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MUSEUM HOURS

Monday-Friday	10 am - 4 pm
Sunday	2 pm -4 pm

Groups welcome by appointment. Light lunches served to groups of 15 or more, upon request.



THE HALYARD MISSION

A daring rescue of Allied airmen
from the Nazi - occupied Serbia
in 1944

Exhibit: Sept. 11 - Nov. 30, 1994

Serbian Heritage Museum,

THE HALYARD MISSION

The Serbian Heritage Museum Is honoured to present this historically significant event and to bring to the public light one of the bravest secret operations during World War II. With this exhibit, The Museum commemorates the 50th anniversary of this event.

The Halyard Mission was known only to those closely involved in the rescue of the trapped Allied airmen who were forced to abandon their damaged planes and parachute behind the enemy lines in the Nazi-occupied Serbia. They were on a bombing mission to Ploesti Fields in Romania, Hitler's main oil supply.

The Serbian National Resistance Forces known as Chetniks, under the command of General Mihailovich, rescued the downed airmen, and looked after them until they were able to return home.

When contact with the Allied forces had been established, an airstrip was built on a plateau above the village of Pranjane under the supervision of Captain Zvonko Vuckovic. Major Aleksandar Milosevich in command of the West Morava Group of Corps provided tight security of the entire area during evacuation.

The mission started on July 25, 1944 when Lt. George Musulin, Master Sergeant Michael Rajacich and Radio Man Arthur Jubilian, parachuted into the area and contacted General Mihailovich. The first evacuation took place on the night of August 9th. But the night operation proved to be too difficult for the large C-47 Transport planes to land on a small airstrip. It was decided to continue during the day. The next morning, August 10th, the incoming transport planes came escorted by 100 jet fighters who provided diversions by attacking the Nazi near by garrisons.

The evacuation went on undisturbed. This practice was repeated within the next few months until all Allied airmen were evacuated.

The Halyard Mission stands as a historical testimony to a heroic Allied cooperation against the Nazis. Though, this act of heroism and loyalty by General Mihailovich and his Chetniks was ignored and denied by many, it was a great contribution to the Allied Cause and the eventual outcome of the war.

CHETNIKS

Who are Chetniks, some may ask? Well, they are Serbian freedom fighters. Their roots go back to the times when the need to resist Turkish oppression sent many brave, determined men to forests, mountains and remote hide-outs. They were known by their sudden and fierce attacks. Turks greatly feared them. At that time such fighters were called haiduks (hajduci).

Facing the danger together, these courageous men developed a great loyalty to one another and formed military units (Chete), thus the name Chetniks, meant one of the company. Furthermore, they were a symbol of brotherhood as much in life as in battle. Coming from prominent families, the home, family and traditional way of life were their sacred, focal points. This feeling was extended toward the Orthodox Faith and in unified love and respect for home and God, they became great patriots in the modern history of Serbia and protagonists for freedom and democracy.

DRAZA MIHAILOVICH

Dragoljub-Draza- Mihailovich was born in 1893 in Ivanjica, a small town in Serbia. He entered the Military Academy in 1908 and as a graduate student specialized in guerilla warfare.

At the age of 19 he fought in the Balkan Wars in 1912, and in World War I, 1914-1918. Between the two wars, he advanced to the rank of colonel. In 1941, when Nazis invaded Yugoslavia, Mihailovich refused to accept capitulation and withdrew to the Serbian mountains, where he attracted many freedom loving officers and soldiers from the former Yugoslav army. They formed the National Resistance Force known as Ravnogorci, by the mountain Ravna Gora, or Chetniks. As the first guerilla leader in occupied Europe he fought the Nazis till the end of the war. King Petar's government in exile promoted him to a rank of a general and appointed him Minister of War.

When Germany attacked the Soviet Union, Josip Broz Tito formed a Communist guerilla group known as the Partisans. As Partisans fought for international Communism with the idea of establishing Communist rule in Yugoslavia, Mihailovich had two enemies to fight: Germans and Communists.

In 1948 President Harry S. Truman, recognized General Mihailovich's contribution to the Allied cause and posthumously awarded him with the Legion of Merit.

The Serbian people loved General Mihailovich in life and they still revere him as one of their great national heroes who have become a legend even before he was executed by the communist regime.