

Thank You, Jewish War Vets

I'm writing this before the Nov. 3 election and have no idea who won arguably the biggest, most controversial election of our lifetime. Partisan politics aside, I intend to support whoever was



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selected to be my next Library Board Member in West Bloomfield Township.

I'm grateful beyond words that the remainder of this column will have nothing to do with politicians. With Veterans Day on Nov. 11, I'd like to focus instead on people who actually get

things done — our community's beloved Jewish War Veterans (JWV).

Take 36-year old Nick Israel of Farmington Hills, for example. He was just awarded the 2020 Sidney Lieppe Memorial Grant from the JWV of the USA Foundation. It's presented each year to an American veteran who demonstrates bravery, athleticism, an aptitude for learning and a commitment to their community at large. Lieppe of New Jersey, a WWII Army veteran, passed away at 96 in 2018.

Israel, a U-M grad and Army veteran, served in Europe and the Middle East

as a psychological operations officer. He also supported U.S. troops and diplomats as part of a nonprofit organization across the Balkans, the Black Sea region and throughout Europe. Today, he's a member of the Michigan Air National Guard and is studying for his master's of science at New York's Columbia University.

"The Jewish War Veterans provide Jewish service members with incredible support and valuable opportunities," Israel says. "As I continue my education, I will draw further inspiration from the legacy of Sidney Lieppe, who provided this generous contribution for my graduate studies. I'm proud to call myself a life member of JWV, and I appreciate everything the organization does on behalf of Jewish service members and veterans."

JWV National Medal of Merit awards have been presented by the JWV Department of Michigan to three members and, in so doing, have proven that age is no barrier to giving back to your community.

Hans Weinmann, 94 (Army, WWII), a beneficiary of the Kindertransport, was recognized for his contributions as chaplain for department functions and



Nick Israel saying goodbye to his "Yiddish" shepherd dog, Shaina, before departing for duty with the 110th Attack Wing of the Michigan Air National Guard, where he serves part-time as a major.

as a liaison to the Holocaust Memorial Center. Weinmann is at the heart of the organization's focus on Jewish values and heritage.

Arthur Fishman, 93, (Navy, WWII), senior vice commander and programming chairman of JWV Department of Michigan, was honored for his 53 years of sustained service. Fishman has played pivotal roles within the JWV in their community outreach efforts.

In his roles as post commander and department vice commander, Mark Weiss, 71 (Army, Vietnam era), the "youngster" of the JWV awardees, has

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been at the forefront of helping the JWV adjust to operating climates during the coronavirus and has also been instrumental in introducing cutting edge technology to ensure continuity of operations.

Weiss is also responsible for the production of a slideshow that commemorates the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, including brief histories and photographs of many surviving Michigan JWV of that era, now available at jwv-mi.org/WWII.

It carries the memory of the thousands of Jewish men and women who served and those who perished giving, as President Lincoln stated at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg in 1863, "the last full measure of devotion."

A reminder that despite the coronavirus keeping us from physically gathering at our congregations, many will honor the JWV for Veterans Day through virtual services. Check your synagogue or temple's website for details.

I am a proud patron of JWV Post 510, and I'm grateful for all the relationships I have forged with our beloved JWV Michigan members. I've had the privilege of sharing many of their stories with you. I hope you read further on in this issue for my most recent submission about some incredible local physicians who served courageously in Vietnam.

The JWV is vital to keeping alive our Jewish community's past and continued contri-

butions to military service. If you know someone who is a Jewish veteran or on active duty, please make them aware of the value of being a JWV member. Direct them to www.jwv-mi.org for details.

As their motto states: "JWV is truly a Jewish voice for Veterans and a Veteran's voice for Jews."

Alan Muskovitz is a writer, voice-over/acting talent, speaker and emcee. Visit his website at laughwithbigal.com, "Like" Al on Facebook and reach him at amuskovitz@renmedia.us.