



# AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL

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

## President's Column

### *Paul Kaye Completes Successful Term as President: His Message*

It has been my pleasure to serve you as president this year. Among the highlights of the year were: the West Point Memorial gathering honoring Mickey Marcus and the other Fallen Volunteers organized by Sidney Rabinovich, the Israel Day Parade led by Dave Gerard, our treasurer, followed by special recognition by the Israeli Consulate in the New York area of our members aboard the Intrepid Museum. In attendance were Consul General Alon Pinkas and Consul for Media and Public Relations Ido Aharoni among other dignitaries. Aliyah Bet members were invited to Washington, D.C. in November as part of the Holocaust Museum's celebration of its tenth anniversary, where recognition of survivors, rescuers and liberators was the theme. Our newly formed speakers bureau was kept busy by Naomi Kantey as she fulfilled requests for speakers all over the country in connection with the re-release of the film "Exodus" as well as for other events.

Without the help of Past President and Executive Director Si Spiegelman, my job would have been very difficult. Through his efforts, including frequent communications all over the world, our organization ran smoothly. He was also responsible for the proper distribution of our new Machal booklet, and for organizing our teleconferenced meetings. His good advice throughout the year was invaluable to me and I want to thank him sincerely.

The diligent work of Ralph Lowenstein in keeping our archives going also needs special recognition. Our treasurer, Dave Gerard, did a great job in keeping our finances in order. Certainly every member has seen the new format of our superb AVI newsletter. Thanks to Past President and Editor Sam Klausner for a job well done. Sam, Si and Ralph worked hard to start a trusteeship to perpetuate our organization by reaching out to our children. This should prove very successful.

At this time, I want to wish Jerry Rosenberg, our incoming president, and Ira Feinberg our Executive Vice President good luck. I stand ready to offer any assistance they may need.

The AVI is a brotherhood/sisterhood, which needs the support and good will of all of its members towards one another. As the New Year begins, let us strive to work towards that goal.

*Paul Kaye*

### *Jerry Rosenberg Assumes AVI Presidency: His Message*

Setting an Agenda for an organization of aging veterans is no easy task. Our membership is declining year by year as our veterans become ill or pass away. To maintain the integrity of the AVI we must fill our ranks with those of our comrades-in-arms who, for one reason or another, did not join our ranks. I know many of our know someone in this category. We need to invite each one of these irreplaceable people.

We had to postpone a planned Las Vegas reunion. This coming year I will ask the Reunion Committee to develop a plan for a reunion that will attract us all.

I wish everyone a Happy Hanukkah and a Good and Healthy New Year.

*Jerry Rosenberg*

**The NEW AVI Board of Directors for 2004 is listed on the following page**

## AVI Board Appoints Trustees to Manage the Organization When the Time Comes

The Executive Board has appointed a committee of Trustees to manage the AVI when the current membership will be no longer able to do so. The Trustees will maintain contact between surviving members, provide information to outside parties on the history of their role in the creation of the State of Israel and accept fiduciary responsibilities for AVI accounts. They will monitor the Machal Archives at the University of Florida. The intent is not for them to continue the organization on a "business as usual" basis but to wind down the activities and, at a time of their choosing, to "turn out the lights." The Trustees are volunteers and have been confirmed by the Board. The following is their charge as agreed by the Board.

### **CHARGE TO THE TRUSTEES**

The AVI Executive Board elects the members of the Trustees Committee of the American Veterans of Israel. Their responsibilities would involve the management of the organization's assets and activities when the AVI leadership is no longer able to do so. The responsibilities of the Trustees would be initiated at a time selected by the Executive Board. This would happen when ANY key management position becomes vacant and cannot be filled from within the organization, i.e., Treasurer, Archivist, Newsletter Editor or Executive Chair. (Presidents and Vice Presidents will serve consistent with the succession plan in effect through year 2008)

The following broad tasks would be the purview of the Trustees:

1. Corresponding with members and responses to incoming mail received at B'nai Zion.
2. Maintain the existing membership (and mailing) databases as appropriate.
3. At their discretion, the Trustees would print and distribute an annual or semi-annual memorandum or Newsletter to surviving members, and other selected recipients, regarding the welfare and disposition of surviving members.

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## National Board

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David Hanovice

Len Shaffron

#### Global Coordination

Zippy Porath

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Naomi Kantey

#### Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

Samuel Z. Klausner

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

#### Archivist

Ralph Lowenstein

[rloewnst@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:rloewnst@jou.ufl.edu)

352 292 3565

#### US Museum Relations

David Gen

#### Membership/Welfare

Lois Sprinzeles (chair)

Sam Alexander

Marvin Lebow

Nat Nadler

Adrian Phillips

### AVI WEBSITE

[www.sas.upenn.edu/~sklausne/aviweb.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~sklausne/aviweb.html)

## AVI Board of Directors for 2004

Incoming President, Jerry Rosenberg has appointed or reappointed the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors

### President, Northamerica

Jerry Rosenberg

(416) 787-7632

### Executive Vice President

Ira Feinberg

(201) 886-1188

### Treasurer

David Gerard

(631) 499-4327

### Chair, Executive Committee

Simon Spiegelman

(212) 685-8548

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#### Canada: Joe Warner

(416) 497-0140

USA- Regions

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(718) 428-2465

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Irving Meltzer

(860) 644-2395

#### Midwest:

Ben H. Steuerman

(773) 935-0802

#### West:

Mitchell Flint

(323) 937-4347

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Sidney Rabinovich

(718) 896-1102

### Speakers Bureau

Naomi Kantey

(201) 489-3809

### Newsletter & Internet:

Samuel Z. Klausner

(215) 473-6034

(215) 473-3998 FAX

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

### Archives

Ralph Lowenstein

[Rlowenstein@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:Rlowenstein@jou.ufl.edu)

(352) 392-6525

(352) 392-6670 FAX

### Planning & Trustees

Art Bernstein

(978) 532-6956

### Activities & Membership

Bill Gelberg

(561) 278-7392

David Hanovice

(201) 224-3551

Bailey Nieder

(206) 722-8197

### Representatives, World

#### Machal

David Baum

Zippy Porath

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Eli Bergman

David Gen

Marvin Libow

Adrian Phillips

Len Shaffron

Eugene Sanjour

Lola Sprinzeles

# Israel Navy's First Warship, the former U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Northland.

A few days after October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1947, when Britain's Royal Navy captured the Hagana ship *Jewish State* (*Medinat Hayehudim*) and her 'cargo' of 2664 Holocaust survivors, she was mothballed and secured to the breakwater in Haifa port. Near her were about 45 other Aliya Bet ships, also captured as they tried to land Jewish refugees on the shores of Palestine in violation of Britain's 1945 Emergency Regulations for Palestine. Until a few hours prior to her capture she had been the *Northland*, the name given to her by the U.S. Coast Guard at her launching in 1927.

Some seven months later, in late April 1948, the nascent Israel Navy began preparing the former *Northland* and two other ex-Aliya Bet ships, *Wedgewood* and *Hagana*, for military service. The latter two began their lives in WW2 as Royal Canadian Navy corvettes named *Beauharnois* and *Norsyd* respectively.

Being in better condition, and idle for less time than the corvettes, the ex-*Northland* was the first to sail again. She left Haifa port on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1948, while the British were still there, and sailed to Tel Aviv to be armed. Commanding her on that historic occasion was Yosef Almog, and her Chief Engineer was Abie Miretsky (later Miron). Both had served on the same ship in her Aliya Bet days.

During her brief voyage to Tel Aviv, she became the Israel Navy Ship *Eilat A-16*. No longer was there the wooden superstructure built on *Northland's* aft deck about 10 months earlier, in Bayonne, France, to maximize her passenger carrying capacity.

