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## **Greece, Hellenism around the world commemorate 'OXI Day' on Monday, country's entry into WWII**



Greece and Hellenism around the world on Monday marked the 79th anniversary of the country's entry into World War II on the side of the Allies. The day also commemorates the Feast of the Protection, related to the appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae, in the imperial city of Constantinople in the 10th century.

The national holiday in Greece every Oct. 28 is known as "Oxi Day", oxi meaning "no" in Greek.

The name of the holiday relates to the absolute refusal of then Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas to an ultimatum by Benito Mussolini's Italy. An Italian invasion of northwest Greece followed hours later, with Greek forces successfully defending the country's frontier and going on an extended offensive roughly two weeks later.

The annual "Oxi Day" series of events climaxed with a military parade in the northern city of Thessaloniki, before Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and the country's political and military leadership. The Cypriot DM was also present in the grandstands.

The pages of the Orthodoxia news agency today feature eyewitness accounts of soldiers that fought on the Greco-Italian front, mostly in the mountainous and snow-covered mountains of southern Albania, as well as the heroic women who supplied the troops on the battlefield.

In the southeastern-most corner of Greece, on the isle of Kastellorizo, a national guard unit raised the flag on the morning of the national holiday, before assembled island residents.

Moreover, on the large eastern Aegean island of Hios (Chios), a gusty northerly wind wasn't strong enough to cancel the raising of a 150-square-meter flag, hoisted on every national holiday.

The flag-raising ceremony was attended by the Metropolitan of Hios, His Eminence Marcos, along with a delegation of local clerics and office-holders.

A heavy-duty crane raised the enormous flag on the southern jetty of the main port on the island before an honor guard, units of local boy and girl scouts as well as students of a merchant marine academy on the island.

Elsewhere, the small ethnic Greek Orthodox community in Damascus, Syria, on Monday also celebrated Greece's Oct. 28th national holiday, which coincided with the 100-year anniversary of the establishment of the community in the ancient Syrian city.

After a doxology service, the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, His Beatitude John X, referred to strong and historic ties shared between the two lands, as well as between the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece.