

THE
Jewish Veteran

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES

Feature Articles

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Hero Of Gettysburg

Introducing Gen. Edward Solomon

By BERTRAM JONAS

JANUARY



1938



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HERO OF GETTYSBURG

Introducing General Edward Solomon

MENTION the name Solomon to an American Jew and he will immediately think of either King Solomon of Biblical times or Haym Solomon, the Jewish patriot of the American Revolution. But there was another Solomon famous in American history about whom few Jews know. And that is Edward S. Solomon, as brave a soldier as ever wore the American uniform.

Edward S. Solomon was born on Christmas Day 1836 in a town of Schleswig-Holstein, then a province of Germany, but now part of Denmark. He came of upstanding but none too prosperous Jewish people. By the time he had completed his secondary education Germany had not yet recovered from the political and economic upheavals of 1848 and young Solomon decided to join the thousands of other middle class Germans who were going overseas to seek their fortune in America.

Solomon was not yet past his teens when he reached the United States. He did not linger on the Eastern seaboard but took the advice of Horace Greeley and went West, settling in Chicago. Although a raw youth, Solomon was so highly thought of by the pioneer Jewish settlers that they elected him secretary of the Hebrew Relief Organization, the first non-religious Jewish society in Chicago, when it was organized in 1859. A year later he was sufficiently well-known in Chicago to be elected to the Chicago board of aldermen. And in 1861 he was chosen clerk of Cook County.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Solomon abandoned politics to volunteer for service, joining the 24th Illinois Infantry. He rose speedily to the rank of major through gallant conduct in the battles of Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain. Through a disagreement among the officers of the 24th Infantry, many resigned in 1863 and organized the 82d Illinois Infantry, of which Solomon became lieutenant-colonel. He was soon promoted to colonel, and at the end of the war was breveted major-general.

That, in brief, is the military record of General Solomon, but back of those cold facts are a story of rare bravery, a story which has been told by his superior officers in their reports recommending him for one promotion after another.

Immediately after the bloody battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, where Solomon served under General Howard, commander of the 11th Army Corps, General Carl Schurz, in reporting to Howard on his division's activities at Gettysburg, said that Solomon "displayed the highest order of coolness and determination under very trying circumstances." To this praise Schurz added an even greater accolade when he acclaimed Solomon as the "only soldier at Gettysburg who did not dodge when Lee's guns thundered; he stood up and smoked his cigar and faced the cannon balls with the sangfroid of a Saladin."

By **BERTRAM JONAS**

This year marking the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, we present as another in the series of articles about great Jewish soldiers the amazing career of General Edward Solomon, "the only soldier at Gettysburg who did not dodge when Lee's guns thundered."

THE EDITOR.

In 1864, when Howard was given command of the Army of the Tennessee, Solomon was assigned to service under Colonel J. T. Robinson of the 3d Brigade of the 20th Army Corps. Here again Solomon distinguished himself by his bravery. In his recommendation to the adjutant-general of Illinois that Solomon be made a colonel, Robinson wrote as follows: "He fully deserves this favor, not only by his inherent ability and merit as an officer but more particularly by the gallantry and efficiency he has displayed during the campaign. The regiment he commands is his best recommendation, it having been soldierly, gallant and thoroughly disciplined." This recommendation was concurred in by General Joseph Hooker, commander of the 20th Corps, who had seen with his own eyes Solomon's heroism in all the battles of the Atlanta campaign.

It was during this campaign, which broke the back of the Confederacy and paved the way for the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, that Solomon won even greater laurels. Nothing can describe them better than Colonel Robinson's report to Secretary of War Edward Stanton recommending Solomon for brevet as a brigadier-general for gallant and meritorious services.

"Colonel Solomon," Robinson wrote in a dispatch dated from Goldsboro, North Carolina, "joined this brigade with his regiment at the opening of the campaign against Atlanta in the spring of 1864. During the fighting before Resaca, Georgia, on May 14 and 15 this regiment behaved with great gallantry. Again at New Hope on the 25th of the same month Colonel Solomon led his command with admirable coolness and courage against the enemy; after having advanced under severe fire of musketry and artillery more than a mile he held his line close to the intrenched position of the enemy without a breastwork and with a scanty supply of ammunition.

