

**THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
COMMISSION TO GREECE; RELIEF
WORK AMONG THE VILLAGES OF
MOUNT PANGAEON; ATHENS,
JUNE 1, 1919**

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The American Red Cross Commission to Greece; Relief Work Among the Villages of Mount Pangaeon; Athens, June 1, 1919 by G. C. Barry

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G. C. BARRY

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COMMISSION TO GREECE

RELIEF WORK AMONG THE VILLAGES
OF MOUNT PANGAEON

BY FIRST-LIEUTENANT G. C. BARRY

Athens

June 1, 1919

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

ATHENS

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RELIEF WORK
AMONG THE VILLAGES OF MOUNT PANGAEON

THE EARLY STAGE

On November 6, 1918, a party consisting of Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Capps, Commissioner to Greece, Major Carl E. Black, Major Clifford W. Barnes, Mr. B. H. Hill and Mr. C. W. Blegen left Athens by rail on a mission of investigation in Eastern Macedonia. The Greek Commission had arrived in Athens only two weeks before this date. At that time it controlled not one pound of supplies, and had only the hope of coming shipments with which to organize relief work. In Salonica much information was gathered as to conditions prevailing in Eastern Macedonia, and it was ascertained that Greece was at that moment faced with the serious problem of repatriating many thousands of refugees who had been, during the war, held as prisoners in Bulgaria.

These refugees were then straggling back toward their homes in the different parts of Eastern Macedonia. The attention of Colonel Capps and the other members of the party was called particularly to the mountainous region of the Pangaeon, where the country had been most severely devastated, inasmuch as the villages of this district lay within the limits of the second and third Bulgarian lines of defense, and almost the total population had been deported from their homes. It was obvious that here was a field of special need, and immediate action was necessary.

In order to make provision for the campaign of relief

work in the Pangaeon district, as well as in other needy parts of Eastern Macedonia, a supply of food was taken from Salonica amounting in all to thirty-five tons, thirty tons of which was contributed by the Serbian Commission of the American Red Cross and five tons by Governor-General Adossides. It was foreseen that the question of transport into the Pangaeon district would be a serious one; consequently Governor-General Adossides commandeered six ox-teams and put them at our disposal in order that our workers might be equipped to send supplies from Kavalla westward into the Pangaeon towns.

The party left Salonica November 10th and reached Kavalla on November 12th, sailing on the ship «Hellespontos», commandeered for their use. All the supplies mentioned above, together with the six ox-teams and one Sunbeam car provided by Governor-General Adossides, were transported on the same ship.

Upon arriving at Kavalla, which had been selected as a base of operations for Eastern Macedonia and Bulgaria, the reports already received in Salonica as to the Pangaeon district were amply confirmed. Mr. Leroy Steele and Mr. James Arrington, American tobacco merchants, were particularly eager in urging that the work of relief be undertaken for the Pangaeon towns, and were able to contribute valuable suggestions and, furthermore, volunteered active co-operation in getting the work organized.

On the Thursday following the arrival of the party in Kavalla, Mr. Andreas Djimou, a resident of Drama and Kormista, one of the Pangaeon towns, came in to Kavalla and gave confirmation to the reports already received, urging that relief be sent at the earliest possible moment.

It was realized fully that the situation was indeed a difficult one and apparently one which the Greek Government was unable at the moment to meet. The difficulty of transportation from Kavalla to the Pangaeon

towns was enormous, and the task would have appeared hopeless except to the stoutest souls.

It was decided immediately to launch forth on the enterprise, Mr. Blegen being designated to take charge of the Pangaeon district, and the six ox-teams brought from Salonica were loaded and instructed to proceed one day's journey westward to the town of Kormista, where the first distribution was to be made. Meanwhile Mr. Blegen, accompanied by Mr. Steele, proceeded to Drama by British Army automobile, and from there traveled on horseback in company with Mr. Djimou and Mr. Steele on Sunday to Kormista. There living quarters were provided by Mr. Djimou, and warehouse facilities for the goods were put at the disposal of Mr. Blegen.

Mr. Blegen then proceeded to an inspection of the situation, endeavoring to estimate the degree of need and to secure such information as would enable him to make an intelligent distribution. In making this inspection and in the subsequent distribution Mr. Blegen instituted the admirable method which was followed constantly through all the stages of the Pangaeon work—the method described in detail by Lieutenant Barry in the following report.

