

Articles from
The Jewish
Veteran

The Official Publication of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Volume: 56, Year: 2003 • Number: 3, Season: Post-Convention

Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum Chief, National Guard Bureau, Excerpts of remarks at the National Commander's Banquet

By Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum Chief, National Guard Bureau

This is a very important organization and I'm proud to be a card-carrying member of it, in case you didn't know that. And have been for about 10 years. And I didn't just sign up today, which is also good. Sometimes you get these just-in-time members.

I've been a member of Jewish War Veterans for a long time. You've been very good to me. When I was a colonel, you put me on your calendar and they made me a general. When I was a brigadier, they put me back on the calendar and they made me a major general. I hope you put me on the calendar again soon.

I'm very proud to be in charge of the greatest military organization of citizen soldiers that exists. It's a national treasure. It's called the National Guard. The National Guard today has both a land component and the air component. It has changed since Desert Storm dramatically.

There are 143,000 citizen soldiers and airmen deployed in 44 countries around this world, to include two combat infantry battalions out of the Florida National Guard who have been awarded the combat infantryman's badge. And, as you well know from the recounting of the incident with Specialist 4th Class Jeffrey Wershow, a deceased Jewish war veteran who paid the ultimate price in defending our homeland abroad in what I like to call the scheduled away game, and the National Guard is playing in the Super Bowl of the scheduled away game, defending your homeland and our way of life tonight—in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And they're giving another part of the world a chance in stopping the modern holocaust in Europe that occurred about seven years ago in places like Bosnia and Kosovo and Macedonia and Albania.

And we have National Guard soldiers and airmen in 40 countries doing theater engagement for the combatant commanders of the European Command, the Pacific Command, the Southern Command, Central Command, and the Northern Command. And I don't think too many people know that. And while they're doing that, we have 14,000 of them back here at home guarding critical infrastructure and airfields and power projection platforms or mobilization apparatus that are needed to send the next group of 100,000 over and the next group after that of about 100,000.



And I'm going to tell you who helps keep us solid and strong. It's organizations like the Jewish War Veterans. If you have to make a list of those organizations that have been there consistently, without wavering, always with the citizen soldier or the serving uniformed member, their families and our way of life and our form of government foremost in their mind, if you were to make a list of those organizations, the Jewish War Veterans would be number one. If I'm not mistaken, this organization is the oldest, longest-lasting, and still continuing serving war veterans organization in the United States.

I wouldn't be alive. And I wouldn't be living in an America that we have today, which is better today than it was yesterday, and it was better yesterday than it was the day before, and it will be better tomorrow every day that this country exists, because of people like you and our children that are coming up if you continue to instill in them the values of service to their nation.

You saved the world for my generation, but this generation and the next generation is going to have some high maintenance to do to keep the world you handed us in the shape we'd like to see it in.

When we were in Bosnia, when we were deployed to Bosnia and were walking around the mass graves, trying to protect Muslims, round up al Qaeda terrorists, which are of the same group—we're trying to protect them at the same time we're rounding them up; difficult work, trying to keep the Serbs from overreaching and beginning some of the terrible atrocities we used to see in black and white film that happened in living color in the early '90s in the disintegration of Yugoslavia, where they slaughtered each other; and then prosecute war criminals. All simultaneous. We did that.

We did that with all National Guard soldiers, mostly, with about 15 percent of the force being active duty soldiers. And we commanded a Russian brigade, a Polish brigade, and a Turkish brigade, all under the command of the United States officer. I happened to have the privilege of doing that.

The young men and women we're getting today in our armed forces have never been better in my 36 years of service. And I would put the kids up today with the soldiers that George Washington had at Valley Forge, with the people Black Jack Pershing had with him, with the people you served with in World War II and Korea and Vietnam and Granada and Desert Shield and Desert Storm. They are amazing young men and women.

I joined in 1968 as a private, and I went to Special Forces training and was a demolition sergeant in the Special Forces. Then I went to OCS in '71, and then I was a Special Forces officer for 15 years. Then I went into the infantry.

So I went a little bit non-traditional route than you'd normally expect. And I will tell you that I am privileged and proud to be in charge of the Army and Air National Guard because right now this country needs the Army and Air National Guard and the other Reserve components—the Coast Guard, the Marine Corps, the Navy and the Air Force, and the Army Reserve—more now than it has needed it at any other time in this nation's history, probably since before we were a nation, because we don't have a draft, because we don't have a large standing army, and because we do not have large oceans—we still have the large oceans, but they don't buy us the weeks and months that we used to have to raise an army, equip an army, and train an army, and deploy an army.

You can't bring the young in now in 1943 and deploy them in June of '44. You don't have that kind of time. Because in addition to being able to do the away games that I talked about, we've got to be ready for the unscheduled home game—9/11. There are plenty of people out there waiting to play that game again on our home field without scheduling it with us. When that happens, the Guard has got to be ready, and we're not set up today to be as ready as I want it to be and you think it should be.

