

Post Convention Issue

The Jewish Veteran

September 2008 • Volume 61 • Number 4



National Commander
Ira Novoselsky

Teleconference Schedule • 2008

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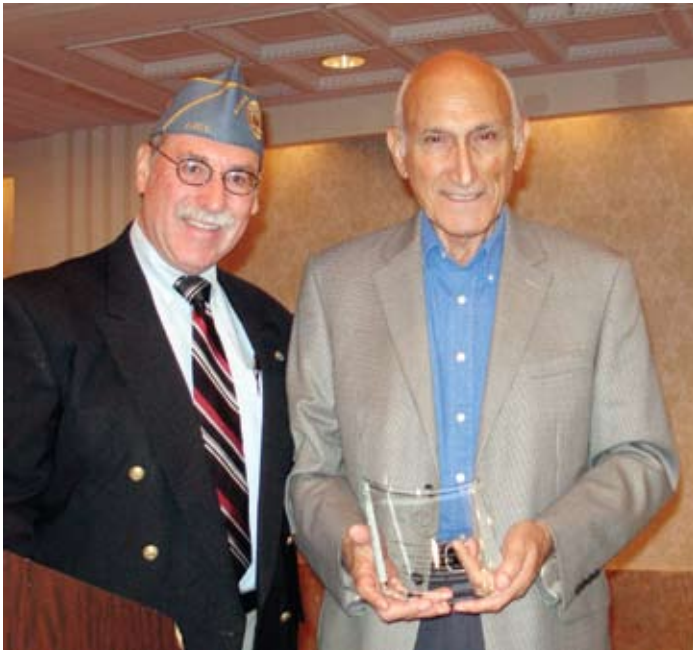
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(Enter the full number, including the # sign)

Teleconference Schedule • All calls start at 8:00PM EDT or EST

2008

September 23	Tues.	Action <i>Working together to fight anti-Semitism and protect the Veteran</i>
October 2	Thurs.	Hospitals and VAVS
October 23	Thurs.	Women in the Military
November 18	Tues.	GWOT/Homeland Security
December 4	Thurs.	Leadership at all levels <i>Meeting your Past National Commanders</i>
December 17	Wed.	Veterans' Legislation <i>What's pending?</i>



Major General Baruch Levy, Chairman of TZEvet (shown at left with NC Schulman), and Colonel Alex Zielony, Chairman of the International Council of Jewish War Veterans, addressed the delegates at our 113th Annual National Convention.



Newly Elected
National Commander
Ira Novoselsky

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Award Winners

Department Awards

Guten Award

Doing Most For Hospitalized Veterans

Department of Southwest

Wolfson Award

Outstanding Record in Community Relations

Department of California

National Commander's Award

Performing Outstanding Service

Department of New York

Edward D. Blatt Award

Outstanding Department Commander

Sid Lichter, Department of New Jersey

Isadore Heiman-Al Berger

Blood Donor Program Award

Department of Pennsylvania

National Emergency Management Service Award

Department of Texas/Arkansas/Louisiana/Oklahoma

Joseph Demiany Memorial Award

Scouting

Department of New Jersey

Council Awards

I.T. Rockman Award

Hospitalized Veterans

Bronx County Council

National Commander's Award

Performing Outstanding Service

South Jersey County Council

Post Awards

Ben Kaufman Award-Hospitalized Veterans

Snyder-Tokson Post 459 (FL)

National Headquarters Award

Community Relations Record

Furer-Barag-Wolf Post 126 (NJ)

National Commander's Award

Performing Outstanding Service

Co-Winners

Furer-Barag-Wolf Post 126 (NJ)

PFC Frederick Hecht Post 425 (NY)

Brotherhood Award

Florence Greenwald-Manhattan Post 1 (NY)



Award Winners

Post Membership Increase Award

- **Group 1 4-99 members**
Treasure Coast Post 705 (FL)
- **Group 2 100-174 members**
Scottsdale Post 210 (AZ)
- **Group 3 175-249 members:**
Harvey Bloom Post 256 (TX)
- **Group 4 250 members and up**
Furer-Barag-Wolf Post 126 (NJ)

Isadore Heiman - Al Berger Award

Blood Donor Program

Fegelson-Young-Feinberg Post 697 (PA)

Brenner-Jaffee Memorial Award - *Post Bulletins*

Fegelson-Young-Feinberg Post 697 (PA)

Any Echelon Awards

Vietnam Veterans Award

Dept. of Texas/Arkansas/Louisiana/Oklahoma

Individual Awards



**Judge Lawrence
Gubow Memorial
Award**
Americanism
Josephine Anton (FL)



PNC JOSEPH ZOLDAN RECEIVES THE MURRAY L. ROSEN AWARD



PNC Joseph Zoldan of Ohio was this year's recipient of the Murray L. Rosen Member of the Year Award given to the member who best exemplifies outstanding service on behalf of veterans, Jews and his community. During this past year PNC Zoldan has served as Chairman of the JWV Finance Board, Chairman of the JWV-NMI Coordinating Committee, and Treasurer of the National Museum of American Jewish Military History.

The Honorable Dr. Michael Kussman

Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs
JWV 113th Annual National Convention Keynote Speaker

Excerpts from Remarks by Dr. Michael Kussman, Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs, JWV 113th Annual National Convention Keynote Speaker

I'm pleased to be here with you today at the 113th annual convention of the Jewish War Veterans and to update you on VA's progress in veterans' health care.

To start, I offer you my sincere thanks for the work you do day in and day out to care for our nation's veterans. All of you here today are strong advocates for America's heroes, working hard to improve the well-being of veterans and their families. What's more, JWV members are among VA's most active volunteers, taking time from your busy schedules to care for the sick and wounded in our clinics, medical centers and other facilities.

All told, VHA health care providers see more than one million patients a week – offering compassionate care that's world-renowned for its quality, safety and effectiveness.

In fact, impartial observers like *Business Week* and *U.S. News and World Report* agree that VA's integrated health care system is second to none.

What's more, we lead both the private and Government sectors across almost every measure of health care. A new VA hospital report card – issued in June – proved this once again.

