

SUMMER 2013



AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL LEGACY CORPORATION

PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF AMERICAN AND CANADIAN
VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

136 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016

The President's Corner

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest AVILC Newsletter and thanks to our Editor, Elizabeth Appley and writer, Si Spiegelman, for yeoman duties in putting it together.

We've had an eventful year highlighted by an exceptional **2013 Mickey Marcus Memorial** event at West Point again ably organized by Si Spiegelman and Rafi Marom, with wonderful assistance from Donna Parker. The theme was to honor the Members of Aliyah Bet who brought thousands of Shoah survivors to Eretz Yisrael and contributed to breaking the British rule there. We were honored to have in attendance Ambassador Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in NY, military dignitaries, members of the Marcus family, Aliyah Bet veterans, Machalniks and family and friends. The Memorial featured the first exhibition of the new Machal and Aliyah Bet Exhibition: *Heroes from Abroad*, produced by the American Jewish Historical Society that was on display at the Chapel. This mobile exhibition is available for display at venues in the U.S. and Canada by the American Veterans of Israel Legacy Corporation. Please

2013 MICKEY MARCUS MEMORIAL AT WEST POINT

Aliyah Bet Veterans Honored Amid Family, Military,
and Israeli VIPs

By Elizabeth J. Appley

AVILC's annual Mickey Marcus Memorial Service at the United States Military Academy at West

the 65th anniversary of Israel's independence and the 65th yartzheit of Aluf Michael (Mickey) Stone, z'l, in whose memory the event is named. A special tribute honored the North American Aliyah Bet veterans who ran the clandestine immigration ships smuggling European Jews into mandate Palestine.



Photo credit: Donna Parker

West Point Cadets Ford and Topp assisting Colonel Charles Stafford, Chief of Staff for the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, during the Candle lighting ceremony at West Point with a full chapel of guests watching.

Point was held on Sunday May 5, 2013, amid an array of AVI families, high ranking American military personnel and Israeli VIPs. The 47th commemoration remembered the 41 North American volunteers who were felled in the Israeli War of Independence and recognized both

The service at the West Point Jewish Chapel was called to order by AVILC Director, Rafi Marom. After the posting of the colors and the singing of the national anthem, Chaplain (Major) Henry C. Soussan, Garrison Jewish Chaplain, gave the invocation, followed by the memorial candle lighting. AVILC President, Jeff Margolis, offered a welcome with formal greetings from the Government of Israel delivered by Ambassador Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in New York.

contact us for more information.

We were all very pleased to hear about the **Machal Exhibit at the Beit Hatfutsot Museum** in Tel Aviv, which opened in April 2012 to excellent reviews and has been one of the most popular exhibits in recent memory. It is not too late to see the Exhibit as its run has been extended to the end of 2013. After that, a segment will remain as a permanent exhibition at the museum. We are especially proud to point to a successful fundraising campaign (spearheaded locally by our indefatigable Si Spiegelman) which was integral to the funding of this important exhibit. Thanks to all who contributed so generously.

Kudos to Donna Parker for another successful **Hannukah Party**—good turnout and lots of fun. The event also raised \$300 for the Brotherhood Synagogue. (Donna circulated a very nice letter from Phillip Rothman, Executive Director of the Brotherhood Synagogue, thanking Donna for the contribution and for the privilege of hosting the AVI Hanukkah event.)

We look forward to an exciting year to come and we welcome your suggestions for the growth of the organization. Please let me know if you are interested in serving on the Board or any of our Committees – especially the Newsletter Committee and the Fundraising Committee.

With good wishes to all and with a special expression of gratitude to those Machalniks who are still with us.

Jeff Margolis
President



Ambassador Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in New York, addressing the crowd at the Marcus Memorial, with Jeffrey Margolis and Rafi Marom, AVILC in the background.