So what I'm doing is transforming, along with all of the adjutant generals in the country. We are no longer going to have an Army Guard headquarters and an Air Guard headquarters and a state headquarters, and we push the Army Reserve out and we hold out the Navy Reserve and the Marine Corps Reserve and the Coast Guard Reserve. The American

people pay billions of dollars for defense, and they expect the homeland to be defended in a synchronized, coordinated way. And you can't do that unless you're organized as a joint force headquarters.

It is going to get done because it needs to get done. And I may come to this organization for help getting it done. It's the right thing to do for America, and we're going to do it. When your community needs help, when your state needs help, whether it's New Jersey or Texas or New York or any of the other places that I found— when that happens in your hometown, it isn't going to be the 82nd coming into Gainesville, Florida, or to Jacksonville, Florida, it's going to be the Florida National Guard. So they'd better be trained, equipped, organized, and ready to handle that.

You've got to have the maritime component in there. That means your Coast Guard and your Navy have got to be integrated with your National Guard response.

So that's the idea of this joint thing. We fight overseas joint—joint means two services or more. Overseas we fight with our sister services, alongside our sister services. You just saw the greatest joint operation conducted in Iraqi Freedom. You saw what that jointness brings to the table. You see the power of that. You see the economy of that. You see the effectiveness of that. We can't walk back away from that now.

Jointness also means you do that within inter-agency and you do it with multinational forces. You do that overseas. We need to do that back here at home as well.

Now, some of you are shaking your head, what are you talking about, multinational forces in the United States? It's already happened, folks. 9/11 happened. Twenty fighters on strip alert that morning by accident. NORAD had 20 fighters on strip alert on 9/11 by accident because the Russians were having a big exercise in Siberia. And we weren't sure what they were doing, so we put some fighters on strip alert just in case. Prudent thing to do. 9/11 happens; in less than 24 hours, because of the incredible response of the Air National Guard, 400 armed fighters in a combat air patrol over every large city in this country was in place in less than 24 hours

But what I'm trying to tell you is, that's back to the future kind of response. That's not World War II mobilization model, that's not Korean War mobilization model, that's not Vietnam War mobilization model, that's not Desert Storm six-month buildup model, that's not even Iraqi Freedom three- or four- or five-month buildup model, that's back to the future, back to the Minuteman, back to the Concord Minuteman, one hand on a plow, one hand on a musket, transition from citizen to soldier in minutes and maybe hours, but days and weeks would be late and unacceptable to you. When you call, you expect us to be there. We will be there, and we'll be ready when we get there, with your help.

I have a vision for the National Guard, and it's shared by 355,000 Army National Guard soldiers, citizen soldiers, and it's shared by about, what, 110,000 Air National Guard airmen around the country. So it's a little less than a half a million citizen soldiers. That means a little less than a half a million families, because most of them are married—about 70 percent of our force is married now. About a half a million employers. We're talking about, when you call out the National Guard you're calling out America. You're calling out America's home team. And that's very powerful, sends a very powerful message. And I want our younger generation on that team, as members of that team. They bring a lot to the fight, as you did and as you will. And they need the same opportunities.

So what we're going to try to do is deliver to you the American people, to you the folks back here at home an organization that will defend the homeland, first and foremost, both overseas and here at home, if necessary. We will support the war fight anytime, anywhere. And we will transform—that means we'll change, we'll build this bridge as we're walking across it. We're not going to try and get it perfect; we're going to change. The world is changing and we need to change.

So I will deliver to you—I promise that these young men and women are capable of delivering a ready, relevant, reliable, and accessible National Guard. The accessible part means back to the future, where we train, we pre-certify that we're ready before we're needed, we alert and we deploy. No more mobilization model, no more going to the mobe station, no more wasted time and effort and doing things two and three times and giving Johnny what they should have been given them before they needed it.

So that's where we're going in a nutshell. That's what our transformation's all about.

Keep doing what you're doing for our young men and women in uniform that are currently serving, that have served, and that will serve. It is making a difference.

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veteran Affairs, Excerpts of remarks during the 108th National Convention

By Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Veteran Affairs

As our nation's oldest active national veterans' service organization, you have steadfastly promoted the democratic principles one million soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen—many of whom were Jewish—gave their lives to uphold and protect.

I am grateful that you took up the banner of justice for all of us when JWV was the only veterans service organization to march with Dr. Martin Luther King in Washington in 1963.

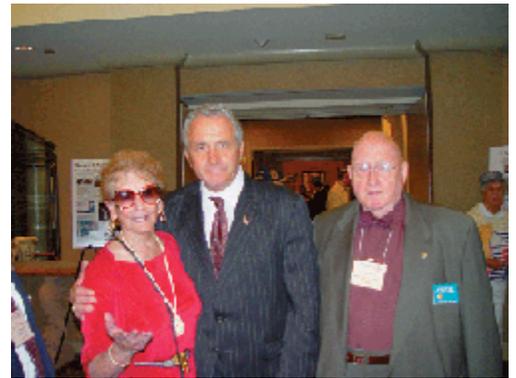
And your superb work every year on Capitol Hill Action Day, when the grass roots veterans who embody JWV fan out to speak with members of Congress on issues of importance to every American veteran, demonstrates your continuing commitment to veterans' issues and our democratic process. Your support makes my work easier when I do battle on the hill for the resources VA needs to honor President Lincoln's commitment to care for those who have borne the battle and their families.

