



THE JEWISH VETERAN

Spring • 2010

IN THIS ISSUE!

Remembering Ben

Page 7

A Tribute to Ben Sklaver

Page 7

War Stories

Page 8

Pesach On The Base

Page 14

Convention Event Schedule & Registration

page 11

JWV Speaking for the Veteran in the Halls of Congress



National Commander Ed Robins presents JWV's legislative priorities before the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee. Photo by Gerald Alperstein

JWV's delegates to the NEC began their annual spring gathering by fulfilling the organization's highest duty—to advocate for the Veteran in the Hall of Congress.

JWV caps were seen all over Capitol Hill as our members met with Representatives and Senators from across the country to share with them and their staffs the needs of veterans of all ages—from today's wars and yesterday's.

The recipient of JWV's Medal of Merit at this year's annual Congressional reception,

Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN), exemplifies the service to the veterans' community that our members look for in their Congressional representatives. Congressman Walz, himself the highest ranking non-commissioned officer ever elected to Congress, is a tireless fighter for the rights of the veteran.

National Commander Ed Robins spoke from the heart during his testimony before the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. NC Robins, a long-serving JWV National

Service Officer and himself a retired Sergeant Major, impressed all who heard him with his passion in speaking for the veteran.

The weekend included the annual meeting of the Policy Committee, meetings of other committees, and the semi-annual meetings of both the Board of Directors of the NMAJMH and the NEC to conduct the business of both the museum and the JWV.

Our delegates left Washington happy to have spoken for those who have given so much to our country.

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- May 12, Wed Membership
- May 27, Thurs..... VA Hospitals
- June 8, Tues Jewish Veteran and PR
- June 29, Tues Long Term Planning
- July 7, Wed Finance Board
- July 22, Thurs National Leadership: Operation of JWV



THE JEWISH VETERAN

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National Commander	Edwin M. Robins
National Editor	Paul Bernstein, PNC
National Executive Director	Herb Rosenbleeth
Managing Editor	Cheryl Waldman
Graphics/Production Editor	Christy Turner
Editorial Fellow	Robert M. Zweiman, PNC

EDITORIAL OFFICE

1811 R Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20009

Telephone (202) 265-6280 x504
Fax (202) 234-5662
E-mail jwv@jwv.org
Web Site www.jwv.org

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DEPARTMENTS

YOUR LETTERS	3
MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER	4
NEWS FROM CAPITOL HILL	4
DISPATCHES FROM THE EDITOR	5
COMMENTARY	6
REUNIONS	9
PEOPLE AND PLACES	10
JWV AROUND THE COUNTRY	12
NEW MEMBERS	17
NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEES	18
MUSEUM NEWS	20
TAPS	22

JWV Efforts for All Faiths

As commander of the Rockland/Orange District of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, I find it both surprising as well as frustrating when someone asks, "Do you collect funds and items for Jewish service personnel only, or do you collect and provide for all who serve?" To properly answer that question, I am enclosing the contents of a letter recently received from two military chaplains, which I believe is self-explanatory.

"Dear Rockland/Orange District Council members:

It is with deep gratitude that we received your shipment of 50 boxes of treats and toiletries for our troops passing through our transit center here at Manas. Hundreds of our soldiers headed into remote locations benefited from your gifts. Service members filled with joy and thankfulness really appreciated all the items from their Jewish War Veteran brothers. The saving kits were the biggest hit. Any future donations of shaving cream kits, toiletry items and chap sticks would be greatly appreciated since the base is in short supply. I cannot tell you how much the Manas Chapel team appreciate your generosity and support. It is patriots like you who continue to inspire and encourage our troops to keep fighting for the cause of freedom. Again, thank you!! God bless you for all you do for our nation's military soldiers. Yours in sincere gratitude, Father Michael J. Morris, Catholic Chaplain, Chaplain James R. Kinsey, Wing Chaplain."

I would like to think that the words uttered by these two military chaplains clearly illustrate and exemplify what the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. are all about.

Alan Moskin
Nanuet, NY

[Editor's Note: This letter was previously published in *The Journal News*, Rockland County, NY.]

Nathan B. Bruckenthal

In your Winter edition of the Jewish Veteran there was a very nice article about DC3 Nathan B. Bruckenthal, USCG. However, there was a very significant fact missing from this article.

I have been an officer with the US Public

Health Service since 1950. We are the medical providers for the US Coast Guard; thus, I have been closely associated with that very valuable, but unsung, branch of our military forces. I was elated to see Nathan's picture and the story of his service to our nation.

Missing from this story is the following: I have spent many summers at Montauk, Long Island, New York, and I know the Station Montauk of the US Coast Guard very well. I wish to bring to your attention that the USCG Station Montauk had a dedication ceremony to the memory of DC3 Nathan B. Bruckenthal on October 3, 2005, at which occasion the barracks, recreation, and mess hall building was designated herewith to be called "The Nathan B. Bruckenthal Building." This ceremony was attended by Federal, State and local representatives of our country.

I would appreciate if you could include this information in a future publication of *The Jewish Veteran*. Nathan's name will forever be honorably displayed at Station Montauk.

CAPT Arthur E. Cohen, MD
USPHS, Inactive Reserve Corps

Holocaust in Lithuania

Please find below our position regarding the request of the Baltic States to equate the Holocaust with the Soviet oppression:

The Association of Lithuanian Jews, representing the Lithuanian Jews in Israel, including the Holocaust survivors, turns to all citizens of the world regarding the Lithuanian government's request to the European Parliament to equate Soviet atrocities against the Lithuanian people as genocide just as the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people.

That request is based on false facts and is shameful. It is an embarrassment to the basic intelligence of mankind. The Lithuanians want to clear the name of their forefathers' murderous past. They are trying to make themselves the victims – a twisted interpretation of history. The Lithuanians know the truth that during the Holocaust they brutally murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews only because they were Jews – that was the true genocide. And what of those who were sent to Siberia? The Soviets also sent Jews, Poles, Czechs, Romanians, Latvians and Estonians to Siberia.

We turn to citizens of the free world with the request to refute this horrid attempt of the Lithuanians. Do not let the Lithuanians who participated in the murder of 95% of Lithuanian Jewry to falsify Holocaust history.

The Lithuanians claim that there is no foundation to the truth especially since they add unofficially that Jews controlled the security services in Soviet Lithuania, meaning that it was Jews who murdered Lithuanians. That, of course, is an outright lie. Our research details the scope of Jewish participation in Lithuanian government institutions during the years 1940/1941. During the years 1944/1989 the participation was close to nil as there were hardly any Jews left in Lithuania. Furthermore that research proves that it was the Lithuanians who were in control during Soviet Lithuania.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph A. Melamed
Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel

CORRECTION

We regret that the article "Calling All Veterans," on page 5 of the Winter 2010 issue of *The Jewish Veteran* contained erroneous information. It is not correct to say that the financial requirements of Category 8 have been waived. The correct information is that the threshold for income has been raised 10%, which will open up Category 8 for people who had applied on or after January 1, 2009, but before June 15, 2009.

According to the VA web site:

In order to ensure the availability of quality and timely health care to veterans with service connected conditions, special authority based on military service, low income, and those with special health care needs, in January 2003 VA made the difficult decision to stop enrolling new Priority Group 8 (high income) veterans whose income exceeded VA Income Thresholds.

The new regulations went into effect on June 15, 2009, and enable the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to relax income restrictions on enrollment for health benefits. While this new provision does not remove consideration of income, it does increase income thresholds. You may be eligible for enrollment under this new provision.

For further information, go to:

<http://www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/eligibility/PG8Relaxation.asp>

or contact your local VA office.

We regret any inconvenience that might have been caused by this error.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

National Commander Edwin M. Robins



For many years JWV has held their annual NEC (National Executive Committee) meeting in March. During that week, JWVers are encouraged to meet with their local Representatives and Senators (while wearing our caps) to press for the causes of the veteran.

At the annual JWV Congressional reception during the NEC weekend, I had the honor of presenting Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN) with the JWV Medal of Merit for all he has done to assist our veterans.

In the ceremonies before the presentation, our grandchildren Eliana, 9, and Odelya, 6, who were visiting from Israel, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. It was a moment that my wife Helene and I will always cherish.

The next morning, I was honored to appear with the commanders of several other veterans groups to testify before the joint House and Senate Veterans committees on our agenda for improving services to veterans.



Leading the Pledge of Allegiance at the opening of the Congressional Reception are Eliana and Odelya Morgenstern, the granddaughters of National Commander Ed and Helene Robins.

While JWV had beautifully printed advance copies of my testimony, it was important to me after 22 years as a National Service Officer to

let it rip and speak directly from the heart about the needs of our veterans, and how we can best serve them. I must admit it cleared my thoughts and let others know the real facts about our veterans and the issues they face.

I was overwhelmed by the accolades I received, but I am still humble enough to realize that we must continue to back our veterans,

As Memorial Day looms ahead, let all of us who perhaps go to visit the cemetery pay our respects to those who made the supreme sacrifice so that we may live in a free society.

G-D Bless America.

I am proud to be your National Commander.

NEWS

FROM CAPITOL HILL



By Herb Rosenbleeth,
Colonel, U.S. Army(Ret)
National Executive Director



JWV Storms Capitol Hill!



On the evening of March 3, JWV honored Congressman Timothy Walz of the great state of Minnesota for his outstanding service as a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

In a stirring and exciting ceremony, National Commander Ed Robins awarded the prestigious JWV Medal of Merit to Congressman Tim Walz.

On March 3 and 4, JWV National Commander Ed Robins proudly led our National Executive Committee members throughout the halls of Congress. Senators, Representatives and congressional staff from all over the country listened as JWV members presented the needs of all veterans to our elected officials.

Attendees at the presentation included members of JWV, the Military Coalition, the Veterans Health Care Partnership, the VA, the Department of Defense and members of Congress, most notably House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner.

On Thursday morning, March 4th,



National Commander Ed Robins presenting JWV's congressional testimony.

Commander Robins forcefully presented JWV's legislative priorities to a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. At the conclusion of his testimony, NC Robins received a huge round of applause from the entire audience! Well done, Ed Robins!

Continued on page 17



Stolen Valor Act Is Facing Legal Challenges

Does the First Amendment protect the right to lie about your military service with regard to earned medals?

I say, again my opinion, it is a crime under the Stolen Valor Act, even if the liar makes no effort to profit from his/her stolen glory.

It is not a victimless crime, not to veterans. It diminishes the value of these medals if anyone can wear them.

The three-year-old law called the Stolen Valor Act makes it a crime to falsely claim to have received military medals and ribbons from the Department of Defense. The legal fight centers on the protection under the First Amendment--Freedom of Speech.

What is being said by lawyers is that the First Amendment can protect a lie under the protection of Freedom of Speech. The lie in this case is wearing medals and ribbons not earned in the service of this Country.

Attorneys in two cases are challenging the law on behalf of their clients, saying the First Amendment protects all speech that doesn't hurt someone else. I say, what are they talking about, it doesn't hurt anyone? Ask a veteran. Ask the heroes who earned medals and ribbons; ask if they are not hurt by these pretenders.

These lawyers are saying that lying about getting a medal doesn't fit any of the categories of speech that the Supreme Court has said can be banned: lewd, obscene, profane, libelous, or creating imminent danger to others. However.

This may not be a legal point, but I think lying to get an advantage should not be protected. If lying about service medals gives you the power to be able to join an organization, get special treatment with regard to getting tickets to ball games, get special license plates, or get preferential treating in employment, then there was an advantage taken. Then the lie did in fact lead to a profit that you would not have had otherwise.

Of course, I am not a lawyer, just an engineer, and I am sure I am making errors on the law, but that does not stop me from speaking out; it's not my style to keep quiet when veterans are hurt.

One federal prosecutor says deliberate

lies are not protected. He said, since Congress has the authority under the Constitution to raise and support an army, that by extension, it has the authority for "protecting the worth and value of these medals." Exactly!

One ACLU lawyer said with regard to free speech, "You can't pass a law that demands respect for symbols." This I take exception to. May I point out the US Flag is a symbol of our Country.

That symbol is protected under US Code Title 36 Chapter 10, which talks about respect for the flag, and Title 18 Chapter 33 Section 700, which talks about criminal penalties regarding the Flag. That symbol of our Country is the same Flag I served under, fought under, and saw draped over the caskets of some of my friends.

