



# AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL

VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE  
 UNITED STATES & CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS  
 136 East 39th St., New York, N.Y. 10016

## CHANGING THE GUARD: FAREWELL AND HAIL

### OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Shalom Chaverim and Chaverot:

The time has come to pass the baton to our president elect, Eli Bergman, in accordance with AVI's succession plan. We completed a challenging year as we focused our efforts on shoring up our treasury, developing the AVI archives as part of our legacy initiative, upgrading our data base containing members' records (personal and service related), enhancing our Newsletter for the internet, reaching out to the community through our Speakers' Bureau and carrying on our functions in the face of the loss of many esteemed friends. (ז'ל).

My heartfelt gratitude goes to all the members in the AVI leadership team with whom I was privileged to serve; David Kaplan, VP; David Gerard, Treasurer; Lola Sprinzeles, Secretary; Sam Klausner, Newsletter and internet; Ralph Lowenstein, Archivist; Jerry Rosenberg who covered Canada and David Baum and Eddy Kaplansky for their valuable help from Israel. My thanks also to the regional leadership; Al Glassman (ז'ל), Paul Kaye, Eli Bergman, Syd Abrams, Bailey Nieder, Ben Hagai Steuerman, Len Shaffron, and Bill Gelberg. Others deserving recognition for their contribution in the various functional areas include Sam Alexander, Marv Libow, Adrian Phillips and Naomi Kantey.

And so, with change come new opportunities. Eli will select his board of directors and introduce his program for 2002 containing changes in focus, surely within the confines of the spirit of fraternity and remembrance that is AVI's 'raison d'etre'. I wish Eli success on his watch and calm seas at the helm.

And to everyone....good health and peace in the year 2002.

Si Spiegelman  
 January 18, 2002

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings to everybody for 2002 and rest assured this is not the year AVI will march off into the sunset. Under the annual presidency rotation system I have inherited the responsibility for 2002, and want to use this Newsletter space for the first time to describe AVI's program priorities for the year, a modified organizational structure, and some changes in the leadership team.

#### PROGRAM:

1. The AVI Legacy Project will continue to be our No. 1 program goal. Under Ralph Lowenstein's direction at the University of Florida, Gainesville, it will include the continued expansion of two tracks:

a. An authoritative historical archive of Canadian/U.S. participation in the Israel Independence War, which will be available in the library at Gainesville, and worldwide on the internet. This resource is designed primarily for use by scholars, journalists and others doing historical research or seeking information on the episode. We have been experiencing increasing information requests which results principally from the web site that Sam Klausner is developing in cooperation with Ralph.

b. A collection of visual material that can be displayed at our own site in Gainesville, and in exhibit formats shared on a loan basis with museum sites throughout the country that display Jewish historic material — such as the ALIYA BET/EXODUS show assembled by the Jewish Historical Museum in Baltimore, and currently in storage. This museum format would utilize the memorabilia, including the diaries; letters; photos; etc. which have accumulated in response to Ralph's periodic reminders. 2. A new dimension of the Legacy Project will be an attempt to address a question that is being raised with increasing frequency: What happens after AVI?

### AMERICAN STUDENTS AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY JOIN THE HAGANAH:

#### David Macarov Recalls the inside story

At the end of World War II the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (in the British Mandated Territory of Palestine) was accredited for studies by American veterans, under the GI Bill of Rights. This meant paid tuition and \$25 a month, on which one could live at that time (although with difficulty). A few authentic students, including some from rabbinical seminaries; some youth movement members evading the British need for immigration certificates; and some adventurers with Zionist inclinations took advantage of the opportunity, including my wife Frieda and myself, and by 1947 there were about fifty such students in attendance. During this same period an organization called Land and Labor was established in the States, mainly to recruit crews for the aliyah-bet ships. The head of the American part of the aliyah-bet operation was Zev (Danny) Schind, from Ayelet HaSchahar, and a major figure in this effort was the late Akiva Skidell, later of Kfar Blum.

As it became obvious that a real war was in the offing, the Jewish Agency asked Abe Herman, then head of the English-Speaking Section of the Youth and Hechalutz Department in Jerusalem, to draw up a plan to recruit volunteers who would join the yishuv in its fight for independence. I worked for Abe while attending the Hebrew University. He, being an educator with Habonim background, submitted a detailed plan called Machal (Mitnavdim m'Chutz L'Aretz) that including several months of Hebrew instruction after arrival in (then) Palestine; familiarization trips; and studies in Jewish and Zionist history, followed, after six months, by induction into the Haganah for basic training.

When, after Partition Day in November, 1947, war became a reality, Yaakov Dostrovsky (later Dori), Chief of Staff, discarded the educational

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## NATIONAL BOARD

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Elihu "Eli" Bergman  
([eli819@aol.com](mailto:eli819@aol.com))

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**CHAIR, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

Simon Spiegelman  
([spiegelsi@aol.com](mailto:spiegelsi@aol.com))

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS U.S.:**

Eastern: Arthur Bernstein

Southern: Irving Meltzer

Western: Mitchell Flint

**PROGRAM DIRECTORS:**

Archives: Ralph Lowenstein  
Newsletter and Internet:

Samuel Klausner  
([sklausner@ucwphilly.rr.com](mailto:sklausner@ucwphilly.rr.com))

Planning: David Gutmann

Speaders Bureau: Naomi Kantey Local

Programming: Bailey Nieder

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Visit the AVI Website to read past issues of the Newsletter  
[www.sas.upenn.edu/~sklausne/aviweb.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~sklausne/aviweb.html)

### President's Corner continued from Page 1

Each successive edition of the Newsletter in which the necrology is overtaking the news sadly suggest the relevance of this query. Do we proudly march off the stage with flags flying like the Grand Army of the Republic, which at least has an extensive legacy of monuments all over the country? Or do we adopt a condition that extends our legacy with members from the continuation of Israel's Independence War such as Machal West has established.

To examine this issue we have recruited one of the of country's leading gerontology authorities: Dave Gutmann (Aliya Bet; Palyam; Israel Navy) Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University Medical School. Dave is eminently suited to deal with a population such as ours.

(Ralph will provide additional information and timetables on the Legacy Project in early Newsletters.)

3. Showcasing the Canadian/U.S. Role in Israel's Independence War:

For years we have complained with ample justification that our participation in the Independence War has been one of best kept secrets of the struggle to create Israel, especially among the North American Jewish community.

Although there have been ongoing efforts to share the story with communal, interfaith, school and other groups, which have been welcomed wherever they have happened, we have not been able systematically to organize the required time and resources for a nationwide effort to expand the activity. It is not too late to do so now. Even surviving Grand Army of the Republic Veterans appeared in school programs.

To address the opportunity Si recruited Naomi Kantey to create and run a Speakers Bureau, and I have asked her to continue in that role, which she already has so effectively organized.

And to expand the coverage in this area, I have asked Sid Rabinovich who has enjoyed a "time out" for several years, to return as Vice President, Public Affairs to manage AVI outreach throughout the country to Jewish communal organizations; community and other media; and to manage AVI contacts with Israel Government agencies including the Washington Embassy, New York Consulate-General, and other consulates. Beyond Sid's experience and skills in public affairs activities, he possesses the most extensive historical memory of anybody in AVI. In addition to whatever priorities he develops, his activities will be helpful to open program opportunities in our regional units.

4. Israel Visit:

During the course of last year Lola Sprinzeles and others suggested an AVI group visit to Israel for reasons we all understand. The idea

## NEGLECTED HEROES

*Following are excerpts from an article published in The Jerusalem Post; Nov 30, 2001 and authored by Arieh O'Sullivan. It records a failed attempt to exhibit Mahal memorabilia in a new Israeli Air Force Museum*

A wing of the Air Force Museum in the Negev that was meant to house thememorabilia of pioneer fliers stands forlorn and decrepit, to the chagrin of those who labored to have it built. Box at end of text. Several thousand World War II veterans from abroad helped the fledgling IDF win its victory over Arab armies in the War of Independence. Known as Mahal, an acronym for the Hebrew term for Volunteers from Abroad, the volunteers were active in all the states military units.