Three days later the six ox-carts arrived from Kavalla, bringing the first shipment of supplies, and distribution was immediately commenced and continued for about three days. In this first distribution eleven towns were served, the recipients of food and clothing being limited to the lowest possible number in view of the small quantity of supplies.

Further distribution required further shipments, and in order to get these shipments out it was necessary for Mr. Blegen to return to Kavalla. The only person left in Kavalla was Miss Gladwyn, of the Serbian Commission, who had accompanied the party from Salonica; but she was not able unaided to attend to the details of shipments,

The other members of the party had proceeded to Bulgaria and were organizing work there.

The ox-carts which had carried out the first shipment vanished entirely during the return trip from Kormista. They never appeared again and nothing was ever heard of them. The drivers, it would appear, had come unwillingly, and only waited for an opportunity to disengage themselves from an assignment which was not to their liking. They did not even return for their pay for the one trip they had made.



Intensive farming in the Pangaeon. An old Turk of Osmani with cow and donkey hitched to his home-made wooden plow.

This loss of the ox-carts complicated the transportation problem. In order to replace them Mr. Blegen, with much difficulty, secured four one-horse carts and three ox-carts. These carts were loaded with supplies and dispatched immediately to Kormista. Later ten military carts were added to the «fleet» of Red Cross transport.

Once more Mr. Blegen, accompanied by Mr. Steele, went to Kormista, this time by way of Pravi. Between Pravi and Kormista Mr. Blegen and Mr. Steele were lost on the mountain-side, owing to the lack of information of their guide, and did not reach their destination until midnight.

A second distribution was made during the first week

in December, and the lists of beneficiaries were enlarged in view of the increased quantity of supplies now available.

The transport for the next shipment was provided entirely by the Greek Army through the courtesy of General Joannou. Mr. Blegen, who had meanwhile returned from Kormista, went for the third distribution by way of Drama, accompanied by Mr. Miller and Mr. Taylor, who had recently arrived from Athens. After the completion of the third distribution Mr. Blegen left Mr. Miller and Mr. Taylor at Kormista, having made proper arrangements for supplies for further distributions, and having secured an interpreter from Pravi. The fourth distribution took place under the direction of Mr. Miller during the last days of December. The food dispensed in these first distributions amounted to 39,384 rations; 5,263 garments and 228 blankets were issued. The lists of beneficiaries contained the names of 3,550 persons.

The station at Kormista remained under command of Mr. Miller until the appointment of Lieutenant Barry as head of the Pangaeon district, on January 27th. During the period of January 1st to 27th three distributions were made on the following dates: January 1st, 16th and 25th. The number of persons served was increased to 4,641.

After the month of January increased amounts of supplies for Eastern Macedonia made possible a greatly extended program of distribution in the Pangaeon towns. The work which began for a few villages on one side of the mountain, and for a very limited number of the population of those villages, grew to embrace fifty-seven villages and seventy-six per cent of the total population of the whole region. This period of expansion is fully treated in the following report.

Major Henry B. Dewing,
Commanding Macedonian District.

Athens, June 1, 1919.

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION

Kavalla, May 26, 1919.

From: First-Lieutenant G. C. Barry.

To: Major Henry B. Dewing.

Subject: Pangaeon Relief Activities.

The Pangaeon region is a mountainous area of some three hundred square miles in the eastern part of Macedonia. It is bounded on the west by the well-known Struma Valley, within recent years referred to by the British as the «white man's grave»; on the northeast by the Plain of Philippi; on the southeast by the fertile Musthenie Valley, and on the south by the sea, beyond which rises Mount Athos about forty miles distant. This section of the country is generally referred to as the Pangaeon Mountain. It is in reality a range about thirty miles long, unequally divided by the Musthenie Valley. At its highest point Mt. Pangaeon is some six thousand feet above the sea and up to the present time the top has been covered with snow.

The climate is moderate, although during the past winter there have been several snow storms and a great deal of rain. The country, other than the cultivated portions, which are used exclusively for the growing of the finer grades of Macedonian tobacco, is wild and rocky, covered in part with a spare growth of brush. This brush