

# Jews in America's Military

by Seymour "Sy" Brody

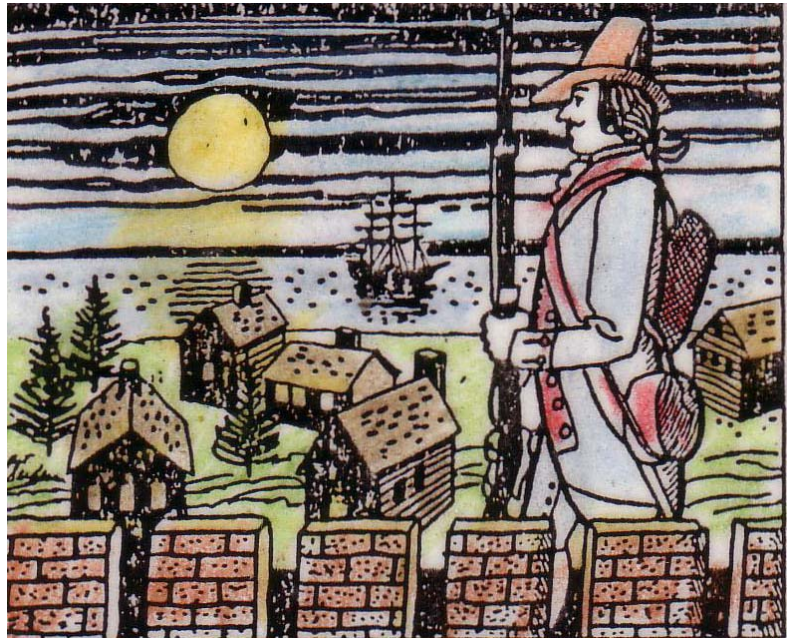
Author of "Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America"  
Editor of "The Jewish Veteran"

JUSTIN MORANSKI

On August 22, 1654 Jewish settlers, from Recife, Brazil, and the West Indies, came to New Amsterdam seeking religious freedom and equal opportunities and obligations alongside of the Christian citizens.

At first, Governor Peter Stuyvesant denied them these basic rights. Jacob Barsimson, Asher Levy, Abraham de Lucena, Jacob Cohen Henricques and other Jewish settlers petitioned Gov. Stuyvesant for the right to be a part of the defense force of the city, to establish a cemetery, trading and property rights and build a synagogue. Pressure from Holland forced Gov. Stuyvesant to grant them these rights, in 1654. This was the beginning of Jews serving in the military of our country—350 years ago.

Today, Jewish men and women in the military are valiantly continuing the tradition of serving in our country's military. They are in Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti as a part of America's Armed Forces. Some have given their lives, many have been wounded and others have been recognized for bravery with medals and decorations.



*Jews doing guard duty on the wall.*

In colonial times, the Jewish population numbered over 2,500 and was scattered throughout the country. In the Revolutionary War, many Jews were in General George Washington's Continental Army.

Lt. Col. Solomon Bush, who was decorated for bravery in battle, was the high-

est ranking Jewish officer, In an intensified battle with the British at Brandywine, his brother, Captain Lewis Bush was mortally wounded, and he received a near-fatal wound.

Francis Salvador was nicknamed the “Paul Revere of the South” because on July 1, 1776, he mounted his horse and rode 30 miles to warn the settlers that the Cherokee Indians, incited by the British, were attacking the frontier. It was on August 1, 1776, that he was killed as he led a small army of 330 men in defending the frontier settlers against the Cherokee Indians.

Mordecai Sheftall acquired the reputation as the “great rebel” in fighting the British in the South. The Revolutionary Government appointed him Commissioner



***Lt. Col. Solomon Bush is honored with a citation.***

General of Purchase and Issues to the Militia of Georgia. Many times he used his own funds to purchase supplies for the troops.

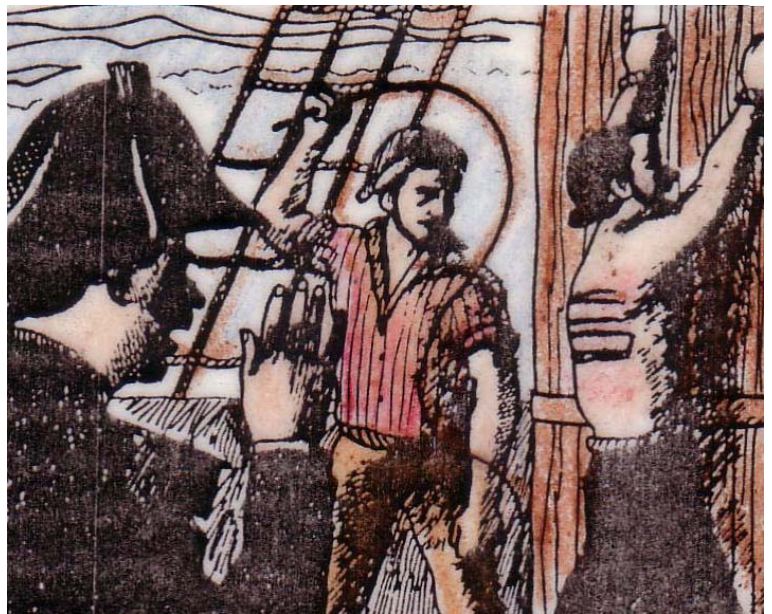
There were other Jews who distinguished themselves on the battlefield: There were the Franks (Isaac, David Salisbury and Moses), Sheftall Sheftall and Benjamin Nomes.

Haym Solomon was known as the “Financier of the Revolutionary War.” During the war, he used his profits in business to buy food and arms for the armies of Generals Washington, Lafayette, Von Steuben and others. He negotiated many

loans for the colonies from France and Holland.

In the War of 1812, Jews were involved on land and sea in fighting the British. Commodore Uriah Phillips Levy served aboard the ***U.S.S. Argus*** as a sailing master who directed the line of fire during battle. His ship disrupted the flow of the British merchant ships, which carried supplies for the British. They destroyed 21 ships before they met their match.

Levy is credited with bringing about the abolition of corporal punishment or flogging in the Navy. During his service in the Navy, he was court-martialed and found guilty six times by the anti-Semitic naval officers and, each time the verdict was overturned. He was finally promoted to the rank of commodore.



***Uriah Levy abolishes flogging.***

The German-Jewish migration to America occurred from 1815-

1877. In Europe, Jews were confined to ghettos and not allowed to own land. They were barred from higher education and taxed heavily. In the Civil War, many of them served and fought for the North and South.