JWV's hospital, rehabilitation and veterans service programs and the counseling you provide on benefits issues to veterans throughout the country are lasting tribute to your willingness to follow the Bible's most important command—to love your neighbor as yourselves. VA could not succeed without your help, and the help of your fellow VSO's.

And JWV's support of the Boy Scouts and college scholarship programs show your true understanding of the Hebrew phrase "L'Dor V'Dor"—that American traditions, heritage and culture must be passed from generation to generation. As an American, I am grateful to your contribution to our future.

America is at war with an enemy that has no compunction about killing and terrorizing men, women, and children not only in our country, but in any country that embraces the basic rights bestowed on all humanity by a power much greater than any tyrant.

America's veterans, especially those of Jewish heritage, know such an enemy...we witnessed such evil, and we have seen what it can do to innocent mothers and children...to the elderly...to anyone who chooses peace over tyranny. Those who lived through World War II have confronted such evil several times in their lifetimes...just as our sons and daughters,



probably even many of your grandchildren, are confronting evil today in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, off the coast of Liberia, and along the Korean DMZ.

As proud as I am to be Vietnam veteran, I am even more proud – and humbled – to be of service as Secretary of Veterans Affairs for our Nation's 25 million veterans.

The roster of men and women who earned the honored title of veteran grows every day as our Nation's 21st century soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coastguardsmen return from campaigns in the far-flung corners of the globe, much as you and I returned home from our tours of duty round the globe.

Today's Veterans Health Administration is ready for them in ways that are almost unrecognizable from my days in Vietnam – and it most certainly is not the VA that my immigrant father, a World War II veteran, knew when he was a VA patient.

The wounded are in a generation of veterans who will experience a VA revamped to reflect the latest research discoveries, medical technology, clinical and surgical practices, health-care administration, computerized patient records, pharmaceutical formulary, and patient safety.

Today, VA hospitals and clinics are community and national resources, led by professionals, and dedicated to restoring veterans to healthy and productive lives. VA receives accolades from every quarter of the health care community. However, our success comes with a price.

Today, we are experiencing what I call the "perfect storm," a combination of eligibility reform, a generous prescription drug benefit program, improved access to care through our community based outpatient clinics, and vast improvements to our quality and customer service.

Three years ago, on October 1, 2001, our budget was \$48 billion. On October 1st of this year, our budget will reach \$64 billion, up 32%.

A budget larger than the entire defense and veterans budget of our greatest ally, Great Britain.

The President's proposed budget for VA for Fiscal Year 2004 represents the greatest percentage increase for any department in government.

Can I use more? You bet! And with JWV's advocacy I know we will prevail. But I am very proud of my team's effort to go toe-to-toe with the Office of Management and Budget to achieve such large increases, and I am so thankful to President Bush and the Congress.

The increase in the number of veterans we treat — from 2.9 million in 1996 to the number enrolled today, 7 million, of which 4.8 million are treated — documents both VA's growth and that President Bush will not abandon our Nation's veterans in their time of need.

Most healthcare systems in America would have collapsed under the weight of that burden...but not VA.

It is true, however, that with this great demand for care we have experienced waiting in many parts of the country.

When Congress enacted enrollment reform, they established seven priority groups (now eight) and in the new law, directed the Secretary to make an annual enrollment decision based on the resources made available to me in appropriation acts.

The potentially easy decision would have been for me to maintaining open enrollment and rationing care by putting veterans on waiting lists, but I could not be a part of that course.

To do so would have hurt the service-connected, the poor, and those in need of specialized services such as spinal cord-injured and blinded veterans; veterans in need of prosthetics, and those who require psychiatric care related to their combat experiences.

Sometimes leaders need to make the difficult decisions, not the politically-expedient ones.

Service-connected disabled veterans are the very reason VA exists. Our every action must focus on their needs.

That is why I made the further decision to offer priority scheduling to seriously disabled veterans. Waiting lists are also frustrating veterans who have, until this week, had to make appointments sometimes months in advance with their VA doctors to receive prescriptions the veterans already had from their own private physicians.

The new program covers veterans who were enrolled for VA care before July 25, 2003; who asked for an initial appointment with a physician before that date; and who will be still be waiting longer than thirty days for that appointment as of September 22.

It is not an instant panacea, but I believe it will help reduce waiting times by allowing some veterans who seek only our prescription drugs to get them, thereby freeing up our doctors so they can focus on veterans who need our care.

I intend to monitor this program very carefully to determine its usefulness in reducing waiting times. Depending upon the outcome, I will make a decision to continue the program and possibly expand it.

Making certain those veterans who need care will have the best possible access to that care is one of the major factors behind CARES – Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services.

CARES is a response to the intuitively-obvious and GAO-documented fact that the Veterans Health Administration's medical infrastructure, created over a period of almost a century and half, may be inappropriate for, and even counter productive to, VA's mission to provide veterans with quality 21st century medical care.

