



The Jewish Veteran

A Jewish Voice for Veterans and a Veteran's Voice for Jews

NC Mellitz Testifies Before Congressional Committees

By Cara Rinkoff, Programs and Public Relations Director



On March 8, JWV National Commander Nelson Mellitz testified before a joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees. Mellitz testified alongside leaders of eight other organizations.

Several members of JWV were at the hearing to show support for Mellitz, including Vice Commander Barry Lischinsky, Chief of Staff Larry Rosenthal, Department of New Jersey Commander Selina Kanowitz, and New York Senior Vice Commander Gary Ginsburg.

Here is the statement he delivered:

Chairmen Tester and Bost, Ranking Members Moran and Takano, veterans in the audience, veterans sitting in Congress, veterans at this table. It's my honor to serve, and sir, I've heard you say

that before and I 100% agree, we serve not only in the military, we serve as veterans. I have served 32 years in the United States Air Force, enlisted and as an officer. I enlisted in 1970, served Vietnam through Iraq, 2005-2006 in Iraq. It was my last assignment. The reason I say this is not to make myself sound good, but when I

left the military originally, after the Vietnam War, I went to the VA, I didn't go back a second time for a lot of years. The VA has improved, has substantially improved, they're wonderful now in many areas. It's because of what the VSOs have done, what you have done in Congress. Thank you for that. I have the privilege and the honor to represent the Jewish War Veterans as the 93rd, sorry, 91st National Commander. The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest national veterans organization in the United States. We were formed in 1896 by a few veterans from the Civil War. The reason we were formed is because of antisemitism. Again, we're the longest serving veterans service organization. We advocate for all veterans, not just Jewish veterans, but for all veterans, for benefits and services

and we've been doing that for at least 127 years. In fact, we'll be celebrating our 127th anniversary next week on March 15.

Our mission is strong and clear. Fighting for military and veterans benefits and services, advocating on behalf of Jewish veterans, Catholic, women, African Americans, Asians, all veterans... We oppose all forms of discrimination, but we concentrate especially and we're outspoken on antisemitism.... We will defend the right of everybody in this United States and we will continue to do so... As antisemitism continues to grow in the United States, JWV asks you, Congress members, to specifically help defend our country's freedoms and go forward and fight antisemitism and all forms of hate and bigotry wherever it exists. Key to that, in our opinion, and at JWV is educating the U.S. citizens.

We have priorities for the 118th Congress... I will emphasize a few things that are important not only to JWV but to you and we haven't really mentioned them to the extent I think is necessary. We know the PACT Act was instrumental when you passed it. It took a lot of pressure. It didn't just take one year for the VSOs to put the pressure on Congress members, it took many years. Please keep that in mind for future efforts. But with the PACT Act we also know that VA started working on hiring people, organizing to address the 3.5 million new claims that they estimate will be filed. But yet, it's not enough. I know there are some bills

Continued on page 9

The Super Bowl Ticket Surprise

By Stewart Mednick, Department of Minnesota Vice Commander

USAA worked with the Jewish War Veterans to award Marine and Army veteran Bruce Legan with a free trip to the Super Bowl.

Can a veteran ask for a better surprise than to have Super Bowl tickets given by the Minnesota Vikings record-breaking wide receiver Justin Jefferson?

"It's the best thing that ever happened to me!" said Legan.

Legan enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1975. He was stationed in Camp Lejeune until the Vietnam War ended. Legan was honorably discharged as a Lance Corporal. In 1987, Legan reenlisted in the

U.S. Army working as a track vehicle repairman and vehicle dispatcher based in Kansas. He eventually became a heavy equipment operator in Louisiana. Legan continued his service until 1995 when he was honorably discharged at the rank of Specialist.

Now a resident of St. Paul, 70-year-old Bruce Legan is an active member of the Jewish War Veterans, is involved in the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad, and works at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis.

"It's a special honor to team up with USAA and the Jewish War Veterans to honor



Jefferson presents two Super Bowl tickets to JWV member Bruce Legan (Photo by Stewart Mednick)

Continued on page 8

CONTENTS

D'veri HaShomrim	2	JWV in the Community	11
Message From the Commander	3	National Ladies Auxiliary ...	18
On The Hill	4	Museum News.....	20
Membership Corner	6	Taps	22

D'verei HaShomrim

THE MISSING HALF OF THE MIDDLE MATZAH

by Rabbi Doniel Z. Kramer, Ph.D., BCC, CH (LTC-ret), USAR.

Shalom.

This Issue of “The Jewish Veteran” should be arriving in our homes around Pesach (Passover) time.

For Jewish chaplains on active duty or in VA settings, Pesach presents us with an excellent opportunity to reconnect lost, disillusioned, or uneducated Jews with their heritage.

The Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) Jewish Chaplains’ Council plans to post a schedule indicating where Passover programs will take place on every military post where there is a Jewish chaplain or lay leader.

There is an intriguing custom performed during the Passover Seder ritual. It is called Yachatz, which means divide. The leader of the Seder takes the middle of the three matzot (plural of matzah) on the ritual table and breaks it in half, wrapping and hiding the larger piece, called the afikomen, which will be shared with everyone at the table at the conclusion of the festive Seder meal, and puts the smaller piece back between the two other matzot.

Many of our readers might recall the times in the 1980s and 1990s when so many Jewish federations and the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) encouraged Jewish families to recite "The Matzah of Hope" prayer at the Seder during Yachatz. This meditation remembered the Jews in the Communist Soviet Union, imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain, who were not allowed to practice their faith and were divided from and cut-off from the rest of the Jewish world. We prayed that just as the missing part of the middle matzah will be returned to the Seder table at the conclusion of the Passover meal, so too may all those Jews cut off from the Jewish world be restored to the Jewish people, and we could be one reunited Jewish family.

Indeed, one of the most remarkable Pesach Sedarim (plural of seder) that I attended was when my congregation and community welcomed and helped settle our first Jewish emigre family from the Soviet Union. This family was enjoying their first Pesach in freedom and joined us in reciting “The Matzah of Hope” prayer for Jews still imprisoned in Russia. That same prayer, which was recited by us the previous year, and collectively included them, was now being chanted by them for the first time, on behalf of their friends and relatives still in Russia! That same message is as timely today for so many of our fellow American Jews who have dropped out, or were never formally and educationally initiated into our faith community. Some of these assimilated Jews may have some warm memory of a Passover Seder long ago perhaps at a grandparent’s home. If these individuals are in the military or work on military bases, a friendly, welcoming Seder conducted by a chaplain or lay leader could be the invitation to affiliate.

So too, with a Seder that a VA chaplain might conduct, often with the support of a local JWV post or district. Indeed, I am personally so appreciative of the members of the JWV Rockland/Orange County New York District, under the leadership of Commander Bernhard Storch, of blessed memory, who were always supportive of all of the Jewish and patriotic activities that I and others planned

in the VA Hudson Valley HCS, both financially as well as physically. Their members volunteered to not only help set-up and serve, but also befriended our hospitalized veterans. And I know that this devoted service by JWV and JWVA takes place around the country! Yasher koach—all the power—to you!!!

There is another aspect to Yachatz. The first half of the Seder consists of reciting the Haggadah, retelling the story of the enslavement of the Jewish people in Egypt. Slaves were not fed full meals and were lucky to have broken pieces of bread to eat, and so only a piece of the matzah on the Seder table reminds us of the time when our ancestors were slaves in Egypt.

In this regard, the broken matzah offers an additional lesson. One of the most venerable traditions of Pesach is the Maot Chittim (literally meaning money for wheat) charity drive, when funds are collected to ensure that all Jews, especially those who are poor and destitute, have the funds to purchase matzah (hence the wheat reference) and all the other Seder necessities, to be able to conduct a meaningful, filling, and fulfilling Seder experience in a regal and respectful manner. Jewish veterans who served and even fought while willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so that evil oppressors and despots, like the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt, could be defeated, surely should be volunteers to fight in this war against poverty epitomized by the Maot Chittim campaign.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin concludes his discussion of Yachatz in his Passover Haggadah this way, “The saintly Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1811) once asked, ‘Who is a whole man? He who has a broken heart.’ As long as Israel is not yet fully redeemed, the second matzah must be broken. It remains as a reminder and symbol within the very festival of redemption that we are not yet redeemed.”

May God bless you and your family with a very meaningful, delightful, and redemptive Pesach. Hag kasher vesamayach!



Doniel Z. Kramer



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Interested in writing an article about veterans' issues? Want to let everyone know what your post or department is doing? Send your articles and photographs to Managing Editor Cara Rinkoff at editor@jwv.org.

You can find more information about guidelines for article and photo submissions on www.jwv.org. The deadline for the next issue of The Jewish Veteran is June 2nd at noon eastern.

Interested in sharing the story of your military service with students and other groups? Join the JWV Project Maggid Storyteller program today and help fight the myth that Jews don't serve in the uniformed services.

For information on how to be part of the program, please contact Programs and Public Relations Director Cara Rinkoff at 202-265-6280 ext. 413.

Project Maggid Storyteller Program



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

National Commander Nelson L. Mellitz

As a Jewish War Veteran, you are in a family. A family that is large and diverse and gives its members many opportunities to fulfill its mission and goals. Let's breakdown our family name the “Jewish War Veterans” (JWV). The first word Jewish. It's a religion, and most of the members are Jewish. The second word is war. Many of us served during a time of war and in combat or in support of combat operations. The third is veterans. Veterans are those who served and were discharged



Larry Rosenthal, Stephen Sunshine, Chuck Greenberg, Selina Kanowitz, NC Nelson Mellitz, NVC Barry Lischinsky, Bruce Kanis, and Larry Holman.

from military service. As participants in JWV, we continue a 127-year tradition of working as a family in the larger Jewish community and the larger U.S. military and veterans' communities.

The family tradition continues with a new JWV emphases on fighting antisemitism, improving access for veterans to earned service member benefits, working to obtain new military and veterans benefits at the federal, state, and county levels, turning the corner on ever-increasing veteran suicides, and improving safety and security for veterans and their families. We will continue expanding our outreach through visits to locations with concentrations of veterans, through print and electronic media, and joining federal and state level commit-

Honoring Our Jewish-American Fallen Heroes This Memorial Day

By PNC David Magidson

This Memorial Day, our spotlight should be focused on those Jewish-American service personnel killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. One way to honor these men and women is at Shabbat services on Friday night and/or Saturday morning before the National Day of Mourning. Many of us belong to a synagogue, and almost all of us, whether a member or not, attend services at a synagogue at least once a year.

In our synagogue each year, we ask the Rabbis for an inclusive Memorial Day service, and they are quite receptive to the idea. At an appropriate time, one of the Rabbis asks all of our veterans to rise; then all immediate family members of veterans to rise; then all relatives of veterans; and finally, all congregants who have or have had a good friend serve in the military. Now we have at least two-thirds of the congregation standing. We kvel!

Later, at the commencement of Kaddish, the Rabbis read the names of the almost 60 Jewish-

tees that provide support to our mission. Since our founding in 1896, our family has flourished against tremendous odds. During our many challenges we have always offered a home to every Jewish service member and veteran, and we are family.

JWV is No Longer the Best Kept Secret!

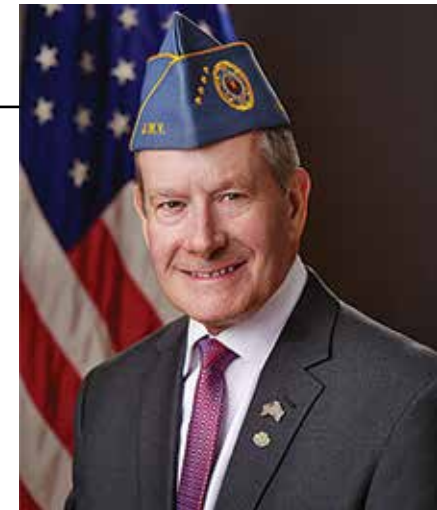
I can't help but focus on my recent visits to the

U.S. Military Academy (West Point) and to the Air Force Academy for Jewish Warrior Weekend. While on these visits I saw hundreds of Jewish Cadets, Annapolis Midshipmen, and ROTC Cadets. They all were interested in hearing about JWV and being part of our family. However, I can't ignore the many challenges that we face to retain these young people after they become members of our family. What does a

Jewish, 18 to 21-year-old future military member need from us? Maybe we should ask what we need from them? I don't have the answers! Tell me what you think these young people need from us now and in the near future.