Photo credit: Donna Parker

Machalnik Paul Kaye delivered remarks to the assembly and honored the brave and valiant members of Aliyah Bet who were in attendance: **Arthur Bernstein** (*Haim Arlosoroff*); **Harry Bieber** (*Ruth Wang* and *Etsel*); **Bernard Ellman** (*Ruth Wang* and *Etsel*); **David Guttman** (*Ben Hecht*, *Geulah* and *Palyam*); **Ray Kaplan** (*Marine Carp*, interned in Beirut); **Paul Kaye [Kaminetzky]** (*Hatikvah*, *Galila*, and Shayetet 13 - Naval Commandos); **Harald Kraushar** (*Altalena* and *Etsel*); **Augustine "Duke" Labaczewski** (*Hatikvah* and *Palmach*); **Henry Mandel** (*Ben Hecht* and in chemed (weapons research); **Irving "Sparks" Meltzer** (*Jewish State*, *Stela Maris*, and in radar); **Robin Rotenberg** (*Mala*); **Martin Silver** (*Mala*); **Moses Stambler** (*Jewish State*, *Ruth Wang*, and in radar), and **Charles Weiss** (*Hatikvah*, *Pan York*, *Pan Crescent*). His powerful remarks were followed by the calling of the roll of recently departed



Photo credit: Donna Parker

Front seven from left to right: Ambassador Ido Aharoni, David Guttman, Harold Kraushar, Charles Weiss, Arthur Bernstein, Paul Kaye, Chaplain (Major) Henry C. Soussan, Garrison Jewish Chaplain at West Point. Back row from left to right: Irving "Sparks" Meltzer, Augustine "Duke" Labaczewski, Ray Kaplan, Harry Bieber, Moses Stambler, Bernard Ellman, Martin Silver.

veterans by Naomi (Levin) Kantey and Paul Kaye, both MACHAL veterans, the reading of scripture by Rabbi Doniel Kramer, Chaplain (LTC) ret., and the recitation of Kaddish, a benediction, and the retiring of the colors.

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machal_exhibition.cfm

WORLD MACHAL EXHIBIT AT BEIT HATFUTSOT: BY LAND, BY AIR, AND BY SEA, VOLUNTEERS FROM ABROAD 1948

The World Machal exhibition at the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv (the Diaspora Museum/Beit Hatfutsot) has been a truly an outstanding event. The Exhibit is called Volunteers from Abroad in Israel's War of Independence and can be viewed at the Beit Hatfutsot website www.bh.org.il.

Exhibit Opening

The exhibit's opening in June 2012 was attended by more than 200 people, the majority were Machalniks from 1946-1949 and their families, who filled the auditorium. U.K. Ambassador Matthew Gould and Deputy U.S. Ambassador Thomas Goldberger and his wife Eden attended the event, as did Major Paloma Beausoleil of the Military Section of the U.S. Embassy.

The speeches commenced with the guest of honor, Chairman of the Knesset, M.K. Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin, praising the Machalniks for their service to the State of Israel. Brig. Gen. Eli Shermeister, Chief Education Officer of the I.D.F. spoke highly and most complimentary of the Machalniks' contributions. Mr. Avinoam Almoni, CEO of the Diaspora Museum expressed pride in hosting the Machal exhibition. The highlight of the evening, judging by the applause and the number of emails which were subsequently received, was a memorable address by Smoky Simon, Chairman of World Machal. Stanley

Medicks, Chairman of UK and Scandinavian Machal, told the audience how happy he was that his dream of holding such an exhibition was fulfilled. Speeches ended with the curator Shira Friedman, explaining her guidelines and motivations while creating this exhibition.

Description of the Exhibition

The guests were then taken to see the exhibit located on the third floor of the Museum in a small well located niche. The walls are lined with panels, representing the various branches of the services – Aliyah Bet, Navy, Air Force, Ground Forces, including the Armored Corps, Medical Corps, Women in Machal, with a brief explanation to highlight important facts related to events in 1948. In the center of each panel is a frame with



Brigadier-General Eli Shermeister, Chief Education Officer of the Israel Defense Forces, addressing the audience at the Opening Ceremony

Photo credit: Doreen Bliss

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photos of Machalniks on display and these are regularly being changed. The panels also contain memorabilia, such as the telegram sent by British



Photo credit: Donna Parker

Large contingent of Marcus family including (r to l) Mitzi Millicent Marcus Band (foreground), Lisa Band, Laurie Kushel Green Parker Wollack, and other members of the family including Neil Wollack, David Band, Sue Klein, Steven Band, Jon Klein, Barbara Kushel Klein, Michael Green, Rachel Klein, Amy Caplan Grossman and Steven Caplan in the West Point Chapel.

