

THE  
*Jewish Veteran*

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES

*"THE TRUE SPIRIT OF AMERICA"*



"Storms from abroad directly challenge three institutions indispensable to America, now as always. The first is religion. It is the source of the other two — democracy and international good faith."  
—HON. FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, Honorary President of the Boy Scouts of America.

MARCH



1939

# Commanders and Comrades of All Units Attention!

In spite of my message last month on LOYALTY TO J.W.V., many comrades and posts still continue to buy their J.W.V. supplies of unauthorized dealers. There are so many reasons why you SHOULD buy of J.W.V. that we have lost patience in discussing them. "J.W.V." is your emblem—you fought for it—you should have some pride in it. Unity means more than lip-service. It means buying your supplies from National Headquarters whenever you need them.

*April 6th is Army Day.* Are you going to march in your local parade? Do you have your uniforms, your caps, your medallions?

*And Memorial Day* will soon be here. Now is the time to order your requirements. By ordering early, you will be assured of service, fit, courtesy and what not. EVENTUALLY, Why Not NOW?

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12 to 50, each .....	.15
over 50, each .....	.12½
Gold plated, each .....	.35
Gold Filled .....	.75c. ea.
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One dozen .....	2.50
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Membership, each .....	.75
25 or more, each .....	.60
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Quantities of 15 or more 15% less.	
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Every post should own at least one of these .....	1.75

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Past Commander, gold-filled, each .....	5.00
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12 letters embroidered free with each cap, quantities	
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50 or over .....	2.00 ea.
<i>Note: All caps requiring more than 12 letters, 5c for each additional letter.</i>	
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Dues Statements—pads of 100 .....	.35
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Lots of 25 .....	1.15
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<i>If there is anything in the line of gifts not listed, contact the Supply Department.</i>	

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ORDER EARLY AND BE SURE TO GET YOUR SUPPLIES

## SUPPLY DEPARTMENT J. W. V.

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# The American Legion and the Jews

By LEE J. LEVINGER, Former National Chaplain of the American Legion

FROM its inception The American Legion has always stood on a strictly American platform of neutrality with regard to the religious affiliations of its members. But, more than that, it has consistently followed the spirit which was implanted in the members of the A.E.F., of a cordial fellowship of men of all faiths in a common patriotic service.

Perhaps I can testify to this most clearly in terms of my own experience, for I have been honored by high office in the Legion and have come into contact with its national leaders, not as a member of the J.W.V. but as a Legion chaplain.

Like all others, I have served first in subordinate capacity, as post chaplain in Wilmington, Del., and then as department chaplain for the state of Delaware. In that little state, with its old American population and its small number of Jews, I found the Legion attitude splendid. It was in the days of the Ku Klux Klan, which was comparatively strong in the state—but not within the ranks of the Legion. I was called on for addresses in every part of the state, was reelected to the office, and felt very strongly that the wartime service which had brought Jews and Christians into fellowship in the Legion had left its effect of comradeship.

Later I was appointed on the national committee on ceremonials, which drafted the post ritual and public ceremonials of the Legion. This committee consisted of a Presbyterian minister, a Catholic priest and myself, together with a sufficient number of laymen for a voting majority. Every part of the ritual was drafted by one member, and then taken up by the committee as a whole for revision. Every prayer was drafted by one of us chaplains and submitted to the other two before being laid before the entire committee. No word went into those prayers which might be objected to by any of the three chaplains. I have sometimes wondered whether the rank and file of the Legion know that many of the prayers they use regularly were written by a rabbi!

The personal fellowship of this committee meant as much to me as the respect with which every faith was regarded officially. At the Kansas City national convention, where our final meetings were held and our report presented, Rev. Eliot Porter and I were assigned a room together while Father O'Connor was given one elsewhere. But when the city became crowded and the priest had to give up his room, we invited him to share with us, had an extra cot installed, and for the better part of a week the three chaplains on that committee gave the entire Legion an example of friendship, not to say intimacy, by rooming together.

