

The Jewish Veteran



Jewish
Pride &
American
Patriotism

100 YEARS
The Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Centennial Report

JWV Accepts the Challenge

Bob Zweiman, PNC, National Centennial Chairman

One hundred years going forward with no last hurrahs—only hoorays for our side with a future designed to accomplish the purposes for which we were founded and which we now provide to America. The Jewish War Veterans continue to serve a very unique Jewish need.

The Southern Baptist Convention has resolved to convert Jews into becoming Christian Baptists and into accepting Jesus as their messiah. They mean what they say. The Baptists have assigned missionaries to accomplish the conversion.

The instant response of a number of Jewish leaders was to warn the non-Jewish community that this development will have a negative effect upon the relationship between Christians and Jews, and that neither side should commit themselves to the proselytization of the other—this is, of course, a sophisticated approach of non-action.

Unless there exists a true bonding relationship, the rhetoric is blinding with its ineffectiveness. The Jewish War Veterans willingly accepts the challenge. The only true way to approach the controversy is to recognize that there is no totally provable way to prevent one people from seeking to proselytize the other. It is not an unadorned question of defense against; but one for a positive appeal to identity.

We don't prove ourselves to be better (whatever that word may mean) by talking to ourselves in the Jewish community or by crying that it is not a fair way of playing the game. We do prove it by showing the vitality of the respect JWV has garnered from within the society while, at the same time, maintaining our Jewish individuality within that society.

The Jewish War Veterans, by its very character, provides Jews with a recognizable avenue of approach—not one based on any arguments of which religion provides the best salvation—not which one provides a ticket to enter heaven—not which one can show itself to be superior to the other but, by having demonstrated an acceptance and respect for what we are within that society and our vital contribution to its being.

So the question really becomes one of whether there is any advantage in revealing that one is a Jew in a Jewish community or to cherish the fact that one is a Jew in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities—this is where JWV shines as an integral part of both by virtue of our service both within and without the perimeter.

JWV does that not merely from a pride of being a Jew— **Continued on page 7**

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IN MEMORIAM PNC ALBERT SCHLOSSBERG 1919-1996



A Tribute to PNC Albert Schlossberg

Bob Zweiman, PNC, National Centennial Chairman

Al Schlossberg devoted his life to G-d, family, country and community as his own expression of individual conscience. He served in the United States Navy in World War II in Naval Air Operations, and immediately upon discharge, joined Boston Post 22, the oldest JWV Post in New England, where he served as Senior Vice Commander, Post Commander and Department Commander. In 1956, Al was elected Commander of the New England Region. He served the JWV National Organization as a member of the National Executive Committee, National Policy Committee, National Editor of *The Jewish Veteran*, and at the convention in 1970, was elected National Commander.

PNC Schlossberg had a comprehensive knowledge of veterans' affairs, of international issues, and a special perception on the issue of the State of Israel. With an encyclopedic recall, he could be counted on to answer questions, give advice, speak eloquently and to produce fascinating weekly columns clearly covering the many issues in

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A Look into the Past

Judge Ralph Yachnin, New York Supreme Court (Retired)

On this 100th anniversary of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, I wonder how many members can recall the Jewish War Veterans annual Fifth Avenue parades that were held in New York City in the years prior to the Second World War.

I was a drummer boy in the Drum and Bugle Corps of the Brighton-Manhattan Beach Post, No. 109. My Dad, George Yachnin, was the "Honorary Commander," a title given to the member of the Post who was in charge of the "Outpost," or drum and bugle corps, made up of the sons of the veterans. We practiced in Public School 225 in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, and played and marched whenever we had the opportunity.

There were several parades each year. I, being one of the youngest in the corps, had to wait two years before the Post would get me a drum. So until then, I just marched at the end of the group, next to the base drum, in my uniform of blue slacks with a yellow stripe down the sides, a blue shirt with epaulets, a yellow tie with a Jewish War Veterans emblem on it, an overseas cap, a Sam Brown Belt that was blue and usually with a scowl on my face, because only the older boys got the drums. I still think it was unfair!