The day continued at the Military Cemetery with the laying of the wreath at the gravesite of Colonel David Marcus and Emma Marcus. The USAG Military Police Color Guard posted the colors, and a message to Emma Marcus from David Ben Gurion was read by MACHAL Veteran, Ira Feinberg. The names of the fallen were read by MACHAL veterans, Ira Feinberg and Paul Kaye, before an assembly of Aliyah Bet veterans and family members. The wreath was laid by Gil Lainer, Israeli Consul for Public Affairs in New York, CH (Colonel) Barbara Sherer, USMA Chaplain, with a member of the Marcus family and distinguished guests. Rabbi Sanford Dresin, CH (COL) ret., Endorser and Director of Military Programs for The Aleph Institute led the group in prayer and the recitation of Kaddish. The



Photo credit: Donna Parker

Marcus family members at Wreath Laying Ceremony at Col. David "Mickey" Marcus' Gravesite at West Point. l to r: Lisa Band, Rachel Klein and Laurie Kushel Green Parker Wollack, and Mitzi Millicent Marcus Band in foreground.

Police Honor Guard fired a salute, and a USMA Band bugler played taps before the colors were retired.

AVILC extends our deep appreciation to Si Spiegelman, Rafi Marom and Donna Parker for planning and carrying out this event.

World Machal Exhibit continued from page 3

Machalnik Golda (Zehava) Laudon to her family following her arrival in October 1948 to volunteer in the Air Force.

The panel on Aliyah Bet shows the original painting by American Machalnik Sol Baskin, the original sketch of the Machal statue by Ardyn Halter, and an original painting by artist Ludwig Blum "Frank," volunteer soldier from Canada 1949.

In the center of the exhibit area are framed drawings of Machalniks sketched back in 1948 by well known Israeli artist, Nachum Gutman. The exhibit includes models of all the airplanes that were in use by the Air Force during Israel's War of Independence. These



models are the work of Asher Roth, a professional builder of model planes. The display tables also contain artifacts and memorabilia, such as the Fighter's Ribbon, military insignia and

the log book of Smoky Simon when he was navigator, listing several flights that took place in June 1948.

The Machal exhibit includes a seven minute film running continuously that is comprised of excerpts from several Machal

films: Ira Feinberg's *My Brother's Keeper*, Pulp Films *South Africa's 804*, Yitzhak Rabin's speech at the Machal Memorial, an interview with Stanley Medicks, and others. Visitors to the exhibit are presented with a brochure containing a brief explanation of the historical background of the inspiring and heroic Machal story written by Smoky Simon, and an explanation of the artwork on display by Curator Shira Friedman. The photo on the cover of the brochure, taken during 1948, shows a group of 72nd Battalion Machalniks opposite Mishmar Hayarden on the Syrian border holding their rifles to form the shape of the Magen David (the Star of David). The same photograph was re-staged by Machalniks at the opening, with rifles supplied by the Kfar Saba Police.

Placing the story of the MACHAL inside the ongoing story of the Jewish people and the return to Zion stresses the significant contribution of the MACHAL to the founding of the State of Israel.

Obituaries

and Stories From the Past

NATHAN NADLER; AMONG THE LAST SURVIVING EXODUS 1947 CREW MEMBERS

Nathan Nadler of Rutherford, New Jersey passed away on July 25, 2012. His wife, Anstiss, died in 2002. They are survived by their two sons, Mark and Aaron, and two grandsons.

Nathan Nadler was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1927. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII when he was only 18 years old. He received training as an electrician. While serving in Germany, he came across anti-Semitism in the ranks. "I did not see any combat in the Army except fighting anti-Semites" he said. At that time he met survivors from the concentration camps with whom he spoke in Yiddish. Although he had not known about the concentration camps before, he learned quickly. He met many survivors who wanted to leave Europe and immigrate to mandate Palestine, but the way was blocked by British restrictions and the naval blockade.

Upon his discharge, Nat decided that he needed to get back to Europe and help the Holocaust survivors. He approached Haganah contacts in New York and the following day, after a brief interview, was instructed to go down to Pier 32 in Philadelphia. The name of the ship was the *President Warfield*. He told his mother he would be writing her and kissed her goodbye. He was 20 years old.