A few years later I was chosen National Chaplain of the Legion, the only rabbi to serve a year in that exalted, though largely honorary, office. Again, the friendly spirit of the organization was manifest. I was constantly invited to address post meetings

## The American Legion Celebrates Twentieth Birthday

In Paris, France, on March 15th, 1919, the American Legion held its first caucus. The dominant personalities at the inception of the Legion appear to have been Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Col. George A. White, Lt. Col. Bennett C. Clark, and later Col. Milton J. Foreman. From its inception, the Legion has been a truly representative and democratic group, being no respecter of either rank, race, color or creed. This was expressed by the Chairman of the caucus as follows:

"Let us try to take steps toward cementing the ties of comradeship we have formed in the service, and towards preserving the principles of Freedom and Democracy which we have defended."

Col. Milton J. Foreman was appointed Chairman of the Executive Committee and became one of the vitally important key personalities in the formation of the Legion. He subsequently was rewarded with the title of "Past National Commander." It was Maurice K. Gordon (now Judge Gordon of Madisonville, Ky.), who proposed their name "The American Legion." Many Jewish war veterans have been active and have attained high rank in the Legion.

In appreciation of the excellent contribution to democracy of this patriotic organization and especially of its fine cooperation with the Jewish War Veterans, we intend to print in this and the April issues of the "Jewish Veteran," birthday greetings, in the form of expressions, from those Jewish War Veterans who have been active in the Legion since its inception.

and department conventions, to write for the American Legion Monthly, and to appear on the platform with the then National Commander, Paul McNutt.

That was several years ago, and I have dropped out of active contact with the national office. But in the state of Ohio, where I am still in close touch with Legionnaires, the spirit of fellowship persists as strongly as ever.

The Jewish War Veterans can be proud and grateful that the largest veterans' organization in America stands on a truly American basis in its attitude toward its own members of every race and faith, and that in this respect at least it is a tremendous influence for true Americanism throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Fortunately for the Legion and for America, there have been only a few instances where some local or national leader failed to understand this fundamental principle. Any such divisiveness would not only injure the Legion, composed as it is of Americans of every group and every section, but would by example spread intolerance faster than all the Pelleys and Coughlins together. And in every such case the national organization has speedily disciplined the apostle of hatred and disunity.

The preamble to the constitution of The American Legion opens with the words: "For God and country." Many a time have I, as a Legion chaplain, spoken to that text. I interpreted it, of course, in the broadest terms, rejecting every type of sectarianism, whether religious, political or sectional. But this interpretation was not only my own; it is my firm conviction that it is in strict accord, not only with the expression of all outstanding Legion leaders, but also with the convictions of the overwhelming body of its membership.

Major Leon Schwarz, of Mobile, was a member of the original Legion caucus in March 15-17, 1919, and a charter member. Subsequently, 1920 to 1924, he became National Committeeman from Alabama. Major Schwarz is a veteran of the Spanish American War, was one of the first to enlist on the American front and saw a year and a half of actual service in France in the World War. Major Schwarz has been an outstanding citizen of Alabama, and served two terms as Mayor of Mobile.

"The Paris Caucus, Paris, France, March 15-17, 1919, wisely decided that there should be no rank in the organization being formed—'General' and 'Private' alike to be 'comrades' in The American Legion. And where one served is not stressed, for, as the founders believed, after a man entered the military service, his government, and not he, selected the place of service. Therefore, the real requirements for membership in The American Legion consist of a coveted scrap of paper, 'an honorable discharge from the military service of the United States during the World War,' evidence of loyalty to the United States in war time, and a pledge with membership in the Legion to continue to be loyal and true to the same country, its Constitution and democratic traditions.

The American Legion is an ideal American institution because it is a democratic society—ever and always devoted to preserving justice, freedom and democracy. Therefore, if we want to preserve 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people,' let us maintain and sustain The American Legion and similar American veterans' societies."

MAJOR LEON SCHWARZ.