

*THE JEWISH*  
**Veteran**





Monday, May 7, 1973—the 5th of Iyar on the Hebrew calendar—represents a memorable date in Jewish history. On that day, beginning with the evening of May 6, the three million people of Israel will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Israel's Proclamation of Independence. Artist Penrod Scofield has depicted a battered flag of Israel, perhaps carried through her 25 years of struggle for survival, against the Wailing Wall.

The Jewish Veteran

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# commander-at-large

By Norman D. Tilles, *National Commander*

Probably the most significant step taken by the Jewish War Veterans in the last few months was the action of the policy committee adopted by the National Executive Committee at its meeting in Philadelphia, February 3, which calls for the establishment of a National Commission For Reconciliation. It is a tribute to JWV that the leadership had the vision and imagination to adopt this policy, which is outlined in the following statement:

*"Not since the Civil War, over a century ago, has this nation suffered such internal turmoil over the consequences of participation in a military conflict. The fragile peace in Vietnam recently achieved has awakened hopes for international reconciliation. This blessed achievement presents now a significant opportunity to reflect upon the domestic turmoil which emerged in the past decade as a result of United States involvement in Vietnam as well as to enlist a broad spectrum of American leadership with the assigned mission to evolve new pathways for national reconciliation.*

*"Who would dispute that the cancer of segregation and racism which permeated our national life this past century could have been mitigated, if not averted, had Presidential leadership after the Civil War sought to*

*heal the wounds that divided this nation? History has recorded the tragic evolution of catastrophic events since 1865 which have undermined American unity.*

*"The residue of unresolved public issues from the Vietnam conflict are patently manifest to most Americans. There is an obvious need to develop effective programs for the rehabilitation and reintegration of Vietnam veterans in peaceful domestic life. There is the challenge to reestablish links and to treat with moral justice those thousands of young men who sought to avoid their military obligations. There is the crying problem of reaching a growing generation of cynical and disenchanted young people who seem to lack faith in the survival of a democratic America.*

*"Only dynamic leadership from the President of the United States who represents the collective judgment of the electorate can unite the divergent forces in this country to focus attention on these crucial issues. Through the appointment of a National Commission for Reconciliation, representative of the broadest spectrum of the American community, the process will be launched to heal the wounds of the Vietnam War and to reach out for national purpose and unity."*



We have been agonizing over the question of amnesty for a number of years. It has caused much mental anguish and strong debate. The question seems to resolve itself as I see it into one that challenges the degree of our compassion. For example, do we spend billions to rehabilitate the North Vietnamese, the avowed enemy, an act which in itself must be motivated by some degree of compassion, and at the same time render no compassion towards those Americans who chose not to serve because they felt this was an immoral war.

Frankly, I do not believe this country lacks such compassion. Indeed, are we who have not lost sons or had experience with the wounded of the Vietnam tragedy to make this judgment on our own? I wonder how those who did lose sons would act towards a proposal of amnesty. We of the JWV, recognizing this terrible problem, have chosen the way towards reconciliation. Sooner or later, if we are honest with ourselves, there will be reconciliation as passions recede and the war becomes a mere memory.

This is the first step, but an important one and we know we have the full support of the organization behind it. □