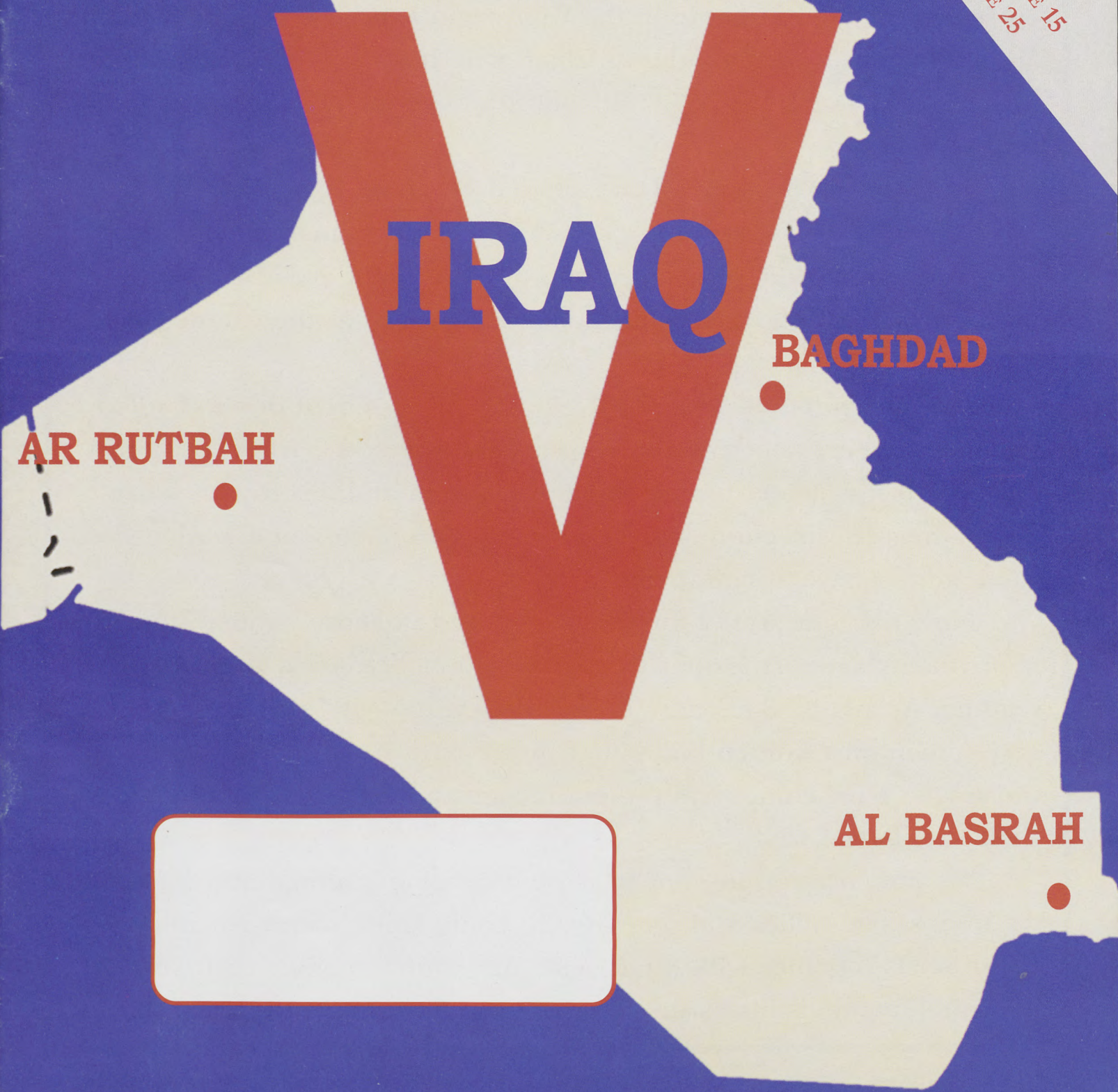


The Jewish Veteran

MAY, 2003

Volume 56, Number 2 **MOSUL**

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AR RUTBAH

BAGHDAD

AL BASRAH

The Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.