National Commander's Project

As your National Commander I completed a major milestone by implementing my National Commander's Project. Many of you know that I have been the JWV National Liaison to the Chapel of the Four Chaplains Foundation for six years. Did you know that the Chapel concept and initial implementation was accomplished by JWV's World War I and II veterans in the late 1940s and early



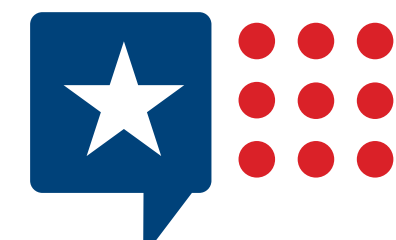
1950s? On February 2, I attended the Chapel's 80th Anniversary Gala Dinner in Philadelphia with members of our leadership. The banquet hall where we ate was not far from the actual chapel on the Philadelphia Navy Yard. There were over 300 attendees at the banquet, who heard my speech about JWV, our history with the Chapel, and what we are working on now. My Commander's Project is to Kasher the two Torahs in the chapel and convert the small chapel to a veterans training center and Jewish chapel room. All the parts of this project are well on their way to completion.

Additionally, the day after the banquet a pew in the main chapel was dedicated to the Jewish War Veterans. This is the first pew dedication at the chapel and it's fitting to have it named after us. The Chapel and JWV will continue to work together to fight all types of discrimination, especially antisemitism. The Chapel's theme is Unity Without Uniformity, and this theme applies today as well as it did 80 years ago.

Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was once asked a question about Israel's future - Should Israel endeavor to be a state like any other state or a light unto the nations? His answer was a light within nations. The Jewish War Veterans members should ask themselves, should the Jewish War Veterans be like all other Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) or a light among the other VSOs?

You Are Not Alone as a Member of the Jewish War Veterans!

Veterans Crisis Line



DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

ON THE HILL

National Executive Director Ken Greenberg

I am pleased to provide you with updates and news from the Hill, the Executive Branch, and JWV.

VA Announces Departure of Deputy Secretary Donald Remy

On March 1, Deputy Secretary Donald Remy announced that he will be stepping down from his role at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on April 1, 2023. A former Army captain and long-time public servant, Remy was confirmed by the Senate and served as deputy secretary after being sworn in by Secretary Denis McDonough on July 19, 2021. JWV had a strong working relationship with Deputy Secretary Remy and he was the keynote speaker for our National Convention in August 2021 and our 125th anniversary dinner. JWV wishes Remy the best in all his future endeavors.

Guy Kiyokawa, VA's assistant secretary for enterprise integration, will serve as acting deputy secretary. Kiyokawa served in the U.S. Army as a Medical Service Corps officer.

JWV knows Kiyokawa from his current VA role as VA's assistant secretary for enterprise integration as well as his former position of deputy director of the Defense Health Agency.

VA is working with the White House to nominate a candidate for deputy secretary as soon as possible. We will keep you updated as the search progresses.

Major Richard Star Act Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill

On Tuesday, February 28, Programs and Public Relations Director Cara Rinkoff represented JWV during The Military Coalition's (TMC) day of advocacy for the Richard Star Act. Members of TMC visited more than 100 members of the House and Senate and asked them to cosponsor the bills

(H.R.1282 and S.344)

Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Jon Tester of Montana, led a press conference that afternoon with the house sponsor of the legislation, Congressman Gus Bilirakis of Florida.

Tester said, "This is a top priority for nearly every veteran service group." Bilirakis said "the next step will be for committees to hold hearings on the bill and then hold votes in both chambers." TMC President Jack du Teil, spoke on behalf of the military and veteran communities.

The Star Act would provide concurrent receipt of DoD earned retirement pay for years of service and VA disability compensation for more than 50,300 combat-injured veterans. Currently, these combat-injured (and often seriously disabled) veterans are subject to a cost-saving offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. Retired pay is for completed years of service paid by DoD, while disability compensation is for a lifelong injury paid by the VA. These two benefits, established by Congress for entirely different reasons, are nonetheless subject to a statutory offset. To reduce earned retirement pay because of a combat disability is an injustice and not the place to achieve savings.

JWV encourages its members to contact their Senators and Representatives and ask them to cosponsor the legislation and to make sure it is either included in the FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) or passed as a stand-alone bill.

JWV Supports Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act

JWV is working with SVAC Chairman Jon Tester of Montana, Ranking Member Jerry Moran of Kansas, and Committee Members Patty Murray of Washington and Mike Rounds of South



Dakota on reintroducing bipartisan legislation (S.495) to expand veterans' access to assisted living services. Improving services for aging veterans remains a JWV priority.

The Senators' Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act would create a pilot program for eligible veterans to receive assisted living care paid for by the VA and allow aging veterans to live more independently while saving taxpayer dollars. The pilot program would be conducted at six Veterans Integrated Services Networks (VISNs) nationwide, with at least two program sites located in rural or highly rural areas and two sites at State Veterans Homes.

Currently, VA is not allowed to pay room and board fees for veterans living at assisted living facilities, preventing many veterans from utilizing this long-term care option.

JWV to Participate in the Vietnam War Commemoration May 11-13, 2023

Operation Welcome Home is a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The event will take place in and around the mall in Washington, D.C. An historical walkway containing exhibits, a military demonstration area, and a rally point designed to share the stories of the veterans, families, citizens, allies, and others during the Vietnam War period is planned. The event will culminate with a live concert on May 13.

If you are interested in volunteering, and being part of the on-site team for JWV, please email Ken Greenberg at kgreenberg@jwv.org, Greg Byrne at gbyrne@jwv.org or Kayla Ramos at kramos@jwv.org. For more details about the commemoration, log onto <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com>.

Staff Update

Please join us in welcoming Melody Harrison as the new membership director and Kayla Ramos as the new administrative assistant at headquarters. Harrison is your point of contact for all membership matters and can be reached at mharrison@jwv.org or (202) 265-6280 ext. 414. Ramos can be reached at kramos@jwv.org or (202) 265-6280 ext. 410.

That's it for this issue. Your views are important, and I want to hear from you. Please share your views on legislation or policy with me at kgreenberg@jwv.org.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

IT COMMITTEE REPORT

By Chairman Leslie Turner

The Information Technology Committee started meeting again in late 2021. Committee members Baruch Fogel of Post 256 in Dallas, Howard Goldstein of Post 54 in Lombard, Illinois, and myself, met frequently via Zoom with staff and senior management of JWV, and often traveled to D.C. to speak with staff in-person. The insight gained from these meetings resulted in the development of what will be a more efficient, effective, and less expensive membership and donor management system.

Fogel, who is an IT professional, is donating many hours towards the development of a system that will include more safeguards and reduce the workload on staff by eliminating work that had to be done manually with the old system.

The committee looked at several possible vendors to provide the system we designed. In the end, we chose a consortium of three companies, including Salesforce, 17 Grapes, and an Israeli based company, Titan. All three together will provide the system JWV needs to move forward and grow its membership and donor base. Fogel will work with the companies to incorporate the code he wrote, saving JWV hundreds of billable hours from the companies.

With the approval of senior management, the National Advisory Council, and senior leadership, the contracts with the three companies were signed by National Commander Nelson Mellitz in early February. By the time this article reaches you, the kick-off meeting with the committee and the consortium will have taken place. We expect that the system will be implemented, and the current database of members and donors migrated to the new system by late summer or early fall.

The committee is also starting to work on requirements for a newly designed JWV Website. I have already received suggestions from members about capabilities they would like to see in a new website. You are invited to submit ideas or suggestions for what you would like to see or do on the JWV website by emailing me at leslie@jwvpost54.org.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

By Chairman Steve Krant

We're asking for donations... no, not that kind. But we know there's a treasure trove of informative newsletters, recruiting materials, published articles, historical materials, how-to checklists, and much more hidden away in the collective attics, closets, and hard drives of each and every JWV echelon. Our Resource Center is the place to donate those ideas and examples of what's worked to grow and promote your Post or Department. Use the handy Resource & Best Practices submission form located under the Membership/Member Resources/Post Management Forms on the JWV website. So don't be a hoarder, share with your JWV colleagues around the country, so they can benefit from your experience and successes.

Also available on the same webpage is our detailed Branding Guide. It's meant to help us unify and standardize the way JWV's logo and visual

elements are seen by the public. In other words, an easily recognized identity for our organization. The guide is mostly written in graphics-speak, so it's best left to your local design person or printer, the people who regularly deal with typography and brand-identity standards.

The Marketing Committee meets monthly via Zoom. Fresh faces and ideas are welcome and encouraged. Contact marketing@jwv.org if you're interested in participating or to share constructive comments and ideas.

POST-9/11 COMMITTEE

By Chairman Jeffrey Blonder

The Post-9/11 Veterans Committee continues to offer meaningful and informative programming to all members of JWV. In November we had a discussion on antisemitism in the U.S. with a representative from the Anti-Defamation League. In December, the Post-9/11 Committee sponsored a very important discussion on suicide and how we can all be agents of change in that field. In January we had a lively discussion on the recent Ken Burns documentary "The U.S. and the Holocaust."

The Post 9/11 Veterans Committee meets virtually the second Monday of each month and is open to all JWV members regardless of which era they served.

VAVS COMMITTEE

By Chairman Howard Goldstein

Are you looking to get more involved with the Jewish War Veterans? Join us as we provide support to VA hospital facilities throughout the country.

Over the past six months, Voluntary Services (VAVS) representatives and deputies have held two virtual meetings discussing what is going on within VAVS and how our activities are supporting veterans in our respective areas. The goal of these quarterly get togethers is to share stories and insights into what is happening within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and to learn from each other as to how we can best support our respective VA medical facilities.

A significant amount of time has been spent over the past few months trying to compile the most comprehensive list of JWV Representatives and Deputies around the country. The initial work is complete but more needs to be done. Any help you can provide would be great. Our list is still incomplete and out of date. Some VAVS reps and deps are being sent emails, but it may be going into their spam folders. For those who have gotten their updates, please make sure all reps or deps you know have also received theirs.

Participating in VAVS meets two key JWV goals: to help veterans and to promote the Jewish War Veterans. We are doing a good job in those facilities where we have active members. It would be good to expand this elsewhere. If you are interested in volunteering at your local VA facility, please contact your Department Commander. We will do what needs to be done to make sure you become an authorized representative.

Those who are currently volunteering at VA facilities are encouraged to track their hours, both at the facility and with JWV National. Doing this shows the VA how much JWV is supporting veterans. At the annual CDCE (Community Development and Community Education) National Advisory Council meeting (the organization overseeing VAVS) awards are given to those organizations showing the greatest support. Beginning in April, we plan to implement a contest within JWV for those individuals and facilities showing the most hours worked.

I will have more to report after the May meeting of the National CDCE/VAVS advisory committee.

VIETNAM VETERANS COMMITTEE

By Chairman Bob Jacobs

The national commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War is well into the planning stages. As previously reported, there will be numerous events on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. May 11-13. JWV will have tent space and we are currently determining what to display. If you are able to volunteer to staff the JWV tent on the 11th or 12th, please contact National Executive Director Ken Greenberg at kgreenberg@jwv.org.

Moving ahead to the JWV National Convention in Jacksonville, Florida, we will again be sponsoring a Vietnam Veterans Night Out on Wednesday, August 30. Reservations are rapidly filling up. The room can accommodate only 60 people and we have more than 50 reservations. So, if you want to attend, contact Jerry Alperstein as soon as possible at alperstein300@gmail.com!

Scholarships for Veterans and JWV Members' Descendants

As it has for many years, JWV is once again offering two types of scholarships.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA Foundation is offering thousands of dollars in scholarships to veterans and active-duty personnel for their education. You do not need to be a member of JWV to apply for the National Veteran Achievement Program.

Direct descendants of JWV members who are seniors in high school are eligible for four scholarships.

You can find the applications at www.jwvusafoundation.org. If you have any questions, please call Programs and Public Relations Director Cara Rinkoff at 202-265-6280 ext. 413 or email crinkoff@jwv.org

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

At the National Executive Committee Meeting (NEC) in Washington, D.C. this January, the Membership Committee discussed what we are doing not only to recruit new members, but to retain members. To that end, the three-year drop rosters have been sent out to all Departments for the Commanders to review and determine why a member has not renewed. The Post Commanders need to be on top of this because that's where retention starts.

We must remember that retention is a key part of membership. We are making inroads with the community of active-duty military members with assistance from the Jewish Welfare Board and The Aleph Institute. Both organizations have access to active-duty Chaplains and Lay Leaders. We hope to spread our message through them and increase the number of active-duty service members in our ranks. This is an investment in our future.

It is incumbent upon all of us to be aware of retention. We need to communicate with and provide meaningful programs for our current members, so they realize the value of continued membership. We need to contact those who have let their mem-

bership lapse, find out why, and bring them back. We continue to lose members as the bulk of our organization ages. While we can't avoid those losses, we should never lose a member for lack of communication, programming, or meaningful activities. It is up to the leadership of each Post to encourage their members to remain active and to keep every member in the fold.

Just as we ask our legislators to have the courage to do the right thing for all veterans, we need to have the courage to reach out not only to our existing members, but to potential members.

