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## A Message From The Commander

By Daniel Weiss

The recent news stories have not been comforting... Jewish graves in cemeteries vandalized. Synagogues spray-painted with messages of hate. Sharp increases in anti-Semitic activity. Demonstrations on college campuses and in business against Israel. News reports condemning Israel with an undercurrent of "Zionism is racism" in the reporting. Politicians, who lost re-election based on their pro-Palestinian positions, blaming "the Jews" for their electoral defeats.

Initially, most people would look at this list and conclude that these actions have taken place in former countries of the Warsaw Pact, or in Third World nations and the more radical regimes in Europe. They would be wrong. All these events have taken place in the United States.

Ever since the Arabs have taken to attack Israel legitimacy once again, these anti-Semites and the anti-Israel propagandists have been out condemning Israeli action in defense of her people. But this time, the ugliness is right in our own backyard.

The Anti-Defamation League has reported that 17% of Americans harbor anti-Semitic views and that the number climbs to 30% in European nations. The college-driven Israel divestment forces have made their case in places such as Harvard, Cal-Berkeley and the University of Michigan. In Concordia College in Canada, Arab and anti-Israeli students did not allow former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to speak on campus, a violation of the rights of those students and teachers who wanted to hear what Mr. Netanyahu was reporting about the situation in the Middle East.

This is why it is so important for us to stand up against those who seek to destroy Israel and our Jewish way of life. There has been controversy within the Jewish community over the vocal support that the Evangelical Christian movement has given to Israel. Yes, there are many social and political issues that separate the Jewish and Evangelical Christian communities, most notably the school prayer controversy.

However, if any group wants to march and raise its voice in support of the Jewish state and her citizens, they should be applauded, not criticized. We welcome our Christian brothers support for Israel and thank them for standing up and being heard.



It is important for you to respond to any anti-Israel propaganda in your communities. There have been boycotts by subscribers of The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times and others, who view the anti-Israel bias in the reporting of these newspapers to be blatant and unapologetic. I encourage you to respond to any anti-Israel columns in your local publications. Write to the editor and make your opinions heard!

It is also imperative that you continue to monitor the increase in anti-Semitism taking place in Europe. Urge our elected members of Congress to investigate these acts of hatred fully and hold these nations accountable for these actions.

It is in this vein that I ask that you stay informed about the activities in your local posts. National Headquarters will, in the coming weeks, increase its communications with the echelons with regards to policy and issue positions. Also, check the organization's website frequently. It will be updated regularly in the coming weeks with helpful information that you can use to promote various issues of importance to JWV. Our members have always responded when asked, and I have no doubt they will do so again.

Also, it is important that you let headquarters know about any incidents in your community that need our attention. Our National Action Chairmen will be in touch with you to see if further action is warranted.

Find allies within your community who might be willing to join with us in programs that aid in the defense of Israel, or in opposition to anti-Israel actions in the community or in the local media. Speak to other veterans organizations in your area, or with local clergy and other religious leaders. Work towards a consensus so that your community speaks with one voice.

This is why it is so important that you continue to support our Allied Veterans Mission to Israel. This is a vital program, that the government of Israel recognized as a successful program benefiting Israel's image. Send a non-Jewish veterans leader in your area on the trip, so they can see first-hand how the people of Israel courageously live their lives and how this democratic nation welcomes all who want to visit or live. Past participants have returned as unofficial ambassadors for Israel, and have contributed greatly to changes in attitudes within various veterans organizations. Contact National Headquarters if you would like to participate in this program.

Though it hasn't been a theme in this column, you know how important it is to continue to press our elected leaders to support programs and policies that benefit America's veterans and their families. When the new Congress convenes in January, the veterans budget will once again be under consideration and we need your voices heard on this issue. For those of you who read my column in the last issue of The Jewish Veteran, you know about some of the issues of concern to the organization with regards to veterans benefits. Contact National Headquarters and check our website to see how you can help.

I will be traveling around the country over the next few months meeting with as many members as I can. I invite you to come to these meetings so I can meet you and hear about your concerns. Obviously, we can do things better and your opinions are important. Let me know what we can do to make JWV even greater. Contact your local Post Commander, or your Department Commander to see where and when I will be in your area.