Although I am convinced that we provide outstanding care, we are not resting on our laurels. We are committed to continuing to offer world-class care to our nation's veterans. To achieve that goal, we must keep searching for ways to deliver higher quality care more efficiently. And we must anticipate the needs of tomorrow's veterans.

Among other things, we must plan to:

- Meet the new expectations of our OEF/OIF veterans;
- Ensure comprehensive health care for our women veterans;
- Provide world-class Polytrauma care, and
- Serve veterans suffering from TBI and PTSD.

It begins with these four priorities:

- Practice progressive leadership.
- Produce meaningful performance measures;
- Promote improved business processes;
- And above all, put patient care first;



Dr. Michael Kussman

I have made these priorities a central focus of my tenure as Under Secretary. They're simple, really. They're just the basic things that need to be done ... not just for today, but for the future. If we achieve these things, we will be patient centric. And that – above all else – is key.

Already, we are making great strides toward achieving these four priorities. In fact, the past few years have been a banner period for improvements throughout VHA.

This spring, we started calling hundreds of thousands of OEF/OIF veterans by telephone as part of the new Combat Veteran Call Center Initiative. The goal is to inform the veterans about VA services and make sure they're getting the services they want and need from us.

We first contacted 17,000 veterans who – based on their wartime injuries – were potential Care Management candidates.

Now we're contacting all 550,000 OEF/OIF veterans who have been discharged from the military and who are not current VHA users. Our message? That VA is ready and eager to help these men and women with their health care and benefits needs.

Last summer we opened a suicide prevention hotline. Since then, nearly 55,000 veterans have called in. In more than 1,200 cases, the veteran on the other

Continued on page 27

Major General Jessica L. Wright

Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
JWV 113th Annual National Convention Speaker

I am humbled and honored to be here, and on behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I welcome you to Pittsburgh and hope you have enjoyed our city these past few days.

You are an amazing organization, and I thank all of you for supporting our fighting men and women, and our veterans.

I commend you for your cooperation with all the other veterans service organizations,

Separately, you are formidable advocates for our veterans, united, you are simply unstoppable.

Each of you are heroes – let me cite three examples in PA:

(1) Sid Singer, who is responsible for a transition house called Veterans Place;

(2) Larry Holman, the incoming commander, is pro-active with his leadership and all veterans organizations; and

(3) My friend, Sam Greenberg, past national commander, who volunteers and is the chairman of the Gino Merli veterans home advisory council -- providing excellent service to our veterans homes.

I applaud your membership in “the military coalition.” This 35-member coalition represents an important step in unifying veterans and military organizations.

Soon you will celebrate the 50th anniversary of your museum and shrine. It’s truly a testament to your devotion to this country and all who serve.

As commander of one of the largest national guards in the country, I can tell you – your national guard, all 54 states and territories, have been very busy!

Our operational tempo remains extremely high. Our soldiers and airmen are being deployed in record-setting numbers.

As the global war on terror enters its 8th year, we have witnessed the national guard transition from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

Since September 11, 2001, over two hundred fifty thousand (250,000) national guard personnel from all across this nation have been deployed.

Right now – as we enjoy the comfort of this ho-

tel, nationwide, there are over forty-five thousand, one hundred eighty-eight (45,188) army and air guard members deployed in lands far away and under the harshest conditions.

By January 2009, we expect that number to increase to fifty-five thousand, three hundred, sixty-four (55,364).

Today around the United States, there are over six thousand (6,000) national guard soldiers and airmen performing state active duty in 17 different states.

Here in Pennsylvania about eighty-five (85%) percent of our guard members, or 17,000, have been deployed. Some are on their second and third deployments.

Soon with the deployment of our 56th stryker brigade, and our 28th combat aviation brigade, we will deploy another 6,000.

We have paid the price for our service -- 42 Pennsylvania national guard members have been killed in action; over 250 have been seriously wounded.

Nationwide, over 530 guardsmen have been killed in action and over 4,200 have been wounded.

Guard units all across the country are answering the call just as you did when duty called you.

Country singer, Toby Keith, sings a song called “American Soldier” and has graciously allowed us to use it in a video.

This short video contains shots of recent Pennsylvania homecomings, training, and actual combat footage.

There is no greater story to be told than one from the streets of Baghdad or the high mountains of Afghanistan while standing next to the best and the bravest in the country.

We, your national guard, are accounting well for ourselves. Our success is due to many things, not the least of which is the support of our families, our employers, and the citizens of this great nation.

Now, I am calling you to duty again.

There will be more and more new combat veterans, and I ask that you continue to provide guidance and assistance to them.



MG Wright, at right, was escorted to the dais by PNC Louis Abramson, left, and PNC Samuel Greenberg, middle.

Continued on page 11

Jewish Vets Pay Homage To Troops

By Chris Togneri

Thirty veterans saluted in unison.

Jerry Alperstein, a Vietnam War veteran from Manhattan, raised his bugle and began a rendition of taps.

Then the troops bowed their heads and recited the Kaddish, the Jewish prayer of mourning.

“We pray for the armed forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and all parts of the world,” said Edwin Goldwasser, a

member of Jewish War Veterans of the USA, based in Washington. “We hope and pray that we don’t have to say the Kaddish for them in the future.”

Such was the scene Tuesday morning on the front steps of Soldiers & Sailors National Military Museum and Memorial in Oakland.

The ceremony, honoring troops of all religions and faiths who have died in combat, marked the beginning of the Jewish War Veterans national convention. The weeklong event is in Pittsburgh for the first time in seven decades.

“We are here to memorialize and honor the deceased vets of all the world wars,” said Lawrence Schulman, Jewish War Veterans national commander. “It is our honor, especially during this current war that is injuring and killing so many of our young people.”

About 350 Jewish veterans are in Pittsburgh this week for the annual convention at the Omni William Penn.

The convention is held in a different city every year, Schulman said. Last year, it was in Charleston, S.C. Next year: New Orleans.

At every stop, the veterans honor deceased troops

by laying a wreath in front of a soldiers’ memorial.