However, few seemed to have more impact than the aviators who built the early air force from scratch and helped keep the Egyptian army from reaching Tel Aviv in 1948. Thirty-three aviators, including 19 overseas volunteers, died in the war. The contribution of the volunteers was especially important since the early air force was little more than a collection of flying museum pieces and surplus junk.

A few years ago, following a decision to establish an exhibit to record the historic contribution of the first IAF aviators, the Israel Air Force Museum in Hazerim built a structure for the exhibit called Beit Harishonim (First Fliers House), with air-force funding. The building was intended to tell the tale of these early aviators, most of whom were veterans of World War II from mainly English-speaking countries, and to preserve some of their memorabilia for posterity.

Surviving aviators gathered and catalogued a collection of their uniforms, decorations and photographs from that period and brought it down to the museum, just southwest of Beersheba, expecting to see it displayed soon. That was nearly six years ago. A gala opening of the exhibit was initially expected to have taken place alongside the country's jubilee anniversary celebrations, nearly three years ago. The ceremony was postponed over and over again. In the meantime, the building constructed to house the exhibit has begun to fall into disrepair, apparently as a result of a poorly constructed foundation. Today it is sealed off.

But to add insult to injury, the head of the museum, former national police chief and reservist Brig.-Gen. Yaacov Termer, decided recently, apparently without consulting the veteran aviators, to name the building after a jet fighter pilot colleague who went missing in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Col. Zorik Lev. The decision has left some Mahal veterans with a sense of abandonment and a feeling that their role in history is being forgotten or erased.

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was adopted enthusiastically; but regrettably nobody came forward and volunteered to assume responsibility for the project. And so it is lapsed into some sort of do-it-yourself visit at an undetermined time.

Having been involved in organizing projects of sort — the most recently in Israel — I can attest that it is indeed a tough job, but one that yields a worthwhile outcome. Do-it-yourself arrangements can work on an ad-hoc basis. But at the bottom line they are not adequate to program logistics, nor most importantly, the personal bonding that increasingly is the most significant ingredient of these get-togethers.

In terms of lead-time, it realistically may be too late to look at a spring date. Whether “do-it-yourself” or “organized” the fall would be more realistic. In any case, a visit to Israel is a thing for us to do, whether as individuals or a group. And we will continue to hope for some brave soul (souls) to step forward and volunteer to quarterback it.

### 5. U.S. Alternative:

If an Israel visit does not materialize, we will consider possibilities for a repeat AVI/Machal West get-together, sometime in the Spring, and possibly in a West Coast location such as San Diego, Seattle, Vancouver, or even a repeat in Las Vegas. We would look to our Machal West partners to take the lead in logistic arrangements, and work together with Ralph and Sam so ably taking the lead for AVI in program arrangements as they did last time.

### 6. Local Joint Programming:

During 2001 Si Spiegelman challenged us to take the initiative in collaborating with Jewish and other organizations in public affairs programs of mutual interests. Israel-oriented issues would provide extensive subject matter, expanded by the events of 9/11. These events could be in the form of presentations or forums to better educate ourselves and others. We have attempted to respond to Si's challenge, so far without any concrete activities. However Bailey Nieder, Chair of AVI/Northwest and an officer of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society with considerable experience in this type of collaborative programming has come up with some ideas that could provide both substance and format guidance for AVI local units. I have asked Bailey to assume the position of Director of Local Programming. The idea would be for local units to design the program, seek local collaborators and funding (if necessary), and conduct the programs. There is a wealth of information out there especially in academic communities and the media which could approach for pro-bono participation.

## ORGANIZATION:

### 1. Regional Autonomy:

For several years we have been experimenting with regional AVI units to bring a concept of “states rights” in the form of locally based programming into the organization. But regrettably the population of some of our “states” has not proved adequate for meaningful activity, or judging from reports in the Newsletter, any activity at all. As a result I am setting up some modifications of the structure more in line with reality, which, hopefully, are better equipped to conduct their own activities at their initiative on their own turf. So along with all political units in the U.S. 2002 is the year for redistricting AVI as well.

Here is the pattern for 2002. (It would be presumptuous to take a 10-year bite as the U.S. Constitution requires:)

New York/New Jersey is not the center of the universe (nor is Los Angeles.) But for our purposes each has the highest concentration of veterans. So in response to this reality, we will redistrict accordingly into the following units: Atlantic Seaboard (Maine to Virginia); the South (Carolina to Florida and including the Southeast); and the West. Hopefully this arrangement will provide several critical masses to enhance regional activities. If not, my successor can change it.

### 2. AVI/MACHAL WEST:

I am pleased to be assuming office in a harmonious environment in which the misunderstandings and sometimes sniping between AVI and MACHAL WEST over what have been mostly trivial issues have been resolved. It is my intention to promote and expand this environment to the benefit of the memberships and missions of both organizations. My intention is not prompted by my bias as a Westerner; but because it makes sense.

Concretely: AVI will continue to distribute our Newsletter to the entire Machal West membership, without regard to membership or dues, an action already decided by the AVI Board. We will encourage eligible Machal West members, who are not concurrent AVI members, the option of joint membership in AVI with full dues-paying “privileges.” And we will expect Machal West to provide the same option to eligible AVI members (some already have accepted.)

(Concurrent memberships in organizations with comparable constituencies and with programs that often are indistinguishable are not unique. Just look at the Jewish community structure where concurrent and multiple memberships are the rule; not the exception. Another example is the collection of American veterans organization where individual multiple memberships are not regarded as inconsistent or worse — disloyal to the particular organization.)

AVI will look forward to working with MACHAL WEST on joint activities on the West Coast, such as a regional and national

meetings.

The AVI web and internet facilities will be open to MACHAL WEST participation, which will include the provision of our e-mail address list to expand opportunities for more extensive communications among the memberships. And AVI would enjoy access to MACHAL WEST's comparable list. Looking toward more efficient use of the web and internet facilities for archival and other research use, I have asked Sam Klausner and Ralph Lowenstein to explore the merits and feasibility of aligning the systems under a common heading such as: CANADIANS AND AMERICANS IN ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE WAR — 1945-49.

To utilize the MACHAL WEST experience in the AVI decision making process I have asked Mitch Flint, one of the founders and currently a Director of MACHAL WEST to participate in the AVI Leadership as Vice President — West. Mitch's domain will include everything West of the Mississippi including most of the Louisiana Purchase plus all the territory Lewis and Clark explored. Among his other contributions I hope Mitch picks up some new members among the missing explorers.

## COMMUNICATIONS:

During 2001 we increasingly benefited from internet access, mostly e-mail, in communicating with one-another on AVI issues large and small. Another important asset was getting to know one another, which is a principal reason for a fraternal organization such as ours.

As the result of e-mail access we were able to transact one particularly fractious issue in simply learning the stakes, discussing them, and communicating our conclusions to one-another. The result was an orderly board meeting in which the decision was reached in record time.

For the sake of economy (conference calls are costly) I want to make maximum use of the internet in transacting our business. We have a far-flung national leadership structure which we want to keep involved. And we have a membership we want to involve in the discourse. Issues can be vetted more clearly and efficiently as the result of the opportunity to reflect on and compose positions in whatever time it takes, and discuss them on e-mail for as long as it takes to reach some understanding. So I hope we can maximize its use; save meeting time; and save our scarce finances. (No intent to market computer systems; but I recommend having access to one.)

## FINANCES:

In my career I have experienced both sides of the financial fence:

Attempting to raise money; and spending money raised by others including Henry Ford. I am no good at the former, and will not get involved in it. But to partially compensate for that liability, I am very frugal in spending an

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## LOWENSTEIN THANKS SUPPORTERS OF THE MACHAL ARCHIVES

The Machal Fund at the University of Florida Libraries has received total contributions of almost \$8,000 from 16 persons, allowing Ralph Lowenstein to hire a student assistant and accelerate the archival work on the University of Florida campus. The contributions were a response personal requests from Si Spiegelman.