This symbol was the first thing I saw raised at Ground Zero on September 11 to show the world we are still here. By the way, the dictionary defines a flag as a symbolic device to denote national or state sovereignty.

The Courts have said that that this act is protected by free speech. I would hope that one day the members of the Supreme Court would use their good sense and protect our Flag from being used as a tool.

I am willing to bet that those who are challenging this law never put on a uniform and served this Country. If they had, they would know how veterans respect the medals they earned in combat. Many veterans wear their medals and ribbons in recognition of their heroic service.

To veterans, medals earned in combat zones are sacred symbols and not to be purchased like prizes in a Cracker Jack box, and certainly, not be worn by those who want to brag about being a veteran.

These wannabees must look up to us with awe if they feel that they need to build up their egos. To me, besides being criminals, they have low self esteem and are failures in life.

Let me hear from you.

In 2009, the JWV National Convention passed a resolution concerning the Stolen Valor Act.

WHEREAS, the Stolen Valor Act criminalizes the wearing or alleging the award of military medals by individuals who are not the recipient of such medals, and

WHEREAS, the media continues to reveal stories of men and women who either magnify or fabricate their military service, and

WHEREAS, there is a central registry of recipients of the Medal of Honor and prisoners of war, but for no other medals including, but not limited to, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and Purple Heart, and

WHEREAS, there needs to be a central registry created so that those who have stolen valor from the men and women who truly deserve recognition, can be uncovered and brought to light and justice,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA urges Congress to provide sufficient funds to create such a central registry so as to facilitate the exposure of "false heroes," and,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Federal law enforcement agencies to vigorously prosecute those who have violated the Stolen Valor Act.



THE FOLLY OF ARROGANCE

Now two separate events occurred at about the same time. The response of our Administration as to the two betrays a bipolar approach to the Middle East.

Vice President Biden goes to Israel and was met with the untimely release of an Israeli government-approved program to construct housing in East Jerusalem. The fear of having Jews actually live in the housing caused a furor that Israel has committed an unpardonable sin against the United States, which called for the most serious of responses against Israel. After all, Israelis are our only true friend in the Middle East, so we can screw them at will unless they live on J Street.

At the same time as Biden was in Israel, our Secretary of State Clinton was in Russia, which issued its untimely release that Russia was going ahead with building a nuclear reactor in Iran—the response of our government was immediate—we said nothing, and then when we entered into our nuclear agreement with Russia—we said nothing. When we met in Washington with all other nations, we said nothing of Russia's actions.

We did discuss the possibility of a Russian and Chinese consent to some form of sanctions against Iran for its nuclear surge toward nuclear weaponry. To prove our intention to prevent Iran from their surge—we immediately withheld a pre-agreed shipment of bunker-busting bombs to prevent Israel from unilaterally attacking Iranian nuclear facilities, as they had done in Iraq and Syria, preventing the threat of American and Global security. Bipolarity has once again reared its ugly head.

Now we are advised that the Administration does nothing precipitously without analyzing background reports from advisors and experts. So, our President does this on the nuclear probability of Iran. In January he receives a memo from Secretary of Defense Gates which tells that the United States does not have any effective [that means implemental] long-term plans to stop Iran from obtaining or, when obtained, from meeting not only the threat but the actual use of such weaponry. Now that sort of a memo has got to give you a concern—actually it has to give you a stomach ache requiring immediate attention to stop the pain.

The non-Arab Islamic Iran—in spite of all of the pomposity of our President—stands as a threatened possible leader of the Arab Middle East. The political win on the medical care issue by the skin of his teeth seems to have instilled an arrogance of power as he now switches to foreign affairs. And, add to that, the possibility of a non-Arab Turkey, which was our ally when they were secular. Also add to that, that Iran has demonstrated a new air defense system, and it is very doubtful that the defense system is intended for domestic electric power. By the time they come up with a decision, if they ever do, how many dead will we endure?

After receiving the Gates memo and all others, he came out with his Nuclear Posture Review, which says that the United States would only use our nuclear arsenal against nations which also have nuclear capability and are part of the non-nuclear proliferation treaty and only against those nations which use biological or chemical

weapons with devastating conventional military response. Whether there is compliance with the treaty provisions will be before the United Nations and the Nuclear Agency—so, we would be screwed again.

Based upon past experience, the world banned the use of poison gas—yet Iraq used it against its own people and in its war with Iran—the world response=nothing. So, what realistic choices do we have when any nuclear war will be unwinnable no matter who is left standing. Diplomacy is not a positive weapon when dealing with terrorists or the nations which support them while hiding in the background.

The Gates Memo must be considered as realistic and be responded to with a realistic answer untainted with nice guy language. There is a credit card advertisement which shows the articles which can be bought and the one which is priceless.

Mandatory Automatic Nuclear Detriment and Response is Priceless. Matter of fact, it is more important to our national security than where a Jew decides to live. It would seem that where Jews live in the Middle East may become an acceptable phase of American Foreign Policy in allowing Arab Palestinians to live in Israel while precluding Israeli Jews from living in Palestinian areas. We really didn't protest when Palestinians were driven out of Jordan in Black September—we didn't protest when the Kuwaitis drove the Palestinians out after the first Gulf War. So, why now?

REMEMBERING BEN by David Abraham



Ben Sklaver was full of hope. “[He] was the kind of guy that cared about everyone,” Staff Sgt. Joshua Yost, who served with Ben in Afghanistan, said in the *Washington Times* last year. Reflecting on Ben’s death in a suicide attack, Yost added “the suicide bomber took the one guy who truly cared and dedicated his life to the poor and someone who really believed that one day we’d find peace with each other.”

Although I never served with Ben, I knew how right Joshua Yost was – I was Ben’s roommate in graduate school. Throughout our time at Tufts University, Ben would discuss his ideas on addressing the pernicious effect of AIDS

on rural Africa or providing refugees healthier meals. He never had grandiose visions of curing the world of all its ills, just the part of the world that he touched. And working on refugee issues at the Center for Disease Control beginning in 2003, those areas were some of the most remote and inhospitable places on earth.

But it was not until 2007 – as he began working with the Ugandan military as a civil affairs officer in the US Army – when he found his issue: water. Ben was tasked with building bridges, schools and wells to counter the influence of the Lord’s Resistance Army, which had been waging a brutal war in northern Uganda for 20 years. He was taken by the resiliency of the Achioli people of northern Uganda, many of whom had been living in camps for up to 20 years. They dreamed of returning home, and the water projects Ben installed helped villagers leave the camps.

The wells were not a panacea for all their woes, but the clean water was a building block for a healthier, more prosperous life. Ben also knew that when you help people provide for themselves – when villagers were able to maintain the water systems Ben installed – it empowered them.

Upon returning home in 2007, Ben recalled his work building wells fondly. He then took

action and founded ClearWater Initiative which funds water projects in post-conflict regions. His friends followed him, donating time and money to his cause. Last year, when he left to Afghanistan, he asked me to continue his work -- although as he led his unit through some of the most dangerous parts of the country, he was still advising me on water projects.

Ben was a visionary and an inspiration to many. Not just to those in northern Uganda, who refer to him as “Moses Ben” for his work bringing them clean water, but to people like me, who strive to forward his vision of hope and compassion for those less fortunate.

[Editor’s Note: Mr. Abraham is the Director of the ClearWater Initiative and was Ben Sklaver’s roommate in graduate school.]



Captain Sklaver in Uganda.

A Tribute to Benjamin A. Sklaver, 1976-2009 Captain, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Army Reserve

By Elliott J. Donn, Commander
Department of Connecticut

On October 2, 2009, the U. S. Army, the people of Uganda, and, most certainly his family, suffered a major loss, with the death of Captain Benjamin A. Sklaver of Hamden, Connecticut. He was killed in action while leading his men on a patrol in Muscheh, Afghanistan. He was just 32 years old.

Ben Sklaver was a true leader who refused to go on a patrol unless he was “point man.” He was a proud and committed Jew who deeply believed in the Jewish precept of “tikkun olam” – repairing a broken world. He was a loving son, brother and fiancé, who was looking forward to his wedding this June. He was also committed to making the most of his G-d-given intellect by earning both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Tufts University, the latter in Law and International Diplomacy from Tufts’ Fletcher School.

Prior to his entering active service, he worked for the International Emergency and Refugee Health Branch of the Centers for



Connecticut Department Commander Elliott Donn (at left) presented two certificates to the parents of Captain Benjamin Sklaver, honoring his memory and making him a posthumous member of the JWV.

Disease Control in Atlanta.

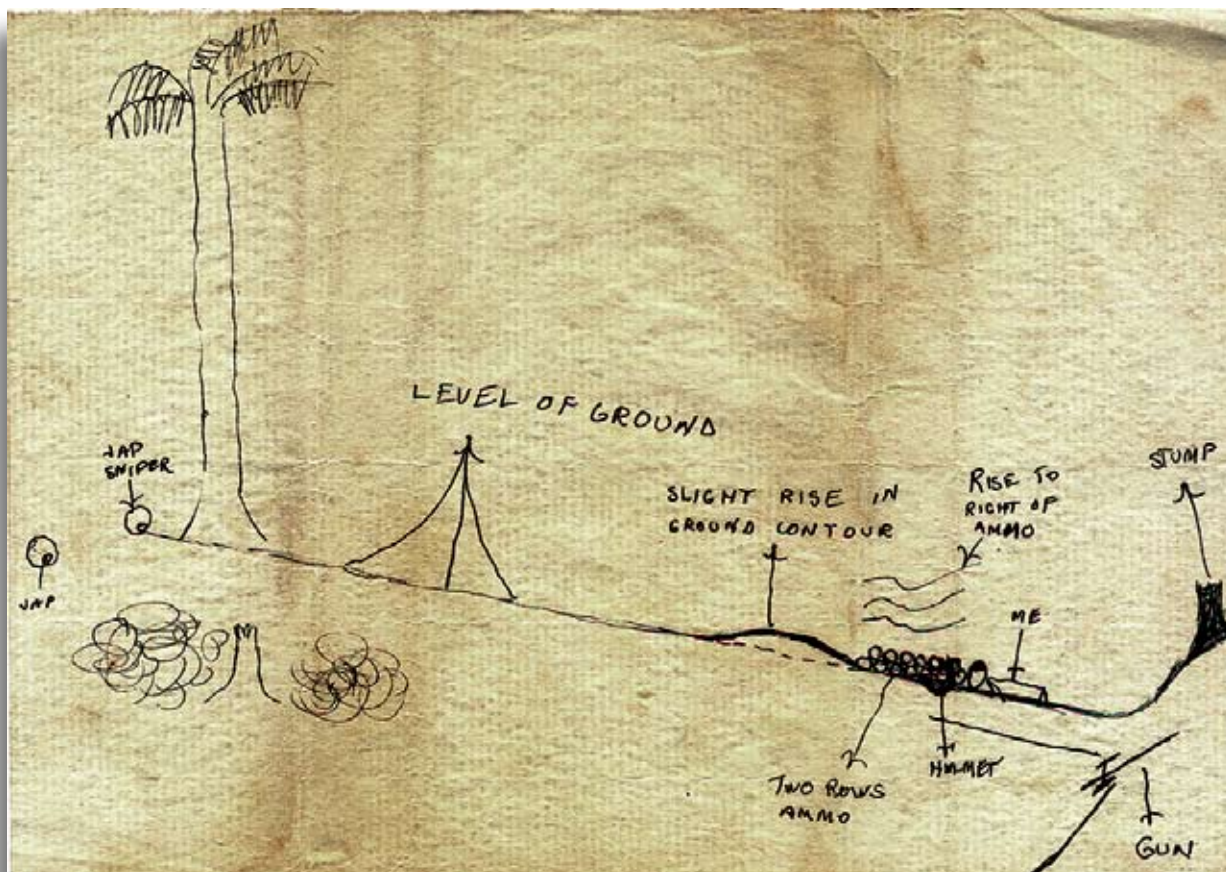
While on his first assignment in Northern Uganda, he was so deeply moved by the deaths of so many children and pregnant women, due to their lack of clean drinking water, that he founded the non-profit ClearWater Initiative to drill wells in their impoverished, war-ravaged villages. The people who live there affection-

ately called him “Moses Ben.” Since 2007, this project is credited with saving over 7,500 lives, and, according to *The Hartford Courant*, it is expected that over 10,000 lives will be saved by the year 2012. He was described by one of his closest friends as truly a “Warrior for Peace.”