"At the battle near Peach Tree Creek before Atlanta on the 20th of July 1864 Colonel Solomon performed a most gallant and meritorious part in repulsing the repeated onslaughts made by the enemy. In the face of a furious raking fire he held his line for four hours when the enemy withdrew from his front with great loss. During the siege of Atlanta, Colonel Solomon was ever prominent for his energy, coolness and judgment. In the fighting near Averys-

boro, North Carolina, on March 16, 1865 Colonel Solomon as usual led his regiment into action with great gallantry and skill. At the battle near Bentonville on the 19th of March, 1865, Colonel Solomon and his command drew the unqualified admiration of all who witnessed their coolness and discipline under fire and their effective service in repulsing several determined attacks of the enemy.

"Colonel Solomon has distinguished himself in other engagements besides those which have been mentioned. At Gettysburg and Missionary Ridge his gallantry was conspicuous and challenged the highest admiration. I consider Colonel Solomon one of the most deserving officers. His regiment is his highest praise. In point of drill and discipline it is second to none in this corps. Its record will bear safe comparison with any other of the same age in the army. Colonel Solomon has had a commission as Colonel since April 1864 but his regiment not containing the requisite number of men he has been unable to get mustered."

The Civil War was already over and the boys in blue and gray homeward bound when on June 15th, 1865, Secretary of War Stanton informed Colonel Solomon that President Grant had appointed him "for distinguished gallantry and meritorious services during the war a brigadier-general of volunteers by brevet."

Thus ended the military career of one of the bravest Jewish soldiers in American history. He was only 29 years old when he returned to Chicago to be acclaimed as a hero. General Solomon then settled down to business but his fellow citizens insisted that he accept some honor from them and so they elected him county clerk again. This office he resigned in 1870 when President Grant appointed him governor of the Territory of Washington.

The great Pacific Northwest was then still largely a wilderness. Law and order were urgently required and Grant knew that in General Solomon he had a firm and courageous man who could temper justice with mercy. The two years that Solomon served as governor were uneventful but when he resigned in 1872 he turned over to his successor a territory where peace and justice reigned. When he resigned the Pacific Tribune said it was universally regretted as "he was honest, fearless and capable. He has done much to bring population to Washington, expending his time and his means."

After leaving the governor's chair he settled in San Francisco where he again became active in public affairs. He was twice elected to the California legislature and served two terms as district attorney of San Francisco County. His former comrades in arms also elected him commander of the Department of California, Grand Army of the Republic, the only Jew to head

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New Year's Resolutions

This being the season for making (and breaking) resolutions we'd like to offer some good resolutions which ought to be adopted by comrades and posts of J.W.V.

The individual comrades ought to resolve to pay their dues promptly, to attend meetings regularly, to carry out the orders of post officers, to bring in new members and to join other veterans organizations to which they are eligible. The posts as units ought to resolve to pay their capita tax promptly, to cooperate more closely with national headquarters and their departments, to help organize new posts in their area, and to intensify their efforts for giving effect to the aims and objectives of J.W.V.

As for ourselves we resolve to make the "JEWISH VETERAN" better than ever during 1938.

Gennett Welcomed Home

Welcomed by a battery of news photographers, reporters and other interviewers, Comrade Isadore Gennett of Morris Krumholz Post, J.W.V. returned to the United States on December 11th, after becoming an international celebrity by his exploit of laying a wreath on Germany's monument to its World War dead in Berlin.

Gennett was met at Quarantine by a J.W.V. delegation composed of C.I.C. Harry Schaffer, Vice C.I.C. Harry Wengrow and National Committeeman Isaac Sobel. Comrade Gennett was presented with a special award by C.I.C. Schaffer in behalf of J.W.V.

At the pier was a large delegation from Morris Krumholz Post and of the Newsdealers Post of the American Legion, of which Gennett is also a member. Later in the day he was the guest of honor at the annual ball of the Bronx County, J.W.V.

His return home and his exploits were widely publicized throughout the world. Modestly, Comrade Gennett has returned to his news-stand at Wall and William Streets, New York City.

A Valuable Suggestion

Comrade Isaac Sobel has called our attention to an important job which J.W.V. can do and we pass his idea along to our national officers for their earnest consideration. He points out that the only lasting contribution we Jewish War Veterans can make to make American Jewish history, apart from our having borne arms in our country's service, is to compile and record for posterity the story of American Jewry's share in the World War. We believe Comrade Sobel's suggestion merits serious consideration.

It happens to be a fact that no where is there to be found a volume which records the names of the American Jews who served their country in the World War. Here and there are some sketchy and fragmentary reports. In scattered books and magazine articles there are articles about individual Jewish servicemen. The statistical record of Jewish war-time service was compiled by the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Welfare Board and published in the American Jewish Year Book. But the whole story still remains to be written.

