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Monday, Dec. 02, 1940

## World War: Sons of Greece

Ever since Poet Homer gave the lowdown on Ulysses, wily has been the word for Greeks. The Greek syndicates of gamblers; the late Sir Basil Zaharoff, merchant of death; tens of thousands of Greek traders in fruits, tobaccos, steamships have carried on the Ulysses tradition of wandering, guile and gain. Last week, with their mother country menaced, Greeks all over the world went in their own ways to her support. In the U. S., one of them was a millionaire oil operator of Louisiana and points west. Possessor of a 65-year exclusive franchise to find and exploit Greece's petroleum resources, he turned over to Premier General John Metaxas \$1,000,000 worth of tools, trucks, pipeline, drill rigs, explosives and a 38-ton tank with which he and his men had been working in the Peloponnesos. His name: William Helis of New Orleans.

The Helis family belongs in Arcadia, high in a mountain district which not even the terrible Turks ever conquered and from which come some of Greece's ablest highland fighters. William Helis' grandfather was mayor of their town for 32 years. Young William went to America after finishing secondary school, did odd jobs in New York and Milwaukee. In 1908 he married a Philadelphia girl of Dutch descent, who bore him three daughters and a son. He set up a coffee and spice business in Kansas City, Mo., became a top sergeant in the National Guard in World War I. Then he hunted for oil in Texas — and found it, near Wichita Falls. He found more in Oklahoma and in California. In Louisiana he struck it really rich because he found not only plenty of oil around New Iberia but also Robert Maestri, cagey political boss of New Orleans.

Now that his mother Greece is up against it, Oilman Helis' fortune is at her disposal. He is director of the southern activities of Greek War Relief Association, Inc., which has offices at No. 730 Fifth Ave., Manhattan and of which Harold Stirling Vanderbilt is national honorary chairman. Mr. Vanderbilt, no Greek, is in there for humanitarian reasons but he and Mr. Helis, the Greek boy who made good, have something in common: Mr. Helis has a 107-ft. yacht, the William Helis II, and Mr. Vanderbilt is the U. S.'s most famed yachtsman.

Spyros Skouras, chain cinema tycoon, is national president of the Greek War Relief Association, Inc., which hopes to raise \$10,000,000.

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