We need to remember that first and foremost, we are an organization of veterans helping veterans.

In other news, the membership form has been updated. There's only one line now for the Sponsor to print their name legibly and then write their initials for any type of member or Patron. This simplifies the form.

There is a new benefit for our members that was introduced at the NEC. It is a coffee buying program in conjunction with Berres Brothers Coffee, which is veteran-owned and operated.



Kim Queen
Membership Chairman

The link <https://www.berresbrothers.com/discount/JWVUSA>, takes you directly to their website and you can order kosher coffee products at a discount. This program is open to anyone, not just JWV members, so please share with members of your shul and community. If you have questions about the program, please contact me at rocksog@sbcglobal.net or 414-313-0297.

2023 JWV National Membership Contest

- GOAL:**
Most new members signed up from January 1 to May 31, 2023
- RULES**
Contestant must be a member in good standing during the entire period of contest
- All entries will be reviewed by the Director of Membership and the National Membership Committee.
 - When submitting membership forms make sure the contestant and their post are listed as sponsors on the form.
 - Only new paid members will be counted (Transfers, Renewals and Patrons will not be counted).
 - Write across the top of the new membership form that this submission should be counted for the 2023 membership contest.

- FIRST PRIZE**
2023 National Convention in Jacksonville, FL. package includes:
- 2023 Convention registration fees
 - Hotel room at the host facility for the dates of the convention (up to five nights)
 - Two tickets for the National Commanders Banquet (All travel and other expenses are the responsibility of the contestant)
- SECOND PRIZE**
2023 National Convention in Jacksonville, FL. package includes:
- 2023 Convention registration fees
 - Two tickets for the National Commanders Banquet (All travel and other expenses are the responsibility of the contestant)
- THIRD PRIZE**
Two tickets for the National Commanders Banquet

2024 JWV Calendar Submissions

The theme of next year's calendar will be "Women in the Military." We are interested in acquiring stories and photos from any women who served in the U.S. military at any time. You can send these items to Programs and Public Relations Director Cara Rinkoff at crinkoff@jwv.org or contact her at (202) 265-6285 with questions.

JWV Commemorates 50 Years Since U.S. Ended Involvement in Vietnam

By Bob Jacobs and Jerry Alperstein
On January 18, 2023, approximately 40 members of JWV and the Ladies Auxiliary gathered at the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.
JWV's Vietnam Veterans Committee sponsored the event. Committee Chairman Bob Jacobs welcomed everyone who attended the event and issued a special welcome home for the Vietnam veterans in attendance. Jerry Alperstein played the national anthem on his bugle.
Jacobs reflected on the problems faced by veterans when they returned from service in Vietnam. He noted that the public did not separate their distaste for the war from those who were forced to fight in it.

National Commander Nelson Mellitz spoke about how Jews have stepped up to serve in every conflict in this country since the Revolutionary War. He also talked about his memories of anti-Vietnam veteran protests. He said Vietnam veterans pledged to "leave no one behind" and to make sure that later veterans would not be similarly mistreated. He pledged that he and future JWV National Commanders will continue to protect all veterans.
General Edward Chrystal, the head of Taskforce 23, which is overseeing the official Vietnam War 50th anniversary commemoration on the National Mall this May spoke to the assembled group as well.
The General thanked the work done by Vietnam vets, which helped ensure that later veter-



Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. From left: Chrystal, Mellitz, Jacobs, and Alperstein.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
Murray Zolkower, Howard Berger, Irving Locker

By Larry Jasper, National Editor

In this issue we are honoring three of our oldest members.

Murray Zolkower

Murray Zolkower, Co-Commander of Post 409 in Dunedin, Florida, turned 102-years-old last month. He was honored at his favorite restaurant, Mission BBQ.



Zolkower celebrating his 102nd Birthday with Jack Rudowsky and Larry Jasper.

Zolkower is a World War II veteran who had his schooling interrupted by the events of WWII. He landed on Omaha Beach six weeks after D-Day. He served as a medic with the 120th Medical Battalion, 45th Division starting in France, and the unit fought its way through Nuremburg and Munich. On April 29, 1945, Zolkower found himself part of the liberation force at Dachau, an experience he knew he would never be able to erase from his memory.
After the war, in 1946, he came home and married his high school sweetheart, a marriage that lasted until her passing in 2014. Zolkower finished his education, becoming a pharmacist in 1948, a career he has loved ever since. He joined JWV in 1946 and remains one of our longest serving members.

Howard Berger

Howard Berger turned 99 in November. His father was a machine gunner in World War I. Berger was working as a salesman when WWII began, but when he noticed many factories starting to make war materials, he decided to enlist. He and his brother joined up at the same time, Berger into the Army and his brother into the Coast Guard.
Berger trained on anti-aircraft artillery at Camp Stewart, Georgia. In December 1944, he set sail on the Queen Elizabeth, heading for Scotland. By this time, he was a Staff Sergeant leading a platoon of 21 men and four halftracks.
When a V-2 rocket landed nearby, Berger

said it "scared the hell" out of them. He remained in England, guarding an Italian POW camp until March of 1945, when his unit left for France.
On May 5, two days before Germany surrendered, Berger was badly burned in an accident. He was sent to Paris where he recovered from his injury. Eventually he received a job offer to join the occupation force in Vienna, Austria as an Assistant to the Class



Berger at Camp Stewart, Georgia

his service-related career in 1994 and settled in Naples, Florida, where he joined JWV Post 202. He currently resides in Denver, Colorado.

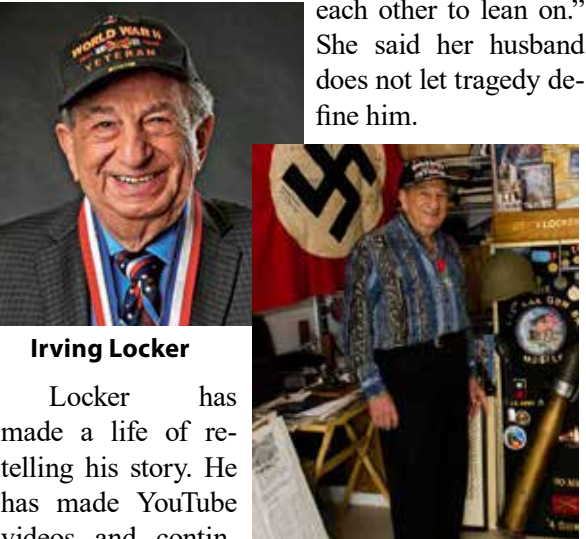
Irving Locker

Irving Locker recently turned 98. On June 6, 1944 Locker was one of the 156,000 soldiers to storm the beaches of Normandy, landing at Utah Beach. Six months later, Locker was a 19-year-old Staff Sergeant with the 116th AAA Gun Battalion of the 1st Army's 7th Corps.
He found himself in the Ardennes Forest during the brutally cold winter of 1944-1945
Locker said, "When we went into the Battle of the Bulge, they had us surrounded on three sides. We didn't have ammunition, food, or anything. I had to send my own sergeant into our own mortuaries where our own dead people were and take the boots and clothing off of them to bring back."
Locker played a part in the liberation of the



Howard Berger
VI Officer. He later joined the entertainment branch of Army Special Services. While there, he met Dorothy, who became his beloved wife of 68 years.
Berger retired from

Gardelegen Concentration Camp, about 100 miles west of Berlin, an experience he will never forget.
Once Locker reached Berlin, he took a swastika flag from a wall and had some of his men sign it. It is one of many mementos he still has from the war.
After the war Locker, made a life with his sweetheart Bernice. They have been married for 74 years. Unfortunately, they have outlived both of their sons. His wife Bernice said, "We've had our ups and downs, but we've always been there for each other. When we lost our sons, I don't think either of us would have survived if we didn't have each other to lean on."
She said her husband does not let tragedy define him.



Locker with his memorabilia collection
Locker has made a life of retelling his story. He has made YouTube videos and continues to give Power Point presentations to anyone who will listen. For 77 years he has given lectures on the war and the Holocaust everywhere from elementary school classrooms to the White House. He returned to Normandy for the 70th and 75th D-Day anniversaries.
Locker said "Too many people have no idea what we experienced. It's important to me that this story is told after I'm gone, so people don't forget."
Locker is 5'2" and during one of his talks, someone asked how he survived the war. Locker answered, "I stood behind a tall guy."
Locker is a long-time member of JWV Post 352 in The Villages, Florida.
If you know of any older members who you would like to see spotlighted, please forward their contact information to me at lmjasper@reagan.com.

NEW MEMBERS

DEPARTMENT AT LARGE Joseph Fox - 100 Rafael J. Kaplan - 100	DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS Aaron Melman - 29	Howard Muser - 740 Paul S. Fried - 972	DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA Steven I. Miller - 697 Bernard Pollack - 697
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA Sholom D. Langsam - 118 Jan Elbaum - 603 Fred R. Kaplan - 603 Arnold B. Krane - 603 Ethel Margolin - 603 Michael I. Mostin - 603	DEPT OF MIDWEST Michael A. Abrams - 605 Marjorie Sue Soffer-Wood - 644	DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK David P. Frommer - 1 Benjamin Wallen - 1 David M. Myones - 105 Elan Shiang - 106 David L. Wolman - 336 Howard A. Blas - 625 Ramona Jones - 652 Eli E. Levine - 652 Philip Schwartz - 652	DEPT OF SOUTHEAST-GA,AL,SC,TN Saul Eisenstat - 112
DEPARTMENT OF CONNECTICUT Samuel C. Beinstein - 51	DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN Michal Kloeffer-Howard - 474 Ethan A. Gross - 510 Bruce E. Plisner - 510 Semyon A. Rozenberg - 510	DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA Joan Austin - 331	DEPARTMENT OF TALO Paul Wainstein - 574 Anthony L. Luvara - 75 Jacob S. Solomon - 753
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA Jay Ginsburg - 352	DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY Herb J. Deutsch - 126 Isaac Landor - 178	DEPARTMENT OF OHIO Robert S. Barnes - 44	DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA-NC David M. Finkelstein - 95 Samuel J. Korson - 95 Jennifer Krischer - 95 Gabrielle L. Friedman - 158

Update from the JWV VSOs

What's Happening in 2023

By Raiana Berman, National Veteran Service Officer

someone to help, they can call 1-800-MyVA411 or contact a JWV Veteran Service Officer.

VA formally launched its mobile application, VA: Health and Benefits, in August of 2022. The new app centralizes veterans' health and benefits information to streamline navigation of VA's services. It's designed to be a single, secure platform that allows veterans to manage their services wherever they are. Veterans can view and cancel health care appointments, view claims and appeals status, upload documentation, message their doctor, locate facilities, and more. It also provides access to the VA Crisis Line.

Updating military history in the application will become even more critical with the signing of the PACT Act. VA continues to build out the application and anticipates adding new features in the coming year, like refilling prescriptions, requesting appointments, and managing payments. Since its launch, more than one million veterans have downloaded the app.

Over the past year, VA reorganized its Electronic Health Records (EHR) management

and deployment schedule. The overhauls followed Oracle's purchase of Cerner Corporation in January of 2022, making Oracle Cerner the new proprietor of VA's EHR software, Millennium. Following challenges with outages and patient safety concerns, VA postponed its rollout schedule in June of 2022. VA reported several additional technical and system issues including challenges with performance, problems with patient scheduling, referrals, medication management, and other types of medical orders that need to be addressed before the agency resumes its schedule. As it makes system improvements, the VA's main focus will be on patient safety. VA will focus on four primary components: change management, leveraging user feedback, holding industry partner Cerner accountable for system downtime, and preparing for the next deployment. VA must make sure that the systems and their people are supported and trained so that the care veterans are getting is not affected. VA plans to resume its rollout in the fall of 2023.

Camp LeJeune Contaminated Drinking Water

By Steve Fixler, Veteran Service Officer

I know this has been brought up before, but I am still getting questions about it, and I thought it would be good to reiterate.

There are a lot of commercials on TV and radio from attorneys asking to represent veterans and civilians who were at Camp LeJeune between 1953 and 1987. The lawsuit is based on drinking contaminated water at the site during that time.

One commercial says filing a lawsuit will not affect any VA benefits that the veteran is receiving. That is not true. Yes, the veteran will not lose any VA benefits, but any money the veteran receives from the lawsuit will be offset by any VA benefits received based on drinking the water.

Filing a VA claim for drinking the contaminated water is different from filing a lawsuit.

If a veteran is already receiving VA Service-Connected Disability Compensation for drinking the contaminated water at Camp LeJeune and that veteran files and wins a lawsuit, the award will be offset by any money or payments made in connection with health care or disability compensation payments related to the contaminated water for any VA, Medicare, or Medicaid program. You cannot be paid twice from the government for the same issue.