The Civil War divided the nation and the Jewish population, which was about 150,000. There were about 8,500 Jews fighting for the North and the South. Many of them were commended for their bravery and resolute courageousness by their superior officers.

The Medal of Honor was established by Congress during the Civil War. It is the highest award given for bravery. Six Jews in the Union Army were recipients of this prestigious award:

Sgt. Leopold Karpeles was entrusted with his regiment's flag during the Battle of the Wilderness. While the Confederate bullets went by him, Karpeles kept waving the flag as it was the only object that the Union soldiers could see. General Wadsworth kept riding up and down the Union lines telling the troops to "rally around the flag." He recommended Sgt. Leopold Karpeles for the Medal of Honor.

Benjamin Levy, a drummer boy, rescued two standards which were dropped



**Sgt. Leopold Karpeles**

by their wounded flag bearers in the Battle of Charles City Crossroads. He unfurled them and carried them throughout the battle, preventing the colors from being captured by the Confederate soldiers. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.

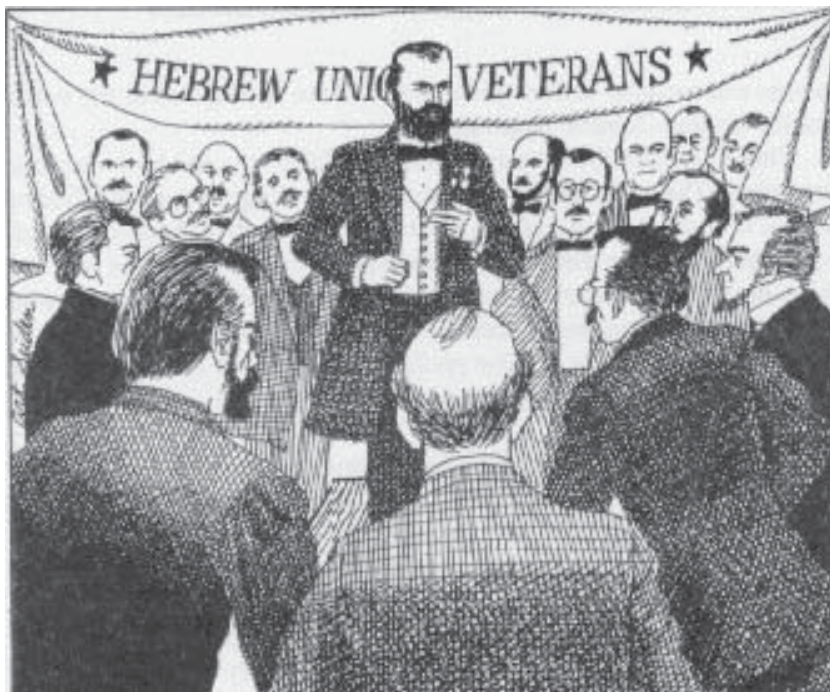
Henry Heller was in a party of four under heavy fire in the

Battle of Chancellorsville. They voluntarily crossed the enemy lines to capture and bring back to the Union lines a wounded Confederate officer from whom valuable information was obtained concerning the battle. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Isaac Gause was awarded the Medal of Honor for capturing the colors of the Confederate Army's 8<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry in hand-to-hand combat.

David Orbansky (Urbansky) received the Medal of Honor for exceptional gallantry and heroism in many actions which included the Battles of Shiloh and Vicksburg.

Abraham Cohn received the Medal of Honor for heroism in two battles. At the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6, 1864, he rallied and reformed the disorganized



***Born out of anti-Semitism, the Jewish War Veterans is formed.***

fleeing Union troops from several regiments and established a new defense line that held.

At the Battle of Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1864, he bravely carried orders to the advanced Union line while under severe fire from Confederate troops.

Simon Suhler enlisted in the Army many times under different names. He used the name Charles Gardner when he enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, on October 15, 1866, in California. His outfit was sent to fight the Apaches in Arizona. His bravery earned him the Medal of Honor, and his citation commends him "...for his bravery, in scouts and action."

Suhler was born in Bavaria in 1844 and came to America in 1866. His brother, Aaron, was the first Reform Rabbi of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Waco, Texas.

George Geiger was a sergeant in Company H, 7<sup>th</sup> United States Cavalry. A very fierce battle took place between the Indians and his cavalry unit on June 25, 1876, at the Little Big Horn River, in Montana. He received the Medal of Honor for bravery in defending a much needed water hole with three other cavalry men.

When the U.S. Battleship ***Maine*** was sunk by an explosion on February 15, 1898, in Havana Harbor, Cuba, 15 Jewish sailors were killed. The executive officer of the ***Maine***, and later a vice admiral in the United States Navy, was Adolph Marix, a Jew.

Marix was chairman of the board of inquiry to investigate the mysterious sinking of the *Maine*. The findings indicated that the Spaniards, who ruled Cuba, had placed floating bombs in the bay.

The United States declared war on Spain on April 21, 1898. There were 30 Jewish officers in the Army and 20 in the Navy. About 5,000 Jews served in this war. When the Jewish High Holy Days were approaching in 1898, there were 4,000 requests for furloughs to attend services.

Colonel Teddy Roosevelt commanded the Rough Riders during the Spanish American War. The first Rough Rider killed was a 16-year-old boy, Jacob Wilbusky. Col. Roosevelt promoted five men in his command for bravery; one of them was a Jew.

Sgt. Maurice Joost of the First California Volunteers, which had more than 100 Jews, was the first man to be killed in the attack on Manila. There were 280,000 American soldiers in this war, which was four-tenths of 1 percent of the population, Jewish soldiers were one-half of 1 percent of the American Jewish population;

therefore Jews served in greater proportion than did the remainder of the nation's citizens.

In 1915, Samuel Marguiles enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps using the name of Samuel Gross. He was serving aboard the ***U.S.S. Connecticut*** when it was sent to Haiti to protect American lives and property because of the turmoil and the Caco bandits.

Gross and the other Marines attacked Fort Riviere, an old French fort, to cut off the avenues of retreat for the Caco bandits. There was a breach in the wall, which was the only entrance into the fort. Gross was the second man to pass through the breach in face of constant fire from the bandits.

After ten minutes of fierce fighting, the Caco bandits were defeated. Samuel Gross was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery.

In World War I, there were more than 250,000 Jews who answered America's call to action: over 3,500 were killed; over 12,000

were wounded; and they received over 1,100 decorations for bravery.

Benjamin Kaufman responded to America's call to arms and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. While serving in an advance detail in the Argonne on October 4, 1918, Kaufman and his men came under heavy fire from a German machine gun.