Jewish communities abroad—in England, France, Germany, Roumania, Belgium, Austria, in fact everywhere except in Russia—have published special volumes dealing with the World War military and naval service of Jews. Only we in America have been remiss. As a matter of fact there is no one book, which any one can go to find reliable and complete information about Jewish military and naval service for the United States even before 1917. There are books dealing with Jewish participation in the Revolution, the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, but no one book in which all this information may be found.

It seems to us that the Jewish War Veterans of the United States ought to undertake this job. It should have been done years ago. But it is still not too late. It will be a huge task of historical research. It will require examination of tens of thousands of records and reports, innumerable regimental histories, soldiers' diaries and memoirs and other source material. But it will be an undertaking of paramount historical value. We need not go into the matter here of how to finance such an ambitious project. We merely call it to the attention of the comrades as something which J.W.V. must and should do. It would be a splendid thing if on the 25th anniversary of the Armistice J.W.V. could announce the publication of such a volume.

J.W.V. And Labor Organizations

Labor controversies between employers and employees and between different labor organizations exist in many parts of the country. Where such disputes occur, public sentiment is aroused for one side or the other. Feeling that J.W.V. should not become involved in these matters, C.I.C. Schaffer has instructed all Departments to

The World's Fair

In the advance publicity for our last national encampment it was reported that one of the subjects to be taken up at Asbury Park was what J.W.V. would do about participating in the New York World's Fair of 1939. Unfortunately this matter did not come before the convention, although it was discussed by the resolutions committee. We want to bring it before the comrades now because the opening of the World's Fair is hardly more than a year off and if we are going to have an exhibit something definite ought to be decided soon.

We have our own pet idea and since no other has yet been advanced we'd like to put it before our national officers. It seems to us that perhaps the finest thing J.W.V. could do in connection with the World's Fair is to undertake to sponsor a hall of fame of American Jewish patriots. The Fair will commemorate the 150th anniversary of George Washington's inauguration as the first President, and the real beginning of our nation. In the century and a half since 1789 American Jewry has played no small part in the development of our country. Among the patriots of our land are many Jewish names.

The suggestion is that J.W.V. undertake to poll American Jewish opinion, through the Jewish press, as to who were the 150 greatest American Jewish patriots of the last 150 years. After the 150 names have been selected J.W.V. would undertake to have life-size pictures made of each of the 150 patriots and exhibit them in a special gallery to be set up, perhaps, in the Veterans Peace Palace, which will be a feature of the Fair. This is only a suggestion which we hope will stimulate some discussion on this important matter. It would be a shame if J.W.V. were not represented by some exhibit at the World's Fair.

National Hqrs. Notes

New Posts:

Baltimore, Maryland,
Scranton, Pennsylvania,
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Metropolitan Post No. 164, Garment Center, New York City.

National Appointments:

Chief National Aide, Max Cohen, Lowell, Mass.

National Historian Gen'l, Isadore Weill, Manhattan No. 1.

National Americanism Officer, Harry Berkowitz, Perth Amboy, N. J.

National Color Sgt., David Feltz, Manhattan No. 1.

National Convention Committee: Martin H. Horwitz, Chairman, New Britain, Conn., George Kath, Cleveland and John Rupp, Milwaukee. Samuel Friedman, Akron, Vice-C.I.C., ex-officio.

caution Posts in their jurisdiction not to become involved in such disputes. It will be found that such a ruling is as expedient as the one which prohibits J.W.V. from becoming involved in partisan politics.

PEACE-FOR-AMERICA PROGRAM

Neutrality and Adequate National Defense

By **SCOTT SQUYRES**

*Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans
of Foreign Wars*

**This timely article by the C.I.C. of
the V.F.W. explains the peace-for-
America program launched through-
out the country by the V.F.W.**

THE EDITOR.

THE "Peace-for-America" program of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is dedicated to the purpose of letting Congress know the true feelings of the American people on the subject of war. The current drive to obtain 25 million signatures on petitions addressed to Congress, will tell the leaders of this nation in unmistakable terms that America must keep out of war. It is up to Congress to devise the policies, and the strategy, to accomplish this objective. If Congress will remember that human lives are more important to the welfare of this nation than dollars, then neutrality will become something real, and America will remain at peace while others do the fighting.

In calling upon Congress to preserve our status as a neutral station, when wars break out between other countries, the V. F. W. petition specifically recommends "a national defense program adequate to preserve and protect our country and its people."

