PAUL KAYE ASSUMES THE REINS

As of January 1, Paul Kaye became President of AVI for the year 2003. Paul served as an officer on the Haganah ship Hatikvah and, along with other members of the crew was detained in Cyprus. Later, with other members of Palyam he participated in the sinking of the British prison ship Empire Life-guard.

Paul's first statement was a call to solidarity and mutual support among AVI members.

Serving with him will be Executive Vice President, Jerry Rosenberg of Toronto, Vice President, Canada, Arnold Friedman, Vice President, Israel, David Baum of Tel Aviv, Vice President, Public Affairs, Sidney Rabinovich of New York, Vice President and Treasurer, David Gerard of Commack, NY and as Chair of the Executive Committee, Simon Spiegelman of New York. The names of other appointees are found in the National Board listing on page 2.

President Kaye has restructured the Board. Following is his charge to the Board with descriptions of the responsibilities of the occupants of each position:

The Board of directors: Consists of 27 members in 2003. Will work with

MACHAL VOLUNTEERS FROM CHINA

The contingent of volunteers from China, who joined the IDF, and the struggle for statehood, consisted of two groups totaling 13 men, in their early twenties, who arrived in Israel towards the end of 1948. Their story starts far earlier.

The majority of the Jews in China were either stateless or after the end of WWII received Soviet (USSR) citizenship basically valid for staying in China, or for travel to the Soviet Union. This differentiated them from most of the Jews living in the Western Diaspora, who possessed the citizenship of the country they dwelt in. Thus it was rather a simple matter for Jewish youth from the USA, Europe, South America and South Africa to travel, using normal means of transportation as available in those days, whereas for us in China, it was nearly impossible to do so in the pre-state period and in the early days of statehood.

The Jewish youth in China, and all of the first groups of volunteers, were mainly organized within the Betar (Brit Trumpeldor) Youth movement, with a few exceptions. Early in 1947, when it became evident that inevitably a military struggle would lead to the formation of a state, and that International Jewry would be called upon to help their kin in Eretz Israel, two youngsters from Tianjin, in North China; Harry (Arie) Marinsky z"l and Samby (Shmuel) Muller, who were an exception to the rule, and held valid Polish Passports, decided to attempt to reach Eretz Israel. They left China in Mid '47 sailing via the Suez Canal to Europe, where they joined the Irgun Zvai Leumi (E’tzel) and underwent a number of military and political training courses in Italy, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Both speaking fluent English, they were able to obtain a visa to "Palestine" from the British Embassy in Rome, this to the amazement of the Irgun leadership in Europe, and sailed to Eretz Israel, arriving in early February 1948.

Their joy in reaching Eretz Israel was short lived, following further military training courses in the Irgun camp at Shuni (near Binyamina), and some actual field action in Jaffa, at that time still occupied by Arabs, the 2

continued on Page 2

continued on Page 10
the President and Executive Vice President on specific tasks and issues. A general meeting of the Board will be called by the President to discuss and vote on matters changing the purpose or membership criteria of the organization.

The Executive Committee: will consist of ten “core” members drawn from the Board of Directors to deal with day-to-day issues through periodic teleconference meetings and special meetings as needed. Other members of the Board will participate as required to deal with the issues on the agenda.

The Executive Vice President will conduct meetings of the Executive Committee in collaboration with the Chairman. Assist in running the organization, by performing special tasks as charged by the President.

Vice President, Israel: Coordinate issues dealing with historical research, reunions and visits to Israel

Vice President, Canada: Deal with all membership issues and activities in Canada

Vice President, Public Affairs: Deal with media announcements and promotion of special events to the community. Maintain Israel Consulate contacts

Vice President - Treasury: Maintain financial records. Report treasury status to the Executive Committee and annual financial reports to the membership. Handle dues bills and arrears.

Chair, Executive Committee: Schedule the Executive Committee meetings. Prepare meeting agenda, background material and minutes. Brief the President and the Executive Vice President. Maintain the AVI data base. (Membership records).

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS (East, South, Midwest, West and Canada): Encourage and organize activities and special events in their respective regions. Deal with specific issues relative to dues compliance, membership pro-

motion and ‘good and welfare’, including condolences to bereaved families.

PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENTS
Planning: Machal West connection, presidential successions, future receivership issue, ‘Friends of AVI’ membership. VP backup.

Activities/Events: Recommend activities and coordinate with the regional VPs including proposed Israel solidarity visits and Las Vegas (or other site). Invite Machal West members. Participate in US. Birthright Project

Global Coordination: Bridge AVI with Machal activities world-wide.

Speaker’s Bureau: Offer and Schedule speaking engagements to major organizations and community groups. Coordinate AVI assistance to anti-defamation campaign on campus.

Newsletter & Internet: Publish quarterly Newsletter (Further exposure to global Machal). Expand subscriptions as warranted. Update AVI website.


US Museum Relations: Promote and coordinate programs and exhibits undertaken by museums in the US relative to Machal and Aliyah Bet.

Membership/Welfare: Assist regional VPs in offering contacts and support to members, condolences to widows.
Miriam Hessel:
IDF Social Services

Miriam Hessel died on January 10, 2003. Miriam had gone to Palestine in early 1948 to be a student at the Hebrew University. When Israel declared its Independence she joined the women’s army corps, serving from June 1948 until May 1949. In the IDF she engaged in work related to social services and also worked as a translator. Her daughter Judy recalls her describing her participation in action carrying a Molotov Cocktail under her skirt. She met her husband, Alexander, at this time. Alexander pre-deceased her. Prior to making aliyah she had studied Jewish education at The Jewish Theological Seminary. She and Alexander remained in Israel until 1956.

In her professional career in the US, she was a teacher and guidance counselor in New York City. She held a BA from Brooklyn College and an MS from Long Island University. Miriam dedicated her self to support of the American Red Magen David. Friends knew her as a nature lover who raised African Violets which she gave to friends and with which she decorated the New Synagogue of Fort Lee. She met her husband, Alexander, at this time. Alexander pre-deceased her. Prior to making aliyah she had studied Jewish education at The Jewish Theological Seminary. She and Alexander remained in Israel until 1956.

Two daughters, Judy and Miriam, and their husbands and three grandchildren, Samantha, Jeremy and Jonathan, survive Miriam.