Supports Our Troops and President in the War Against Iraq

In its longstanding role as the "Patriotic Voice of American Jewry," the Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) supports our troops currently engaged in battle in the Gulf region and the President of the United States as Commander in Chief, who has mobilized them for the liberation of Iraq and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

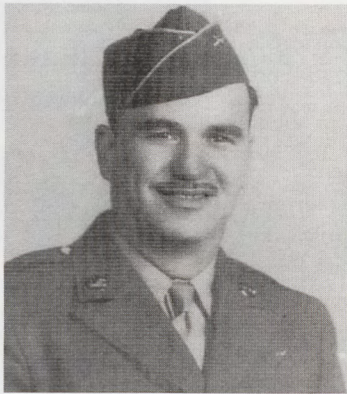
Now and at our recently concluded National Executive Council meeting, which ended on March 8, 2003, the JWV unanimously went on record supporting our troops and our President even before the outbreak of hostilities. A policy statement passed at the Council meetings stated:

JWV supports our armed forces and the president of the United States, in the event he commits our armed forces as part of a willing coalition to use force to oust Saddam Hussein and destroy his weapons of mass destruction and the means of producing and storing the same and to have a regime change.

Now that our armed forces are engaged in active combat, the JWV reaffirms its support for our troops and the policies that they are defending. At this perilous time in our history, it is vital that our young servicemen and women know that the American people and especially those who have come before them recognize, support, and appreciate their sacrifices.

We are encouraging our posts and echelons throughout the country to organize rallies and meetings in conjunction with their municipal officials together with other veterans groups to show their support in a public and visible forum. We invite all Americans to join with us.

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Organized 1896
Official Publication of the
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

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The Jewish Veteran is a member of
The American Jewish Press Association.

The Jewish Veteran Publishing Schedule for 2003



Feb. 2003: Copy, photo and ad deadline-Jan. 10; In mail by Feb. 9
May 2003: Copy, photo and ad deadline-April 16; In mail by May 14
Post Convention 2003: Copy, photo and ad deadline-July 22; In mail by Sept. 12
Oct. 2003: Copy, photo and ad deadline-Sept. 9; In mail by Oct. 8
Dec 2003: Copy, photo and ad deadline-Nov. 7; In mail by Dec. 9

EDITORIAL OFFICES, 1811 R Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20009, Telephone: (202) 265-6280 x504, Fax: (202) 234-5662, Home Page: <http://www.jwv.org>, email: jwv@jwv.org. Advertising information and rates available from the Editorial Office. The opinions expressed in signed articles and letters in this magazine are not necessarily those of JWV. The Jewish Veteran is published 5 times a year: Winter (Jan-Feb), Spring (Mar.-Apr.-May), Post-Convention (June-July-Aug), Summer (Sept.-Oct.) and Autumn (Nov.-Dec.) by the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America at 1811 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009. Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription price in the United States is \$5.00 per year, included in membership. Nonmember subscriptions: \$7.50. Single copies: \$2.50. Photos and articles submitted to the Jewish War Veterans of the USA shall be used at the discretion of the organization. JWV assumes no responsibility for products and services advertised in this publication. Postmaster: Send address changes or undelivered copies to *The Jewish Veteran*, 1811 R Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20009. © 2001 by the Jewish War Veterans of the USA.

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A Message From The Commander

How does one draft a message when America is at war? What is there to talk about except that our men and women are fighting and dying in a distant country? I'm not going to spend my time discussing the war and its ramifications. I'm sure all of you have your own opinions as to the necessity of this conflagration, and I expect you are talking about it with your family, friends and fellow Post members.

However, as the National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans, it falls to me to represent the organization at those functions and meetings that are directly and indirectly effected by the war. This I have done.

I was called to the White House to be briefed by President Bush a few weeks ago on the status of the war with Iraq. I joined my fellow veterans' leaders in hearing the President discuss how the war was going, what the future battle plan entailed, and what he hoped might come out of our victory in the desert. The President made his case forcefully and assured all those in attendance that victory would be at hand and that Iraq would be liberated.

I would like to think that all the hyperbole and grand pronouncements from the meeting were good enough to make me comfortable, but I left the meeting quite unsettled. What the other leaders of this nation's veterans organizations and I all wanted to say was, "Thank you, Mr. President, for leading our armed services and having the faith and support of the veterans of this nation. But, when these soldiers return home and become veterans themselves, how will an over-burdened, over-taxed, thinly-stretched, underfunded and undermanned VA health care system be able to care for them?"