We have witnessed revolutionary changes in healthcare over the past several decades.

Advanced technology in medical diagnosis, surgery and treatment, new drug discoveries, telemedicine, telemetry, digital radiology have redefined how medicine is practiced in America.

Procedures that once required long inpatient stays can now be done in an ambulatory setting—and I foresee the day when they will be done in the veteran's home.

Over the past several years, we have opened almost 700 new CBOC's and we need to do more to bring medical care to the veteran.

The choice is clear – Is the VA to be on the leading edge of this revolution, or on the trailing edge of the century gone by? I choose the former, and ask you to join me in this effort.

GAO testimony before Congress shows that VA maintenance of obsolete, redundant, inappropriately located, or otherwise unneeded medical infrastructure diverts a million dollars a day away from veterans' medical care.

\$365 million every year – \$3.6 billion over ten years that could be used to expand the reach of healthcare for our Nation's veterans. The goal of the CARES process is to identify the infrastructure VA will need to provide 21st century quality health care to 21st century veterans.

I look forward to the Commission's recommendations, and I thank JWV for your constructive input as CARES progresses. I have provided CARES proposals and supporting data to the independent CARES Commission.

With that information in hand, the Commission will conduct several months of public hearings, listening to veterans and other health-care stakeholders, and provide their independent assessment of the proposed plan before presenting the Commission's recommendations to me later this year.

Almost three years ago, decisions on all pending claims, including disability, pension, education, and DIC took too long. We had a backlog of 600,000 pending claims. It took nine months to process a claim.

Last year, our inventory of rating-related claims peaked at 432,000; Today, the number stands at 274,000, even though we receive, on average, an additional 60,000 new or reopened claims every month.

A year ago, it took an average of 233 days to process a claim. Today, it takes only 163 days. We are on our way to meeting our target goals.

We're not done yet. It still takes much too long to decide appeals. I am committed to applying the same direct pressure to solving that problem.

VA is dedicated to helping all our returning wounded, disabled, or ill veterans regain their dreams of a fulfilling vocation and gainful employment.

I have convened a task force to review VA's vocational rehabilitation and employment service to be sure VA is prepared to help them become full economic partners in the society they swore to defend with their lives.

I believe the program needs to be dramatically improved to bring it into the 21st Century.

I am committed to helping these young patriots achieve the vocational goals for which they so bravely fought.

When I came to VA in 2001, one of my highest priorities was to ensure that our National Cemeteries were properly revered as National Shrines.

With America's veterans passing on at ever-increasing rates – now about 1800 veterans every day – we must assure their families and the nation that our commitment to them is eternal.

We will continue to prepare the final resting places for our Nation's defenders, and we will not flag in our commitment to honor them in death as they honored America in life.

Once again, I thank all JWV members for your service. I am privileged to stand at the helm of America's premiere agency tasked with honoring your service and your sacrifices.

Today I look into the eyes of friends, colleagues, fellow veterans and citizens whose service in uniform earned you the honored title of American veteran.

Your bravery and dedication entitled you to the eternal gratitude of your fellow countrymen and women. Your example of courage, loyalty, and continued good citizenship after leaving the service provides strength and comfort to your families, your communities and our nation.

And though we no longer serve in uniform, the spirit of our service lives on to inspire our troops throughout the world today because our cause is eternal.

In Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Korea, and in every corner of the world in need of the light of freedom, young men and women in uniform like my sons and the sons and daughters of so many Americans are ready to uphold the values for which you and I fought; ready to catch and hold high the torch of liberty you and our comrades have thrown them; and ready to earn the respect, and honor and love that you yourselves once earned through your service to this great land, America.

The Impact of Jewish War Veterans on American Jewry

By Dr. Seymour S. Weisman, Ph.D., National Historian and Senior Fellow NMAJMH

Segments of this article have been adapted from a longer treatise that I wrote which identified American Jewish community leaders of the twentieth century. I postulated in that article that American Jewry had established in the twentieth century the most advanced Jewish civilization since the fall of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. in Jerusalem. Before naming those Jewish leaders most responsible for this colossal achievement, I sorted out the factors or forces which emerged in the twentieth century that were essentially different from prior Jewish historical experiences and allegedly accountable for the new status of Jewry.



I summarized below these major forces or factors that became manifest in the twentieth century:

1- Massive Jewish Immigration

When the United States celebrated its centennial of freedom in 1876, the Jewish population was estimated to be 225,000. One hundred years later, that number increased to six million. While some Jewish agencies assisted a number of Jewish immigrants to enter the country and adjust to their new environment, the overwhelming majority of Jewish immigrants relied on family and friends for such assistance, or they survived through sheer wits and grits. This dramatic growth in Jewish numbers enhanced the collective effort of Jews to pursue multiple personal and community endeavors which translated to Jewish power as will be illustrated below.