They elect a national commander at the convention, review accomplishments and set an agenda for the next 12 months, Schulman said.



PHOTO BY GERALD ALPERSTEIN

Goldwasser said the organization urges politicians to improve government assistance for wounded troops and the families of dead troops.

“We lobby,” Goldwasser said. “It’s very important because, unlike years ago, the majority of our representatives and politicians did not serve. We have to keep reminding them of the need to

support the troops.”

They also perform public service.

Yesterday, the Jewish War Veterans donated 1,200 teddy bears to police and fire departments to be given to trauma victims. Today, several veterans and their spouses will tour local Ronald McDonald Houses.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA was established in 1896 and has more than 37,000 active members.

This week’s convention marks the first time since 1936 that the group has convened in Pittsburgh -- too long of a wait for some local veterans.

“Why are we in Pittsburgh this year? I don’t know why we’re here,” said Clarence “Code” Gomberg, a World War II veteran from Stanton Heights who attended the ceremony.

Gomberg smiled and added: “Why? Because it’s about time.”

[Editor’s Note: Reprinted with permission from the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.]

Commentary

By BOB ZWEIMAN, PNC, Editor, Post-Convention Issue

A Learning Convention—Addicted? *Not Me*

You go to a convention expecting to learn or experience something on veterans' rights, national security, foreign affairs, etc. Well, the major thing I learned was to recognize and understand my own being. For the last number of months I have been trading the flu with my wife and suffering from a pneumonia, a triple wrist fracture, and excessive pain.

At the convention I lost a complete day. I went to meetings without realizing I had been there or remembering what had taken place. The following day I was told, to my dismay and embarrassment, what I had done and said without any recall.

Before coming to the convention, to relieve pain, I had been taking Percocet, a pain medication. Frankly, I had been taking it in larger doses than I should have, and more than was prescribed. I've got to tell you the truth that it was exceptionally effective in stilling the pain and making it bearable. If I had been home, I would have just laid down in bed and slept it away.

At home, I would have been accepting an addiction without realizing it and with the self-assurance that I could control it. After all, I had been able, as a chain smoker, to give up smoking.

Luckily, I was at a convention meeting obligations.

It was during the meeting, as I explained before, that I lost contact. So what was the problem? Starting with considering that I may have been overmedicating myself to still the pain I was experiencing, I stopped taking any pain medication at all. And it worked, and I started returning to my usual self—together with pain which became a little more bearable, with a recognition of the source.

So why write about my experience since many encounter physical responses—especially as we grow older (an admission). The problem is that as long as we feel fine and with limited pain spasms, we don't really care about the cause and effect. We should care. We should realize that we are not living our life to its fullest. Sedation can be wonderful, but it wastes life's potential.

A lesson learned is worth telling. A lesson followed through is worth living. A lesson fulfilled is an acceptance of yourself.



Laissez Les Bons Temps Roulez!

Be sure to mark your calendars for JWV's 114th Annual National Convention in New Orleans, August 16-23, 2009. Once again we'll enjoy the legendary hospitality of the Big Easy as we enjoy our stay in the heart of the French Quarter at the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel. Don't miss this chance to get together with your fellow JWV'ers in the welcoming atmosphere of this most unique and charming of American cities! See you there!



Jewish War Veterans Holds 113th Convention in Pittsburgh

By Mike Zoller, Associate Editor, Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle



Every year holidays like Veterans Day and Memorial Day honor those who fought bravely in America's past wars. However, a typical American doesn't realize the struggles veterans must fight year round.

To form a unified front, veterans groups hold national conventions to bring everyone together. This year the Jewish War Veterans, America's oldest active veterans organization, is holding its 113th annual convention in Pittsburgh.

This year's convention, which opened Sunday, Aug. 10, and goes until the Sunday, Aug. 17, at the Omni William Penn Hotel, Downtown, has attracted more than 250 veterans from all different wars.

Starting out as the Hebrew War Veterans Union in 1896, the original group met because there was anti-Semitism following the Civil War. Many Americans believed that Jews had not served their country and had dodged the war. Mark Twain wrote several articles calling the Jews unpatriotic. Knowing something had to be done to counter all of the false rumors, the organization was founded.

The name changed to the Jewish War Veterans sometime after World War I. "It's important for us to come to these meetings," said Sheldon Reinheimer, who served in the Army from 1957-59. "I enjoy the camaraderie here and knowing what's going on in the past, present and future."

All donning their service hats, the lobby in the hotel bustled with hun-



PHOTO BY ROBERT RICHTER

dreds of years of service between all the men who had served in the armed forces. It became an emotional experience for many, as they saw old friends and got to make up for lost time.

Paul Bernstein, who served in Vietnam from 1962-63 and was the 2003-04 National Commander of the JWV, credited the convention with keeping its members up to date on what is happening to veterans all

around the country.

"The convention helps us piece everything together," he said. "People from all over the country talk about what is happening in their region, and here at the convention, we piece it all together."

Bernstein, who was in Tower 1 on 9/11 when the first plane hit, remembers running down 74 flights of stairs that day to save his life. In 2006 he was named chairman for the JWV committee for Homeland Security. In two short years, he has spoken in front of Congress, met with the National Homeland Security Council and observed several airports in the nation and given suggestions on how to increase their safety.

"I felt like I was in two wars," he said. "I was in Vietnam and I was in the war on terror on Sept. 11. We don't want another attack."

While the National Executive Committee (NEC) held its annual meeting Tuesday afternoon to elect new officers, the issue of health benefits and dwindling government support was on the minds of many of the veterans.

"The problem is most of the leaders in Congress

have never been in the service,” Bernstein said. “They don’t know how important these benefits are.”

Veterans who receive medical services following their active duty are supposed to have those services covered by the Veterans Administration (VA). However, the veterans say funding is inadequate and Congress refuses to give the organization mandatory funding.

Currently the VA receives discretionary funding, which means there is no set amount that is required to be given, and if there is another cause that seems more important. Congress can redirect that money away from the veterans.