For example, if a veteran is receiving VA disability payments and wins a lawsuit:

<i>Lawsuit Settlement:</i>	<i>\$200,000</i>
<i>An Offset:</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>
<i>Legal Fee (40%):</i>	<i>\$80,000</i>
<i>Net to Veteran:</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>

In other words, if a veteran received money from the VA for drinking the water, they will subtract the amount of money the veteran received from the VA from the amount of money that the veteran gets from the lawsuit.

If you want to file a lawsuit against the govern-

ment, make sure that it's financially the right thing for you to do. Do not just let the attorney tell you that you should do it and join all the other veterans that are doing it. (There may not be a lot of veterans doing it.) Check out all your options on whether you should file the lawsuit and how it will impact your VA disability payments and hospital care.

As of this date, I do not know any veteran who has filed a lawsuit. I know they have filed VA claims. I am not saying it is wrong to file a lawsuit, but I just do not know of any veteran who has filed a lawsuit.

Another thing is that this is not just for Marines. If an Army, Navy, or Air Force veteran, or National Guard or Reservist was at Camp LeJeune, they also could be eligible for compensation.

Civilians and spouses of veterans filing a claim would not be affected by any VA benefits, but I do not know how that works if they are receiving any federal aid like Medicare. They need to check how that affects anything they're receiving from the federal government.

Veterans also must watch out for scammers – not only to file a VA claim for drinking the water, but for any type of VA benefit. Last week, I had a wife of a veteran call me and say that she is working with an organization that will help her file for VA Aid and Attendance. The organization said that it will cost her \$1,000.00. I told her no one ever has to pay to file a VA claim. She gave me his name and I have heard of him, but I always contact the Illinois Attorney General's Office of Veteran and Military Affairs and report him. Like I said, no one ever has to pay to file a VA claim. Not only that, but they cannot guarantee that you will be approved for the claim and many times, they send you to a Veteran Service Officer who will actually send the paperwork to the VA.

THE SUPER BOWL TICKET SURPRISE

Continued from page 1

Bruce, who continues to serve his fellow veterans," said Jefferson.

"All expenses paid. Leave your wallet at home!" exclaimed Jefferson when he presented the two oversized foam-board tickets. Legan and his brother, who he was allowed to take along as his guest, were given plane tickets, hotel rooms, meals, and access to all the Super Bowl events.

So how did this dream come true for Legan?

I received a call from JWV National Executive Director Ken Greenberg. In strict confidence, he explained that he would like me to be the point of contact for the USAA, JWV, and the Jewish Community Center (JCC) in St. Paul where the staged ruse took place. Yes, a ruse to have Legan show up under the guise of an interview by USAA to talk about his military experience.

The Friday of the video shoot came upon us quickly, and early in the morning we were all setting up. I had been in contact with Legan to firm up the schedule of events. The trick was to have Legan show up before Jefferson did, so they wouldn't see each other before the reveal.

During the middle of Bruce's interview, Jefferson walked in from behind where Legan was sitting with the two oversized Super Bowl Tickets in hand. I had a chill run down my spine as Jefferson presented the tickets to Legan's elation and surprise.

I cannot say enough about the USAA organization and how much they have provided for all veterans. This was an enjoyable experience and I hope JWV collaborates with USAA again soon.

As a proud Life Member of JWV, this epitomizes the efforts and passion of how JWV and all Veterans Service Organizations can change a person's life with a simple act of kindness.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

There are many important issues facing JWV today - antisemitism, apathy, retention, recruiting, our aging population, and long-time members refusing to change the way things were done in the past. All of these need to be addressed if we, as a viable Veterans Service Organization (VSO), are going to continue functioning in the future.

Antisemitism is being addressed at all levels. All departments are now required to have an antisemitism action officer. This person is responsible for keeping track of antisemitism issues in their area and taking any necessary action. There is a national coordinator to work with the department officers. If you don't know who your department officer is, you should contact your Department Commander.

Apathy is an issue all organizations are facing today. We are told younger people are not joiners. While this has merit, some do join. They need to see a reason to join and the purpose has to resonate with them. This creates a challenge for us all. We need to find new ways to attract members by rethinking how we do business – whether it is post meetings, department meetings, or national conventions. We need to change what we do to make it attractive to the younger generation.

Retention is a serious issue. We cannot change the fact that we lose members due to aging. That is something that will affect all of us at some time. Unfortunately, the bulk of our losses are manageable. Sure, some members lose interest as they age, but we are losing members because we are not en-

gaging them. Think outside of the box. Don't hold your meetings on a weekday morning or afternoon unless all you want are retired folks. Change some of your Sunday morning breakfast meetings to a picnic in the park or another more interesting venue.

Recruitment is not the sole responsibility of a recruiter. We are all recruiters. Some members reach out to new service members through the service academies. Some reach out to installations nearby. We are making inroads with the Aleph Institute and the Jewish Welfare Board to reach active-duty chaplains, lay leaders, and service members. We can recruit them, but we need to be proactive in engaging them. We need to let them know why they should not only join but remain. Over the past few years, we have created new benefits such as free membership in a JCC for two years after leaving active duty. Most service members like going to the gym and most JCCs have them. We now offer two years of free JWV membership after leaving active duty. Did you know about these? You should and so should the active-duty members we approach. There are additional benefits we can offer, such as the intangibles, comradeship, sharing their experiences and concerns with fellow veterans, relating to veterans who share their religious beliefs, assistance in obtaining benefits, and more.

We cannot stop our members from aging but we can do more to honor them. We have a significant number of members who are at or near the century mark. Are we recognizing them? Are we

NELSON'S TESTIMONY

Continued from page 1

going through Congress right now that say give more money to doctors, nurses, administrators at VA. We need to push those bills through the system because if we don't have those people in place, claims will increase and then the appeals will increase continuously.

Yes, we addressed toxic exposure by the PACT Act, do all the veterans out there know about their benefits? The VSOs and Congress have to stand out. Make sure they know those benefits, know that they can apply for the benefits, put claims in. You addressed in a previous meeting the predator lawyers. Yes, JWV agrees with Veterans of Foreign Wars, penalties should be applied to those people. But there should also be incentives for additional veteran service officers to come out, to be employed by the organizations like the Jewish War Veterans. Yes, we're increasing our program and trying to recruit as many VSOs as possible to process those claims and we will do that.

Suicide prevention and mental health. We obviously know more must be done. We know that one veteran, one military member taking their life is too much. But everything I've heard over all these many panels, all these many hearings, didn't address what happens in the military before you get to the veterans side. I think, from day one that you join the military, you should be addressing, in the military, mental health. When you go through basic training, that is extremely important to address it. I think maybe even before that, and we work with an organization called Our Community Salutes, who actually works with the families of the veterans, of

the military members rather than going into the military directly out of high school...

Supporting women veterans. The fastest growing group of veterans, as you know, is women. It's haphazard. I visited many veterans locations, many veterans affairs medical centers, and some are great. The one that I go to in Philadelphia is fantastic at addressing women's needs. That might be because the director is a woman. I don't know. I've gone to others and that's not the case. It needs to be looked at not as a total VA package, but individual centers.

Expanding service to veterans and caregivers. Again, we know this is important. One area we want to stress is, JWV urges Congress to remove the regulatory requirement for the 70 percent disability rating to be eligible for this program. That's ridiculous. And that's my words. Take it out. It wasn't there before. Take it out.

Major Richard Star Act. Committee Chairman Tester, thank you for heading up that effort. And there are others. In New Jersey where I come from, we have gone to all our Senators, all our Congresspeople, and they have signed on. We have encouraged all the JWV members to go to the 50 states and territories and get their Senators and Congresspeople to also sign on. It impacts over 50,000 combat injured veterans.

Ending veterans' homelessness. We've made progress. Between 2020 and 2022, 11 percent of the veterans that were on the street are no longer homeless. The best we've done in five years. The problem is that's not good enough. JWV has submitted to many of you members just last week steps that we should take that you haven't really discussed before. I don't have time in my short period of time here to go over them, but I encourage you to look at

recognizing their contributions to not only JWV but to our nation? Publicizing these milestones draws the attention of all veterans and non-veterans alike. Equally important, it is the right thing to do.

How many times have you heard, "that's how we always did it"? The old ways worked in the past and some may work today, but the world has changed and so have ideas and desires. We need to respect the past and learn from it. We need to change with the times if we are to have a future.

Have you heard of OCS? No, not Officer Candidate School. Our Community Salutes. This is a project started by a JWV member about 15 years ago to honor high school graduates who have decided to join the military. There is a schedule that has been sent to all Department Commanders indicating events in communities around the country. Check the list and participate in events in your area. This is a great opportunity to find Jewish recruits. Be sure to bring applications with you!

If you have ideas on how to make JWV better or how to recruit and/or retain, share them. Be a part of the future while respecting the past.



Larry Jasper, National Editor

Welcome to Jacksonville, Florida!

The 128th JWV annual convention will be held in Jacksonville, Florida this year. The largest city by area in the contiguous United States, Jacksonville is a city with a rich history.

Studies of pottery found in the Jacksonville area revealed that people inhabited the area as far back as approximately 2500 B.C., though much of its history before 1562 is unknown. The area switched ownership repeatedly between the French, Spanish, and British empires before the territory of Florida became part of the United States in 1821. The city is named after President Andrew Jackson. It rose to prominence during the American Civil War when, as an important port for the Confederacy, it was blockaded and occupied several times by Union forces.

The city had largely recovered from the Civil War by the late 1800s, when it suffered an outbreak of yellow fever and a massive fire. The fire gave Jacksonville the chance for a fresh start. The city emerged as the “winter film capital of the world”



because of its cheap labor and agreeable climate, a title held until 1917. Conservative citizens and their newly elected representatives decided to make Jacksonville less appealing for film studios due to their disapproval of the oftentimes loud and disruptive nature of filmmaking.

But where one industry fell, another rose to prominence. Its location made Jacksonville a par-

ticularly enticing area for the U.S. Navy. When World War II came around, Jacksonville became the home of several new Navy bases. While this helped in the short term, the post-war migration of residents away from the city and into the suburbs caused Jacksonville to experience an economic decline. A 1967 consolidation referendum combined the city and county governments into one, and placed an emphasis on combating corruption, facilitating integration, and improving the quality of services that benefitted the citizenry. It was through these efforts that Jacksonville recovered and became the beautiful city that it is today. It has continued its tradition of having a storied existence, having survived several hurricanes and the hosting of Super Bowl XXXIX. JWV is looking forward to adding to that history by having the 2023 National Convention in Jacksonville. We hope to see you all there August 27 – September 1.

Things to Do in Jacksonville

****Make sure you download the “Visit JAX!” Destination App for your phone before heading to convention. The app will give you deals and discounts on local attractions and restaurants!****

Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens features the only walking safari in Northeast Florida. There are more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals, as well as 1,000 plant varieties on exhibit. The zoo is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The general admission cost is \$29.95 per person. Seniors 65 and older are \$27.95. For more information call 904-757-4463 or visit <https://www.jacksonvillezoo.org/>.

Head out to the Ballpark



The Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp are the Double-A affiliate of the Miami Marlins. They have evening home games August 29, 30, and 31 at 7:05 p.m. For ticket information call 904-358-2846 or visit <https://www.milb.com/jacksonville>.

The Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens

This museum in the historic Riverside neighborhood houses more than 5,000 works of art, including significant European and American paintings, as well as a renowned Meissen porcelain collection. Visitors can also tour the formal



gardens which overlook the St. Johns River. The museum is open on Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m., closed on Monday, open Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Wednesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission costs \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors and active-duty military members. For more information call 904-356-6857 or visit www.cummermuseum.org.

Museum of Contemporary Art



MOCA has designed its exhibits to enhance the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art with an emphasis on works created between 1960 and the present. There are more than 1,000 pieces in the museum’s perma-

Fort Caroline National Memorial



Located along the St. Johns River in the Arlington neighborhood, Fort Caroline is a memorial to the French presence in Jacksonville during the 16th century. The location has both a replica fort and muse-

um along with a Visitor Center for the Timucuan Preserve. The National Park Service operates this free site, which also includes numerous historical sites and nature trails. The area is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call 904-641-7155 or visit https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/foca_visiting.htm.

St. Johns River Taxi and Tours

The easiest ways for visitors to get on the water is via the River Taxi. From Wednesday through Sunday, the taxi has multiple stops along the St. Johns River in the city’s downtown area, and also offers sunset cruises and ecotours. You can ride all day for just \$15.00. For information call 904-860-8294 or visit www.jaxrivertaxi.com.

