



AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL

VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

UNITED STATES & CANADA VOLUNTEERS

136 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016

President's Message

I am most grateful to the AVI board of directors for the honor bestowed on me in electing me as President of our organization. To the membership at large I proffer a pledge to do my utmost in fulfilling our organization's agenda and objectives.

The major challenge I see this coming year is in keeping us unified and focused to accomplish our mission, in spite of our ever-diminishing numbers. We want to ensure that others will perpetuate our legacy when we are no longer here.

I envision the mission of our organization as ensuring that the Jewish community is made fully aware of our role in the creation and defense of the State of Israel. That the ideals and spirit that led us to fight in the defense of the Jewish people be remembered and emulated whenever our people are endangered.

In my vision I see a place for AVI in the Conference of Presidents of the Major Jewish Organizations where we could call on the Jewish communities to act vigorously in defending the Jewish People and the State of Israel in these threatening times

During my tenure in 2005 I will encourage and provide focus to:

1. Supporting the AVI Newsletter and the Newsletter Website, the principal means of communication among our members.

President's Message
continued on p. 14)

He Deserted the British Army to Fight for Israel

Kit Wilkes-Chase, a non-Jewish British serviceman, was assigned to guard prisoners at Atlit in 1947. Appalled by the treatment of these Holocaust survivors, he abandoned his post and offered his services to the Haganah. With the formation of the IDF, he was sent to the commando unit, *Chayot Hanegev*, where he fought to stem the Egyptian advance on Tel Aviv. Wilkes-Chase also participated in battles to conquer Beersheba and the skirmishes around Eilat. He was wounded twice.

(Wilkes-Chase continued on p.14)



Gen. Zvika Gendelman of Israel Embassy in London presents certificate to Mrs. Wilkes-Chase



Kit Wilkes-Chase

Book Review: Machal in the Eyes of History

Ha'Machal, Mitnadvei Chutz L'Aretz b'Milchemet Ha'Atzmaut (Machal, the Overseas Volunteers in the War of Independence), by Yaacov Markovitsky, is among the collection of War of Independence articles by different authors in Alon Kadish's book *Milchemet Ha'Atzmaut*. An overview of the book and reviews of several articles appeared in the Summer 2004 AVI Newsletter. The Fall Newsletter contained a review of Markovitsky's Gachal article.

Markovitsky is also the acknowledged author of the Machal booklet, published a few years earlier by Israel's Ministry of Education. Those who've read either the English or Hebrew version may recall that Zipporah Porath, Joe Woolf and yours truly are thanked for "their contributions" and for "help in editing." When trying to compare the two, I thought the article more akin to his draft of the booklet before the involvement of the "contributors," than to the finally published product. I also found it odd that the Machal booklet is not referred to at all in his article, although it contains references to other Markovitsky works - and some of its passages were apparently taken from his booklet almost verbatim.

Also odd is that his article begins with an obviously non-Machal morsel, which has it that over 20,000 of all those mobilized in the War of Independence were "new immigrants who were trained and organized in Europe and in the Cyprus camps," and "most arrived after British rule ended on 15

Book Review *(continued on p.15)*

American Veterans of Israel

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**ANNUAL BUDGET AND CASH FLOW PLAN
YEAR ENDING 12/31/05**

BEGINNING BANK BALANCE-2005	\$16,500	
Machal Pamphlet Reserves		4550
Life Membership Reserves		3500
Archives Donations		750
TOTAL ALLOCATED FUNDS	8,800	

BEGINNING BALANCE (1/1/05)- FREE CASH 7,700

PROJECTED INCOME-2005

Membership Dues		7000
Transfer from Life Membership Reserves		1700
Transfer from Machal Pamphlet Reserves		2000
Archives Donations (Released from 2004 donations)		750
Hanukkah Contributions (Attendants)		500
Machal Pamphlet Sales		600
Newsletter Subscriptions		1000
TOTAL INCOME -2005	\$13,550	

PROJECTED EXPENSES-2005

Newsletter Printing and Mailing		5000
Museum Inauguration and West Point National Events		2000
Computer Supplies & Service		500
Postage, Printing & Copies		1000
Telephone & Conference Calls		800
Hanukkah Event		600
West Point & Parade		500
Contribution to Archives Account (new)		1000
Transfer to Archives Account (Members Donations from 2004)		750
TOTAL EXPENSES- 2005	\$12,500	

PROJECTED ENDING BALANCE (12/31/05)-

FREE CASH 9,100

PLANNED RESERVES ALLOCATIONS- END 2005

Machal Pamphlet Distribution		2550
Life Membership Reserve		1800
Archives Donations (Estimated for Year 2005)		1000
TOTAL ALLOCATED RESERVES- END 2005	\$5,350	

PROJECTED BANK BALANCE- END 2005 \$14,450

*Dave Gerard
Si Spiegelman
1/13/2005*

NEW YORK AVI HANUKKAH OBSERVANCE 2004

On Sunday, December 12, 2004, AVI in New York held its annual Hanukkah celebration at the Bnai Zion hall. As in years past, old comrades got together to exchange family updates, swap old tales and commiserate as the years take their toll. Nevertheless, nothing stopped them from enjoying a great brunch, lighting the Hanukkah candles and joining in song.

It was also an opportunity to introduce our incoming president, Ira Feinberg, who spoke about his program for the coming year. (See Ira's message in this issue of the Newsletter). He spoke of AVI's opportunity to become more engaged in persuading other organizations to

take a harder stand in combating anti-Semitism in the world, particularly in view of the deepening threat of countries in the Middle East condoning terror.

The guest speaker was Ravit Bar-Av, Chief Information officer at the Israel Consulate General in New York, who spoke of the improved outlook for negotiations with the Palestinians in view of Arafat's departure from the scene. She was guardedly optimistic about the practically nil possibilities of peace while he was alive.

Si Spiegelman, Executive Director, praised Ravit for her support of AVI and reminded the audience about her activities in organizing

the Machal tribute on the Intrepid and her assistance in distributing the Machal pamphlet. As a token of appreciation she was presented with the Silver State of Israel medal remembering Clandestine Immigration.

Ruth Gruber concluded the program with a talk about her life and work as an acclaimed and prolific author even to this day. She spoke of the importance of persistence and dedication as values in life. Two of her books were available to the attendees.

The guests took leave standing around and chatting at the door until the last minute as another Hanukkah celebration came to a close.

THE HANOVICE STORY: DAVID HANOVICE REMINISCES.

For many U.S. and Canadian volunteers who served in Aliyah Bet and in Machal the essence of their stories is the theme of a dual commitment. They served their country in the Second World War and participated in the struggle for the creation of a Jewish State. Nowhere were these ties more explicit than in the story of the Hanovice family.

PART I. QUIET TIMES

Israel Hanovice was born in Russia, in the Minsk province, on Jan. 10, 1884. Following the recurring pogroms he emigrated to the United States of America. He landed in New York and settled in York, Pennsylvania where he found work in the coalmines and other industries. He married his first wife Sara around 1905 and they had two sons. He discovered new opportunities in the West and resettled the family in Houston, Texas where two daughters were born. Following Sara's untimely death at age 29, Israel traveled to New York where he was introduced to a young widow, Rebecca Pravda. He married her and brought her to Houston. Rebecca cared for his first four children and also raised 8 more of their offspring in Houston, Texas.

Israel found work in various trades and engaged in

business. He became a U.S. citizen in 1912, and during World War I participated in the war effort by working as a carpenter and pipe fitter in the Houston area shipyards. When the war ended and Britain received a mandate from the League of Nations to govern Palestine, Israel, who was an ardent Zionist, left for a visit to the Holy Land. He toured the country from one end to the other on foot and by any means of transport available at the time. This led to his decision to settle and make a home for his family in Palestine. Tel-Aviv was in its infancy when he brought the family over and bought a parcel of land near Jaffa. Here he constructed his house. It was one of the early buildings in the city and it still stands today on Geula Street 30 serving as an annex to a school next door. Nine of Israel's children moved to Palestine with their parents and three more were born in Tel Aviv later on. Israel worked for many years as a plumbing contractor in the growing city. In 1927 the family returned to Houston in order to retain their U.S. citizenship. With the onset of the depression years the family left Houston and resettled in Tel-Aviv. This time the four older children remained with relatives in Houston in order to continue their high school studies. Re-

Hanovice (continued on next page)

Hanovice *(continued)*

turning to Tel Aviv in 1930 Israel resumed his occupation as a plumbing and building contractor as the new city was growing by leaps and bounds.