Outgoing National Commander Lawrence Schulman believes that if Congress grants the VA mandatory funding they feel like they won’t have control over veterans groups.

“If Congress knows that we don’t have to go to them every year for funding, they will feel like they don’t have the power anymore,” Schulman said. “It’s so important that we get mandatory funding because our veterans need it.”

With funding for the VA at very low levels, veterans can be delayed medical treatment over long periods of time, so that the VA and hospitals don’t have to spend already limited funding on them.

Ray White, a veteran from Florida, was unable to get a doctor’s appointment at a hospital there for six months. During that time he had five appointments canceled by the hospital itself before finally being seen.

“What they do to service veterans is a total disgrace,” White said.

Schulman says that one of the few times money is handed out graciously by the government is when the media takes an interest at the story.

“They get embarrassed because it’s released how poorly we are being treated,” he said. “They give us the funding because of the media.”

Every March, the JWV participates in Action Day. On this day veterans from all over the country converge on Washington, D.C., and speak before congress on the dismal status of benefits for veterans.

“We present our case to congress,” Bernstein said. “Obviously they haven’t done anything about this, because we’re still talking.”

With a new wave of veterans coming back from the Middle East, Schulman hopes Congress will realize how important it is to fund the VA.

“We’re hoping over the next several years the new

veterans will help bring these issues to the forefront,” he said. “They will hopefully help us get the funding we deserve.”

[Editor’s Note: Article is reprinted with permission from the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.]

Major General Jessica L. Wright

Continued from page 7

I rely on you to maximize federal benefits for these new veterans, while insuring that our older veterans are not forgotten in the rush.

Our returning warriors have many places to turn for help, and the Jewish War Veterans is at the top of this list.

You, outstanding Americans, the Jewish War Veterans, have always been at the front edge of the battle area.

I stand with you in service to our American warriors. There is no more noble mission in this country than helping our veterans.

Before I close, there is one special person I would like to recognize – commander Jerry Polonsky. However, I understand he had to depart. I was going to present him the Pennsylvania Commendation Medal for his outstanding service, but I will make arrangements to do that later.

Thanks for having me here today. God bless America – Shalom to all.

To all of the members of the JWV:

I would like to thank all of the members of this great organization for giving me the opportunity to serve as National Commander. Your kind treatment to me and my staff on our visitations was greatly appreciated.

We have a strong organization due to the hard work you, as members, commit to the service of veterans and Jewish causes.

Continue the good work that you all do in the coming years.

Yours in comradeship,

Lawrence Schulman
Past National Commander

Convention Highlights



Convention Highlights



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AGENT ORANGE

The Department of Veterans Affairs has required veterans who allege an exposure to Agent Orange to prove that they set foot on the ground in the Republic of Vietnam. There are those veterans who are suffering the disastrous results of Agent Orange exposure whose contamination occurred while aboard ships off the coast of Vietnam. The Agent Orange Equity Act would correct this misinterpretation of the sense of Congress permitting every veteran who was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal or who was otherwise deployed in or near the Republic of Vietnam to be treated and compensated for the results of being exposed to this toxin. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the amendments to the Law which would expand the definition to all veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange.

COST OF MEDICATION THROUGH THE VA

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA finds it difficult to understand why the Department Veterans Affairs charges \$8.00 for a monthly supply of a generic drug while so many chain stores are now charging \$4.00 for a monthly supply and, some, \$10.00 for a three month supply. These are obviously the same or equivalent medications from the same or equivalent manufacturers. Since many veterans take multiple medications, the expense of these medicines can have a major impact on their ability to make ends meet. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs, 'DVA' to reconsider the pricing of generic drugs to charge the same as or less than the prices charged by private vendors or, in the alternative, to write prescriptions which can be filled by commercial pharmacies.

Furthermore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the DVA to make available to veterans those new medications which are not in its pharmacopeias because there are no generic formulations but which better fulfill the medical needs of the veterans.

USE OF SCHOOL BOOKS PUBLISHED OR SPONSORED BY FOREIGN NATIONS

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has supplied Arab-language textbooks for use in the Commonwealth of

Virginia. Even a casual scanning of the text reveals a strong anti-Jewish bias. Clearly, textbooks used in any school located anywhere within the borders of the United State of America must not contain hate language, regardless of the source of the book or the group targeted for the venom. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA asks Congress and the several States to establish clear guidelines as to what textbooks can say as to any group, race, religion, nationality, etc. It is the purpose of the Jewish War Veterans not to censor any textbook but to insure that any textbook is not a conduit of hatred and bigotry.

SUPPORT FOR DETERMINATION OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE AS SERVICE CONNECTED

There is considerable information that the onset of Parkinson's disease may be service-connected. Much of the information comes from well-respected and widely recognized universities and research facilities. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Department of Veterans Affairs to consider the expansive research available and, after careful review, make a determination whether the research supports the proposition that Parkinson's disease among veterans is *prima facie* service-connected, or that veterans who can meet a set of published criteria will be determined to have a service-connected disability.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA has long supported mandatory full funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs, especially mandatory funding of health care. It appears most unseemly that the veterans of this great Nation must come with hat-in-hand to the Administration and Congress each year like a beggar asking for a handout and alms. With the return of hundreds of thousands of men and women from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is even more demeaning to the veterans' community. This new generation of veterans is returning home with a higher number of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome cases and, the signature injury of these theaters, Traumatic Brain Injury. Our Department of Veterans Affairs seems ill-prepared to properly care for these new veterans. Moreover, it is obvious that

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there must be expedited determinations of claims done right the first time so the veterans of the current wars get their benefits quickly and accurately. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Administration and Congress to adequately prepare for these returning wounded warriors by having sufficient staff, both in terms of numbers and training, and funding in place to meet their emergent needs as well as the needs of those veterans already in the system.

MIA/POW

There are still thousands of MIA/POW remains for which no accounting has ever been honestly and fully given. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress and the President to continue this Nation's commitment to locate and return to this Nation the remains of the MIA/POWs still listed as Killed in Action-No Body Found and to continue to use all our available resources for that single purpose.