While anchored off Tel Aviv, the *Eilat* received four Czech-made *Beza* machine guns, two *Oerlikon Hispano-Suiza* 20mm anti-aircraft guns and several *Sten* sub-machine guns. Thus armed, she began patrolling the new State of Israel's lengthy coastline.

On June 4<sup>th</sup> she encountered three Egyptian Navy ships just as they started shelling Tel Aviv. The trio consisted of a corvette, a converted freighter, and a landing ship whose deck was seen to be crowded with Egyptian soldiers. The corvette opened fire and scored a few hits on the *Eilat*, but caused no casualties and only minimal damage. Finding herself outnumbered and outgunned, the *Eilat* called for air support.

An hour or so later two single-engine Israel Air Force 'bombers' appeared on the scene; a *Beechcraft Bonanza* with under-wing bomb racks, and a *Fairchild F-24* with a box of small bombs in its cabin which were to be heaved out of the airplane manually. One of the bombs dropped by the *Bonanza* was seen to hit an enemy ship, but it caused little apparent damage. As the *Fairchild* began its attack, it was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire. Killed were its pilot, David Shprinzak, and pilot Matitiyahu Sukenik who was acting 'bomb chucker' on the ill-fated mission.

The Egyptian ships abruptly broke off and headed for home, with the news that Israel now had a navy. It was soon learned that the Egyptians had intended to land an infantry unit just south of Tel Aviv to establish a beachhead, with which the main Egyptian army force only 25 miles or so away would try to link up.

A few days after the sea battle, the Israel Navy's first, the former *Wedgewood* sailed out of Haifa port to begin her Israel Navy career as *Hashomer K-18*. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the day after the British departed, she and *Eilat* re-entered Haifa port. Each had a 65mm cannon bolted to her deck. The *Eilat* sailed a few days later, after its main mast was taken down, with a full crew of 89 officers and men.

While lying at anchor off Tel Aviv on July 9<sup>th</sup>, the *Eilat* was strafed by an attacking Egyptian Spitfire whose guns killed Leif Nils Elwing, a non-Jewish volunteer from Sweden, and injured six other crew members. Thus it was that the Israel Navy suffered its first loss of life in combat.

On July 16<sup>th</sup> *Eilat* and *Hashomer* shelled enemy positions at Tira, just south of Haifa, in a combined operation that succeeded in reopening the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway. Deadly gunfire from those positions, on a rise dominating the all-important road, had kept it closed for many weeks.

During the next two days *Eilat* and *Hashomer* shelled Tzur (Tyre), Lebanon, where a unit of Fawzi el Kaukji's 'Liberation Army' was then located. This was the last time ever that the *Eilat* fired her guns in anger.

Too late to participate in those actions was the ex-Aliya Bet ship *Hagana*, which had very recently joined the Israel Navy bearing the same name plus the designation *A-20*.

In late December 1948 the *Eilat* had an air-sea rescue role in Operation *Velveta 2*, in which eleven Spitfires purchased from Czechoslovakia were ferried to Israel. The final leg of the operation entailed a non-stop five-and-a-half hour flight from Yugoslavia, an unprecedented feat for a Spitfire. Since most of their planned flight path was over the sea beyond gliding distance from land, the *Eilat* took up a position a few hundred miles into the Mediterranean on the Spitfires' planned route, and stood ready to pluck from the sea any hapless pilot forced down by a possible emergency. Luckily, the Spitfires reached Israel without mishap - just in time to take part in the last aerial dogfights of the War of Independence.

Through the early 1950s, the *Eilat* served as a training ship for would be naval officers, seamen and engine-room crew. In 1955 she became the mother ship of the Israel Navy's fleet of motor torpedo boats. During the same year she was renamed *Matzpen* (Compass), but retained the designation *A-16*. At the same time, the name *Eilat* was conferred on one of two destroyers pur-

chased from Britain.

During the Sinai campaign of 1956 the former *Northland* acted as the supply ship of the torpedo boats, which carried out various coast guard and intelligence-gathering assignments.

In her final years in the Israel Navy the *Matzpen* spent much time tied up in Haifa port, leaving only to supply her torpedo boats and, at times, for lengthy training voyages that carried her far into the Mediterranean.

In February 1962, *Matzpen* was decommissioned and sold to a scrap firm in Italy for \$50,000. It was exactly the same amount Weston Trading Co., fronting for the Hagana, had paid to acquire her from the U.S. Maritime Commission some 15 years earlier.

Thus ended the three-phased illustrious career of a proud ship that was launched on May 7<sup>th</sup> 1927 at Newport News, Virginia, as the USCGC *Northland* (WPG-49).

Several items that were integral parts of the *Northland* throughout her three lives are on permanent exhibit at the Israel Navy and Clandestine Immigration Museum in Haifa. There one can see her original wheel, her transmitter-receiver radio of WW2 vintage, one of her lifeboats, and the spare propeller that seemed permanently lashed to her aft deck.

The above article is based on the recollections of retired IN Sgan-Aluf (equal to USN Commander) Yosef Almog, on a discussion the author had with Abie Miron prior to his untimely death several years ago, and on literature about the Israel Navy and Clandestine Immigration Museum.

Eddy Kaplansky, Haifa

© October 2003



The Northland

## Machal Archives: Challenge Grant and Bequest

The Shepard Broad Foundation of Miami, Florida, has given the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives a challenge grant of \$20,000, spread over five years, to enable it to complete archival activities over the next five years.

The Broad Foundation will give the archives \$4,000 each January, providing at least that much has been matched by January of each year.

Ralph Lowenstein, archivist, said \$1,000 toward the match has been received from Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Kohn of Sarasota, Florida. Ralph has pledged \$6,000 over the next four years to help meet the Broad Foundation match, and has asked other members of AVI to consider contributions, also.

Ralph is going to foundations and individuals to contribute toward a five-year budget of \$105,000. He feels that with a budget of \$21,000 a year, he can complete all current activities of the archives in five years.

This includes the following activities:

Drawing up an accurate roster of all Americans and Canadians who served on the American-owned Aliyah Bet ships, with each person identified by ship or ships of service, hometown and duty aboard ship. This task is now 95 percent complete, with final rosters having been sent in the last two weeks to selected crew members for verification.

— Drawing up an accurate roster of all Americans and Canadians who served in Machal, with individual unit and duty service verified. Ralph and his undergraduate assistant have now begun this task.

— Collecting questionnaires (some 400 detailed questionnaires are already on file) and photos from surviving members of Aliyah Bet and Machal.

— Sorting and organizing documentary material from members and official papers of former presidents of AVI.

— Organizing photos in individual folders for library storage, and transferring all photos to a data base that will be available on the Internet.

— Transcribing audio tape interviews of veterans, and organizing lists of books, magazine articles and videotapes about the Aliyah Bet and Machal experience.

— Completing the "virtual museum" ([www.israelvets.com](http://www.israelvets.com)) on the Internet that tells the story of Aliyah Bet and Machal, and lists the verified ship and unit rosters, plus histories of Aliyah Bet and Machal.

— Creating an Aliyah Bet and Machal display in cases along two long walls in the new \$7 million Hillel Foundation at the University of Florida, along with an "interactive" museum based on the Aliyah Bet and Machal archives.

— Inputting all information from the questionnaires (52 detailed questions) into a specially-prepared data base.

— Inputting all rosters into a data base.

The University of Florida Libraries has agreed to be the official repository of the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives. All past and current newsletters of AVI are available through the University of Florida Libraries site. All the documentary material being prepared by Ralph will be available to scholars in the Special Collections section of the UF Libraries, and much of the material will be available to scholars and others on the Internet.