National Convention Schedule

**Schedule subject to change* (All times are Eastern)*

Sunday, August 27

Constitution and Bylaws Committee 3:00pm

Museum Event 8:00pm-10:00pm

Monday, August 28

NEC Meeting 9:00am

JWV/JWVA Joint Convention Opening 11:30am – 12:30pm

Resolutions Committee 4:00pm

JWVA Pound Auction 8:30pm

Tuesday, August 29

1st Business Session 8:00am – 10:00am

Legislative Advocacy Training Session 11:00am – 12:00pm

Free Time Starts at 12:30pm

JWVA National President’s Reception and Banquet 6:00pm

Wednesday, August 30

2nd Business Session 9:00am – 12:00pm

Double Chai Luncheon 12:00pm

Free Time Starts at 1:00pm

Thursday, August 31

Ideas Roundtable 9:30am -10:30am

Closing Nominations and Elections 10:30am - 12:00pm

National Museum of American Jewish Military History Board Meeting 1:30pm – 3:30pm

National Commander’s Banquet 6:00pm

Vietnam Veterans Night Out Chart House

Wednesday, August 30

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Attendance is limited to the first 60 reservations received. \$55 per person (includes tax and tip) if check received by August 25. \$65 per person (includes tax and tip) if paid in cash at National Convention (if still available). Contact Jerry Alperstein at (212) 477-3131 or (646) 825-1694 for more information.

JWV 128th

Convention will be held at the Marriott Jacksonville Downtown 245 Water Street Jacksonville, FL 32202

Hotel registration deadline is Wednesday, July 26

A one night (\$165/single or double) deposit is required for all hotel registrations.

A 3-night minimum stay is required. Hotel reservations must be made through JWV.

There is a \$175 Convention surcharge for members not staying at the hotel.

Local members living within a 50 mile radius are exempt.

Hotel reservations can be canceled without penalty

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

Annual National Convention JWVA 95th

August 27- September 1, 2023 • Jacksonville, FL

JWV members will be also able to attend the convention online. To register for the online version of the 2023 convention, you must log onto our website, www.jwv.org and fill out the online form.

This form will NOT be accepted as registration for the virtual convention.

JWV Member Name: Post #:

JWVA Member Name: Aux. #:

Address: Dept.:

City: State: Zipcode:

Phone: Email:

Room will be shared with:

Arriving on: Departing on: Total nights:

Registration for both JWV + JWVA	Cost	QTY.	Amount
Rooms Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> King <input type="checkbox"/> 2 beds ADA rooms are first come, first served <input type="checkbox"/> ADA Compliant <input type="checkbox"/> Third Person in Room.	\$165.00 per night Breakfast included \$85/per night		
JWV Member Convention Registration Fee	\$50.00		
Convention Surcharge for those not staying at the Hotel	\$175.00 per member		
National Commander’s Banquet • Thursday, Aug. 31 ____ Chicken ____ Fish ____ Kosher ____ Sugar-free Dessert	\$55.00 per person		
National Ladies Auxiliary Registration Fee	\$50.00 per member		
Partners Club (\$50 new members /\$25 renewal) • Monday, Aug. 28	\$50.00 \$25.00		
National President’s Reception and Banquet • Tuesday, Aug. 29 ____ Chicken ____ Fish ____ Kosher ____ Sugar-free Dessert	\$55.00 per person		
Double Chai Club Luncheon • Wednesday, Aug 30 ____ Turkey Wrap ____ Vegetable Wrap ____ This is my first Double Chai Luncheon ____ I am happy with the Double Chai Pin I have now I have _____ on my pin and will need one more (15 stones max)	\$36.00 per person You don’t need to belong to the Ladies Auxiliary to attend our Double Chai Luncheon.		
Raffle Tickets \$5.00 Each or 3 for \$10.00	JWVA JWV		
Total \$			
All events and raffle tickets must be pre-paid in full. Amount paying now: \$			
I am paying by: <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> American Express <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover			
Card No.		Exp. /	
Signature			

Procedure for Submitting a Proposed Resolution for Consideration at National Convention

- All proposed resolutions must be submitted at the Department level for approval before being sent to National Headquarters.
 - Once approved by the Departments, all proposed resolutions should be sent via email to resolutions@jwv.org or to headquarters in D.C. to the attention of Cara Rinkoff.
 - All proposed resolutions must contain the name and post number of the requestor and the dated approval signature of the Department Commander.
 - All proposed resolutions must be submitted by July 28, 2023.
 - Proposed resolutions of an emergent nature may be accepted at the start of the Resolutions Committee meeting with the approval of the Chairman.
- If you have any questions about how to submit a resolution or how to format a resolution properly, please contact Resolutions Committee Chairman Larry Jasper at resolutions@jwv.org or JWV National Programs and Public Relations Director Cara Rinkoff at crinkoff@jwv.org.

Voting Eligibility at the 2023 National Convention

- To be in good standing and eligible to vote at the National Convention, all Posts must have done the following:
- Completed IRS Form 990-N (or 990 or 990 EX) and submitted a copy to National Headquarters.
- Submitted a completed Installation Form (Warrant) to National Headquarters.
- Submitted a completed Financial Report, which must then be approved by the Finance Board Chairman.
- Provided proof of Fidelity Bond and Post Liability Insurance to National Headquarters.

JWV IN THE COMMUNITY

Cadet Training & Promotion Ceremony

Members of **North Shore Post 29** in Illinois attended the promotion of one of its members, Chaplain Dovid Grossman of the Civil Air Patrol Air Force Auxiliary, to the rank of Major. Before the promotion ceremony, Grossman led a character development class for Civil Air Patrol Cadets. With a wealth of wisdom in the room, veterans and CAP senior members paired off with cadets to discuss each question in the curriculum. Grossman said it was exhilarating to witness the multigenerational interactions and to hear insights they shared with each other.



From left: PNC Jeff Sacks, Rose Hunt, Andrew Loy, and Grossman.



Dave Schuman and Civil Air Patrol Cadet Colonel Connor McGuire



On December 12, members of **Post 605** delivered gift cards to the residents of St. Michael's Veterans Retirement Center in **Kansas City**. These donations are part of the post's 20-year tradition of delivering holiday gifts to local veterans. From left: Donnie Wilson, Richard Brockman, Herb Spiegel, Mark Slatkin, Carl Younkers, Scott Bronston, and Susan Engel.

The **Department of Wisconsin** co-sponsored a menorah building program with Chabad of Mequon at a Home Depot in Grafton, Wisconsin. From left: Rabbi Moisha Rappaport, Yitzak Biynan, Oded Lipsick, Kim Queen, Mark Schneider, and Phyllis Wiggins.



On January 13, the Department of Veterans Affairs officially renamed the Welcome Center at the Kettles VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan after WWII Veteran and JWV member Dr. Guy Stern. Stern attended the ceremony along with other members of the **Department of Michigan** the day before his 101st birthday. From left: Arthur Fishman, Steve Haas, Donald Schenk, Stern, Mark Manson, Mark Weiss, and Bill Glogower.



On February 24, National Commander Nelson Mellitz spoke to 75 chaplains and support uniformed service members at the Aleph Institute's Military Chaplains Symposium in Miami, Florida.



On January 6, **Drizin-Weiss Regional Post 215** in **Philadelphia** demonstrated the capabilities of a Search, Rescue, and Recovery K-9 to students at Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware. Pictured are Post Commander M.B. Kanis and K-9 in training MacGyver.

JWV IN THE COMMUNITY



Junior Vice Commander Gary Ginsburg of the **Department of New York** introduced four new JWV members from the West Point community at the end of services on December 2. From left: Alisa Friel-Watanabe, Benjamin Wallen, Ginsburg, Chaplain David Frommer, and Aiden Djavadi.



Members of JWV and JWVA grab dinner together during NEC 2023 in Washington, D.C. in January. Clockwise from front left: Rachel Hayman, Tracey Adler, Carol Adler, Al Adler, Leeann Warner, Bob Jacobs, Marcia Jacobs, Nelson Mellitz, Debbie Mellitz, Shirley Zak, Stephanie Naftelowitz, Steven Silverman, Merci Silverman, and Selina Kanowitz.



Members of **Post 652** participated in the program, Shine a Light, at the Mid Island JCC in Plainview, New York on December 20. The goal of the program, which is held during public Hanukkah celebrations, is to raise awareness about antisemitism. More than 200 people attended the event.

JWV donated a four-foot-high menorah to the leadership of the Joint Base McGuire, Dix, Lakehurst Jewish Chapel during the 2022 Chanukah Party. There were nearly 100 attendees, including those on active duty, as well as reserve and national guard members, and JWV members from New York and New Jersey. From left: Chaplain (Lt Col) Menashe Miller, Perry Levine, Selina Kanowitz, Chuck Greenberg, Chaplain (Maj) Raphael Berdugo, and NC Nelson Mellitz.



Members of the **Department of California** packed gift bags that were distributed on Christmas Day to hospitalized veterans in Los Angeles and Long Beach.



Herman Siegel **Post 625** of Poughkeepsie helped commemorate the 141st birthday of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on January 30 in Hyde Park, New York. Post Commander Ralph Schwartz presented a wreath on behalf of the post.

JWV IN THE COMMUNITY



Martin Hochster Memorial Post 755 in Fort Worth, Texas held an installation ceremony for its new officers on January 22. From left: Sidney Zimelman, Michael Ross, Nachshon Atkins, Ron Sivernell, Richard Crossley, Jr., Ken Sherwin, Phil Kabakoff, William Oglesby, Jr., Lauren Baum, and William Kutler.



On January 15, the **Department of Michigan** presented Dr. Sydney Harris with a Centenarian Certificate in honor of his 100th birthday. From left: Don Schenk, Harris, and Larry Berry.



On February 1, Eli Levine celebrated his 100th birthday at the American Air Power Museum in East Farmingdale, New York with friends, family and fellow members of **Post 652**.



On December 27, **Department of Florida** Commander Larry Jasper presented Moie Brenner with a check for being the recipient of the Clifford Lee Kristal Education Grant, which is one of the JWV National Youth Achievement awards.



In December, **North Shore Post 220** honored Ed Gustat with JWV's Gold Medal of Merit for outstanding and continued exemplary service. From left: Gustat and Larry Taitelbaum.



On February 4, **Department of Wisconsin** Commander Kim Queen read Rabbi Goode's story at the American Legion 2nd District of Wisconsin's Four Chaplain's program. Thanks to assistance from Rabbi Dovid Grossman and the Aleph Institute, for the first time an official military Siddur and Homash were part of the display.



Jersey Shore Post 125 held a brunch on December 4 in Long Branch, New Jersey to celebrate a successful Veterans Day Poppy event. Top row from left: Gene Lowy, Lewis Wetstein, Mike Gordon, Michael Steinhorn, and Monty Fisher. Bottom row: Ruth Lowy, Henry Lewis, Lena Lewis, Gerald Levine, Judy Rubenstein, Marc Rubenstein, Burt Resnic, and Carol Shapiro.

JWV IN THE COMMUNITY



On February 17, the Jewish Committee on Scouting of Greater Tampa Bay Council of the Boy Scouts of America held its 2nd annual Scout Shabbat at Congregation Rodeph Shalom. JWV member Stanley Weinstein is the chair of the Greater Tampa Bay Council.



Maryland Free State Post 167 joined with Boy Scouts Pack 18 and the Jewish Uniformed Service Association of Maryland to put together mishloach manot (Purim treats) for local veterans. The group made gifts for more than 85 veterans on March 5.

On December 11, members of the **Capital District Council** placed stones on the graves of more than 180 Jewish veterans at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery. The effort was a new initiative to honor Jewish veterans who should not have wreaths on their graves placed by Wreaths Across America. Photo by Shannon Silva.



In February, Rob Rubin of **Siegel Post 625 in Poughkeepsie, New York** delivered non-perishable food items to a volunteer at the Castle Point VA Food Pantry. The Post purchased the food from funds raised during its most recent poppy sale.



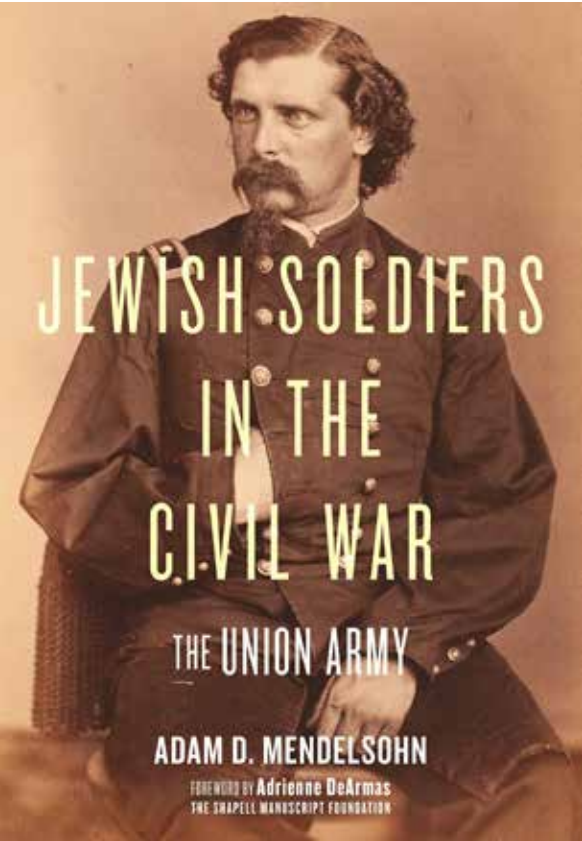
On February 27, New Jersey State Senator James Beach allowed Department of New Jersey Commander Selina Kanowitz to press the button casting a vote in his name. Kanowitz and other members of the Department were at the statehouse to receive a proclamation honoring the 127th anniversary of the Jewish War Veterans.



