



**THE MIRACLE MAN OF THE WESTERN FRONT  
VARAZTAD H. KAZANJIAN**

How many of us living in Springfield in the 1940s-1970s realized what an important role the quiet and unassuming Dr. Kazanjian had played in saving people or restoring their injuries so that could lead a normal life? Dr. and Mrs. Kazanjian and their family lived at Foxstand during the summers and holidays. They also had a small cottage on Lake KOLELEMOOK that has since been purchased and updated by Nancy and Robert Bower.

Dr. Kazanjian was born in Turkish Armenia on March 18, 1879. He came to the United States to get away from the terrible strife in his homeland. He was sixteen years old when he settled in Worcester, Massachusetts. He went to work in a wire factory and discovered he was very good with the use of his fingers which was going to be very important to his future career. He attended night school and took correspondence courses. While in Armenia, he had attended a missionary school. In 1900, Varaztad Kazanjian became an American citizen and decided to become a dentist. He went to Harvard Dental School and there became interested in fractured jaws and congenital deformities which were treated at the clinic. By 1905, he was practicing dentistry and teaching as an associate in Prothetic Dentistry at Harvard. He headed the department in 1912.

In 1915, the First Harvard Unit was organized to serve with the British in World War 1914. Dr. Kazanjian was appointed the Dental Chief of the outfit. A clinic was established in Camiers, France. As his skills became known, increasing numbers of casualties with maxillofacial injuries were sent to him. He was at this post until February 1919, treating more than 3000 cases of gunshot, shrapnel, and other severe injuries to the face and jaws. That is where he earned the title, "The Miracle Man of the Western Front."

In recognition of his service during World War 1914, Dr. Kazanjian was invested as a companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George by King George V in Buckingham Palace.

When Dr. Kazanjian returned to the United States, he rejoined Harvard Dental School, but also decided to enroll in Harvard Medical School to complete his training in the types of surgery he had been performing on the Western Front. He went on to become Harvard's first Professor of Plastic Surgery, publishing more than 150 articles on plastic and reconstructive surgery. He concentrated on deformities of the face and jaw. Dr. Kazanjian and Dr. John M. Converse wrote what became THE standard reference in the field, THE SURGICAL TREATMENT OF FACIAL INJURIES. He believed that each patient's problem needed an individual solution.

Over the years Dr. Varaztad Kazanjian was President of the Association of Plastic Surgeons and received recognition both in the United States and abroad. He maintained his surgical practice treating people all over the world and served on the staff of major Boston area hospitals such as Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Kazanjian died at age 95 in 1974.

Patsy Heath Caswell

(Reference material was found at [Armeniapedia.org](http://Armeniapedia.org), [www.massgeneral.org/](http://www.massgeneral.org/) the Mass General website and <http://www.miraclemanofthewesternfront.com>.)

\*\*\*There will be a new biography published in January 2007, entitled MIRACLE MAN OF THE WESTERN FRONT, DR. VARASTAD KAZANJIAN PIONEER SURGEON, by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian, DDS.