Condolences may be sent to
Judy Bosin
6 Horizon Rd.
Fort Lee, NJ 07024

Rabbi Irving Block:
AVI Chaplain

Rabbi Dr. Irving (Yisrael) J. Block passed away on October 31, 2002 at the age of 79. Rabbi Block joined and fought with the Haganah in Jerusalem even before Israel became a state. He had suffered from Parkinson’s for a number of years. In his last years h would still, with the help of his wife, Phyllis, arrive at the B’nai Zion building to light the Hanukkah candles for the New York AVI celebration. Following his wishes, he was interred on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

Following service in the Army in World War II, Irving completed a B. S. in accounting at the University of Connecticut and upon his return from Israel studied at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion receiving his ordination in 1953 along with a Master of Hebrew Letters and, in 1978, an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from HUC-JIR. In 1993 he received a honorary Doctor of Divinity from General Theological Seminary.

Irving was widely known as the founder of the Brotherhood Synagogue in Greenwich Village in 1954. For twenty years he shared the building with the Rev. Dr. Jesse W. Stitt and his Village Presbyterian Church. Rabbi Block and Dr. Stitt would speak of two faiths under one roof. They traveled together, espousing their principles, in the U.S. as well as in Germany and Israel. This arrangement was terminated upon the death of Dr. Stitt and The Brotherhood Synagogue, after some wandering, settled into what had been a Friends Meeting House on Gramercy Park. From this setting Rabbi Block provided services for the mentally ill, the African-American Jewish community, the Ethiopian Jewish community, the homeless and dozens of other groups. His son, Herbert, recalled that he was a member of NAACP, fought for gun control, worked with new immigrants and had a deep love for the State of Israel. In 1999 he published an autobiographical work A Rabbi and His Dream: Building the Brotherhood Synagogue.

At the service before Irving was flown to Israel for burial, Herbert said, “He taught me to care about all Jews everywhere, regardless of their affiliation. He taught me brotherhood and to strive for peace and I tried to follow.” Herbert’s son Isaac was born six days before the death of Yisrael and, at the brit, received his names Yisrael Yitshaq Noam.

Irving is survived by his widow, Phyllis, their son, Herbert and a daughter-in-law, Judith, and two grandsons. His brother, Allen Block, is Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanuel in Canarsie. He leaves two sisters, Lillian Danberg and Evelyn Cooperstock, both of Connecticut.

Condolences to Phyllis Block
201 E. 21st St. 9-S
New York, NY, 10010

Manny Weinstein was four years old when he emigrated from Poland to Canada with his family. They settled in Montreal, where he attended the Jewish People’s School (Yiddishkayt Shuleh) for several years before continuing through high-school in the city’s public school system. On December 6th 2002, two days short of his 76th birthday, Manny passed away in Montreal. Years earlier he had officially changed his name to Lukas Vongard, during a largely cloak-and-dagger sea-going career that began with his wartime service in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) and continued well into the 1960s.

He joined the RCN in 1944, as soon as he was old enough, and served on a corvette doing convoy escort and anti-submarine patrols in the North Atlantic. While in the RCN he acquired the nick-name Wingy, by which he was widely known for the rest of his life. After the war he worked briefly as a stoker on a coal-burning Great Lakes freighter before becoming involved in Aliya Bet.

Wingy’s Aliya Bet career began in Baltimore, where he worked for a while with the team that helped prepare the President Warfield for her role as the Haganah Ship Exodus 1947. Before long he was sent to Miami to join the crew of the Tradewinds (Matikvah), on which he served through her entire Aliya-Bet career. Following the Matikvah’s interception and capture by the British, he was detained in Cyprus with most of the ship’s passengers and crew. There he became involved in the successful plot to sabotage the vessel that would, after their release from Cyprus, bring them to Haifa. To achieve this end the team of conspirators had to dig a tunnel under the camp’s perimeter fence, smuggle in materials to make a bomb, get the bomb onto the vessel—the Empire Leguard, and detonate it in Haifa port just as the last of its passengers were disembarking. Wingy was among the suspects rounded up for questioning. He was held at Athlit until November 1947, when he was released for lack of evidence.

When the troubles started following the UN’s adoption its Partition Plan for Palestine on November 29th 1947, Wingy joined the Palmach. He initially served with its maritime sabotage unit, and then in its
Les Solomon: From The Altalena To The Computer Revolution

Leslie Solomon passed away on October 19, 2002 at the age of 83 after battling renal disease and emphysema. He was born in Leeds, England and came to the U.S. as an infant with his mother. He was a WWII veteran who landed with the U.S. Army Rangers on the Normandy beaches on the second day of the invasion. He was wounded in Normandy and again in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

Back in the States, Les was recruited by the Revisionist movement and sailed on the Altalena as a radio operator, bringing 4000 tons of armaments and 940 volunteers to Israel in June of 1948.

The LST-138 renamed Altalena, was a surplus cargo ship converted to a vessel for the Israeli underground movement. It was manned by volunteers, adherents of the Irgun. The ship loaded armaments and people at Port de Bouc, France. The Altalena began her seven-day journey across the Mediterranean Sea and came onto the Beach at Kfar Vitkin where a number of the passengers disembarked and some of the weapons and munitions were unloaded.

Because of differences with the Provisional Government on the planned distribution of the armaments, the craft sailed down the coast and beached on the Tel Aviv shore. On June 22 the craft was shelled by orders of the government and sunk. Les, subsequently served on a Palyam ship bringing refugees to Israel.

Upon his return to the U.S., Les dedicated his life’s work to technology and played a pivotal role in the computer revolution. He was the technical editor of the magazine “Popular Electronics” for many years. He is remembered in computer circles as “the puller of strings who set the computer revolution in motion”. He worked with Bill Gates before Microsoft was formed.

His’ life was marred by the tragedy of losing his first wife and two sons to illnesses. He is remembered for leading a courageous life. His close friends remember him as a master storyteller with an ability to make an easy friendship with everyone crossing his path. He was an avid ham radio operator all of his life. Among the people he befriended over the radio waves were Barry Goldwater and King Hussein of Jordan. He leaves behind his wife Marlene and many close friends who will miss him.

Zichrono Livracha
Simon Spiegelman

Condolences to
Marlene Solomon
13840 Via Flora
Delray Beach, FL 33484

Victor Chaber: Air Force Ground Radio Operator

Victor Chaber, who served as a Ground radio operator in the Israeli Air Force from 1948 to 1949, died on April 20, 2002, at the age of 83, in Boca Raton, Florida. He is survived by his widow, Gertrude.

Victor was born in New York City and was living in Alliance, New Jersey, when he volunteered to serve with the Air Force. He had served as a radio operator in the U.S. Army during World War II, seeing combat duty in North Africa, Sicily and Western Europe.