***Sgt. Benjamin Kaufman charges a German machine gun nest.***



Two of his men were wounded, and Kaufman realized that he had to silence the machine gun.

As he moved toward the machine gun, he was hit by a bullet in the right arm. With his shattered arm bleeding and hanging limp, he advanced on the enemy. He used his left arm to lob hand grenades into the German machine gun nest. He silenced the machine gun and captured a German soldier.

For his bravery, Kaufman was awarded the Medal of Honor and received awards from nine foreign governments. After the war, he joined the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. and served as national commander in 1941-42 and thereafter as its National Executive Director.



***Sgt. William Sawelson brings water to a wounded man.***

Sergeant William Sawelson was born in Newark, N.J., and entered the Army, serving in Company M, 312<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 78<sup>th</sup> Division. It was in Grand Pre, France, on October 26, 1918, that Sawelson heard a wounded man in a shell hole cry out for water.

Sawelson left his protective shelter to crawl through heavy machine gun fire to bring him a canteen of water. He returned safely to his shell hole to obtain more water. He was returning to the wounded man when he was killed by machine gun

bullets. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery.

The third Jewish soldier to receive the Medal of Honor in World War I was First Sergeant Sydney G. Gumpertz. It was on September 29, 1918, at Bois de Forges, that he displayed his heroism.

His outfit was advancing against the Germans when it was held up by machine gun fire. An American heavy artillery barrage failed to destroy the machine gun nest. Using the barrage as a cover, Gumpertz and two men went out to silence the enemy position.

The artillery shells killed the two men with Gumpertz. Alone, he zigzagged

through the enemy bullets until he reached the machine gun nest. He jumped into the nest and captured nine German soldiers. For his bravery, Sydney G. Gumpertz was awarded the Medal of Honor.

One of the great stories in World War I was that of the “Lost Battalion” of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division and



***Maj. Gen. Milton J. Foreman***

how Private Abraham Krotoshinsky, a Jew, saved the day. It was on November 2, 1918, in the Argonne Forrest, that his battalion found itself in trouble.

His commander, Col. Whittlesey, had led the battalion into the forest to clear it of German machine gun nests. The Germans pulled back and then encircled them. Private Krotoshinsky and another soldier were sent out to make contact with their

division. As soon as they started out, the other soldier was killed. Krotoshinsky slowly made his way through the German lines and reached his division, which moved forward to save the “Lost Battalion.”

Major General Milton J. Foreman, of the Illinois National Guard, received the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery while serving as a colonel in France. When his unit came under heavy German artillery and machine gun fire, he crept through the German gunfire laying out telephone wire so that he could tell his artillery where the enemy had gun positions. Through Foreman’s information, the American artillery was able to destroy them.

General Foreman was one of the organizers of the American Legion, and he was chairman of its executive committee at the Paris Caucus. During the American Legion’s third national convention in 1921, he was designated as a past national commander by resolution.

The finest tribute paid to the Jewish fighting men in World War I was given by General John J. Pershing: “When the time came to serve their country under arms, no class of people served with more patriotism or with higher motives than the young Jews who volunteered or were drafted and went overseas with our other young Americans to fight the enemy.”

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan and Germany. Over 550,000 Jewish men and women responded to America’s call for the Armed Forces in World War II. About 11,000 were killed; over 40,000 were wounded.

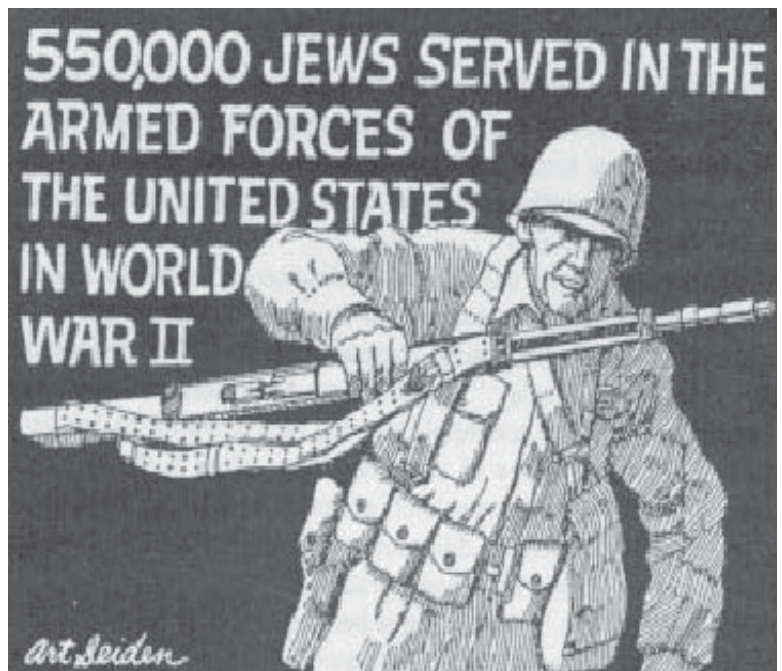
There were three recipients of the Medal of Honor; 157 received the Distin-

guished Service Medals and Crosses, which included Navy Crosses, and over 1,600 were awarded the Silver Star. Over 52,000 other decorations, citations and awards were given to Jewish heroes.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt praised the fighting abilities and service of Jewish men and women.

General Douglas MacArthur in one of his speeches said, "I am proud to join in saluting the memory of fallen American heroes of Jewish faith."

At the 50<sup>th</sup> National Memorial service conducted by the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, General A. Vandergrift, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, said, "Americans of the Jewish faith in the Marine Corps have served with distinction throughout the prosecution of this war. During the past year, many Jewish fighting men in our Armed Forces have given their lives in the cause of freedom. With profound sympathy and respect, I join you in paying homage to them at this memorial service."



General Mark W. Clark, Commander of the Army, said, "Thousands of Americans of Jewish faith are serving under my command, carrying their share of the burden in battle in Italy. Many of them have been killed in the service of their country."