This all took place in the late 1930's and I came into this world in 1927, so my recollection is not that sharp. But I do recall that we used to march in the Coney Island Mardi Gras on Memorial Day, in the annual Brighton Beach parade, and best of all, in the annual Fifth Avenue Jewish War Veterans Parade. That was the real parade of the year. It started on upper Fifth Avenue and ended inside Temple Emanuel with speeches and a prayer service. In between, there was a reviewing stand and I recall seeing Governor Lehman among all the dignitaries up there. What a thrill it was for a young drummer to be walking past the Governor of the great State of New York. I was so impressed with seeing the Governor that I could not take my eyes off of him, and instead of marching straight with the parade, I veered off to the sidewalk before I

realized what I had done. Was I embarrassed.

All the posts in the metropolitan area participated. There was Abe Cohen with the Philip Lehman Post; a contingent of Spanish American War Veterans in their full dress uniforms and wide brimmed fedora hats; and one of the stalwarts of the Jewish War Veterans at the time, Colonel Mendelson. The contingent from the Brighton-Manhattan Beach Post was led by our color guard composed of men from the post, the banner with the post name carried by two of the daughter members of the outpost in their light blue uniforms and capes. Then came the drum and bugle corps, bugle first, drums in the rear with my dad marching alongside the buglers proudly wearing his J.W.V. cap. At the end of our contingent were the members of the post, the former soldiers and sailors, with their veteran caps, keeping in perfect step, followed by the "piece de resistance," the lovely Ladies Auxiliary with their white uniform dresses and powder blue capes, topped by their powder blue caps. It was a sight to behold.

During the march, my father was either telling the drum corps to keep their lines straight or their feet in proper step or taking movies of us and the many other marching parades. Subsequently, Dad took all these movies and spliced them onto one large reel. They depict an era when the Jewish War Veterans were at their strongest, for it was an era when they were in the forefront, and indeed one of the few, to actively combat anti-Semitism, the Gerald L. K. Smiths, the Fritz Kuhns, and unfortunately, so many others that were spewing the venom that was coming from Nazi Germany.

No, that priceless remembrance, those pictures are not lost, for several years ago I donated them to the only place they rightfully belong, the Jewish War Veterans museum in Washington, D.C.

I cannot go back one hundred years ago, but I can recall a few of the events in the history of the Jewish war Veterans that took place some sixty years ago. Since then a lot has happened. Two from our outpost did not survive the war, one went to Hollywood and became a star, and by now, all of the members of Post 109 from World War I have passed away. But if you want to see how they looked back then, just stop in at the J.W.V. museum and ask to see the movies. What a priceless remembrance part of that one hundred years!

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Name Last First Middle

Home Address

City State ZIP Code

Residence Phone

I hereby apply for membership in the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America. I certify that I am a citizen of the United States and of Jewish Faith, that my Service was honorable, that I have never subsequently been discharged from Military or Naval Service under dishonorable conditions, and that I am not a member of any Fascist, Nazi or Communist organization.

Signature of Applicant Date

Post Name Post No.

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ANNUAL DUES vary from Post to Post. Please check amount with your local Post Commander or with National Headquarters.

Membership-at-large is available for \$35.00 annually. Send your check and application to Headquarters.

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Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.
1811 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

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Branch of Service (check one) Army _____ Navy _____ Marines _____ Air Force _____ Coast Guard _____ Merchant Marine _____

Rank _____ Serial Number _____ VA Claim Number _____

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Were you ever a member of JWV? _____ Number of Post _____

Post Name _____

Enlist your friends and associates in the oldest active veterans organization in the United States.

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View From the Top

National Commander's Report

Neil Goldman, National Commander

As I write this article, less than one week after my return from Bosnia, I think it important that I relate to you some of the personal events of that trip. Both PNC Bob Zweiman and I have written reports on our trip which you will find elsewhere in this issue. Neither report addresses the personal issues which can add a dimension not investigated in either report.

The War in Bosnia

The War in Bosnia is a Civil War with all the tragedies inherent therein. It is friend against friend and neighbor against neighbor. In Bosnia, a home occupied by Christians has a two-sided roof, while one occupied by Muslims has a four-sided roof.

As we traveled from Eagle base to the city of Tuzla we found that the homes of Christians and Muslims were very often side by side. These people knew each other as neighbors, their children played together. Yet, in many cases, the men fought each other in separate

militaries and killed members of families they knew. This is to me the greatest tragedy of this murderous war—the severing of the bonds of the neighborhood.

