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AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL

VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

UNITED STATES & CANADA VOLUNTEERS

136 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016

West Point 2005: More Reports

Volunteering to Become a Hero

Boaz Ga'on, West Point

This article was originally published in the Shavuot Supplement to Ma'ariv, June 6, 2005. It has been translated by the AVI Newsletter editor. The article belongs to a literary genre of perceptions of the "self" by the "other" such as European travelers who publish their perceptions of America. Of course, American Jews dedicated to Israel minimize differences between themselves and their Israeli compatriots. Yet, life conditions and experiences leave their marks.

Colonel "Mickey" Marcus was killed in the Jerusalem hills during the War of Independence. Ilan Chersky arrived from Beverly Hills and was killed in 1973 on the banks of the Suez Canal. Paul Kaye ran away from his home in 1947 in order to help establish the Israeli fleet. Bob Marom was a tank driver in the Yom Kippur War. Once each year Kaye, Marom and their colleagues gather at the prestigious West Point Military Academy in order to memorialize the Jews who fell in the 1948 war.

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Remains of Two Machal MIAs Found and Identified After 57 Years

The Machal memorial at Sha'ar Hagai lists 40 names of Americans and Canadians, Jews and non-Jews, who fell in the Israel War of Independence between 1947 and 1948. Six of these are listed as MIAs and were long presumed dead. They are Jerome Kaplan, Mandel Math, Harvey Cohen, Edward Lugech, Robert Lester Vickman and

DEDICATION OF THE ALIYAH BET AND MACHAL MUSEUM

(NOV. 18-20, 2005)

Invitations to members follow by mail

American Veterans of Israel (AVI) announces a gathering of Aliyah Bet and Machal Veterans over the weekend of November 18-20 to inaugurate the Permanent Aliyah Bet and Machal Display housed in the new \$8.5 million Hillel building at Gainesville, Florida. All the events will take place at the Hillel House. Meals are prepared by the Hillel staff and are certified Kosher. Family and friends are welcome.

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Stanley Andrews. An article in both the English and Hebrew editions of Haaretz of August 15, 2005 reported finding and identifying the remains of eight MIA including Math and Kaplan. Following is a reprint of the article followed by comments from two of their comrades in the Givati Brigade and sketches of them from A. Joseph Heckelman's American Volunteers and Israel's War of Independence (1974). A photograph of Math and Kaplan along with some comrades from Givati, which appeared in the English translation of the Machal booklet (2003), accompanies the text. The AVI Newsletter, summer, 1999 p.3-4 carried a translation of an article from the Yiddish Forward on Mandel Math.

IDF team locates bodies of 8 who fell in '48

The Israel Defense Forces unit for finding missing persons recently discovered the burial sites of eight soldiers who were killed during the 1948 War of Independence and laid to rest on Mount Herzl and in Rosh Pina.

Five of the soldiers had served in the Givati unit and were killed near Kibbutz Nahshon, and

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American Veterans of Israel
136 E. 39 Street
New York, NY 10016-0914
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201 886 1188

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Naomi Kantey
201 489 3809

Activities and Membership

David Hanovice (USA)

Joe Warner (Canada)

Art Bernstein (Museum)

Representative to World Machal

Zippy Porath
zip@netvision.net.il

Websites

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~sklausne/avi-web.html>

<http://www.israelvets.com>

three of the soldiers were killed near Mishmar Hayarden.

The Givati soldiers were part of a force that captured an abandoned British detention camp near Kibbutz Nahshon. On the morning of May 13, 1948, the force was hit by heavy gunfire. Corporal Shlomo Barber, Private Yehuda Kaplan and Private Matt Mandel went to the eastern fence of the camp to get a cannon, and were killed on the spot. Two other missing soldiers - Private Yaakov Shenweiss and Private Moshe Hasman - were hit near the western side of the fence, and that is where their bodies remained.

At the end of 1949, while members of the I DF rabbinate were searching for missing soldiers from Operation Bin-Nun A, they found the bodies they were looking for, as well as those of three unidentified men buried in a mass grave of the brigade that had carried out the operation. Investigators from the missing persons unit concluded that the bodies had belonged to Barber, Kaplan and Mandel.

At the beginning of 1950, members of the IDF rabbinate conducted searches in the area west of the British detention camp and found 24 bodies of IDF soldiers. But according to the investigators, the brigade that fought there - Brigade 7 - lost 22 soldiers in the battle that took place there. The other two, say the investigators, are Shenweiss and Hasman.

Major General Elazar Stern, head of the personnel directorate, approved the inquiry findings after hearing the explanations given by IDF Chief Rabbi Brigadier General Yisrael Weiss and the investigators. The families of the dead have been informed that their graves have been found.

Eli Ashkenazi

Two Comrades Remember

Two of these soldiers, Jerry Kaplan and Mandel Matt, are well known to some of us. Jerry, from Bayonne N.J., and Mandel from Brooklyn, N.Y. were both Machalniks. Both had Zionist backgrounds and good Jewish educations. Matt was particularly Orthodox, having been an active member of Mizrachi and in his younger days, a Yeshiva bocher. Both had served in the U.S. armed forces in WWII. Jerry in the Navy as a pharmacist's mate and Mandel as an infantryman in Europe where at one time he faced a court martial for his refusal, because he was a Kohayn, to participate in a grave registration detail handling the remains of Jewish victims at Dachau.

Jerry and Mandel left New York on 3/30/48. They arrived in Israel on 4/14/48 where they met up with a group of Machalniks from Boston, Chicago and New York. The unit was assigned to Givati's 51st battallion G (as in Gimel) company, based in Kibbutz Hulda across the valley from Latrun. It was in a firefight on a hilltop across the highway from Latrun that Jerry and Mandel went missing on 5/13/48, the day before Yom Atzmaut and just one month after they arrived in Israel. *Aleihem hashalom.*

As much as we appreciate the story in Haaretz, there are a number of errors and omissions in it which should be corrected for historical accuracy: 1) the story refers to Private Matt Mandel. His name is, in fact, Mandel Matt. 2) There is no identification of Jerry and Mandel as Machalniks. 3) The story suggests that the operation in which they went missing was at

the site of an Abandoned British detention camp near Kibbutz Nachshon. Actually, that camp is nowhere near Nachshon. Rather, it is near Hulda, and the Brit's camp is today the site of a joint Israeli Arab-Jewish village known as N'veh Shalom. 4) The Haaretz story mentions "heavy gunfire" hitting the Givati force. That gunfire, according to a front page story in the Palestine (now Jerusalem) Post, the day after the battle (Friday, 5/14/48 came from six British Comet tanks stationed at the Tegart fortress at Latrun (now the IDF armored corps museum). 5) The Haaretz story also says Jerry and Mandel went to the eastern fence of the camp to get a cannon. They were in fact sent to retrieve ammo from the platoon's bus, which had been disabled by the British tank fire. There was no cannon. The heaviest piece of "artillery" in the platoon was a 2-inch mortar minus its base plate. It was on that ammo retrieval mission that Jerry and Mandel went missing. 6) Haaretz makes no mention of a search of the battlefield by a small group of platoon members the night following the firefight in a futile attempt to find the two missing men.

There's more that could be written about the contribution made by Jerry and Mandel to Israel's independence. Both participated in scouting, patrol and bridge blowing missions in the Beit Jiz, Beit Soosin and Al Kabab areas and elsewhere. Finally, it should be noted that on returning to camp at Hulda after each night's operation, Jerry and Mandel would engage in a seemingly endless discussion; the issue: since the sun was just rising when we got back to camp, what do we do first --- clean our rifles or daven shachris? In best

Talmudic fashion they are probably still debating the question wherever they are. *Lahem: Kol Hakavod.*

Arnold Sternberg

Right after the battle (it wasn't much of a battle) we had 2 cannon made of wood, plus rifles. We were being shelled and machine gunned, and had to retreat. Afterward, the bodies weren't located, and we thought maybe they had been blown up. At the same time, others were killed, and Al Glassman was hit in his finger by shrapnel. By the way, Mandel's name was Math.



L-R Top Row, Arnie Sternberg, Bert Bean, Sidney Rabinovich; Below them: Art Sockol, Mandel Math, Jerry Kaplan; Kneeling: Elly Harris, unidentified comrade, unidentified comrade, Al Glassman, Naish Band, Harry Kaye (Kravitsky)

Jerry and Mandel had already descended from the top of the hill, to safety. But they were sent back to retrieve ammo, and this time they got hit. My memory isn't what it used to be. But Jerry wasn't religious, and it wasn't his style to get into a religious discussion.

There is a big mystery here. The focus should be on the recovery of the bodies, and their burial. The article in Ha'aretz gives different dates, years apart, not only not mentioning they were Americans, but also not stating how the families were notified, and not listing where each one was buried. Something's funny.