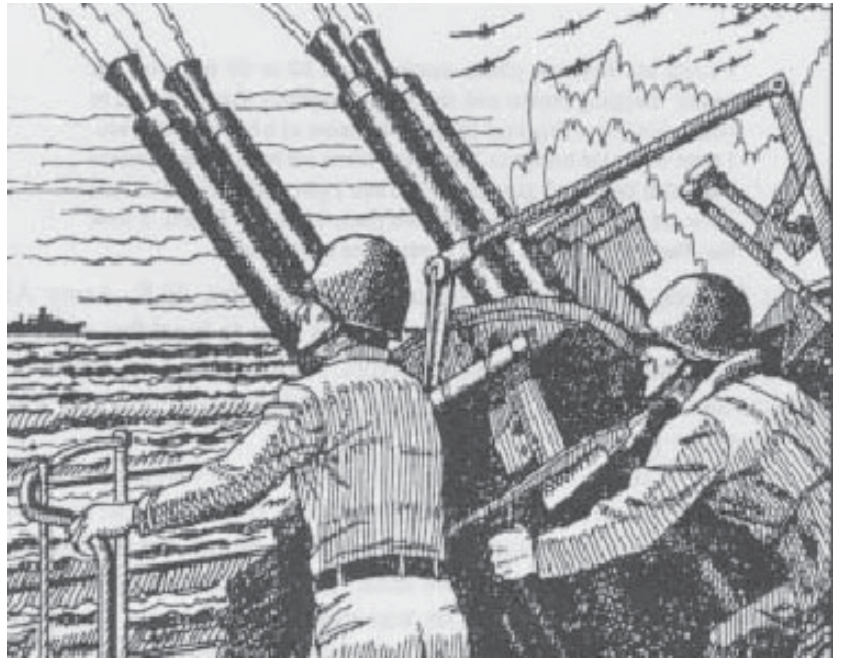
To American soldiers of the Jewish faith go my most sincere thanks for their

faithfulness, diligence and bravery in battle. To those who have passed on must go a nation's gratitude."

The role of the Jews in the Navy was best expressed by Admiral Harold R. Stark, Commander, United States Navy in Europe, "The officers and men in the United States Naval Forces in Europe, join to honor those gallant Americans of the Jewish faith who, during the past year, have laid down their lives for their country...We mourn them as brothers—brothers who cannot be with us to share this European triumph toward which they gave their lives."

The comments made, extolling the sacrifices and bravery of Jewish men and women by the military leadership of the United States in World War II, were based on their exploits in the field.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on that Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, Jewish men stationed there quickly responded to repulse the enemy.



*Ensign Moldane and Ensign Asher on the destroyer Blue fighting their way to the open sea.*

Ensign Moldane and Ensign Asher, both Jewish, were having breakfast when they were informed of the Japanese attack. Their orders were to take their destroyer, named **Blue**, out to sea. Ensign Asher directed the crew in taking the **Blue** out to sea. Ensign Moldane took charge of the forward machine guns and saw the

**Battleship Arizona** take a direct hit and sink. He describes what he saw as the **Blue** battled its way out to sea:

“I could see Japanese planes coming about 30 to 40 feet over our heads, dropping bombs and shooting at anything that happened to come along. Our ship kept firing at the planes as it headed out to sea. I went to the bridge to help Asher when we both saw a Japanese plane, that the **Blue's** guns had hit, go into a pineapple field. The men gave out a cheer when they saw the plane burst into flames. It took the **Blue** one and a half hours to reach the open sea.”

Private Louis Schleifer was at Hickam Field when he saw the Japanese planes dropping bombs and strafing American planes. He went outside to help get the



**Paratrooper Sgt. Isadore S. Jachman**

planes into hangars when he saw a Japanese plane heading toward him. He drew out his revolver and kept firing at the plane until he was mortally wounded.

There is a memorial fountain for Private Louis Schleifer in the garden of Temple Beth Shalom, Livingston, New Jersey. Every

year on December 7, the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association holds services at the fountain.

Lee Goldfarb, of Jersey City, New Jersey, was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class radioman on the **U.S.S. Oglala**. He was preparing to get some sleep when he heard sounds of

planes. He looked out the porthole and saw the Japanese planes attacking the seven ships tied up at Ford Island. He was at his battle station when his ship was struck by a torpedo and sank.

Many Jewish men fought and died at Pearl Harbor. The heroism that they displayed has been recorded in the military records of our country.

There were three Jewish recipients of the Medal of Honor in World War II. Second Lieutenant Raymond Zussman was a tank officer in France. It was in a street-fighting battle at the Village of Noroy-le-Bourg, in the Rhone Valley, that he displayed his heroism. His tank became disabled and he took a carbine and on foot proceeded in front of another tank and guided it through the village streets. He fired his carbine and killed 19 enemy soldiers, took 93 prisoners and captured two anti-tank guns, a flak gun and two trucks.

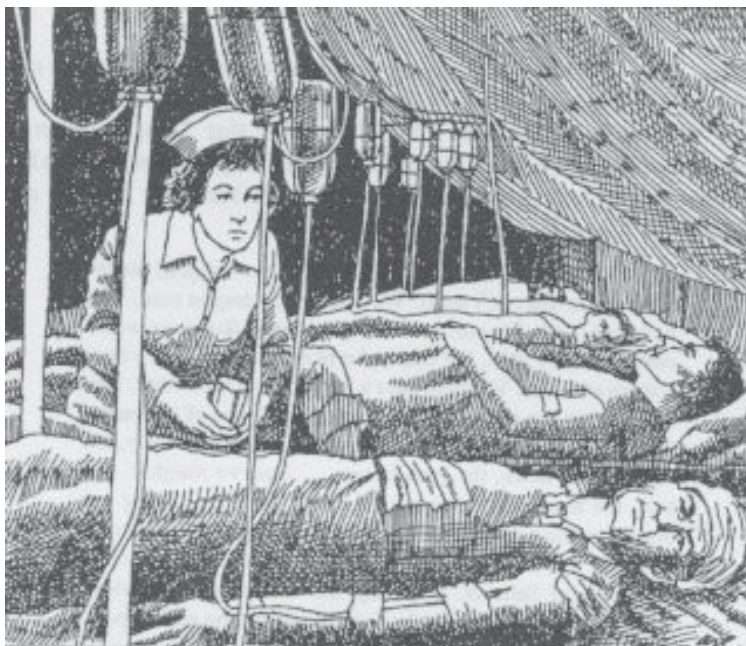
Zussman guided the tank through German-made booby traps and directed its fire to destroy an enemy machine gun position. When his carbine ran out of ammunition, he picked up a Tommy gun to use. Fearing a trap at an intersection, Zussman went in alone to look for the enemy. When the tank rounded the corner of the intersection, he had 30 prisoners and two anti-tank guns that they were using. Zussman was killed a few days after the engagement which earned him the Medal of Honor.

Sgt. Isadore S. Jachman had come from Germany when he was two years old. After Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Army. He was a paratrooper who saved his company from annihilation at Flamierge, Belgium. Here on January, 4, 1945, there was a fierce and bitter battle. Jachman, without regard for his personal safety,

pushed through the enemy's wall of concentrated fire and single-handedly saved the day.