Those members contributing to the fund were Si Spiegelman, Adrian Phillips, Sam Klausner, Ralph Lowenstein, Paul Kaye, Marvin ibow, Len Shaffron, Bill Gelberg, Gideon Lichtman, Eugene Blum, Adah Jaffer, Gillian Fischbein, Arthur Bernstein, George Lichter and Fred Levinson. In addition, Ken Schick of Atlanta also contributed \$1,000

At the suggestion of Arthur Bernstein, several dozen friends of the late Al Glassman have made contributions to the Machal Fund in memory of Al. Following Arthur's lead, AVI is now encouraging friends and family of deceased Aliyah Betniks and Machalniks in the future to make donations to the Machal Fund in their memory. The contributions will significantly help our effort to compile a photographic and written record of those Americans and Canadians who volunteered for Israel in 1947-49

All contributions are completely tax deductible, and acknowledgements will be sent to the donors from both Ralph Lowenstein and the University of Florida Foundation. Checks for contributions or memorial gifts should be made out to "Machal Fund" and sent to "Ralph Lowenstein, Machal Fund, PO Box 118400, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611." A note with the memorial checks should state the name and address of the family of the deceased, so Ralph can notify them that a memorial gift has been made.

## MACHAL CANADIAN COUSINS MISSING SINCE 1948.



*Missing Toronto cousins Harvey Cohen (left) and Ed Lugech (right) in May 1948 with Palmach comrades-in-arms Menasheh Elimelech (Israel; 2nd from left) and Ira Feinberg (USA; 2nd from right). The photo was discovered recently by IDF MIA investigators trying to determine the cousins' fate. It was taken near Rosh Pina shortly before their unit moved to Sarafand camp where, in June 1948, Cohen and Lugech were last seen. Anyone who recalls seeing them anywhere in Israel, or en-route to Israel, is asked to contact Eddy Kaplansky by e-mail (kaplansk@shani.net), by airmail (58/83 Hillel St, Haifa 33728, Israel), or by telephone (+ [972 4] 853 3147).*

## AVI ISRAEL REPORTS

*Annual Palyam Reunion — 2002.*

The Directors of the Palyam veterans group have invited American, Canadian, and Latin American Palyam veterans to the annual Palyam reunion scheduled at the Sdot Yam guesthouse facility on June 1 or 8 (the date is not yet locked in.) The event provides a unique opportunity for visiting and bonding among fellow veterans. It is scheduled from mid-morning through mid-afternoon, and provides beer and wine and lunch, all at a nominal charge. The timing will be confirmed at an early date.

*Palyam's Historical Account of Aliya Bet GATES ARE OPEN.*

The 550 page Palyam official history of the post World War II Aliya Bet campaign is now available. The work which has received enthusiastic reviews, contains biographical account of all the Palyam participants in the operations, plus sketches — in English — of American and Canadian volunteers who submitted them for publication. The volume is illustrated with photos of people, ships, and locations where the ships embarked and arrived.

Dave Baum has volunteered to take orders for the book: Here is the procedure: Mail a check for US 35.00 made out to Dave, and include a card with the purchaser's name and mailing address to: David Baum, 11/13 Mapu, Tel Aviv 63577, Israel. The purchase price covers the cost of the book and mailing. (rdbaum@netvision.net.il)

# OBITUARIES



Alfred Glassman  
March 25, 1948

## Alfred Glassman, 74, Air Force Cartographer

Alfred Glassman passed away at the Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston on December 25, 2001. Al was born, raised, and educated in Jewish Dorchester and, as a teenager, became an inveterate Zionist. Al was an active member of Boston Habonim (Labor Zionist Youth) throughout his teen-age years. He answered the call of the nascent Jewish state and arrived in Palestine on the March 1948 voyage of the Marine Carp with the first American volunteers. He served with the 51<sup>st</sup> Givati in the pre-state battle for the road to Jerusalem at Latrun. Under a barrage of artillery fire from Syrian irregulars he was wounded. His platoon suffered two fatal casualties. The American platoon was disbanded after the first truce and Al joined an engineering demolition team assigned to the Negev Palmach Brigade. His company escorted 50 women soldiers through the Egyptian lines to prepare for the attack on Beer Sheba and then participated in the capture of Beer Sheba. He ended his Israeli military career in the map section of the new air force. Upon return to the U. S. he founded the Universal Publishing Company and was active in the Jewish Community of Sharon where the family lived. He was the New England representative of the American Veterans of Israel and was to become its national president in 2003.

His brother, Cy Glassman delivered a eulogy at his memorial service. Cy said, "His humanity, his wit, his sense of humor, his kindness and his warmth touched many people." Cy's remarks recalled some family history and Al's military record and concluded with some personal reminiscences. "Al had a wonderful rapport with children, not only his beloved grand-children but children in general. He did a wonderful imitation of Donald Duck and his kids would clamor for more. His Donald Duck fame grew to the extent that people were always showering him with Donald Duck memorabilia."

"His interests were wide and varied. He loved to read. He loved old maps. He had an extensive Israel stamp collection. And he collected art and scrimshaw."

The *GIS Monitor*, a newsletter of Al's professional group recalled his founding of Universal Publishing Company in 1963. He was responsible for the Universal Atlas of Metropolitan Boston and Eastern Massachusetts. He began by making maps the old-fashioned way by hand, with double line roads and indices compiled without the aid of computers.

Al leaves his second wife Lisa and four sons from his first marriage- Michail, Arnold, Steven and his wife Patty, Andrew and his wife Marcia and Paul Gregorian. His brothers Lawrence and Cyril and sisters Dorothy Porter and Frances Glassman and five grandchildren Molly, Kevin, Benjamin, Matthew and Amber survive him. He was predeceased by his first wife, Geraldine (Frank) Glassman and his sisters Helen Creiger, Betty Egel and Lillian Glassman.

Donations in his name may be made to the Machal Fund in support of the AVI Archives. Send contributions to its director, Ralph Lowenstein, 1705 Northwest 22<sup>nd</sup> Dr., Gainesville, FL 32605. Condolences may be sent to: Lisa Glassman - 5 Holden Road. Belmont, MA 02478, lgglassman@aol.com

## Max Tocker, Artilleryman, 76

Max Tocker, 76, died December 9, 2001 leaving a son and daughter and three grandchildren. Max was originally from Belgium and served in Machal as a member of the Field Artillery. He came to the US and raised a family. He was a member of the staff of Israel Bonds.

He was active on the Executive of AVI for many years serving as a Vice President. He worked on committees. Unfortunately, Max suffered with a debilitating lung and heart condition causing him to become inactive. We wish his family consolation in the knowledge that their father's activity in behalf of Israel serves as a worthy example of a meaningful life. *Sam Alexander*



David Buchman  
Wedding - January 3, 1951

## David Buchman, Cavalryman, 86

David Buchman, who served in the Polish, Soviet, British and Israeli armies, died in Ocala, Florida, Sept. 21, 2001, at the age of 86.

A native of Poland, Buchman was serving in the Polish cavalry when Poland was invaded by Germans in World War II. He escaped to the Soviet Union, serving in that army, than was transferred to England to serve with the British army's Polish forces. After the war, he volunteered for the War of Independence, serving with both the Irgun and then the Israeli army. He returned to England in 1949 and emigrated to the U.S. in 1952. Buchman was a long-time member of the electrician's union in New York. He and his wife Ricky made their home in Brooklyn.

He retired in 1977, and he and his family moved to Ocala in 1994. He is survived by his wife, two daughters, Carolyn and Yvonne, and two sons, Joseph and Stuart.