Representatives of **Capital District Council** presented a donation to the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, New York on December 23 as part of the JWV Operation Jingle Bells. From left: Rich Goldenberg, VA Volunteer Services Representative Dom Dominguez, Gary Hoffmann and Fred Altman. The **Albany Post 105** and **Schenectady Post 106** donated \$720 in lieu of their traditional in-person visits on Christmas Eve. They were unable to visit in person due to health concerns. Photo by Michael Fitzpatrick, Stratton VA Medical Center.



On January 29, National Commander Nelson Mellitz attended the quarterly meeting of the **Department of Florida** in **Deerfield Beach**. From left: Verna Rosenzweig, Mellitz, and Larry Jasper. Photo by Sid Burns.



By Sheldon Goldberg, PhD
Ten years ago, when I became a Docent and Historian at the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, I was honored to follow in the footsteps of those who had come before me. I

NYC Museum Celebrates the Jewish Deli

By Dr. Douglas Segan
The New York Historical Society Museum currently has a special exhibit on display exploring the history and culture of the Jewish deli. The exhibit, “I’ll have what she’s having: The Jewish Deli,” tells the story of the Jewish immigrant experience, their culinary heritage, and how these immigrants created the Jewish deli in America.
The exhibition explores the food of the immigrants, the prominent role that the Jewish deli plays in the culture of both New York City and America as a whole. On display are neon signs, menus, photographs, advertisements, and deli workers’ uniforms, alongside film clips and video documentaries.
One display at the museum that will be of particular interest to Jewish War Veterans is a letter from my father, Benjamin Segan to his fiancée, my mother, Judith Berman. He sent the letter to her from Italy during World War II. During the war, his mother would ship him salamis from Katz’s delicatessen on the Lower East Side. In the letter on display, Private Segan wrote that he “had some tasty Jewish dishes just like home” thanks to these shipments of salamis. Katz’s Deli had a famous “Send a Salami to Your Boy in the Army” campaign during the war.
This fascinating exhibit runs through April 2, 2023. The New York Historical Society Museum is located at 170 Central Park West in New York City. Visitors will have a rewarding experience and a newfound appreciation for the Jewish deli.
The museum safeguards all 740 letters that my dad wrote to my mom during World War II.

JEWISH SOLDIERS IN THE CIVIL WAR: THE UNION ARMY
BY ADAM D. MENDELSON

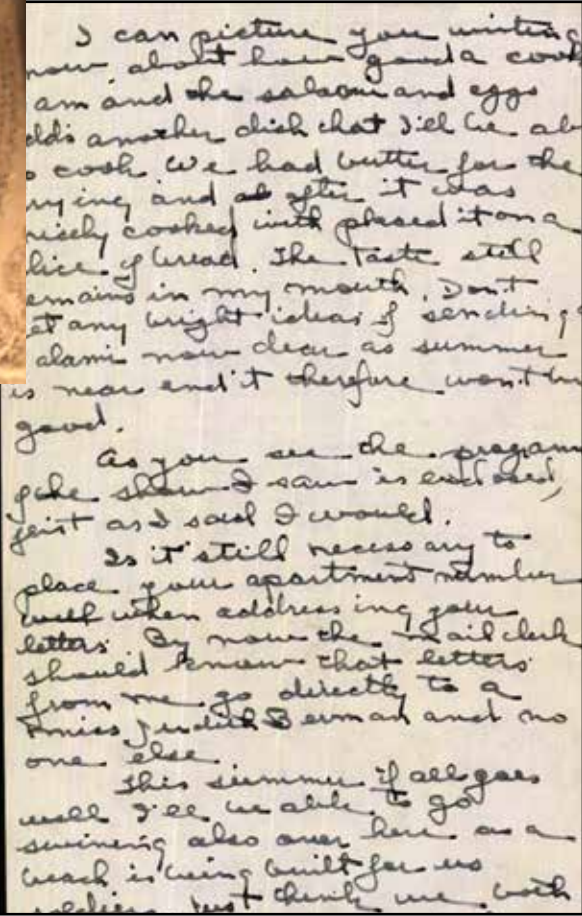
gathered the materials they used, read the histories written about Jews in the military, and did research on the internet to update them, especially about the Jewish Medal of Honor recipients. I also found the museum’s exhibit books invaluable as I wrote my lectures and prepared scripts to memorize for tour groups. And so it went until the arrival of “Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War: The Union Army” by Adam Mendelsohn.
Mendelsohn’s book is the result of ten years of research sponsored by the Shapell Manuscript Foundation, using Simon Wolfe’s “The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen,” from 1895, as a starting point. Wolfe claimed as many as 10,000 Jews served in the Civil War. “Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War” is an attempt to correctly identify every Jew who served in the Union Army, something Wolfe’s error-prone book attempted. While Mendelsohn’s book has been published, it is, in fact, unfinished. Shapell researchers continue to attempt to identify Jews who fought on both sides, delving into archives across the country, finding personal letters, photographs, memoirs, and of course, official documents, thus adding names on an almost daily basis. That said, it tells a story – one I had been telling, but which now requires some key changes.

“Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War” is presented in six chapters that describe where those identified Jews who served came from, what their occupations were, how and why they enlisted, many, but not all, just for the bonus, and for how long. It is important to note that not every Jew who served was an abolitionist. Many feared that freed slaves would take their jobs.
Mendelsohn writes that the dearth of Jewish compatriots, as opposed to some majority German or Irish regiments, led some to deny their faith, even to other Jews, or to change their names. Among those who served were brave heroes and cowardly deserters, upstanding members of society, and lowly crooks. He also points out that while antisemitism existed, Jewish soldiers often changed their units to avoid the slurs and attempts to proselytize them. That said, the exigencies of combat and the conditions under which all soldiers lived also created friendships between Jews and non-Jews, many of which lasted beyond the end of the war. Mendelsohn also clarifies the roles played by the Board of Delegates of American Israelites in Washington and Rabbi Arnold Fischel, by debunking the existing myth of how three Rabbis came to serve as Jewish Chaplains in the Union Army.

Thankfully, the museum has made the letters accessible on their website to researchers and anyone else interested in learning about the daily experiences of a U.S. soldier during the war. The letters describe Private Segan’s experiences in basic training at Fort Dix and Camp Croft, his arrival in North Africa, and life during battles in Italy, Southern France, and Germany.
Because mail from the front was censored and because he did not want to cause unnecessary worry back home, Private Segan did not write about specific details of his combat experience and his dangerous close calls until after Germany surrendered.
While serving in Italy, Private Segan was with the 93rd Armored Field Battalion. In Germany, he was at the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp on April 11, 1945.



Judith and Benjamin Segan



Letter to Judith Berman, April 23, 1944. Caserta, Italy. Patricia D. Klingenstein Library, New-York Historical Society.

Family Service and Sacrifice

By Marc Schenck
In the course of researching our family tree with my father, Lt. j.g. Bernard Schenck, a Navy veteran who served during the Cold War between 1956-1960 on the USS Virgo (KA-20) and the USS Glacier (AGB-4), I first learned about the scope of one of our family member’s military service in two wars. Forgotten by most, his sacrifice is worthy of acknowledgment and our memory.
My father’s uncle, Mack Schenck, was an immigrant from Belarus along with his four siblings, probably in the first decade of the century. In 1928, along with three other men, they founded Temple Beth-El Congregation in Great Neck, New York. At the time, Great Neck had a population of 12,000 people and only 115 Jewish families. It was the first synagogue in the town.
Mack had a son named Robert Schenck, my father’s cousin, born on May 30, 1921. He was a bomber pilot who flew a B-17 Flying Fortress in World War II and received the Distinguished Flying Cross. As part of the 379th Bomb Group, 527th Bomb Squadron, based at Kimbolton, UK, they flew more sorties than any other Bomb Group in the Eighth Air Force and dropped a greater bomb tonnage than any other Group.
The B-17 Flying Fortress Group was awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations, the first for operations between May 28, 1943 and July 31, 1944. Its first combat mission was the bombing of German U-boat pens at St Nazaire, France, on May 29, 1943. The second was awarded to the 1st Bomb Division as a whole for flying without fighter protection to bomb aircraft factories at Oschersleben, Germany,



Capt. Robert Schenck

on January 11, 1944.
Flying with the 527th during the Spring and Summer of 1944 Capt. Robert Schenck participated in missions throughout Western Europe and as far east as Poland. Several missions over Germany flew into the highly defended airspace above Berlin. It was a hazardous profession for the aircrews and more American airmen died over Europe than Marines died in the Pacific. He flew 35 missions, mostly on the Busy Baby, above the minimum of 25, and later 30, necessary for having the option to return home. By November 1944, the Busy Baby, after 87 missions, was classified as war weary. It was relegated to scrap in Kingman, Arizona in December of 1945.
After the war, his path was

less clear, but a family member recalls hearing that he had gone into business importing goods from the Dominican Republic. He remained a reservist and was called back for the Korean War, this time as the senior pilot of a C-119C Flying Boxcar from
The Busy Baby, circa 1944, United Kingdom



The Busy Baby, circa 1944, United Kingdom

Defending Democracy: A JWV Art Exhibit

By Neal Gosman
Six-year-old Cub Scout Elijah Dale carefully scrutinized the various works on display at the Capp Building of the Jewish Community Center (JCC) at an art exhibit co-sponsored by the JCC and the Jewish War Veterans Department of Minnesota.
“That one is just like the picture on the wall in my Dad’s office,” Dale pointed out. This is not as surprising as it might have been, because the artist is in fact his Dad, Jeffrey Dale, a Saint Paul photographer, coder, and Afghanistan War veteran who served in the U.S. Army for ten years.
More surprising is why the Department of Minnesota is sponsoring the art exhibit that opened on December 11.
Last summer, the department put out a call for artists to present works on the themes, Defending Democracy, Fighting Oppression, and Tzedakah. “This is a pilot project that we haven’t tried before,” explained Department of Minnesota Commander Lou Michaels. “We want to be more present in

the community with our dual missions of being a Jewish Voice for Veterans and a Veterans’ Voice for Jews.”
Michaels said he wants to raise the profile of JWV in the community, which will in turn focus attention on the needs of veterans in general and on why they put their lives on the line in service of American ideals.
Jeffrey Dale presented three photos from his series Friday Night, based on his experience in Afghanistan. “I am thrilled to have this opportunity to show some of my work. All too often, the established art world shies away from the soldier’s perspective,” he said.
Other artists showed paintings reflecting empathy with Latin American refugees, honoring the Ukrainian resistance, and there were also posters calling for justice, empowerment, and democracy.
The exhibit also featured a pen and ink drawing by the late Mark Zhitnitsky, a former Soviet and Israeli artist, which illustrates his struggles in 1919 Ukraine against antisemitic pogroms.
“The ultimate aim of this exhibit, hopefully the first of more to come, is to build awareness of the JWV in Minnesota, to grow public support,

the 63rd Troop Carrier Squadron, 403rd Troop Carrier Group.
Until the end of 1952, it dropped paratroopers and supplies, transported personnel and equipment, and evacuated casualties in support of the Far East Command and UN forces. The group flew more than 6,300 flights, dropped nearly 10,000 personnel, more than 18,000 tons of cargo, 380 tons of supplies, and airlifted almost 14,000 medical patients.
On November 14, 1952, his aircraft was enroute from Ashiya Air Base, Japan to Seoul, Korea when it crashed into Hill 683 near Cho-ok, about 15 miles east of Airfield K-19, killing all 44 servicemen on board. Robert Schenck was just 31-years-old and was awarded the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.
His remains were recovered, and he is interred at Beth-Elom Cemetery in New Britain, Connecticut. He was survived by his parents and siblings. Upon learning of our family history, we will never forget the sacrifice he paid in service of our nation. Remembering is the least we can do.
If any readers have any comments or additional information regarding Capt. Robert Schenck or related events I would welcome them. I can be reached at mschencl@optonline.net.
and to attract new members from among veterans in the Jewish community,” said Stewart Mednick, Department of Minnesota Vice Commander.