He received the Medal of Honor posthumously. The citation read:

“Sergeant Jachman, Company B, 513<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, above and beyond the call of duty at Flamierge, Belgium, on the fourth of January, 1945. When his company was pinned down by enemy artillery, mortar, small arms fire and two hostile tanks



***Lieutenant Frances Slanger taking care of the wounded.***

that attacked the unit, inflicting heavy casualties. Sergeant Jachman seeing the desperate plight of his comrades, left his place of cover, with total disregard for his own safety, dashed across open ground, through a hail of fire and seizing a bazooka from a fallen comrade, advanced on the tanks, which concentrated their fire on him. Firing his

weapon, he damaged one and forced both of them to retire. Sergeant Jachman's heroic action, in which he suffered fatal wounds, disrupted the enemy attack, reflecting the highest credit upon himself and the Parachute Infantry.”

Captain Ben L. Salomon was a dentist in the Army in World War II. He was in the Marianas Islands on July 7, 1944, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 105<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 27<sup>th</sup> Division. The Regiment's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions were attacked by an overwhelming force estimated between 3,000 to 5,000 Japanese soldiers.



They penetrated the American lines and inflicted heavy casualties. Captain Salomon's aid station had about 40 wounded. He saw a Japanese soldier bayonet a wounded soldier. Firing from a squatting position, he killed the enemy soldier. He turned to take care of the wounded when two more Japanese soldiers appeared at the entrance of the tent. As he killed them, four more crawled under the tent walls. Rushing them, Captain Salomon kicked the knife out of the hand of one, shot another, bayoneted another and butted another in the stomach. A wounded comrade shot and killed the butted Japanese soldier.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, Captain Salomon ordered the wounded to make their way back as best as

they could. He grabbed a rifle from one of the wounded and rushed out of the tent to confront the enemy. He found four dead American soldiers slumped over their machine gun. He took control of the machine gun and started firing it. The next morning, he was found dead over the



***Paratrooper Sergeant Charles Feuereisen  
talking to General MacArthur.***

machine gun with 98 Japanese dead in front of his position. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously after 50 years because it was thought that medical people couldn't get this award. It was realized recently that a medical person could get this award if he is defending a position.

Thousands of Jewish women entered the military in World War II. They were in all of the branches of the Armed Forces. The National Museum of American Jewish Military History has an exhibit of over 200 Jewish women who enlisted to serve in our country's Armed Forces. One of them was Lt. Frances Slinger, an Army nurse.

Slinger was short and petite and was one of the first nurses to land in France, wading ashore with the hospital platoon. She had to hold on the backpack straps of a GI in front of her to keep from being swept under by the high waves of the ocean. When she landed, she started taking care of the wounded on the beach. She felt so proud of the GIs that she wrote a letter to Stars & Stripes extolling their heroism.

That evening, a German shell landed near her and four other nurses. As she lay dying, she wanted them to take care of the other wounded nurses. She was buried in a military cemetery in France, next to the GIs that she admired. Years later, she was taken from her burial site to a Jewish cemetery outside of Boston.

Jewish women veterans returning after the war honored her by forming the JWV Frances Slinger Memorial Post, a post which has only women veterans as members.

Charles Feuereisen was with the 511<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Division and rose through the ranks to become a sergeant. He made 39 jumps in combating the enemy. On one of his jumps in Leyte, Philippines, his outfit found maps of a California invasion in a dead Japanese officer's briefcase. Feuereisen and P.F.C. Ralph Merisiecki were assigned to take it to their headquarters near Buraueng.

They delivered the documents and proceeded to Tacioban for an airlift to their base. General Douglas MacArthur had his headquarters here. Feuereisen decided

that they should go to where MacArthur had his office and possibly get to speak to him.

They went through a maze of officers and reporters and finally they met Lt. Col. Roger O. Egeburg, the supreme commander's personal physician and aide, and explained why they were here.

Before long, General MacArthur appeared and warmly greeted them with a smile and a handshake. He took them into his private office to talk about the military actions of his parachute group. Feuereisen was very pleased to find out how much information General MacArthur knew about his outfit.

On April 6, 1945, he led a patrol to find the enemy. A landmine killed the lead man, and Feuereisen was shot in the back by a sniper. He was paralyzed for nine months before returning to good health.

Feuereisen's bravery earned him the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and the Asiatic-Pacific Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters.

At the JWV convention in August, 1968, Charles Feuereisen was elected to be the National Commander.

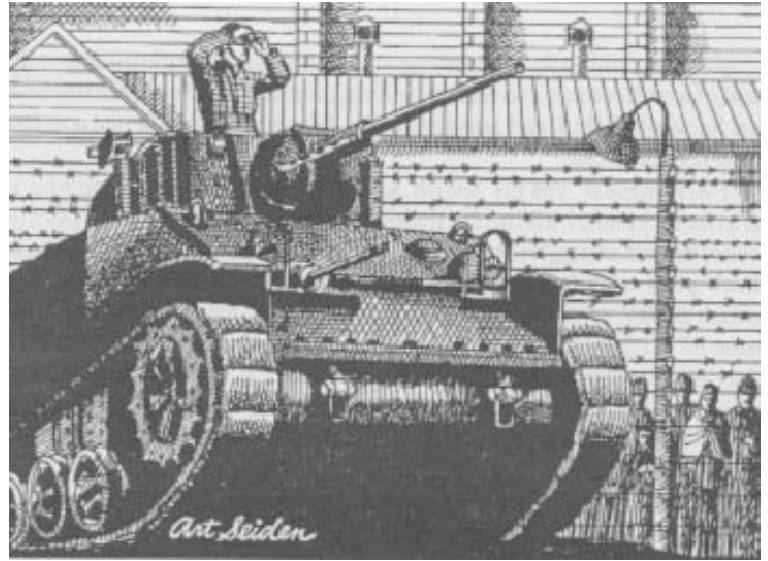
David "Mickey" Marcus is a hero who fought for the two countries he loved, America and Israel. He graduated from West Point in 1924. When World War II



***General Maurice Rose receives an award for bravery from a French General.***

erupted, Marcus went back into the Army with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He was appointed a divisional judge advocate and later a division commander. When the Allies decided to invade Normandy, Marcus volunteered to join the D-Day airborne assault. With no previous training, he joined the paratroopers and parachuted into Normandy.

In 1945, Marcus joined General Lucius D. Clay's staff to help oversee a military government in Germany after the Nazi's defeat. Marcus was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Bronze Star and British decorations.