Condolences may be sent to  
Ricky Buchman  
POB 277  
Candler, FL 32111-0227

## Henry Kantzer, Army Veteran, 74

Henry Kantzer, born in Cairo, Egypt in 1927 of parents from Austria and Poland. At age 14, having made *aliya* with his parents he joined the Haganah. In 1948 he served in the IDF B Company, 79<sup>th</sup> Battalion during the first Israeli Arab war. Subsequently he came to the United States and served in the Korean War. Returning to civilian life, he studied engineering at the University of California at Los Angeles.

After graduation, he started an international freight forwarding company, work which took to countries around the world. He was an especially frequent visitor to China. His friends remember him as one who spoke about five languages fluently. He would hold telephone conversations with friends who knew these languages and could be heard changing from one language to another in the same conversation. Henry and his family were members of Temple Shalom of River Edge, NJ.

Condolences may be sent to  
Carmen Kantzer  
341 Paramus Rd.  
Paramus, NJ 07652



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# OBITUARIES

## Dov (Dave) Kaplansky, z"l.



*Dov Kaplansky, 1948*

My only brother, Dov Kaplansky, passed away last October 7th 2001 in Andorra after a long illness. We were always very close, having shared many experiences as brothers, Machalniks and business partners.

Born in Montreal, Dov grew up during the hungry 1930s in the area of the city portrayed in Mordecai Richler's early novels. He and Richler knew each other rather well as teenagers, having played snooker and worked at summer jobs together in their high school days. This may explain Richler's use of the name Kaplansky in some of his novels. As fate would have it, they both died in the same year, and of the same malady.

Too young for active participation in WW2, Dov enrolled in the RCAF Air Cadets while still in high school and learned aero-engine mechanics. He was well over 18 in July 1948 when Dov arrived in Israel. He spent the next two months on Abe Nurick's team in Ramat David helping to keep 103 Squadron's C-47s airworthy. In September, when he heard that a flying course was being organized, Dov applied and was accepted for pilot training.

Not much flight training had occurred when the course was suspended in October due to the imminence of Operation Ten-Plagues. The would-be pilots were given a brief 'bomb-chucking' course, and throughout the campaign chucked bombs out of the IAF's Norseman, C-46 and C-47 transport planes. In December, just weeks after the course had resumed, it was again suspended for Operation Horev. During the 17 days of this campaign Dov heaved bombs out of the C-46s, mostly onto targets in the Gaza-strip where anti-aircraft fire was particularly heavy; "comparable to that of the Ruhr valley's 'flack-alley' in WW2," claimed airmen who had experienced both.

The flying course was plagued with interruptions after its resumption in January 1949, usually due to a shortage of instructors or training planes. In May it was suspended indefinitely for reorganization, and the demoralized budding-pilots were given other assignments. Al-

though he had some 20 hours of solo time by then, this setback decided Dov to return to Canada. Some of his fellow students might have followed suit, but as Israelis they had no choice but to stay put. Many of Dov's friends on the course ultimately became top-notch IAF pilots. Some achieved considerable renown, among them Benny Peled (Weidenfeld) who commanded the Air Force in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Other graduates of the first IAF pilot course in Israel are today retired El Al captains.

In 1959 Dov and I went into the real estate business in a fruitful partnership that lasted until my return to Israel some 13 years later. In the mid-1970s he and his family moved to England, where in 1978 he was diagnosed for leukemia. They returned to Canada after Dov's condition stabilized, but again moved to England a year or two later. Being a keen skier, in the early 1980s they settled in Andorra near a popular ski area. His leukemia had been in remission for some 20 years, when he was diagnosed for cancer.

Street-smart and largely self-taught, Dov was good at whatever he turned his mind to, from skiing and playing trumpet to developing real-estate projects. He is sorely missed by family and friends the world over, who will always remember him fondly as a very special person.

Besides our sister Miriam (Levy) and me, Dov leaves behind his wife Andree and son Peter, three children of a previous marriage, Lyon, Joy (Haas) and Sandy, and grand-daughters Samantha and Jackie Haas.

*Condolences may be sent to  
Andree Kaplansky, B.P. 21,  
La Massane, Andorra (via France).  
and  
Eddy Kaplansky,  
Kaplansk@shani.net*

**COL. DAVID (MICKEY)  
MARCUS**

**WEST POINT  
MEMORIAL**

**SUNDAY,  
MAY 19, 2002**

## Jack Goldstein, aircraft radioman



*Jack Goldstein, RCAF*

Jack Goldstein, my friend of many years, passed away in Montreal on October 14th, 2001. He is survived by his wife, Corina, daughters Maya (di Robilant) and Dana, grandson Michele and brother Irving.

Jack joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1942, and after completing communication and air gunnery courses received his W/AG (wireless/air gunner) wing. following specialized operational training in England, he was assigned to an RCAF heavy bomber squadron. In the ensuing months he flew 41 night bombing raids against Germany in Avro Lancaster bombers; more than enough to earn him a gold RAF 'Ops' wing.

He was among the very early Canadian Machalniks, and probably the first in the budding Israel Air Force (IAF), having signed up in March 1948. Jack's IAF career began in Perugia, Italy, where he spent most of April helping prepare a C-46 cargo aircraft for its ferry flight to Israel. The C-46 had been there since early March.

It finally left Perugia on May 3rd, piloted by Arnie Ilowite and Harry Schwartz; (both from USA) with Jack as radio operator. Since the C-46 had been under surveillance by Italian authorities and the FBI, when it left Perugia on May 3rd it was for a pretended test flight to Catania, Sicily, and return next day. They left Catania on May 4th cleared for Perugia, but changed course for Israel soon after take-off.

When they reached Israel in the dark hours of May 5th unannounced, as the radio wasn't

obituaries continued on Page 7

# OBITUARIES

**Jack Goldstein**  
continued from Page 6

working, Ekron field was blacked out. When runway lights finally came on, the crew, all strangers to the country, had no way of knowing if it was Ekron or an Arab-held field. Ilowite landed anyhow, as they were low on fuel. But after landing he kept the engines running ready for take-off, while Jack cautiously opened the cabin door with gun in hand, until sure they were safe. It was the first ATC aircraft to arrive in Israel.

In the following days, Ilowite and Jack flew the C-46 as a two-man crew to make repeated low-level drops of food and supplies to besieged Yechiam. Their luck held until May 11th, when a burst of machine-gun fire shattered some flight instruments as they neared Yechiam at tree-top height for another drop. The cockpit was showered with glass fragments and alcohol droplets, which cut their faces and blinded Ilowite briefly. Jack took over from the co-pilot seat and kept the plane flying safely until Ilowite opened his eyes again a minute or so later.

The next two months saw Jack on the C-46s flying the "Operation Balak" airlift from Czechoslovakia to Israel. On July 15th he was radio operator on one of the three B-17s that bombed different Egyptian targets while being ferried to Israel from Zatec, Czechoslovakia. Documents on file at IDF Archives show that Jack's was the B-17 that bombed Cairo. In later years he rarely spoke about having participated in that historic raid.

Jack was thus a founding member of 69 Squadron, which was created especially for the B-17s even before their arrival. He and the B-17s took part in every remaining campaign of the War of Independence. He stayed on in Israel after the war, and co-founded a communications equipment company. After it merged with another new company to form Tadiran Ltd, Jack returned to Montreal where he was in the office furniture business for over 30 years.

Always of cheerful disposition and a cool cat under fire, flier friends dubbed him "Smiling-Jack" after the 1930's comic-book aviator of that name. It was Jack who suggested the name "The First Fliers" for my paper on the IAF's early aircrew personnel, for which I am ever grateful.

Those who had the pleasure of knowing Jack will always fondly remember him as a very affable and knowledgeable person. Fellow RCAF and IAF fliers he will also remember him as a superb radio operator and airman.

*Eddy Kaplansky*

Condolences may be sent to  
Corina Goldstein  
4462 Sherbrooke St. W, Westmount,  
Quebec H3Z 1E6, Canada.

