

Reference code: GB165-0366

Title: Robert Large Collection

Name of creator: Large, Robert Walter Canning

Dates of creation of material: 29 May 2004

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 item (4 sheets)

Biographical history: Large, Robert Walter Canning

National Service 1945-1948, served in Palestine and Transjordan. Joined the Transjordan Frontier Force and rose to be a Staff Captain. After demobilisation returned to his home county of Perthshire in Scotland and collected money for Basil Mantura's Holy Land Arab Refugees Fund. Then moved to Cambridge to study in 1948 and continued as a student to raise money for Arab Refugees by selling clothes on commission. Then applied for service in the Aden Protectorate. Left Aden in 1967. Then joined the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University and in 1974 successfully completed a PhD on 'The Extension of British Influence in and Around the Gulf of Aden, 1865-1905'.

Scope and content: Letter giving Robert Large's reminiscences of his service in Palestine and Transjordan c1947-1948 in the Transjordan Frontier Force. The letter was written by Robert Large to the Overseas Service Pensioners' Association in response to a notice in the DFID (Department for International Development) OPD (Overseas Pensions Department) Newsletter in September 2003 about the Overseas Pensioners' Association Colonial Service Research work. The letter gives Robert Large's reasons for wanting to join the Colonial Service and his reminiscences of serving in the Transjordan Frontier Force, including his admiration for his Arab colleagues and the strong sense of community in the Transjordan Frontier Force that cut across divisions of race and religion. The letter includes an example of such strong community and comradeship in account related to him by Haim Bek, the Jewish Commanding Officer at the Transjordan Frontier Force Cavalry Remount Depot in Palestine, of how his duty officer and the troops had come to his aide to protect his wife. After the hanging of two Palestine Policeman, sergeants Martin and Paice, by the Irgun, some Palestine Policemen from Beisan had got drunk and angry and gone to beat up the nearby small Jewish Settlement where Haim Bek's wife lived. Haim Bek's wife had telephoned her husband during the attack and the Transjordan Frontier Force

troops intervened telling Haim Bek that ‘your home, your wife, are as precious to us, as our homes, our families’.

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Robert Large and then David Le Breton of the Overseas Service Pensioners’ Association who then sent it on to Anthony Kirk-Greene (who was a Lecturer in the Modern History of Africa from 1967 to 1992 at St Antony’s College, Oxford) who then passed it on to Dr Eugene Rogan for the Middle East Centre Archive.

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from Anthony Kirk-Greene 14 Jun 2004

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist’s note: Fonds level description created by Debbie Usher 30 Sept 2016. Biographical information compiled from information in the letter and the British Library catalogue entry for Robert Large’s PhD thesis.