The following was received

from my brother in Jerusalem: "Sid: I've asked the Jerusalem Post military correspondent, who originally wrote the news item, whether he can find out more or at least tell me who I can contact. He's involved right now with the evacuation story but he hopefully will come up with something."

Sidney Rabinovich

From the Heckelman book-

Mandel Math -- Born August 22, 1926, in Brooklyn, New York. Given a strongly religious upbringing at home and in school. His elementary education was at a day school (Yeshiva), continuing at Herzliah Hebrew High School in New York. His attendance at Brooklyn College was interrupted by World War II. He served in the U.S. Army, participating in the liberation of the survivors of the death camps of Dachau and Buchenwald. Was court-martialed and vindicated for his religious convictions. As a "Kohen" (a descendant of the priestly class in the days of the Temple in Jerusalem), strict Jewish Law forbids any unnecessary contact with the dead (other than one's immediate family). Mandel understood this to apply to the ashes and the other remains in the death camps, and therefore refused to participate directly in their burial, since this could be done by others and there was other work he could do. At his court-martial his position was understood and he was released. He returned to Brooklyn College, but the memory of the European survivors was very much with him. He was particularly agitated by the lack of positive action on the part of the American Government to open the gates of Palestine. Organized a general group to help the Haganah; tried to organize a group of young volunteers within his own organization

("Mizrahi") to serve in the growing war in Israel. Left for Israel March 29, 1948, and promptly enlisted in the Haganah. Killed in the battle for Latrun of May 13, 1948, together with Jerry Kaplan the day before the State was declared. His body was never recovered.

Jerome (Jerry) Kaplan-- Born in Bayonne, New Jersey. Served as a Pharmacist's Mate in the U. S. Navy in World War II. After discharge he began a course of study preparatory to University work. Upon hearing that Israel urgently needed young people to assist in its struggle, left his studies and volunteered through a Haganah channel. Sailed from New York March 29, 1948, with Mandel Math and other volunteers, arriving in Haifa April 14. From there made his way to Tel Aviv and Haganah military service. Fell, with Mandel Math, in the battle for Latrun of May 13, the day before proclamation of the State. His body was never recovered.

MACHALNIKS MANDEL MATH AND JEROME KAPLAN (MISSING-IN-ACTION)

1. (a) After writing to you on 23rd August, I received a phone call at home in the evening from Arieh O'Sullivan, one of the Jerusalem Post's military correspondents. Arieh has been very supportive of Machal over the years.

(b) Arieh had heard about the identification of the three bodies, and he gave me the phone number of Mendel's sister, Shirley Stolpner, who lives in Jerusalem, and Shirley told me the story.

2. Math's family had been notified by the IDF that Math and two comrades-in-arms - Jerome (Yehuda) Kaplan and Shlomo Barber - went missing-in-action in May 1948. During the years there was no news that

the bodies had been found. However, a short while ago, the unit for finding missing soldiers was satisfied that the remains of the three soldiers had been buried in three unmarked graves in the military ceremony on Har Herzl in Jerusalem.

3. The IDF is now apparently in touch with the three families in order to have a stone-laying ceremony for the three soldiers, and Shirley believes that the ceremony may take place some time in September, but at this moment in time, the date for the ceremony has not yet been fixed. I will try to ensure that there will be a Machal representation at the ceremony.

4. We will arrange to have the asterisk signifying "Missing in Action" removed from the Names of the Fallen on the Machal Memorial.

4. As the story unfolds, I'll keep you posted.

5. I'm very pleased that you brought the story to my attention, as I was completely unaware of this dramatic identification of the bodies.

Warmest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely,
Smoky Simon

WESTPOINT continued from pg. 1



West Point, May 2005, reading the names of the fallen. L-R Samuel Klausner, Paul Kaye, Marcel Berkowitz, Marvin Libow. *Photo by Boaz Gaon*

The first Jewish American killed in our War of Independence was Bill Bernstein. He was, *de facto*, taken out to be executed by a British

soldier who had consumed one too many beers or who tried to sink one too many illegal immigrant ships or was simply a soccer hooligan who did not believe that the red headed Jew who had just disembarked from the Exodus moments before and who tried to explain to him that he had no intent of sneaking into Israel (*sic*) but simply wanted to help Jews escape from Europe. He would return home to the lights of Los Angeles.

Bernstein was buried wrapped in the stars and stripes in the Haifa military cemetery, 22 at his death, and now his name is recalled emotionally by old men in berets filled with fifty years of dust and moth holes who have been coming to West Point for 39 years to stand at attention and to sing, with honest emotion, the anthem, first the American and then the Israeli, which they call *hatiqveh*.

The first American Jew killed in the war in Iraq was named David Bernstein. He was killed in Taze in Iraq after grenades were rained on his Jeep and blew him to pieces. The pieces were wrapped in an American flag and flown to his home in Pennsylvania and from there they were sent to the Academy at West Point, on the borders of which we now stand along with Bob "Rafi" Marom who fought in Israel in 1973 and Paul Kaye who ran away from home in 1947 to establish the fleet.

This is Another Time

Of course it may or may not be likely that in another fifty years they will stand at attention at the grave of David Bernstein just as at the grave of Bill Bernstein (*sic*), old men covered with dust who awaken feelings of honor and who will blow bugles, wave flags and become

emotional, just as in public relations ceremonies. After that they will close with a muttering of *kadish* in a heavy Brooklyn accent that will be swallowed up by a glorious and deep blast of a horn.

But, somehow, this doesn't seem likely and almost impossible and even a bit sad that the place of the victims, which history recalls, as in the case of Bill Bernstein, are replaced by the victims of bureaucracy which history has already forgotten, as in the case of David Bernstein. Of those selected randomly by some military computer only God knows who will take more of an interest in their height and weight than in their strivings for the future. In order to dispel any doubt, there is no place in their eulogies, empathically sketched in places sponsored by the Pentagon. It was never written in David Bernstein's bar mitzvah speech that he longed for a democratic Iraq.

What turns everything into seven times as sad is the fact that the yearly memorial to Colonel "Mickey" Marcus, who was born in New York and arrived in Israel in 1948 to help in the War of Independence until he was killed on the Jerusalem hills. He is the only graduate of West Point buried here who was killed for the blue-white flag and not for the red, white and blue. There were only some tens of people present while at the funerals of American Jews who still come to Israel to fight, that is, those who live on two sides of the road connecting Beth El to Alon Moreh. Those are well-attended events, crowded, sweaty in which the chances of meeting the Minister of Defense is greater than that of meeting the Vice Consul for Public Relations, an excellent and talented young man

by the name of Amir Ofek, formerly our representative in Georgia and who is not interested in Madonna and even less interested in Judy, in Steve or in the Ambassador's wife.

In brief: Why is it that young American Jews from the center of the political map, grandchildren of the men and women Bill Bernsteins, are more concerned with Iraq or the West Bank than with Israel. This is the question with which I arrived at West Point in Bob Marom's silver Passat. He left home to fight in Suez while Paul Kaye, who sat in the back seat, left home to establish the Israel fleet.

Marom arrived in Israel in 1971 and was trained to drive a Sherman tank despite the fact that the IDF preferred, as he said in Hebrew, to "throw him into the Artillery." Everything was relaxed and proceeded on apparently calm waters. The underground movements had not yet begun to bubble up and Israelis flowed to the Gaza market to buy authentic water pipes. Two years later Marom took up the pen to write news for the Jerusalem Post. The IDF sent him by bus to El Arish and then to Refidim and from there to the base at Tasa not far from the banks of Suez. At Tasa Marom lost his good friend Ilan Chersky who had arrived a few weeks earlier from Beverly Hills. The night before Marom was lying in his military bunk and praying to God that he would not be killed and if he were to be killed it should not be on the next day which was his birthday. God agreed and left Marom in his bed but took his good friend Chersky.

Kaye arrived in Palestine in 1947 following an anonymous telephone caller who asked him to wait at noon the next day on the

corner of such and such a street and such and such Avenue (He thought it was a friend of his sister's). Kaye had recently tossed away his seafarer's cap after he heard that World War II had ended and that Hitler turned from a person to a historical personage. He said to himself, "Why not?" and went to the rendezvous point.

There several Haganah men said to him that if he wants to "help the Jewish people," rather than just himself and Truman, he should go to Baltimore and get on the ship Hatikva which was readying to sail for Palestine. Kaye was captured and interned in a British camp in Cyprus and then in Athlit. Its crew blew up the ship on which he arrived so that it could not return. Finally, he assisted several thousand people from Europe to get into Palestine, which became "Israel" at about the same time that Kaye shifted from the Haganah to the fleet. He called the founder of the fleet, Yochai bin Nun, "Yochy." The fleet was, at that time, based in Athlit. "Kaye's son will always remember Athlit as the site of his Bar Mitzvah.