Following service in Israel, he was a poultry farmer for 12 years, then enrolled in Glassboro State College, where he received a bachelor of science degree in 1962. He was a school teacher until his retirement. A daughter died in Israel and is buried at Kibbutz Gat.

Ralph Lowenstein

Unfortunately, we were unable to locate members of Victor’s family to help us fill out the details of his life.

Jack Olfman: Air Force Wireless Operator and Trainer

Jack Olfman was 82 when he passed away on October 28, 1997. Jack is survived by his wife of 47 years, Ruth Olfman and his two sons, his daughter in law and four grand children.

At the outbreak of World War II, Jack volunteered and enlisted in the Canadian Air Force. He trained as a wireless operator, and as an air gunner; and served Canada as a wireless air gunner during World War II. When the war ended Jack rejoined civilian life making his living as a grocer. After Israel received its independence in 1948, despite being a well-settled civilian in his early thirties, Jack volunteered to join Israel’s air force.

In Israel’s fledgling air force, trained wireless operators were in short supply. However, they were desperately needed for the essential job of obtaining coded weather forecast transmissions, which the air force depended on to plan its flights and bombing missions. Because of his five years of wireless operations experience during World War II, Jack was able to train other volunteers and Israelis in the operation and use of wireless equipment. Jack also worked as a wireless operator in Aqir’s crucial underground wireless center, receiving and passing on coded messages for the Israeli Air Force.
At the end of the War of Independence, because of his excellent service, the Israeli Air Force asked Jack to remain in Israel as an Air Force Instructor. However, Jack decided to return to Canada, where he met his future wife, the former Ruth Myerson; and he settled, for the second time, back into civilian life, and raised a family. Jack’s family misses and remembers him, and says he is best described as a very nice person.

Shawn David Olfman

Condolences may be sent to
Ruth Olfman
70 Polson Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2W 0M2

Joe Tunis:
Anti-tank Gunner at Faluja and Iraq el-Sueidan

Joe Tunis immigrated to Canada from Poland with his parents and sister in 1927, when he was a year old. He was brought up in Vegreville, Alberta, and after high school moved to Vancouver to study at the University of British Columbia.

In May 1948 he interrupted his university studies to help defend the nascent Jewish State in the War of Independence. Joe got to Israel in June 1948 on the SS Marie Anick, which had sailed from France carrying Machalniks from different countries. Before long he and six other Canadian volunteers found themselves in the 4th Troop of the Anti-Tank Regiment. He took part in raids against the Iraq el-Sueidan police fortress during October’s Yoav campaign, and in the fighting at the Faluja pocket during the Horev campaign some two months later. Their unit was initially formed as a mortar battery, largely because its commander was a former US Army officer with WW2 mortar experience. But due to a shortage of mortars and the Givati Brigade’s fortuitous capture of two 6-pounder and one 17-pounder anti-tank guns, it was soon converted to an anti-tank unit.

After the war Joe opted to make his home in Israel, and in 1951 he married Susan Stern at Moshav Kfar Daniel. They were among its original members, together with Machalniks from Canada, USA, South Africa and Britain. Kfar Daniel was their home ever since.

Joe Tunis passed away on September 11th 2002. He is survived by Susan Tunis, their children Mickey, Rachel and Moshe, his sisters Lee Kramer and Polly Howard, and nine grandchildren. His former comrades-in-arms fondly remember Joe as a very warm and friendly person who was always supportive of his buddies. He is sadly missed by everyone who knew him.

Eddy Kaplansky
kaplansk@actcom.com

Elkan Levitan:
IAF Aero-engine Mechanic

Although an air force’s heroes are sure to be found among its fliers, heroics are not necessarily their exclusive domain. A case in point is the WW2 record of Elkan Levitan, who passed away on September 12th 2002 in the Montreal suburb of Laval after a long illness. He was in his 80th year.

Elkan was barely 18 when he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1941. After training as an aero-engine mechanic, he was posted to No. 410 Squadron in England where he serviced the air-defense unit’s Mosquito night fighters. His next assignment was in Scotland with No. 403 Squadron, a Coastal Command unit equipped with Bristol Beaufighters. After a while he was sent to a newly formed squadron in England, No. 433, the first RCAF unit to use Halifax heavy bombers.

Several months before the end of the war in Europe, Elkan was assigned to a combined operations unit in Italy whose purpose was to remove secret equipment from downed Allied airplanes, or, if unable to do so, to destroy the airplane. The unit was made up of several six-man teams, each consisting of two infantry soldiers, two demolition experts and two airplane mechanics. They operated in front-line areas, and at times were involved in skirmishes with the enemy.

On April 28th 1945, shortly before VE-Day, Elkan’s team was behind enemy lines on a joint mission with four other teams when suddenly they came across a German infantry unit. Being greatly outnumbered, they considered surrendering, but much to their delight the Germans surrendered to them instead.

While Elkan was in Italy, Jewish personnel in nearby Allied military units were invited to a Pass-
EXODUS PLAQUE AT THE SMITHSONIAN TO BE DISPLAYED AGAIN

Eli Bergman reports:

I had discussions last week in Washington on the likely future of the EXODUS plaque in the Smithsonian with Dr. Paul Johnson, Curator of the U.S. Maritime Enterprise Exhibit. Johnson is the person who arranged and escorted an AVI group during a visit to the Museum in conjunction with our program at the Holocaust Museum introducing Rudy Patzert’s book in 1994. The plaque was removed last year together with many items that will be held in storage while the section is being renovated. The timetable for completion is 12-18 months. Johnson is aware of our commitment to the plaque and expects that it will be restored along with the other exhibits.

Meanwhile the Smithsonian is raising funds from private sources to finance the renovation and additions to the Smithsonian museums. I told Johnson I did not think AVI was in a financial position to participate in this venture which involves big bucks mainly from firms in the transportation sector — but would let him know if any surprises or hidden treasures emerged. This private participation is an aim of the new Smithsonian administration, which has caused some criticism from the professional staff and others. I gather, though, that with the exception of one major and highly publicized episode in which a prospective donor wanted to call the shots (the donation was rejected) it is going well.

HOW MANY OF US WERE THERE?

Various estimates have been tossed around regarding the number of Machal volunteers who were recruited from around the world. Eddy Kaplansky estimate 3500. He explains that the 3500 estimate was arrived at in the early 1990s by the late Joe Heckelman, Joe Woolf and me, soon after we completed our year-long task of identifying the Machal fallen and missing. Both lists were needed for plaques on the Machal Memorial.