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# General Sir John Monash: A Jewish Australian General Who was Master of the Battlefield In World War I

By Seymour "Sy" Brody, National Editor

General Sir John Monash, of Australia, was a scholar, engineer, soldier and nation builder.

At the outbreak of World War I, Monash was given the command of the 3rd Division of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). In 1914, he was sent to Gallipoli where he served with distinction. It was a terrible campaign and he learned much about commanding and himself.



In 1916, Monash was promoted to the rank of major general and was sent to the Western Front. He had developed a reputation as a careful and efficient commander. He took part in the offenses at Messines and Ypres. In 1918, he was appointed commander of the Australian Corps.

It was at the Battle of Hamel on July 4, 1918, that his tactics won a well needed victory for the Allies. Monash needed extra fresh troops for his war weary soldiers. He was given 2,000 American troops who had recently arrived from the United States.

Monash spent a week with American and Australian officers preparing for the battle. Unlike his predecessor, who preferred tactics of attrition, which cost many lives, Monash was a construction engineer who harnessed modern technology for big projects.

He assembled the latest aircraft, Mark V armored tanks, heavy artillery and supply carriers. Developing a new blitzkrieg style strategy, he sent planes over Hamel to photograph German positions. He ordered artillery officers to fire heavy rounds at dawn for the first week of battle to get the Germans used to dawn shelling.

Monash ordered tank drivers to give soldiers joy rides and paint nicknames on tanks that would protect the infantry. He ordered hot meals the day before which greatly impressed the American soldiers.

Finally, he chaired a planning meeting of 250 officers with a 133 agenda items and almost as many detailed maps. The meeting lasted four hours.

After putting his troops into their positions on July 3rd, he circulated a telegram telling them the "eyes of the world were on them." He recalls that the American troops were all excited and anxious for the battle, but were a little nervous. He had deliberately chosen July 4th, 1918, to inspire the American troops.

On July 4, well before dawn, Monash ordered the usual shelling but also moved his heavy artillery forward. At 3:10 A.M. he then sent 60 tanks toward Hamel followed by Australian and American troops. Planes then bombarded accurately plotted German positions and, as a new tactic, dropped spare ammunition for the troops.

This was the first time that any general had combined air power, tanks, artillery and infantry in such a well coordinated manner. The Germans, besieged as never before, did not know what hit them. Australian and American troops killed or disabled about 2,000 Germans and captured 1,500 prisoners. They took Hamel before sunrise with only about 800 casualties, dead and wounded.

Monash had broken the stalemate of trench warfare. The battle turned out as he had planned. He thought they would capture Hamel in 90 minutes, but it took 93 minutes.

On August 12, 1918, King George the V knighted John Monash and this was the first knighthood bestowed on a soldier in the battlefield in over a 100 years.

John Monash was born in West Melbourne, Australia, on June 27, 1865. He was the son of Prussian Jewish parents who had arrived in Australia in 1864. He entered Scotch College with a complete understanding of his Jewish culture and strong in English literature, science and the arts He was encouraged by his mother to read and develop his language skills in English, Hebrew, German, French and Latin.

Monash majored in engineering at the University of Melbourne, where he joined the University Company. He later transferred to the North Melbourne Battery.

In private life, Monash had a successful engineering firm and was chairman of the Electric Commission of Australia. Monash University was named in his honor for his contributions in helping to build and defend Australia.

Monash married Hanna Victoria Moss in Melbourne on April 8, 1891. Their daughter Bertha was born in January, 1893.

He died on October 8, 1931. Tributes came from everywhere. Over 250,000 people lined the funeral route as thousands walked behind the cortege for the nine miles from Parliament House, where he lay in state, to the Brighton Cemetery. Here, 50,000 people were waiting for the funeral procession to arrive. Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery said, "General Monash was the best general on the Western Front in WW I. The soldiers will never forget their great fortune in having had such a leader."

Every year in October, The Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women and other organizations hold the Monash Commemorative Service at the Monash Statue, King's Domain, Melbourne.

We want to thank Jonathan King, reporter, and "The Australian", Australia's leading daily newspaper for much of the information in the article.