Kaye's and Marom's children do not live in Israel. His grandchildren also do not live there. When asked about this he suddenly becomes excited about the beauty of the New Jersey's woods, so it seems. Marom said, "Among many young American Jews the idea of Israel is foggy, associated with things they learned in Hebrew school. They do not even travel to Israel to visit. Most Americans who come to Israel are Evangelical Christians."

Kaye said, "Look to the right. This is one of the most beautiful roads in the eastern United States...There is even a scouting camp here."

Marom commented, "I think it is connected with the expense of a trip to Israel...also the fact that Americans are afraid they might be blown up in Israel. After all, there is the State Department warning against traveling to Israel."

Kaye broke in, "That was another time. The world was not as small as it is today and the Arabs did not fill the news with anti-Semitism. Also, remember that we were trained by the American military. But my son, who had his bar mitzvah in the fleet base in Israel, was frightened when I said I intended to visit Israel. He said to me, "Abba, I will buy you a first class ticket if you would delay your trip for several months until things are quieter." I replied, "OK, save your money."

The forest through which we traveled to West Point rustled. The waters of the Hudson sparkled like grains of sugar and the interior of the Passat filled with the silence of the tires that hovered over the asphalt.

"Look to the right," said Marom, "the road passes close to the water exactly as in Rosh Haniqra."

"That's beautiful," said Paul Kaye," Really magnificent. It would be worthwhile coming back with the children."

A Mortar Impresses Ben David

Ya'qov Ben David sits in the dining room of the Jewish Cadet Chapel at West Point. On the wall, near the entrance to the Chapel, are two announcements side by side. One is an optimistic story of a Jewish cadet who won a fencing contest and the other the tragic report of Jewish officers who died in Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. Ya'qov

wears a black hat of a veteran of the Second World War. What it is not necessary for him to say is that he can speak without the permission of his wife Jackie sitting to his left and quaffing a sandwich the size of Austria and then an apple the size of Poland.

In 1948 Ben David was a student at the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus and subsequently was sent to fight in the Negev. He completed his Israel career as a gardener in the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem. Perhaps out of prophetic sensitivity to what was about to occur (turning all of Israel into a biblical zoo) he might be projecting the reticence of American Jewish youth towards Israel. After a useful pause, he used the Hebrew idiom "he feared for his ass."

All this contrasted with the southern gentleman H. B. Shugar who was born in Turnboro, North Carolina and knew nothing about Palestine, or about Jews, or about the Haganah until World War II ended (He was stationed in Greenland, one of the few naval officers present at the dropping of the atomic bomb on Bikini Island before the real thing vaporized Nagasaki and Hiroshima,) and like Paul Kaye he hungered for adventure and for idealism.

A few months later the Haganah entrusted him with three of its mortars. They were too heavy to move from place to place. Shugar would take a taxi each time his position was moved.. Like Kaye, Shugar was attached to the Israeli navy after the Haganah demobilized and he was sent to serve as a gunnery officer on the ship "Eilat."

Shugar, age 82, drove alone from Albany to West Point that morning in his beige Chevrolet. On the dashboard he had a pile

of autobiographical materials he had prepared the evening before in preparation for his taking part in the Colonel "Mickey" Marcus memorial. This would be a change, since the Israeli press concentrates on more burning matters such as what did Judy say to Laren concerns a correspondent serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

I asked H.B. about the picture of Gaza which he had shown me. In it he is photographed beaming happiness along with a soldier who appears so stunned that he seemed made of cardboard (not him). He said he belongs to an organization called Americans for a Safe Israel that opposes the withdrawal from Gaza because it is a part of Israel despite what those Arab bastards with towels on their head say. All this is because of the "idiot Barak who retreated from Lebanon and gave them ideas." I asked him whether his children are living in Israel and when they expect to go to serve in Gaza, the very area inseparable from Israel and populated temporarily by the wearers of towels? He replied that his children have no such plans and, besides, his son has established a company dealing with solar energy, and some of the customers are Israelis.

Monash, Kaplan, Klein

We are standing in front of the bright beige tombstone of "Mickey" Marcus, which is alongside the dark beige tombstone of his wife, Emma. Five veterans and a rabbi are holding the blue banner inscribed American Veterans of Israel. The official representative of Israel is no longer there. Several children are pulling on their mother's blouse,

a wife of one of the four Shapiro Brothers who had earlier sung the anthems in harmony. The children were impatient to return home, *nu?* Meanwhile, Paul Kaye, wearing a navy beret from 1948, called out the numbers, which had earlier been divided among the veterans so that the names of the American Jews (*sic*, not all were Jews) killed in the War of Independence would be equally divided among them.

“Number two,” Kaye called.

“William Gerson,” answered the leftmost veteran, “Glenn Ernest King, Harold Monash, Jerome Kaplan, Mandel Math.”

Kaye: “Number three.”

“Moshe Geberer, George F “Buzz” Beurling, Moses Aaron Rosenbaum, Baruch Linsky, Jacob Klein.”

Kaye: “Number four.”

Harvey Cohen”, Edward Lugech, Irving Sevin,...

Kaye: “Number five.”

“Lewis Ball, William Edmondson, Robert Lester Vickman, Reuben Schiff, Joseph Kahn.”

Kaye: “Number six.”

“Sidney Rubinoff, Spencer Andrew Boyd, Edward Leonard Troyen, Sidney Leisure, Stanley Andrews.”

The list was long, almost as long as that read earlier in the chapel. The list of *mitnadvei hutz-la'aretz* from 1948 who went to their eternal rest in the past year “may their souls rest in peace,” said Kaye, and everyone answered “Amen” and for a moment even the cynicism of the journalist, feeling a deep distress in the pit of the stomach, evaporated in the face of an undertaking born in naiveté, stained with rifle oil, and where is it today.

Memorial Service at the Cadet Chapel

AVI held its annual “Mickey Marcus” memorial service at the West Point Jewish Chapel on Sunday May 15, 2005. The ceremony memorialized Colonel Marcus among the forty volunteers who gave their lives in Israel’s War of Independence. The service was conducted in the presence of Consul Amir Ofek, representing the State of Israel, AVI members, family and guests. Representatives of the USMA Corps of Cadets were present as well as a special group of Young Judaea members led by David Rosen, Area Supervisor of the organization. Highlights of the event included the lighting of three memorial candles by USMA cadets in memory of Col. Marcus, all the Fallen and a special candle for Lt. David Bernstein respectively. Lt. David Bernstein was a graduate of the USMA class of 2001 who fell in Iraq on October 18, 2003 while leading a patrol North of Baghdad. Cadet Mathew Moosey recited the ‘The Machal’, a poem written by eleven year old Zach Ben-Amots from Colorado as a tribute to the Volunteers. (*See the account written by the cadets in the AVI Newsletter, Spring 2005.*)

Following a rousing welcome by AVI President, Ira Feinberg, Major Carlos Huerta, USMA Chaplain and Rabbi Doniel Kramer, the VA area Chaplain, conducted the Chapel service. The names of the members lost in the year were remembered by Naomi Kantey and Arthur Bernstein preceded by Sam Klausner’s “Contemplations on the Meaning of Memory.”

There is reality and there is memory of reality. The historian and the biographer attest reality.

The one who remembers shapes the memory of reality. These events of the life of one gone are chosen, dotted on, lionized, cherished, appreciated, even chided and denounced but, most importantly, mourned by the one who survives and remembers. What is valued about the deceased is that which bears meaning for the life of the survivor. That which is valued by the community is that which is portentous, bearing a future promise and hope, sometimes a fear, for the community. We strive to recognize the heroic and the selfless sacrifice of one who once lived with us.

We recall our conflict and our love for the now hidden soul and try to draw a lesson for our own lives. The way we apply that lesson will live in the memories of our survivors-and so on and on.

The names of AVI veterans who died during the past year were read.

Rose Agriss Haganah, Defense of Jerusalem

Stanley Behr Irgun Zvai Leumi

Victor Chaber, Israel Air Force

Sol Freeman, 72nd Battalion- 7th Brigade

Harlow Geberer Prisoner of War, Lebanon

Murray Kaplan, Israel Air Force

Eddy Kaplansky, Israel Air Force

Kalman Michaeli Crew, Haim Arlozoroff

Dov Mills Crew, Exodus, Paduca

Jacques Sade, Army Security (Sherut Bitachon)

Boris Senior, Israel Air Force

Eleanora Stratham, Israel Air Force Intelligence

Al Wank, Israel Navy, Palmach

Irving Weingarten Crew, Arlozoroff, Pan Crescent, Pan York

There were special eulogies to Ezer Weizman, the erstwhile President of the State of Israel, who served with the Machalniks in the Air Force and remained a steadfast friend of the Volunteers throughout his life and to Eddy Kaplansky, a distinguished Machal member who dedicated many years to document the Machal story.