The calculation was based on a combination of known numbers, projections and guestimates, in some cases. We started with reasonably accurate by-then known numbers for:

2. The South Africans: From Katzews manuscript SOUTH AFRICA’S 800.
3. Machal killed and missing: From our f/m research project.
4. IAF aircrew personnel: From my work, THE FIRST FLIERS.
5. The volunteers from Canada: From another of my research projects.
6. The volunteers from Denmark: compiled by Danish Machalinik David Israel.
7. Those from Finland: compiled by Finnish Machalinik Shlomo Kafka.
8. Those from Columbia: “10 or 11” says Columbian Machalinik Yakov Ghittes, “they were all at my wedding.”

Our South American representative in World Machal provided estimates on the South Americans that seemed reasonable. By projecting aircrew data from THE FIRST FLIERS, we arrived at seemingly reasonable estimates for several other countries. For the US we added the Aliya Bet numbers to estimate 1100 maximum. The numbers for Britain and France we had to guestimate, reasoning that they were not much different than the Canadian number.

The total came to some 3250, which we ‘rounded’ to “about 3500” to please those who apparently believe that more is better.

Recently, I have learned that the numbers for USA, South Africa and France were less than originally estimated, and that there were volunteers from China, Sweden and one or two other countries whose numbers roughly balance those we previously overestimated. All told therefore, I expect the “about 3500” estimate will remain valid.

WELCOME TO NEW ‘GLOBAL’ MEMBERS

Over the past few months the AVI has offered membership to veterans beyond its usual United States, Israeli and Canadian constituencies. The following individuals have availed themselves of the opportunity and AVI welcomes them.

Australia
Maurice Fremder
Geoff Stark

Belgium
Lazard Perez
Mathilde Strassman
Jean Zeydmann

France
Maurice Fajerman

Israel
Shaul Bubis
Menachem Fuss
Jacobo Gitis
Sol Jacobs
Yaacov Shelach

South Africa
Freda Lewis
Julian Schragenheim

Switzerland
Maurice Stroun

United Kingdom
Eti Bohm
Michael Brecker
Jack Freedman
Sidney Graham
Leslie Greenhouse
Sydney Jacobs
Gerald Levy
Melville Malkin
Maurice Mann
Jack Mann
Gerald Power
Stanley Summers
Betty Weisberg

U.S.
Abe Sacks
To the Editor:

Since 1998, Mahal 2000 helps young Jews from around the world who wish to volunteer to the IDF. Now Mahal2000 asks you to contribute to the defense of Israel - from your computer. Please spread the word to the young Jews who wish to volunteer to the Israel Defence Forces (IDF):

2. Forward this email to webmasters of as many as possible websites with a Jewish audience
3. Spread the word to your friends who might be interested in volunteering to the IDF or spreading the word further

If you want to do more, see "Support Us" on the Mahal2000 page http://www.mahal2000.com

Thank you in advance for helping to defend Israel.
Sincerely yours,
Daniel Katz
Mahal2000

The following are some questions put by the editor of the Newsletter to Daniel Katz and his reply.

Dear Dan:

Thank you for letting us know of this most positive program. I would like to consider an announcement in our newsletter but need to ask some questions for clarification:

1. The up-front pitch is for IDF service but your 'alma muta permit describes itself as simply a program to encourage aliyah. Why the discrepancy?
2. The original Machal did not require aliyah. I understand that this program must because IDF does not take foreign volunteers. This difference from the original Machal should be made clear.
3. Since the program involves aliyah and the requirements of the Law of Return it must be restricted to bona fide Jews. The original Machal included Christians and we still number Christians among our members. Further, the Definition of Jewishness still follows that of the Israeli orthodox rabbinate. What are the implications for an American Jew, or a modern orthodox female, who would of this problem would be the case of an ultra-orthodox Jewishness under the patrilineal formula? The other side can Reform Jew with a non-Jewish mother who claims orthodox rabbinate. What are the implications for an American Jew?

Machal2000 program.

Sidney Graham (Gumpricht)
London

To the Editor:

Thank you for your summer issue. Please continue to send me future issues. All news about Machal is greatly appreciated. I am formerly from South Africa along with another 25 or so who have migrated to Australia. Looking forward to your next issue,
Fred Sarif
Point Piper, Australia

To the Editor:

Many thanks for the AVI Newsletter. I am interested to continue receiving the Newsletter.

With best wishes for the New Year and well over the Fast.
Jack Mann
Israel Air Force 1948-9
Eastcote, Pinner, Middlesex

To the Editor:

Many thanks for sending me the Newsletter, which I found extremely interesting. I went to Israel via Aliya Bet from Marseilles on the Narkas in May 1948 and served in Shin Mem 2 for almost a year and a half.

The highlight of my service was when I intercepted an S.O.S. from the SS Richard Bourchard, which had been attacked by the Egyptian destroyer Emir Farouk. This message gave us the position of the Farouk that was ultimately sunk as a consequence.

Shalom and good luck and shana tovah.
Sidney Graham (Gumpricht)
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex

To the Editor:

Many thanks for the AVI Newsletter. I am interested to continue receiving the Newsletter.

Shalom u’v’racha,
Joe Woolf
Moshav Ilaninya

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Sidney Graham (Gumpricht)
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex
of the 101 who get the top billing. But for the record let it be known that there were seven different squadrons that made up the IAF. I did 50 combat missions. The 69th Hammer Squadron dropped bombs on some very important targets. When the three B-17's left Miami for Zatec Czechoslovakia, I inherited the responsibility as Chief Flight Engineer making sure the 17's reached Zatec. All of this was not chopped liver. (He provides a number of additional examples of neglect of others than the 101st.)

For heaven's sake give some other men some credit too...Here are some fine men of the 69th B-17 Squadron that I would like to mention. All are incredibly dedicated men. Bill Katz, who became chief pilot for El Al; Al Raisin, Sam Feldman, Morris Yanker, Irv Aaronson and Jules Cubernek

William Lichtman
Chicago

Reply:

Thanks for your comments, which I read with great interest. Inasmuch as I write the article, I would like to clarify a couple of points. First, the essence of the article, if you read it again, is precisely the point that the Machal contribution has not been adequately recognized neither in Israel nor abroad.