This, unfortunately, we didn't get an answer to. But, it is a question that must be asked and answered. The problems with the VA are well-known, and, though VA Secretary Principi is admirably trying to correct decades of federal inaction, the current veterans' health care system is ill-equipped to handle new cases from veterans who will be seeking help after this war is over. We are asking our men and women to fight an enemy on its home turf, and yet, when these veterans return to their home turf, they will be unable to receive timely and efficient care from a system that was formed to help them after they had borne the battle. This is tragic.

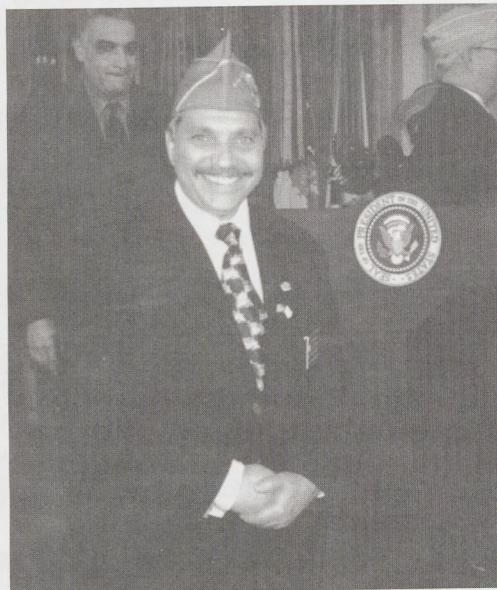
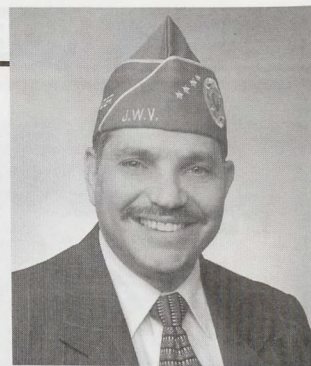
Before hostilities broke out, I met with several members of Congress from my home state of New Jersey, and members who sit on the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. They all relayed the same message to me - there is not enough money in the VA health care system to adequately care for the current veterans needing care, let alone those who will request it after the war is over in the Middle East. In my testimony before Congress, I excoriated those members who were willing to trim the VA health care budget to pay for pork-laden unnecessary programs, while our men and women were getting ready to go to battle.

I find it offensive that certain legislators of this nation are willing to send our sons and daughters off to war with the newest and finest tools, yet will not make it a priority to strengthen the health care system for those soldiers when they return! To use a Hollywood

analogy, we ask Private Ryan to turn away the enemy in Baghdad and risk his life, yet when he comes home, Private Ryan will be turned away from his local VA medical center because of short staffing and underfunding.

If this nation sends its men and women to fight for freedom, it had better adequately fund the VA health care system! Anything less is unconscionable and is an insult to our soldiers. We will face another generation of soldiers to whom the government cannot promise quality health care when they return. It was a disgrace to our Vietnam veterans. It was a disgrace to our Desert Storm veterans. And, now, it is a disgrace to our Iraqi war veterans. Call. Write. Urge. Scream, and use your vote, to demand that our members of Congress address the needs of those whom they have sent into battle. The veterans of this nation deserve the highest quality health care possible. Contact your members of Congress at (202) 224-3121 and urge them to adequately fund the VA health care system!

Though I don't think this may come about, it bears repeating. I encourage J WV members to submit letters to the editor of their local publication to refute any false statements about Jews and Israel made by people in their communities as a result of this war. But, I would ask that you clear these letters with National Headquarters as you are responding as a J WV member. I don't want mixed messages by members in different echelons. Let's speak with one voice. In most instances, these rebuttals will be approved with slight changes. However, those letters that run counter to stated J WV policy must be amended, or must not be sent as an official J WV response. If you want to know how to draft appropriate letters on the subject, please contact National Headquarters. We'll be happy to assist you.



NC Daniel Weiss during White House Briefing.



NMAJMH Historian Albert Lerner, National President Florence Rosen, National Commander Daniel Weiss and PNC Edward D. Blatt.