TREATING THE WOUNDED WARRIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Recent studies have brought to the fore that there are far too many errors of commission and omission in the care and treatment of today's wounded warriors. These include not only the service member, but the servicemember's family as well. We have learned from various studies that which we knew intuitively, that the service member's family must be cared for before, during and after any deployment. The military is deploying and redeploying members of the Reserve and National Guard components as never before in history. We know that these multiple deployments cause tremendous stresses upon the family fiber and structure. The men and women coming home are not ready to be simply deactivated and dropped back into the family. The family dynamics have changed in the 18-24 months of their absence and neither the service member nor the family is prepared to reintegrate the absent member without some level of professional assistance. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to work together to insure that the transition from a military family to a veteran's family is done seamlessly and well-orchestrated so that there is no break in services, counseling and medical care

for the wounded warrior and the family unit.

DOLE-SHALALA REPORT

The Dole-Shalala Report highlighted many deficiencies within the delivery of services to the veterans' community as well as to the members of the active and activated military. One aspect of this Report is its call for the creation of patient recovery coordinators. These patient recovery coordinators would serve as the advocates for the men and women who are unable to advocate for themselves. They would know "the system" and would know which buttons to push and which "buzz words" to utter.

The Report also spoke of the need for a unified system of ratings for service-connected disabilities for retirement and separation. The Report highlighted the need to have the Departments of Defense and of Veterans Affairs use the same lexicon, evaluating procedures and rating criteria so that there are no discrepancies between the two Departments and everyone would, ideally, be able to safely predict the results of an evaluation. One key element of this goal would be to give the Departments of Defense and of Veterans Affairs mutual access to the other's medical records. Without this access, the current unacceptable system will continue to exist, unabated and still unmanageable. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress and the Administration to implement the major changes called for in the Dole-Shalala Report.

CLAIMS DELAYED ARE CLAIMS DENIED

We know from the Dole-Shalala Commission that the number of initial claims and claims for service-connected disabilities continue to rise. Coupled with pending claims for educational benefits, the Department of Veterans Affairs is grappling with more than 860,000 claims. The average processing time for all classes of claims is over 170 days. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to automate the processing of claims in a paperless environment and to invest heavily in 'state-of-art technology' and information management support so the claims are moved along expeditiously. Moreover, to get the money into the pockets of the veterans more quickly, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the paying of well-

developed claims prior to a formal decision.

SERVICE MEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act replaced the outdated Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act. It is designed to protect members of the military on active duty. Since its passage, some deficiencies have become obvious and need to be addressed. Clearly, many of the protections afforded members of the military must be given to their families as well. Also, when activated, the servicemembers need to be released from personal service contracts such as cell phones, utilities, cable/dish television agreement, etc. Servicemembers called to active duty while enrolled in an educational institution should be entitled to a full refund of their tuition, fees, etc., and should be permitted to reenroll upon their release from active duty without the necessity of going through the application process again. Furthermore, the grace period for the starting date of the repayment of all student loans should be abated and adjusted to reflect the period of time the individual was on active duty. Finally, employers and employees should be permitted to contribute to defined contribution retirement plans (401) (k)-(403) (b) during periods of active duty of members of the Reserve and National Guard components.

UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT ACT

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA) is designed to protect servicemembers as they return to the workforce. While the Law works quite well, it can still use some amendments to make it assist returning servicemembers and their families. It must be made clear that the Law supersedes any contract regardless of the contracting parties and that any complaining employee is shielded against discriminatory dismissal. Furthermore, the Act must provide for punitive damages in some of the more egregious cases and must allow the injured worker to bring suit against employers. Additionally, the aggrieved worker should be able to pick the forum, i.e., either state or federal court as he/she decides. Finally, protections need to be extended to those family members who must suspend their employment to care for a dependent due the activation of a spouse or other individual akin to a spouse.

HOMELESS VETERANS

The term “homeless veteran” should not exist. There should not be homeless veterans, nor should the family of a veteran be homeless. In this country of countless wealth and prosperity, the wherewithal and ability to find housing and services for every veteran exists. The real question is, “Do we, as a society, have the commitment to secure a safe haven for our veterans and their families to enable them to reintegrate back into society?” Until we make that unbridled, wholehearted commitment, without reservation, there will always be homeless veterans and their families walking the streets of our cities and living in squalor in our forests. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress, the Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs to seek out the homeless veterans and their families and secure for them the complete array of services which would enable them to return to society as productive members be able to return to the table as individuals with dignity and a true sense of self-worth.

HOUSING RESOLUTION

It is clear that there is a crisis in adequate housing with all segments of American society. This is especially true within the very low income veterans’ community. The House of Representatives has passed H.R. 3329 entitled the “Homes for Heroes Act of 2008.” The Bill is aimed at assisting veterans and their dependents afford safe, clean, and habitable rental units. In addition, it would permit the construction of rental units restricted to veterans and their dependents without the requirements of the Fair Housing Act which would make the units available to all without a specific preference to the veteran population. It would, also, create a separate component for veterans and their dependents under Section 8 of the Housing Act and under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the “Homes for Heroes Act of 2008” and urges the Senate to act quickly so the Bill can be passed by this Congress rather than await the new Congress and the need to start completely fresh.

HOLOCAUST STUDIES

We, as Jews and as veterans, recognize the need to in-

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sure that there never is another holocaust. We acknowledge that this is a goal and an ideal. Nevertheless, we vow that we will strive toward this ideal. We know that there will be genocides and “ethnic cleansings” for as long as racial, religious and ethnic hatred are taught in the homes and in the schools. However, in pursuit of our goal, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the development of a Holocaust Studies curriculum which would be mandated and funded by the several States to be taught in every school, be it public or private. It is the hope of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA that by introducing holocaust studies into the schools the next generation of America’s young will learn to at least tolerate those who are different than themselves.