Ralph reports that he is receiving inquiries almost every week from throughout the world about Aliyah Bet and Machal from persons interested in this experience or from relatives of members now deceased. In many cases, families know detailed information about a parent only from the detailed questionnaires from AVI members that Ralph has been collecting for 20 years.

Considering the age of veterans - the youngest is 73 years old, and fully one-third are already deceased - the time is very short for completing this important project. The University of Florida is the only official archive, with AVI having so designated it and given the archive its complete support.

All contributions to the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives are fully tax-deductible. Donors will receive an official confirmation of the tax-deductibility of the gift from the University of Florida. Any person interested in contributing to the archives to help meet the Broad Foundation challenge grant, or who has a foundation or individual contact who might be interested in contributing, is urged to contact Ralph at the address below.

In addition, Ralph reports that Mrs. Adelaide E. Ross, a longtime benefactor of the University of Florida, died on August 4, 2003, bequeathing \$22,000 to the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives to establish an endowment for the archives. Income from the endowment - currently about 4 percent a year - will be used to support current activities of the archives and eventually to provide maintenance support in perpetuity for

the archives.

Ralph Lowenstein, archivist, has established a \$20,000 "charitable gift annuity" at the University of Florida annuity for the archives. He and his wife will receive an income from the annuity during their lifetimes. Upon their deaths, the \$20,000 on deposit will be deposited in the endowment fund, raising the endowment to \$42,000.

Ralph encourages members of AVI to consider doing likewise. Such a charitable gift annuity must be established with a minimum of \$5,000. The annuity is deposited into the University of Florida Foundation, a 501c-3 organization. The annuity pays from 6.9% a year to a person 75 years old to 9.2% a year to a person 85 years old, in quarterly installments. From 44% to 53% of the sum contributed is tax deductible, starting in the first year. Obviously, this beats the devil out of a CD. Upon the named annuitants' deaths, the principal will revert to the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives endowment fund.

Any person interested in establishing such a charitable gift annuity or who wants more information about such an annuity should contact Ralph, who will send them detailed information. Ralph can be reached at:

e-mail: [rlowenstein@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:rlowenstein@jou.ufl.edu)

Phone: (352) 392-6525

Ralph Lowenstein

Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives

PO Box 118400

University of Florida

Gainesville, FL 32611

### Machal Fund (Income) Acct. 11482 University of Florida Foundation

<b>Beginning Balance, 6/30/02</b>	<b>\$10,141</b>
<b>Income, 7/1/02-6/30/03:</b>	
Gifts, General	\$ 814
Gifts, AVI transfer to Machal Fund	1,000
Special gifts for Machal Book	<u>8,800</u>
	<b>\$10,614</b>
	<b>\$10,614</b>
<b>Expenditures, 7/1/02-6/30/03</b>	
Undergraduate Assistant	\$ 3,184
Web site development (virtual museum)	2,524
Machal book	7,000
Supplies	588
Printing, postage	838
Miscellaneous	90
UF Foundation accounting	<u>265</u>
	<b>\$14,764</b>
	<b>\$14,764</b>
<b>Ending Balance, 6/30/03</b>	<b>5,991</b>
Reserve, Machal Book	<u>1,800</u>
	<b>\$4,191</b>

Major Expenditures so far in 7/1/03-6/30/04 fiscal year:

File cabinets for archives	\$1,054
Transfer to pay fund for undergrad asst., fall semester	\$2,700



*Monument  
to the  
Ships and  
Crews of  
Aliyah Bet*

## Memorial to Aliya Bet and Ha'apala Dedicated in Tel Aviv

A ceremony dedicating a memorial of *Aliyah Bet* and the *Ha'apala* was held on October 20, 2003 at Gan London, Tel Aviv

The Memorial features two elements in the shape of ship's hulls, lined with metal plates containing photos of various *Aliyah Bet* operations and explanations of activities. Most impressive is the wall of metal plates in the shape of a wave, which list all of the vessels which participated in the effort, and commemorates the 2800 persons lost at sea. Sloping paths and plantings of trees and flowers complete the area and add to the aesthetics of its overall appearance.

About 200 people participated in the dedication ceremony. Sir Ronald Cohen spoke (in Hebrew) about the contribution to the strength of the *yishuv* by the *olim* that the *Aliyah Bet* brought. The Mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Huldai, mentioned the historic significance of the location. Several *Aliyah Bet* ships were run aground in this area and the *olim* came ashore. He also mentioned the volunteers who were part of the crews. Mordechai Roseman, the leader of the *olim* on the *EXODUS* emphasized the determination of the refugees to get to Palestine and start rebuilding their lives. Samek (Shmuel Yanai) the last commander of the *Palyam* (maritime section of the *Palmach*) spoke of the significant role played by the men and women of the *Palyam*.

Sir Ronald Cohen and Lady Sharon Harel Cohen donated the Memorial in memory of his father Michael Cohen. Yossi Harel and Samek were the moving force for the establishment of this memorial.

Gan London was originally dedicated to the courage of London's citizens during the Blitz. In the past years it has been neglected and run down. It is located between the Dan Hotel and the American Embassy, facing the Sea, and includes access from both Hayarkon Street and Herbert Samuel Blvd.

*Dave Baum  
Tel Aviv*

## THE MISSING MACHALNIKS FROM CANADA: IDF MIA INVESTIGATORS SEEK HELP.

The IDF's MIA team trying to determine the fate of missing Toronto cousins Harvey Cohen and Ed Lugech, is making excruciatingly slow progress in one of the most difficult cases ever investigated by the unit. This is primarily due to the difficulty in uncovering meaningful clues after all these years.

From the time the case was reopened several years ago until now, only four people were located who knew, or served with, the cousins before they went missing. Moshe Sadeh, a former *Palmachnik* in Montreal who was in the same unit as Ed and Harvey, responded to a letter in the Canadian Jewish News submitted by the AVI's Sid Rabinovich. A group photo Sadeh provided appeared in the Spring 2001 issue of the AVI Newsletter with my article, which resulted in former *Palmachnik* Ira Feinberg coming forward to provide data about the cousins.

MIA investigators in Israel later tracked down another former *Palmachnik*, Menasheh Elimelech, who for a time served with Ira and the cousins. From him came the accompanying photo, which shows (left to right) Harvey Cohen, Elimelech, Ira Feinberg and Ed Lugech at Filon camp in Rosh Pina.

Their collective input, plus data provided earlier by *Machalnik* Wally Reiter, provides a rough sketch of what may have happened to Harvey and Ed. They arrived in Israel early May 1948, and joined the *Palmach's* Yiftach Brigade. While based at Filon army camp in Rosh Pina, they participated in the battle for Malkiyeh and probably also in other Galilee battles. In early June during the First UN Truce, their unit was transferred to Sarafand for rest and reorganization. It was apparently from there that they went missing.

Evidence to date points to the possibility that Ed and Harvey were among the unidentified victims of an Egyptian air raid on Rishon le Zion, which is close to Sarafand. Another possibility is that they inadvertently went in the wrong direction after leaving camp, and wandered close to a nearby Arab village where they were waylaid and killed by irregulars.

IDF records of the period indicate that North Americans Bernard Kahane, Jack Schacter or Max Robinson may have served or crossed paths with one or both of the cousins prior to their disappearance. Anyone knowing their whereabouts is asked to please contact MIA researcher Yaoz Ribinson, or this writer, at either of the addresses below. Also very welcome would be even the most seemingly insignificant information about Ed or Harvey.