David Hanovice recalls his boyhood years in Tel-Aviv, "When I was a child and came home from school at midday, my mother would send me to deliver lunch to my father at his work site. While he had his meal I waited to take back the utensils. My father detailed jobs for me to do while he was eating. In this way I acquired my mechanical skills from him. Among my childhood memories of Tel-Aviv, I vividly recall the school years as I entered the first grade without knowing any Hebrew. I recall the special efforts of my teacher, Rachel, to have me keep up with the class. I kept close ties with her for many years. Mr. Maravi was our music teacher. He taught me to read notes and to sing on any occasion. Geula Street branched off from Allenby, a main thoroughfare of Tel-Aviv at that time. North of Dizengoff Street was sand dunes. Westward on the Mediterranean Sea was a very shallow beach where we spent a lot of time swimming in the summertime and building sandcastles. The lifeguard at the beach was known as Mullah. On the holiday of Lag Ba'Omer we would light bonfires on the beach till the early-hours of the morning, sitting around and relating stories. There was an opera singer in our neighborhood who practiced for his performances and all day our street was filled with opera music. On the Sabbath, when there was no traffic on the street, we would play sticks, a game similar to baseball, played with a short stick instead of a ball. We went on special outings

to the Yarkon River that required a full day's hike back and forth. For popular entertainment there were several movie houses in Tel Aviv, including the Mograbi, Armon, Achad Ha-Am, Gan-Rina, and Ophir. There was also the Habima Theater."

In 1935 Israel decided to leave Tel-Aviv and live on the Land in the spirit of the Zionist pioneers. With eight children in the family helping out, he saw the possibility of operating a farm of moderate size. He bought a citrus grove in Tel-Alon, near Pardess-Hanna. At that time citrus exports to Europe were rising and the future looked promising for that industry. He sold the house in Tel Aviv and aided by bank loans he purchased a ten-acre citrus grove. He built a new house on the hill overlooking the grove and had the entire family help to finish it and make it livable.

David Hanovice recalls those days, "We were isolated, since the closest community of Pardess-Hanna was five miles away. There were only three families nearby and they lived miles apart. with hundreds of acres of citrus groves covering that area. Beside the citrus grove where all of us worked every day after school, we had a barn with several horses, cows, donkeys and a chicken coop. Each of us had prescribed chores assigned varying with the seasons. There also were hired laborers who worked alongside our family members whenever more hands were needed. We grew our own fruit and vegetables and that was one of my chores for many years. All year round we had vegetables that were in season. We had a surplus of produce and eggs, which my father would sell to a grocer in Pardess-Hanna. To get to school we rode our

donkeys, as was the custom on the land. There were no paved roads and riding a bicycle was impossible on the sandy roads in the region. At school I studied music and sang in the choir, but then I switched to classes in the school's carpentry shop and worked on class projects that were displayed at the end of the school year. In the evenings, except on Friday nights, my parents would take a buggy ride to Pardess-Hanna to visit and have tea with relatives and friends from their country of origin. They would talk about the "old times" while we, children, remained at home to do our school homework assignments. On Sabbath, our only day off, I would accompany my father to the Synagogue in the morning. In the afternoon my older brothers played with the local soccer team, and we would attend the matches. I also participated in the local Maccabi sports group and Zvulun Sea Scouts in Hadera. On Saturday evening there was usually a new movie at the local theater including news shorts from around the world. In the news at that time we saw the rise of Nazi Germany, of Fascism in Europe and the outbreak of World War II."

PART II. WAR YEARS

Before the war broke out, five of the Hanovice children were living in the U.S. The remaining children, consisting of five boys and two girls lived on the family homestead in Tel-Alon. In 1936, Arab terrorist gangs began to ambush residents of the Jewish communities and settlements, engaging in wanton killings and destruction. The British administration permitted the strengthening of the police forces in the Jewish villages, townships and settlements

Hanovice *(continued on next page)*

Hanovice *(continued)*

as well as in the large cities. As a result, the Haganah, the Jewish underground defense organization, called on able-bodied Jews to participate in its defense activities. Jewish men joined the British Police Special Forces called Notrim, Gafirim, or Supernumerary Police. This was followed by a variety of clandestine training and maneuvers in weapons use and field tactics as part of the Haganah activities. In 1939, when World War II broke out and as news spread about the atrocities perpetrated against the Jews in Europe, a large number of volunteers joined the British Armed Forces and served in the Jewish Brigade, and other units.

Israel Hanovice was not a political person. His life's focus had been on daily mundane matters related to his trade or working the land. As it became clear that war was imminent he encouraged his sons to join the Haganah and later on the U.S. Armed Forces in which they served as U.S. citizens. Without speeches, he simply told them, "It was the right thing to do."

Life in Tel-Alon changed drastically with the start of the war and work on the family homestead came to a standstill as the export of citrus fruit to Europe was halted and four of the Hanovice sons went off to war.

Harry Hanovice

Harry joined the Northern Fence Security forces, a Police unit that patrolled the Lebanese and Syrian borders. When America entered the Second World War he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps from Tel-Aviv and served in Abadan, Persia. After the war, he re-enlisted in the U.S. Air Force where he served as a career

soldier until his retirement.

Sam Hanovice

Sam was active with the Haganah and trained under Orde Wingate, head of the 'Night Brigades' combating the Arab terrorists in Palestine from 1936 to 1939. During WWII his Haganah unit was attached to the British Royal Navy Commandos and trained as seals in underwater demolition. In May 1941, the 23 members, under the command of British Major, Sir Anthony Palmer, were sent on a mission to destroy refineries and fuel storage installations in Lebanon and Syria. These were under the control of the French Vichy government, which collaborated with Nazi Germany. To this day they are MIA and their boat "Sea Lion" has not been found. In 1957 a monument was erected on Mount Herzl in their memory.

Aaron Hanovice

In 1941 Aaron joined a British Naval unit and was stationed in Haifa. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in Egypt during WWII returning to Tel-Aviv after his discharge. Based in Camp Russell B. Huckstep in Egypt for the duration of WWII. Camp Russell B. Huckstep was a center hub of transporting GI's and war supplies throughout the Near East, Middle East Europe, the Far East and the USA. He was killed at the hands of an Arab mob in August 1947 while driving a truck in a convoy from Tel Aviv.

David Hanovice

After graduating from public school, he worked in the family orange groves and became active in Haganah activities. He was involved

for four years in K-9 training as assistant instructor for local groups of dog owners. This involved training dogs in attack and defense as well as mine detection and using dogs as messengers between local posts and patrols in the field. He served in the British Air Force supernumerary Police around Tel-Nof /Aqir and as the U.S. entered the war he transferred to the U.S. Army unit based at Tel-Litvinsky. He served with the 404th Q.M. Trucking unit made up of US citizens who resided abroad. The company included six Christians from Lebanon and about 50 Jews from Palestine. The unit transported supplies and personnel during the battles of El Alamein and Sulom Pass, Tobruk, Benghazi, Tripoli all the way up to Sfax in Tunisia. David returned to the U.S. for his discharge and studies. He graduated from the School of Technology of the University of Houston that prepared him for a career in marine engine repair and maintenance. He subsequently volunteered for service in Israel's War of Independence. He was among the U.S. Machalniks that brought the Yucatan (Noga K-26) from New Orleans to Haifa for delivery to the Israeli Navy and later served as its Chief Engineer. The Noga (Kuf-26) took part in all naval engagements during the War of Independence, including the sinking of the Egyptian flagship Emir Farouk. Upon his return to the U.S., David was involved in refitting and delivery of two other vessels to the Israel Navy; the K-28 corvette and the K-22 that became part of the Shayetet 13 operation. (See AVI Newsletter of Spring, 2001 for the full Yucatan story). David returned to the U.S. and made a career in the marine engine industry. Subsequently David

Hanovice *(continued on next page)*

Hanovice *(continued)*

resumed sailing US Merchant ships as a US Coast Guard Licensed Marine Engineer till retirement at age 65 during a continuance period of 23 years, serving in all Engineering Ratings all the way to Chief Engineer on a variety and types of US Flag ships , Oceanography Research, Bulk Grain and Coal Carriers, Tankers , General Cargo and Container Ships.

Yitzhak Hanovice

The youngest brother, Yitzhak, enlisted at age 17 and served in the Palmach under Yitzhak Sadeh in the War of Independence. He later

served in the Tank Corps, Gedud 82. In 1954, while, serving on Israel Army Reserve duty, Yitzhak lost the use of his legs due to polio and was confined to a wheel chair. Taking account of the shortage of wheelchairs in Israel because they were imported, he started a factory to produce them locally. He returned to civilian life to run the business providing employment in the community of Pardess Hannah and expanded into various other business sectors. In 1956 he trained as a swimmer on Lake Kinneret and participated in the Paraplegic Olympiad in England, where he won the Gold medal for the State of Israel.