**Colonel David "Mickey" Marcus**

He couldn't forget entering the Dachau concentration camp, at the head of a tank column, seeing the living and the dead Jews. He resolved that he would help Israel survive so that Jews would have a place to live there if they chose.

When he retired as a colonel, the Hagganah contacted him and asked him to build up their fledgling army. He accepted the offer and they gave him the rank of alluf (brigadier general). While inspecting the Israeli security lines, he was accidentally shot and killed, being mistaken for the enemy. He was buried in the West Point Cemetery with full military honors.

General Maurice Rose was a hero of World War I and World War II. He was a second lieutenant in the American Expeditionary Force that fought the Germans on French soil in World War I. When the war was over, he decided to make the Army his profession.

In World War II, he served as chief of staff of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division and was promoted to brigadier general, in 1943. His division was shipped to Africa, and Rose was involved in many tank battles with the Germans. He negotiated the unconditional surrender of the Germans in Tunisia. He was given the command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division in Europe. In 1944, he was promoted to major general.



***Jews who fought in World War II and Korea.***

He led his tanks in combat against the Germans through France, Belgium and into Germany. There was a fierce battle where General Maurice Rose was killed.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart. The French Army bestowed upon him the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre.

General Rose's 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division had many singular feats: It was the first

division to cross the German border; the first to breach the Siegfried line; the first to shoot down an enemy plane on German soil; and the first to fire an artillery shell into German soil.

General Rose was the son of Rabbi and Mrs. Samuel Rose and was born in



***Tibor Rubin, Korean War Hero.***

Connecticut in 1899. He was buried with military honors in 1945.

Many Jewish veterans of World War II didn't rest on their laurels for long. They rejoined the American Armed

Forces to fight in the Korean War. One of these men was Major Melvin Garten.

Garten was a highly decorated hero of World War II. He had been awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, a Presidential Unit Citation and the Purple Heart with three Oak Leaf Clusters for having been wounded four times in battle.

Garten was the captain of K Company, 312 Infantry Regiment, U. S. Army, when he was hailed for extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy. This action took place on October 30, 1952 near Surang-Ni, Korea. He observed that companies F and G were pinned down by withering fire on a dominant hill.

He voluntarily proceeded alone up the rugged slope to help them. When he reached the besieged troops, he found that the key personnel had been wounded, and the men were without a commander.

He took command of the remaining troops. He assigned men to the machine guns and distributed hand grenades. Garten led these troops in attacking the enemy positions and routed them.

Garten was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The end of his citation sums up his heroism: "Major Garten's inspirational leadership, unflinching courage under fire and valorous actions reflect the highest credit upon himself and are in keeping with the cherished tradition of the military service."

Tibor Rubin's bravery during the Korean War is probably unparalleled in the history of America's fighting heroes. He was an Hungarian Holocaust survivor. He

lost his parents in a Nazi concentration camp, and he managed to stay alive until he was liberated.

He came to United States and enlisted in the Army to fight in Korea. While in Korea, he broke his leg and was shipped to an Army hospital in Japan. With his leg not completely healed, he returned to his unit in Korea.

On November 1, 1950, he received shrapnel wounds in his left hand and chest. He was captured by the Chinese and, along with other American prisoners of war, was marched to a fortified camp where they were confined.

Rubin, who had learned to survive in a Nazi concentration camp, applied his experience to sneak out during the night to steal food from the Chinese. He would give this food to the other prisoners, especially the sick and dying. Every time he went out for food, Rubin was risking his life. He felt that this was his way at getting back at the enemy as they were short on food themselves.



**Colonel Jack Jacobs**

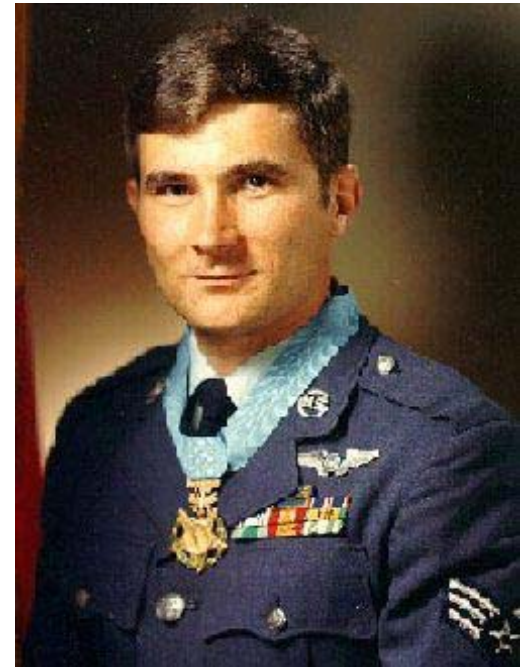
Rubin was a prisoner of war for two and one-half years. His fellow prisoners credit him with saving 35 to 40 lives during his daring, almost nightly ventures of stealing food for his comrades.

Many organizations have campaigned to have Tibor Rubin receive the Medal of Honor.

Congress passed legislation to have the military review the records of 35 Jew-

ish recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross to see if anti-Semitism was responsible for many of them not being awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor. The Korean War is the only major conflict that didn't have a single Jewish recipient of the Medal of Honor. Was anti-Semitism responsible?

Vice Admiral Hyman George Rickover took the Navy into the atomic age with his persistence that U.S. Navy build the first atomic-powered submarine. In 1946, he was assigned to Oak Ridge, the site of the development of the atomic bomb. He also visited other nuclear research centers and became convinced that ships could be powered by nuclear energy. Almost alone in his belief, he finally convinced the Navy to begin to develop a nuclear submarine in 1947.



**Sergeant John L. Levitow**

The ***Nautilus*** was launched in January, 1954, and became the first atomic-powered submarine.

Admiral Hyman George Rickover is considered to be the father of the atomic-powered Navy.

The Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s was long and protracted. The heroism and casualties of the Jewish combatants reflected their participation in this war.

There were two Jewish recipients of the Medal Honor in the Vietnam War: Col. Jack Jacobs, U.S. Army, and Sergeant John L. Levitow, U.S. Air Force.

Colonel Jack Jacobs received the Medal of Honor in 1969 for saving the lives of 12 soldiers and stopping an ambush of his unit in Vietnam. On March 9, 1968, in the Province of Kien Phong, in the Republic of Vietnam, Jacobs' actions in combat



were beyond the call of duty and at the risk of his life. His citation is as follows:

“His gallant actions and extraordinary heroism saved the lives of one U.S. adviser and 13 allied soldiers. Through his efforts, the allied company was restored to an effective fighting unit and prevented defeat of the friendly forces by a strong and determined enemy. Jacobs by his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action, has reflected great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.”