Capt. Ben Sklaver is but one more in a long line of reminders that Jews DO serve courageously and sacrifice greatly for this great nation. In a brief ceremony at his home on February 25th, his parents, Attys Gary and Laura Sklaver were presented with certificates signed by National Commander Edwin M. Robins, recognizing him for his service to our country and also making him a posthumous member, in perpetuity, of Post 100, Jewish War Veterans of the USA.

Among Ben’s awards were the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, Armed Services Expeditionary Medal, Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the Combat Action Badge,

Captain Ben Sklaver was a patriot and humanitarian--a credit to our people--the best and the brightest. May his memory be for a blessing, and may he forever rest in peace.



Richer's location during combat in a sketch sent to his sister.

WAR STORIES

By Helene Begun

It always struck me as odd that a man who would never even speak of his wartime experience could be so enamored of war movies. My father, Solomon Richer, a World War II veteran who served with pride in the infantry in the Pacific theater, spent countless hours watching the likes of John Wayne and Audie Murphy fight the good fight. I've no doubt he would have been riveted by the mini-series now airing on HBO about the war in the Pacific, his war.

My father never invited questions or conversation about the war. Except for the fact that he exhibited a lifelong love of Hawaii, which was where he was stationed when war broke out, it was clear to my siblings and me that the topic was off limits.

Still it hung over our lives throughout my childhood, in much the same way as his uniform hung in the hall closet for decades. And every time I went down to the basement, I came face to face with his army helmet. It sat on a shelf above the stairs, right next to a Japanese mess kit and knife, my father's own personal spoils of war. There was a hole in the helmet. I imagined it was a bullet hole and may even have conjured up a war story of my own, but, for all I knew, it could have been damaged in a move, or my mother could have punctured it while cleaning. What I did know was not to ask.

In a dresser drawer, my father kept a small envelope of 2"x 3" black & white photos that

were strictly verboten. I was given to understand that they were so graphic in their depiction of my father's wartime service that they were inappropriate for children. So ingrained in me was my parents' admonition that when I came across them many years later, long after my father had passed, I hesitated to open the envelope even then, despite the fact that I was in my 60's. I don't know what I expected - and there is the occasional corpse - but for the most part the pictures are benign, paling in comparison to the photos that are so much a part of daily life in a country that always seems to be at war with someone.

When I was a senior in high school, I wrote a report entitled "The War in the Pacific." It was a history assignment and I chose the topic in part because I thought it would please my father, who may never have spoken about his war service, but wore his patriotism on his sleeve. In my family, it was: "My country, right or wrong." My father said it so often that it wasn't until many years later I realized he was quoting someone else.

My report, as one might expect of a teenager who was more interested in what was going on that weekend than something that happened in the 1940's, was not one whit more or less than it needed to be to fulfill the assignment. It never occurred to me to solicit a first-hand perspective on the subject, and I covered Eniwotek, an

island on which my father saw days of brutal hand-to-hand combat and spent nights in fox-holes, in two paragraphs.

Needless to say, my father was not blown away by the breadth of my reporting or my in-depth knowledge of the subject. I had summed up the defining moment of his life in ten double-spaced pages...with generous margins. If I had any thought that this might open up a dialogue, I was wrong. On this subject, he remained taciturn throughout his life, determined to shelter my siblings and me from the horrors of war.

It wasn't until a few years ago, when my mother gave me several shoeboxes of letters my father had written home during the war, that I finally got a firsthand account of his time in service. There is an unmistakable quaintness to the letters, their missing rectangular spaces bearing witness to a time when people believed the flow of information could be stopped by a censor's scissor. There is nothing quaint about their content, however, and, written as they are in my father's meticulous longhand, they speak to me in a way my father clearly never could. There

are hundreds of them, and midway through I am stunned to find, in one to his older sister, Sophie, dated March 16, 1944, the story of the helmet. My father wrote it on a boat, on his way back to base, days after what I suspect from the



Solomon Richer's bullet-pierced helmet, with his photo.

timeline was the battle for Kwajalein

As his landing craft hit the beach, he writes, he and his unit broke out to clear it and set up their artillery. There were holes dug in the sand all around them. "Are there any dead Japs in them?" he asked a marine, who pointed to one about ten yards away. Picking up the piece of tin covering it, my father recalls: "There was a Jap in a squatting position, leaning forward, but he had no obvious wounds. All the while we

stood there looking at him, I remember thinking: 'Put a shell in him. Make sure.' But then I thought how silly I'd look shooting a dead Jap, not to mention the commotion it would cause."

It was a decision that would come back to haunt him as his unit came under sniper fire from the 'dead' soldier's position throughout the night and into the following day. Two men next to me dropped," the letter continues, "hit bad." Soon after, a medic who'd come to treat the wounded men, was shot as well.

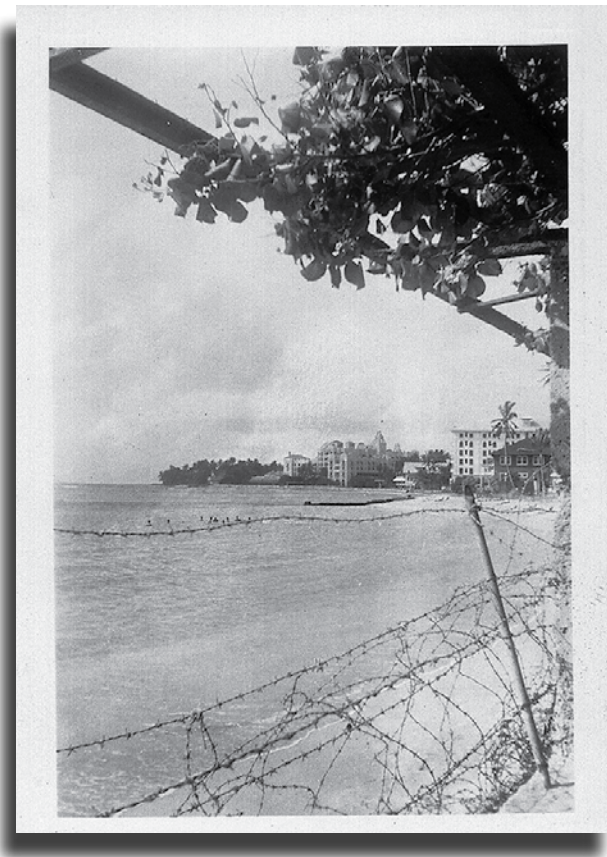
"I raised my head for a second to see if I could spot the sniper. Just as quick, I put it down and a fraction of a second later a bullet blew through the hair on the back of my head. I raised my head a second time, quickly put it down and again drew fire that breezed across the top of my head." Three times, my father writes, he raised his head and three times he lowered it with no warning of incoming fire. "Maybe you can tell me what lowered my head," he asks my aunt, "because the only answer I have is that God was with me."

Before grenades finally wiped out the snipers and the action subsided that day, my father had helped save the lives of those three wounded soldiers. What he didn't realize was how close he had come to being a casualty himself until he got up and started to go to the sniper's position. "Hey, Richer,' one of my buddies called to me, 'there's a hole in your helmet.' For the life of me, Soph, I can't tell you when it happened."

My father's letter describing the events that took place on that atoll in the Marshall Islands was 28 pages long. Along with it was a sketch that showed his location and the close proximity of the Japanese snipers. My father, a small stick figure, lies prone next to a large pyramid of what look like cannonballs. Looking at it, I realize it is nothing short of miraculous that

he wasn't blown to bits, so it is with a sense of the absurd that I read the postscript at the end of this letter recalling what were arguably the most harrowing moments of his life. It was capitalized for emphasis: "PLEASE SEND SOME CHOCOLATES. YOU KNOW WHAT KIND."

Fortunately, not all of the stories from this period of my father's life were war stories. According to his discharge papers, when my



Eniwotek

father wasn't in the trenches manning a 105 Howitzer, his specialty, he was baking. And, apparently, this was where his heart lay, because, in a small notebook I found among his papers, he had diligently recorded the recipes, and upon

his return home, my mother tells me, he was intent on reducing them for family consumption. I'm not sure which is more amusing, the vision of my father as the Wolfgang Puck of war, or the fact that he thought army food was worth duplicating. But in this innocuous way, and this way only, did my father share his wartime experience with us.

The gentlest of men, my father was never meant to be a warrior, and after what today would have been three tours of duty, he was discharged by a sympathetic doctor. For years afterward, my mother confided in me, every shadow, every sharp noise, every sudden movement sent my father, a man who never even raised his voice, into a combat-ready stance.

Yet, he never let it intrude upon our lives and, having read his letters, an unflinching tale of war, I am struck by the effort of will it must have taken to compartmentalize that period of his life, move on, and raise my siblings and me with a sense of normalcy and an abiding security that went counter to everything he'd experienced. By any account, my father went on to live a successful and happy life, cut short though it was by cancer at 67. From our point of view, he died too young, but I doubt he would have shared that perspective. He returned home from the war at 26. After that, he used to say, everything else was gravy.

My father's army helmet still sits on that shelf in my childhood home, the hole in it no longer a mystery. It's taken him 64 years to tell me what he did in the war, and although there is nothing comforting in a firsthand knowledge of the fear and horror he felt that day, I do take comfort in the fact that he served his country with heroism, although, even six decades after the fact, it fills me with great sorrow that he — that anybody — has to do so.

REUNIONS IN SEARCH OF

▶ USS Cascade (AD-16) reunion will take place Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 2010, in Chicago IL. For more information contact Barb Kennovin, 302-945-2719; Leonard Goeke, 319-653-3904; or Bob Croghan 314-954-7801.

▶ 80th Infantry Blue Ridge Division Veterans Association--WWI, WWII, Global War on Terrorism-- will have their 91st Annual Reunion, Aug. 11-15, 2010, Arlington VA. Contact Max R. Schmidt, 336-288-0983.

▶ 793rd Military Police Battalion Association, U.S. Army, reunion will take place Sept. 22-26, 2010, in Atlanta GA. Contact Richard Kealy, 905-987-5016, richliz793@rogers.com.

▶ 7th Armored Division 64th Annual Reunion will take place Sept. 22-26, 2010, in Philadelphia, PA. Contact Cheryl M. Higley, 860-678-1018, cmhig58@sbcglobal.net.

▶ Third Marine Division Association will hold its annual family reunion, Aug. 4-8, 2010, in Charleston SC. For information contact Jeffrey A. Dement, 815-436-3783, jeffdement@aol.com.

▶ 95th Infantry Division Association will hold its reunion Aug. 4-8, 2010, in Cambridge MA. Contact Seymour Schnuer, 978-371-1435, sybarbara@comcast.net, www.95divassociation.com.

▶ U.S. Navy / Marines, USS Hornet (CV-8, CV-12, CVA-12, CVS-12) reunion will take place Oct. 20-24, 2010, in Tucson, AZ. For information contact Carl & Sandy Burket, PO Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, 814-224-5063, hornetcva@aol.com. Reunion Web Site is <http://www.usshornetassn.com/>.

IN SEARCH OF

▶ Looking for Jewish Navy Veterans who served in the Pacific on the USS Wasp (CV18). Contact Len Berman, 805-969-3966.

PEOPLE & PLACES

► **Jesse Gersten**, Past Department Commander, Department of Southwest, also the first Jewish War Veteran inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame has been elected Department Commander of the Arizona Korean War Veteran Association.

► **Morris Eisenstein** of **Post 266**, West Palm Beach, FL, a liberator of Dachau, was an honored guest of the US Holocaust Museum at its National Days of Remembrance events, April 14-15, 2010, in Washington, DC.

► Post Commander **Harold Riffer** of **Post 128**, Chandler, AZ, plays saxophone weekly for veterans at the Carl Hayden Veterans Hospital in Phoenix, AZ. The Post, which recently celebrated its 15th anniversary, also sponsors televised horse races for the vets and provides them with prizes and refreshments.

► **Albany Post 105** Commander **Sam Spitzberg** administered the oath of installation to the newest members of Post 105, Lance Wang, an Iraq war veteran; Stephen Spitzberg, a Vietnam War era veteran; Tony Linsk, a Cold War veteran and Paul Zonderman, a Vietnam veteran. The four were inducted during the post membership brunch held at Temple Israel on Dec. 20.