This is a “Beau Geste” story of our time relevant to many of the Machal volunteers who came from North America and other regions where Jews live free and peaceful lives. They found a way to maintain an allegiance to their countries of origin while engaging in the creation of the Jewish State and serving in its defense.

Si Spiegelman

(Based on material provided by David Hanovice)

Editor’s Note: Israel Hanovice passed away in 1966 at the age of 82. Today there are 77 or more of his descendants living in the U.S. and Israel.



Yitshak Hanovice



Harry Hanovice



Aaron Hanovice



Sam Hanovice



David Hanovice

Middie to Machal: The Israeli Odyssey of Paul Nachman Shulman

If anyone can “bottle” historical research, the bottle should contain a label: “Warning: historical research can be highly addictive.” Such is the nature of my research for a book about Paul Shulman, the graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who in 1948 established an academy in Haifa to train officers for Israel’s new navy.

After two years of duty as engineering officer of the USS Hunt, Shulman resigned his commission. He volunteered for the Haganah’s mission to get Jewish Holocaust survivors to Palestine, the Jews’ promised Homeland.

Of the estimated 1,500 Americans who served as volunteer Machal, some 250 were veterans that crewed the surplus vessels, purchased by cover corporations supplied by funds from wealthy Jewish interests, which formed the “Jews Secret Fleet” of Aliyah Bet – clandestine immigration.

David Ben-Gurion made several trips to the United States in 1945 and 1946 to press the case for the state of Israel. When in New York City he would sometimes stay at a small hotel at 14 East 60th street, known as “Hotel Fourteen,” which was above the trendy Copacabana nightclub. More than once he was a houseguest of Rebecca and Herman Shulman – Paul’s parents – at their apartment overlooking Central Park West, or at their elegant country home in Stamford, Connecticut. It was at one of these visits that “BG” impressed the 24-year-old Lieutenant,

(Junior Grade) that Israel could use a man with his engineering skills.

Shulman’s engineering skills served the Haganah in New York and Italy where he helped ensure the sea-

worthiness of Aliyah Bet vessels. Soon after May 15, 1948 Ben-Gurion called Shulman to Israel to set up the naval academy, in Haifa. The staff included former U.S. naval officers Richard Rosenberg, Marvin Broder and Saunder Finard, and British ex-officers Allen Burke, David DeLange and Harvey Miller. Training texts included the U.S. Navy’s Bluejacket’s Manual

Himself trained at Annapolis, Shulman often found it a challenge to instill the same regard for classical learning in the former PalYam (Sea Service) students. “Paul would make a point about seamanship,” Marvin Broder recalled, “and a student might reply, “Oh, yeah? Prove it!”

Shulman’s limited sea-going experience in combat was no secret, recalls Richard Rosenberg. “Still, he did a creditable job of organizing the navy...given the opposition of the PalYamnicks...” Dual-hatted as the Navy’s Commander-in-Chief, Shulman was not content to command merely a desk. He took part in several

naval operations. In the most celebrated, in command of Kuf-24, Ma’oz, he led a group of naval commandos from Shaytet-13 on a mission to attack the Egyptian corvette Emir Farouk off the harbor at Gaza on October 22, 1948. Although a truce with Egypt was not struck until 1949, it is believed that the loss of their flagship that night was in Hebrew – the straw that broke the camel’s back.

J. Wandres

J. Wandres is writing a book about Paul Shulman. He would enjoy hearing from anyone who served with him in the Israeli navy or during his long life as a civilian in Israel. Contact Mr. Wandres at <jperiod@optonline.net>



Shulman with Ben Gurion

Irving J. Block

Honored and Memorialized

Rabbi Irving J. Block, who passed away in October 2002, was a veteran of the Haganah defending Jerusalem in the early days of the War of Independence. He was a member of the AVI Executive Board and served as AVI's Chaplain. He founded the Brotherhood Synagogue in New York in 1954 and then served as its Rabbi and Rabbi Emeritus until his death.

The Brotherhood Synagogue has established the Rabbi Irving J. Block Memorial Lecture as an annual program. The first lecture took place in November 2003 with Abraham Foxman National Director of the Anti-Defamation League. The 2004 lecturer was Rabbi David Ellenson, President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion where Irving was ordained in 1953.

A monument has been erected in Irving's honor in Israel.

**Yom HaZicharon
in Israel**

**Wednesday May 11, 2005
Machal Monument**

**Contingents are expected from
the United States, Canada,
France and the United Kingdom
as well as Israel**

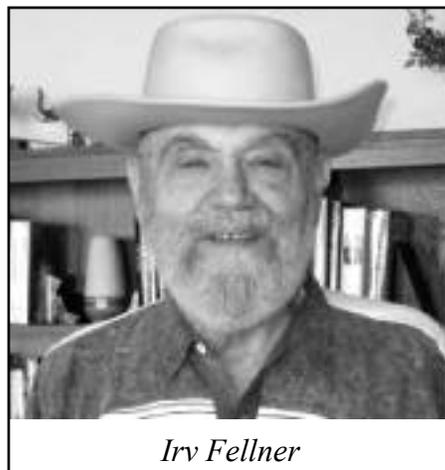
Information
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An American delegation is in
formation.

For information contact Ira
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**FELLNER'S "SAM'S QUEST"
PRODUCED IN NEW YORK CITY**

Irv Fellner, a member of AVI, who served in the Israel Army in 1948, now of Mesa, Arizona has written a play, "Sam's Quest," which was produced by The Theatre-Studio, Inc., of New York City in December. Irv and his wife Eileen were at the December 11 opening.



Irv Fellner

"Sam's Quest" is about a disabled, older man who is desperately seeking a way to make his existence meaningful. His wife, Beverly, is bitter about having all the responsibilities of day-to-day living thrust upon her and constantly demeans him. Sam is planning a drastic solution to his dilemma when he unexpectedly finds a solution to his quest. This is Irv's second play to be produced. The American Theatre of Actors produced "Bitter Herbs," a drama about a family conflict during a Passover Seder, in New York City in 1997.

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**MUSEUM OF THE JEWISH SOLDIER
OF WORLD WAR II AT LATRUN**

Accompanied by Colonel (ret.) David (Migdal) Teperson, a South African Machal brother, I visited the Latrun Armour Museum where the Exhibit titled "The Jewish Soldier of World War II" is displayed. This exhibit portrays one the close-kept secrets of World War II: "The Forgotten Ally" i.e., the Jewish People.

Displays representing Jewish fighters who served in the armies of many countries (regular and partisans) and who made a major contribution in defeating the Third Reich, fill and entire room. One and a half million Jewish soldiers fought to free the world of Nazism; many of them distinguished themselves and were highly decorated. A number rose to the top echelons of command in their respective army and navy. This vast number represents almost 11% of the total Jewish world population remaining at the end of the war. The casualty rate of the Jewish fighters was very high; sixteen per cent of the total number who served gave their lives. In the United States, 500,000 Jews served in all branches of the armed forces and 52,000 were decorated for bravery.

Sadly, the victorious Allies did not recognize this contribution to the war effort. Instead the Jews were rewarded with a British blockade and a weapons embargo as the Jews struggled to resettle the holocaust survivors and create a State of their own. The story of the Jews from many allied nations in World War II is a compelling one; of courage, dedication, and distinctive service rendered toward Allied victory and the defeat of fascism.

Ira Feinberg

Obituaries

Dov Mills: Exodus Crew and then Palmach

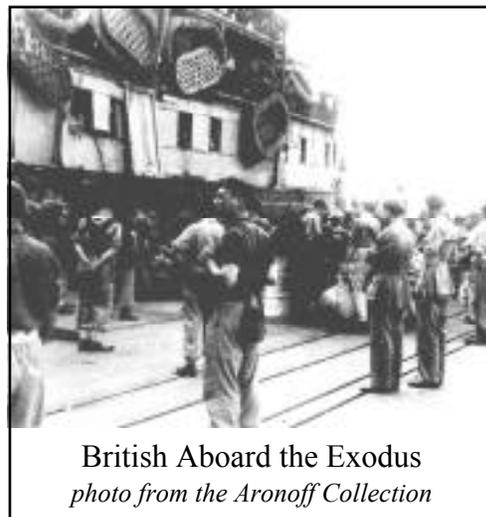
Dov Mills passed away on the 23rd of October, 2004, and was laid to rest in the cemetery of the City of Be'er-Sheva', situated about mid way between Kibbutz Hatserim and the "Old City". His plot is on the same path he took in his PALMAH jeep on the 21st of October, 1948, as a member of the 9th Battalion of the Negev Brigade, which liberated Be'er-Sheva'. The Israeli forces advanced from the West, from Kibbutz Tse'elim, passed Kibbutz Hatserim and attacked the town from different sides. Eight years after the War of Independence ended, Dov settled in Be'er-Sheva', where he spent most of his mature life.