Sergeant John L. Levitow, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Operations Squadron, received the Medal of Honor and the citation reflects his heroism:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty, Sergeant John L. Levitow (then Airman First Class), U.S. Air Force, distinguished himself by exceptional heroism on February 24, 1969, while assigned as a loadmaster aboard a AC-47 aircraft flying a night mission.”



***Astronaut Judy Resnik.***

In the National Museum of American Military History, in Washington, DC, there is an exhibit that makes a comparative examination of three Jewish heroes of the Vietnam War.

Corporal Roger Steven Briskin was in the Marine Corps and was in the thick of battle in the Da Nang Quong Nam Province, Vietnam, with the enemy. While attempting to rescue a wounded Marine, Briskin was killed by Mortar fragments. He received many medals for his bravery.

Captain Fred Zedeck in the 388<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, U.S. Air Force flew 165 missions and logged more than 450 combat hours. His decorations included the Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with ten Oak Leaf Clusters. He retired from the Air Force as a colonel.

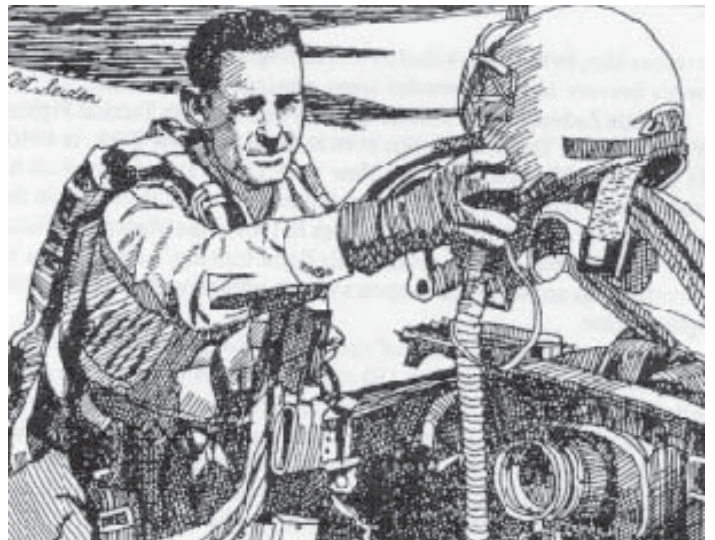
Lieutenant Joseph Ira Goldstein was in the U.S. Navy Squadron VF154. He was in Vietnam and flew 110 combat missions. He received the Navy Unit Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross and five air medals.

Brisken, Zedeck and Goldstein are three of the many thousands of Jews who fought for our country in the Vietnam War. Some were killed; some were wounded; some brought back with them the mental scars of combat. Again, as in America's past wars, Jews responded to their country's call for fighting men.

Judith A. Resnik was the second Jewish woman to die for our country and the second woman astronaut to ride in space. She once said, "I think that something is only dangerous if you are not prepared for it, or if you don't have control over it, or if you can't think through how to get yourself out of a problem."

On her first trip into space, Resnik was a mission specialist on the maiden voyage of the space ship *Discovery*. She radioed back to NASA that "the Earth looks great." Part of her job on the mission was pointing a camera on the craft's robotic long arm to inspect initial efforts to shake a chunk of ice off the craft's side.

Resnik was born on April 5, 1949, in Akron, Ohio. She received a



***Vietnam Hero***

Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from Carnegie-Mellon University of Pittsburgh in 1970, and a Doctorate of Engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park, 1977.

On January 28, 1986, millions of people saw Resnik on television as she strutted aboard the **Challenger** wearing a smile and waving her hand. She was joined by six other astronauts. The **Challenger** was launched from Kennedy Space Center at 11:38 a.m. Resnik and the crew were killed at 11:39 a.m. when the **Challenger** exploded, seconds after it was launched.

Judith Resnik will live in the legacy of Jewish women and men who contributed to our country, many of whom died doing so.

For 350 years in America, Jews have given of themselves to protect and fight for our country. Over one million Jews have served in our military from colonial times to the present. Jews have always had a higher percentage in the military than their percentage of the total population. They have been in every major skirmish, battle, war and expeditionary force action.

In defending our country, many Jews have been killed and wounded. Today, our Jewish men and women are in the military fighting terrorism and tyranny.

They are giving up the best years of their lives to defend and to preserve our cherished democracy and freedom. Many Jews went beyond the call of duty to become heroes. They have never shirked their responsibilities when serving in the military—in war and in peace.

Our Jewish men and women in our country's military are giving up their "today" so that our children and grandchildren will have their "tomorrow" in our land of freedom and democracy.

# Epilogue

Two developments related to the Civil War, the establishment of Jewish chaplains in the chaplains corps and the founding of the precursor organization to the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, had very positive consequences for Jewish service in the American military.

The Civil War brought a change in the Army's Chaplain Corps. Prior to that time, a person had to be an ordained Christian minister to become an Army chaplain. In 1861, a Congressional bill to allow ordained rabbis to be commissioned as chaplains was defeated. On July 17, 1862, the wording of the law was changed to read "an ordained minister" instead of "an ordained Christian minister." This was the beginning of an historic and notable tradition of rabbis serving in our country's Armed Forces as chaplains.

In World War I, Chaplain Captain Elkan Voorsanger was called "The Fighting Rabbi" by the New York Times. When the troops came out of the trenches to fight the enemy, he would go out with them. He never carried a rifle, and all he had to offer the wounded and the dying was a prayer and solace.

The Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) was created in World War I to recruit and train rabbis for military service. They provided support materials to these newly commissioned chaplains. They also supplied the necessary materials to the troops for the Jewish holidays.

In World War II, Chaplain Rabbi Alexander Goode gave his life when the Army troopship carrier, ***U.S.A.T. Dorchester***, was sunk off the coast of Greenland. He and three Christian chaplains gave up their life jackets to four soldiers who were without them. They all stood together and said their prayers as the ship sank.

Women rabbis have also become a part of the military Chaplains Corps. Chaplain

(LTC) Bonnie Koppell and Chaplain (CPT) Chana Timoner, through their military service, have paved the way for other women rabbis to become a part of the Chaplains Corps.

Today our Jewish chaplains, men and women, are carrying on this tradition in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti and other dangerous areas.

The second development arising from the Civil War era was the establishment of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA. In the 1890s, Mark Twain and other noted writers wrote that Jews did not fight in the Civil War. Their anti-Semitism blinded them to the truth. Mark Twain later recanted his error and commended Jewish Service. On March 15, 1896, seventy-eight Jewish veterans of the Civil War met in New York City and formed the Hebrew Union Veterans Association, the precursor organization to the Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV).