My intention in writing the article was not to present a comprehensive on the Machal contribution including all the Air Force units in which Machal guys served...This is a different theme. My focus was on the connection of the Messerschmitts and the early Spitfire shipments that came from Czechoslovakia and involved the 101 Squadron. The more comprehensive story that you are alluding to should be written and perhaps you would like to tackle for the Newsletter. I know that Sam Klausner, as Editor, would appreciate receiving it.

Si Spiegelman

To the Editor:

The article by Si Spiegelman in the Newsletter Summer 2002 is AOK and very informative, as expected, but it contains an unfortunate little error which may well be my doing. I'm referring to the information, attributed to me, that 33 IAF pilots were killed or missing in 1948/49. In fact 10 of those 33 fliers had aircrew trades other than pilots (see page 37 TFF). Whether my error or yours, I trust you'll agree that it merits a note of correction in the next Newsletter.

Eddy Kaplansky, Haifa

To the Editor:

I was thrilled to receive your Newsletter and read it from page to page. Of particular interest to me was the article by Joe Woolf, a friend with whom I still maintain contact.

I am a Machalnik, an ex-South African and now I am happy to tell you that I am an American citizen. There were seventeen Machalniks from my hometown in South Africa. On our return we had annual get-togethers which continue even today.

Abe Sack
Nashville, TN

To the Editor:

Thanks very much for your two complimentary magazines that I found most interesting. I will keep my eyes scanned for news of old comrades. I served in the Air Force in 48/49 and helped start the radar unit. My friends knew me as Jack and I am in touch with comrades Milton Sackin of Pittsburgh and Sam Greene of Manchester. We went over on the Pan York.

G. Jack Levy
London, U.K.

To the Editor:

I read with special interest the letters telling the story of the birth of the Israeli Paratroop Corps (AVI Newsletter, Fall 2002). Many names turn up but the name of Charles Bortz does not appear.

In early 1948 I was part of a group of volunteers that sailed from New York bound for Israel by way of France. During the trip I became well acquainted with one of the group, Charlie Bortz. Charlie was not Jewish and had served as a Staff Sergeant in the 101st Airborne and had made the jump on D-day and engaged in all the fighting that followed. We were both the same age and had enlisted in 1942. After reaching Camp Zebulon near Marseilles, Charlie and I were separated from the group and were sent together with volunteers from other camps. Charlie had been experienced in the sea and was engaged with the 101 on Israeli ships in port. Charlie had spent a short time at sea after the war.

A few days later we helped load the Pan York with refugees and our original group was on the way to Israel. We were on hand to take the lines of a decommissioned U.S. Navy P.C., renamed Yucatan, that had made a very long trip from the United States. Charlie, Anahan Pizaro, and an ex-Dutch naval officer, and I boarded the Yucatan as part of the crew for the trip to Israel. We docked in Haifa at the end of August or the beginning of September 1948. Charlie Bortz left for the Paratroops that was, at the time, located on the Carmel, and was made an officer. I remained on the Yucatan, renamed Noga K-26, Pizaro was executive and later, Captain. I served as Chief Boatswain and 3” gunner.

A few days after docking we started organizing our crew. I decided to go up to the Base of the 72nd Infantry. I wanted to influence one of my friends to join our crew. I did not succeed but I met his C.C. who was Captain Appel. Charlie Bortz was already an officer in the Paratroops.

Our homeport was Haifa and Charlie visited us. Later, the training took place in Ahuza where Charlie Bortz was in charge of the Jump School. The C.O. was Yovel Pelgi.

After the war, in May 1949 I joined the new settlement Moshav Habonim. Charlie continued his two-year contract with the paratroopers. Before leaving Israel he came to say goodbye and that was the last time I saw or heard of him. Aharon Ranot
Israel

To the Editor:

I received the Fall 2002 Newsletter and was sad to note that in the breakdown of the Medical Corps 1948-49 that I was the only trained radiographer. I worked at No. 10 military hospital with my late husband, a medical doctor, and a strong contingent of South Africans. We all worked very hard and were a well-knit group headed by Cyril Kaplan and Dr. Wilton. Originally the late Arthur Heffel recruited us. Dr. Ossie Treisman from Boston can tell you lots of stories.

Good luck in your efforts.
Ruth Landsman
South Africa

To the Editor:

Thank you very much for the Summer 2002 AVI Newsletter. Jack was thrilled to see in your photo on P. 1 his old friend George Lichter. Having been married to Jack for 49 years I have been “brought up” on the exploits of the Mahal, especially the Air Force. Jack was at one time a squadron leader of 101. We were very sorry to hear about the passing of Benny Peled of the IAF.

There is no Mahal as such in Australia so Jack does not get much news. Jack and I were in Israel in 1973 (We lived in South Africa at that time.) and again in 1998. But due to severe health problems won’t be able to make any more air trips. We can be contacted through out son-in-law Alan Abrahams at avrm@bigpond.net.au.

May and Jack Cohen
Caulfield, Victoria
Australia

To the Editor:

In October we had a meeting in Balfour House. So many are now missing! I was wounded in the hills of Jerusalem and had surgery five times. I refused amputation and was on crutches three years. With a 1952 diploma earned in the U.K., I now work as a Music Therapist.

Etty Bohm
London, U.K.

To the Editor:

When I received the fall issue of the AVI Newsletter I broke down with emotion. All I read was part of my life—except I am not American. Hence I need to introduce myself. In 1937 my family escaped from Germany via Switzerland, Poland, Rumania. My father was a great Zionist and we had the necessary ‘certificate’ to go to Palestine. I was 13 years young and we had no material assets and we were received by an uncle who lived in Haifa and by a hail of bullets from Arab terrorists. I loved Haifa, learned English and found a job. In 1947 I joined the Haganah and was sent to a training camp and then to Tel Litwinsky to join the army. Fate decided otherwise. I got on the wrong truck to Herzliya and arrived at the 101 Squadron with two other girls. I quickly learned that all of the pilots were Machal who were staying in Kfar Shemaryahu. I have a beautiful photo with Ezer Weizmann and Maurice Mann of the U.K.E.I met my first husband, Frank, in Haifa. That marriage did not last and I came to the United States where I married Jerome Greenhut who had fought in the Philippines. Sadly, he passed away in 1995. There is a picture of me in I Am My Brother’s Keeper (p. 224).

I wish I could send you money but I live on SS alone and have Medicaid but hope you will continue to send me the Newsletter.