Dov was multi-talented, self-educated, and had many diverse interests: Zionism; the sea, navigation, astronomy; the land, agriculture, camping; psychology; and even painting, poetry and short-story writing were all part of his life. He was born in Brooklyn N.Y. on the 6th of August 1925, to Jewish immigrants who had come as children with their parents from Poland and Romania. He spent his childhood in Brooklyn, and, later in life, warmly recalled the public library, playing handball in the streets of his neighborhood, his friends and, of course, his family. Dov studied agriculture in the only high school in the city that had this course of study. As a youth, Dov joined the Hashomer Hatsa'ir Movement.

In 1943, Dov joined the U.S. Army and, after Basic Training, he was sent to fight in the Far East. He was stationed in the Philippines and later in Okinawa, when the atomic bomb

wiped out Hiroshima on his 20th birthday. Ever since, his birthdays were mingled with sadness, as he remembered the multitude who died that day or carried their terrible wounds for the rest of their lives. His commemoration reached a fateful peak during the last year of his life, when a young group of Japanese missionaries for peace knocked on his door. They visited him often and brought him much happiness during his sickness. He told them about his experiences and feelings regarding "the bomb", and that he had written a poem about Hiroshima, which they then translated into Japanese and sent to the Mayor of Hiroshima. A reply from the Mayor brought Dov much excitement and some sense of closure.

A brief leave from the Army, towards the end of the War, brought Dov to Shanghai, changing his life entirely. There he met Jewish refugees who had survived W.W.II. He became aware, for the first time, of the tragedy of his people in Europe. Later, he used to say that this had a significant impact on his decision to help with the establishment of a home for the Jewish People. After returning to New York in 1946, he looked for a way to do this. Through Hashomer Hatsa'ir, Dov heard that the Haganah was seeking young Jewish men to volunteer for 'Aliyah Bet.' So Dov volunteered to serve as a crew member on the ship "Exodus". The story of the "Exodus" and the agony of the 4,500 refugees has been told many times. Dov was an oiler during the voyage to Israel, and spent most of the transit in the en-



British Aboard the Exodus
photo from the Aronoff Collection

gine room down below deck. On the way back to Europe, on board the "Empire Rival", he served as a middleman between the undercover Haganah people and the British officers. He was also on an organizing committee that dealt with the frequent problems of the refugees. Being a pivotal figure, many came to know him: activists and refugees alike. On board the "Empire Rival", in order not to be recognized by the British as a crewmember from the "Exodus", he changed his name from Bernard Miller to Dov Mills. Later, he managed to escape from the detention camp at Popendorf, Germany, with other "Exodus" crewmembers, posing as a member of a soccer team. When passing through France, he was the only member of his group to meet the head of Haganah. He finally made 'aliyah in January, 1948. After only a month or so, Dov had already volunteered for the PALMAH and joined the Negev Brigade. He participated in battles against the Egyptians in Gaza, the northern Negev,

Obituaries (continued on next pg.)



Dov Mills, Oiler

Be'er-Sheva' and Bir Asluj. Though he did not have a license, he was a jeep driver and shot a machine gun during the battles. His jeep commander was Corporal Mota Gur, later Commander-in-Chief of the I.D.F. After one year of fighting, at the end of the War of Independence, he was discharged. First, Dov joined Kibbutz Sasa (Hashomer Hatsa'ir), but he left after several months. Then, looking for a job using his agricultural experience, Dov found work at the Smuckler Farm in Moshav Rishpon, where he also met the farmer's daughter, Shula, who had come for a visit from the U.S.A. They fell in love, got married, and settled in Moshav Habonim, being among the first settlers. His son, David, was born in Haifa, when they occupied one of the rooms in the Crusaders' Fortress. After two years, Dov and his family moved to Moshav Orot, near Be'er Tuviah, where his second son, Ilan, was born. In 1956, difficulties in land cultivation and financing drove him away from Orot. Having returned temporarily to the Rishpon area, he started working as an agro-meteorologist at the Meteorological Service in the Qiriyah in Tel-Aviv. In 1957, Dov did not hesitate to move South to

Be'er-Sheva', still a small town at the time, when a job was offered to him - to head the Meteorological Station. This station was located at the Negev Institute for Arid Zone Research (later named: the Institutes for Applied Research of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev).

Working among animal and plant physiologists, chemists and engineers, he flourished. Self-educating himself in climatology and meteorology, he reached very high levels of expertise in these fields. Besides carrying out the routine meteorological observations, he provided weather forecasts for farmers all over the northern and southern Negev and participated in different researches that needed his skills and know-how in climatology. He also taught a practical laboratory course on climatology at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. In 1964, Dana, his third child, joined the family. Dov loved his country, so during holidays he would travel throughout Israel. Camping was his favorite activity in the late sixties and seventies. Dov's mind was always stirring, always looking for new interests. Psychology caught his fancy in the late seventies. He completed his B.S. in Behavioral Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and continued with an M.A. in Psychology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dov always loved astronomy. An autodidact also in this area, he became the beloved astronomy teacher of kids from around Be'er-Sheva' for several years; he loved those kids and they loved him. Dov retired from work in 1989, after 32 years of governmental service. Then, he returned to his lifelong dream—the sea. Dov bought a small yacht and spent the rest of his life

living on it in the Tel-Aviv Marina. Not forgetting where he had been before, Dov named his boat "Desert Dream". He taught himself navigation and often sailed along the coasts of his beloved country. Dov had two homes: one was the place he slept and had his meals (for the last 15 years—his boat) and the second was the Aranne Library in Be'er-Sheva', where he spent much time nourishing his mind. Painting and short story writing occupied Dov in his last years. His final project was to develop a simple method of navigation, using neither a sextant nor a GPS, but his illness prevented him from completing this. About six months before he passed away, he could no longer live on his yacht. This was very hard for him. Deciding not to sell it, Dov gave it as a gift to Giora of Moshav Habonim, who loves sailing, loves the sea, and has "good hands" to make it seaworthy and keep it ship-shape. Dov did not live to see his boat go back into the water. On October 25, 2004, Dov's family, friends from Hashomer Hatsa'ir, from the "Exodus", from Kibbutz Sasa, Moshav Habonim, Moshav Orot, and from the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and others, came to pay their final respects and take their leave of Dov. May he sail the heavens in peace!

*Received from David Baum
Condolences to
Dana Oumat
Kehelat Solaniki 4/8
69513 Tel Aviv*

Memories from Dov's Friends

Our chaver and former shipmate, Dov Mills (born Bernard Miller) passed away in Beersheva, Israel on

Obituaries (continued on next pg.)

Saturday, Oct. 23rd, at 78 years of age. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y. he served in the U.S. Army during WWII. He was a crew member of the Aliyah Beth ship "Exodus" and was among those who accompanied the *maapilim* on their forced return voyage to Hamburg, Germany. The Americans later escaped from the British Zone while posing as a soccer team and managed to make their way back to Palestine (Israel). During Israel's War of Independence, Dov served as a member of the Palmach's Ninth Battalion and participated in the capture of Beersheva and taking of Eilat (*Um el Rashrash*). He was an early member of Kibbutz Sasa and Moshav Habonim. For many years he lived in Beersheva and served as a meteorologist for the Ministry of Transportation at the Arid Zone Research Institute. He enjoyed teaching children about the stars, wrote poetry, and maintained a small sailboat at the marina in Tel-Aviv.

Avi and Batsheva Livney

Kibbutz Barkai

ISRAEL

972-4-6387254

Encounters With Dov

I first met Dov (Miller then) when both he and I were visiting the Hechalutz training farm at Heightstown N.J. I didn't get much of a chance to get to know him but I do remember him as a very popular and likeable character with a remarkable baritone voice. He especially enjoyed singing Negro spirituals which was enjoyed by all.

We met again years later when I came to Kibbutz Sasa. He had already made up his mind to leave the kibbutz so once again we did not have much of a chance to know one another. It was clear that Dov's leav-

ing was very much regretted by the kibbutz members.