2- Emergence of the United States as the Premier World Superpower

By the end of the twentieth century, the United States reached the pinnacle of its power as a nation beyond any historical development since the fall of the Roman Empire in the early first millennium A.D. Its global power was perceived in the fields of military supremacy, economic development, achievements in scientific, technological, educational and cultural affairs, advancement in democratic ideology, expression of civil rights and liberties for its citizens, and stabilization of government succession without internal upheavals.

3- American Jewry Exploited Open Window of Opportunity

American Jewry took full advantage of the opportunity to seek upward mobility in this favorable environment. As the barriers of discrimination in employment, housing, education and public accommodations were terminated by the historic civil rights legislation of 1964, Jews migrated from the East coast cities where their families initially settled, and found havens in new thriving urban and suburban communities. They established prominence in American society. Whereas Jews comprised three percent of the population, the United States Senate included ten Jewish senators, one tenth of the body! Of equal significance, an estimated one third of all Americans who won Nobel Prizes since 1950 were Jewish.

4- Secularization of Jewish Life

The power of the Orthodox religious hierarchy began to lose its dominance among American Jewry during the nineteenth century. Reform Judaism which originated in Germany became the alternative to Orthodoxy among the German Jews who migrated to the United States from 1820-1880. Beginning in 1881 and terminating in 1924, approximately 2.4 million Jews from Eastern Europe, mostly Orthodox, entered in the United States. Increasingly these new immigrants and their descendants switched their religious affiliation to Conservative and Reform Judaism. By the

end of the twentieth century, only fifty percent of American Jews held synagogue membership. Within this group, the Orthodox adherents numbered fifteen percent while the balance of eighty-five percent were affiliated with Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist synagogues. The stringent religious covenants of Jewish shtetl living in nineteenth century Eastern Europe no longer prevailed in the American Jewish community. Having discarded the formalized Orthodoxy regulations, American Jews were able to pursue their economic, educational and cultural interests without religious constraints. Women were no longer relegated to sit behind curtains in the synagogue but were granted mixed seating with their families. They became involved in the activities of the synagogue including attending to administrative affairs and election as officers. In some synagogues, women now serve as cantors and rabbis.

5- Development of Jewish Institutions on American Soil

In his classic study of American society in the early 1830's, the brilliant French writer, Alexis de Toqueville, observed that a unique American contrivance was the proliferation of voluntary organizations to advance their beliefs. American Jewry eagerly adapted this behavior with great enthusiasm. They organized agencies to provide for family care; for programs for the aged, children, disabled and poverty-stricken; for vocational counseling and training; employment assistance; for relief for Jews in foreign lands; for athletic, cultural and entertainment facilities and a variety of assorted accommodations.

The American Jewish community coalesced forces to combat anti-Semitism through such organizations as the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Anti-Semitism became more virulent during the period between the First World War and the Second World War and less formidable as government passed laws to protect civil rights and civil liberties.

A diversity of pro-Zionist agencies appeared on the American scene prior to the First World War to advocate the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Until the end of the Second World War, these fractious organizations represented a struggling minority of American Jewry. Jewish War Veterans and the American Jewish Congress were the only two national Jewish organizations (other than the divisive Zionist groups) which publicly advocated a Jewish State. Those organizations which failed to commit for a Jewish State included the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, Workmen's Circle, National Council of Jewish Women, National Jewish Welfare Board, the national synagogue organizations and rabbinical associations representing Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jewry.

After Israel achieved statehood in 1948, the Jewish community created the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (Presidents' Conference) to coalesce forces for the enhancement of Israel's security. It became a powerful voice in Jewish public affairs.

In the post World War Two period, grassroots support sprung up throughout the country to remember the horrors perpetrated on Jews and other during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. Several museums under Jewish auspices were founded to bear witness to the Holocaust.

Then in 1963, after several unfortunate false starts, the Jewish community created an organizational mechanism to mobilize forces to attain freedom for the Jews in the Soviet Union. The initiative for convening the first planning group came from the Jewish War Veterans. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry and other national and local groups developed several program strategies to provide aid and comfort to Soviet Jews.

6- Jews in Military Service

During the twentieth century, nearly one million Jews served in the armed services of the United States according to the following estimated breakdown: World War I 250,000; World War II 600,000; Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War 150,000. At no other time in Jewish history has a similar concentration of Jewish military service for one nation occurred. Of greater

significance was the military competence of Jewish personnel as compared to the general military population. For example, in World War II and Korea, ten percent of Jews were commissioned officers; sixty-five percent were noncommissioned officers and the balance were privates. Further, one of three physicians and dentists in uniform were Jewish! The percentages for Jewish ascension to higher military ranks also prevailed in Vietnam and the Gulf War.

Recent historical documentation supports the proposition that anti-Semitism permeated the higher military echelons until the end of World War II. Jews could cite many manifestations of prejudice in promotion opportunities, unfavorable assignments, unfair disciplinary proceedings and failure to recognize bravery on the battlefield. While avoiding publicity, a covert group of attorneys during World War II and thereafter monitored general court martial proceedings involving Jewish personnel. They succeeded in many cases in having sentences overturned or reduced.