CREMAINS

“Cremains” is shorthand for cremated remains. It has come to the attention of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA that there are the cremains of veterans sitting on the shelves of funerals homes where a cremation had been requested but the remains never claimed. These cremains have been known to stay on the shelves for decades. We find this intolerable and an insult to the memory of every veteran who ever served this country. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls on the legislatures of the several States to enact laws which would permit veterans service organizations or the states’ Department of Veterans Affairs or the equivalent to assume possession of these cremains so as to assure that there will be a disposition of the cremated remains in a dignified fashion with the honor due all former members of the Armed Forces.

WOMEN VETERANS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA has long recognized that women veterans have unique problems arising out of their military service, as well as those problems suffered by all who have served. These problems included sexual harassment and assault, which continue to impact upon the lives of the women long after their separation from active military duty. With the increasing number of women seeing active duty, as a result of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, this Nation is witnessing a rapid and unparalleled number of women in need of coun-

seling and specialized medical services. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Departments of Defense and of Veterans Affairs to provide the essential services unique to the female veterans’ population.

BIO/CHEMICAL SCREENING

With the increased exposure to biological and chemical agents in modern warfare comes the concurrent need for biological and chemical screening. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA recognizes that the Department of Veterans Affairs facilities which now work with veterans exposed to Agent Orange can be and should be utilized to screen and treat veterans suffering from biological and chemical exposure as well.

COSTS OF MILITARY TRAVELING ON COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

Several airlines are charging members of the military traveling home or between duty stations for excess luggage. This is blatantly unfair as the servicemember may well be carrying all of his/her worldly possessions to the next stop. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the airlines to recognize that servicemembers have special needs when they travel and to refrain from charging them for the excess number of items checked or carried aboard the aircraft.

The Post Rosters scheduled for mailing to Post Quartermasters late January or early February 2009, will be available electronically after the third dues billings.

Posts that want to receive their rosters electronically should advise the Membership Department by January 15, 2009. Please let us know in what file format you would like to receive your Post’s roster: Excel, text, or PDF, and give us the e-mail address to send it to.

Convention Overview 2008

By Cheryl Waldman, JWV National Program Coordinator

Delegates to the JWV's 113th Annual National Convention felt at home in "America's Most Livable City" as soon as they entered the gracious lobby of the Omni William Penn, Pittsburgh's premiere hotel. The hotel, which was originally built in 1916 and has been completely refurbished, combined the elegance of another era with all of the amenities of today.

The first event of the convention was a special dinner at the hotel, featuring the "North Star Kids." This group of talented youngsters, who have sung with Barry Manilow and Celine Dion, charmed our convention delegates, who had a chance to greet old friends and relax from their trips to Pittsburgh, while enjoying world-class entertainment.

Monday morning brought an all-day tour of host city Pittsburgh. The highlight of the trip was a visit to the Biblical garden at Rodef Shalom, the oldest Jewish Congregation in Western Pennsylvania. The garden was established in 1987. It is the largest biblical botanical garden in North America (1/3 acre) and the only one with an ongoing program of research and publication. Visitors are able to experience the land of the Bible in a setting that includes a waterfall, a desert, a stream and the Jordan, which meanders through the garden from Lake Galilee to the Dead Sea. All of the plants in the garden are labeled with biblical verses accompanying them.

On Monday evening, our delegates enjoyed a reception presented by the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, which is proudly celebrating the 50th anniversary of its Congressional charter in 2008. Our convention delegates enjoyed a presentation of the planned major permanent exhibit, tentatively titled "Jews in the American Military," presented by the head of the firm chosen to develop the exhibit for the Museum. The exhibit will be a tribute to the contributions of all Jews to the American military back to the foundations of Jewish life in America, more than 350 years ago.

On Tuesday morning our delegates traveled to the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Pittsburgh to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country by participating in a solemn wreath-laying at the site of the memorial. Taps was played, and the Kaddish was recited in their memory.

The work of the convention began in earnest on Tuesday afternoon with the semiannual meeting of the National Executive Committee. PNC Michael Berman finished his term as Chairman of the NEC and was presented with a plaque thanking him for his service by National Commander Lawrence Schulman. PNC Monroe Mayer was elected the new Chairman of the

NEC for a two-year term, and PNC Bernard Becker will be Vice-Chairman.

Tuesday night gave our delegates two opportunities to enjoy comradeship with fellow members. One group of delegates enjoyed watching the Pittsburgh Pirates host the Cincinnati Reds at home, while the Viet Nam veterans met for dinner at their annual night out.

On Wednesday, the President of the Pittsburgh Jewish Federation, Jeffrey Finkelstein, brought greetings from the Jewish community of Pittsburgh. National Commander Schulman thanked President Finkelstein for the generous donation from the Federation for our Convention. We were honored to have as our keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Kussman, Under Secretary for Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs, who brought our members up-to-date on developments in health care at the VA.

On Wednesday evening, our delegates enjoyed a dinner cruise on Pittsburgh's three rivers, the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela. It was a chance to take pleasure in the company of fellow JWV'ers while enjoying Pittsburgh's natural beauty and a wonderful evening of great food and good company.

Thursday morning brought two very distinguished speakers to address the gathering. The first speaker was Major General Jessica Wright, the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania, who has worked so closely with JWV members on the issues of veterans housing and health care in the state. She brought a perspective on the issue of the National Guard, so many of whose members are serving with such great distinction in our current conflicts, and reinforced the extent of their service by showing our members a powerful video detailing their current service to and sacrifice for our country.

Our next speaker, Pittsburgh native, Rep. Bob Filner, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, brought our members a wide-ranging perspective on all issues of interest to veterans. He provided a one-of-a-kind perspective on legislative priorities facing the veteran community.

On Friday, the convention turned to issues facing veterans around the world and to the challenges confronting the State of Israel as it celebrates its 60th birthday. Our distinguished panel of speakers included Norman Gardner of the JWV of Canada; COL Alex Zielony, Chairman of the International Association of Jewish War Veterans; and MG Baruch Levy, Chairman of TZEVEVET, the organization of IDF veterans.

On Friday afternoon, Ira Novoselsky of

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DANIEL NEAL HELLER

1924-2008

Daniel Neal Heller, National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA from 1963-64 died at the age of 83 on Sunday, August 3, 2008, at his Miami home.