Members of the Rockland Orange District carried the colors and the Shapiro Family Choir sang inspirational cantorial and Israeli musical renditions.

Following the chapel ceremony, wreaths were laid at the graves of Mickey and Emma Marcus and the names of the forty fallen were called out by AVI members. The recitation of Psalms and *Ke'l Maleh Rachamim* followed Zipporah Porath's "Tribute to Col. David Marcus" (*See below.*) read by Joseph Warner, AVI-Canada, at the graveside. The USMA cadets then concluded the ceremony with the Salute by the ceremonial rifle squad and the bugler's sounding of Taps. After the discharge of the colors, AVI members lingered to greet comrades-in-arms and old friends. Many met for a meal and time together in a local eatery.

This year's event was marked by a more visible participation of young people. They laid the wreaths at the graveside. The decline in our membership becomes more evident with each passing year. Though the chapel was filled to capacity, fewer of the old faces were noted in the assembly. Guests, instead of AVI members, made up the majority of the participants. Next year will mark the 40th consecutive year that AVI conducts the memorial service. Many feel that a new generation needs to participate

actively in perpetuating the sense of remembrance and history this memorial evokes.

For many years the West Point gathering was organized as a local event attended by AVI members residing in contiguous states. A concerted effort is now being made to broaden the attendance. Other AVI regions as well as Canada are participating to a larger extent in spite of the extensive travel.

Si Spiegelman

COL. DAVID "MICKEY" MARCUS: A Eulogy

On the first anniversary of the tragic death of Col. Marcus, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion instructed the IDF Publications Department to gather information from those who had known Mickey, or served with him, while their memories and impressions were still fresh. B.G. had in mind publicizing Mickey's heroic role in Israel's War of Independence for American youth, and I was the lucky soldier assigned to this task. The Mickey Marcus who emerged from those interviews was a fascinating and complex man.

Mickey Marcus or Mickey Stone, his *nom de guerre*, was involved in Israel's struggle for survival and independence for a total of only about 200 days. But, during that time his multi-faceted personality and tremendous vitality made a major impact on everyone he met and whatever he did. Initially, the hierarchy of the Haganah and Palmach had serious reservations concerning the charming, gregarious OUTSIDER who had volunteered to serve as military advisor. Not

everyone agreed with his military concepts or considered his contribution crucial to the winning of the war, but all were in awe of his unique personal qualities: his quick grasp of situations, ability to reduce the most complex concepts to the simplest terms, phenomenal memory, his outstanding bravery, humanity and integrity. Ultimately, he found his way into their hearts, proved his military professionalism and laid the basis for important changes in the army. Above all, he was like a shot in the arm, injecting confidence and optimism, strengthening in each man he met faith in their special abilities.

From the outset, he recognized the remarkable human material in the partisan army, and truly believed they had the makings of the best soldiers in the world. Today, when Israel's army IS one of the best in the world, his convictions proved prophetic.

Mickey Marcus personified the compelling spirit that motivated Machal volunteers to rally to the defense of the fledgling state. His heroism, and theirs, without doubt, was in the selfless act of volunteering when they were most needed.

What had been a military mission for Mickey, became a commitment of the heart. He felt privileged to be part of our struggle. In a letter to his wife he wrote: "*I doubt if I have ever done anything -- anywhere -- any time, that is more worthwhile...*"

*Zipporah Porath
Read at the graveside by Joe Warner*

Letters To The Editor

To the Editor-

Nice piece on the Abril (see Newsletter Spring 2005, "The Mighty Ma'oz" by J. Wandres, p. 1+). We crew members preferred to call her the Abril rather than the Ben Hecht. Since I was an AB on her, I can make a few minor corrections for an article that was clearly well researched and a lot of work involved. Following are citations and comments:

Citation: David Kaplan was radio officer...

Comment: There were two. Ed Sty-rak was there first, but since Dave's father was important in the Zionist affairs, he was inserted also.

Citation: Port du Bouc

Comment: It is Port de Bouc

Citation: got underway at night without a pilot...

Comment: You'd have to be nuts to do that. She left in broad daylight, the passengers singing Hatikva and then she ran aground. A typical Jewish joke if you ask me.

Citation: Kaplan saying "de mortuis nihil nisi bonum."

Comment: He was a spoiled rich kid who simply considered the crew crude shits. He got bopped on the nose for that.

Citation: Port de Bouc—a shipyard.

Comment: It was a tanker port. The Abril never moved from her anchorage until it was time to board her passengers.

Citation: 660 refugees

Comment: There were a little over 600.

Citation: She was converted into a ferry in the Naples Bay area.

Comment: Not really and error. She did the Naples-Capri run.

I did a novel based on her voyage (not really a voyage since she never returned. Technically, NYC-Marseilles-Haifa would be a series of passages.). The novel is titled, What Ship? Where Bound? Knopf, 1961. It would be a miracle if you found it anywhere.

All the best to you guys

Shepard Rifkin

POB 22048

61220 Tel Aviv

The book is available in the libraries of the University of Chicago and Hebrew Union College and may be purchased through Amazon.com for \$15.

The editor

Response from J. Wandres:

Shepard. I've read your book. Great retelling of the Abril's voyage. Consider yourself lucky that it wasn't made into a film starring Paul Newman, Sal Mineo and Eva Marie Saint.

J. Wandres

To the editor--

J. Wandres' story of the ship Abril shows much documentary research which must have required great effort. It is also a very readable account of an almost-forgotten incident, and he deserves much credit for bringing these details to light. However, not only do I have some question as to whether the Haganah "publicly applauded the play and the purchase of the vessel," the understatement that the ship "sailed from New York on December 26, 1946," obscures a serious aftermath.

When the "Ben Hecht" was to sail, the Irgun prepared a send-off party on the pier, to which the media, many public personalities, and the public in general were invited. The public relations gain for the Irgun by sending the ship was recognized as invaluable, and therefore every effort was made to publicize it. The subsequent party was well-attended, well publicized and a great success.

On the other hand, the Jewish Agency's aliyah bet activities in America were extremely secret, since British Intelligence (probably with the help of the CIA) were determined to hamper the organization in any way possible. I do not say this lightly -- I was in charge of laundering the money that came from the Sonnenborn group and others in order to confound the opposition. This was not only to obscure the recipient of the money, but also the donors, who were not sure that such donations were not somehow illegal.

In addition, we never legally registered our ships, since this in-

formation would have been on the public record and invaluable to the British. We bribed foreign consuls to give us flag papers. This not only kept them off the record, but silenced any information that might have emanated from the consuls. Again, I write from personal experience, because it was part of my job to carry and transmit the bribes (American dollars in unmarked envelopes).

Following the publicity bash of the Ben Hecht's sendoff, our sources closed up like a soundproof door. People and firms who had been providing us with material as gifts, at reduced prices, or even in the open market, refused to deal with us. Everyone was afraid of some sort of pressure or retribution from the American government, and took no chances. We couldn't buy a can of beans, a blanket, or an anchor.

More important, no foreign consul (we had been dealing mostly with Latin American countries) would take a bribe, see me, or even give me an appointment. They were understandably more frightened off by publicity around the Ben Hecht's sailing than anyone else. As a consequence, although we had ships ready to leave for Europe (where the Haganah was taking off thousands of refugees, as compared to the Ben Hecht's 609) we could get no supplies for them, and -- more important -- no flag papers.

This continued for some time, and no one can know how many thousands of refugees spent unnecessary time in exit camps and ports, could not be dealt with, or died in the meantime. The situation was finally resolved by the sympathy and courage of Sam Zemurray, head of United Fruit Lines -- but that's another story.

David Macarov

To the editor:

Today I received the Spring Edition of the AVI Newsletter, in which an article by J. Wandres about the Maoz, Ben Hecht K-24 appears on page 1,4 and 5. In the story about the sinking of the Egyptian Flag Ship King Farouk during the Israeli War of Independence, Wandres omitted the presence of 2 more Israeli War ships. During that Naval engagement, there were a total of 4 ships, including Haganah K-20, and Wedgwood K-18 beside the Maoz K-24 and Noga K-26, and the Yuchi Boats of Shayetet 13. I think that it is a disservice to omit the names of the above 2 ships in that historical event of the sinking of the Egyptian Navy Flag Ship "King Farouk."

I commend Wandres for his meticulous research about Paul Shulman, the origin and service of the Maoz, from the time she was built in 1931 and to her final destination to Naples Italy as a Ferry Boat with accountings till 1998 of her where about. However, in my opinion he should give us more information and acknowledgments regarding the sources of your information. Wandres may recall from our former correspondences and communications that I was there too, present at that Israeli Navy engagement as an Engineering Officer on board the Noga K-26 during which the Egyptian Navy Flag Ship King Farouk was sunk. Please make reference to this correction of the omitted 2 ships in our next AVI Newsletter Edition.