## Harry Eisner, Army, AVI Leader



*Standing (L-R) Jack Klementz (Scotland), Cliff Epstein (England), **Harry Eisner**, Julie Konorty (Bulgaria), Alter Leff (Canada), Howard Cossman (Canada), Joe Wolff (South Africa)*

*Kneeling: 'Palmach' Joe Kornstein (Germany), Hymie Klein (Canada), Alex (Peewee) Dworkin (Canada), Arthus Lipshitz (England), Harry Balish (England)*

*Reclining: Vic Gurovitz (England), Jack Banin (Kenya)*

We are sorry to inform you of the passing of Chaver Harry Eisner. He died on July 10, a few weeks shy of his 87th birthday. Harry served in the 72nd Battalion of the 7th Brigade—the Anglo-Saxon Unit. He served in the US Army in World War II.

For many years an active member and leader in AVI; he was responsible for organizing many AVI trips to Israel and he kept in touch with Machal people in Israel, England and South Africa maintaining a close liaison with world Machal. Harry was granted the rare opportunity to serve as Director of the Association for the Welfare of Soldiers in Israel, the Vaad Lemaan Hachayal giving him an opportunity to spread the name of the AVI and allowing AVI to play a role in the activities of the Vaad in the USA. This was especially true when Menachem Begin was Prime Minister and Harry received the Jabotinsky medal and was invited to the signing of the treaty between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai Desert.

He was an excellent speaker and he organized a number of fundraising activities for the AACI. He will be missed.

*Sam Alexander*

### CREW OF SCHINDLER'S B-17

Eddy Kaplansky reports that Ralph Lowenstein has succeeded in identifying the eight crew members of Irvin Schindler's B-17 that was impounded in the Azores in 1948, as per the list that follows. Until now it was not known here who were Schindler's crewmen on that ill-fated flight, and their aircrew trades are still unknown. Apparently only Schindler made it to Israel after their deportation from the Azores to USA .

Hyman Philip Mark, 23  
Sholom Solowitz, 25  
Marvin Kraft, 25  
Gustave Brown, 21

Fred Fink, 25  
Harold Freedman, 24  
Harry Frank, 28  
Albert Schragger, 27

## President's Corner continued from Page 3

organization's money, however rich the organization.

Given AVI's financial constraints which Dave Gerard tackles daily, and to which Si Spiegelman has devoted so much time, it is clear we are not in a position to tolerate discretionary spending. Whatever discretionary spending we can afford will be directed principally to the Legacy Project, and I would like to devote whatever we can afford to a buildup in the Public Affairs area that Sid will be managing. Costs for speakers will be borne by the host or the speaker themselves; Naomi has demonstrated how this can be done. We can no longer afford contributions to outside organizations. And whatever financial needs are generated by our regional programs will be self-liquidating, provided by local benefactors, collaborators, or other contributors.

### PARTISAN POLITICAL POSITIONS:

The question of AVI positions on political issues affecting the well-being of the U.S. and Israel occasionally is raised. The answer is simple: As an organization we do not take them. And the reason is understandable: We have an extensive diversity of opinion in AVI on the criticality of any given issue and the merits of any position, each one of which is felt deeply. Accordingly the sentiments and judgments are best left to individuals.

We have had lively discussions and exchanges with one-another via e-mail, and sharing of media and other information. This of course is OK. And as individuals, not representing AVI, we have expressed our reactions on issues of our choice to media outlets. This is OK too.

As our activities for the year get underway we will be in touch, principally through the Newsletter both in its print and online versions. Meanwhile here is the profile of this year's Leadership Team as currently constituted; there may be some modifications which will be announced as we move along.

All the best to you and yours for the New Year.

Eli

## American Students continued from Page 1

part of the proposal and moved to simply recruit soldiers from abroad - many of whom were inducted into the Haganah immediately after landing. [Machal was different from Gahal (Giyus Midnavdim m'Chutz L'Aretz) which consisted mainly of refugees and immigrants from Europe, including the concentration camps, whom in many cases were thrown immediately into battle, particularly in the attack

on Latrun].

As Machal became more institutionalized it developed a structure, with offices in New York and in Jerusalem. Land and Labor remained in being as a cover, since it was technically recruiting workers for abroad, and not the arm (or army) of a foreign body. By this time volunteers were given pay, were insured against casualty and death, and were entitled to a discharge bonus. (This was not true in the earliest days. When the President Warfield [later Exodus 1947] foundered off Cape Hatteras, I was asked to abandon my vacation and return to New York in case it became necessary to notify families of fatalities - and there were no insurance arrangements then). Recruitment was also enlarged to include volunteers for tasks other than manning the refugee ships - particularly for the airforce.

The American students at the Hebrew University were assembled on one memorable night and given the opportunity to volunteer for the Haganah. This was truly presented as an opportunity - there was no pressure and would be no reprisals on those who declined. A few students returned home; a few decided to opt out of military service but to remain in the country and continue with their studies; and one student had himself accredited as a correspondent by his hometown paper, and went to live in the safety of one of the Bevingrads, the British army enclaves.

The great bulk of American students, however, and their wives, volunteered, and thirty men were enrolled on the spot. The first rank consisted of veterans who had seen combat duty (including this writer). The second were those who had been in armies, but not fought. The third rank consisted of rabbinical students who had been exempted from the American draft. (Known jocularly as Chayil HaRabbonim, this group bore the unfortunate and undeserved acronym of Charah, i. e., shit). The students were assigned to various units. Rabbi Ezra Spicehandler stopped a Syrian tank; his brother Danny took part in the attack on San Simon in Jerusalem; Moshe Geberer was killed leading the attack on Mount Zion; Marlin Levin intercepted Arab orders to capture Neve Yaakov (which led to abandonment of the moshav); Dov Shugar fired our one mortar from point to point on the perimeter to give the impression that we were well-armed; Louis Guttman headed the psychological warfare division; Eleazar Whartman was in the press division; Jerry Renov flew one of our two Auster training planes (one fourth of our airforce at the time) as a courier from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and back; Elaine May was stationed in Hadassah Hospital as a nurse; my wife delivered arms to Motza and I was in charge of codes and ciphers in Jerusalem (and later in Tel Aviv for the Israel Airforce).

At one point the American Ambassador heard

that the American students were taking part in the fighting, and wrote an official request for information to the Hebrew University. The with the Machal establishment. They had come earlier, at their own expense, and were doing the same jobs as Machalnicks, but had no pay, no insurance, and no discharge payments. A compromise was reached, in which the students were entitled to the same discharge pay as Machalnicks, but nothing else.

When the war was over, an office was established in Israel to try to convince Machal members to stay, offering them easy terms for housing, employment counseling, and subsidies of various sorts. A young Cockney girl was in charge of dealing with those who simply wanted information, and her innocent "Are you a query, dearie?" may have caused any number to leave without asking their question.

Among the Machal members who stayed in or returned to Israel on aliyah, a good number were the former University students. Jerry Renov trained pilots for the Israel Airforce and introduced every new aerial innovation into the country; Louis Guttman founded a prestigious research institute and developed several new mathematical theories; Ruth Guttman became a famous geneticist; Eleazar Whartman was a noted foreign columnist; Marlin Levine was the Time correspondent in Israel; some ex-students became members of and/or founded kibbutzim; and I am emeritus professor at the Hebrew University, where I studied Hebrew under siege in 1947. (Macarov has recently published *The Uncles*, available through Amazon.com, ed.)

## George Will Remembers Murray Aronoff

George Will, reviewing significant events of 2001 in Newsweek, December 24, recalls the obituaries of some who "evoked some of the stony paths to the present." He writes, "Murray Aronoff, 75, was a crew member of the steamship Exodus carrying 4,500 Jewish refugees to Palestine. He led an unsuccessful four-hour fight against British troops—'they had sidearms, machine guns and tear gas, and we had canned food and potatoes and rocks'—who boarded the ship turning it back to Europe, as part of a policy to balance Arab and Jewish populations in Palestine. Most of its passengers later made it to Palestine."



