

A stylized graphic featuring a white silhouette of a soldier's profile facing right, set against a blue background. The entire composition is framed by a large, white Star of David (Magen David) shape. The background is composed of red and white geometric shapes, including triangles and hexagons, creating a patriotic and symbolic aesthetic.

**National Museum of  
American Jewish  
Military History**

**1811 R Street NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
[www.nmajmh.org](http://www.nmajmh.org)  
Phone: (202) 265-6280**



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## **Section I**

# **National Museum of American Jewish Military History**

# National Museum Of American Jewish Military History

## Introduction

- a. In 1954, the Jewish War Veterans moved its national headquarters to 1712 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, in Washington, DC. The building also housed the *National Shrine to the Jewish War Dead*, an educational institution - museum, archives, and library - dedicated to the preservation of military records and achievements of Jewish service personnel. On September 2, 1958, the institution was chartered by an Act of Congress under the name Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. National Memorial, Inc. The name was added in 1994 as the *National Museum of American Jewish Military History*.
- b. The National Museum of American Jewish Military History operates under the auspices of the Jewish War Veterans, U.S.A.
- c. The Museum's mission is to document and preserve the contributions of American Jews to the peace and freedom of the United States, as well as to provide documentation concerning the courage, heroism and sacrifices made by American Jews who served in the U.S. armed forces.
- d. The Museum is located in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington D.C. at 1811 R Street NW, and is an important museum in the Dupont-Kalorama area.
- e. The Jewish War Veterans, U.S.A. National Memorial Inc. owns the Museum's property without a mortgage.
- g. Col. Herb Rosenbleeth is the Museum Director and Larry Richardson is the Museum Administrator.

## Current income streams

- a. The Museum has an endowment fund, which was initially funded by individuals through the Maccabean Brigade program.
- b. The Museum's exhibitions and programs are supported by the Jewish War Veterans, its departments, posts and members. At

present, the Museum receives no government or corporate funding for its activities.

- c. Among our Major Benefactors are Susan & Elihu Rose Foundation, Stanley and Selma Silver, Cpl. Larry Muss Post 415, Paul D. Savanuck Post 888, San Fernando Valley Post 335, National Ladies Auxiliary, Kelkey-Blatt Post 575, Long Island City Post 110, Abe Cohen-Lehman Post 50, The Schottenstein Family, Fegelson-Young-Feinberg Post 697, Rabbi Joshua L. Goldberg, Major General Julius Klein, Bernard Paroly, Manuel & Rachel Auerbach, Stanley Kaufelt, Reuben Lipson, Herman R. Simon, Helmut Hannes, Sgt. Meyer Levin-Flatbush Post 169, Abraham Kraditor Post 2, Long Beach Veterans Association, Department of New York.

## **Major Exhibitions**

*The Museum's permanent exhibitions are:*

### **Major General Julius Klein: His Life and His Work**

This permanent exhibition tells the story of Julius Klein's historic life and work. Julius Klein was a hero during World War II, when he saved many lives during an explosion at New Caledonia in the South Pacific. In 1941, he formulated an important military plan called "Combat Public Relations," which encompassed such topics as psychological warfare and propaganda. He also helped ameliorate both German-American and German-Israel relations after World War II. In 1948, as national commander of the Jewish War Veterans, Klein organized an enormous show of strength for the establishment of the State of Israel in the form of a parade down New York's Fifth Avenue. The parade influenced the United States to vote for the partition of Palestine which led to the birth of the State of Israel in May 1948.

### **The Goldberg Chapel**

The Museum's chapel is dedicated to Joshua Goldberg, a Navy captain and the first rabbi during World War II to receive this commission. During the war, he traveled with members of the

Protestant and Catholic clergy to navy bases around the world. By conducting interfaith services, he made sure American soldiers and sailors had places to worship regardless of their faith. Following the war, Captain Goldberg participated in two NATO conferences on building ecumenism among the military clergy. While serving during the Korean War, Goldberg was the first Jewish chaplain to attain the rank of captain. In 1960, he was the first Jewish chaplain to be awarded the Legion of Merit. Captain Goldberg died December 24, 1994, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on January 6, 1995. The Museum's Captain Joshua L. Goldberg Memorial Chapel was dedicated on February 10, 1995.