Yaoz Robinson, e-mail: [alonwine@netvision.net.il](mailto:alonwine@netvision.net.il), 2 Ein Gev Street, Givat Ella 23800, Israel.

Eddy Kaplansky, [kaplansk@actcom.com](mailto:kaplansk@actcom.com), 58/83 Hillel Street, Haifa 33728, Israel.

*Eddy Kaplansky, Haifa.*



*L-R: Harvey Cohen, Elimelech, Ira Feinberg and Ed Lugech at Filon camp in Rosh Pina.*

## May the Mala Be Considered an Aliya Bet Ship ?

Some *Machal* veterans have raised the question as to whether the *Mala* may, appropriately, be considered an *aliya bet* ship and its crew veterans of *aliya bet*. There is no doubt that the ship brought European DPs to Israel. The argument is that it arrived after May 15, 1948 without interference from a British blockade. David Gerard, a crewmember on the *Mala* has submitted documentation that the Israel government considers the *Mala* to have been part of the effort to establish a Jewish State.

The documents include a certified document from the Israel Ministry of Defence awarding David (Goldstein) Gerard a Decoration of Fighters for the State (*Itur Lohamei HaMedinah*). Also included is a letter from the Consulate General of Israel in New York, signed by Vice Consul, Arieh Tennen awarding Gerard the State of Israel Fighters Pin. The letter is dated April 24, 1970. Gerard also presents a certificate to accompany the decoration citing "For his participation in the Struggle to Establish Israel." The certificate is signed by Dov Ramati and date October 9, 1997.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the Israel government considers David's service on the *Mala* as *aliya bet* service. By extension the entire crew is so recognized.

## Bill Bernstein Remembered at the Merchant Marine Academy

On October 2, 2003, William (Bill) Bernstein, who was killed on the *Exodus* in July 1947 when the ship was over taken by British Marines, was honored at the United States Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point in New York (King's Point), with the Captain Michael Walker Award, for alumni of the academy who display individual acts of heroism at sea in the line of duty. Bill was an alumnus of King's Point graduating in the Class of 1944 and took the position as second mate aboard the ship *Exodus*.

The *Exodus* was the ex-President Warfield, a small inland steamer designed to carry 400 excursioners. She was bought by the Friends of the Jewish Army Resistance to move former Jewish holocaust survivors out of Europe and into Palestine. In July 1947, 4,500 refugees (ten times the passenger capacity) boarded the ship in France bound for Palestine.

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, as the ship neared Palestine it was boarded by two British destroyers. On the bridge of the *Exodus* Bill Bernstein sounded the ship's whistle to alert sleeping passengers but the unarmed passengers were quickly overcome by British sailors. Bill Bernstein locked the wheelhouse to prevent the British from taking the vessel. In an ensuing scuffle to take the bridge, Bill Bernstein was killed by a blow to his head. The *Exodus* never reached Palestine and her passenger and crew were sent to detention camps in Cyprus. Bill's body was wrapped in an American flag and he was buried in Martyr's Row in Haifa Cemetery. He demonstrated the best of Kings Point virtues, "Deeds not Words".

Bill's first cousin's Frieda Asher, Estelle Bahar, and first cousin once removed, Michelle Goldman were in attendance and accepted the award along with members of the American Veteran of Israel, including President, Paul Kaye, and Nat Nadler who sailed as third engineer on the *Exodus* with Bill, and a representative of the Israel Consulate, Ido Aharoni.

Mr. Joseph Schwartzstein, King's Point Class of 1996, had read about the story of the *Exodus* and Bill Bernstein's selfless act of valor. Mr. Schwartzstein was very moved by this and wished for King's Point to recognize Bill Bernstein hence nominating him for the award. When he heard that the academy would be honoring Mr. Bernstein with this award, he and his family researched through numerous venues to find surviving family members, fellow crewman, and other representatives to accept this award in Bill's honor.

Family members are still contemplating where to display the award.

*Rachel Kron*

## Hanovice Completes Collection of AVI Organizational Files

David Hanovice has completed the task of collecting and forwarding AVI organizational files to the Machal Archives at the University of Florida. He is to be congratulated for his efforts to preserve the AVI organizational memory. He reports that the Archives have received the records and papers left by Joseph Heckelman, the records and papers left by Harry Eisner, Sam Klausner's presidential and Newsletter records, Eli Bergman's presidential records, Paul Kaye's collection Sid Rabinovich's papers as an officer and Newsletter editor, materials left by Ariyeh Agriss sent in to Ralph along with 49 photocopies of Agriss documents obtained from AJHS in Manhattan, David Kaplan's extensive correspondence and Si Spiegelman's papers. Other materials may come in over time.



*Accepting the Michael Walker Award at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, October 2, 2003.  
L-R Estelle Behar, First Cousin; Joseph D. Stewart, Rear Admiral, USMS, Superintendent; Frieda Asher, First Cousin' Ido Aharoni, Israel Consulate; Nat Nadler, Exodus Crew Member; Paul Kaye, President, AVI; James T. Shirley, Class of 1965; Michelle Goldberg, First Cousin Once Removed*

### AVI Board Appoints Trustees continued from Page 1

4. The Trustees would advise the University of Florida on questions relating to the AVI archives under their control.
5. The Trustees would retain an advisory position in relation to Machal repositories and Machal Monuments in Israel and, at their discretion, maintain contact with Machal West and other Machal units (e.g. in Israel, England, South Africa and France).
6. The Trustees would manage the organization's financial assets, including its bank account, and disbursements and, at their discretion, collect membership dues and make decisions regarding other fiduciary matters such as endowments and bequests.
7. Following the death of the last recorded member, the Trustees would discontinue the organization and distribute any remaining funds as they see fit.

The following are the names and locations of the Trustees:

Elizabeth Appley, Esq.	Atlanta, GA
Sharon Baldree	Calabasas, CA
Bryan Feinberg	Ramat Gan, Israel
Ethan Fishman	Jerusalem, Israel
Michael Flint	Los Angeles, CA
Daphne Genyk	Philadelphia, PA
Dr. Ora Gooch	Huntsville, AL
Dr. Arthur Kiron	Philadelphia, PA
Henry Lowenstein, Esq.	Miami Beach, FL
Jeffrey Margolis, Esq.	New York, NY
Dona Parker	Ft. Lee, NJ

Samuel Z. Klausner and Bailey Nieder will serve as liaisons between the Board and the Trustees.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*To the Editor..*

Just about a week ago I had my seventy-eighth birthday and decided to thank all those responsible, especially David Baum, for publishing and sending me the AVI Newsletter over the years. Enclosed, in appreciation, is a poem, "Illegal Voices" (Exodus 1947), I wrote about my experiences as a sailor (black gang) on the ship. The saga started for me during Chanukah in December 1946, when I boarded the President Warfield in Baltimore Harbor, and terminated in January 1948 when I arrived for the second time in Haifa after being a prisoner of the British aboard the Empire Rival.

In sixteen lines the poem encompasses over a year of unforgettable experiences which, if found worthy, I would be honored to share with your readers. The poem is published in a small booklet of poems I have written in Beer Sheva. The poems were compiled and edited by Leah Katzenell.

It has recently come to my attention that a replica of the President Warfield is on public display in Baltimore. The poem, which follows could be displayed alongside the replica as a succinct description of the event.

## "Illegal" Voices (Exodus 1947)

The voice of history whispered: "Do!"

Not hearing, nevertheless, we knew.

The voice of Destiny said: "Go!"

We heard and went forth.

A voice spoke: "Gather in!"

We prepared and they came.

The wind sang: "Sail!"

We lifted anchor for an old/new destination.

Dignity shouted: "Resist!"

In desperation, we fought.

The land beckoned: "Enter!"