David Hanovice

Wandres replies:

First, thanks to Paul Silverstone for providing pictures of the ship known variously as "Argosy," "Vita" "Cythera II," "Abril," "Ben Hecht" and finally, as the I.N.S. ship K-24

"Ma'oz." Well, maybe not finally. The ship was known to be in service in 1998 as the Italian Ferry called "Santa Maria del Mare."

There was no deliberate intent to omit references to the other I.N.S. ships that took part in the raid on the Egyptian flagship "Emir Farouk," on October 22, 1948. The focus of the feature was on the one vessel and its multi-storied history. Each of the vessels that took part in Aliyah Bet and/or became the first ships of the Israeli navy have interesting stories, all well told in the Greenfield-Hochstein book "The Jews' Secret Fleet."

For "The Ablest Navigator," my work-in-progress about Paul Shulman, I would still appreciate any recollections AVI/Machal members have about that naval action and the role of the Shayetet 13 Commandos. Email to: jperiod@optonline.net

J. Wandres

To the editor--

I just read the Ezer Weizman obituary in the Chicago Sun Times. He was a very close friend. And we flew together when I was a volunteer pilot in the Israel Air Force, in 1948 and 1949.

This is how we met. I was sitting in the lounge of the Zion Hotel in Haifa when a tall young man walked in. He came over to my table and asked me if I was one of the volunteers. I told him, "Yes." He told me his name was Ezer Weizman, which didn't mean a thing to me. He ordered two glasses of Cherry Heering, which I hate, too sweet. But I didn't say anything.

He asked me what I thought of Israel. I told him I was too busy flying and I didn't see much of it. I told him, "The food over here stinks and tastes like cardboard. And I'd give anything for just one of my mother's potato latkes."

Obituaries

YAACOV BEN YISRAEL: Crew of *Hatikvah*, Interned in Cyprus and Athlit, Set up Communities in the Negev



Yaacov Ben Yisrael and Friends: L-R Shmuel Bari, Yaacov Ben Yisrael, Murray Aronoff (crouching), Dov Mills, Josh Lewis

Yaacov Ben Yisrael, born on August 3, 1927, died on October 13, 2004. Yaacov made aliyah in 1947,

That Saturday I received a call at base operations. It was Ezer Weizman. He invited me to his house in Haifa for lunch. I wanted to beg out of it but I went. When I walked into the hallway of his house, I was overwhelmed by the odor of potato latkes. I knocked on the door and Ezer Weizman's mother opened the door. Looking over her shoulder I could see a large platter on a shining dinner table piled high with potato latkes. And sitting around the table were a lot of hungry volunteer airmen.

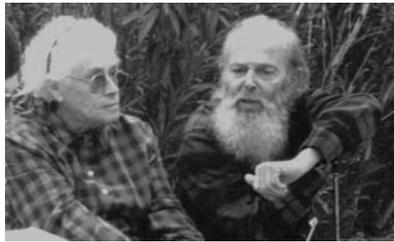
Even though Ezer Weizman was in a different squadron—he was in the 101, and I was in the 69th—we flew on a lot of combat missions together and we became very close friends. When the war was over I would visit him in his home in Caesaria.

Rest in peace, my flying friend. I'll always have fond memories of you.

From JUF News June 2005

*William Lichtman
Chicago*

when he served aboard the aliyah ship “*Hatikvah*”, which he had joined in Baltimore, Md. The ship brought “illegal” immigrants from Italy and was stopped by the British. That led to a period of imprisonment in Cyprus and then in Athlit. Those dramatic months proved to hold much meaning for Yaacov's life and



Rinah and Yaacov Ben Yisrael

featured in many of his stories.

He was short and stocky, diligent, efficient and very responsible. Aboard ship he was responsible for the fresh food products store. When he reached Israel he changed his original name - Jerome Jacob Woodrow - to Yaacov ben Yisrael.

He was born in Pittsburgh, but his family followed work opportunities and moved between various American cities. His teen age years Yaacov spent mainly in Detroit. He was bitten by the Zionist bug and was a member of Habonim, but later switched to Hashomer Hatzair, because he thought that movement more “practical”. He worked on the training farm in New Jersey, in order to prepare himself for a life of work on a kibbutz - the hope of his life. When he was 19 years old, he jumped at the opportunity to join a ship that would bring immigrants to Israel.

After the difficult period of illegal immigration he met Chaim Myers, who invited him to join Kibbutz Shuval. He participated in that group's work just before and during

Operation Eleven Outposts, a major pre-Independence effort to set up Jewish communities in the arid Negev. When Yaacov's own group from the United States began to reach Israel, he rejoined it and help to found Kibbutz Barkai in the Wadi Ara area. There he married and there his son was born. More than ten years later he followed his second wife Rinah to Kibbutz Shuval, where he lived for forty years.

Yaacov never revisited his old home in the United States, because he never had a desire to do so, never was homesick. He was an idealistic kibbutznik, a believer in collective living, in kibbutz education. Modesty in material things was his nature. He worked industriously with the sheep, in the cow barn, the orchards and the poultry runs, and - when he grew older - in the metal working shop. Being useful and productive was a necessity for him, and when that was no longer possible he lost his taste for life. During the last few years he made pancakes and scrambled eggs in the dining hall for the haverim.

Yaacov always thought for himself and said exactly what he meant; practicality and thriftiness were his hallmarks, as was emotionality, a love of song and love for his wife, Rinah, four children, Elan, Beni, Itai and Hanan, and twelve grandchildren.

He died on the day before Rosh Hashanah, at the age of seventy-seven. May his memory be for a blessing.

Itai Ben Yisrael

*Condolences to
Rinah Ben Yisrael
85320 Kibbutz Shuval
Israel*

**WILLIAM RALPH
POSTELL: Aircraft Maintenance Technician**



Bill Postell

Bill Postell served in the United States Navy during WWII. He was recruited as an aircraft technician in Israel during the 1948 war. After the war he remained to work in Bedek Aviation Corporation where he remained until 1955. In his departure letter on January 30, 1955, A. Ben-Joseph, Chief of Personnel Department, writes, "to express to you our gratitude and thanks for the effort and devotion you have shown to the firm and the position you filled as Chief of the Aircraft Maintenance Division. During this period this department has constantly grown both in area and operating scope, and you have shown wide professional knowledge, devotion, loyalty and success in maintaining a friendly relationship with the employees."

In March 1961, Bill Postell received a letter from Golda Meir inviting him to the celebration of the opening of the Haganah House (beit eliyahu golomb-beit hahaganah) in Tel Aviv. She writes, "Your contribution to this magnificent effort of the Jewish people has been acknowledged on many occasions. We feel that you should be among those who celebrate with us on April 6...All of us who were together in spirit and in force during those fateful years look forward very much to seeing you here."

Janet Postell

There follows a eulogy delivered at Grace Lutheran Church in Grass Valley, CA and then a memorial by Evelyn Dahms whose husband Fred served with Bill in Israel.

The Eulogy

Bill was born September 10, 1923, In Santa Monica, California. He was the son of Philip and Ruth (Rose) Postell. He was baptized into the Christian faith in September 13, 1970. at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Sunnyvale. California.

Bill affirmed God's grace born in him at his baptism with his own confession through the Rite of Confirmation at St. Luke Lutheran Church. Sunnyvale. California on September 13, 1970.

He worked as a supervisor and a Management Specialist at Lockheed for twenty-nine years. Bill's interests included fishing and "the adventure of traveling." He and Jan had traveled twice to China and Japan. They also visited Europe, Russia. Turkey, India, Egypt and Jordan. In 1971 they climbed Mt. Fiji. Bill was also very generous in helping people. He was a member of the Nevada County Historical Society. Friends of the Library and the Nevada City Travel Club.

On May 16, 1970. He was joined to his wife Jan in marriage. His wife, Jan, his daughter Sandra, survives him. step-sons Michael and Robert, and six grandchildren, six step-grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Bill was an active and faithful member of Grace Lutheran Church. He had a wonderful understanding of the mission of the church, which he faithfully proclaimed through both word and action. He was a fine

model for Christian living. He served the congregation by working on the Board of Stewardship.

Bill was received into the Church Triumphant on Saturday, August 28, in the year of our Lord two thousand and four. He was a strong and faithful member of the Body of Christ; he will certainly be missed and remembered always.

On behalf of the family, thank you for your loving support through this trying time.

Evelyn Dahm's Memorial

Bill and my husband Fred helped keep the rickety, war-weary planes flying in the frantic airlift of fighter planes and war materials to the infant state of Israel in 1948. And when the IAF needed technical help to build an air force, they volunteered.

From late 1948 until spring 1950, Bill, Fred and I lived and worked at Ekron field (Tel Nof). His technical knowledge helped rebuild the aircraft overhaul base. His cheerful, bouncy good nature brightened lives through times of privation when often we had nothing to eat except boiled cabbage and potatoes.

