Prospectus For a Traveling Exhibit

Légion Arménienne

The Armenian Legion and Its Heroism In the Middle East

1916-1920

To schedule the exhibit, or for additional information, contact the:

ARMENIAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF AMERICA

65 Main Street
Watertown, Mass. 02472
Telephone: 617-926-2562
E-mail: Gamavor@almainc.org

OVERVIEW

Using photographs, maps, documents, personal accounts, and graphics, the exhibit tells the story of the Armenian Legion in World War I on several panels. The vivid words of the Legionnaires, interspersed with French official documents and historical texts, helps to form the narrative, placing the account of the Legionnaire movement against the backdrop of the turbulent Middle East conflict.

HISTORICAL SCOPE

The primary focus is the participation of Armenian Americans in the Armenian Legion, from its formation in 1916 until its dissolution in 1920. Viewers learn about the recruitment of soldiers to fight with the Allies in World War I. They can see how the Armenian volunteers train in Cyprus and fight with British General Edmund Allenby's forces, winning a crucial battle at Mt. Arara (Palestine). Their subsequent assignment takes them to their ultimate destination, Cilicia (southeastern Turkey), where the Allies had promised Armenians autonomy.

The exhibit examines the Legionnaires' efforts to aid the local Armenian population in regaining pre-deportation properties, gathering young children into orphanages, and in liberating women and children held in Muslim households. The failure of the Allies to keep their promises to the Armenians at the end of World War I, and in particular, shifts in French diplomatic policy towards Turkey, lead to the dissolution of the Legion and disappointment to the Armenians.

LITERARY AND ARTISTIC SCOPE

Original prose, drawing largely from primary sources, tells the story of the Armenian volunteers who fought with the Allies and later defended Cilicia. Whenever possible, primary source materials are used, and where suitable, reproductions of documents are displayed. Material from state and private archives in France, the United States, and Great Britain are presented, along with excerpts from memoirs, letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, and reports.

The primary graphic medium consists of large photographs reproduced from a variety of sources, including a valuable collection in the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University, California.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXHIBIT

On September 23, 2001, the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), in commemoration of the anniversary of the victory at Arara in Palestine by the Armenian Legion in 1918, opened its exhibit, "Forgotten Heroes–The Armenian Legion and the Great War," to a capacity audience. The enthusiastic response to the exhibit revealed a tremendous interest in this long–forgotten and in many ways unwritten story of the brave and selfless young men who fought with the Allies to victory, and later, even in the face of betrayal, risked all in defense the Armenian cause.

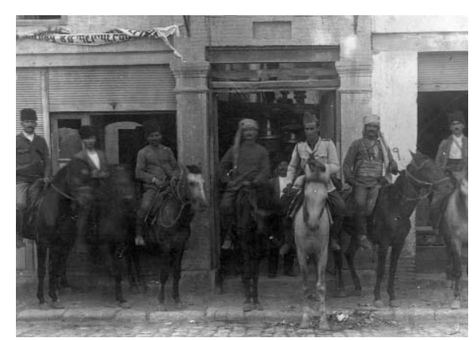
Almost immediately, requests came in to ALMA inquiring about bringing the "Armenian Legion" exhibit to other locations in the United States. In response to these inquiries and as part of its goal of a broader community outreach, a small cadre of devotees, with the help of a graphic designer, developed this traveling exhibit, incorporating the community spirit of the original into an informative historic, literary, and artistic presentation. The exhibit is now available to interested venues in order to inform the public about this largely forgotten episode from the history of the Middle East.

DESCRIPTION

The traveling exhibit consists of 22 graphic panels, each measuring 7 feet tall by 4 feet wide as follows:

- An introductory triangle of three one-sided panels; eight double-sided panels (16 sides) in two groups; a summation triangle of three one-sided panels.
- Each panel is mounted, laminated and framed on easy-to-install pre-hinged interlocked aluminum frames. Each set of frames is hinged and consists of either three or four panels. Almost no assembly is required other than positioning the frame sets.
- An exhibit space of approximately 850 square feet or greater is optimal.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The exhibit is available to interested venues for a period of 6 to 8 weeks at no charge, but exhibitors will be required to pay the shipping costs.

The exhibit remains the exclusive property of the Armenian Library and Museum of America. The information contained in the exhibit is not to be reproduced or used in whole or in part for any purpose without the express consent of ALMA.