► **Golden Century Post 501**, West Palm Beach, FL, has sent a carton of stamps for the use of hospitalized veterans to the VA Medical Center in West Palm Beach, FL.

► Members of **Gary Grant Post 680** and its Ladies Auxiliary have visited the VA Hospital in Long Beach, CA, the third Friday of each month for over 20 years, bringing the patients food and phone and PX cards. Four times a year they also visit the Naval Hospital at Camp Pendleton in Oceanside to donate blankets and outfits for the babies born there and commissary cards to the Chaplains to help service families.

► **Herschel L. Sheiness**, **Post 753**, San Antonio, TX, Cemetery Chairman, recently presented a plaque to William Trower, Director, Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, and Ron Wondolowski, Assistant Director, for their support and assistance to the Post in cataloguing Jewish war veterans buried in the San Antonio area's VA cemeteries.

► Albany Post 105 recently hosted a meeting at which the guest speaker was NY Army National Guard MAJ and Post member **Kevin Meislin**. MAJ Meislin recently returned to the United States after duties in Israel this past fall and winter. MAJ Meislin has been engaged with the IDF Home Front Command as the representative of the National Guard Bureau to improve the ability of both nations to provide military support to civil authorities. Meislin, an infantry officer, serves full-time with the National Guard Bureau in Washington, DC, as a future operations planner. He deployed to Iraq in 2004-05 with the NY National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division.



JWV National Court President Marshall Kaplan of Milton L. Finel Post 389 of the Department of New York presented a most generous and welcome gift of \$200,000 to the JWV on behalf of the Post. The gift will be commemorated by a display in the main conference room at JWV National Headquarters and stands as a tribute to the dedication of our members. Mr. Kaplan (center) presented the second installment of the gift at the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the NMAJMH. The contribution was accepted by PNC Bob Zweiman (at left) and PNC Ed Goldwasser (at right) on behalf of the organization.

Place Your Ad or Message in the 2011 Convention Journal!

Inside Front Cover	\$750.00
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Deadline submission is July 1, 2010

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Jewish War Veterans **115th** Annual National Convention

SAVANNAH, GA • AUGUST 8 -15, 2010

Hilton Savannah DeSoto

15 East Liberty Street • Savannah, GA 31401 • Phone: (912) 232-9000 • Fax: (912) 232-6018

Hotel Registration deadline is Thursday, July 1, 2010

A one night (\$140/single or double) deposit is required for all hotel registrations • A 3-night minimum stay is required

Hotel reservations must be made through JWV, or the surcharge will be assessed and attendance at meetings will not be allowed.

\$150 Convention surcharge for those not staying at the Hilton Savannah DeSoto Hotel. Local Members living within a 50 mile radius are exempt.

Partial Schedule of Events

(Subject to Change)

Daily • Aug 10-13

Morning Minyan - 8:00 AM

Sunday • Aug 8

Mystery Dinner Theater

Monday • Aug 9

Tour of Historic Savannah
& Low Country

Tuesday • Aug 10

Wreath Laying Ceremony

Committee Meetings

NEC Meeting

Wednesday • Aug 11

Joint Opening Session

Resolutins

1st JWV Business Session

Century Club

Thursday • Aug 12

2nd Business Session

Committee Meetings

Resolutions

National President's Banquet

Friday • Aug 13

3rd Business Session

Committee Meetings

National Commander Elections

Shabbat Dinner

Shabbat Evening Services

Saturday • Aug 14

NMAJMH Board Meeting

Commander's Banquet

Name: _____ Post No. _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Room will be shared with: _____

Arriving: at _____ / _____ Departing: at _____ / _____ Total nights: _____

JWV 115 th Annual National Convention	Cost	How Many?	Amount
Convention Registration Fee	\$50.00 per member		
I prefer: <input type="checkbox"/> King (Single Room) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 beds (Double Room)	\$140.00 per night		
3rd Person in a room	\$55.00		
Minimum Deposit Only	\$140.00		
Convention Surcharge for those not staying at the Hilton Savannah DeSoto Hotel	\$150.00		
Mystery Dinner Theater • Sunday, Aug. 8 No. of: Fried Chicken _____ Baked Fish _____ Sugar Free Dessert _____	\$37.50		
Tour of Historic District & Low Country Area • Monday, Aug. 9	\$45.00 per person		
Century Club • Riverboat Cruise • Wednesday, Aug. 11	\$100.00 member		
	\$50.00 spouse		
Traditional Kosher Shabbat Dinner • Friday, Aug. 13	\$27.50 per person		
Commander's Banquet • Saturday, Aug. 14 No. of: Sirloin _____ Salmon _____ Kosher _____ Sugar Free Dessert _____	\$40.00 per person		
You must include full payment for all event(s) that you plan on attending. Reservations for trips or activities will only be made if paid in full.	Total:		

I am paying by Check Credit card:

American Express Visa Mastercard Discover

Card No. _____ Exp. _____ / _____

Signature _____

Sign and mail this completed form, along with your payment to:
Jewish War Veterans • 1811 R Street, NW • Washington, DC 20009
Attn: Convention Dept.

JWV AROUND THE COUNTRY



Members of the Neumann-Goldman Post 69 and Ladies Auxiliary perform weekly services, including distributing books, taking digital photographs of patients, calling bingo, and providing clerical services, at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx, NY. Shown from left are Ira Friedman, Irving Feuer, Mel Saks, Bobbie Saks, Lillian Tannen, Edward Bronstein, and Don Tannen.



Past Department of New York Commander Jason A. Kaatz and Ladies Auxiliary Past Department President Petra Kaatz with a Pen Certificate signed by New York Governor David Paterson for their work helping pass a 2009 law which improved the Cold War Veterans Property Tax Exemption.



JWV National VAVS Representative Jerry Berns (at right) with VA Secretary Eric Shinseki at 64th Annual VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting in Cincinnati on April 7.



On October 10, 2009, members of Drizin-Weiss Post 215, Philadelphia, PA, attended the commissioning of the newest Aegis Class Destroyer, USS Wayne E. Meyer (DDG 108). The ship is named after RADM Meyer, who is known as the Father of the Aegis Weapons System. Shown at the commissioning from left are: Paul Ouslander, Commander Irv Faye, and Marvin Simon.



Lt. James I. Platt Post 651, Fair Lawn, NJ, contributed \$400,000 to name a room at National Headquarters for the Post. The room is hung with Post memorabilia and is highlighted by a portrait of their namesake, Lt. Platt.



Bernard Becker Post 123, Camarillo, CA, donated four wheelchairs to the Veterans Home in Ventura, CA, bringing to 34 the number of wheelchairs donated by the Post. Shown in bottom row, from left are: Brenda Manke, Home Administrator; Walter Greenberg; Lynda Griffin, Supervising Rehab Therapist; and SVC Irv Bergman. Top row from left are: Irv Jacobs, Ronald Perkowich, Post Commander Joe Ettenberg, and Sanford and Lois Lebman.



Yonkers Post 68 conducted a memorial service in front of the 3/4 -sized Viet Nam Wall visiting Yonkers on Veterans Day 2009. Cantor David Shiff, who assisted in the service, became a Patron of the Post after the service. In the rear from left are PC Hilly Hoffman, PCC Stan Bernstein, PC Harold Tirsch, Commander Phil Levy, PCC Irving Goldenberg, Cantor David Shiff and PCC Elliott Palais. PCC Harold Dworetzky is at the podium.



Ed Kranson, commander of Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Post 65, Henderson, Nevada, at right, presents an award to COSTCO in appreciation for their support and dedication to American veterans. COSTCO has been supplying Post 65 with cake and pastries which Post 65 volunteers serve the veterans at the VA's Henderson Medical Clinic as they come in to meet their medical appointments. Looking on are Junior Vice Commander Gene Kanofsky and Sandi Rothman, Post 65 Marketing Representative. The award was made on February 13, 2010. Courtesy Photo by Jane Kranson



The Murray L. Rosen Post 64 of Las Vegas, NV, held its installation of officers on March 28, 2010. Shown from left in the front row are: Elaine Black, Evelyn Efros, and Bea Siefman. In the top row from left are: Mort Friedlander, Leon Cooper, Ed Kranson from Post 65, Herb Spiegel, Commander Louis Augenblick, Ed Kline, Gil Boscoe, Mark Bar-or, Irv Finver, and Abe Efros.

Post 64 allots a minimum of \$1800.00 per month for the housing and rehabilitation of homeless veterans. The funding comes from twice-yearly poppy drives. Post 64 received a certificate of recognition for this program from the White House office for Community initiatives, the only such award in Nevada.

Jewish War Veteran turns 100 years old



Shown celebrating with Mr. Hescheles (in front) are from left in back row: Lester Friedman, Bill Kosel, Jocelyn Dure, Jason Kaatz, Marshal Duberstein, and Jerry Petite.

Accomplished Yiddish and English poet, Jeremiah Hescheles, turned 100 years old in March. He celebrated this momentous birthday in the company of the residents and staff at the VA Saint Albans Community Living Center in New York, and a number of representatives of the JWV, who presented Mr. Hescheles with a citation on behalf of NY State Assembly member David Weprin, recognizing Jeremiah Hescheles as an "outstanding citizen of New York State."

Mr. Hescheles served proudly in the Army from 1942-1943. He is an accomplished poet in both English and Yiddish, and has published a number of poems, *Sonnets of Chaos* (Sonetn fun tohu vavohu) in 1947 and *Songs* (Leider) in 1963. He also wrote for the Yiddish newspaper, *Tog-Morgan Zhurnal*. Kendall Murphy, Recreation Therapist, SA CLC, said Mr. Hescheles is "a very pleasant and humble man" who always "has a bright smile and something positive to say." He is an avid reader and loves classical music. He can be found reading passages in Hebrew during chapel services and having literary discussions with staff.

Mr. Hescheles thanked everyone for coming and recognized the great staff at SA CLC for contributing to his having a happy 100th birthday. Age has not worn him down, and he offered these words of wisdom to the party: "Life begins at 100!" he said, throwing up his hands.



George Fisher, Senior Vice-Commander, Post 520, West Palm Beach, FL, recently spoke to 72 students at an all girls yeshiva in Brooklyn, NY, about his experiences in WWII.



Rabbi Abraham Morheim accepted the JWV donation on behalf of the Hanscom Field Air Force Base Chaplain's Fund at their Seder. Shown from left are: Base Commander Colonel David Orr, Rabbi Morheim, PNC Ira Novoselsky, Massachusetts Department Commander David Westerman, and North Shore Post 220 Commander Barry Lischinsky.

Pesach on the Base

By Bayla Sheva Brenner



Preparing for a seder in Balad, Iraq, 2004. Courtesy of the Unit Ministry Team

One week after US forces toppled Saddam Hussein's tyrannical regime in April 2003, Jews everywhere gathered around their Seder tables to celebrate Pesach. Inside an army tent in the desert outside Baghdad, twenty-five Jewish American soldiers—scruffy, tired and elated from their mission—huddled close together. For them, it was truly a night different from all others and one they will never forget.

“On erev Pesach we had a horrible sandstorm,” recalls Chaplain (Major) Carlos Huerta. “You couldn't see ten feet in front of you. But it cleared by sundown and we had a wonderful Seder.” Rabbi Huerta, who was ordained at Yeshiva Or HaTorah in Jerusalem, has been a chaplain for sixteen years (nine of them at the United States Military Academy at West Point; he is currently serving at Fort Benning, Georgia).

Weeks before Pesach, the division chaplain sent word about the Seder. Jewish military chaplains got busy preparing for Pesach in the middle of a war. “Here we were ready to invade Iraq,” says Rabbi Huerta. “Everyone's checking their weapons, and I'm in the back of a moving truck making sure all my matzot are covered with three plastic bags so that they'll survive [the mission].”

Obtaining kosher for Passover food was challenging at the time. Chaplain (Captain) David Goldstrom, a chaplain for nine years who is currently stationed at Fort Drum in upstate New York, flew to Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait to visit soldiers in his unit. The night the war “kicked off,” he arrived with preparations for Pesach on his mind.

“There was no way to get kosher meat,” says the chaplain, who was ordained at Ohr Somayach, in Monsey, New York. “I had this idea that pretty much anywhere in the world one could find fresh fish.” He asked an air force

services officer to procure a few whole salmon on ice. He held the Seders with enough salmon for the sixty soldiers, airmen and Marines from the surrounding camps.