Bill roomed down the hall from us in the same barracks. We prepared meals together, ate together, played cards and read the same books. To me he was like a younger brother.

We remained friends for over half a century and I shall miss him.

Evelyn Dahms

*Condolences to
Janet Postell*

*Bellewood Apartment # 331
3710 Providence Point Drive SE
Issaquak, WA 98029*

NORMAN DLIN
Royal Canadian Army Veteran,
Served in Tank Corps



Norman Dlin

Norman Dlin, 79, who served as a Canadian volunteer in both the 72nd Battalion and the 79th Armored Battalion, died July 15 in Shreveport, Louisiana, after a long illness with diabetes. He was buried on July 19 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

A native of Edmonton, Norm was born Aug. 18, 1926, the son of Ukrainian Jewish immigrants. He had served three years in the Royal Canadian Army, prior to volunteering for Israel, rising from private to second lieutenant.

Norm held a Ph.D. in Geography from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He taught four years at San Francisco State University, then 18 years at Louisiana State University-Shreveport, until his retirement several years ago. Recently he published *Virgin in the Galilee*, Authorhouse Books, 2005.

He arrived in Israel in June 1948 on the Displaced persons ship "Marie Annick" and did not depart until September 1949. In the 79th,

he served as an armored car driver with the rank of corporal.

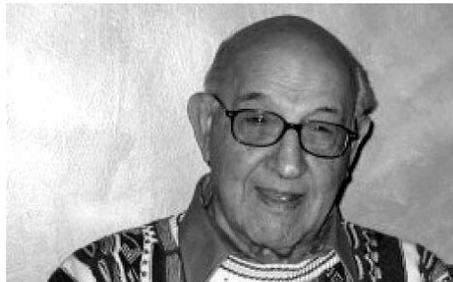
Of his service, he once said: "My personal service was a very small part of Israel's war effort, but Machal definitely had a major role to play." He added: "It changed my whole life. I was a high school drop-out and from that experience I began a long road towards more education."

Just before his death, Norm published his memoirs, dealing largely with his experiences in Israel. He is survived by his wife, Deborah, and one son, Douglas. Another son, Neal, was killed at the age of 12 when struck by a van while riding his bicycle.

Ralph Lowenstein

*Condolences to
Deborah Dlin
5705 River Rd.
Shreveport, LA 71105*

JULES DONESON
From Infantry Captain in
the ETO to Infantry Captain in
Israel



Jules Doneson

Jules Doneson, 86, who served as a captain in the 71st Battalion of the 7th Brigade, died of a stroke in Southfield, Michigan, on July 31, 2005. He was buried in Clover Hill Cemetery in Royal Oak, Michigan.

Immediately after his return from Israel in August 1949, he went to work for the Zionist Organization of America for three years as director of the Michigan-Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky-West Virginia Region. He then opened his own travel agency. He and his wife, Ann, spent many years as travel agency executives, until their retirement in 1989.

The son of Polish Jewish immigrants, Jules was born in Philadelphia on January 25, 1919. He was deposited in a Jewish orphanage in Philadelphia at the age of 5, and lived there until he was 17. He was given the number "62." In later life, he bought specialized license plates inscribed "JD 62." In 1966, he wrote a book entitled "Deeds of Love: A History of the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum of Philadelphia - America's First Jewish Orphanage." New York: Vantage, 1996. which described growing up in "the home."

In World War II, Jules was a captain and company commander in the 28th Infantry Division in European Theater of Operations. While still in Europe at the end of the war, he was engaged in an operation to rescue children from a Catholic convent in Cone, France, and insure their passage to Palestine.

This contact with Palestinian Jews led him to visit Palestine in 1945 and again in 1946. He arrived in Israel as a Machal volunteer in June 1948. He was involved in Operation Hiram, which cleared the central and northern Galilee of Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi and Arab Liberation Army forces. Later, following his discharge from the Israeli army, he spent three months working in a kibbutz. He said that as a child of an orphanage, he was used to communal living.

When asked what benefit he had derived from his experience as a Machal volunteer, he responded: "Just the satisfaction that I was part of a miracle."

Jules was preceded in death by his wife, Ann. He is survived by two daughters, Davida Robinson and Shira Klein, five grandchildren and a sister.

Ralph Lowenstein

*Condolences to
Mrs. Shira Klein
700 Avon
Ann Arbor, MI 48104*

JACQUES SADE: Israeli Intelligence



Jacques Sade

We have not been able to obtain precise information on Jacques Sade's role in Israeli intelligence. If anyone has such information, please send it to the Newsletter editor so the obituary might be amended

Jacques Sade, a veteran of Israel's War of Independence, died earlier this year in Turkey at the age of 76. Tel Aviv-born, his family moved to Italy and then France in the 1930's, and he was living in France when he volunteered for Machal in the summer of 1948. According to

his daughter and close friends, he served in the Shay (Israeli secret service) during the War, and, as befits someone in that line of work, little is really known about what he actually did. He became a member of American Veterans of Israel after coming to live in the United States in 1957.

At one point, he Hebraicized the family name of Blumenfeld to Sadeh (field), although, in the French version, he spelled it Sade with an accent grave over the "e." A close friend, Prosper Anselm of the New York suburb of Forest Hills, says the US Embassy in Ankara had notified him of the death. Sade had been a lifelong amateur sailor and had gone to Turkey to buy and outfit a boat that he then would sail to Israel and use as his floating hotel.

Just three days before his death, Sade called Anselm from Marmora to say he had been ill but that he was now recovered and going ahead with his plans to sail to Israel. The Embassy said the cause of death was a sudden heart attack. The two men had met at a Paris railway station when they were both setting out for Israel in June of 1948. Anselm says they lost touch with each other in Israel, until a chance meeting 15 years later, when they found themselves working at the same restaurant. From then on, they got together regularly to celebrate the holidays.

In the years after 1949, Sade worked for a while at the Israeli Embassy in Paris and studied film. He and his wife Marie Therese divorced a year or so after he moved to the United States, and their daughter, Armele went to live with her maternal grandparents in France. Unable to break into the closed shop of filmmaking in the U.S., Sade held a series of jobs to provide for his family. He was a hairdresser, put in several years in

the garment district in New York and finally found a career as the maitre d' in society restaurants.

He remarried and eventually settled in Plattekill, New York, where he raised pedigreed dogs after his retirement. The second marriage also ended in divorce. There were no children.

Charles P. Weiss

*Condolences
Armele Doyle
4131 Bellefontaine St.
Houston, TX 77025*

ISAAC IMBER: With Sonnenborn, Provider of Arms for the Haganah and Rescue of DPs



Isaac Imber

Isaac Imber was born on August 23, 1907 in New York, and died after a short illness on June 5, 2005, the day of the Israel's Independence Day parade in New York.

His parents were recent

immigrants from Poland. His father worked in the clothing industry and was an active union member, but most of the family lived in Eastern Poland, now the Ukraine. Isaac's family visited relatives in Eastern Poland just before the beginning of World War One, where as a child, he came to know, love and play with family members there. These early memories and sentiments were seminal to his Zionist thoughts and activities in adult life.

When Isaac was only fourteen he became a responsible wage earner for the family, as his father died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. He worked full time as a delivery boy for a dental products company, and attended evening high school on the lower east side. Later, he studied in evening classes at City College in New York, becoming a Parole Officer for the New York State Prison System. He also became an ardent Zionist in the early nineteen thirties, and was the founder of a Zionist group in New York, called Masada. He married Rebecca Schmuckler in 1929, and twin daughters, Abigail and Michal were born in 1939. His wife Rebecca was also an active Zionist. When she returned from her Palestine trips, she lectured to many Zionist groups in the United States.

The Zionist goal of establishing a Jewish state became his mandate and his world from 1942-1949. He was associated with Rudolf Sonnenborn, a wealthy businessman and philanthropist, and founder of the Sonnenborn Institute, and through Sonnenborn associated with Ben Gurion. When the British mandate was ending at the close of World War Two, the British were preparing to leave Palestine,

Imber became progressively more active in the Zionist movement and the Sonnenborn Institute. This organization recruited Jews from all of the United States to help with the war effort in the Middle East. The Haganah, the secret army of the Jewish community in Palestine, would send lists of items needed, and Jewish-American business people and professionals actively donated and bought materiel necessary to fight the war there. The Sonnenborn Institute was also instrumental in establishing arms production and factories in Palestine.

When the United States War Assets Administration placed an embargo on arms shipments to the Middle East, Imber was appointed the first paid employee of the Institute. Arms and materiel were smuggled in crates labeled "farm equipment". Many times their heavy weights cracked and broke the crates, and Imber had to make long explanations and negotiate with longshoremen and police to allow the shipments to be loaded on cargo ships.