By including this specific requirement in our "Keep America out of war" petitions, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has no desire to instigate any controversies between those who may favor one form of neutrality over another. The main objective, and the one in which our organization believes American citizens are fundamentally interested, is to keep America out of wars, particularly those which do not threaten an invasion of our shores nor our rights as a free and independent nation.

Nevertheless, the V. F. W. realizes that as long as there are nations that refuse to renounce war as an instrument of international policy, and as long as the leading powers of all continents engage in armament competition, America must be properly prepared to defend itself in any emergency. No man whose home is surrounded by fires would be apt to cut off his water supply and destroy his fire extinguishes. It would be just as foolhardy for the United States to ignore our military defense needs when we are surrounded on all sides by the fires of war, and by pyromaniacs suffering with Napoleonic ambitions. The United States has never attempted to build an army and navy for offensive purposes. Our utter helplessness as an aggressor nation was extremely obvious when we declared war upon Germany. Without the use of ships loaned to us by the Allies, and even those vessels we took from Germany, the A. E. F. would never have landed in France. Without the help of the Allies in controlling submarine warfare, the battleships of the United States Navy would have been running around in circles in the Atlantic Ocean accomplishing nothing. It took us nineteen months before we could land an army of

sufficient strength in France to make sure of victory.

In favoring neutrality policies supported by an adequate national defense we simply want to make sure our neutrality principles will be respected. We do not yearn for the biggest army and navy in the world. But we do want both of these branches of the service to be capable of defending America, and its principles as a sovereign power, against the dangers of attack.

We do not pose as military experts, and for this reason, we offer no statistics, and no recommendations, as to the size of our standing army, or the number of battleships America should possess. Modern warfare is a complicated science, and the ordinary citizen is in no position to interpret the requirements involved in an adequate national defense. This is a question that is rightfully placed in the hands of our chosen representatives in Washington, and the officials of the War and Navy Departments. When we go on record in support of an adequate national defense for protection of our country and its people, we are simply endorsing a policy that every clear-thinking citizen can support. We have no desire to see Uncle Sam in the role of a swaggering bully, for the purpose of forcing acceptance of America's policies by the implied threats in a huge display of armaments. Instead, we ask only that America be properly equipped for its own protection when dealing with aggressor nations that are drunk with military successes on other fronts, and ready to attack any other country that offers little or no resistance in the form of military safeguards.

In support of this program, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is seeking the signatures of 25 million citizens. These are being obtained on petitions being distributed by 3,600 local units of our organization and through the cooperation of thousands of citizens who are in no way identified with our organization but sincerely anxious to keep America out of war. Hundreds of daily and weekly newspapers, throughout the country, are publishing so-called ballots designed for the use of those who may not have an opportunity to sign one of our petitions but nevertheless desire to register their support.

From every indication, this campaign is destined to be the greatest organized drive for peace ever waged in the history of the United States. And when these petitions are presented to Congress, early in 1938, as evidence of a universal demand which calls upon that body to keep America out of war, we feel confident every member of Congress will come to the realization that "25 million people can't be wrong."

—O—

Army & Navy Union Vice-Commander Warns Vets Are Tiring Of Bund's Actions

War veterans are getting tired of the "un-American" activities of the German-American Volksbund and it is time for the bund to wash off its Nazi coloring. With this outburst, Mortimer Kastner of Milwaukee, national vice commander of the Army and Navy Union, declined to meet George Froboese, mid-west Bund leader, in a debate on the status of the Bund in America. Although challenged to debate the Nazi question, Kastner declined and made it clear he was not afraid he would lose his oral war but because he would not "appear on the same platform with such as Froboese."

Kastner detailed his reasons for turning down Froboese's challenge to debate charges that the Bund is anti-Jewish and un-American. Asserting that the matter has become "very distasteful" to him, Kastner said the debate would be "futile and harmful." "Your group has made itself conspicuously obnoxious by its bull-headed and undiplomatic manner in clinging to a cause purely and simply of foreign origin." Kastner wrote Froboese. "Persons who have borne arms for the United States are fed up with your activities and have sponsored bills providing for deportation of naturalized citizens who advocate discrimination because of race or religion. Your literature not only is predominantly foreign, but it authorized by Adolf Hitler, Paul Goebbels and other Nazis. We in America don't care any more about their philosophy of government than we do about Stalin's or Mussolini's.

Kastner wrote Froboese that it would be a good idea for members of the organization to abandon their Nazi salute and use the salute of the United States—if they must have a salute. He advised Froboese that members of the Bund should act more in accordance with the principles of the land of their adoption. "This is the best country of all, and that's why you are here," Kastner, whose forbears were German, concluded.