Schenck’s headstone in Beth-Elom Cemetery in New Britain, CT.



Elijah Dale examines the art on display at the JCC in Saint Paul while his father, artist Jeffrey Dale, talks with Mednick.

NATIONAL LADIES AUXILIARY of the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.

NATIONAL PRESIDENT NATALIE BLANK

I am happy to report that we had a wonderful and informative NEC this past January and I wish to thank all who attended and helped to make it a success. Special thanks to PNP Sandra Cantor, PNP Joanne Blum, NSVP Shirley Zak, and PCP Stephanie Naftelowitz for their great work filling in when needed. Congratulations to Jo Reingold of Dallas Auxiliary 256 on her election to the high office of National Junior Vice President. I look forward to working with her.

The weekend following the NEC, I had the pleasure of making my official visit to the Department of Florida. It was warm and sunny there the day

of sharing this visit with National Commander Nelson Mellitz. I will give a more detailed report regarding this visit in my President's Report at our National Convention in August.

In the meantime, I am looking forward to my upcoming official visits to the Department of New Jersey, the Department of New York, and Auxiliary #256 in Texas.

Sisters and comrades, please remember to support our fundraiser, Pick-a-Date. It is a fun program in which you select an important date in your life or the life of someone else. If your date is the winner at our National Convention, you will get a wonderful prize. For more information, please contact NSVP Shirley Zak. Her email address is: zaky960850@aol.com.

As we all know, the National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH) is our legacy. There are many new and exciting things happening at our museum. Please make it a must see on any trip you make to the Washington, D.C. area. I hope that each of you is a member. If

Seated from Left: NP Natalie Blank and PNP Charlotte Steinberg. Standing from left: PNP Sophie Ruderman and PNP Charlene Ehrlich.

I arrived. After a nice breakfast and a trip to the beach I had the pleasure of visiting PNP Charlotte Steinberg. I am very happy to report that she looks wonderful and was so pleased that the Department made seeing her a part of my visit. She also was very happy to see all the other sisters and comrades who visited along with me. I had the priv-

ilege of sharing this visit with National Commander Nelson Mellitz. I will give a more detailed report regarding this visit in my President's Report at our National Convention in August.

not, please join and support our legacy. Remember, membership in JWV or JWVA does not include membership in our museum. Applications can be obtained on the NMAJMH website.

PROGRAMMING

By Chairman PDP Carol Adler

Having a good program is essential and can impact the success of your Auxiliary. Here are a few suggestions:

- Have a program with a diversified topic.
- Have a program that will be of interest to all.
- Plan an event.
- Have a speaker.
- Have entertainment.
- Publicize events.
- Open the event to the community.
- Provide or sell refreshments.

Having a successful event can maintain our membership and can attract new members as well.



EDITOR'S COLUMN

by PNP Sandra Cantor

Volunteerism is one of the most selfless acts that we can become involved in. As Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Nonprofits around the world, like JWVA, need more volunteers to carry out their missions and make the biggest difference possible. Whether the contributions are monetary or not, every bit of help can make a big difference. The pictures below show that our members engage in volunteerism and hopefully more members can help as well.



Auxiliary members in the Department of Florida making a donation to the JFS Food Pantry. From left: Ileene Yashpeh, NP Natalie Blank, PDP Verna Rosenzweig, Pantry employees Jaclyn Tureff and Julie Weisberg.



National Secretary Roz Kaplan dropping off items for the Children's Cart at the Dallas VA



PNP Sandra Cantor and Auxiliary 256 President Jo Reingold dropping off hygiene bags for female veterans at the Dallas VA.

National President's Banquet

honoring

Natalie Blank

Tuesday, August 29

Reception 6:00 p.m.

Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to join us
for a delicious meal and
delightful celebration!
\$55 per person



Rita Panitz Memorial Teddy Bear Program

Bears here, Bears there,
big bears, small bears!

Bears bring big smiles and happy faces!

The children of our country are our most important asset and we need to provide for them. We live in a world that is constantly changing and it is sometimes difficult for them to cope. Each day children may be subjected to violent or emotional situations through no fault of their own. The Rita Panitz Teddy Bear Program was established to help children deal with these unfortunate events.

Our donations of Teddy Bears or Stuffed Animals during our National Convention to the local Fire Department, Police Department, Children's Hospital, and Ronald McDonald House has made a difference in these communities. Providing a new friend for a child to hug can put a smile on their face and is a true mitzvah.

Each item that is donated to the first responders and other organizations has a tag attached to it recognizing JWVA as a donor. We need the support of all our members to continue putting smiles on children's faces.

If you would like to make a donation for the Bear Program, please send a check payable to: PNP Elaine Bernstein, 9 Dogwood Court, Sayreville, NJ 08872.



Let's make this the BEST
Bear Convention ever!



DOUBLE CHAI CLUB

Join Us For Lunch!

Wednesday, August 30 at Noon

The Double Chai Club has a special meaning for all of us. We rededicate ourselves annually to our purpose -- service to the veteran and his/her family.

Become a member of
our "Double Chai Club."

This luncheon is open to everyone.
We look forward to seeing you there!
\$36 per person

Join us in Jacksonville! • 8/27 - 9/1, 2023

95th ANNUAL CONVENTION

For the perfect ending to a hot summer season, come join your Comrades and Sisters in the new, modern Jacksonville, Florida ... JAX. The JAX motto is "It's easier here!"

Jacksonville is the most populous city in the southeastern United States and the largest city by area in the lower 48 states. It is centered on the banks of the St. Johns River about 12 miles south of the Georgia border. It is a major military and civilian deep-water port. Both the Navy and Marine Corps have bases located here. This "River City by the Sea" boasts more than 20 miles of wide and uncrowded beaches.

Black Hammock Island in the national Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve is the site of the discovery of some of the oldest remnants of pottery in the United States, dating back to 2500 BC. The Timucua people were the original inhabitants of the area.

Jacksonville is known for its beautiful parks: Confederate Park is a public park that in 1914 hosted the annual reunion of the United Confederate Veterans. In 1915 a Confederate monument was erected to honor the Women of the Southland. Friendship Fountain is in St. Johns River Park and is one of the City's most recognizable and popular attractions. Jacksonville has many museums and art galleries to visit in your free time.

Jacksonville has a diverse religious population. The largest religious group is Protestants, but Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Hindus and Buddhists are among the other groups.

The City is also host to both College and professional sports teams. There is something for everyone!

Partners Club

Please join us at the Convention for
a wine and cheese get-together.

The purpose of this program is to help our administration function. The funds collected help keep our Washington office operating. Remember, anyone can be a partner member. If you know people who would like to support our cause, please ask them to join.

The cost to join is \$50.00, and \$25.00 to renew every year after the first year. I hope all the members who originally joined will renew and continue to help our National Ladies Auxiliary.



Rhea Sahl Memorial Baby Shower For Pregnant Military Women Monday, August 28

We're holding a baby shower for pregnant military women during our National Convention in Jacksonville on Monday, August 28. It is one way that we can say "Thank You" to these women for serving our country.

We would like to fill baskets for each pregnant mom-to-be with items needed for a newborn, such as: diapers, bath towels, wash cloths, bibs, onesies, bottles, baby lotion, pacifiers, burp cloths, crib sheets, receiving blankets, night clothes, etc. Each basket averages at least \$125.00 and we plan on presenting 12. If you would like to purchase these items yourself, you may do so.

If you would like to make a donation for the baby shower to purchase any items for the Rhea Sahl Memorial Baby Shower Program, send a check payable to: PNP Elaine Bernstein, 9 Dogwood Court, Sayreville, NJ 08872.

Please send your items for the Baby Shower and/or the Teddy Bear Program directly to the hotel, between August 23 and August 25.

Address packages to: **Marriott Jacksonville Downtown**, 245 Water Street Jacksonville, FL 32202
Attention: PNP Elaine Bernstein, Convention Chairman JWVA.

Let's do it again!

Our Pound Auction is always a popular event at the convention. Everyone has such a great time and so we are going to do it again.

Please bring a pound of anything, and put it in a brown lunch bag. If you don't have a brown bag, we'll have extras.

Start looking now! Examples are candy, erasers, popcorn, etc. Use your imagination. As long as it weighs a pound.

You won't know what you are bidding on. Follow the clues of the auctioneer.

See Joanne Blum at the convention or call her at 860-869-2982, and give her your item for the auction.

Admission is \$2.00

It will be an evening of fun and laughter!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH) has hired a professional fundraiser, an individual who has a long, well-known history of success. Abe Wasserberger will help bring the museum and the building up to the next level. This was only done after much research and reflection on the process and the direction we want the museum to take. Do we want the museum to remain small or should it grow in terms of content and staffing? Should it remain a niche museum or expand its focus to better tell the story of Jews in the military? Many of our exhibits are past their prime and in need of an update. Others have been up too long and need revisions. We have a staff of two wonderful and dedicated individuals, but could we do more with more staff?

As the King said, "Tis a puzzlement." We envision a museum that will be able to produce

a better product, with some displays using more modern technology, to highlight our contributions to America's military and the defense of the American way of life. We are not simply hoping to have a larger treasury for the sole purpose of having a larger treasury. We are seeking to become the premier Jewish Museum of American Jewish Military History, exactly what our name says.

Our next exhibit moving forward is Jewish Women in the Military. Thanks to Rochel Hayman, we are optimistic that we will have Phase I of the exhibit up and running by the time of our National Convention in August and be able to bring photographs showing this new exhibit. We are still in need of funds and items depicting the contributions of women in the fight to preserve our way of life. These can be letters home, photographs of women in uniform, or items a woman might have had

in her barracks. Please call Pam Elbe at the museum before you send any items.

We will be holding a Board meeting in April on a date and time to be announced. All members of the Board will be notified by email once arrangements are finalized. Information about the meeting will also be on our website. All members are encouraged to participate in our deliberations.



PNC Michael B. Berman

Updates By Michael Rugel • Director of Programs and Content

We welcomed several groups of young people from synagogues and schools to the museum in recent months. They came from both the local area and from groups visiting Washington, D.C. on trips. These included Temple Emanuel, the Neshama School, the United Hebrew Congregation (St. Louis), and the International School of the Americas (San Antonio). Hearing interesting questions about the history of Jews in the American military from teenagers and kids eager to understand their heritage is always rewarding. The instructor from Temple Emanuel described it as "a meaningful and inspiring visit for our sixth-grade students and their parents. All of us, including the teachers, came away with increased knowledge and respect for the contributions made by our ancestors."

Please help us spread the word. If you have a connection to a school or youth group, encourage them to visit the museum.

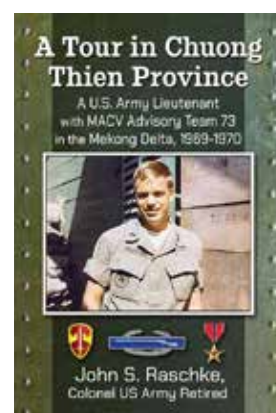
It's also rewarding to reach interested groups of non-Jews. Special thanks to Philip Sternberg for arranging a tour of the museum for VFW Post 8469. Docent/Historian Sheldon Goldberg led the tour. Post Commander James "Mac" McCarl praised the museum's exhibits and appreciated the experience as a "reminder of the diversity of our nation and its service members." It's more important than ever that we continue to reach groups outside the Jewish community.



Our most recent webinar featured retired U.S. Army Colonel John Raschke, author of, "A Tour in Chuong Thien Province: A U.S. Army Lieutenant with MACV Advisory Team 73 in the Mekong Delta, 1969-1970," in a conversation with JWV Past National Commander Harvey Weiner. This webinar was done in conjunction with the museum's Jewish Americans in Military Service During Vietnam exhibit. In the book, Raschke described Weiner as his first exposure to someone of the Jewish faith. It's a great example of the way the military has brought together Americans from different background. The two discussed not only sharing a hooch, but many other shared experiences in Vietnam including life and death struggles. It's

remarkable to hear how their Vietnam experiences made a life-long impact and to witness their relationship after many decades. Video recording of the webinar is available on our YouTube page and "A Tour in Chuong Thien Province" is available in our museum store. Visit <https://nmajmh.org/shop/>.

There will be more programs both online and in person in the coming months about the Civil War, World War II, and more.



Keep up with the museum online at <http://www.nmajmh.org> and



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By Pam Elbe • Director of Collections, Archives, and Exhibitions

A Brief History of the Jewish War Veterans National Memorial, Inc.: The First 40 Years

As we look to the future of the National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH), it's useful to look back at where we started and how far we have come.