Imber was also forceful and assertive in supporting Holocaust Survivor immigration to the United States and was often seen at docks in New York facilitating entry of survivors. This activity was especially important as England's White Paper limited immigration to Palestine, forcing Holocaust survivors to languish in Displaced Persons camps.

The most important result of his efforts and activities was of course, the historic establishment of the Jewish State of Israel on May 4, 1948. President Truman led the process of recognition and other nations followed. For his selfless

and outstanding work, Isaac Imber was granted the honorary title of major of the Haganah in 1949. He traveled to Israel countless times, and was active in supporting many Israeli institutions.

In 1950, Imber was asked to establish the US arm of the Rassco-Israel Corporation. The company constructed houses in Israel, and with Imber's help raised significant capital in the US to expedite construction of homes. After leaving Rassco, he was active in real estate in New York, but by the late 1970's returned to his other significant interest, writing poetry. He first published To the Son of Ishmael in 1932; Stones About the Middle Sea, written in Yiddish and translated into English by Imber in 1990, and Road to Jerusalem in 2001. Before his death, Imber was preparing his fourth volume of poetry, One Hundred Poems for One Hundred Years.

He was the oldest, most honored and revered member of the Reconstructionist West End Synagogue, and regularly active in the services and the congregation. Twin daughters, Michal and Abigail, a grand daughter Nadia Gold, a rabbi in Temple Emanu-El in New York, and his companion Esther Heyman survive him.

Esther Heyman

*Condolences to
Esther Heyman
41 W. 83rd St.*

New York, NY 10024-5246

and

*Michal Diani
240 W. 98th St. Apt. 14c
New York, NY 10025*



Isaac Imber

**ERIC RAY:
Rabbi, Sofer, Created Map
Department for Israel Navy**

The Jewish world and AVI have lost a treasure. Eric Ray was known internationally as an authority on Jewish art. His work hangs in the Israeli Keneset, the White House, in several museums and in several private collections.

Born in London, England in 1926, Eric started art school at the age of 12 on a special dispensation. Having become proficient at calligraphy, in 1943, while still a teenager, he was assigned to work in the British Admiralty's map and charts department, gaining experience, which he later used in Israel.



Eric Ray

At the end of World War II, having heard of Eric's skill at calligraphy, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee enlisted Eric to help save survivors of Dachau, which had become a "displaced persons camp" in which inmates still suffered from overcrowding, malnutrition and disease. Eric was smuggled into Dachau by members of Haganah, disguised as a survivor. His head was shaved, a number written on his forearm and dressed in the tattered clothing of a survivor. While working he was hidden behind a false wall in what had been the Nazi officer's latrine. The young calligrapher became a forger of transfer documents enabling an estimated 5000 DPs to leave Dachau. Eric rode the last DP truck from Dachau to Marseilles and from there, by ship, to the new state of Israel. The ship on which he arrived was the Altelena, which was fired upon off the beach at Tel Aviv. Ray swam ashore and shoeless. A shoe store owner, seeing a tall young man dripping wet, provided him with a pair of shoes.

In Israel Eric enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces in which he was commissioned as an officer. In July 1948 he was wounded in action. After recovering in a hospital in Haifa he worked as an officer in kheyil hayam, creating the first map department of the Israeli armed forces. He also participated, under Yigal Yadin, in the battle with the Egyptians for Beer Sheva. Years later he worked with Yadin on an excavation in the Galilee. He returned to study archaeology in Los Angeles. He holds a Master's degree in Art History and a Doctorate based on a dissertation on "The Symbolism in the Arts of Ancient Religion" from London University. His rabbinic ordination is from the batei din of Jerusalem and London. He restored



Israel Veterans in Chicago, 1955. Eric Ray seated far right

the oldest known European Torah scroll written in Spain in the 1300s for the Liberal Synagogue in The Hague.

Eric had been a member of AVI for many years when, in November 2003, he and Lali attended the Holocaust Survivors Tribute, joining other Aliya Betniks and rescuers who were invited. The Tribute was held in huge tents erected on the grounds of the Holocaust Museum to accommodate the many survivors and their children and grandchildren. It is related that Eric asked a man whether he was a survivor of Dachau and learned that he was one of the survivors for whom a forger had supplied papers so that he could leave the camp. "Hello," said Eric, "I am your forger. An unforgettable moment for an unforgettable friend and comrade.

With great sadness we report the death of Eric Ray on Friday July 8, 2005. Our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Lali, their children and grandchildren.

Naomi Kantey

*Condolences to
Natalie Ray
4 Margot Pl.
Great Neck, NY 11023*

Club CopaHagana at the Hotel Fourteen

August 1947 was quite a month.



Club CopaHaganah

UFOs were "sighted" over Saranac Lake, New York. The Palestine Resistance Committee formed a basketball team to play teams from the Borscht Belt resorts in the Catskill Mountains, to raise money for and awareness of the Irgun. Miles Davis, Charlie Parker and

Max Roach recorded "Milestones," and gave birth to Be-Bop. Half way around the world the Indian sub-continent was partitioned into Pakistan and India, further eroding the crumbling British Empire. Thousands of Jewish refugees on the Haganah Ship Exodus 1947 refused a British ultimatum to disembark at Marseilles, further embarrassing London's increasingly belligerent but tenuous ability to keep Holocaust survivors from Eretz Israel.

In New York City a group of well-connected Jewish businessmen gathered at the McAlpin hotel for the regular meeting of the Sonneborn Institute. It's nominal leader, financier Rudolph Sonneborn, was utterly dedicated to the cause of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine.

The so-called "institute" had been convened at the request of David Ben Gurion to be the principal conduit through which American Jewish interests could contribute large sums of "Stephens" (a then-popular Haganah slang for dollars, named after Rabbi Stephen Wise), and weapons for the Haganah's Palmach strike forces that was girding for an Arab invasion once the British quit their mandatory control over Palestine.

VICTOR CHABER:

Air Force ground radio operator

The AVI Newsletter Winter 2003 carried an obituary for Victor Chaber who had died on April 4, 2002. An editorial comment below the obituary lamented that we knew so little about Victor. He had completed a questionnaire for the Machal Archives and we relied on that. Now, we have a note from Brenda S. Kaldenbach-Holtz in the Netherlands. Brenda's father was a friend of Victor's and she has fond memories of him. We learn from her that Victor's wife Gertie predeceased him as did his two daughters, Faye and Joanne. Those seeking more information may e-mail Brenda at B.Kaldenbach@elsevier.nl

The Editor

As the well-fed gentlemen served themselves from the buffet “Rudy” Sonneborn introduced their speaker, Shaul Ben Zvi. Though with a Hebrew name, his English had a familiar New York cadence to it. The Sonneborn group was accustomed to fielding requests for all manner of military equipment. But they were non-plussed when Ben-Zvi all but handed them a shopping list for the navy that he believed Israel would need to defend its coast. Ben Zvi, of course, was the name taken by Paul Shulman, the ex-naval officer and Annapolis graduate whom Ben Gurion planned to use to help establish Israel’s navy, as soon as there was an Israel.

Shulman, having resigned from the navy, had been released from active duty only six months before. The Mossad Le Aliyah Bet’s Ze’ev Schind, who was in charge of acquiring vessels for the clandestine immigration program, had brought him on board. Ben Gurion had likely told “Danny” (Schind’s code name) of Shulman’s experience as a naval engineer, and said that he could be useful in assessing the seaworthiness of vessels the Mossad would need to purchase and convert into refugee ships.

Whatever the Sonneborn men thought about the self-assured, almost brash 25-year old ex-naval officer, they dutifully sent him to see Shlomo Shamir (né Rabino-vitch) over at Hotel Fourteen.

Shulman knew that, as in any well-run underground organization, Haganah’s functions and offices were isolated from each other so as to reduce compromising the entire operation; they assumed that their phone lines were tapped and operatives were shadowed by Hoover’s G-men and, probably,

British Intelligence as well. Indeed, Haganah units were spread out all over the city disguised behind bland corporate names. The Mossad operated from an office on lower Broadway in the Wall Street area, possibly from space at the law firm of Hayes, Podell and Shulman – Paul’s late father.

Hotel Fourteen had been built in 1902 as a refuge for coupon-clipping widows of Captains of Industry; by the 1940s it had become a popular pied à terre for up-and-coming couples in town for the upcoming social season. At any rate, Ben-Zvi/Shulman may have been dismayed to learn that in the basement of Hotel Fourteen, at 14 East 60th Street just off Fifth Avenue, was the Club Copacabana, café society’s favorite late night watering spot. The Haganah felt the club provided the perfect cover for its covert operations, and dubbed its offices “Club CopaHaganah.”

