

Guts & Glory:

The War Train that Shaped a Nation



At the outbreak of World War I, Czechs and Slovaks had no country to call their own. Their lands were a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, an old aristocracy that had ruled over them for centuries. Seeing this war as an opportunity to free themselves, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Edvard Beneš and Milan Rastislav Štefánik formed the Czechoslovak National Council and worked tirelessly to establish an independent and democratic Czechoslovakia.

An Exhibit in Six Panels

First Panel:

This panel sets the stage for World War I, beginning with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. It lists the participants in the War and explains where Czechs and Slovaks fit into the picture.

Second Panel:

The Czechoslovakia National Council was formed by three men working toward the establishment of a nation of Czechs and Slovaks. Their names are Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Edvard Beneš and Milan Rastislav Štefánik and they work tirelessly with United States President Woodrow Wilson and others throughout World War I.

Third Panel:

This panel tells the story of how the Czechoslovak Legion was formed.

Fourth Panel:

Vojtěch Preissig created posters and postcards designed to raise awareness of and sympathy for an independent Czechoslovak nation among people in the United States. The recruitment posters he created for World War I, primarily aimed at Czech and Slovak immigrants, urged them to join the fight against Austria-Hungary.

Fifth Panel:

The Czechoslovak legionnaires lived on trains as they crossed Siberia. Rail cars were converted into barracks, bakeries, workshops, munitions storage, supply cars, print shops, post offices, and medical cars. Some were even decorated on the outside with paintings of home or patriotic slogans.

Sixth Panel:

This panel details the formation of the First Czechoslovak Republic and the Czech Legion's long-awaited arrival to its new independent home.

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Exhibit Rental Information

Guts & Glory: The War Train that Shaped a Nation is comprised of six retractable panels that tell the story of World War I through the lens of Czechs and Slovaks. On one side of the War is the establishment of the Czechoslovak National Council and its work to appeal to Americans and their president for the support of their cause. The other side is told from the front lines on a train across Siberia where the Czechoslovak legionnaires both lived and fought for their freedom.

Exhibit Contains:

- 6 panels that retract into a metal base (opened like a roller shade), each housed in a black zippered bag. The opened panels are each 36 x 72 inches in size.
- Folded pole to hold each panel open (in bag with panel)
- Shipping box weighs approximately 76 lbs.

Space Requirements:

- 21 linear feet (allowing for 6 inches between each panel). This figure is based upon all six panels being set up in a row, but they can be in any configuration within a space.

Time:

- Duration of exhibit is negotiable

Security:

- Periodic checks of exhibit area
- Open to the public only while there is an attendant in the building

Procedures for Booking:

The borrower must pay for shipping costs to and from the venue. The NCSML Traveling Exhibit Coordinator will ship via FedEx and send return shipping labels via email once the exact return date has been determined. The Coordinator will also arrange the package pick-up. The NCSML Finance Director will bill the borrower after the exhibit's return to the NCSML.

Setting up the Exhibit:

- Remove metal case (panel rolled within) and pole from bag
- Place metal case flat on floor
- Straighten bent pole and insert together at the elastic
- Insert pole into circular slot near center of the case
- Lift panel and unroll far enough to attach it to the top of the pole
- Unlatch pole and raise the rest of the way (approximately 1.5 to 2 feet)
- Latch pole to lock it in place

The NCSML traveling exhibition program is generously supported by American Czech Association, Los Angeles and American Sokol Los Angeles.

Questions about this exhibit?

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