As we traveled to the various bases, we ran into several Jewish service people.

We had a discussion with Chaplain LTC Scott McChrystal at Eagle Base, the headquarters for the area. He told us that there are a few hundred Jews in service in the area, they are widely spread, and it is difficult to get enough of them together to hold regular services. However, 80 service people did celebrate a Seder during Passover. It was conducted by Chaplain Major Rabbi Fairstein who visits the area bi-weekly. We had an unusual experience in Base Camp McGovern. We ate lunch with the troops. As I entered the mess tent, the troops were all standing to greet us. I was introduced to a young 1st Lieutenant named Jeremy Nathan. He is a West Point graduate. I asked him if he knew Walter Stern. He was thrilled. He knew Walter and his wife quite well, and asked me to deliver a personal note to them. What a beautiful coincidence: to meet this patriotic young Jew in that camp, in that mess tent and at that table.

Memorial Day at the White House

On May 27 Sharon Portnoy, President of the

Descendants, and I were privileged to have breakfast at the White House and to be personally greeted by President Clinton. I had written a letter to the President detailing to him our reasons why a postage stamp should be issued in honor of our Centennial. I told the President of this letter, and asked him if I could present it to him or one of his aides. He took the letter and put it in an inside coat pocket. I believe that the letter did have some effect.



Descendants Sharon Portnoy and National Commander Neil Goldman join with President Clinton and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown at a Memorial Day breakfast at the White House.

Postmaster General Runyon shortly thereafter did call a meeting of major Veterans organizations, which because of prior commitments, I was unable to attend. We were ably represented by Bob Zweiman, Herb Rosenbleeth, and Michelle Spivak. Mr. Runyon stated that he would not issue a stamp for organizations, but did offer a postcard to celebrate significant milestones to each of the organizations present. This is a crack in the armor of Runyon's previous position. We will keep pushing for the stamp.

We cannot be absolutely sure, but the evidence seems to point to White House pressure. If we continue to apply our pressure, there seems to still be an opportunity to have a Centennial stamp in honor of JWV issued.

The Elections in Israel

In the recent Israel elections, Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Prime Minister.

Unfortunately, the Knesset was more fractured than ever. There are 67 seats for the two major parties and 53 seats for the splinter parties. Nevertheless Mr. Netanyahu has formed a government and has selected a cabinet of mostly moderates. Many have claimed that with the Likud advent to power, the peace process will stop. Nothing could be further from the truth. I

expect to see a continuation of the process with further emphasis for security for Israeli citizens both in Israel proper and the West Bank. I foresee greater demands for the Palestinian Authority to hold up its end of the Bargain particularly in the control of terrorists operating out of territory under its control. Many people forget that the first peace treaty with an Arab Nation was signed by Menachem Begin of the Likud and Anwar Sadat of Egypt who precipitated the Yom Kippur War against Israel. All factions in Israel want peace. Their approaches can be different. My feeling is that the more conservative approach, taking nothing away from Labor's accomplishment, is the correct approach today.

Convention and Veterans Day

We are coming down the home stretch in our Centennial Celebration. However, we still have several months before our Centennial National Convention. Many celebrations are planned during this Convention that are innovative and exciting. These will be dimmed by our being the host organization at Veterans Day ceremonies in Arlington Cemetery. Plan to attend the Convention and the Ceremony. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In the meantime, please continue with your own Centennial events up to Convention time, November 5 to 12. I know of some celebrations by echelons for late October.

Membership Drive

During this Centennial year and the year of our Nationwide membership drive, one fact has stood out. There is a definite correlation between the depth and variety of Centennial activities and success in the membership drive. More than 100 posts received 100% post blue ribbons as of May 5. We are well on our way to an excellent membership year. If you continue your Centennial activities, and if you have tough retention campaigns in each of your echelons, we should have a membership increase as of August 31, 1996, the end of our membership year. This is contrary to most Jewish and Veterans organizations' experiences. It is up to each of you. You are JWV, I know you can do it.

Each of us wishes to express our deep and heartfelt appreciation to all of our friends in the Jewish War Veterans for all of the many messages of sympathy and donations to the Museum on the loss of our husbands—PNC Benjamin Chasin and PNC Albert Schlossberg.

Eleanor Schlossberg Rose Chasin