Five months before the Nazi surrender that ended World War II – in Europe, at least – in January 1945 the Haganah had sent Yaacov Dori (né Jacob Dostrovsky) to New York to open up a headquarters. Office space was hard to find, and expensive; the unassuming hotel on a quiet side street was a perfect location. Dori operated out of a second floor suite. As Haganah’s operations expanded its need for space grew, and Dori later rented a top floor apartment where he and Haganah operatives could hold quiet meetings undisturbed, and where Ben Gurion and others could stay during their frequent visits to the United States. Dori was recalled to Palestine and moved on to become the Chief of Staff of the Palmach. Shlomo Shamir, formerly a major in the British Army, followed him. Shamir

didn’t last long, and was succeeded by Teddy Kollek, who arrived in October, in time to witness the U.N. vote -- on November 29, 1947 -- to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish sectors.

Paul Shulman, too, moved on to bigger projects: He had been named President of the Mossad-backed dummy company, “FB Shipping,” which had purchased two former banana-carrying ships, which the Mossad planned to use in the largest-ever clandestine immigration sealift to be undertaken: 15,000 Romanian refugees would attempt to reach Palestine on the Pan Crescent and Pan York.

FOR FURTHER READING: The Pledge by Leonard Slater, Simon & Shuster; For Jerusalem by Teddy Kollek, Random House; Ben Gurion: Prophet of Fire by Dan Kurzman, Simon and Shuster.

J. Wandres, the author of this article, is writing a book about Paul Shulman. He welcomes recollections and anecdotes about Haganah and Mossad leaders and their operations in the United States. Send E-mail to: jperiod@optonline.net. Copyright 2005, J. Wandres

Stanley Medicks Recalls the History of the Israel Parachute Forces

Upon arrival in Israel in 1948, early in the year, I was assigned to the air force with Ezer Weizman as my commanding officer I had come out with enthusiastic

ideas of forming a force similar to the British S.A.S of which I had been a member on several operations during the Hitler war. We had many ex members of the Jewish Brigade with experience of S.A.S operations. We had many meetings at GHQ on the possible ways to organize and create a parachute force. Most of the ideas were unrealistic with the means available to the Israeli State at that time. Most of the planners had no experience of the training necessary for such a force and although some had experience of parachute operations they were not instructors. My last effort 1n July '48 was to put forward a plan for a very small force, a platoon to be formed from experienced men for immediate use in the conflict. No permission was given and in order to help in a more practical way I went to the 7th Brigade then forming at Neshar near Haifa. I kept in touch with Chaim Lascov during my time in the 7th brigade. A parachute unit of approximately company strength. Eventually with Yoel Palgi as its C. O., Dan Avril as adjutant and Norbert as Intelligence Officer.

Parachutists.

They were given a camp on Ahuza. A large Parachute training Tower was built there to assist in training. An operation was carried out in the Negev and the troops actually fired on one another due to faulty training. Some men were killed on parachute training and there was a very chaotic organization generally with no properly run training.

In 1949 Norbert, Dan Avni and some Air Force Officers came to Machanaim and asked me, with

Chaim Lascov's authority', to create a basic training school. Lascov was In charge of training for the re-organized army at that time. One of my tasks was to disband the old unit and I sent some of the men away on a basic instructor's course to rejoin me later. Meanwhile I had to find and build a training camp and eventually I was given a part of the Tel Nof camp, which was of course part of the Air Force. Eva was a nurse with the original unit and joined me as a civilian secretary /translator at the newly organized school. Charlie Borzt and an American Avaram Erlich among others joined me and I had Karl Kahana, a very experienced S.A.S. type as my chief instructor. We started in a very elementary way building the equipment we needed from old scrap and using old parachutes, which were obtained, from Millets stores as ex-world war II surplus. It took us a few months before we had created an instructional team capable of training parachutists to an acceptable army standard.

Ben Gurion came to the end of my first course and presented the first parachute wings, which had been won by the first instructors. Old ex-WWII Dakotas were available for training.

There is a history of all the operations carried out during WWII and of the first Israel unit with some mention of the school at Tel Nof. It is by A. Lewin-Epstein, sefer hat-sanchanim, (Book of the Parachutists).

Stanley Medicks

Hispanic Machal

Request for Information

Laszlo PATAKY (b. Hungary, 1917, died Miami, 1997) commanded a unit of Spanish-speaking Mahal volunteers in Israel in 1948-49. He was a close friend of Leo Heaps, and might have known Dunkelman & Marcus. He had been in the (Free) French Foreign Legion (like Shaltiel) serving in North Africa and the Mideast, especially at Bir Hakeim, (wrote memoir, Los Duros...Legion extranjera, 1959) , soldiered with British, Nicaraguan and Salvadorean forces. I have limited information on Col. PATAKY to share, but would appreciate any information on his unit (its strength, battle honors, deployment, etc.). Please contact aardvark_@sympatico.ca. Thank you. Allan E. Levine, Ottawa, CANADA.

WANTED: U.S. OR CANADIAN WORLD WAR II WAR VETS

AACI and other Olim associations have been asked by Member of Knesset Yuri Stern to assist in the upcoming commemoration of 60 years since the end of World War II and the defeat of the Nazis. The project is looking for U.S. or Canadian veterans who served in Europe to tell their stories for the historical record and/or to lecture (in Hebrew) to young people during the coming year. In addition, the commemoration committee wants to publish a book of these stories for teachers and students.

Interested individuals should contact: Immanuel Miller, 03-731-1792 or 050-722-9442 or E-mail: mission@walla.co.il

DEDICATION continued from page 1

Program

The highlight of the program will be the opening of the permanent exhibition on Sunday morning in the presence of Israeli and American dignitaries. Those arriving on Friday are invited to Shabbat services at the Hillel House. A Shabbat eve dinner with the University students will take place at the Hillel House. On Saturday evening we plan to have a festive reception followed by a dinner banquet and a keynote program. Sunday morning will include a buffet brunch followed



The new Norman H. Lipoff Hillel Building; home of the Aliyah Bet and Machal Exhibition adjacent to the Gainesville UF Campus

by the Museum dedication and a memorial to our Fallen comrades. The dinner banquet on Saturday will be open to members and their guests only; whereas the Museum inauguration on Sunday morning will be open to the public. AVI members will have an opportunity to visit the Aliyah Bet and Machal Archives as well as several interesting museums in the area. There will be lots of time for socializing.

Accommodations

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Paramount Plaza Hotel Suites and Conference Center in Gainesville. Participants will be able to reserve rooms for any or all of the following nights: Friday night, Nov. 18, Saturday night, Nov.19, or

Sunday night, Nov.20. Room rate will be \$75 per night (all-inclusive, with “bare bones” continental breakfast). Full buffet breakfast also available at extra cost, and many restaurants are nearby. To reserve please call the hotel directly at 1-352 377-4000. The hotel is located on Biven’s Arm Lake just one mile from the university campus, and 2 ½ miles from the Hillel building. (Hotel address: 2900 SW 13 Street, Gainesville).

Transportation:

Delta, US Air, Continental and Northwest serve Gainesville. Less expensive fares are usually available by flying to Jacksonville (80 miles from Gainesville) or Orlando (120 miles away). Rental car from these sites advised. For shuttle from Orlando to Gainesville call in advance Phil Costanzo (407) 832-0147. For shuttle from Jacksonville airport to two sites in Gainesville (then pay extra for taxi to hotel) call in advance Runways Transportation (800) 578-6929. Both shuttles charge \$35 p.p.

Cost

A package that includes Saturday night reception and banquet, Sunday morning brunch and registration will cost \$80 per person, in total. Friday night dinner (optional) will cost an extra \$10 p.p.

...(Those attending only the Sunday brunch will be charged \$20 p.p.)

Questions?

Please direct all questions to Ralph Lowenstein at (1-352 392-6525) or Si Spiegelman (1-212 685-8548).

From The Desk Of The President:

The summer is over. It’s time for us to go back to work and make our next event a resounding success (The official opening of our Machal Museum in Gainesville at the University Of Southern Florida November 17,18,19, 2005) The response from our membership for the Machal Museum fundraiser has been a great success. To all of you who have sent in your contributions The Board of Directors and executive staff extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous support. For those of you who haven’t sent in your contribution there is still time to do so. Get out your checkbook today and send us whatever you can afford.

Gaza is behind us. Whatever your political side as to the correctness of the Government of Israel’s action history has been done. We cannot roll back the clock. It’s time to unite and support the Israel we love so much. It’s time to hope that this difficult, almost impossible action will lead to positive results. It’s time for reconciliation. On the other hand we mustn’t dream that everything is secure. We have sworn enemies (Hamas, Iran, Syria, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah) all who seek the destruction of Israel and its dismemberment. For this we must be vigilant and prepared. I look forward to greeting each and everyone of you in Gainesville where together we can celebrate as comrades our great contribution to Israel’s birth. Please bring your friends or family to Gainesville for this great event. Shalom, and L’Hitraoht.

Ira Feinberg, President, AVI