Subsequent to World War II, the number of anti-Semitic incidents in the American military were substantially reduced but episodes of unacceptable behavior persisted. The writer was privy to anti-Semitic behavior at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. At the urging of Jewish military officers on the ground, I declined to pursue the matter since the officers alleged that any formal investigation would only create hardship for the Jewish cadets.

It is beyond the scope of this article to report on all the JWV activities in the twentieth century that impacted on the American Jewish community. Those interested in obtaining such a comprehensive review should write to JWV national headquarters in Washington, D.C., for the booklet, "A Century of Patriotic Service to the American People," under my byline. As an alternative approach to provide a broad overview of JWV's impact on Jewish communal affairs during the twentieth century, I decided to highlight the careers of two JWV leaders who directed the destiny of JWV in the twentieth century. Recorded below is a compendium of events which established the mantra of JWV's philosophy and programs.

By focusing on these individuals I do not wish to denigrate the worthy contributions of many other valiant JWV leaders. Their efforts, individually and collectively, were crucial to JWV's successful performance. However, my nominees were the only leaders who measured up to my criteria for leadership:

1- The leader's efforts and contributions extended over a sustained period. He was unlike other leaders who appeared on the scene, became involved in an innovative development, but faded thereafter from leadership responsibility.

2- The leader was recognized by his peers as the anointed one whose policies and programs were overwhelmingly adopted. 3- The leader demonstrated tenacity and sound judgment when confronted with crisis situations. He was willing to rally the troops and show the flag. He did not shirk to engage in a public stance. 4- The leader had administrative skills in long range planning and organizing public events. 5- The leader had superior talent in communicating with his constituency and stimulating their energetic response. During the twentieth century, I had personal contact with every JWV national commander since the First World War (except those elected between 1922 and 1932). Further, I am the only JWV member who had read every issue of JWV's house organ, "The Jewish Veteran." I have probably attended more meetings of JWV's national executive committee than any other member. With this background, I believe that my credentials are impeccable to evaluate the performance of JWV's leaders.

Abraham Kraditor

After his military discharge in 1919, Abraham Kraditor became a founding member of JWV Brooklyn Post 2 and continued as its leader until his death in 1970 when the post adopted his name. In 1924, Kraditor was elected to the national executive committee and served therein for nearly a half century.

When Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, JWV called for a boycott of German goods. As a publicity gimmick, Kraditor organized a parade of 4000 post and ladies auxiliary members to march on City Hall in New York in support of

the boycott. The parade received front page prominence in the press. Finally, a Joint Boycott Committee was organized to coordinate the campaign against German goods. Its success was confirmed as sales of German imports to the United States showed a significant decline.

After election as JWV national commander in 1936, Kraditor was the catalyst in convening the first meeting of the International Conference of Jewish War Veterans in Paris attended by Jewish veterans organizations from Great Britain and Central and Western Europe. Although no longer national commander, Kraditor went to Vienna in 1937 for a follow-up meeting of the International Jewish War Veterans. War clouds prevented further meetings of this group until the post war period.

Kraditor's most brilliant achievement occurred in April 1948, when JWV with financial support from philanthropic Jews, organized the largest parade in Jewish history. The parade sought public support for the United States to vote for the establishment of a Jewish State at the May 1948 meeting of the United Nations. Kraditor undertook the monumental task to organize the parade. He recruited ninety marching bands from veterans organizations within a 250 mile radius of New York City. He had to arrange for housing and transportation for the bands, cover their expenses, assign their locations before the start of the parade. It took five hours for the marchers to pass the reviewing stand.

The political impact of the parade had many ramifications. President Harry Truman became cognizant that he would not be able to carry New York State in the 1948 presidential elections against his Republican opponent, the governor of New York, if he failed to support Israel as a new country in the United Nations. But it was not only the Jewish vote at stake. The vast support of organized veterans from several surrounding states also carried a message to Truman. They, too, supported a Jewish State.

The parade demonstrated that no other Jewish organization could match JWV's ability to organize the mass of the Jewish populace. Jews in the twentieth century could call on a large constituency to pursue their community goals.

In his role as chairman of JWV's foreign affairs committee, Kraditor undertook in 1956 to assist Israel in fighting the Arab boycott conducted in the United States. As a precondition for doing business within Arab countries, American corporations were required to complete questionnaires fully disclosing prior transactions with Israel. Henceforth, the American corporations had to sign certificates not to engage in trade with Israel.

When JWV learned that the tobacco distributor, Brown & Williamson, (B&W) refused to trade with Israel, Kraditor spent two futile years in negotiating with the general counsel of B&W to reverse its stand. Frustrated at the rejection, Kraditor went public in 1958 by circulating a pamphlet, "Smokescreen of Cowardice and Deceit." It detailed the operations of B&W in its boycott of Israel. More than 100,000 copies of the pamphlet were distributed in local communities. The Presidents' Conference organized a boycott committee to pressure B&W to settle with JWV.