PNC Heller, a practicing attorney in Miami for many years, attended Cornell and Princeton, and earned degrees from New York University and Harvard Law School. A Navy veteran of World War II, he served on an aircraft carrier. In 1961, Mr. Heller was a member of the United Jewish Appeal's First Young Leadership Mission to Israel and Europe, where he met with Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, Itzhak Ben-Zvi, Moshe Sharett, Abba Eban, Levi Eshkol and other top government leaders of the time. He was an observer at the Eichmann trial.

He was awarded the President's Award as the outstanding young Miamian in the Combined Jewish Appeal and was the recipient of three leadership awards for outstanding service in the Combined Jewish Appeal of Greater Miami. He has served as Chairman of the Speaker's Bureau of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation and as President of the first Men's O.R.T. (Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) in Florida. He has also been a past director of the Miami Beach Junior Chamber of Commerce, a 32nd degree Mason and Shriner, and President of the Harvard Law School Association of Florida.

As national commander of the Jewish War Veterans of America in 1963, he marched in President John F. Kennedy's funeral procession. He and Mrs. Heller stood behind French President Charles de Gaulle at JFK's Arlington National Cemetery burial.

In 1964, Heller had an audience with Pope Paul VI to discuss anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, during which the Pope said he sympathized with and would pray for oppressed



Jews.

During his term as National Commander of the JWV, Mr. Heller, who was the first Floridian to be elected National Commander, called on all JWV posts to support the racial equality goals advocated by the Kennedy administration. A supporter of a powerful military defense, he was nevertheless a strong advocate of a nuclear test ban treaty and the United Nations.

Heller began his career as a prosecutor's assistant then co-founded the firm Heller & Lindzon. Heller later established the firm Heller & Kaplan. Among his pro bono clients: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 2004, Heller joined the Miami firm Tew Cardenas.

In addition to his wife, the former Diane Star, PNC Heller is survived by daughters Mona Kornfeld of New York and Lisa Heller Green of Miami and sons Douglas Paul Heller and Brian Lewis Heller of Miami.

Dr. Michael Kussman

Continued from page 6

end of the line was clearly in danger of harming himself or herself—or harming others. Only cool, clear-headed thinking on the part of crisis counselors on duty when most of us were sleeping prevented 1,200 tragedies. That's 1,200 rescues... 1,200 lives saved.

I'm pleased to say that those are just two examples of our initiatives to improve care for veterans. We also:

- Refocused our efforts on quality and safety;
- Made it easier for vets to access care through initiatives such as telehealth, telemedicine and tele-mental health; and
- Made a concerted effort to expand our health care capacity.
 - VA announced last month that we'll be adding 44 new CBOCs in the next 15 months;
 - We'll also be adding 39 new Vet Centers by the Fall of 2009;
 - We've added approximately 4,000 new mental health staff nationwide; and
 - We're building a fifth Polytrauma/TBI center in San Antonio.
- Implemented a program to screen for traumatic brain injury all patients who served in Southwest

Asian combat theaters.

- Strengthened our partnership with DoD to better serve our severely injured patients. This is vital as we help these patients move from hospitals through rehabilitation ... and ultimately back to their home communities.
- Improved our suicide prevention program. We:
 - Expanded our hours at VA's 153 medical facilities to care for veterans with mental health problems;
 - Hired suicide prevention counselors at each VA medical center; and
 - Offered special training programs for all VA employees in medical centers and clinics to alert them to warning signs in veterans for suicide and other emotional problems ...

Across VHA, in ways large and small, we are making many changes to better serve the men and women who sacrificed and served for our country.

But make no mistake: VA will face significant challenges in the future. We are determined to meet those challenges ... because we are determined to continue to provide the best health care anywhere to those who have earned it through their service to our nation.

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New Members

The JWV welcomes our newest members to our fold. We hope you will join with us and participate in our many programs and activities.

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JWV Announces 2008-2009 Olympiad Award Winners

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA is proud to present to a worthy High School Senior its Olympiad Award in memory of the Israeli athletes murdered at the Munich Olympics in 1972. All student athletes, whether or not they have ties to the Jewish community, are eligible for this award. The Olympiad Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Harry Ettlinger, has awarded three cash prizes to this year's winners.

The winner of the 1st prize award of \$1,000, the

Edith, Louis, and Max S. Millen Memorial Education Grant, is Ben Enowitz of Coronado, CA. The 2nd place award of \$300 goes to Samantha Kee of Haskell, NJ, and the 3rd place award of \$200 goes to Alexandra Wright of Matteson, IL.

The achievements of each of these student athletes-leaders impressed the committee greatly, and the JWV wishes them the best as they begin their college careers.

National Education Grants

We regret that our scholarship committee was unable to meet to determine the winners of our National Education Grants for 2008-09 at our National Convention in Pittsburgh. The committee will meet at a later date, and winners will be selected at that time. Winners will be informed individually, and the names

of all of the winners will be published in *The Jewish Veteran* when they are available. We regret any inconvenience that may be caused.

Scholarship applications for our 2009-10 competition will be available on our web site, www.jwv.org, in November.

Constitutional Changes

Constitutional Changes Enacted at Convention
By Allen E. Falk, Esq., NJA

The following amendment to Article II, Section 1, of the Bylaws was passed at the 2008 National Convention:

Notwithstanding the above, the NEC is hereby authorized to establish from time to time multi year and discount programs.

Convention Overview

Continued from page 25

Massachusetts was elected National Commander for the coming year 2008-09.

On Saturday, at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, PNC David Magidson of Florida was elected President for the coming year. PNC Bob Zweiman was thanked for his service to the Museum in this past exciting year of growth.

Our convention concluded with our gala banquet on Saturday evening to honor and thank outgoing National Commander Larry Schulman for all of his contributions during his term of office. Commander Schulman has truly been an important advocate for the JWV and for all veterans during the past year. At the conclusion of the evening, newly elected Commander Ira Novoselsky was sworn in as the new National Commander. He promised to continue to uphold the legacy of the JWV throughout the nation and the world.