Our third encounter was in Beer Sheva where I joined the Negev Institute for Arid Zone Research. Dov was in charge of the local office of the Government's Meteorological Services which maintained weather observation facilities at our Institute. He was responsible for measuring the various meteorological parameters for Israel's southern region and transmitting them over the worldwide weather network. I noticed that despite very little previous training Dov was able to explain to me the basics of atmospheric physics & how to decode weather charts. We spent many hours during those years poring over weather maps & observing cloud formations. Dov fit in well with the staff of the Institute. His son David is now a professor at the Institute & the associated Ben-Gurion University.

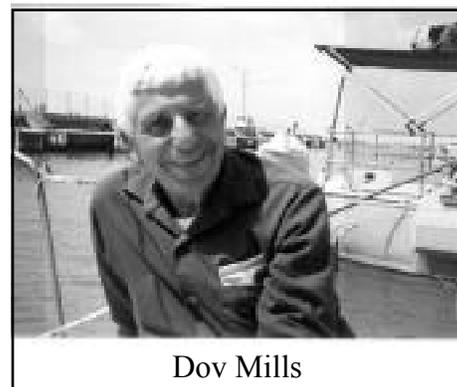
Dov was always ready to explain what he was doing. Hardly a day passed when there was not a group of young pupils from the nearby high school eagerly listening to Dov's enthusiastic lecture & patient demonstration of how equipment is used to measure and predict the weather. Especially the measurement of upper atmospheric winds by following the flight of a helium filled balloon would attract a big crowd of kids. A visit to his station was very popular in Beer Sheva high schools. His interest in people led him to study psychology in later years.

Our fourth meeting with Dov was in Tel Aviv where we had gone to live after retirement. Dov still maintained his connections with Beer Sheva but established a second home in a little sail boat which he named "Desert Breeze" We visited each other from time to time. Dov enjoyed

talking about the use of the sun & stars for navigation. He seemed always to be working on a new method & claimed that he was close to a new solution.

Essentially Dov was a loner. He was a free spirit that could not be held down for very long in conventional frameworks. You felt this when you spoke to him or when you read his poetry. We shall miss him.

Yoel & Chela Schechter



Dov Mills

We regret to report
the death of

Ida Chertoff

90

wife of

Mordecai Chertoff

New York City

October 21, 2004

We regret to report
the death of

Miriam Gardner

79

widow of

Leo Gardner

Boca Raton, FL

January 20, 2005

Obituaries

Irving Weingarten: Normandy Veteran and Aliya Bet

Irving Weingarten passed away on July 25, 2004. Irv served on the Hayim Arloseroff, the Pan Crescent and the Pan York. Irving was born in Flushing New York on May 23, 1924 and soon after moved with his family to Buffalo. His Jewish education was modest and his family observance hardly went beyond High Holy Day attendance at synagogue.

Irv had served with the United States Merchant Marine and was part of the Normandy invasion during WWII. Upon returning to the United States after the war he met recruiters for aliya bet. He was drawn to the effort more for the adventure than out of a sense of Jewish ideology. However, the sight of the DPs changed his life and his attitudes. He became devoted to the Zionist cause.

The British boarded his ship. In a show of daring he attempted to save the Zionist flag on the ship and was



Irving Weingarten

shot in the leg and arrested. Placed on a bus to the Athlit prison he managed to hide under a seat where he remained when the other prisoners were debarked. In cooperation with the bus driver he was spirited away.

For seventeen years Irving worked as a bus driver for the New York City Transit Authority. His wife Sarah and his son Michael survive him.

Condolences to:

Sarah Weingarten

5801 NW 62nd Ave. #205

Tamarac, FL 33319-2227

954 726 1401

In 1948, however, his lifelong dedication to the newly created State of Israel was about to begin in earnest. Answering a random ad for an overseas aircraft and engine mechanic, he found himself face to face with a recruiting agent for the fledgling Israeli Air Force. Before long, he was heading to Israel, where he spent 1948 and '49 with 69 Squadron at Ramat David servicing Israel's squadron of three reconstituted Flying Fortresses.

What made the whole experience most interesting was his meeting up with Jim Fuller, a gentile former U.S. Air Force aircraft mechanic working alongside him on the "forts." Fuller went through the same experiences as he did but, this time it was supposedly with a fledgling Israeli Airline (that then did not exist).

Jim's parents, with whom he lived at the time in Cleveland, suggested he ask the advice of a relative in nearby Geneva, Ohio, who, they remembered, was married to a Jew. The relative recommended Jim consult with a Cleveland Rabbi who knew something of Israel's set up. Unbeknownst to Jim at the time, the rabbi, who recommended Jim accept the position in Israel was Abba Hillel Silver, popular president of the Zionist Organization of America.

Murray is survived by his wife, Elaine Strauss, and two daughters, Shoshana and Bat-Ami, both of whom received their initial, pre-high school education in Israel.

Eugene Blum, AVI, IAF, 1948-'49

Condolences to

Elaine R. Strauss

828 Oakton, Apt. 2F

Evanston, IL 60202

Murray Kaplan: Serviced IAF Flying Fortresses

Regretfully, our old buddy, Murray Kaplan, has passed away after a protracted illness. We will always remember him as a faithful servant to Israel. Murray was born in New York City on June 5, 1926 of parents who had immigrated to the United States from the former Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Despite never belonging to a Jewish or Zionist organization, Murray considered himself Orthodox. He celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and was proud of his Jewish Heritage.

Upon graduating from De Witt Clinton High School in The Bronx in 1943 at the age of 17, he obtained permission from his parents to enlist in the U. S. Navy "to fight the Nazis." He spent close to a year transferring from one aircraft and engine mechanic school to another before being shipped to Guam, where he served out the rest of the war as an aviation machinist mate.



Murray Kaplan

Obituaries

Sol Freeman: Mechanic with 72nd Battalion



Sol Freeman

We remember Sol Freeman with great pride. Sol was a licensed mechanic who served

first in the Ordinance Corps and then in the Infantry Corps of the Canadian Army in World War II. He was sent home from Belgium in 1944 for training as a Flame Gunner on Carriers.

Sol volunteered for the Haganah in late 1947 and eventually sailed

for France on the Marine Swallow. Arriving at the Grand Marinas DP Camp he assisted the residents with day-to-day arrangements and prepared them for aliya. He accompanied some of them to Palestine on the Pan York and was assigned to a military base in Samaria. He was assigned to the 72nd Battalion, Company B and saw action a scant four days after his arrival. He participated in an attack on a hill designated as Tamara. Fighting there was severe and at close quarters and the Jews were heavily outnumbered by the Arabs. A bayonet charge was called for. The B Company lost a number of men and many were wounded.

Being the great mechanic that he was, he was able to gather parts of three or four damaged trucks and build one that worked. He performed this service with the 72nd in the Galilee.

Sol's first wife Betty passed away 25 years ago. He married Bea Estrin 17 years ago. He is survived by Bea, a son, Brad, a daughter, Aviva, grandchildren Norina, Rebecca and Veronica and a step-daughter, Marilyn Rosen and her daughter Jessica.

His family and friends who loved him dearly miss him.

Condolences to
Bea Freeman
 55 Skymark Dr. #206
 Toronto, ONT, 2H3 2N4
 Canada

Wartime Humor—as Remembered by David Macarov

In establishing the Codes-and-Cipher Section of the Israel air force, in Tel Aviv, I needed tens of workers, not only to make up the random-letter codebooks, but also to work in each of the outlying signal stations as well as in headquarters. Since the air force operated in English (due to the many foreign volunteers), I went to the head of the air force — Aaron Remez — and explained my need. He thought a moment and replied that there were hundreds of airplane watchers on the roofs on Tel Aviv and other cities, and that many of them undoubtedly knew English. He also said he was convinced that the air-watch service was over-manned. So he called in the head of the air-watch section — an old kibbutznick named Zvi — and told him to transfer fifty air-watchers to the Codes and Ciphers Section. I am told the conversation went somewhat like this:

“Fifty? I can’t spare fifty. Maybe if it is an emergency I can give them five.”

“Zvi, this isn’t the kibbutz and you aren’t the work manager. This is the army, and you are ordered to transfer fifty people.”

“Okay, okay, I understand. I’ll stretch myself and give them ten.”

“Don’t you understand, Zvi? This is an order: Transfer fifty.”

“No, I can’t do that. It would denude my service. Fifteen is my last offer.”

By this time Remez was laughing out loud.

“Zvi, you are not negotiating a land sale with an Arab. The code section needs fifty people and you are to give them over.”

“Aaron, with my hand on my heart I tell you I can’t do it.”