With fresh hopes, We arrived.

But the voice of the enemy said: "No!"

Back we went from whence we'd come.

Yet the song of hope prevailed,

And we returned!

Dov Mills  
Beer Sheva

*As far as I and Nat Nadler know, the replica of the President Warfield is in the Smithsonian in Washington, DC.*  
Editor

*To the editor..*

In reading your last Newsletter, I was pleased to see pictures of my old shipmate, Dave Hanovice and old friend, Naomi Kantey.

I would like to comment concerning the question of Ben Steuerman and his service in the Israeli Navy and aboard K-26, Noga. When the Yucatan (Noga) steamed

into Marseilles I was on hand along with a few Machal with experience at sea. We took the lines and then boarded ship to help make her fast. It was a pleasure to once again board a ship that had been part of the U.S. Navy and it felt like home. A day or two later three of us came aboard as crew to continue the trip to Israel. At the same time those not continuing left the ship and that includes Ben Steuerman. He stated that he did not want the guns to fall into the hands of Israeli youngsters. There were no youngsters aboard ship. Those who remained aboard and those of us who had joined the crew were all WW II veterans from age 23 and up.

From that day on and all through the war until our discharge in May 1949 we never saw or heard of Ben Steuerman. I doubt very much that he was of the caliber of Commander Alan Burke who was an instructor at the Navy Officers Training school. Throughout the war the rank of officer was never given freely, especially in the Engine Room, for duties that in other Navies were carried out by C.P.O.s and P.O.s.

Some of the members seem to think that Machal has political leanings. That is hard to understand especially among those of us who made our home here and taken part in all the following wars and served years of active reserve duty.

Aaron (Cohen) Kanot  
Kfar Gifton, Israel

*Aaron Kanot may not have seen Steuerman in Israel but I recall seeing him in an Israeli naval uniform in Tel Aviv the summer of 1948.* Editor.

*To the editor..*

I don't want to belabor this hero business. To me the real heroes are the guys that never made it back. Why a few should be concerned with what I did or did not do is not important.. I know what I did. I am proud of what I did. I put my butt on the line a few times. I did fifty missions. So what? All that and a 'buck' will get me a cup of coffee. What's done is done. What's past is past. I am 85. I just want to be left alone. I don't have to prove anything to anybody.

William Lichtman  
Chicago

*To the Editor..*

With respect to the letters in your Summer 2003 Newsletter regarding the omission of *Etzel* and *Lehi* from the Machal booklet, should there be a second edition printed to correct this error, mention should also be made of another slighted group, namely, those of us who found ourselves in Palestine toward the end of 1947 for other reasons, such as study, and became involved as volunteers.

In my case, for example, during the summer of 1947 the Haganah learned that I was planning to spend the academic year 1947-48 at the Hebrew University. I was contacted and asked to take along a new 1947 Dodge for David Ben Gurion. The British would permit me, an American citizen, to import the car. Thus, was I recruited into the Haganah. Upon my arrival in Palestine I led a double life, first as a student and then as an intelligence courier for the Haganah with a false identity card. When violence erupted immediately after the U.N. partition decision on November 29, 1947, about 99% of the student body at the university was sworn into the Haganah. I was at a swearing-in ceremony at the Rehavia High School as described by Zipporah Porath in her book and reprinted on page 8 of the English edition. And, as Etty Bohm relates on page 7 of your Newsletter, we all served full-time in the Haganah after November 30, 1947.

Thus, it is not quite accurate to say as on page 16 of the Machal booklet that the first overseas volunteers arrived in Palestine as early as February 1948. Nor is it fair to imply that the major activity from the fall of 1947 to early 1948 was "Recruiting Machal" as described on pages 15 and 16 of the Machal Booklet. Even the first sentence of this section refers to "the first months of the fighting (end of 1947 and early 1948)." On page 13 of your Newsletter you list the names of the 40 fallen Machalniks whose names are inscribed on the Machal Memorial. The second name on that list is Moshe Perlstein who was one of the 35 who gave their lives in a vain attempt to break the siege of the Gush Etzion bloc in January of 1948. I was asked to bring Moshe's last effects to his family upon my return to the States.

Thus, a second edition of the Machal booklet should recall not only the *Etzel* and *Lehi* but also those of us who served in the pre-State Haganah.

Lee Reinharth  
New York, NY

*To the Editor..*

*The following correspondence is between Naftali Zloczower, who had been a refugee baby on the Paduca and William Patzert, son of Rudolph Patzert, Captain of the Paduca.*

June 23, 2003

Dear Naftali Zloczower:

Yes, I am Capt. Rudy Patzert's son. What a pleasure to hear from a Geula passenger. I hope that you life has been happy and fruitful. My mother is alive and well, and I'm sure she would love to hear your story. Also, my brother, Andy would love hear your story. I strongly suggest you read his book ... have you seen it? I await to hear from you.

Shalom, Bill Patzert

letters continued on Page 8

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CONTINUED

Pasadena, CA

July 14, 2003

Dear Bill:

As I wrote to you, my name is Naftali Zloczower, I was born in Rumania in December 1946, and my parents took me on the S.S. Paducah, whom we called "Geula" (redemption or liberation, in Hebrew) to what was Palestine. Of course, we were captured by the British and hauled away on a prison ship to Cyprus. For years, I didn't see anything written about the Paducah. Her sister ship, the S.S. Northland (Called Medinat Hayehudim, or the State of the Jews, in Hebrew), on whose decks came some of my relatives, was a little better known and a little more was written about her. Moka Limon, the Haganah Commander on the Paducah, was very well known and popular, but for other escapades. I knew nothing about the identities of the American volunteers, including the Captain, or the Haganah personnel, since the passengers were purposely kept in the dark about their identities in case of capture.

About 10 years ago, I started researching on the Paducah, and I found original Hebrew newspaper articles on the discovery of the ship by the British, as announced by London on September 29, 1947. In a newspaper article from October 3, it was announced that the British captured the Paducah and the Northland the day before. There were other articles, including details on the capture and the transfer to Cyprus. My parents told me of how brave the American volunteers were, of how the Haganah blew up the engines so they could not be forced to return to Rumania, of how the British destroyer rammed the Paducah, almost sinking it, and of how the British threw gas grenades at it, which caused me to pass-out, bringing panic and anxiety to my parents. We were kept in a British concentration camp in Cyprus for a number of months. We lived in tents. The camp was very crowded, sanitation was poor, and there was danger of epidemics spreading out. For this reason, families with children under two years of age were transferred to a camp in Palestine. This camp got crowded, also, and conditions got bad, so the British allowed families "sponsored" by local residents, to leave the camp. We were sponsored by a kibbutz, and left the camp.

Many things, including a number of wars, happened since then. I even got to live in The States for 14 years, to graduate from high school and college, there, and come back to Israel. My wife's sister's family leans a little to the right, politically, and subscribes to the press of the more nationalistic parties in Israel. My wife and I lean more to the left, politically, so we never read this press. One day in March 2001, I sat in my wife's sister's kitchen, and I see, on the cover of the weekend magazine, a picture of the Paducah in the port of Haifa, with some of the people being taken away, and, in large print, the announcement of the cover story about the Paducah.

In the article, one of the volunteers on the Northland, Eddie Kaplanski, was interviewed, and told the story of

the Paducah. He told of your father, Captain Rudolph W. Patzert, and noted that he wrote a book about the Paducah. Your father's name was written in Hebrew, and not too accurately, as was the name of the book. I looked for the book in the internet and after a number of trials I found it in Amazon, and ordered it. I also found Eddie Kaplanski's phone number and talked to him on the phone. He knew your father and talked about him. He told me that your father was coming to visit in Israel, and that he would let me know when he comes. He said they would visit me on my kibbutz (my kibbutz is very nice, over-looking the Sea of Galilee).