Lucie Greenhut
New York

To the Editor:

Of late I have been reading about men and their service in the IDF in 1948. I have also been receiving letters and a ‘phone call which I consider rude. I do not know

letters continued on Page 9
whether the caller is a member of Avi but he told me he flew in Israel. He wanted to know what I did which I found ill mannered. So, I told him that I shot down a hundred Arab planes.

As for myself, I have never been in the hero business. I was in World War II and I went to Israel because I felt I had to. I never considered myself a hero. The real heroes to me are the guys that never made it back. They gave their all serving Israel. I am thankful I came out of WWII and the 1948 war alive and that is enough for me.

William Lichtman
Chicago

To the Editor:
Thank you for the complimentary issues. My subscription cheque is enclosed herewith.

Your extract from Chapter II of Teddy 'Eytan's' book brought back memories that may not entirely tie up with some of the details in your summary. This isn't really important. I first met Teddy in the refugee camp at Grandes Arenas, just outside Marseilles, about 10 April 1948. One of the Canadian volunteers insisted that I speak to him. The Canadian had also mentioned that the Haganah were suspicious of a guy such as Teddy joining up with us, the Jewish Legion of the damned. Therefore, he put this senior officer of the French army, severely wounded in World War II, on a three-week basic infantry course in one of the clandestine training camps in southern France. Most of the time it rained. Teddy was housed in a leaky tent. But, according to the Canadian, he had borne everything with good-humored patience.

To my best knowledge, Teddy came from the highest ranks of the French aristocracy. His last rank, in the French army, had been at least Lieutenant Colonel. He had been seriously wounded at the battle of Bir Hachaim in 1942 when Erwin Rommel had tried to turn General Bernard Montgomery's left (southern) flank and failed. (This was four months before the decisive battle of El Alamein that led to the final defeat of the Germans in North Africa.)

When I first spotted Teddy's lean, almost emaciated, figure (with the characteristic bent and scarred left arm), he was sitting on a concrete slab, his back against the curved corrugated steel of one of the camp's Nissen huts. He was wearing a khaki shirt and shorts. After I was introduced by the Canadian, Teddy remarked in his typical French accent, "...ze Haganah zey don't trest me..."

In June, after four of us had transferred from Battalion 31 to Battalion 81 (later 89), Teddy and I met once more. Evidently, after the Haganah had convinced itself of his bona fides he had to leave France after we did to become training office in Battalion 81. The Battalion had been raised by Moshe Dayan, our first commanding officer, initially from volunteers from Dayan's moshav, Nahalal. This time Teddy and I passed each other at a training exercise and there was no more than friendly recognition and eye contact.

The third and last time I saw Teddy was during a night operation at the end of the famous "ten days." These were the ten days between the first truce and the second during which the tactical situation changed totally. From then on we couldn't lose anymore. The task of the 8th Brigade was to open the road to the southern settlements that had been cut off by the Egyptian advance. The task of B company of Battalion 81 was to capture the village Khartiyeh near the Majdal-Hebron lateral road.

We had just passed the Egyptian held Taggart fortress at Faluja (where the Egyptians were putting up massive flare and Verey Light display) when the entire column of half-tracks came to a dead stop. Later we were told that the driver of the leading half-truck couldn't get up the further embankment of the wadi that we were crossing. There was heavy rifle and machine gun fire, with an occasional mortar bomb and once there was a six-pounder airburst above our half-track but no casualties. We were in dead ground and, for the moment, everyone relaxed. Some cigarettes were lit.

Suddenly Teddy appeared out of the dark. "Are you crazy?" he said in a tone of utter contempt (and no French accent that I can remember). "Put out those cigarettes at once!"

The above should add a little to your information about this great man. Mike Isaacson of Pretoria can confirm what actually happened. Two platoons had advanced during the night from Tamra village to the mountaintop in line formation with fixed bayonets (those who had them), without meeting any opposition except perhaps wild random shots high above our heads. All hell broke loose only at dawn when the enemy counter-attacked. In fighting it off three men were killed (from Canada, Belgium and Britain).

6. "The army base of Samaria near Netanya." Now called "Scraga," Samaria was actually close to Nahariya, some 30 miles north of Netanya.

7. "Ben-Gurion awaited them on the dock" Really! I suppose the 'old man' had nothing more important to do in those desperate days than wait on the dockside for the arrival of displaced persons from Europe.

8. "He accompanied the DPs to Palestine, arriving shortly after the State was declared." His IOF number (64563) indicate that he probably arrived on August 14th or later, considering that it is in the same range as the IOF numbers of Machalniks who arrived on the Fan York on August 14th, 1948. They were Cohen 64283, Esiner 64291, Goodman 64263, Katz 64524, Kesselman 64522, Klorman 64524, Nadel 64299 and Paschkoff 64284.

So much for Lou Laurie's account. Also Sam Pivnik's article in the last Newsletter was flawed, even after allowing for tricks of memory. Actually no South African of the 79th Battalion was killed in a tank (read "armoured truck").

Pivnik stated. Perhaps he was thinking of South African Lou Hack who was in the 72nd (infantry) Battalion, and was killed on October 23rd during a deep penetration foot patrol. Nor did we, the 7th Brigade, liberate Safed. The Palmach and the Golani Brigade achieved this on May 10th, long before we operated there. Safed was the starting point for Operation Hiram on October 28th, during which we defeated the P.L.A. (Palestine Liberation Army) - one of the objectives of Operation Hiram. While it is correct that Pivnik's battalion, the 79th, decimated a volunteer Syrian company of the P.L.A. in their attack on Jish, this unfortunately doesn't mean that they defeated the Syrian army.

May I suggest to the Newsletter's editorial committee that personal accounts should be more carefully edited before being published, as some that I've read were pure fantasy.

Joe Woolf,
Mosheh Ilanyia, Israel.

Comment: Since the Newsletter is a one-man volunteer operation, it is not feasible to do significant "fact checking." Our readers must act as the editorial board and send along their versions of reports as Joe Woolf did above. So, the Newsletter continues to invite Machalniks to submit accounts of their experiences in the knowledge that another Machalnik may offer an alternative version. The original author has the right to offer a reply.
Machal China
continued from Page 1

chaps, on specific orders of Menachem Begin and Haim Landau, were ordered to return to China to initiate an Eztez cell there and to mobilize and train Chinese youth, to join the fighting expected to break out in Israel. This took place Pesach 1948.