In the end, we got twenty-five new clerks, and Remez told me that was the best he could do.

Humor (continued on p.19)

President's Message

(continued from p. 1)

2. Furthering the archival work at the University of Florida and encouraging members to donate or lend photographs and documents. Further work in validating service records, and expanding the Virtual Museum remains also an integral part of our archival agenda.

3. Encouraging a mission to Israel by an AVI delegation coinciding with the Yom Hazikharon memorial at Sha'ar Hagai. This solemn day of remembrance for Israel's fallen soldiers occurs on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, followed by Israel's 57th Independence Day celebration on Thursday.

4. Expanding the West Point Assembly (honoring Mickey Marcus and the other Fallen North Americans) into a National AVI event with appropriate media attention and participation by Jewish schools, temples and community centers. The event is scheduled to take place on Sunday, May 15.

5. Participating, as is our custom each year, in the Salute to Israel Parade down Fifth Ave in New York,

scheduled for Sunday June 5th, 2005.

6. Completing the first stage of Aliyah Bet and Machal Museum in Gainesville, Fl. by September. The tentative opening is planned for early December, 2005. We plan a festive reception for the inauguration with participation by members and special guests.

7. Promoting fundraisers to support the archival and museum work in progress gaining support from individual members, outside sponsors and foundations.

8. Continuing the work of the Speakers Bureau in providing AVI speakers to temples, organizations and community centers.

These are the pillars of the 2005 Agenda that I propose to the AVI Board. I ask the membership at large for further support. Please come and help. Contact any of the board members to volunteer your time. Feel free to call or e-mail your thoughts and suggestions to me or any of the Board members.

We recognize our Archivist, Ralph Lowenstein, for his incredible achievement with the Machal & Aliyah Bet Archives, the AVI

website (www.israelvets.com), and the museum that he created at the University Of Florida at Gainesville. We owe a lot to Ralph for his unswerving efforts and his determination as well as his resourcefulness in raising the funds for the projects.

We are especially thankful to the University of Florida, Hillel and the financial sponsors for their unflinching support and to our Machal friends in Israel for their research assistance in connection with the exhibit material. Our story will be documented and reflect a unique contribution to Jewish History by a relatively small band of inspired people.

I salute my predecessor, Jerry Rosenberg, for his service to this organization and I look forward to working with our new Vice president, Bill Gelberg, and the AVI Board of Directors in serving the members to the best of my capacity and abilities.

I extend my best wishes for good health and happiness to you and your families for the coming year.

Shalom,

Ira Feinberg

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(Wilkes-Chase continued from p 1)

Later, he passed an officers training course and was assigned as a bodyguard to David Ben Gurion. He remained in Israel until 1958 and achieved the rank of Captain in the IDF artillery. Returning to England, he surrendered to the authorities and served a year's detention at Colchester barracks. Upon his release he moved to East Anglia and accepted a position with a

Cambridgeshire agricultural packing business. He met his wife, June, a former nurse and married in 1962. They had two daughters, Vanessa and Genevieve.

Wilkes-Chase died at the age of 73 in 2002. Stanley Medicks, coordinator of the British and European Machal, arranged for the Israeli Embassy to recognize his contribution with a certificate of appreciation. IDF Brigadier General and Is-

raeli Ambassador Zvika Gendelman presented the certificate to his widow. Medicks said he was disappointed not to have known Wilkes-Chase. He learned of his service from his obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*.

This article is based on a one that appeared in the Jewish Chronicle, London, June 18, 2004. John Rifkin took the photograph of the presentation.

Book Review (continued from p.1)

May 1948.” This doesn’t seem to mesh with the passage in his Gachal article which states, “over 4,000 men who received ‘service’ training and arrived in Israel ... between February and September 1948, joined various Hagana units which later became IDF units.”

Returning to Machal, he writes that “over 4,000” participated in the various IDF and pre-state underground forces. But instead of providing justification for that number, he states that published Machal numbers are not uniform; one source gives 3,000 as their total, another puts it at “about 5,000,” and still another, a book of his own, puts it at “between 4,700 and 5,600.” In the footnote he explains that “it’s not our purpose to study the topic of quantity in this article.”

It’s puzzling why Markovitsky chose to mention those unfounded and wide-ranging numbers, educated guesses at best, that were bandied about over the years, when the “about 3,500” given in his own Machal booklet was built on solid footings and is therefore generally accepted as being a very realistic estimate.

As is generally known among students of Machal, researched numbers were just non-existent prior to 1987. Only with the publication that year of *The Jews’ Secret Fleet*, by Joseph Hochstein and Murray Greenfield, did a reasonably solid Machal number (for Aliya-Betniks) come to light. Other equally solid Machal numbers, all the result of thorough research, became known during the 1990s, including; the killed and missing, volunteers from South Africa, aircrew personnel and volunteers from Canada.

Markovitsky’s Machal article has considerably more footnote references to original data sources than does his Gachal article, but here too many original data sources are masked by references to his own works. But in contrast with the latter, his Machal article contains several interesting morsels

that I was previously unaware of. Except for those morsels, there is not much in it that most of us are not already familiar with, such as references to ‘brand-name’ Machalniks like ‘Buzz’ Beurling, Ben Dunkelman and ‘Mickey’ Marcus.

How many of us knew, for example, that volunteers from Australia and New Zealand were initially considered as Gachal? Officialdom’s rationale was that since they came to Israel on their own (recruiting organizations were non-existent in either country), they hadn’t been promised any ‘special’ service conditions such as transportation back home, as were their comrades-in-arms from other English-speaking countries.

To this I can add that bona-fide volunteers from Eastern European countries, and there were some, had an especially hard time trying to be classified as Machal. As Markovitsky points out, perhaps the official attitude toward them mirrored that of David Ben-Gurion who regarded the *Czech Brigade*, which had some Machalniks in its ranks, with apprehension as being a possible Communist conspiracy.

In another reference to Ben-Gurion, he tells of an entry in his war diary which shows that he saw the Machal contribution “not only in terms of increased military manpower, but mainly as an expression of Diaspora Jewry’s solidarity” with the nascent State of Israel. It seems to me that we saw our contribution to the cause in a somewhat different light; more as individuals putting our lives on the line than as Zionists or representatives of Diaspora Jewry. That may be why even now many of us are inclined to see ourselves, justifiably in my view, as being a head taller than most Jews in the Diaspora. Perhaps it’s that very sentiment which led to our tongue-in-cheek definition of a Zionist back then, as a Jew in the Diaspora who raised money from a second Jew with which to send a third Jew to join the fight in Israel.

Markovitsky also refers to the resentment of Machal among Gachalniks. He explains that their antipathy was due largely to the better service conditions enjoyed by Machalniks, and was particularly evident in mixed units, such as the mainly Gachal *Czech Brigade* and the *French Commandos*, both of which included a number of Machalniks.

To his credit, he provides this astute explanation of officialdom’s ambivalent attitude toward Machal, which he wisely attributes to un-named other people; “The military and political establishment wasn’t sufficiently truthful in its relationship to Machal personnel, ... National pride was a factor in the behavior of military commanders toward the volunteers.” Furthermore, “Yishuv leaders believed, or wanted to believe, that they didn’t really need outside assistance,” a contention “strengthened by the ‘fact’ that the volunteers *yardu min ha’aretz* (deserted the country) when they left and so there was thus no need to immortalize their assistance and contribution to the war effort.”

The article ends with the indisputable but rather timid view that since many Machalniks came with WW2 military training and experience they “made a meaningful contribution that enabled the IDF to create a regular and modern army in a relatively short period of time.”

While few Machalniks would find Markovitsky’s article totally satisfying, we should bear in mind that its appearance in Kadish’s important book will surely help spread the Machal message in Israel. Who knows, it may also reach members of the country’s establishment who know little, if anything, about the true worth of the Machal contribution back then.

Eddy Kaplansky
Haifa

Letters to the Editor...

The Eleanora Stratham obituary in the last Newsletter brought to mind a very pleasant young lady from Britain called Ella at the IAF's Intelligence Wing, and I was therefore saddened by the news of her passing. I was previously unaware that she was then a married woman, and that her husband was an airman called Joshua Joseph.

The first time I came across his name was some forty years later, while researching and compiling THE FIRST FLIERS, a definitive work on the nascent IAF's aircrew personnel that was later published by the IAF Historical Branch. The document containing his name indicated conclusively that on October 29th 1948 air gunner Joseph was in the IAF's Aircrew Pool, essentially a roster of fliers either not yet assigned to a squadron or awaiting their discharge. In none of the dozens of other documents I scoured did his name appear, and to none of the many former IAF fliers I consulted was his name familiar. He therefore appears in THE FIRST FLIERS as an air gunner in the Aircrew Pool whose WW2 service, unit of IAF service and country of origin are unknown.