Well, I have to leave some for later. I would be very happy to meet you and your mother and brother, preferably here, on my kibbutz. I will be in Minnesota, California and Texas on a business trip in October, but I don't think I will be able to visit other states this time. Be well, and best regards to your mother and brother. I will write more, if you are interested.

Best regards,  
Naftali (Nifty)

*Kibbutz Kfar Charuv*  
DN Ramat Hagolan, Israel 12932

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*To the editor:*

The recent exchange of letters in the AVI Bulletin concerning the purported neglect of the *Irgun* and Stern Gang in the booklet "Machal," published by the Israeli Ministry of Education, is somewhat amusing, since the original plan for Volunteers from Abroad was conceived and carried out by the Jewish Agency, whose authority the sponsors of those groups (the Revisionists, the Bergson Group, and Betar) repudiated. In any case, let me attempt to put the record straight.

A forerunner of Machal was a group of Americans recruited by Akiva Skidell in 1946 at the request of Yaakov Dostrovsky (later Chief-of-Staff Dori) to train for possible service, basically behind enemy lines. Most went to Israel, fought there, stayed in Israel, and in one case (Moishe Geberer) were killed in the war. None of them were originally members of Machal (which didn't exist then).

Purchase of ships for *aliyah bet*, their provisioning, and - note - manning was already being done by the Jewish Agency's group, headed by Danny (Zev) Shind. (Akiva Skidell was in charge of recruitment efforts). The *aliyah bet* crews recruited at that time were officially part of "Land and Labor," to protect secrecy and to safeguard any possible repercussions about fighting for a foreign power (although Israel did not yet exist). There was no Machal organization as such at this time.

Incidentally, in view of the *Irgun* members' protests as noted above, it is ironic that their much-publicized launching of the "Ben Hecht" (né "Avril"), caused a painful hiatus in the much larger rescue efforts of the Jewish Agency.

In the fall of 1947, Abe Herman (later Avraham Harmon - Ambassador to the United States and President of the Hebrew University), then head of English-Speaking Section of the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Jewish Agency, was asked by the Jewish Agency and/or the Haganah to prepare a plan for recruitment of Jewish volunteers from abroad. (I personally worked on several drafts of that plan, as an employee of the Department). The plan called for an orientation session, Hebrew lessons, sightseeing trips around the country, and a relatively heavy educational content, as well as later military training. As the military situation became critical, the educational content was dropped and the plan was for military recruitment only.

It should be recognized that up until this time there was no formal framework for recruitment other than "Land and Labor," which was mostly Habonim and Hashomer HaTzair-based, in which members of the dissident groups certainly did not participate. The crews of *aliyah bet* ships were not insured, nor did their families receive any compensation. (When the "President Warfield" was thought to be sinking off of Cape Hatteras, it would have been my duty as a member of Danny Shind's staff to notify the parents of any lost seamen. There was no talk of insurance, reparations, or even covering the family's expenses).

Finally, Machal became formalized enough (although still as "Land and Labor") to begin to provide insurance, pay, transportation, and - eventually - discharge pay. At that time the question of who was actually a member of Machal came up, and it was originally decided that only those who came through the official Machal channels were entitled to these benefits. However, this excluded those who had gone to Israel before Machal, and volunteered there - including a substantial group of American "students." They complained that it wasn't fair that since they volunteered before there were benefits, they should be excluded from them. At that point the definition of Machal (and the benefits) became anyone who came from a country to which he or she could return (in order to exclude refugees) - and volunteered for the fighting forces. It was at this point that not only were the pre-Machalniks blanketed-in, but also - perforce — members of the *Etzel* and *Lechi*.

It should be clear from this account that there were volunteers from abroad, among whom were those recruited by Machal, and others who were not - until blanketed-in post-volunteering. In fact, there were American students who fought in the Haganah, (and in *Lechi*), who stayed in Israel, and who never "joined" or considered themselves Machal.

A final piece of irony - Machalniks who returned to their previous countries were given relatively substantial discharge pay, while those who remained in Israel were given only very much smaller IDF discharge compensation (which consisted mostly of a suit of clothes).

*David Macarov*  
Jerusalem

# OBITUARIES



*Sam Alexander, about 1948  
Second from right, standing.*

## SAM ALEXANDER: Golani Brigade

From a young age in Brooklyn, Sam Alexander was active in the religious Zionist youth movement; Hashomer Hadati (today affiliated with Bnai Akiva). He was a leader in the Boro Park chapter of the organization. After serving in World War II, Sam came to Israel when the State was founded and joined the 13 Th Battalion of the Golani Brigade as a medic and later as an infantryman. He participated in actions that gave Israel control of the Galilee in the summer of 1948. Sam joined comrades with the remnants of Kibbutz Kfar Darom, destroyed by the Egyptians in the Negev to form a new border settlement near Isdud (now Ashdod).

Back in the U.S, Sam married Leila and raised a family. He became a teacher in the New York City public school system, taught Jewish history in high schools and to adult groups. It was a subject he had mastered and taught with a special insight and passion. In later life, his classes conducted as part of the UFT continuing education program were filled to capacity.

Sam was a founding member of AVI and served on the Board of Directors as Secretary for many years. He held the presidency of the organization in 1995-96

A side of Sam unknown to many was his role as a chapter leader of the New York City Teachers Union. He was one of the leaders of the teachers' walkout in November 1960 that led to the City's acceptance of collective bargaining as a contracting process with the Teachers Union and the transformation of the UFT to what it is today.

Sam wrote in his AVI questionnaire, "My being in a combat unit allowed me to save lives and limbs as a combat medic. As part of a liaison team I worked with the Christian community in Nazareth. Serving Israel gave me a purpose and satisfaction in knowing that I did not sit idly by when the Jewish people needed me. In know now that however insignificant the individual may think he is, he can make a difference. It is a good inheritance for his progeny."

Sam is remembered as a man of principle for his steadfast dedication to causes he believed in and for his service to our organization. *Alav Hashalom.*

*Condolences to*

*Mrs. Leila Alexander, 303 West 66 St. (6KW), New York 10023., 917 441 6297*

Simon Spiegelman

## Sam Alexander, his Wife Remembers

Sam Alexander, past President of the AVI, past National Secretary, past AVI Liaison to the Israeli Consulate and member of the Executive Board passed away on July 1, 2003 after a lengthy and debilitating illness.

Many fortuitous circumstances led to Sam's involvement in Machal and the AVI. He was born into a religious (Mizrachi), Zionist in 1925 in Boro Park—when Boro Park was an active and culturally aware Jewish community accepting all aspects of Judaism both in the religious and secular realms. He was a proud graduate of Yeshivat Etz Chayim, which was the first orthodox yeshiva to teach Ivrit b'Ivrit, and many of his teachers were old-time *maskilim* intent upon instilling a love of learning, tradition, literature and *tzionut* into their young charges.

Sam was drafted into the American army where he was trained as a surgical technician and once again he was serendipitously deployed to the Middle East after the cessation of hostilities. While stationed in Egypt he made contact with the Palestinian underground and helped smuggle American surgical supplies into Palestine.

After his discharge Sam came back to the US, took a variety of uninspired jobs and trained at *hachshara*. He always

wanted do settle in what was then Palestine. In March 1948 he went to Palestine to settle and used the ruse of a student visa. I believe he told me he sailed on the USS Marine Carp with Sidney Rabinovitch. In Palestine he joined a religious kibbutz and, because of his fluency in Hebrew, he served in an all-Israeli unit in the Golani Brigade of the Haganah. Of all his accomplishments Sam was proudest of his effort in the establishment of a Jewish State.