### **Hall of Heroes: American Jewish Recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor**

This exhibit features displays about the fifteen known Congressional Medals of Honor recipients of the Jewish faith as well as a list of the recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and the Air Force Cross. The exhibit displays one of the largest collections of Medal of Honor, including the Medal of Honor given to World War I hero and JWV National Commander and National Executive Director Benjamin Kaufman, as well as information and memorabilia from the fifteen recipients.

*Other exhibits at the Museum are:*

### **Hidden Treasures: Selections from Our Permanent Collection**

Since its inception, the Museum has collected a wealth of mementos, photographs, and archival materials pertaining to Jewish service in the American armed forces. But as with most other museums, we are only able to present a small portion - roughly 2 to 5% - of this material at a time. In the collections of the NMAJMH there are many fascinating, touching, and amusing items that the public rarely has a chance to see. In a continuing effort to display the wonderful materials contained in the Museum's collection we bring you *Hidden Treasures: Selections from Our Permanent Collection*, an exhibition created to highlight all of the interesting items that have been

donated to the Museum over the years. Material in this exhibit will change regularly so that we may display as much of our collection as possible.

## **Jewish War Veterans' Protest March Against Nazi Germany – 75th Anniversary**

As the Nazi Party grew in numbers and strength following Adolf Hitler's appointment as Germany's Chancellor, the world weighed how - or if - to respond to Nazi oppression of Jews. While other American Jewish organizations debated, the Jewish War Veterans called for a boycott of German goods. On 23 March 1933, to kick off this boycott, the JWV led a massive parade through the streets of Manhattan to City Hall, where Commander-in-Chief J. George Fredman presented Mayor O'Brien with a resolution calling for the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany. Many other groups followed the JWV's initiative, leading to an international boycott movement. The JWV is proud to have stood up while others hemmed and hawed on the sidelines, bringing international attention to the threat of Hitler and Nazi Germany and forcing other organizations into action.

## **Women in the Military: A Jewish Perspective**

The exhibit profiles female Jewish veterans of U.S. conflicts from the Civil War to the Gulf War, and through their stories, brings to the fore-front the vital role women have contributed to America's war efforts throughout our history. Even before the accomplishments of the feminist movement, women were transcending traditional roles in support of America's military efforts, bravely serving their country in times of need. The NMAJMH exhibit focuses on these female war heroes in an effort to give public notice to the vital contributions of women to our country's safety and well being over the years. The exhibit not only focuses on the barriers these individuals faced as women, but also those they overcame as Jews. Often experiencing dual-bigotry, these amazing veterans epitomized true American patriots in their willingness to fight past such obstacles to preserve their nation and their way of life.

## **Rescue & Renewal: GIs and Displaced Persons**

With the end of World War II, almost 8 million persons displaced by the war were in Germany and Austria. They included concentration camp survivors, former prisoners of war, forced laborers and ethnic Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Most of the displaced persons were quickly repatriated or resettled, but for Jewish survivors this was generally not an option. Jewish survivors had no intention of returning to countries where they did not feel welcome and which had, in fact, become vast Jewish cemeteries. Immigration quotas and the British blockade of Palestine kept them in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps longer than most, often three years or longer after World War II ended. They were housed in German army barracks and former slave labor and concentration camps. Jewish soldiers identified with their fellow Jews. Often they could speak in a language survivors understood and were responsive to their needs. They helped locate relatives and provided food and clothing and other assistance. Jewish chaplains were heavily involved, providing for spiritual needs, improving living conditions in the camps and paving the way for eventual departure from Europe. This exhibit is divided into two sections. The first is on the rescue of survivors of history's greatest crime against humanity. The other is on the role of Jewish GIs in helping DPs toward a new life. The NMAJMH worked in coordination with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to put together this exhibition.

## **OUTREACH PROJECTS**

### **Website**

The museum website is located at [www.nmajmh.org](http://www.nmajmh.org). The website provides access to the Museum to an audience who might not be able to visit the museum in person. It features a newly revamped virtual tour that shows all the galleries of the Museum and some of the highlights of our collection. The website also gives information on current exhibits, donor opportunities, museum governance, and museum hours and locations.

## **Yahrzeit Program**

The Museum's Yahrzeit program gives families the opportunity to memorialize their loved ones. A family sends in biographical information on the deceased person, including service information for veterans, the date of death (yahrzeit) which is recorded on computer in the Museum.

## **Future Trust**

The Museum is currently in the early planning stages to set up a trust so that the Museum will be able to continue operating and mounting exhibits after the Jewish War Veterans have ceased to exist due to deaths and decline in membership. The projected value of this will be \$10,000,000.