Thanks to the heroics attributed to him in Ella's obit, I now know much more about Joshua Joseph, but have no evidence that he ever flew with an IAF squadron. Since there was only one unit (69 Squadron) back then with any need for air gunners, and there were more than enough air gunners in the IAF to fill that need, it may be that Joseph was among the many 'superfluous' air gunners who did great work on the ground as intelligence officers, operations officers, or in some other important capacity. Or

perhaps, in common with several others I know of, he just didn't like the idea of serving in a non-flying position and opted for an IAF discharge.

The heroics attributed to him will be seen as highly unlikely to anyone familiar with the IAF history of that period or with matters of aircrew training. For one, that someone trained only as a navigator, "flew one of Israel's first aeroplanes in Italy" after making "the mistake of telling the Israelis he could fly," is utter nonsense to anyone knowing how much training is required before one can safely take-off and land even the simplest of light airplanes.

And if one of our fliers was indeed "wounded severely in aerial combat" back then, such sensational and unprecedented news would have spread like wildfire throughout the IAF. Yet there is no known documentation of an IAF airman having been wounded in action at any time during the 1948/49 war. While seeking clarification of that unlikely allegation, I was informed that he "shot down an Egyptian plane and was shot down and wounded himself." It happens that the circumstances of every air-to-air downing of an airplane, both the enemy's and the IAF's, were properly recorded at the time and so are well known today among historians and researchers of that era. I have little doubt therefore, that both heroic deeds attributed to Joseph are of the kind seen in that old Danny Kaye classic, The Adventures of Walter Mitty.

Such 'old-soldiers tales' more often than not originate with the self-proclaimed hero himself, and are innocently propagated, and frequently embellished, by admiring

friends and relatives. Often beginning as little white-lies, such tales are known to have developed into myths that effectively shut out historical truth. And in instances where the tale is based on an actual happening but with a name-change, the identity of the true hero can be lost forever. As former CIA director Alan Dulles reportedly put it, "Truth has a hard time once myths are established that satisfy our hunger for heroes and heroics."

If other reputable veterans organizations can manage to keep their newsletters clean of such history-falsifying stuff, surely so can the AVI.

Ed Kaplansky, Haifa
kaplansk@actcom.com

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A number of Machal volunteers served together with their wives. Yet, some of the wives do not appear in Machal records, though they are recognized by AVI as members. The following letter speaks to this point.

Many of the wives of American students were active one way or another (as were single girls like Zippy (Borowski) Porat, Rachel Lev, Rachel Weiner, and others). However, this was long before the creation of Machal, and they were not later blanketed in like the men. My wife stood on the porch of Patt's bakery trying to spot Arabs entering the New City. She also carried arms to Motza, but when the war was over none of these wives received discharge papers or pay. Sexual discrimination is not new.

David Macarow, Jerusalem

Letters to Editor
(continued on next page)

Letters to Editor
(continued from p.16)

Letter to the Editor...

I am a quiet member of AVI. I was 3rd engineer on the Aliyah Bet ship Mala in 1948. Paul Kaye and Sid Rabinovich may remember me.

I recently listened to a lecture by Dr. Louis Levine, the Curator at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in NYC, on the heroic role of uniformed Jewish servicemen during World War Two. The lecture was a verbal "walk thru" of a new exhibit he mounted at this museum. After his inspiring talk, I suggested to him what a natural addition to the exhibit it would be to add those USA WWII servicemen who served in the various branches of Machal during the Israeli war of independence in 1948. Dr. Levine had already thought of the idea but was having difficulty in finding Machal people.

I respectfully suggest that you contact Dr. Levine and move this idea forward. Perhaps Dr. Levine could write an article for our AVI newsletter and solicit responses from surviving qualified member veterans?

Martin Silver
Lenox, MA

Dear Martin:

It is always pleasing when a quiet AVI member speaks up. Thank-you for the information. We had some contact with the Museum of Jewish Heritage through David Gen perhaps a decade ago. I am forwarding this to Si Spiegelman, now the chairman of our executive board. This initiative falls in his area.

The Editor SZK

Response from Si Spiegelman..

Dear Martin:

Over the years we have been in touch with the curators of the Museum, specifically Esther Brumberg and more recently Michael Spielholz. They know all about our organization and where to find us. Our talks with them in the past led nowhere. There were problems in their minds as to how we fit with their exhibit themes, besides budgetary issues and more recently their focus on remodelling the floor where we suggested an Aliyah Bet Exhibit be mounted.

Thanks for telling us about your conversation with Dr. Louis Levine. I will be more than happy to contact Dr. Levine and give him all the assistance he needs. There is no doubt that even a small exhibit on Aliyah Bet and Machal would be an upbeat message of resistance, defiance, hope in connection with the holocaust years. We have always felt that we "belong in the Museum of Jewish Heritage", but you understand that it is not in our hands and soon it will be too late as our numbers are dwindling fast.

I suggest, if you see it as appropriate, to cc this note to Dr. Levine...

Si.

uuuuu

Gainesville Machal Museum...

A Reality Check

Gainesville ?????????? At first blush it sounds like a strange place for the Machal museum considering all the fine Jewish museums and institutions located in our major cities that attract large crowds...

The reality is as follows...

1. Over the past ten years we have discussed the museum idea with major organizations. Interest was intense and promises were made, but no one delivered. The problem was in funding the project.

Now....

2. Hillel in Gainesville offered the space for the exhibit to us and even designed the new Hillel House foyer to accommodate the display cabinets.

3. While AVI members provided the modest seed money to start the fund raiser, the sponsors/contributors who provided significant funds are Floridians

Other factors...

4. UFL- Gainesville supported the creation of the archives over the years and signed agreements to maintain the archives in perpetuity. (Supported by a Machal endowment fund.)

5. Ralph Lowenstein, who has dedicated his time to create the archives and museum lives and works in Gainesville as past Dean of the UFL School of Journalism

6. UFL at Gainesville has a significant Jewish student population (6000) and a major Judaica library.

In the final analysis the museum location becomes less important if we consider that

7. Displays will be accessible on-line through the internet (www.israelvets.com).

8. Mobility is assured by having replicas of displays that can be exhibited by other institutions. All they have to do is provide the space. There is also plenty of room for further enhancements if they care to participate in such initiatives.

Si Spiegelman

More on “Machal Volunteers from China”

The AVI Newsletter Winter 2003 contained an article entitled “Machal Volunteers from China.” Sello Fisch, a 1967 veteran, has submitted a follow-up article sketching some of the history of Jews in China, China as a refuge during the Holocaust, a list of individual Jewish refugees from China who have become prominent in American life and a vignette of Jewish volunteers who sailed for Israel in 1948. This last part of Fisch’s narrative is reproduced below.

With the end of WWII the ‘China Jews’ refugee community dispersed some to the US and Canada or Australia while others went on aliya to Israel. Among the various Zionist organizations in Shanghai was a contingent of Betarniks of Jabotinsky Revisionists who trained, with three British Lee-Enfield rifles, to join in the fight for independence in Israel. In the latter part of 1948 the first contingent of this Machal group boarded the ‘Wooster Victory’ an ex US troop transport enroute on a two months storm tossed voyage around Africa to Israel. The Suez Canal passage as well as most ports of entry along the way was barred to this ‘human cargo’ (four-tiered bunks in the cargo holds were the accommodations and noodles and tuna the standard fare), which finally disembarked in the port of Marseilles. There they were joined by a group of French Gachal embarked on the Zim ship Negba, to its destination the port of Haifa in Israel.

Among the ‘China hands’ and descendants of note are Zerach Warhaftig, saved by Sugihara (the Japanese diplomat in Poland who issued transit visas to allow Jews to escape to Kobe and Shanghai), destined to be among the signers of Israel Declaration of Independence and long-time serving minister of religious affairs in Israel’s cabinet; on one of his official visits to Japan he re-discovered Chiune Sugihara. Joseph Tekoa, Israel ambassador to the UN and director of Ben-Gurion University in the

Negev. Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of Commerce in the Carter administration and Peter Max, new-age illustrator of New York. Colonel Avi Lanir (Lankin), son of an illustrious Zionist family whose father made aliya from Harbin China and whose uncle Eliyahu Lankin was commander of the ill-fated ‘Machal/Gachal’ LST ‘Altalena’. He commanded Machal fighter squadron 101 at Ramat David during the Yom-Kippur war. The Syrians downed defending the Golan Heights Lanir’s ‘Mi-

rage’ and Lanir was captured and martyred in Damascus at the promising age of thirty-three.