“At that point in the war, we didn't have to put on our gas masks or chemical suits,” says Rabbi Goldstrom. “Two weeks earlier, we were sleeping in our protective chemical gear. When we got to the end of the Seder and said ‘L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim,’ more than any other



Chaplain David Goldstrom at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, using up the last bits of chametz before Pesach in 2003. Courtesy of Chaplain David Goldstrom/US Army

Pesach in my life, I felt it.”

Chaplains elsewhere in Iraq at the time faced the same kosher-for-Passover-food dilemma. “The majority of our meals consisted of fruits and vegetables, and a few cans of

tuna and gefilte fish,” says Chaplain (Colonel) Mitchell Ackerson, fifty-two, an army reservist for twenty-five years who led a Seder near the Iraq/Kuwait border. Since there is a long-established US air base in Kuwait, he turned to the base for better provisions. With free access to the warehouse, he was able to procure fruits and vegetables and even managed to get a few new pots and knives as well as a cutting board. “We threw butcher paper on the table and cut everything up, put it all in baggies and stuck the baggies in a footlocker,” he says.

DISCOVERING JUDAISM WHILE DEPLOYED

The military Seder has offered many assimilated Jewish servicemen and servicewomen a vital introduction to their religion. “They walk away not just with full bellies or with a couple of tunes in their heads. They walk away with a heightened Jewish awareness and, in some cases, reconnected,” says Chaplain (Major) Shmuel Felzenberg, a chaplain for more than a decade who is currently at West Point. A graduate of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Israel, the forty-two-year-old chaplain has led Seders in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Moshe Lans, a reserve soldier for sixteen years, was called up on active duty to Iraq in 2006, just before Pesach. A chaplain assistant at the time, Rabbi Lans sat down to a Seder along with forty Jewish soldiers in Saddam Hussein's hunting lodge. “We took a place of such darkness and evil and turned it around by performing mitzvot there,” says Rabbi Lans, who received semichah from Pirchei Shoshanim, based in Lakewood, New Jersey.

“The place was packed,” says Laurie Zimmet, a lieutenant in the US Navy who participated in the Seder and is currently stationed in Washington, DC. “Many of those who came,

who weren't necessarily stationed at the base, traveled by Humvee and helicopter and on foot. These soldiers risked their lives for the sole purpose of being with other Jews at a Seder."

In 2007, Rabbi Goldstrom led a Seder in Tikrit, 100 miles northwest of Baghdad on the Tigris River. By that time, thanks to the input of the Jewish military chaplains, the army was supplying Jewish servicemen with "Seder kits." Each kit came equipped with a Seder plate, a zeroah, charoset, marror, a pound of matzah, a matzah cover, a Kiddush cup, a Hebrew/English Haggadah, boxes of grape juice, jars of kosher-for-Passover gefilte fish, kosher-for-Passover MREs [meals, ready to eat], and a white kittel and yarmulke. The kits were drop-shipped by helicopter to designated locations.

"Jewish soldiers are what the Army calls 'low density' . . . We're not concentrated in one place; there's one, maybe two in a unit. The rare opportunities when [we] get together with other Jewish soldiers are extremely meaningful," says Rabbi Goldstrom.

Many soldiers are surprised to see "so many" other Jewish military men around the table, and from such varied backgrounds. "We've had folks asking the Four Questions in Hebrew, English, Spanish, French, Russian, Ukrainian and Hungarian," says Rabbi Ackerson. "They love coming together."

For many soldiers, the Seder evokes dormant memories. "I may be sitting with a forty-year-old air guard who remembers that the last time he had an experience like this was when he was eleven, sitting at his grandfather's table," says Rabbi Felzenberg. "The experience can move even a combathardened warrior to tears."

"The first Pesach I was in Afghanistan, [I saw] the typical twenty two-year-old wise guy, who isn't afraid of anything, break down," says Chaplain (Colonel) Ira Kronenberg, who retired in 2008 after thirty-seven years in the military. "When I asked him to recite the Mah Nishtanah at the Seder, he started crying. He told me, 'I've been in Afghanistan for nine months, and this is the first time I'm crying.' He said the Seder reminded him of his grandfather's Seder."

Aside from arousing nostalgia, the Seder also piques the participants' curiosity, as it was designed to do. "I'm up till one or two in the morning answering questions," says Rabbi Ackerson. "Soldiers want to know about God, the meaning of the Bible, why it is such a problem to marry someone who isn't Jewish. I've even been asked if I can help find shidduchim for them. I help them understand that being a Jew in the US military is not inconsistent; [Judaism promotes the idea of] bringing freedom and democracy to others. Many of them had never heard Judaism spoken about that way."

Stephen Goldenberg experienced his first and "best" Pesach in 2008 in one of Hussein's

palaces. While on an MiTT (military transition team—a group of ten to fifteen soldiers who train local forces), living among Iraqis, he "put in his paperwork" saying he wanted to participate in Passover services. "I was just starting to explore Judaism at the time," says Goldenberg, who is now stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas and regularly attends an Orthodox synagogue in El Paso. "[That Pesach] was a wonderful experience. The rabbi held prayer services and a couple of the guys started crying. We had some rounds coming in the [second] night; we stopped for a minute and when it was all clear, we went back to the Seder. I felt privileged to be alive and to be able to celebrate Pesach."

Pesach, perhaps more than any other yom tov, speaks to a Jewish soldier. "[I think] it's the challenges of going to war, the separation from loved ones," says Rabbi Ackerson. "They want



Laurie Zimmet, a lieutenant in the US Navy, participated in a Seder held in Saddam Hussein's hunting lodge in 2006. Here she is seen in Iraq, lighting candles to welcome Pesach. Courtesy of Laurie Zimmet

that connection to home, family, Am Yisrael. All that comes forward when a soldier goes to war. The soldiers remember that Seder [held during wartime] for the rest of their lives."

FINDING THE AFIKOMAN IN OKINAWA

Chaplain (Lieutenant) Kevin Scott Bemel discovered that putting together a kosher Seder in Okinawa, Japan, was a far cry from pre-Pesach shopping in Los Angeles, his stateside home. The forty-nine-year-old Navy chaplain, who received semichah from Pirchei Shoshanim in Lakewood, New Jersey, sees to the religious needs of Jewish US servicemen throughout the Western Pacific. He has been serving in Okinawa, home base for the Third Marine Expeditionary Force, since 2006. According to Rabbi Bemel, the next closest rabbi is a civilian

in Tokyo. Being the sole Jewish presence in the area, he wasn't surprised that his first Pesach Seder drew close to half of the sixty Jews who live in the region.

"Unlike the Army and Air Force, the Department of Navy has tighter budgetary restrictions [on holiday provisions]," says Rabbi Bemel. He didn't let that daunt him; he simply rallied his "domestic troops," organizing a small Pesach committee comprised of four military wives, the chapel staff and himself. The crew got busy cleaning as he tracked down food for the Seder.

"Fortunately, there were some Passover supplies in the commissary, our grocery store," he says. "I got some freshly caught fish at the local fish market and got hold of some Pesach kits containing the matzot and bitter herbs. Using whatever resources we had, we cobbled together a Seder."

Despite the fact that most of the participants did not have a Jewish education, he urged everyone to take turns reading from the Haggadah. Three young sailors appeared while the Haggadah was being read; their ship had docked in Japan that day. "They were desperate to be able to celebrate a Seder," reports Rabbi Bemel. "Someone at the port directed them to the Seder going on at Camp Foster. As the only three Jews on their ship that had been at sea for quite a while, they were ecstatic to be with other Jews for a Seder. It raised everyone's spirits."

Passionate about serving as a chaplain, Rabbi Bemel was formerly employed in the commercial real estate field. He turned his life around on September 11, 2001; he was standing in the nation's Capitol Building when the Pentagon got hit. "It changed my perspective on life," he says. "I joined the Navy to help sailors and Marines who don't have their families with them and are so far away from home. Being isolated from other Jews often sparks a need to connect. I become their link to their Jewishness—their source of anything Jewish."

His second year in Okinawa, Rabbi Bemel held another community Seder. Twenty-eight people participated. "It was very heimishe," says Rabbi Bemel. "A number of the [servicemen] approached me, saying it was really like being at home; it was what they remembered from when they were children.

"We had conversations going on [around the table] in Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew and English," says Rabbi Bemel. "We were a kehilah experiencing Pesach together."

KEEPING FAITH IN THE JUNGLE

With the inception of the draft lottery in the late 1960s, young men lived in constant dread that their number would be called. In 1969, Dr. Norman Kahan's number was called; he was

Continued on page 16

Pesach on the Base

Continued from 15

going to Vietnam.

A graduate of Brooklyn Talmudical Academy and New York University Medical School, Captain Kahan, twenty-seven, began his tour of duty in the jungles of the Mekong Delta. He left behind his wife and son, who was less than a year old.

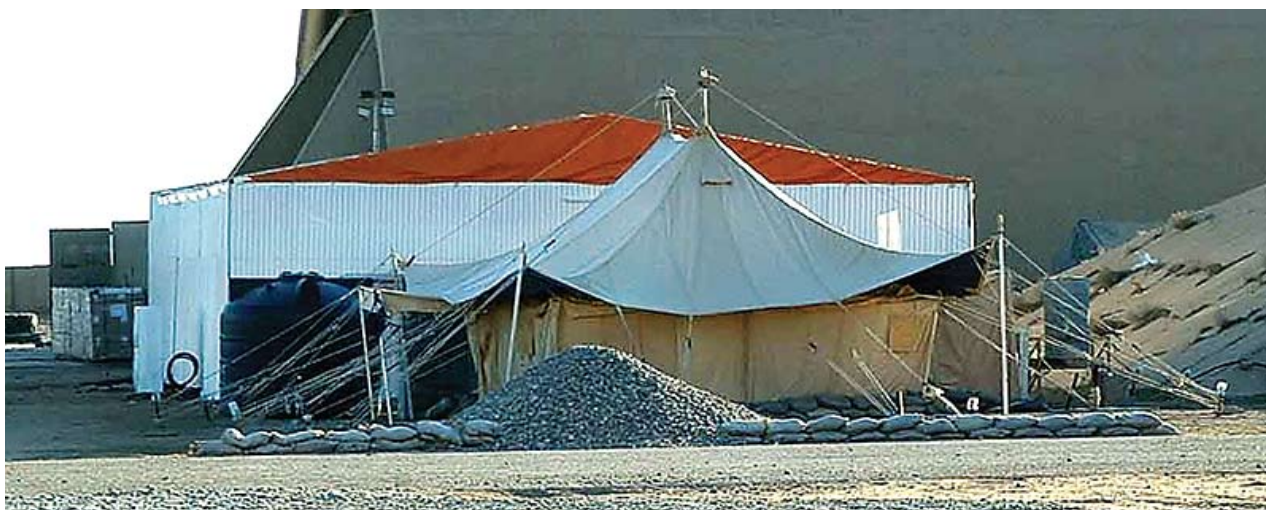
A battalian surgeon, Dr. Kahan was responsible for treating wounded soldiers. "Tragically, there was often very little for me to do other than send them out via helicopter, but I had to be there," he says.

"It was an otherworldly experience," says Dr. Kahan. "The God of the Western world, where there are toilets that flush, didn't exist in that dark part of the universe. You're out in the jungle where no one cares if it's Thursday or Friday; it's just one day after another melding into one."

In the midst of the gloom, Dr. Kahan heard that there would be a Passover Seder in Long Binh. He received permission to attend and welcomed the jeep ride out of the Delta, looking forward to a semblance of yom tov.

Arriving in Long Binh, he met Major Mendy Ganchrow, MD, a fellow Orthodox officer who was serving as an army combat surgeon for an evacuation hospital in the area. "He put me up in living quarters that were palatial compared to where we were," Dr. Kahan recalls. "We actually slept in beds with a roof over our heads. [Dr. Ganchrow] even had a refrigerator and kosher cheese!"

That Pesach, 400 Jewish soldiers celebrated the season of our freedom in an unused hospital wing. Soldiers from bases and field posts across the region sat together at long tables lined with matzot, wine and hundreds of TV dinners (provided by the Jewish Welfare Board). "It was a great feeling to be sitting there and observing the holiday, in relative comfort, with fellow



Chapel at Contingency Operating Base (C.O.B.) Speicher in Tikrit, northwest of Baghdad on the Tigris River, in Iraq. Courtesy of Chaplain David Goldstrom/US Army

Jews," says Dr. Kahan.