Kibbutz life was not his style. He knew that he wanted to go back to school and returned to the US in the summer of 1949, enrolled in Columbia University's School of General Studies with the intention of returning to Israel with a profession to help the nascent Jewish State. This dream was not to be.

He met and married Leila Blum in 1953 and they raised a family of three daughters and a son. Sam taught for many years in the New York City school system. His involvement with Judaism never ceased. He was a part-time Hebrew teacher, *chazzan sheni* at Congregation Beth Shalom of Long Beach and served on the boards of B'nai Zion and the AVI.

After he retired from the New York City Board of Education, Sam taught Jewish history at the UFT Learning Center for more than two decades. He was unabashedly in love with his subject and his students, all retired teachers and professionals, loved and admired him.

Sam enjoyed the comradeship with the AVI members. He always felt that it was important to keep together because each member was vouchsafed a unique experience. He was saddened, however, by the internecine bickering and often slanderous epithets hurled in anger at the organization's members. Because of his involvement with the AVI he forged many friendships with members as well as with the Israeli Consulate staff members.

Sam was too weak and too tired to join with the Machalniks for recognition day on board the Intrepid on the first of June. This was his last great disappointment. Sadly, he died on July 1<sup>st</sup>. He leaves a wife, Leila, daughters Debbie, Judy and Abby and son Daniel and seven grandchildren.

Leila Alexander

We regret to report the death of

**Esther (Tichauer) Miller**

Wife of Leo Miller

Boston

May 24, 2003/-12/-13/

An obituary appears in the Boston Globe

May 27, 2003

# OBITUARIES CONTINUED



*Leo Gardner, about 1949*

## Leo Gardner, Pilot

Leo Gardner was born in Manchester, NH, and moved to California with his family at an early age. He passed away on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2003 in Boca Raton, Florida, in his 89<sup>th</sup> year.

Some of his exploits as an early Israel Air Force (IAF) pilot are described in Leonard Slater's *The Pledge*, and in Major Avi Cohen's *Gesher Aviri l'Atzmaut*, the official history (in Hebrew) of the IAF's Air Transport Command (ATC) of 1948.

In the early 1940s he served as a flying instructor in the US Army Air Corps, and was later transferred to the US Air Transport Command. There he and former TWA captain Sam Lewis became fast friends. They may well have been the only Jewish pilots who ferried US-built warplanes across the Atlantic to beleaguered Britain in WW2.

Early in 1948 Leo and Sam were brought into the Zionist cause by Al Schwimmer, who was then recruiting personnel and buying war-surplus airplanes for the future Israel Air Force. Initially Leo ferried newly acquired airplanes from their points of purchase to various staging bases, all within the USA. On February 28<sup>th</sup> he took off from Millville, NJ, to ferry the first of Israel's C-46 transport planes to Europe, and landed at a small airfield in Italy after four overnight stops en route. Before heading back to the USA, Leo flew the same airplane on a successful search mission over the Adriatic to locate the *Lino*, which was carrying munitions bound for Syria.

Upon returning to the USA he again ferried newly acquired airplanes within the country, and worked closely with Schwimmer in an unsuccessful effort to acquire three *Mitchell* bombers and 30 *Thunderbolts* located in Mexico.

Al Schwimmer recalls how, in early July 1948, Leo helped him 'retrieve' a B-17 that was seized by federal authorities at Tulsa, Oklahoma, although he had never flown that type of airplane before. The plane refueled and made airworthy before its seizure, but was now parked in a restricted area on the military side of the air-

field. It was a very dark and rainy night when they arrived at Tulsa airport, and took a taxi to the military gate hoping to bluff their way in. At the gate they were greeted by a shout from the sentry booth through the rain, "you all going to the party?" "Of course," came the reply, and the barrier was raised. They soon learned that the Oklahoma Air National Guard was having a party there at the time.

When they found the B-17, aided by a flashlight, Leo familiarized himself with its dashboard and cockpit layout and started the engines. While taxiing without lights to the runway in use, on the plane's radio they heard the control tower warn the "unidentified aircraft" to get off the taxiway, and then instruct an airliner to go around again because an "unauthorized aircraft" seemed ready to take off. With Schwimmer in the co-pilot seat they took off and headed east, initially without navigation lights, and at dawn landed at Westchester County Airport. Fearing detection by the FBI the same B-17 soon took off, piloted by Irwin Schindler, in an unsuccessful effort to ferry it to Israel.

In the weeks that followed Leo flew ATC C-46s on the air-bridge from Czechoslovakia, bringing military supplies to Israel. In mid-August he was appointed to the high level IAF team planning Operation Dust, the airlift of military supplies from Aqir to Ruhama in preparation for October's Ten Plagues campaign. He then went on to manage the airlift as ATC's special operations officer.

Soon after his return to the US, Leo was among those who were tried in Los Angeles for "conspiracy to violate the Neutrality Act" by exporting ten C-46s and a Constellation to Israel. They were found guilty, and fined \$10,000 each.

For a time Leo worked for El Al as a C-46 captain, flying cargo between Europe and Israel. In 1950 he and Sam Lewis brought the first of the airline's Constellations to Israel. When El Al was getting ready to retire the Constellations a few years later, Leo and Sam developed a plan to acquire them and start a rapid freight airline. Their plan received a lot of favorable attention, but for one reason or another never materialized. Apparently impressed Leo's business acumen and knowledge of the airline business, El Al soon opened a branch office in Miami and appointed him its general manager.

Leo Gardner is warmly remembered as top-notch pilot, an excellent businessman and a fine person. He is survived by his wife Miriam, originally of Safed, Israel, their children Leora and Arthur, and a number of grandchildren.

### *Condolences to*

*Miriam Gardner, 6079 Tower Colony Dr., Boca Raton, FL 33433, 561 487 7073*

*Eddy Kaplansky, Haifa. [kaplansk@actcom.com](mailto:kaplansk@actcom.com)*

*In an obituary for Leo Gardner published in the Jerusalem Post on June 18, 2003 it is reported that "Many of Gardner's assignments were top secret. He received his orders and instructions personally from Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and the defense ministry's then-director general, Shimon Peres. In 1958, while in the cockpit of an unmarked Israel B-17, Gardner touched down in Bone, Algeria, totally unaware of the fact that the requisite coordination with the French authorities had not been arranged. He was taken into custody along with his three-man crew—one other American, a British subject and an Israeli citizen.. The US penalized Gardner by stripping of his rights as a World War II veteran. (The comment about his veteran's rights being taken away does not ring true. Editor)*



*About 1949, L-R unidentified, Leo Gardner, Mrs. Taiber, Rami Taiber, Al Schwimmer*

*Opposite Leo Gardner is Ray Kurtz's wife Ruth and their son. Standing in the background is (L to R) Al Raisin, Eddie Chinsky and Armie Ilowitz.*



## Four Charitable Opportunities

*Individuals wishing to contribute to any of the four projects below should send their check to the AVI Office, B'nai Zion, 136 E. 39<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY. The AVI will forward the check to the appropriate recipients. Contributions are tax deductible. Contributors may wish to memorialize deceased comrades in this way.*

### Museum of The Jewish Soldiers of World War II

A Museum of the Jewish Soldiers of World War II is being erected in the complex of the Armoured Corps Museum in Latrun. This museum will house the records of Jewish soldiers in all of the allied armies of that war. David "Migdal" Teperson, Sol Baskin and David Shachar represent Machal on the museum committee. The Israel committee has accumulated about \$6000 toward the establishment of the museum. The museum would welcome individual contributions.