JWV circulated data which noted that B&W's sales in the United States declined by twenty percent while the other major tobacco distributors were showing gains in their sales. When B&W's counsel decided to renew negotiations with Kraditor, he threatened to sue JWV for libel. Kraditor rose immediately, shook the hand of counsel and said that their next meeting would be in court.

The battle continued until October 1961, when JWV was informed by the Presidents' Conference that a settlement had been reached with B&W, subject to the approval of JWV. The key sentence of the statement noted, "Presidents of Major National Jewish Organizations including the Jewish War Veterans, have issued a statement about the sale of our brands in Israel and have expressed their satisfaction and pleasure over this development."

Kraditor's next challenge came in 1966 when Coca Cola refused an Israeli bottler a franchise due to the Arab boycott. At his meeting with James A. Farley, FDR's Postmaster General, who was chairman of Coca Cola's Export Corporation, he

was given a polite rebuff. Kraditor told Farley that JWV would go public on this issue. One of Kraditor's colleagues, a food broker, spread word at a meeting of supermarket executives (many were Jewish) that Coca Cola was cooperating with the Arab boycott against Israel. Several executives decided to limit shelf space for Coca Cola products. Within a month, sales of Coca Cola products dropped sharply across the country. The pressure from the Coca Cola bottlers forced the president of Coca Cola to act. He called upon a prominent Jewish attorney to resolve the crisis. The franchise was awarded to a Jewish philanthropist who coopted an Israeli bottling company.

Subsequently, the Jewish defense agencies including JWV succeeded in securing federal legislation prohibiting American corporations from cooperating with the Arab boycott. The Arab boycott faded away and remained a minor irritant to Israeli trade in the United States.

Not adverse to undertake a challenge, Kraditor engaged in a public relations battle with Germany's Bonn government. In 1945, the Germans passed legislation which established twenty years as the period when a criminal could be tried for murder. As the deadline (1965) approached for this statute of limitations to expire, Jewish organizations worldwide pleaded in vain with the German government to extend the mandate to cover crimes committed against Jews and others prior to 1945 during the Hitler era. The appeals fell on deaf ears.

A JWV delegation headed by Kraditor met in November 1964 with the German Ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C., to seek extension of the statute of limitations. Not only did the Ambassador rebuff Kraditor's presentation but he had the chutzpah to send a report to his foreign office belittling the influence of the Jewish War Veterans. (Unbeknownst to the German officials, Kraditor had a secret contact reporting to him on activities within the German Embassy.)

JWV leadership backed Kraditor's proposal to picket the German Embassy and fifteen consulate offices in the United States. After some hesitation, the Presidents' Conference consented to urge its member organizations to join in the picketing, an unprecedented decision in its history. Following the picketing, the national media provided strong editorial support attacking the Bonn government for failure to extend the statute of limitations. Congressmen and senators also attacked Bonn's intransigence on this issue. As a result of this clamor, the German Ambassador, (according to Kraditor's mole) warned his superiors of the potential danger to his government's public relations standing in the United States. The Bonn government capitulated: it passed legislation extending the statute of limitations. Kraditor prevailed once again.

Robert M. Zweiman

Following a long history of JWV leadership in New Jersey, Zweiman served as national commander in 1982. He gained dominance as JWV's indigenous leader in 1986. Soon, he had the opportunity to demonstrate a flair for a dramatic scenario. On learning of plans for a mass rally in support of Soviet Jewry to be held at the mall in Washington, D.C. (1987), he rescheduled a meeting of JWV's national executive committee to coincide with the rally. He wanted to obtain a large JWV turnout.

At the rally which drew 250,000 participants, the JWV national color guard led the JWV marchers to the reviewing stand, followed by the national commander and his aides and supported by a phalanx of JWV post color guards, four abreast and 25 ranks deep. As this contingent of over 100 flags proceeded, the assembled crowd opened a lane, similar to the waters that parted the Red Sea in biblical days. This pageantry was featured on television cameras, and the photo of the flags surrounding the reviewing stand received international coverage. Zweiman was following the JWV mantra; rally the troops and show the flag.

JWV sponsored sporadic missions to Israel for state and local officials from various veterans organizations. These JWV guests were selected for their influence within the veterans community. On the mission, JWV provided the veterans

exposure to life in Israel. On return from the mission, the veterans spoke on their experiences to community groups. They gave a positive assessment of Israel's pursuit of peace.

Zweiman convinced the leadership that the missions should be conducted annually and that the JWV mission leaders should be adequately briefed on their assignment. With favorable feedback from the returning veterans on their experiences, JWV was able to recruit more veterans to join the missions. It became a self-sustaining project.

To strengthen ties with Jewish war veterans in other countries, Zweiman took a leadership role in the International Conference of Jewish War Veterans which met in Jerusalem. This was another effort to enhance the bonding with the Israeli people whose veterans hosted the sessions.

Most Americans are unaware of the existence of The Military Coalition (TMC), one of the more powerful lobbying groups in Washington, D.C. TMC represents military affiliate associations and veterans organizations which seek appropriate entitlements for active military personnel and discharged veterans as well as their families. JWV is the sole Jewish organization that holds membership in this group and Zweiman, to my knowledge, is the only Jewish leader who has been elected to TMC's board of directors.