"Even though the vast majority of the soldiers were non-observant, some had never even been to a Seder before, no one in the room seemed impatient about sitting through an Orthodox Seder," says Dr. Ganchrow, who years later served as a president of the Orthodox Union. Dr. Ganchrow led the Seder (pinch-hitting for the unit chaplain, who was recuperating from a bout with laryngitis) and remembers the soldiers' rousing singing of Dayeinu, a song most of them found comfortingly familiar. "Many of the men probably absorbed more Yiddishkeit in those two hours than they had in years," he says.

The sound of incoming enemy rocket fire broke the revelry. "We knew instantly what it was," says Dr. Ganchrow. "One of the first things a soldier learns upon entering the Vietnam war zone is to distinguish between the powerful thud of outgoing mortars and the sinister whistle of an incoming missile." The sirens wailed, signaling everyone to crawl to an underground bunker until the all-clear sounded. Dr. Ganchrow announced, "I give you my solemn word that God will not allow harm to befall you if you perform the mitzvah of finishing the Seder." No one left the room.

At the Haggadah's conclusion, the chaplain (hoarse voice and all) and Dr. Ganchrow linked arms and spontaneously danced around the table singing "L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim." Soon everyone in the room joined them; many of the soldiers had tears streaming down their faces. "Men were unashamedly hugging each other," recalls Dr. Ganchrow. "It was emotionally overwhelming to join with hundreds of American GIs in the distant jungles of Vietnam, professing our shared love for far-off Jerusalem."

That Seder undoubtedly strengthened the morale and spiritual strength of every one of the soldiers present. Dr. Kahan, who admits to struggling with his faith while in Vietnam, counts himself among those who were deeply affected. "[In Vietnam] I saw the worst side of human nature," he says. "I saw mortally injured men dying in front of me But partaking in a religious ceremony, the Pesach Seder, with other Jews in that battle area was a very moving experience—one I will never forget."

"Reprinted with permission from Jewish Action, the magazine of the Orthodox Union, Spring 2010 issue."

Bayla Sheva Brenner is senior writer in the OU Communications and Marketing Department.

Austin Post 757 Sends Passover Supplies to 60 Locations World Wide *By Mike Baum*

Thousands of American Jewish soldiers, sailors, and airmen throughout the world were not able to be with their families to celebrate this year's Passover Seder, but were serving our country so that we could safely be with our family and friends.

We went about our daily lives, cleaning our homes prior to Passover, getting our Passover finery, planning our menus, buying the food, and finally safely celebrating our Passover Seder. But who allowed us to go about this daily routine and



Austin JWV Post 757, pictured at a recent post meeting, sent Passover Packages to over 190 Jewish soldiers, sailors, and airmen stationed at 60 locations world wide. The Post sends packages for the High Holidays, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover and has sent packages to over 800 Jewish deployed military members over the past 3 years.

safeguarded our freedom to celebrate Passover?

Austin Post 757 of the Jewish War Veterans of America sent packages containing kosher for Passover food items and Passover cards to 190 Jewish military personnel in 60 different locations. It is but a small thank you to Jewish soldiers, sailors and airmen for preserving and protecting our freedom.

Continued on next page

NEW MEMBERS

DEPARTMENT AT LARGE

Melvin Aaron Fineberg-99 • Arthur Jacobson -99 • David Bergman-100 • Stephen D. Constant-100 • Norman Crandus-100 • Samuel I. Deutsch-100 • Mark A. Dobbertien-100 • Jack A. Durra-100 • Morris Garber-100 • Allan Gewirtz-100 • Jennifer B. Griffith-100 • Neal R. Kreisler-100 • Bernard Sherman-100 • Joseph L. Weingarten-100

DEPARTMENT OF NEVADA

Melvin Irwin Kornberg-64 • Ron Ellen-65 • David Edward Kapel-65 • Newton Moss-65 • Ronald Arthur Weingard-65 • David Wolin-65

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

Art Melworm-603 • Harry Wachtel-603 • Norman K. Zeichner-603

DEPARTMENT OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Les Bergen-381

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

Leonard M. Anker-440 • Jerome S. Faber-440 • Michael Schaja-440 • Jerry L. Emerman-459 • Philip L. Glaser-501 • David Goldstein-501 • Wallace Richman-501 • Lawrence Shapiro-501 • Isaac D. Nachtigal-505 • Bruce Edelman-631 • Steven W. Levin-639 • David H. Miller-819 • Stanley Stern-819

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

Don Brinee Cohen-29 • Larry Ronald Gold-

berg-29 • Maurice Unger-29

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND

Milton Eisen- 567 • Jack Klass-567 • Ruth P. Weldon-567

DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Julian Krane-74 • Dennis Lloyd Albert-171 • Benjamin P. Barclay-171 • Kenneth Robert Wilens-171 • David Irving Welz-211 • Peter Bickoff-302

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

Harvey G. Gavorin-510 • Ralph Gordon Sachs-510

DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

Rhoda Janice Gillet-125 • Daniel P. Harrison-126 • Gerald Konefsky-126 • Arnold Dermer-133 • Uri Chuck Karp-133 • Marvin Rothman-133 • Michael Max Seidemann-133 • Marvin Bram-273 • Frederick L. Koved-395 • Julius Levine-395 • Michael H. Nussbaum-657 • Murray Mankowitz-740

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

Michael Rothschild-41 • Stanley I. Abramson-46 • William S. Friedman-46 • Paul M. Milbauer-68 • Leo Scarlet-105 • Neil Slater-250 • Stanley Z. Selesnick-413 • Don Goldberg- 652 • Eugene Malin-652 • Irving Weiss- 709 • Louis Goldsmith-717 •

Howard Pazer- 717 • Stanley M. Gewanter-776

DEPARTMENT OF OHIO

Bernard Myer Bader-44

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Serkan Seker- 176 • Barth E. Allgeier-215 • Milton P. Bolno-215 • Alfred George Levy-215 • Jeffrey H. Hill-305 • Dean Mazik-697 • Benjamin L. Dynner-791

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTHEAST-GA,AL,SC,TN

Arnold Maurice Balser-112 • Robert Gene Blaustein-112 • Victor Benatar-976 • Harvey Jay Berkowitz-976

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTHWEST

Robert I. Nagel-128 • Chris Young-128 • Woody Cohen-201 • Mark B. Levine-201 • David B. Smith-201 • John J. Dante-619

DEPARTMENT OF TX, AR, LA, OK

Elliott Martin Bain-580 • Ruhama Dankner-580 • Shulamith Fuchs-580 • Dov Glazer-580 • Irwin M. Marcus-580 • John Steven Shalett-580 • Louis A. Velez-580 • Lawrence Zaslowsky-580 • Stephen E. Riemer-753 • Jakub Brand-755 • Felipe Bumagny-755

DEPARTMENT OF VA-NC

Stan Tomberg-777

NEWS FROM CAPITOL HILL

Continued from page 4

As always, JWV's Capitol Hill Action Day saw our members in the congressional office buildings speaking eloquently on behalf of veterans issues. JWV speaks to Congress concerning the programs we provide and on proposed legislation for veterans benefits.

Overall, our three days on the Hill were a huge success!

VA Claims Processing

On Thursday, March 18th, PNC Norman Rosenshein represented JWV at a roundtable discussion aimed at fixing, or at least repairing, the current VA disability claims system. With over one million claims and appeals jammed in a fatally flawed system, the need for reform of the veterans' benefits claims processing system is obvious.

House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) brought together stakeholders, industry

leaders, veterans service organizations, members of Congress, and representatives from the VA to address new and unique ways of reducing the horrific claims backlog. Chairman Filner stated, "Frankly, it's an insult to our veterans and their service."

PNC Norman Rosenshein actively participated in the discussions, emphasizing that overhauling the clogged claims processing system has become JWV's number one legislative priority. PNC Rosenshein has pressed the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) for answers concerning their procurement procedures.

Although everyone agrees the system needs to be changed, there are various opinions on how to do that. These ideas include hiring more claims processors, moving to a fully electronic record system, and quickly adjudicating claims which are scientifically linked to military service, orthopedic conditions and hearing loss.

National Commander Ed Robins, who has handled veterans claims for decades, and our National Service Officer Director, PDC Michael Winnick, will keep JWV focused on improving the claims processing system.

Tribute to PFC William Silberman

General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, sent a tribute to PFC William Silberman for our archives.

At a recent reception, General Conway said he had something for me. I then received this tribute to PFC Silberman.

Our museum and archives record the patriotism and heroism of American Jewish military personnel. We are pleased to add this tribute to PFC Silberman.

Thank you General Conway!

Austin Post 757

A sample of the locations where packages were mailed includes Iraq (Baghdad, Balad, Baquba, Tallil, Taji, Al Sahra Airfield, Forward operating base Hammer); Afghanistan (Bagram

Airfield, forward operating base Shank and Kherwar); Seoul, Korea; Yokosuka, Japan; and US Navy ships at sea (USS Wasp, USS Vella Gulf, and USS George H. W. Bush).

At Agudas Achim's Kosher Chili cook-

off and at the recent JWV fund raising concert sponsored by Jewish Family Services, members of the Jewish community wrote messages on the greeting cards that were included in the packages.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEES

Action Committee

By Co-Chairman PNC Warren S. Dolny

The purpose of The Action Committee is to be both reactive and proactive to the elements of discrimination and bigotry.

When we learn of anti-Semites in the media, the Internet or through our echelons, we analyze and determine what course to take. Considering the age of our membership, many times we will enlist other parts of our community for demonstration and rallies. Often we will appear as speakers at an event where permitted. Other times we will write letters to the media and Internet or contact local and national elected or appointed individuals for support.

Proactively we will do much the same as above in anticipation of an event that we deem imminent.

We will assign department, council or post members to carry out our purpose.

Awards Committee

By Chairman PNC Ira Novoselsky

Everyone enjoys being recognized for his or her hard work. One way that the Jewish War Veterans of the USA does this is through the Awards Committee. There are 21 different awards for Departments, Councils, Posts and individuals. The Committee makes determinations on 18 of these awards. The only ones that are not given by the Committee are the Murray Rosen Member of the Year Award, which is determined by the National Commander, and Membership Awards for a Post and an individual.

The Award guidelines and instructions are on-line at www.jwv.org. Everyone is reminded that the Committee cannot make awards to those who do not submit the appropriate paperwork and documentation. Follow the instructions, guidelines and time-frames and your submission will be reviewed.

Use photographs, newspaper

articles, flyers for events or anything that puts JWV in the forefront – hospital visits, ceremonies, etc. Put in chronological order from the beginning of the year. Label events, identify members and dignitaries.

Good luck to all.

Development Committee

By Chairman PNC Monroe Mayer

Most of you have received our Annual Calendars, and hopefully have read them prior to pinning them on the wall. The same is also true of the *Veteran*, which you are obviously reading now. In our publications we try to tell the story of the Jewish Veteran, and who can tell it best but those who are reading this, our Jewish Veterans.

We received a complaint from a vet, that we hadn't published enough WWII stories. I replied to him, that we need those stories, especially from those who actually were involved. He responded with his personal story which was of a B-24 Liberator co-pilot, who was shot down and ended up in a German POW camp. He was in our Calendar for 2010. How else would this story have been preserved, if he hadn't sent it along?

If you have a story of yourself, a relative, or friend that will interest all of us, please forward it to us...The only way the incidents will be recorded and preserved is if you send them.....now.

Emergency Management Committee

By Chairman, PNC Nathan Goldberg and Co-Chairman, PNC Sam Greenberg

Recently, we have all read about the disaster in Haiti and the general requests for help—most financial. While we have no direct ties to the people of Haiti, nor do I know of any Jews who may have suffered loss in that country, the magnitude of the disaster is such that the committee felt it should recommend to

the coordinating committee that JWV should participate in helping the Haitian people. It appeared to us that it was the “menshelach” thing to do and our members would expect us to participate.

The committee recommended that we request our members to contribute to Haitian Relief (and also “Chilean Relief”) through National Headquarters, and we will forward the funds to appropriate relief agencies.

You are all aware that like all other organizations such as ours, funds are scarce. Activities have been curtailed because of lack of funds. Charitable organizations are all suffering. On the other hand, we cannot be accused of turning a deaf ear to people's needs. In addition, the committee has recommended that from our Emergency Fund, to show our support for the plight of the Haitian people, the sum of \$2,000, to be split among two Israeli relief organizations on the ground in Haiti at \$500.00 each and a U.S. relief organizations collecting funds for Haiti relief in the sum of \$1,000.00.