The story of the NMAJMH starts in 1951, when National Commander Paul Ginsburg spoke of a museum dedicated to Jewish participation in the U.S. armed forces. At a meeting of the Jewish War Veterans (JWV) National Executive Committee at what were then national headquarters on West 77th Street in New York City, Ginsburg described his vision for a permanent memorial to Jewish participation in our country's defense. He said,

"I should like to move the National Headquarters to Washington.... It is my desire that we, at our new National Headquarters, establish a museum which would include a depository to serve as a suitable memorial to the contribution of the American Jew to our country. This central depository in Washington will serve as a sanctuary for the many valuable records which are now in the possession of others and which we can secure to be part of an historical depository. There can be no question but that the establishment of such a depository would serve as the living memorial to the patriotism of the American Jews and his contribution in war and in peace to our country."



The Weitz altar and ark displayed alongside the stained-glass windows of the National Memorial on New Hampshire Ave

And so, the National Shrine to the Jewish War Dead was conceived.

The search for a suitable home for the national headquarters and shrine began, led by Meyer Neumann (Chairman of the Building Committee) and Joseph Barr (longtime leader of Washington's Post 58). The JWV fundraising committee had an initial goal of \$50,000, but later expanded that goal to \$85,000 (nearly \$1 million in today's dollars). The success of the fundraising rested on the shoulders of JWV membership, who participated in countless dinners and sales and stood up at NEC meetings to contribute to the building fund. They contributed because the National Shrine would be a legacy for deceased service members, their children, grandchildren, and generations to come. It would be a place to remember the contributions of Jewish men and women to their country's call.

As home to the National Shrine and JWV headquarters, the committee chose the Thomas M. Fraser mansion at 1712 New Hampshire Ave

NW, a five-story building constructed of brick and stone "with an air of permanence about it." They purchased the building in April of 1954 and completed the move a few months later. At the opening, National Commander Harry T. Madison told the crowd that "seeing the Shrine as a living, working organism in the nation's capital has given me one of the great moments of my life. It is indeed a monument not only to the brave Jewish war dead who have paid the supreme sacrifice for a free America, but to the membership of the JWV whose efforts, devotion and unrelenting labor have made JWV's greatest dream a living reality."

At the same time JWV was working to create a new home and shrine in Washington, leadership was also considering a congressional charter for JWV. It was Joseph Barr who visited Congressman Emanuel Celler in 1958 to secure a federal charter for the JWV. Celler said that a charter for JWV was unlikely because the organization is sectarian, leading Barr to consider obtaining a charter for the shrine. The Congressman agreed that it was



Images of Rabbi Goode, PNC Mendelsohn, and Meyer Levin hang above a case featuring the stories of Jewish American heroes

plausible because the shrine would be a memorial to Jewish servicemen. On September 2, 1958, the Senate and House of Representatives enacted Public Law 85-903, H.R.109, a charter to incorporate the Jewish War Veterans of the USA National Memorial, Inc. and to bestow to the corporation the right to establish its own constitution and bylaws. The law said in part that the shrine was "to maintain and conduct a National Memorial and museum dedicated to and commemorating the service and sacrifice in the Armed Forces of the United States during the period of war by Americans of the Jewish faith..." The Senators and Congressmen who worked for the passage of the bill were a who's who of political leaders, including one man who would later become the 36th president of the United States, Lyndon Baines Johnson, as well as Everett B. Dirksen, Emanuel Celler, and Sam Rayburn, among others. The bill was passed in the Senate by unanimous voice vote and signed by President Eisenhower. The charter and the President's signature gave the shrine the prestige of a national memorial endorsed by the national government.

The National Shrine to the Jewish War Dead became known as the JWV National Memorial, Inc. (NMI) and began to display a few artifacts and stories to honor those Jews who served with courage and honor in the U.S. armed forces. One of the key artifacts from this period is on display in the museum today. A portable ark and altar, fashioned by members of many different faiths on the island of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands during World War II for Rabbi Martin M. Weitz. Chaplain Weitz used the ark and its contents while he served in the South Pacific, taking it by truck, jeep, boat, and plane from the Northern Solomons to the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. The ark is contained in a footlocker, with its contents made from Japanese as well as American equipment. Its lid has a background of Japanese parachute silk, while its center has the Ten Commandments fashioned on Japanese aluminum. The chimes on either side of the Decalogue are carved from the 35mm shells, one Japanese and the other American, upon which are engraved Isaiah's phrases, "swords into plowshares... spears into pruning hooks," and to which the Chaplain added, "shells into bells." Two service members, one Protestant and one Roman Catholic, interested in the project, polished and carved the chimes. The candlesticks, carved by native Northern Solomon Islanders, were set in a pair of 105mm shell caps. A Seabee made the miniature ark of plywood, and a sergeant in a salvage unit sewed the cover for the tiny scroll. The Star of David is fashioned of aluminum.

The National Memorial was composed of a Hall of Jewish Heroes, the Library and Archives, and the Memorial Chapel. Upon entering the Hall of Heroes, the visitor first viewed the colorful stained-glass windows that are now housed in our Rabbi Joshua Goldberg Chapel. The left window, donated by the Elin-Unger Ladies Auxiliary 273, depicts the Torah and other Jewish symbols of faith against a muted brown and blue background. The center window, donated in memory of Col. Benjamin P. Shein, pictures a purple sword over an olive branch. Next to the sword is a helmet and an American flag. Under a rainbow in the center of the window is written in Hebrew, "And they shall beat their swords into plow shares." The rainbow extends into the right window, donated by Horace W. Goldsmith, which shows a woman driving a plow in expectation of the fruits of peace.

The rest of the Hall of Jewish Heroes was dedicated to displaying the awards and medals bestowed upon Jewish servicemen like Benjamin Kaufman, whose Medal of Honor was displayed prominently. Paintings of Rabbi Alexander Goode (one of the Four Chaplains), PNC Morris Mendelsohn of the Jewish Veterans of the Wars of the Republic, and Meyer Levin (recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross during WWII) hung above the display cases.

While the memorial held a few artifacts, it was not what you or I would think of as a museum during this period. In 1978, Col. S. J. Pomrenze became the first professional staffer of the memorial when he took on the role of archivist. He created a plan to grow the collection and expand the museum. The planned growth of the memorial led to a need for a larger building. The building

Continued on page 22

A Brief History of the Jewish War Veterans National Memorial, Inc.: The First 40 Years

committee was able to locate a suitable home for the future museum just a tenth of a mile from the memorial. The National Memorial moved into our current home in 1984 and hosted a dedication on August 29, 1984. It was a large affair, with the street in front of the building shut down to provide seating for hundreds of guests. Virginia Governor Charles S. Robb delivered the dedication address and then-Vice President George H. W. Bush affixed a mezuzah to the door and gave his own remarks. It was an auspicious start to this new iteration of the National Memorial.

The new home of NMI provided much more exhibition and storage space than the prior building. The first large exhibit at NMI opened in 1988. Lives Under Fire: A Comparative Examination of Jewish Contributions to World War One and the Vietnam Conflict, juxtaposed the experiences of Jewish service members from WWI with those of Jewish



VP George HW Bush affixes the mezuzah to the doorframe at 1811 R Street

service members during Vietnam. This exhibit was followed in 1990 by Perspectives of Patriotism: Selections from the Jewish War Veterans National Museum and Archives, and a traveling exhibition, Salute to Jewish Military Chaplains: From the Civil War to Operation Desert Storm. In 1991, our longest running exhibit, Major General Julius Klein: His Life and Work, opened. The final exhibit under the Jewish War Veterans National Memorial Inc. monicker opened in 1992. Candid Moments in the

Military: Snapshots from 1914 to 1991, was the last exhibit before NMI adopted its current name.

In 1992, the National Memorial became known as the National Museum of American Jewish Military History. The Board of Directors passed the motion to change the name to “encourage notoriety and increase membership from both within [JWV] and the general public at large.” The new era ushered in by the name change, as well as the future of the museum, will be the focus of my next article.



A large crowd listens to the remarks of Governor Robb of Virginia

Stanley Samberg, A Forgotten Veteran

Once forgotten, the Department of New York is making sure no one will ever again forget a Jewish veteran who gave his life in World War II. Department Commander Gary Glick received an email from Barbara Silberman, who found a grave in disrepair at the Wellwood Cemetery.

Silberman said bushes and weeds had overtaken the gravestone, which she noticed while visited the graves of her parents.

The grave belonged to Stanley Samberg, a 19-year-old veteran who died on December 17, 1944. In her email, Silberman wrote, “having given his life for our country, he deserves our respect, and something should be done.”

Glick told Silberman he would see what could be done, and went to the cemetery to see the site, and take some pictures.

Glick contacted the cemetery to make sure they would clean up the bushes, weeds, and other debris.

When he went back to see the site, he placed a JWV marker and flag on the grave.

Glick says he hopes to have the cemetery clean the stone, and wants them to consider taking similar actions for other veterans who no longer have family and friends to take care of the site.



Before



After

TAPS

DEPARTMENT AT LARGE

Adolph Brateman - 100
Jerome Y. Ginsburg - 100
Maur Levan - 100

DEPARTMENT OF NEVADA

Kenneth V. Hill - 64

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

Ascher Teich - 385

DEPARTMENT OF CONNECTICUT

Norman Cohen - 45

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

Edward Lasoff - 243
Martin D. Markowitz - 400
Samuel Ben-Rubin - 440

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS

Fred S. Miller - 407
Abe I. Ordman - 407

Leo L. Wolfson - 407

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND

Allan Firestone - 567

DEPT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Isadore Cutler - 157
Marvin B. Sallop - 161
Daniel Singer - 161
Daniel Sirkin - 735

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

Harold L. Shwedel - 135
Sandy Kantor - 474
Herman V. Kasoff - 474

DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

Bernard Nappen - 39
Sidney Plotkin - 63
Arthur Tauber - 125
Howard I. Wiener - 125

Stanley L. Brown - 178

Harold Kravetz - 178

Barry P. Stern - 311

Bernard Cohen - 609

Jordan M. Holtzman - 609

Jack Brownstein - 651

Stanley Kaplan - 651

Philip Schreiber - 972

DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

George Ginsberg - 1

Murray Haber - 191

Herman Gancz - 488

Alvin Kravitz - 488

Michael Menschel - 648

Leon Chajet - 652

Don Goldberg - 652

Maurice I. Kessler - 652

Herbert Price - 652

Wallace Sturm - 652

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Joseph M. Engel - 98

Edwin Krauss - 98

Richard G. Ivins - 215

Bernard Zalman - 305

Daniel Axler - 575

Solomon Volen - 575

DEPT. OF RHODE ISLAND

Sanford H. Gorodetsky - 23

Herman Wallock - 23

DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST

Stanley Rosen - 210

DEPARTMENT OF TALO

Gordon I. Goldstein - 256

Paul Rifkin - 256

Jack Fox - 757

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Allan and Sheila Abramson

In Memory of PNC Lou & SVP Brenda
PDP Gloria Abramson

In Memory of Adele Zucker PNP
In Memory of Eugene Baraw
PDC Edward & PDP Louise Baraw

US Forces Austria ('44-'55) – USASETAF
Italy ('55-'94)
Howard A. and Dorothy G. Berger

Remember PNC Paul Bernstein & PAP
Shelly Berman
PNC Mike Berman & PNP Elaine Bernstein

In Loving Memory of My Wife, PDP Adele
PDC Stanton Bilker, 697

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PNC Jerry & PNP Joanne Blum

In Loving Memory of son Frank Pincus
Collins,
NYC Detective & SSGT. Army Reserve

In Loving Memory of Allen Silkes
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Best Wishes and Good Health to All
Elliott & Elisa Donn

Preserve Democracy

In Memory of David Alter USMC

In Memory of Philip Dorf, Post 6

PNC Jerome D. Cohen – Post 50
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In Loving Memory of my husband, Code
Jerry Gomberg & Daughters

In Memory of Sam Gould, Post CMDR
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Arthur Greenwald, Post 321/69

In Memory of PNC Ron Ziegler
PA PDC Larry Holman

Good Health to All!
Jason A. & Petra C. Kaatz

Spread Love, Kindness, & Peace in 2022.

In Memory of Marty Kessler
Leon Kutcher

Best Wishes & Good Health to my Dear
Friend
Dr. Robert Pickard – Col. US Army – PNC

We Wish all Good Health, Strength & Happy
Life
Ret. Maj. Gen. Pierre David & Jhoanna Lax

In Memory of David Westerman
PDC Atty. Stanley R. Light

To All Good Health & Happiness

Happy Holidays
PNC Ira Novoselsky

In Loving Memory of Jayne Wasserman
The Paley Family

In Memory of my wife, Virginia
Queens County PC Ron Peters

In Memory of Raya – Dr. Jack Porter

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By Bernice Rothman PAP Aux. 44

In Honor of my wife Helen
Stephen Sax

Love Harley Gabrielle Shelbee
Maxine Dad Irv USMC USNR USA

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JWV Shore Post 712

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