The test of a leader's effectiveness is to assess his karma, specifically his ability to shape the destiny of the organization's future. When Zweiman assumed leadership, he was confronted with a long neglected JWV project, the operations of JWV's museum which received a Congressional charter in 1958. Other than selling the museum's original building in 1983 and replacing it with a larger renovated structure, the prior leadership had failed to provide responsible management.

Zweiman recognized that the museum required drastic changes. But he wanted to avoid finger pointing games in plotting his improvements. He called upon the Coordinating Committee (CC) to secure cooperation between JWV and museum officials on museum operations. The CC elected its chairman. Its members resolved agenda items by consensus rather than formal votes. When failing to find a consensus, the matter was referred for further deliberation. In this cooperative climate, Zweiman was able to proceed with future planning for the museum.

Starting with basics, the CC obtained a grant for an outside evaluation of the museum by competent museum officials. The CC was advised to start anew: to set up standard procedures for operating a museum; to recognize the physical limitations of the current museum facilities; to hire professional staff; to affiliate with other museums in the community; to organize an outreach program to its members and the local community. It was a tall order to tackle; it was a challenge to overcome the neglected past.

The most difficult issue facing the CC was whether to engage in a complete inner reconstruction of the space layout in order to provide the proper facilities for exhibits and accommodations for the archives. Would the JWV membership undertake fund raising responsibilities for the reconstruction? After much internal deliberation, Zweiman received support for a comprehensive reconstruction.

While the renovations were under way, the CC adopted recommendations to bring the museum up to professional standards. A new name for the museum was introduced; the National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH). Legal structural protocols were initiated. Professional staff was hired. Permanent and travel exhibits were prepared. Collaboration with other Washington museums was established including the United States Holocaust Museum, the Ford Theater Museum and the museum consortium surrounding Dupont Circle, where the NMAJMH is located. Guest speaker were invited for presentations relating to the museum's projects. From a moribund nonentity, the NMAJMH emerged as a dynamic, thriving enterprise.

These developments became possible because Zweiman was able to organize a coterie of supporters to raise funds for the NMAJMH. Zweiman's cohorts doubled the fund raised in the prior three decades. The JWV members voted with their dollars in appreciation of what had been accomplished in the 1990's.

Above all, Zweiman was a planner. He looked ahead to anticipate future events. This trait is best exemplified by JWV's celebration of its centennial year in 1996. Assuming responsibility as centennial chairman, he convened his initial planning group in 1991 to delineate the specific activities to mark the celebration. For an opening project, JWV sponsored a contest for its members to design a logo for the centennial.

In 1996, JWV published a "coffee table" deluxe edition of JWV's history with a blaze of photos prepared by graphic designers. JWV also printed an abbreviated history of highlights in booklet form for mass distribution. The exercises at Arlington Cemetery on Veterans Day 1996 were a moving experience. JWV was the host veterans organization for the annual wreath laying ceremony. At the closing banquet, JWV displayed its vitality as an organization which endured a century of cataclysmic changes.

I add this final comment about Zweiman's attributes. In my judgment, he has been the most effective speaker among JWV's leaders, past or present. His legal training is manifest in his written presentations. He demonstrates clarity of thought, by carefully linking concepts to his primary arguments.

In the introductory segment of this article, I outlined what I considered the crucial factors which accounted for the successful development of twentieth century Jewry. Looking back on the leadership efforts of Abraham Kraditor and Robert Zweiman on behalf of Jewish War Veterans, it becomes evident how they impacted on the Jewish community. Their ability to induce large contingents of Jewish war veterans to stage protests, attend rallies, create picket lines became an effective tool to influence public issues of concern to the Jewish community. No other Jewish organization had similar ability since the First World War to assemble numbers for public action. Moreover, JWV participated in coalition with other military and veterans organizations as a lobby force on issues where no other Jewish organization had a persuasive voice.

On the other hand, JWV joined forces with other Jewish agencies in fighting anti-Semitism and Nazism, in assisting Jewish brethren in the Soviet Union, in helping the birth of Israel and providing for its security and welfare, in sponsoring programs for the remembrance of the Holocaust, in enhancing Jewish cultural life through its museum in Washington, D.C.

My assessment of JWV's impact on Jewish communal life has been recognized in an article that appeared in 1998 in the Journal of Jewish Communal Service. Writing on "The Structure of the American Jewish Community at the End of the Twentieth Century," Professor Bernard Reisman of Brandeis University observed, "A number of important Jewish organizations have emerged in America with the stated primary objective of supporting a major Jewish social welfare program of service and at the same time affording their members with important social ties with other Jews of similar ages and interests. Some of these organizations also provide social ties with other Jews of similar ages and interests. Some of these organizations also provide social welfare benefits to their members at modest cost, such as health insurance, hospitalization and cemetery privileges. Three of the largest such fraternal/service organizations are Hadassah, B'nai B'rith and Jewish War Veterans." No one would dispute that Jewish War Veterans deserves this accolade.