The Jewish Veterans pledged to maintain a true allegiance to the United States; to combat anti-Semitism and bigotry wherever it originated and whatever the target; to uphold the fair name of the Jew and to fight his battles wherever unjustly assailed; to assist such comrades and their families as might stand in need of help; to gather and preserve the records of patriotic service performed by men of the Jewish faith; and to honor the memories and shield from neglect the graves of heroic Jewish veterans.

Since then, these principles have been expanded to include benefits for all veterans, support for Israel, Boy Scouts and Eagles, college scholarships, sending packages to our Jewish men and women in the military service and working with the community for common goals and causes.

Some of the major accomplishments of the JWV have occurred when it organized a boycott of German goods (1933); effectively campaigned for the G.I. Bill (1944); had a successful drive to supply blood for our soldiers during the Korean War (1951). It was the

only national veterans' organization that joined with Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in his historic march on Washington (1963) and spearheaded a drive against President Ronald Reagan's visit to Bitburg (1985) honoring the graves of SS soldiers who murdered American troops.

The JWV is the "patriotic voice of American Jewry;" it is the oldest active veterans' organization in the country, and it is the only active Jewish organization with a Congressional Charter.

JWV interacts with other Jewish veterans throughout the world when they meet biennially in Israel. JWV sponsors a yearly allied mission to Israel and invites the leaders of the other American veterans' organizations to join them as their guests.

JWV is a proud sponsor of the National Museum of American Jewish Military History (NMAJMH) in Washington, DC. It is the only Congressionally accredited veterans' museum in the country. The NMAJMH contains Jewish veterans' memorabilia, artifacts, records and many exhibits, from colonial times to the present. Many national Jewish museums have borrowed materials from the museum for their exhibits.

A few of the many exhibits the NMAJMH has are: Salute to American Jewish Chaplains; The Hall of Heroes; GIs Remember: Liberating the Concentration Camps; Major General Klein: His Life and Work; Candid in the Military Moments; A Mother's Grief; Perspectives on Patriotism; Rescue and Renewal; Commandore Uriah P. Levy, An American, A Sailor and A Jew; and Women in the Military: A Jewish Perspective.

The headquarters of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and the National Museum of American Jewish Military History are located at 1811 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

# *Addenda*

When one is close to an impressionistic painting, one sees only dabs of color.

When one stands back and looks at the entire painting, one sees a beautiful picture.

This exhibit is like an impressionistic picture in that it reflects the sacrifices, contributions and heroism of Jewish men and women in our country's military, from colonial times to today. When you are finished reading it, and reflect on what you have read, the conclusion is that Jewish men and women have unselfishly and valiantly given of themselves in fighting for and defending our country.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA is the living patriotic voice of our Jewish veterans and Jews in today's military.

The National Museum of American Jewish Military History is the caretaker and exhibitor of the records and tradition of Jewish men and women, who served and are serving, in our country's military.

We, as Jews, can stand tall and proud of our accomplishments as veterans of past service and as current participants in our country's Armed Forces.

May G-D bless America!



# ***Acknowledgements***

Molly Fraiberg Judaica Collections

Wimberly Library

Florida Atlantic University

Boca Raton, Florida

“Jewish Heroes of America”

“Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America”

Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

National Museum of American Jewish Military History





**Seymour "Sy" Brody**, of Delray Beach, FL, is the author of "Jewish Heroes of America", 1991 and 1996; "Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America" 1996, "Jewish Heroes and Heroines of America, Revised", 2004. He is the editor of "The Jewish Veteran", the official publication of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA. He has four exhibits on Jewish heroes and heroines of America on the web site of the Molly Fraiberg Judaica Collections of Florida Atlantic University. The 172 articles and illustrations have been individually visited over a million times from all over the world.

Brody has an ongoing yearly Florida lecture series for the JWW and the NMAJMH which attracts over 1,000 people. He is a columnist whose articles have appeared in the Jewish and non-Jewish press throughout the country. He is a board member of the JWW National Executive Board and the NMAJMH Board of Directors. He is a retired educator and a past commander of the JWW Department of New Jersey. Brody was a U.S. Marine in WWII and was in the Defense of Guadalcanal, invasions of Bougainville and Guam.

**Art Seiden**, of Woodmere, NY, was a professional illustrator with over 500 books to his credit. He was a highly respected artist. He passed away in July, 2004.

# **Websites for More Information on Jews in America's Military**

**Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History**  
<http://www.celebrate350.org/>

**Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America**  
<http://www.jwv.org>

**National Museum of American Jewish Military History**  
<http://www.nmajmh.org>

**Molly S. Fraiberg Judaica Web Site Collections.**  
**Wimberly Library, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL:**  
<http://www.fau.edu/library/depts/judaica9.htm>

**American Jewish Heroes and Heroines from Colonial Times to 1900**  
<http://www.fau.edu/library/brodytoc.htm>

**American Jewish Heroes and Heroines from 1900 to WW II**  
<http://www.fau.edu/library/bro2toc.htm>

**American Jewish Heroes and Heroines from WW II to the Present**  
<http://www.fau.edu/library/bro3toc.htm>

**Jewish Recipients of the Medal of Honor**  
<http://www.fau.edu/library/cmoh.htm>

**B'nai B'rith**  
<http://bnaibrith.org/>

**American Jewish Committee**  
<http://www.ajc.org/>

**American Jewish Congress**  
<http://www.ajcongress.org/>

**American Jewish Historical Society**  
<http://www.ajhs.org/>

**The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education**  
<http://www.caje.org/>

**The Council of American Jewish Museums**  
<http://www.jewishculture.org/museums/museums.html>

**Hadassah**  
<http://www.hadassah.org/home.asp?flashEnabled=yes>

**Jewish Publication Society**  
<http://www.jewishpub.org/>

**Jewish Women's Archive**  
<http://www.jwa.org>

**Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation**  
<http://www.jrf.org/>

**National Council of Jewish Women**  
<http://www.ncjw.org/>

**Na'amat**  
<http://www.naamat.org/>

**The Orthodox Union**  
<http://www.ou.org/>

**Simon Wiesenthal Center**  
<http://www.wiesenthal.com/>

**Skirball Cultural Center**  
<http://www.skirball.com/>

**The Union for Reform Judaism**  
<http://www.urj.org/>

**The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**  
<http://www.uscj.org/index1.html>

**YIVO Institute for Jewish Research**  
<http://www.yivoinstitute.org/>