## **Museum Certificate Program**

Ordering a certificate from the National Museum of American Jewish Military History an opportunity to do a good deed and to benefit the National Museum. The proceeds from the certificates, issued in honor or in memory of, will be used in the Museum to chronicle the history of American Jewish participation in America's defense.

## **Speaker Bureau**

The NMAJMH has a number of speakers available for events. Included among the speakers are concentration camp liberators/survivors and military historians.

## **American Jewish Military Heritage Project**

The American Jewish Military Heritage Project is web based educational program designed for students and teachers. The program includes websites, films, and literary resources pertaining to veterans.

## Section II

### *Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.*



Jewish War Veterans of the USA, (JWV), founded in 1896 by Civil War veterans, matured as a dynamic organization as our nation was involved in several wars during the twentieth century and has developed strategy for its continuance in the twenty-first century.

JWV's accomplishments these past more than one hundred years are unmatched in the American Jewish community. As described in the book by the same name, our record is one of "A Century of Patriotic Service to the American People." Among the highlights of JWV's diverse activities:

- Standing tall in the veterans' community to affirm the long history of Jewish Military Service
- Defending our nation in time of war
- Confronting anti-Semitism at home and abroad
- Support the people of Israel
- Representing veterans of all faiths to secure benefits under current law
- Visiting disabled veterans of all faiths
- Sponsoring Boy Scouts of America programs
- maintaining the graves of deceased Jewish military personnel in local and national cemeteries
- preserving the records of Jewish military personnel
- Testifying annually to Congress on behalf of veterans and national defense
- Supporting those currently serving in defense of our country

In reviewing major developments of the American Jewish community in the twentieth century, Dr. Bernard Reisman, professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, wrote that "...a number of Jewish organizations, notably Hadassah, B'nai Brith and Jewish War Veterans, have implemented a stated primary objective of supporting major Jewish social welfare programs and services." Rabbi Isadore Miller, a former JWV National Chaplain, said that if JWV did not exist, the Jewish Community would have to create it.

Current JWV activities give credence that JWV is not resting on its past laurels but maintains its relevance to Jewish communal affairs.

JWV, through the implementation of the Internet and Intranet, continues to work on specific proposals for improving its internal and external communications, to propose adjustments for realigning its infrastructure and to address its financial requirements. These issues have become the ongoing concern of the JWV/NMI Coordinating Committee, which has the responsibility for the agency's management policies.

JWV draws its leadership from a wide variety of Jewish communities across the country. National Commanders and members of the National Executive Committee have not been concentrated in any single community.

The organizational structure is also diverse, allowing for a great deal of local control and input. The nation is divided into 23 departments, each with its own Commander. Within Departments there are County and District Councils, and at the local level are the hundreds of Posts, which comprise the JWV membership itself.

Any person serving in America's Armed Forces during a period of military conflict is eligible to join JWV as a regular or in-service member. Additionally, those who may not meet this requirement can become associate members, attending and participating as leaders and members in programs and supporting JWV.

Other concerns have also become more prominent for JWV. Our National Housing Commission has worked to assure an adequate housing supply for veterans. Funds have been raised for construction in Pittsburgh, PA, of housing for homeless veterans and their families. Through the East Boro Housing Corporation, JWV provided seed money for a project to provide 105 HUD Senior Housing units. Other housing projects have been undertaken by local JWV posts and departments working in conjunction with other veterans service organizations in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, New Jersey and California.

As America has become an Internet nation, JWV has moved both its operations and programming on-line as well. Our website

([www.jwv.org](http://www.jwv.org)) and that of the Museum ([www.nmajmh.org](http://www.nmajmh.org)) have been constantly updated and redesigned to provide more and better access for our members and the general public. JWV has become a leader in committee teleconferencing.

By virtue of statutory exemption, JWV, as a veterans organization, continues as one of the most politically active of America's Jewish organizations. When the Chinese government illegally seized the crew of an American surveillance plane forced down by a reckless Chinese pilot, JWV was among the first to call on Congress and the President to review our positions on Chinese entry into the WTO and the Chinese bid to host the Olympic games. We were the first veterans' service organization to call for cancellation of the contract for Chinese-made berets for use by the US Armed Forces. JWV's contacts on Capitol Hill and in Washington's agencies are numerous and effective. We maintain contact as well with the defense establishment within and outside the Pentagon.