The original concept, as devised inter alia by Eliahu Larkin, the commander of the Altalena, who too was of “Chinese” origin, Eytan Livni, Eztez operations chief, Arie Ben Eliezer and others of the Irgun High command, was to transport the volunteers from China and from surrounding areas, as well as some from the West Coast USA by sea from a Chinese port. For this purpose they were to purchase a LCT or similar vessel in Shanghai, and obtain arms, which were readily available from American WW II surplus equipment stockpiles in the region. The plan included the enlistment of another ex China hand, who had served in the US Navy, and by this time was a naval Capitan with American President Lines, and with the assistance of other American and local (China) sailors and military volunteers, the ship was to sail with about a battalion strength of fully armed and prepared troops and land in Aqaba, to join up with IDF forces from the North. The operation was headed by a young woman who was the China delegate to the Zionist congress in 1946 in Basle Switzerland, and head of the Betar movement in China, Ms. Judy Hasser later to become Mrs. Ben Eliezer. This idea was well advanced, but collapsed for a number of political reasons, and needs to be told in detail on another day.

The problem now facing the volunteers from China was to obtain appropriate traveling documents. Initially we forged authentic looking European passports, the writer does not want to mention the country, for obvious reasons. However since any itinerary from China to Europe (This long before the Jet Age) and hence to Israel, required passage through Arab controlled territories it was considered too risky, so other alternative means were devised and finally the two groups were ready to leave.

The first group consisting of five boys left Shanghai by plane in October 1948 and traveled on a Laissez Passer issued by a clerk in the French Embassy in Tianjin, who was a Jewish boy from France and going around (and finally married) one of the local girls. Jean Pierre was eventually fired from the French Foreign Service for this episode and always thanked us, since after leaving the French Foreign Service he became a successful businessman and very well off. The Laissez Pass indicated that the traveler was going to join the French Foreign Legion and the authorities enroute were asked to provide their assistance. One of the group’s stop was Basra in Iraq, where they spent 4 hours including lunch and haircut. Two of the boys in the first group were of Iraqi origin, and spoke Arabic and had a hard time controlling themselves.

The second group of 8 men traveled on Soviet papers, except for Harry Marinsky who still had his Polish Passport. They flew via Damascus in Syria, in mid December of 1948, and decided to leave some sign of their transit, it seems that haircuts were in style. The existing dangers of transiting Arab countries, at war with Israel, was dwelt upon as were the dangers involved in these journeys, but there was no other alternative to reach the war in progress in Israel.

The first Group consisted of: Samby Muller group leader now in Kfar Shmaryahu
Al Jacobs now in Australia
Johnny Jacobs z’I (Israel)
Joe Pittel now in Natanaya
Sammy Pollak now in Neve Monsson (Efrain).

The second group consisted of:
Harry Marinsky z’I (Israel) group leader
Bobby Bershadsky now in Jerusalem
Vova Dichte now in Zurich
George Kanpol (Kanzepolsky) now in Savyon
David Kopievker now in Jerusalem
Emmanuel Pratt (Pirutinsky) now in Jerusalem
Aaron Rothfeld now in Australia
Boris Silberg now in Ramat Chen.
*Marinsky published a book “B’or ve B’seter” describing some of the exploits enroute to Eretz Israel.

Both groups initially landed in Paris, the first group was temporarily arrested overnight (at the airport) and met next day with Jules Moch, then Minister of Interior, who wanted to see how 5 guys traveled on a sheet of paper, without a picture, half way around the world. The boys were released, the Irgun had good French Connections, and given temporary French papers. The volunteers arrived in Haifa via the Marseilles staging area, and were inducted in Tel Litvinsky. The first group arrived in early December ’48, the second group arrived about 3 weeks later.

Since the boys were all fully drilled and combat trained, they were sent directly to the Southern Front, and participated in the liberation of the Negev. They were stationed for some time in Ein Hussein, which was the farthest outpost of the IDF in the Western Negev - December 1948. The two groups with some South African Machalnikim in main, and a spattering of Americans and French volunteers formed a company, which was commanded by Capitan Grisha Vernikoff, who himself made aliya from China in the early thirties. We all were a happy and highly professional bunch. The whole Chinese detachment was later incorporated in the 8th Gdud (Battalion) of the Negev Brigade (Palmach). Towards the end of the Independence war in April ’49, and the disbanding of the Palmach, some stayed on in the army in different other units, others demobilized and went their way in civilian life.

It is worthwhile to point out that in main, all the initial volunteers from China made aliya and remained in Israel, occupying different positions in Israeli society. The group still meets from time to time and remain good friends, telling tall stories of times that were. Here is a list of some of the books related to China written from the authors perspective. My write up while a little dry is a summary of facts as I remember them.

a) MY CHINA, Jewish life in the Orient 1900- 1950 By Yaakov Liberman
b) Shanghai Lost, Jerusalem Regained
By Judith Ben Eliezer (nee Hass er Published in Israel, Steimatsky
Both of the above are in English and published in the early Nineties (?)
c) B’or uve’seter (In Light and In Darkness) In Hebrew By Arie Marinsky Edanim Publishers, Yediot Ahronot, Israel

Information on additional books written on the subject would be available from the Secretariat of Igud Yotziei Sin.

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Pres. Katzav continued from Page 1

ing Latin American Machal) and Al Schwimmer (Israel Aircraft Industries). I took the occasion to announce that in response to a demand for an English version of the Booklet, a translation was already under way; the next step was to find funding for the project. The reception concluded with remarks by President Katzav, who pointed out to the representatives of the Ministry of Education that more has to be done to create awareness of Machals historic role. They deserve it. He plans to invite the committee to Beit Hanassi for Israels 55th anniversary celebrations and suggested we organize a World Machal Conference, which he would host.

A Review


Mahal is lovely booklet with an attractive cover design by Nehama Vimer. It sketches the recruitment of non-resident Jews and non-Jews, known by their Hebrew acronym as Mahal, and their role in the armed struggle between the nascent Israel IDF and the Arab states in 1948-1949. Introductory comments recall the foreign volunteers, mostly American and Canadian, who served on the ships of aliyah bet. Markovitzki, the principal author, lectures at the University of Haifa on Israeli military history. The other contributors, Porath, Kaplansky and Woolf, are veterans of Mahal who subsequently settled in Israel and have followed the history of Mahal and the war assiduously. The writing is direct and simple Hebrew appropriately to the main target audience, middle school students.