## Neglected Heroes continued from Page 2

They speak of being saddened over not receiving the little recognition they deserve for their historic contribution as they approach the twilight of their lives. Instead of being displayed as a source of pride, their memorabilia have been stuck inside a warehouse since January 1996. They are further insulted at the thought that the museum built to house their exhibit is in such a poor state and is to be named after someone who was not a War of Independence pilot.

Some have threatened to take back their donated items and display them elsewhere, including at a possible Mahal museum being contemplated, unless steps are taken soon to open the exhibit at Hatzerim. If the survivors efforts to open their own museum fails, they would pass the memorabilia onto their offspring, which means these valuable souvenirs could be lost to the public forever.

The veterans have won the support of the IAF Cornerstone Committee, which handles commemorations and is comprised mainly of former Mahal members. The panel has written a protest letter to Turner, saying the closed exhibit and the pavilions naming after someone who was not a pioneer flier will be seen by some as burying, while still alive, those whose contribution to the establishment of the state is axiomatic. Turner, who is also the mayor of Beersheba and one of the countrys great flyboys, is the living spirit behind the Air Force Museum and its creator.

The late and legendary American pilot Bill Katz, commander of 69 Squadron in the War of Independence and the Ramat David air base in 1948, had his own dream of putting together an exhibit of how the World War II veterans had helped lay the foundations of the IAF. Katz, a distinguished US Air Corps bomber pilot who flew many raids over Germany, is perhaps best remembered for ferrying an ailing B-17 bomber from Czechoslovakia to Israel on July 15, 1948, and bombing Cairo en route. Some years ago he collected memorabilia from fellow veterans and pitched the idea to Turner of creating a separate exhibit about the IAFs first fliers at the Air Force Museum.

Katz died in 1994, before the idea was implemented. But his widow, Ruth, won the support of the Cornerstone Committee for the plan. The committee took over where Bill left off. Members inventoried Katzs collection, doubled it with their own collection efforts, and catalogued it in crates. In March 1995, Turner informed them of plans to build Beit Harishonim, saying it would be funded by the IAF. They agreed to put up a permanent exhibit with written accounts and photographs of Mahalniks and other early fliers, and a display of the medals they had won in World War II.

Last year Turner surprised them all when he re-named Beit Harishonim Beit Zorik, after his missing hero. He invited Levs family, but did not bother to consult with or inform the Cornerstone Committee or the other veteran early fliers.

We have no objection to Zorik, but rather with the naming of Beit Harishonim after him. He was never one of the rishonim. We have an obligation to first fliers, and these people want to see it named appropriately, Sol Jacobs, 78, says. Proper recognition of our part in history in the early IAF has eluded us.

Adds Eddy Kaplansky, a Mahal volunteer from Canada who piloted Dakota transport planes in the War of Independence: We were amazed that it was named after someone other than a first flier. It shows a lack of appreciation, an affront to the actual first fliers of the air force, especially to the 33 who were killed.

Kaplansky, author of *The First Fliers*, a research paper documenting the IAF aircrew personnel in the War of Independence, says native Israelis were a minority in the force at that time. This was mainly because Britain barred Palestinian Jews from aircrew training in the RAF until 1943, and then only grudgingly. Kaplansky says that fewer than 25 people from the Yishuv had qualified as RAF pilots. One of the best known of them was Lt. Modi Alon, who shot down two Egyptian Dakotas bombing Tel Aviv. Some four months later, Alon was killed on his return mission, after his plane was perhaps damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Another native-born pilot was none other than former president Ezer Weizman, also a former IAF commander.

Nearly 70 percent of the first fliers were foreigners who came to help the fledgling Jewish state, out of a sense of adventure or for money, Kaplansky says. "Most were gratuitous volunteers, but a significant number were hired professionals, and a few were new immigrants," he says. A former pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Montreal native says that of the 621 members of the early air force, 191 were from the United States, 82 from South Africa, 53 from Britain, 52 from Canada, and 18 from Sweden.

The 185 Israelis in the IAF in the 1940s included 81 "bomb chuckers," as well as 69 pilots without World War II training or experience, who learned to fly in the US, Czechoslovakia or Italy in 1948. "Without its foreign fliers, the newborn IAF would certainly not have been able to utilize its heavy bombers, heavy transport planes, and most of its fighter planes, all acquired clandestinely throughout the world and secretly brought to Israel, mostly by them, via unique and hazardous routes," Kaplansky's research paper says.

The IAF was so Anglo-heavy its working language was English rather than Hebrew,

Kaplansky adds. In fact, most of the surviving documents of the early air force were also written in English.

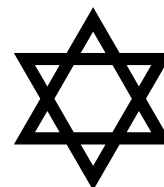
With the cessation of the fighting, most Mahal volunteers left the country. But some of the Jews stayed on as new immigrants. Alongside the native-born Israelis, they went on to continue building the modern IAF and also the national airline, El Al. Kaplansky flew with the IAF until September 1949.

### **Were You or Your Family Victims of Financial Spoliation in France During WWII?**

The French Government has established the Commission for the compensation of Victims of Spoliation resulting from Anti-Semitic Legislation in Force During the Occupation to investigate and compensate claims by victims whose assets from frozen, blocked, looted or Aryanized.

You are eligible to apply for compensation if you (or your family, heirs or successors) were Jewish and if you believe that you (or your family) may have had any type of professional or personal account in a bank in France during the period September 1939 to May 1945.

For information contact Commission pour l'Indemnisation des Victimes des Spoliations (CIVS), 1 Rue de la Manutention, 75116 Paris, France. Telephone 33 (0)1 56 52 85 00. (Toll-free from the US 1 866 254 3770).



## IRA FEINBERG IN THE PALMACH: FIGHTING ON AFTER DEFEAT

Ira Feinberg submitted an extensive memoir of his war experiences beginning with his recruitment and training, battle experience and more. A part is reproduced here.

Here we were in a camp in Palestine where the two major Jewish groups wanted and vied to enlist us in their particular army. The Haganah on the defensive in every area where Jews confronted Arabs were waiting until the British had totally departed to act aggressively to achieve their objectives. Their fighting arms, the Palmach, mainly drawn from the Kibbutzim (communal agricultural settlements) were somewhat trained and ready to do battle. They were spread out in units in the north, south and east guarding the lifelines of Jewish towns, cities, and settlements. Upon the departure of the British, and as they left various fortifications, The Irgun became unrestrained, and in April they engaged the Arab forces of Yaffa who had commenced harassing, and firing on their neighbors in Tel-Aviv. So began the battle for Yaffa where the Irgun entered to take the city and force out the Arab forces. During the day the battle was somewhat subdued but at night all hell broke loose. Some of their fighters or commanders came to our camp and invited us to join them in the battle now raging in Yaffa. Together with a few of my comrades we visited in the nighttime their battle lines to decide if this was the army we wanted to join. The next day the Palmach recruiter came to our camp, and our five-buddy team, Ralph Moster, Sonny Wosk, Ray Rudin, Lawrence Suras and myself decided unanimously to join the Palmach. Immediately we left all the other American and Canadians behind, and off we went to the Galilee to a Palmach camp near Rosh Pinah.