JWV condemned as an act of war the cowardly and unprovoked terrorist attacks in New York and Washington which claimed thousands of innocent lives. In his condemnation, then JWV National Commander Bernard Becker said, "Our people in the Pentagon, in the Twin Towers in New York, and on the aircraft seized and crashed in Pennsylvania, died for where they lived and what they believed, just as certainly as any Israeli sitting in a Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem."

JWV also vigorously condemned the arrogance of OPEC in controlling production limits with the express purpose of raising the cost of oil and the cost of the war on terrorism, and publicly called on Americans to realize that OPEC expressly designed its actions to create and impose damage on America's economic recovery.

JWV's members remain one of the strongest components of the Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services system, providing countless hours of effort on behalf of hospitalized veterans across the country. It is, in fact, one of the primary facets of JWV's unique mission that we are the only Jewish organization which has worked with the non-Jewish community on a daily basis in hospitals, community relations, in the legislative arena and elsewhere.

Our on-going Allied Veterans' Mission to Israel, continues to provide non-Jewish veterans' service organizations with informed, motivated members who understand the situation Israel faces. As the media continues its biased reporting about Israel, these veterans' voices will be heard and listened to by those organizations, telling the truth.

While the Boy Scouts of America are under attack for remaining true to their core values, JWV continues to provide support and recognition of the value of their programs. Posts around the country provide certificates of achievement to scouts achieving the rank of Eagle, regardless of their religion. In some communities the Posts actually sponsor troops.

At the US military academies at West Point, Annapolis and Colorado Springs, JWV acknowledges the achievement of Jewish graduates by presenting them with kiddush cups and candlesticks. As important as it is to let all Americans know that the Jewish community shares the task of defending America, it is equally important to let the new Jewish officers know that the Jewish community appreciates their dedication to serving their country. JWV continues to support the Academy graduates and all other Jewish military personnel as they serve their country with packages from home and support when they re-enter civilian life. m

JWV remains the "Patriotic Voice of American Jewry," proudly defending our nation and its values.

## **Section III**

# **The Impact of Jewish War Veterans On American Jewry**

**By**

**Seymour S. Weisman, Ph.D.**

**April 27, 1919 - October 3, 2005**

***National Historian***

**Jewish War Veterans of the USA**

**and**

***Senior Fellow***

**National Museum of American Jewish  
Military History**

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 in 2007 included thirteen Jewish senators, more than 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 ac-

tivities 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 (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 II period, grassroots support sprung up throughout the country to remember the horrors perpetrated on Jews and others 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 and in Afghanistan and Iraq. 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 JWW activities in the twentieth century that impacted on the American Jewish community. Those interested in obtaining such a comprehensive review should write to JWW 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 JWW's impact on Jewish communal affairs during the twentieth century, I decided to highlight the careers of two JWW leaders who directed the destiny of JWW in the twentieth century. Recorded below is a compendium of events which established the mantra of JWW's philosophy and programs.

By focusing on these individuals I do not wish to denigrate the worthy contributions of many other valiant JWW leaders. Their efforts, individually and collectively, were crucial to JWW'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 JVV national commander since the First World War (except those elected between 1922 and 1932). Further, I am the only JVV member who had read every issue of JVV's house organ, "The Jewish Veteran." I have probably attended more meetings of JVV's national executive committee than any other member. With this background, I believe that my credentials are impeccable to evaluate the performance of JVV 's leaders.

## **Abraham Kraditor**

After his military discharge in 1919, Abraham Kraditor became a founding member of JVV 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, JVV called for a boycott of German goods. As a publicity gimmick, Kraditor did 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 JVV 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 West-

ern 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 corpo-

rations 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 and again in 1996-1997. 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 ef-

fort 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's Theater National Historic Site and the museum consortium surrounding Dupont Circle, where the NMAJMH is located. Guest speakers 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 with Zweiman as JWV's main speaker. 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 Brith and Jewish War Veterans." No one would dispute that Jewish War Veterans deserves this accolade.

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*I hereby apply for membership in the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America. I certify that I am a citizen of the United States and of Jewish Faith, that my Service in the Armed Forces was honorable, that I have never been discharged from Military Service under dishonorable conditions, that I have never been convicted of a felony, and that I am not a member of any organization that believes in or advocates hate or the forceful overthrow of the American government or bigotry.*

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