While the committee generally entertains requests for aid in making rewards, considering the magnitude of the damage and suffering, this was the Jewish thing to do. The recommendation was approved by the coordinating committee. Staff has advised that the money has been forwarded.

Foreign Affairs Committee

By Co-Chairman PNC Warren S. Dolny

Our purpose is to monitor the media and Internet to determine when we believe international anti-Semitism, discrimination and bigotry exist against Jews and Israel. Often anti-Semitism is disguised in terrorism. We will then advise the Action, Homeland Security, and other appropriate committees to consider what course to pursue.

We attend meetings of national and local Jewish organizations where often an overview of what

is occurring throughout the world is discussed and analyzed and then determine our response both orally and in writing to the proper venue.

Health Initiatives Committee (HIC)

By Chairman Jacob Romo

Approximately 1.9 million U.S. troops have been deployed for OIF/OEF in Iraq and Afghanistan. A recent study found that the “psychological toll of these deployments—many involving prolonged exposure to combat-related stress over multiple rotations—may be disproportionately high compared with the physical injuries of combat...” Concerns have most recently centered on two combat-related injuries in particular: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). The media have noted the increasing incidence of depression, suicide, and suicide attempts among returning veterans. Additionally there are the rates of traumatic amputations, other muscular-skeleton injuries, and diseases troops are bringing home from their combat tours.

WWII and Korean veterans have health care concerns associated with their advancing age. Vietnam combat veterans are coping with Agent Orange exposure related illnesses, PTSD, and traumatic injuries similar to what our OIF/OEF veterans are dealing with.

The HIC needs to prioritize what issues and what groups of veterans will be the focal point(s) for our concerns over the next number of months. I invite all interested JWV members who are interested in serving on the HIC to please email me at Jacob.Romo@VA.Gov.

Holocaust Committee

By Chairman Michael Winnick

It is time to begin planning our “Yom Ha Shoa” commemorations for 2011. I know we haven't reached this year's commemora-

tion, but to do it properly we have to bring many different venues together.

The United States Congress established the Days of Remembrance as our nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust. Next year the "National Days of Remembrance" are May 1 - 7.

Sunday May 1, 2011, is Yom Ha Shoa. It is really much closer than the calendar shows, and, if we don't make the effort to remember the 6 million, who will?

As an aid to planning events for Holocaust commemorations the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum offers a planning guide and resources on their web site, www.ushmm.org/remembrance, that you can use to enhance local observances of Yom Ha Shoa.

We also have within the ranks of JWV a number of "Liberators," G.I.'s who were the first to enter the camps and see first hand the horrors of the Holocaust. Call on these men to tell their stories; they offer a dramatic look at what unfortunately is fast becoming a footnote to history.

It is up to us to carry the banner with the emblazoned words, "Never Again," and to remind the world of what "Genocide" really is. Too many organizations are trying to make the systematic elimination of the Jewish population a small part of a larger effort. The fact is that the Holocaust was a concerted effort to eliminate the Jewish population from Europe and, while they were at it, to eliminate the Roma (Gypsies) and homosexuals also.

UN Memorial Ceremony

*By Holocaust Vice-Chairman
Hannah Deutch*

On Tuesday, January 27th, I attended the UN Memorial ceremony—"An Authentic Basis for Hope: Holocaust Remembrance and Education." As in previous years the turnout was tremendous, and the JWV was well-represented.

Memories were awakened and not easily put back to sleep. The program as always was astounding. Of course, there was a message from UN Secretary General

Ban Ki-Moon, which was delivered by the Moderator, Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information.

Among the speakers were Ambassador Gabriela Shalev, who is the Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN; Mr. Leonid Rozenberg, a Russian WWII veteran who spoke in Russian, with a translator, about his experiences during the war; and Ms. Ruth Glasberg Gold, a Holocaust survivor.

The Keynote Speaker was Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, who is the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, who touched everyone with the tale of his survival and the story of the past 70 years of Jewish persecution. He called the audience to action and most of all ZACHOR (Remembrance).

Cantor Ya'akov Motzen from Israel sung the Kel Ma'le Rachmin and Ani Ma'amin. The musical theme was presented by Elisha Abas an Israeli pianist and Yoon Kwon, of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

INSURANCE COMMITTEE

By Chairman Steve Zeitz

As a new benefit, the JWV will be offering for members and others two travel plans. Many travelers assume that their basic medical insurance plan will be enough when they travel abroad. This is often not the case, as domestic major medical plans are not designed for international travel and may leave serious medical gaps or lack of coverage when needed most. Our broker Marsh will be offering two plans--Patriot Travel and Patriot Platinum. Both plans provide a minimum of 10 days to a maximum of 3 years of coverage. The plans will be marketed via the JWV dedicated insurance web site (www.personalplans.com/jwv). Depending on the plan chosen, ranges will be from \$1 million to \$2 million with varying deductibles both in and out of PPO networks. This is a good opportunity for our members and friends who travel to protect themselves and their families.

Generous Benefit Amounts

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RecoveryCare steps in with up to **\$1,200.00** in cash benefits for each hospital or skilled nursing facility stay.

JWV RecoveryCare delivers up to an additional **\$6,000.00 a year** for home health care. So you can collect \$150.00 a day for:

- ✓ Rehabilitation
- ✓ Nurse visits
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GIVING GOES A LONG WAY

One of the major legacies of the Jewish War Veterans is the jewel called the National Museum of American Jewish Military History. Our Museum, near DuPont Circle in Washington, D.C., tells both non-Jews and Jews of the heroic and continued Jewish participation in the Military of the United States.

But where does the fuel to run our "Little Engine that Could" Museum come from? In other words how do we fund our building and its hard-working staff? Two words immediately come to mind – "bequests" and "gifts." Let me point out to you two examples.

Lieutenant Colonel Larry Epstein, a 30-year US Army/Army Reserve veteran and Army War college graduate, served in Military

Intelligence during Vietnam in Indochina; in Panama; and during the Gulf War as CENTCOM Deputy Commander for Intelligence. He was a Jewish War Veterans National Service Officer; Department of New York National Service Officer; New York County Commander and Manhattan Post 1 Commander. Larry, a Brooklyn native and a legend in the computer industry, in 1978 was the first person to attach a hard drive to a personal computer. Additionally, he wrote books on computers, theater and dance.

Larry died last year of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis – Lou Gehrig's disease – which he contracted when he was in the military. He devised to our Museum \$100,000.00. He cared, and we

thank you Larry!

According to Post Editor, Harold Fisher, and Past National Commander, Sam Greenberg, Fegelson-Young-Feinberg Post 697 Levittown of the Department of Pennsylvania has contributed many hundred of thousands of dollars over the years to insure the continued survival of our museum. A walk through the Museum – its vestibule, rooms and walls – shows the kindness, caring and generosity of the Post and its members.

To Post 697, and Pennsylvania Posts 98, 215, 575, 212, and to all the Posts of The Department of Pennsylvania we raise our glass and toast you and thank you as well.



PNC DAVID L. MAGIDSON
President, NMAJMH

If you care enough about your service and Jewish participation in the United States Military, please remember the graciousness of Lt. Col. Larry Epstein and Post 697. Please include us in a gift, will or trust. It is a gift which keeps on giving!

FROM OUR ARCHIVES By Pamela Elbe

Collections Manager/Archivist NMAJMH

May is Jewish American Heritage Month, and this year the National Museum of American Jewish Military History would like to pay tribute to the Jewish servicemen and women who have given

their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It is vitally important, more-over the mission of the NMAJMH, to recognize that Jews have served in the armed forces of the

United States since the founding of our nation and that Jewish men and women continue to fight and die for this country. To date thirty-five Jews have died while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan:

Agami, Daniel - Specialist, Army, Florida
Allen, Howard Paul - Sergeant, Army National Guard, Arizona
Ben Yahudah, Benyahmin - Specialist, Army, Georgia
Bernstein, David - 1st Lieutenant, Army, Pennsylvania
Bitton, Albert - Corporal, Army, Chicago
Blum, Aron C. - Sergeant, Marines, Arizona
Bruckenthal, Nathan - Petty Officer, Coast Guard, New York
Cohen, Michael R. - Corporal, Marines, Pennsylvania
Dvorin, Seth - 2nd Lieutenant, Army, New Jersey
Engel, Mark E. - Lance Corporal, Marines, Colorado
Evnin, Mark A. - Corporal, Marines, Vermont
Fairbairn, Aaron - Private First Class, Army, Washington
Farkas, Daniel - 1st Lieutenant, Army National Guard, New York
Fletcher, Jacob S. - Private First Class, Army, New York
Freeman, Daniel J. - Specialist, Army, Cincinnati, OH
Harrington, Foster - Sergeant, Marines, Texas
Jacobson, Elizabeth N. - Airman First Class, Air Force, Florida
Kane, Jeremy - Lance Corporal, Marines, Cherry Hill, NJ

Krissoff, Nathan M. - 1st Lieutenant, Marines, Nevada
Rosenberg, Mark - Major, Army, Florida
Schrage, Dustin - Corporal, Marines, Florida
Schulte, Roslyn - 1st Lieutenant, Air Force, St. Louis, MO
Secher, Robert Michael - Captain, Marines, Tennessee
Seiden, Marc S. - Specialist, Army, New Jersey
Shackelford, Michael - Sergeant, Army, Denver, CO
Sherman, Alan D. - Sergeant, Marines, New Jersey
Sklaver, Benjamin - Captain, Army Reserve, Hamden, CT
Stern, Andrew K. - 1st Lieutenant, Marines, Tennessee
Tarlavsky, Michael - Captain, Army, 5th Special Forces Group
Weinger, Robert M. - Sergeant, Army National Guard, Illinois
Wershow, Jeffery - Specialist, Army National Guard, Florida
Wolfe, Colin J. - Private First Class, Marines, Virginia
Wolfer, Stuart A. - Major, Army, Florida
Wong, Elijah - Sergeant, Army National Guard, Arizona
Yelner, Jonathan - Senior Airman, Air Force, California

In honor of the sacrifices made by these young men and women the NMAJMH has created a small exhibition entitled Fallen Heroes:

Remembering American Jewish Casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. We hope that this exhibit

will serve not only as a memorial to those who have died, but also as a reminder of the long legacy of Jewish service in the American military.

Administratively Speaking **By Mary Westley, Asst. Administrator**

The National Museum of American Jewish Military History is constantly looking for volunteers as docents, event planners, graphic artists, and library assistants. For the past two summers, college student Sam Geselowitz has faithfully reported to me to help pass out our visitor brochures to local hotels and businesses and to Pam Elbe, our Archivist/Collections Manager in cataloging our library. This year, due to the passing of Senior Museum Docent Al Lerner, Sam has agreed to train as a docent, as well. Also volunteering last year, but for school credit, was Kristen Kersey who created a series of letters suitable for contacting groups that might wish to visit the museum. She also was a champion graphic artist and was able to create quite a few announcements and flyers for our summer month events.

I have been asked this year to research volunteer organizations, most of which are nationwide, some worldwide, and to see just what kind of “matches” there might be with local chapters. I was able to come up with an interesting and diverse list that I posted with, and I would like to pass it on: **AARP’s**

Create for Good, VolunteerMatch.org, VolunteerSolutions.org, 1-800-Volunteer.org, Idealist.org and Serviceleader.org. For instance in joining AARP’s Create for Good, I was able to enter in the online community section and post a “topic,” and I did not have to be a member! It was pretty easy too. You may come across other organizations that you have worked with. I would love it if you would share them with me. And if you would like to volunteer, or, if you know someone in the Washington, DC metro area who you think would be a good match for us, call me at (202) 265-6280 or mwestley@nmajmh.org. We look forward to hearing from you. In the words from the mission statement of VolunteerMatch, *“Volunteering is about relationships; bringing good people and good causes together.”*

Through the Eyes of Children

After a recent visit to the National Museum of American Jewish Military History from the 5th and 6th Grade students at the Hebrew



Day School in Silver Spring, MD, the students wrote to express their thanks for a very special experience.

“I want to thank...the museum for letting us look around at those AMAZING pieces of History!”

“I now realize how important we Jews are.”