After a busy week of both work and play, our delegates left Pittsburgh, safe in the knowledge that

the JWV will continue to have strong leadership for the coming year and looking forward to meeting again in New Orleans for our 114th Annual National Convention, Aug. 16-23, 2009.

Dear Members of JWV:

PNC Bob Zweiman, PNC David Magidson, and the family of the late PNC Charles Feuereisen wish to thank the members and friends of JWV for their cards, letters, and expressions of friendship and condolence on their recent losses. All of these expressions of sympathy have been much appreciated and confirm the special bonds we hold one for the other.

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Jack Feller-145 • Milton Mitz-487



L'Shanah Tova



CMDR. Allan Abramson & Wife Sheila
Happy Days and Good Health

PNC Lou & PDP Gloria Abramson

Jerry & Sara Alperstein

Howard M. Barmad • Post 76-NJ
Chag Sameach

Howard A. & Dorothy G. Berger
Naples, FL/Denver, CO

CMDR. Stan Bilker & JVP Adele
Post 697, PA • L'Chaim to All

PNatl. Adj. Izzy & PDP Harriet Brosbe

Central District Council, PA

Fegelson Young Feinberg Post 697
Levittown, PA

PPC Norman & Phyliss Goldberg • Post 98

Nat. Inspector Sidney & Fay Goldman

Irving & Dena Goldberg

National Officer of the Day
Martin & Sandy Greenberg

PNC Sam & PNP Barb Greenberg
Happy Holidays to All

PCC-PNEC Arthur H. Greenwald • Post 69
PCP Mildred Pirkowsky • Aux 3

Roland Greenwald • Holiday Greetings

Donald H. Haber, PDC-NY

Susan Schneider Helsinger
President, Dept. of NY - 2007/2008

Larry D. Holman • Post 706-PA
Best Wishes to All

Jewish War Veterans USA Post 1
Our Original Post

PC Arthur & Barbara Kahn • Post 74-MA
L'Chayim and Best Wishes to All

Beth Kane Wishes You Happy Holidays
Enjoy Good Health • Enjoy Your Meals!

Ira & Shelley Novoselsky
Happy Holidays

The Perlman -Matlin Post 800
Best Wishes & Happy New Year

Dr. Edward & Renee Penzer
To All the Very Best Wishes

SGT. Manny Peven Post 65

Dr. Robert & Mrs. Susan Pickard

LT. J. I. Platt Post 651 • Fairlawn, NJ

Queens County Council
Queens, New York

Jerry & Lea Rosenberg • Post 740-NJ
Good Health & Happiness to All

Herb & Francie Rosenbleeth
Happy Holiday to You and Yours!

PDC/NEC Murray Runin

PDC Ralph & Florence Shear • Post 459

Harriet & PDC Norman Schnitzer

PNC Lawrence & Judith Schulman
Our Very Best Wishes to All

Ralph & Marian Schwartz • Post 625

PPC Norman & Toby Smith • Post 129-NY

PNEC Leroy & PNP Marie Vegotsky

Ken & Anita Volk • Post 510-MI
Shalom - Peace on Earth

PNC Robert & Jeri Zweiman
To Life

Join your Comrades and send a holiday greeting to family and friends in the next issue of the Jewish Veteran!

For only \$30.00 per 1 line of names, or \$50.00 for 2 lines, you can purchase a one year subscription which includes greetings for 5 holidays!

Rosh Hashanah • Yom Kippur • Chanukah • Purim • Passover

Names and greetings can be submitted anytime. Please fill out the form and send it along with your payment to :

Jewish War Veterans
1811 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Name _____

Address _____

Amount of payment _____ Check Credit Card
 Visa MC Amex

Card # _____ exp ____/____

1st line _____

2nd line _____

(no more than 30 characters per line)

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Leadership Mission to Israel • February 14-24, 2009

Join us on this exciting trip to beautiful and historic Israel! Meet Israelis and their leaders. Get updated briefings. Visit places other groups do not visit. Enjoy comradeship with fellow veterans.

Cost:

- \$2679.00 plus \$597.00 airport tax and fuel surcharge (as known on July 9, 2008). Based on double occupancy. This price includes air and land fare, and airport taxes. (Airport taxes subject to increase based on oil prices until ticket is issued).
- \$1900.00 for land fare only.
- \$445.00 additional for single room supplement.
The last person to join may have to pay additional single room supplement if roommate is not available.
- Airline Business Class upgrade cost upon request. (approx. \$3,000.00 plus)
- \$240.00 per person Comprehensive Travel Insurance, including cancellation fees. **(Strongly recommended)**. Or just \$38.00 for medical insurance while in Israel.
Please contact Aviatours for more information.

Package includes:

- Round trip coach class tickets on El Al Israel Airlines, from Newark, NJ.
- Transfers to/from airport and hotels (if you fly with the group)
- 9 full days of sightseeing in an air-conditioned deluxe bus with the services of a licensed English speaking guide
- All entrance fees to sites as per program.
- All taxes and service fees as imposed by hotels
- Full Israeli buffet breakfast and dinner daily, except Saturday (Participants have the opportunity to dine in any of the fine local restaurants of their choice).

Not included:

- Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages are not included in package cost
 - Tips to guide and driver and hotel restaurants. (Recommended tips of \$9.00 per day per person for guide, driver, and hotel restaurant staff.
 - Expenses of personal nature
- **A \$250.00 deposit is required at time of registration.**
 - **2nd payment of \$500.00 to be paid no later than Nov. 15, 2008.**
 - **Full payment for trip is due to JWV no later than Dec. 19, 2008, to avoid a \$49.00 late fee.**
 - **Passports must be valid at least until August 24, 2009**

For more information, please contact
Christy Turner at JWV Headquarters:
Phone: (202) 265-6280 E-mail: cturner@jwv.org

If you want to extend your stay in Israel
or visit other countries, please contact:
David or Mary at Aviatours:

Phone: (516) 867-2200 / (888) 574-2566
Fax: (516) 377-4983 • info@aviatours.net