### A Machal Statue

An Israeli soldier, Reuven Huver, attempted to save the life of an English-speaking Machalnik who suffered severe wounds during one of the battles around Latrun. Huver carried the wounded Machalnik for some three kilometers but the effort was in vain. The Machalnik died. Huver, himself died a while ago. In his Will he bequeathed funds for the erection of a statue in honor of the fallen Machalnik. Huver's family decided on a statue of a soldier carrying a wounded comrade-in-arms. The statue is nearing completion and will be placed at the entrance to the Museum of the Jewish Soldiers in World War II. The statue, about 2 meters in height cost some \$100,000. About \$7000 is still needed for the base of the statue. The Committee seeks contributions from individuals and from Machal associations around the world.

### The Machal Archives

Continuing support is sought for the Machal Archives at the University of Florida. See the report of Ralph Lowenstein, Director of the Archives, elsewhere in this Newsletter.

### The Sha'ar Hagai Machal Memorial

The Jewish National Fund maintains the Machal Memorial at Sha'ar Hagai with monies collected from Machal Associations abroad. The JNF seeks contributions from individuals for this effort. This is designated JNF project Number 671. Contributions should be marked with this designation.

## AVI Invited to Wingate Memorial Ceremony in Washington, DC

On behalf of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and JWV Department of the District of Columbia, I would like to extend an invitation to the American Veterans of Israel to join us next April 25, 2004 (Sunday) at Arlington Cemetery as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the death of the great British Zionist Orde Charles Wingate.

As I am sure you know, Orde Wingate was one of the greatest friends Israel and the Jewish people had in the past century. Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Wingate, an ardent supporter of Israel independence, helped to organize the precursor to the Israel Defense Forces while serving as an officer in Palestine in the late 1930's. Israeli leaders such as Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon have credited Wingate with being the spiritual father of the IDF. In 1940 and 1941, Wingate led a British-Ethiopian force in the liberation of Ethiopia over the far larger Italian Fascist occupation army in one of the few bright moments for the democracies during the early years of the war. From 1942 until his untimely death in March 1944, he organized and led the famed British-Indian "Chindits" against the Japanese.

Orde Wingate was 41 when he died in a plane crash on March 24, 1944 just as his Chindit troops were beginning their second and most ambitious campaign against the Japanese. Upon hearing of Wingate's death, Prime Minister Winston Churchill hailed him as "a man of genius who might well have become also a man of destiny." General Wingate is buried in Arlington National Cemetery with the American and British air crew with whom he died.

The Jewish War Veterans organization has been holding the Wingate ceremony for the past thirty years. Approximately 250 people attended our most recent ceremony this past April which commemorated the centennial of Wingate's birth. We were honored to hear from a number of very distinguished speakers, including U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Dov Zakheim, Israeli Ambassador Daniel Ayalon, British Army military attaché Brigadier John Keeling, and Maj. Gen. (ret.) John R. Alison (the former deputy commander of the 1st Air Commandos which assisted Wingate's Burma operations). This year's ceremony was graced by the presence of members of Orde Wingate's family (his daughter-in-law and two granddaughters) who flew in from London to be with us. Among our participants were the U.S. Naval Academy's Jewish Midshipmen's Club, Boy Scout Troop 1948 from Rockville, cadets from the Virginia Military Institute and the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment.

We would be very pleased to have the American Veterans of Israel join us at next year's ceremony as we remember Orde Wingate, show our solidarity to Israel and pay our respects to all those who served our country.

Michael H. Hurwitz

for the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and JWV Department of the District of Columbia

(202) 942-0814 (office)

(301) 984-0867 (home)

hurwitzm@sec.gov (office)

hurwitzm@msn.com (home)

## WORLD WAR II VETERANS, PLEASE NOTE

A Museum of the Jewish Soldier in WWII is being created as part of the Armor Museum at Latrun. Our World Machal coordinator David "Migdal" Teperson is asking all Veterans of WWII residing in the U.S. to provide information. Service branches include ground forces, Navy, Air Force, Merchant Marine and Partisan/Resistance fighters. Please send us your name, service unit, dates of service and any other particulars you wish to add concerning your experiences. We will forward the information to the Museum where it will be collated with information received from Veterans all over the world. Photographs and artifacts (or copies) will be greatly appreciated. The Museum, when completed, will be a legacy for future generations attesting to the fighting spirit of Jewish men and women against the Nazis and their allies.



Please mail your response to:  
American Veterans of Israel  
136 East 39 St.  
New York, NY 10016.



## Lola Sprinzeles on the Ethics of Volunteering for Battle

Ethics is a philosophical concept of moral conduct, a differentiation between right and wrong. Although most often applicable to medical practice which impacts life and death, ideally, it is hoped that ethics also exists in other spheres.

When in 1947, the need for a Jewish homeland was acknowledged and voted upon by a majority of United Nations representatives, a handful of determined young Jews and several non-Jews from the free world took the initiative to help in every possible and impossible way. An estimated 1,200 Americans, Canadians and South Americans and about 3,000 Europeans, South Africans and Australians volunteered to take an active part in neutralizing some of the wrongs. Many volunteers empathized with the survivors, because they too had lost family members in the European death camps. Others had the essential skills for defense methods and wanted to fulfill a moral obligation. Some of the volunteers paid the ultimate price with their lives or health.

In 1945, illegal immigrants were surreptitiously brought into the country; weaponry was furtively purchased and collected abroad and subsequently smuggled into Palestine; Jews received instruction and training in self-defense and military tactics from local fighters and World War II veterans. One of the most significant contributions to the struggle for independence was the role

of Mahalniks in establishing the fledgling Israeli Air Force, today one of the world's best. Other military branches also benefited from the expertise of WW II veterans. One example was that of Col. David (Mickey) Marcus. As a West Point graduate and former commander in the American Allied Forces in the European theater during WW II, he had vital skills in military tactics and strategies. Israeli government officials asked him to serve as consultant in military matters. Unfortunately, he was one of the volunteers who paid the ultimate price.

On May 15th, 1948 when the British pulled out of Palestine and Ben Gurion declared a Jewish state, named Israel, fierce fighting broke out between Jews and Arabs. Materiel and military equipment were purchased, borrowed, stolen, re-equipped or modified for ultimate use by Israel. While the outcome is known, some points may be worth noting; namely: 1.-Quantitatively, a relatively small number of volunteers was involved in the struggle for Israel's independence, but qualitatively, the volunteers had a significant impact on the results. 2. In other parts of the world ethnic groups usually volunteered by means of organized recruitment procedures to serve a cause, but Mahalniks relied on spontaneous volunteerism, even with doubt about the eventual success of the cause they came to serve, with little remuneration and a long stay for months or years in a land away from family and the

relative security of home. What made them do it? For the most part a moral obligation prompted their action. Most were ethically motivated. A small number might have sought adventure.

At the 1996 Mahal reunion in Israel, we were invited to president Weizman's residence and he stated that if more individuals had volunteered in 1948, Israel's geography would have looked different and would have had fewer demographic problems. While this is likely to be true, he addressed the wrong audience. We were the ones who answered the call in time of Israel's need.

My personal reason for having joined the Israel Defence Forces was rooted in my having narrowly escaped Nazi atrocities. In 1948, Israeli agents sought people with essential skills. I met the requirements. Moreover, I had no other responsibility than to myself and little to lose. I felt morally obligated to do my part, for "there but for the grace of God go I." Had I been one of the war casualties, at least I would not have lost my life in vain. If people like me had not helped their brethren, then who should have done it?

Lola L. Sprinzeles  
Former Lieutenant in the Israel Defence Forces -  
Army Medical Corps