Early on we learn that the volunteers from 43 countries were impelled by a variety of motives including a Jewish national commitment, anti-imperialism, a humanitarian impulse an adventurism. Presumably, religion, Judaism, was not a significant motive or the authors did not think of it or subsumed it under nationalism. Recruits with military infantry, tank and artillery experience were sought in North America through Land and Labour for Palestine. A group led by Hyman Schechtman and Al Schwimmer sought recently discharged military air personnel. A Canadian group succeeded in recruiting personnel for the armoured corps, many of whom fought with the Givati Brigade. Recruiters in Europe and South Africa dispatched only a fraction of their volunteers due to lack of financial resources and organizational inefficiencies. Following their arrival in Israel, difficulties emerged in integrating them into Israeli units, partly for reasons of language and partly over disagreements about the obligations of the volunteers. The military responded with a unit designed to attend to the special problems of Mahal and by organizing English and French speaking units.

Most of the personnel of the Air Force, especially the pilots, were Mahal. They performed a vital service in creating a supply line from Czechoslovakia to Israel and in assisting the ground forces in stemming the Egyptian advance in the northern Negev. With English as the operative language of these units they had fewer organizational problems. The organization of the navy under the young Annapolis graduate, Paul Shulman, was accompanied by conflict with Israeli seamen trained in the period of underground operations. A letter to her family from the officer of her unit, caps a poignant vignette of the death of Esther Kalingold, a teacher from England, in defense of the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. Photographs scattered throughout the booklet, provided by Eddy Kaplansky, add a tinge of personal memory. Perhaps the fact that they are amateur snapshots, and so lack something in focus, lightning and composition, may even add to this personal feeling.

It may be difficult for the work to reach its intended audience of school children. The tale is descriptive, more informational than educational. It misses what the contemporary educator calls teaching moments. Thus, we learn of the locally illegal aspects of recruitment and supply. This could be the basis for student problem solving for the student. How did the Yishuv deal with such barriers? What other tactical options were available? What are the moral dilemmas here? Or, we learn of problems of tension between volunteers and Israeli personnel. What is the real basis of such tension? What part do the personalities of volunteers play in this? What might be the role of unclear authority structures? Or, we learn that non-Jewish volunteers were not fully trusted. Might this be related to the conspiratorial atmosphere of the underground days or the importation of attitudes based on European experience? How might the Israeli military, or any military, deal with prejudice in the ranks? Unfortunately, the bibliography is weighted with historical novels and memoirs. It has some, but not enough, references to credible historical works.

Without this educational problem setting, school officials are less likely to adopt the booklet than they would be otherwise. An experienced educator could easily rework the booklet in this way. One notes that the information office of the Ministry of Education produced it. Why did it not come through the Ministry of Defense? The above article mentions an English translation in progress. Hopefully, these types of modifications can find their way into the English text.

The Editor

SPRING EVENTS OF AVI’S EASTERN REGION

The annual A.V.I. Memorial Service to commemorate chaverim killed in Israel’s War of Independence will be held on Sunday morning, May 4th, at the West Point Military Academy. Ceremonies will begin in the Jewish Chapel with a reception starting at 10 A.M. followed by a service 11 A.M. in the chapel. This will include a presentation of colors, remarks by an AVI leader and blessings and an invocation by the West Point Jewish Chaplain. Ceremonies will continue at the gravesite of Colonel David (Mickey) Marcus with a reading of the names of the fallen, a memorial chant and a six gun salute by the cadet Honor Guard.

While our members in the Eastern Region arrange the event it is a national AVI memorial. Members coming from afar should be able to arrange hospitality in or near New York on the evening before the ceremony.

The New York annual Salute to Israel parade will take place on Sunday June 1. Those in and around New York will receive information on the order of march.
NEWSLETTER INDEXING: CALL FOR BACK ISSUES

We are planning to prepare a comprehensive index for the AVI Newsletter. This will facilitate searching for names and events in the organization’s history. We have a complete file of Newsletters from 1993 to the present. Following are the Newsletters we have in our archive dating back to 1966. Do you have copies of Newsletters not on this list? If so, please send them to Samuel Klausner, 7055 Greenhill Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19151. If you request, the copies you submit will be returned to you after they are indexed. If you do not request their return, they will be placed in the AVI archives at the University of Florida and available to future researchers on Machal.

Dec. 9, 1966
Feb. 10, 1970
Aug. 24, 1970
Feb. 2, 1971
Dec. 1, 1971
March 1, 1972

April 14, 1972
July 1972
Sept. 1, 1972
March 1973
July 1973
Nov. 6, 1973
April 8, 1974
June 1974
October 1974
March 1975
May 1975
October 1975
April 9, 1976
April 21, 1977
August 22, 1977
Dec. 8, 1977
Dec. 27, 1977
February 1978
June 1978
January 1979
April 1979
January 1980
July 1980
December 1980
June 1981
September 1982 (approx.)
December 1983
December 1983
Dec. 14, 1983

July 1984
March 1985 (approx.)
April 1985
September 1985
Nov. 11, 1985
October 1987 (approx.)
January 1988 (approx.)
March 1988 (approx.)
March 23, 1988
April 1988
May 5, 1988
May 11, 1988
December 1988 (approx.)
January 1989 (approx.)
March 1989 (approx.)
April 1989 (approx.)
July 1989
January 1990 (approx.)
February 1990
June 1990
November 1990 (approx.)
December 1990 (approx.)
May 1991 (approx.)
August 1991 (approx.)
December 1991 (approx.)
March 1992
May 1992
July 1992
November 1992
Nov. 17, 1992

BEN HAGAI STEUERMAN FEATURED IN KENOSHA NEWS

The Kenosha News published Ben Hagai Steuerman's Mahal story on April 12, 1998. Selections follow:

Steuerman, a member of Mahal says, “World War II had just ended, and a young Steuerman was considering a career as a rabbi. While serving in the U.S. Navy as a marine engineer he was asked to conduct religious services and he felt this to be his calling. Before becoming involved in Israel’s struggle he remembers saying, We are tired of being kicked around. The Holocaust made a tremendous impression. We’re going to fight.”

Steuerman was arrested 13 times by the British secret service, before being forced to leave Palestine and he returned to his home in Brooklyn. There a man named Green who requested that he repair three small ships to be sent to Israel approached him. He says, “I worked on repairing the ship, the USS Yucatan which later became the Noga." A year later he returned to Israel to become an officer in the Israeli navy aboard the Noga.

Dues Reminder
If you have not yet sent your dues of $36 for 2003 please do so now. Unfortunately, with the loss of so many members, we cannot continue to subsidize members by sending the Newsletter. This does not apply to those exempt from dues such as widows of AVI veterans.

David Gerard, Treasurer
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New York, NY 10016-0914