An interesting aside of ‘the circle of history’ is the adventurous life story of Gerhard Neumann, a Frankfurt am Main Jewish aviation engineer who in the 1930’s serviced German engines for an airline in southern China. During WWII he became head of maintenance of

Claire Chennault’s A VG (American Volunteer Group) ‘Flying Tigers’ in Chunking. Among his exploits was the restoration to flying condition of a crashed Mitsubishi ‘Zero’, which was the nemesis of allied pilots who desperately wanted to discover its nimble flight characteristics. After the war Neumann came to Ohio and joined the budding GE jet-engine division where he rose to become its director And developer of the unique J-79 engine the powerhouse of the indomitable F-4 Phantom and Israel’s indigenous design fighter-bomber the Kfir.

Sello Fisch



Betar members sail from China to Israel, 1948

AVI EVENTS IN 2005

The year 2005 will be marked by four major events. AVI members are asked to take note and invited to participate.

MISSION TO ISRAEL

We are planning a mission to Israel by an AVI delegation coinciding with the Yom Hazikharon memorial at Sha'ar Hagai. This solemn day of remembrance for Israel's fallen soldiers occurs on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, followed by Israel's 57th Independence Day celebration on Thursday. Our plan is to arrange for transportation for the attendants from a central Jerusalem or Tel Aviv location to Sha'ar Hagai and return to that point at the conclusion of the ceremony. We are in touch with World Machal about organizing a special dinner or lunch event and a visit to a museum including also a visit with Israel dignitaries. Each participant will make his/her own travel and room arrangements AVI will provide a schedule (time and venue of the events). For information please contact: Ira Feinberg (201) 886-1188, David Hanovice (201) 224-3551, Sparks Meltzer (561) 637-5874 or Jerry Rosenberg (416) 787-7632.

WEST POINT ASSEMBLY

The West Point Assembly (honoring Mickey Marcus and the other Fallen North Americans) has been an important event for many years attended mostly by members and friends living in the immediate vicinity. We now plan to expand the attendance to involve other regions and to include Jewish schools, temples and community centers. The memorial event is scheduled to take place this year on Sunday, May 15. For information, please contact any of the committee members: Naomi Kantey (201) 489-3809, Paul Kaye (718) 428-2465, Si Spiegelman (212) 685-8548, Dave Gerard (631) 499-4327, Joe Warner (416) 497-0140, Sparks Meltzer (561) 637-5874 or Ira Feinberg (201) 886-1188. Additional

information regarding the program will be mailed beforehand.

Note: Those joining the mission to Israel and also attending the West Point assembly should plan their trip so as to return to the U.S. in time for the event (May 15). There was no flexibility in scheduling the West Point Assembly earlier in May.

SALUTE TO ISRAEL PARADE

We will again march (or ride) in the Salute to Israel Parade down Fifth Ave in New York, on Sunday, June 5, 2005. For information contact Dave Gerard (631) 499-4327

OPENING OF THE ALIYAH BET AND MACHAL MUSEUM

We plan an opening ceremony of the Museum in Gainesville, FL on either Sunday, November 6 or 13, 2005. Our members and special guests following a catered brunch at the Hillel House will attend the formal opening in the afternoon. Those members who will be in Gainesville on Saturday can join for Shabbat services in the morning and an informal dinner in the evening. The committee members organizing the event are Ralph Lowenstein (352) 392-6525, Art Bernstein (978) 532-6956, Bill Gelberg (561) 278-7392, Sparks Meltzer (561) 637-5874, Paul Kaye (718) 428-2465, Jerry Rosenberg (416) 787-7632, and Si Spiegelman (212) 685-8548.

More information regarding the program will be forthcoming.

Note: If you can lend a hand with these events, please get in touch with our President, Ira Feinberg at (201) 886-1188. We need all the help we can get.

*Si Spiegelman
Executive Director*

Humor *continued from p. 13)*

We made up codebooks of random strings of letters by painting alphabets on poker chips, stirring them around, and drawing them out in groups of five. This was tedious work, and in order to keep morale up I usually asked for volunteers among the cipher clerks. We did this work at night, and usually served light refreshments to keep things on a pleasant keel.

We had worked late one night, and when I dismissed the crew, Sonia — who had just joined the service — waited until everyone else had gone, and then said, “I don’t mind working late. In fact, I don’t mind being here with you very late. What do you say?”

I said, “That is very thoughtful and very helpful of you. However, I think my wife would be annoyed if I came home too late.”

Shock! “You are married? I didn’t know that. I have to leave now.

Sonia never volunteered to mix poker chips again. However, it was when she was stationed in a small airfield in the north that I received a phone call from the Military Police wanting to know about Sonia. It seems she had shot the lock off the door of her room, and they wanted to know what I wanted done with her.

I got on the phone and asked her if she had lost the key to her room. The answer was no. Had she found trouble unlocking the door? Again, no. Then why shoot the lock off?

“I wanted to see if it really works, like it does in the movies.”

I got her off that time, but the next time I was unable to help her. She was arrested for shooting dice behind the cipher hut with a bunch of

Humor *(continued on p.20)*

Humor continued from p. 19)

officers, while she was just a buck private. None of the officers were arrested, of course, and I found out later that she was winning a fortune. I also found out that they caught her cheating. That was the last I heard of Sonia.

Two pretty, blonde, sexy young ladies from the States used to hang around the Yarden Hotel, which is where air force officers were quartered. Somehow — I won't try to guess — they got hold of officers' uniforms and wore them. The somewhat taller and older girl was referred to as "Hot Pup," while the younger, more slender girl was called "Little Kitten." They turned up at almost every air force social function, and many times when there was no function. Eventually, two officers were court-martialed for having taken them along on a secret trip to Yugoslavia, and Hot Pup and Little Kitten disappeared.

When Jerry Renov and another pilot flew Frieda and myself out of besieged Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, the first place to which we headed was the Brooklyn Bar, which was really a milk bar. Crossing the street, we saw a cucumber in the gutter, and bumped heads from simultaneously leaning down to retrieve it. Food had been so scarce in Jerusalem for weeks that a free-floating cucumber (so to speak) promised a treat. Once in the bar, we ordered the fanciest concoction we could find ice cream, fruit, whipped cream, nuts the works. Just as we were ready to dig in, a young woman dressed in what I can only describe as Tel Aviv high fashion, wearing jewelry and well made-up, stopped at our table and said, loudly: "How can you eat something like that when people in Jerusalem are starving?"

Someone with us mumbled: "These people have just come out of Jerusalem."

She turned red, bit her lip, and ran out of the cafe. I began wondering how people in Tel Aviv not eating would help the people in Jerusalem, until I remembered how many mothers used to urge their children to clean their plates because of the starving children in Armenia.

When I joined air force headquarters staff in Tel Aviv Frieda and I found we had been assigned the penthouse suite in the Yarden Hotel, which we thoroughly enjoyed. I had the rank of Squadron Commander, which was the equivalent of a rank between major and lieutenant colo-

nel in the American army (we called it "major plus). After a few days, the hotel manager approached me, explained that he had not been paid by the air force for the use of the hotel in several months, and asked me to intervene to see that they would be paid.

I tried to explain to him that I was not in the finance department, and that I had no real influence anywhere else in the air force, but he kept after me, eyeing the evidence of my rank on my epaulets. When he finally understood that I couldn't or wouldn't help him, I found myself demoted. Not by the air force, but by the manager. We were shifted to a much smaller room from which we heard the constant noise from the street.

Incidentally, the hotel had a nightclub on the ground floor, and the band would play loudly into the wee hours of the morning. Remonstrations, pleas, official reprimands made no impression on the hotel manager or on the bandleader. Pilots would explain that they needed their sleep to be of maximum service in the morning, but that made no difference.

Finally, drastic steps were evidently necessary, so by pre-arrangement a group of pilots visited the nightclub one night, and at eleven o'clock told the band to stop playing. The leader remonstrated, whereupon twelve uniformed air force officers standing together took out their pistols, advanced on the bandstand, and explained: "Believe us, the army will acquit us for whatever we do on the basis of wartime necessity."

The band never played after eleven o'clock from then on.

On a routine flight to the airstrip in Ekron one Ezer Weitzman introduced me to the field commander who was passing. When he left, I asked the pilot with whom I was flying about Ezer.

"A wild man," he said. "He'll never amount to anything."

