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Historic Fort Huachuca Army Library Closed

ALA recently learned about the closure of the Fort Huachuca Library, located on the Army installation in Arizona. We are especially concerned about this because it is part of a pilot program that could provide impetus for base library closings throughout the country.

The Army is sending Fort Huachuca soldiers and their families off base to the city library for reduced library services. A number of services the soldiers had received -- including military-network programs and access to library staff knowledgeable in military-related issues -- are now unavailable.

Closing this historic library, especially during a time of war, deprives soldiers and their families of an important resource for education, information and technology.

ALA is deeply concerned because the stakeholders -- the soldiers and their families -- were left out of the process, and the decision-makers have little understanding of the staff and services that are integral to a library and the community it serves.

This closing, as in the case of the Environmental Protection Agency libraries, may have national ramifications, as it could be replicated in Army installations across the country. Further, our contacts report that the Northeast Region Office (NERO) -- which includes bases such as Fort Belvoir, Fort Meyer, Fort Hamilton and the Aberdeen Proving Ground -- is interested in expanding the legislation that approved the pilot program.

ALA President Leslie Burger sent a letter to Acting Secretary of the Army Preston Geren expressing her concern about the Fort Huachuca Library. The letter was copied to Arizona's Representatives and Senators on Capitol Hill, as well as Senate and House leadership of the Armed Services Committees.

ALA staff is still gathering information on this issue, and a website will be available soon.

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