We were the most unfit soldiers you ever could find. Myself, at the age of 17 was a pack a day smoker and the most physical exercise I ever had the past three years was holding a cue stick in a pool and billiard parlor. The first day we were awakened at 5:30AM, and off we went jogging for two or three miles. I could barely keep up but I wouldn't let on that an American from Brooklyn couldn't do the same as a trained Kibbutznicks. Ralph who was very flabby, smoked a lot, and whose exercise the past three years consisted of taking laundry from the washing machines he operated at his business in his Laundromat in Vancouver, and throwing them in the dryers. Lawrence Suras was a bit overweight, Sonny had suffered from rheumatic fever as a child, and

his heart wasn't the best. He was in pretty poor shape but as a shochet (butcher) a profession he practiced in Vancouver his arms were thick and very strong. The same was with Ray Rudin. What a group of misfits as recruits! Five days of rudimentary training and we were called palmachnicks ready for battle. None of us spoke any more Hebrew than Cane or Lo, (yes or no) We were broken up into two teams. Ralph, Sonny and I were a machine gun team. Ray and Larry were assigned to a Piat team (an anti-tank or armored car attack weapon similar to the bazooka. I learned how to line up a target on the site of an Enfield rifle and my instructor taught me how to fire without using ammunition of which we were very short. Ralph was assigned to a Browning 30-Caliber machine gun (cannibalized from a destroyed World War II Spitfire).

He was assigned this job because he had been a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and had trained to dismantle the Browning machine gun fixed in the wings of his plane. Sonny was to carry the base (which came from a World War II German 30 caliber machine gun) and I the third in the team, the spare ammo to be loaded on my body whose weight seemed heavier than my 138 lbs. I also was given two ammunition boxes the size of an attaché case to carry, one in each hand (good training when I later on became a bell hop working my way through college).

It was the evening of May 14th 1948 that we were assembled in a field at our camp in Rosh Pinah. There in full battle dress and assembled according to units, platoons and battalions, The Declaration Of Independence of The State Of Israel was read to us, and for Jewish people everywhere. What a moment in Jewish history! This was our pep talk before we were to go into battle against the enemy, the Arab world that chose to push us into the sea. The next evening we boarded our buses. Some of us would never return to Rosh Pinah. On the buses the songs reverberated, a medley of Hebrew, Russian Army, French, American songs, and of course the marching song of the Palmach and as we sang them our fears were being sublimated. When the busses reached the foothills that would lead to our military objectives it was silence again. It was a pitch-black night as we climbed in single file up the steep hills. There never seemed to be a top. We just kept climbing and climbing. I don't know how I or my pals Sonny and Ralph kept up, but kept up we did.

Somewhere after many hours I slipped while climbing, probably out of vertigo from the climb combined with sheer exhaustion, and the little attaché size wooden boxes that I had carefully carried in my hands came smashing down on some sizable stones along

the path which cracked their fragile wood frames open spewing out the 30 caliber bullets that were neatly fixed on the belts that carried them. Fortunately we were given time to rest just at that moment, and I had time to clean them off and put my ammo box back together again with the bullets on the belt neatly in place. I even managed to repair the little wood boxes that carried them. This stop in our climb was the end of our all-night walk, and we were allowed to sleep, if we could, in the hot sun, with no shade to shelter us. It was this long day in the sun the night before the attack that weakened many of us. We also were not permitted to drink any water that we carried in our canteens, as this was our reserve for the following days or in the event of an emergency.

When the sun set finally and cooler weather prevailed we continued to rest until total darkness occurred. In that darkness we packed our supplies and gear and moved on to our battle objectives, Malkiah, Nebayusha and Kadesh, two towns and a Taggart Fort, which we were commanded to capture. There was a rumor after the battles that a doctor in our camp was a spy and had communicated with the Syrians that we were coming. A trap was set for us, and we stepped right into an ambush as the enemy allowed us to enter the town of Malkiah and then when we were in the center of the town-opened fire on us. Over three hundred of our best Palmachniks fell in the first few hours of battle. Just imagine how ironic that on the day that Jews all over the world were celebrating the creation and independence of the Jewish State we were suffering a catastrophic defeat by the Arabs. Later we learned that other areas where we were fighting for our lives, the conditions were either very bad, or we had lost some important positions and terrain. The Old City of Jerusalem was lost and new city was almost cut off from the rest of Israel. The Egyptians were moving up from the south, and east was the Arab Legion of Trans Jordan under Glubb Pasha a British general who commanded them. The Iraqis in the northeast, and the Syrians and Lebanese in the north. The world turned its back on the Jewish State. No nation lifted a finger to stop the invasion of the armies sworn to drive every Jew into the sea. The United States imposed an embargo on all arms going to the Middle East, and by so doing punished Israel the most, but not the Arabs, who had the weapons and could secure more if they needed them from Britain who tilted totally towards the Arabs.

Now back to the battle area. We were in a group of twenty, a small platoon. We were covering the humiliating retreat and ambush of Malkiah and Nebayusha. Arab

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soldiers were firing on us from the hills above. We were in the plains and were sitting ducks. Ralph after carrying his Browning 30 caliber couldn't get it to fire. Our commander ran over and released the safety switch and starting firing on the Arabs who were firing at us and who were getting closer and closer.

When our 30 caliber Browning finally starting spitting out bullets their advance was halted, but they kept firing on us from about five hundred yards from our position. I was told to remain behind a large rock. Suddenly bullets starting hitting on all sides of the rock. I couldn't figure out why me. My commander came running over and pulled down a rifle I had been given that I had standing upright against the rock which was a perfect target for the enemy to shoot at. After four days of military training what would you expect?

The next moment the three of us were given an order to move out from where we were to climb to a hill overlooking the valley. Just as we made it up to the top a shell hit our previous location killing five or six of our comrades. On that hill I remember meeting the two young Canadians who later were missing in action, and whose bodies have never been found. They were very agitated and upset. Neither of them spoke any Hebrew, and neither of them had any training to be soldiers. They complained about how they had been through hell, and unless they got some training and learned some Hebrew they were going to ask to be sent home. Later on they somehow decided to stay, and in one of the battle excursions they must have gotten separated from our forces, and they were never seen again. In those days if the Arabs caught you, you were a dead duck. Not only were you killed on the spot but your body was cut up in pieces, genitals were cut off and placed in the mouth in case some of us would witness the atrocities and sense that this would happen to us as well if we were caught. When an intensive effort was initiated some years later to secure more information about them from their families in Toronto to help in the search, those close family relatives refused any help. They were geshmat, (converts) and didn't want to have anything to do with those Israeli Army personnel who were trying to find them.

From our high position we could see in the distance a string of our soldiers retreating hastily, moving down from the main battle area of Malkiah. They ultimately passed through our position. I saw one of my tent mates, a young handsome Romanian, a tall blond fellow who was badly shot up. No plasma, no water, few bandages. We had to take turns carrying him on an improvised

stretcher. He never made it back alive. Our individual water supply was depleted. I remember drinking some water from a inside a hole in some large rock using the barrel of sten gun as a straw. No water, no food, what else could you do? This ended up giving me a good case of dysentery that took me months to get rid of. Now we were in full retreat, the glorious Palmach and just after having declared our independence to the entire world. Twenty-one of our best had fallen. Our military historians have claimed the number of wounded at one hundred and twenty. Whatever the true number it was a severe blow to our morale. Although the numbers seem small in proportion to those engaged in the that battle the percentage of wounded and killed was very high. This was no way to commence a war of independence. The first such war in almost two thousand years of our history as a people.