“It was an amazing experience. It made me proud to be Jewish.”

The NMAJMH is a special place for those of all ages. Support it proudly.

From our Archives **By Mike Rugel**

Assistant Collections Manager/NMAJMH

The worn Model 1940 riding boots of Private Harold Ehrenpreis evoke an Army man who’s spent countless hours on a horse. Most people associate combat on horseback with an earlier time, but, when Harold Ehrenpreis was issued these boots in 1941, the horse cavalry was still an active part of the U.S. Army. Mounted cav-



Boots of Harold Ehrenpreis

alrymen were trained at Fort Riley, Kansas until 1944. As with every other part of the military, this included Jews. Many had prior riding experience, but it was completely unfamiliar terri-

tory for some from urban environments.

Seen at right, Morris Corman was an early draftee before the U.S. had officially entered World War II. He was sent to Fort Riley in 1941 where he earned the nickname “The Brooklyn Cowboy.”

Before another young Jewish soldier, Marvin Kastenbaum, was sent to Fort Riley, his experience with horses consisted only of seeing one pulling the milkman’s cart down his street in the Bronx. In a letter home after his first days of cavalry training in 1944, he expressed surprise that “they’re big animals when you get up close to them.” He thought the riding would lead him “to be split in two before the week is out.” But it didn’t take long for Kastenbaum to become a solid rider, easily passing the mounted problem training, firing live ammunition while riding a course on horseback.

Kastenbaum was among the last of the soldiers trained as a mounted cavalryman. The final cavalry charge in combat was in the Philippines in 1942. The horse cavalry units were gradually disbanded, and those trained on

horses were reassigned to mechanized cavalry or infantry units.



Morris Corman at Fort Riley

DEPARTMENT AT LARGE

Samuel Axelrod-100 • Edward Burg-100 • Albert Feigelson-100 • Morris Fine-100 • Martin Gellman-100 • Martin Greene-100 • Isaac Schwadron-100 • Mrs. Alexander Sherman-100 • Joseph Shuster-100 • Benjamin Sklaver-100 • Robert Weiner-100 • Julius A. Zlotnick-100

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

Lawrence Golland-123 • Melvin Wities-185 • Leonard Greenwald-385 • Harold S. Krasner-385 • David Barrad-593 • David Green-595 • Harry I. Fingerroth-603 • William Guralnick-603 • Robert Siegel-603 • Martin Zolot-603 • Hugo Zelinger-617 • Abraham Breverman-680 • Joseph S. Jagoda-680 • Albert Nameth-680 • Samuel Wechsler-680 • Daniel F. Cohen-750 • Leonard B. Leon-750

DEPARTMENT OF CONNECTICUT

Sid Miller-45 • Jack Saffer-45 • Sidney Sandick-45 • Gershon Weil-45 • Jack Smith -56 • Bertha Spector-56 • Colman Dashefsky-141 • Morton Schpero-317

DEPARTMENT OF DELAWARE

Sol Balick-747 • Stuart H. Flamm-747 • Jacob V. Fried-747 • Manuel Skversky-747 • Leonard Levithan-767

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

Leonard Garten-199 • Sidney Cutler-246 • Herman Erdman-266 • Max Levine-266 • Alex Spielman-266 • Robert Tepper-300 • Irving Cypen-330 • Louis Silverstein-373 • Harold Brody-400 • Hans M. Krieger-409 • Harvey Barkmak-440 • Harold Bernstein-440 • Herbert Fox-440 • Oscar Levine-440 • Gustave Oberman-459 • Martin Lapsker-502 • William Remmlinger-519 • Saul Sloam-519 • Murray Dembo-520 • Max S. Feldberg-520 • Julius Halpern-520 • Irving I. Lazar-520 • Arnold Weisman-520 • Joseph Zuckerman-520 • Norman Auslander-613 • Myron Dolgin-631 • Daniel Hollander-639 • Michael Rawson-730 • Harold Rosenblum-759 • Stanley D. Leslie-778 • Harvey J. Aronoff-819

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

Louis J. Pressburger-89 • David Levin-153 • Jacob Levin-153 • Irving M. Stein-328

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND

Leon Dobres-117 • Isadore Goodman-117 • Joseph K. Rosenblatt, Jr.-117 • William Goldstein-167 • Alvin Bramow-567 • Leonard Burchman-567 • Paul S. Jaffe-567 • Stanley S. Lowenthal-567 • Emil B. Nassau-567 • Irvin Silverman-567 • Robert W. Abel-692 • Frank M. Chapper-692 • PDC Albert I. Lerner-692 • Jerry Wells-707

DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Bernard Glantz-26 • Joseph Cohen-32 • Henry S. Gaffin-32 • Mitch Goldstein-32 • Harold Press-32 • Alfred Raifman-74 • James Fox-154 • Robert Appleton-157 • Leon E. Rabinovitz-157 • Leonard Ginsburg-161 • George Norman-161

• Charles Sagan-161 • Morris L. Shultz-161 • Herbert M. Silver-161 • Irving Brem-193 • Harold Krasnoff-193 • Jacob L. Siegel-193 • Carl M. Frutkoff-211 • Albert Kramer-211 • Phyllis Miller-211 • Willett Smith-211 • Burt Levy-220 • Leonard A. Mulman-220 • Louis Friedman-302 • Morton S. Harpel-302 • Norman I. Rottenberg-302 • Frank Kozol-735 • Robert Lesco-735 • Robert A. Saunders-735

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

Henry H. Politzer-135 • Leslie A. Bramson-474 • Harry Fridson-474 • Mort Gold-474 • Bernard Nolish-474 • Allen S. Rosenfeld-474 • Carl Schram-474 • Milton Abramson-510 • Robert Woolf-510

DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA

Irving P. Steinberg-354

DEPARTMENT OF MO/KS/NE/IA

Normand E. Roffman-260 • Sam M. Cohen-346

DEPARTMENT OF NEVADA

George Canvasser-21 • George Lynwood Massey-64 • Newton Moss-65 • Allen H. Dunaisky-711

DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

Harry Siegel-10 • Sol Swerdloff-10 • Albert Brilliant-34 • Harry Fishman-39 • Matthew Kalman-39 • Martin Novek-39 • Bernard H. Swartz-39 • Gerson J. Abramson-125 • Henry I. Epstein-125 • Abraham Glass-125 • Bernard Kobb-125 • Benjamin Mayerowitz-125 • Jack Tesser-125 • Karl S. Goodstein-126 • Melvin Levine-126 • Harold M. Rayden-126 • Gerald S. Rosenberg-126 • Herman J. Siegel-126 • Bernard Siman, M. D.-126 • Harold Freedman-146 • Kurt Gimson-146 • Seymour Sherman-146 • Albert Berkelhammer-156 • Matthew Wiener-178 • Milton Lisker-273 • Samuel Solomon-273 • Harry Weiss-273 • Theodore Metzendorf-311 • Irving Feingold-395 • Nason Gordon-498 • Benjamin Rosen-498 • Jerome B. Schuman-498 • Allan S. Weinberg-498 • Benjamin Harris-536 • Arthur Isaacson-569 • Kalman Roey-569 • Sylvan L. Goldfein-601 • Irwin Kavesh-601 • Dan Sesskin-601 • George Applebaum-609 • Ben Edelson-609 • Jerry Gubernick-609 • David Lemberg-609 • Stuart Lind-609 • Walter J. Loeb-609 • Milton Moslovitz-609 • Sheldon Raskin-609 • William Schuler-609 • Sol Yecalsik-609 • Seymour T. Kossak-651 • Stanley Mitchel-651 • Allen Kamen-657 • Henry Gutin-695 • Jack Mandell-695 • Reginald E. Gilbert-740 • Julius Mendalis-741 • Julian Batlan-972

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man-70 • Harold M. Gottheim-105 • Charles Jacobs-105 • William Leventhal-105 • Seymour W. Block-131 • Jack Marks-131 • Warren Wilkins-131 • Stanley Ross-183 • S. Winter-191 • Leo Rozman-206 • Herbert Hecht-209 • Raymond Cohen-312 • Milton Hirschhorn-336 • Leonard Hirshfield-425 • Aaron R. Kramer-425 • Emanuel Rosen-425 • Ted Klein-625 • Milton D. Feld-648 • Leo Goldfarb-648 • Marvin Meister-724 • Harry Melnick-724 • Joseph Baum-731 • Andor Schafer-770 • Leonard E. Borger-776 • Stanley R. Grey-776 • Alan Levey-776 • Burton Yudin-776

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Leonard M. Biarsky-44 • Irving C. Brown-44 • Harold Cadkin-44 • Lawrence Russell-44 • Frank Nutis-122 • Harry Topolosky-122 • Harry Koenigsberg-587

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

David H. Bieber-83 • William W. Lipsitt-97 • Bernard B. Fineman-98 • Harold Steinberg-98 • Marty Damiano-165 • Monroe M. Jurkowitz-165 • Samuel Richlin-176 • Herman M. Aqua-212 • Teddy Levinson-212 • Carl Abramson-215 • Isadore Diamond-215 • Philip Kretchman-215 • Ben Coren-305 • Joseph P. Garfinkel-305 • Beatrice R. Lucas-305 • Lawrence C. Rappaport-305 • David Burke-499 • Irwin Kramer-499 • Sidney Marcus-499 • Stanley E. Snyder-499 • Milton O. Strahl-499 • Joseph Schwartz-575 • Leonard Dermer-697 • Melvin Newman-697 • Mitchell Zimmelman-697 • Daniel Kanefsky-706 • Sidney Singer-718

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Sydney P. Cohen-23 • Eli Kaufman-23

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTHEAST GA-AL-SC-TN

Robert Alexander-112 • Rachel R. Lehmann-112 • Jurdon Messinger-121 • Mannie Riesenber-121 • Benjamin Berendt-237

DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST AZ-NM

Melvin Stein-194 • Harry Appelton-210 • Gerald R. Aptekar-210 • Seymour Bader-210 • Irving Bloom-210 • Max Brier-210 • Richard Cohen-210 • Melvin Lee Harris-210 • Gilbert Korner-210 • Earl M. Lowenstein-210 • Herman Sheldon Mandell-210 • Ernest Michel-210 • George Platt-210 • Earl B. Levitt-375 • Hy. Mauger-375 • Olga Maizel-375 • Irvin Feller-619

DEPARTMENT OF TX-AR-LA-OK

Sidney Dukatt-256 • Sol Greenberg-256 • Sydney Kuntz-256 • Mendel Melasky-256 • Arnold Radoff-256 • Sam Schwartz-256 • Martin Burstein-580 • Harry Melman-580 • Samuel A. Steeg-757

DEPARTMENT OF VA-NC

Joseph A. Weinberg-155 • Julius Feuer-158

DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

Jack Langer-487

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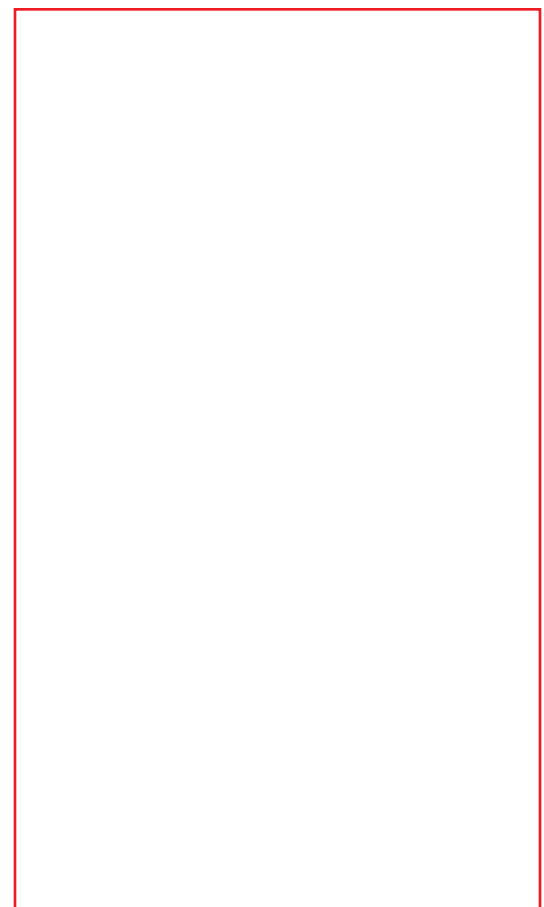
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