We returned to Rosh Pinah and regrouped. Not even a week had elapsed before we were on our way back to Malkiah, Kadesh, & Nebayusha. This time we were regrouped into three forces. Two were to attack from the front, and one fighting group was to come in from the rear. I was assigned to a convoy of armored cars, home made of course, and we grouped at Ramat Nafatali where we spent the night. In darkness the following day our convoy of seven or eight armored cars led by a command car took a road that entered Lebanon. Through the slits in the armored car we could see Arabs sleeping on the side of the road near their flocks of sheep and cattle as we passed through a number of towns. Suddenly we heard a loud thunderous explosion, and the firing of various weapons. Following the lead vehicle we made a u turn on that road. As we did we could see the source of the explosion, a large truck in flames. What had happened was that our lead car ran into a truck, which ironically was carrying reinforcements for the areas that our forces were attacking from the front at that very hour. We had gotten lost in Lebanon and were on a road that led to Beirut. The u-turn set us in the correct direction to reach our objective, which was to attack the town of Kadesh from the rear. When we arrived it was dawn and very quiet. Unloading from our armored cars we spread out and moved up a hill with our weapons drawn expecting the worst. To my right was Moshe Sadeh whose expression was anything but calming. When we arrived in the village the only person remaining was an old woman. The Arab soldiers who were there had left, and our objective had been achieved without firing a shot. In the meantime the other two objectives, Malkiah and Nebayusha had been taken by the other two groups. Some time later the regular militia replaced us, and we were transferred to

Sarafan, a base just outside of Rishon Le Zion. It was there that I got a report that I had been reported missing in action. Ray Rudin who was shot in the face, and whose mouth was all wired up reported to my family in Tel Aviv that I was indeed an MIA. I had to get to Tel Aviv urgently to see my relatives and get a letter or wire off to my parents informing them that I was alive and well. All my letters home were white lies to prevent them from worrying about my safety. I told my mother in a letter that it would be about six months before my training would be up, and then I would be assigned to another unit. At Sarafan our unit was enlarged by other volunteers amongst them a young chap no more than twenty who came from Paris to join us. William Bertram Edmundsen, An American from Bethlehem Pennsylvania was an idealist from the left. One of those young Hemingway character like communists who really believed that only good would come from the Red Cause. He had married recently in Paris and had decided that Israel's war was a just war that he had to fight in. Somehow he had some military training possibly in the American Army in Europe. After a few sorties he was out away from our unit and upon returning forgot the password. He was shot by one of our own and buried with honors in a military cemetery. Colonel Mickey Marcus met a similar death killed by our own forces. His father from what I remember was an editor or owner of the Bethlehem Times, an alleged virulent Anti-Semitic newspaper.

Separated from my comrades, Ralph Moster and Sonny Wosk, Ray Rudin and Larry Suras, I decided that I wanted to be in on the battle for Jerusalem. To be there I transferred myself by applying to a unit, which was about to go there, and they welcomed me with open arms. In those days that was the way you transferred to another fighting unit. I then became a palmachnick with Gedood Harevee'ee, Haporzim under the command of Dado, David Alizar, one of Israel's great heroes and a magnificent soldier.

I was assigned to Plugah Bet under the command of Yuska Prinsky, (now Yosef Ronnen). Yuska had recently arrived to the Gadoot Harevee'ee from the Etzel (Irgun Zvai Leumi). Yuska looked like a movie star when I first saw him. Blond hair, blue eyes, broad shouldered but short in stature, he was a champion when it came to knocking anyone out in the first round. Yuska was a street fighter and you didn't want to engage him in what he called a "fair fight". I saw him floor more than one person who challenged him. We were stationed in a town called Bet Jeez, and there I underwent additional training. I became a 'Miklan', (machine gunner) for our 'Kitah' (squad). We parried here and

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there with the enemy and helped in completing the finishing touches on Derech Burma (The Burma Road as it was called circumventing Arab held terrain to create a road to the besieged city of Jerusalem) My kitah commander was a tall handsome fellow by the name of Leon. He later became a Mossad agent and lived in Syria performing some incredible work. I was sad to hear that he committed suicide together with his girl friend some years after leaving the Mossad. Why and how is a mystery that we may never solve. Jerry Raymond, a machalnik from England became my buddy. We fought together through some battles at Har Tuv, and Dera Ouwa and became good friends. Jerry's brother was somewhere in Israel in another outfit, and after the war I lost contact with Jerry and have never been able to find any news as to his whereabouts. Jerry was a trained soldier having had served in the British Army unit for a few years before coming to Israel. He and his brother were amongst those young people who were sent by their parents just before the Holocaust to England to survive. Most of those parents went on to their own deaths in the camps but some managed to get their children out.

One of the most memorable experiences in my life was when I was part of force of 20 or more trucks filled with provisions that was the first to use the Burma Road and enter the besieged city of Jerusalem. The people and the children were standing on the sides of the streets cheering as we passed through the city. A city eternal to the Jewish People that had been saved. We brought water and food and tested the road's facility to get us through on a regular basis. Under the nose of the Arab forces we had bypassed their lines and created a link from the rest of Israel with Jerusalem with a road that will be memorialized.

After the battles of Deira Ouwa and Har Tuv I developed an infection in my left arm and was admitted to a hospital in Jerusalem. There I saw some of our badly wounded soldiers fighting to live. One of them was a young mustached soldier from England named Marcus Stenner. When I spoke with him he told me how he had just arrived a few weeks ago and how he had been shot in the abdomen seven times. Every day I would visit him as his room was just down the hall from mine. Every day we talked about his life and how important it was for him to be here in Israel. One day I found him delirious and speaking only in German, which was his native tongue. He and his brother had been separated at an early age. Marcus went to England from Germany, and his brother went to the camps. Now at this moment his

brother who had just arrived in Israel, and who had not seen his younger brother Marcus for more than ten years found him in the hospital fighting for his life. Marcus could not recognize him in his delirium as he sat by his bed in the hospital. The next morning when I went in to visit Marcus he wasn't there anymore. He passed away during the night and they removed his remains quickly so as not to demoralize the other patients. After ten days in the hospital I returned to my unit. A very kind woman in Jerusalem who took care of the welfare of soldiers leaving the hospital tried to get me special boots that would prevent me from spraining my ankle. I will never forget her and her kindness. I can only remember her beautiful face but not her name.

During the course of our sorties I kept twisting my left ankle until I had very little support that could prevent me from twisting it over and over again. This gave me a disability in combat. I couldn't climb the hills without spraining my ankle again and again. I was a key man in my kitah and having a weak ankle prone to spraining it over and over again forced me to the sidelines. Not to be stopped from combat I volunteered for the Jeep Commando's. These were converted Jeeps loaded with two or three machine guns that acted as assault vehicles as they charged into the enemy lines firing away in a terrifying way. I remember appearing before Dado to get his approval for the transfer. His answer was a stern but avuncular in tone, no. "You are too young to die just yet." Dado had probably saved my life.

In the interim as I waited to be formally discharged from the Palmach, my comrade Ralph Moster crashed his Widjin seaplane into the Kinneret (the lake called The Sea Of Gallilee) killing himself and three other unlucky and unfortunate passengers. I flew up to the Kinneret sitting on the floor of a small cargo plane, and the old team had a reunion brought together to search for Ralph's body. Ray Rudin, Sonny Wosk, and Larry Suras were all there to wait until the four bodies would rise from the depths of the lake where they had crashed. Four days later we spotted the first body. The next day the other three bodies. Then the return trip back to our bases, and finally the burial of Ralph Moster who had made a name for himself by flying some incredible number of times on combat missions in the Negev. Another hero buried in the soil of Israel.

It was all over for me. Together with Danny Dannovitch another medically discharged air force soldier we sailed to Europe, and then back to the States.

## AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL - CAN YOU HELP?

The Museum of Jewish Heritage tells the story of 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish life from the perspective of those who lived it. Created as a living memorial to the Holocaust, the Museum honors those who died by celebrating their lives. Our core exhibition is organized around three themes: Jewish Life a Century Ago, The War Against the Jews, and Jewish Renewal.

We are extremely interested in collecting material reflecting the experiences of American Jews who dedicated themselves in this way to realizing the Zionist dream and helping Holocaust survivors reach mandate Palestine.

The Museum is seeking donations of original material related to your service on the illegal ships, in Displaced Persons camps or from early Israeli military service, for example:

- uniforms, armbands and insignia
- weapons, tools and navigational instruments used on *Aliyah Bet* ships
- Panamanian papers
- letters home
- souvenirs; gifts from refugees
- items from Displaced Persons camps
- identification documents issued by the State of Israel in 1948
- commendations and medals from the State of Israel
- items relating to Operation Magic Carpet

If you would like to donate material, please contact Esther Brumberg, Curator of collections, One Battery Park Plaza, New York, NY 10004-1484. Telephone: 212-968-1800 ext 142. Email: ebrumberg@mjhny.org