The S.S. *President Warfield* was a packet steamer, vintage 1928, carrying passengers and freight around Baltimore. She would later be renamed Haganah Ship *Exodus 194*. (Y'tziat Europa, Exodus from Europe, was written in Hebrew letters across her bow.) The captain was Yossi Harel. Ike Aharonovitch was the Haganah commander and Bill Bernstein served as

second mate. The crew consisted mostly of Jewish volunteers, many from the U.S. Among them was a clergyman with a clerical collar, a black tunic, and a large cross on his chest who was a Methodist minister, John Stanley Grauel¹. Nat referred to him as "a very righteous person." Nat worked as an electrician on the ship as she steamed across the Atlantic. Eventually, they came to Marseilles, and then to a small port in Italy where the ship was

converted. It normally carried 355 people. Italian craftsmen modified it to carry 5,000 people on four decks. Every deck had a first-aid station. It carried eight doctors and 30 nurses, who boarded later.

They reached Sete, a French Mediterranean port not far from the Spanish border. Nat said, "We tied up inside the breakwater, and it was night, and our stern was tied into this breakwater, and we are waiting there. In the morning, trucks started arriving, one behind each other; a convoy of trucks. You

couldn't see the last truck. And people started getting out of these trucks, with their suitcases on their backs. All these trucks had rendezvoused in Sete that very morning, from all the DP camps in Europe. This was a big operation." Nat continued. "It was secret, but the trouble was that too many people knew about it. We loaded the ship; it took us from dawn to dusk. We loaded 4,554 people, all of them survivors. When it came time for us to leave, the British were putting pressure on the French not to let us, and here we are with four-and-a-half thousand people on a blockade runner. We have to get out of this harbor. We had everything we needed on the ship, including potatoes. That was because you could eat them or throw them at the British. We needed a tugboat to get us out of the port. It took us all night to get this big ship out of the tight harbor. Finally, in the morning, it was free. I remember falling asleep for a couple of hours because I hadn't slept for two days. When I woke up, we were



Machal veteran Nat Nadler at an American Jewish Historical Society event in 2008. Photos courtesy American Jewish Historical Society

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in free water, steaming toward Palestine. And who was the greeter on either side? The British cruiser *Ajax* and five other cruisers were steaming on either side of us. They turned the loudspeakers to us and said, 'Give up. You don't stand a chance!' And we turned our loudspeakers to them, and played Sir Edward Elgar's march, 'Pomp and Circumstance.' We had planned on beaching the ship at Jaffa. There was a five-mile international limit. At that time, if you are outside the limit, they couldn't touch us legally, but they attacked us when we were nearer to the coast of Gaza. Of course, that was illegal. In the first wave, they took control of the wheelhouse. Everybody got out of the wheelhouse but Bill Bernstein, this little guy, a first mate with red hair who was always horsing around. They clubbed him and he died. Before I knew it, I was knocked out, bleeding profusely from my right eye, and when I came to, I crawled out the starboard side of the wheelhouse. Another crew member, Bill Millman, grabbed a British sailor by the crotch and by the neck; he picks him up and he's dragging him outside to throw him over the side. The other British marine takes out a 38-millimeter revolver and shoots Bill in the head. Luckily, the bullet hit his chin, shattered his jawbone, and he was knocked out. I managed to crawl down underneath the tear gas."

Finding refuge in the ship's hospital, he also found Millman. "His whole head was bandaged; he could barely talk. He says to me, 'We really showed them, didn't we?' I said, 'yeah, we really showed them. Look at us, you big schmuck!'"

Soon Nadler rejoined the fight. "The British were still trying to board the ship and stop it," he said. "The captain and the second mate had disconnected the wheel. The ship was being steered from the afterhelm. Two British soldiers jumped aboard with their machine guns in their hands, and looked at the people," he said. "One of them took his machine gun and threw it over the side, took his helmet and threw it over the side, and he jumped over the side. He

didn't want to have anything to do with what was going on. And the other one, I jumped him, I grabbed his helmet from behind, his chin strap was under his chin and didn't have a release strap like the Americans had, and I threw him over the side." Nat helped hide some of the passengers; some of them later escaped with the shore gang. Nadler ended up on a British prison ship, the *Ocean Vigor*, one of three. "We got two meals a day," he said. "The morning meal was salty tea, with a package of British sea rations. They were biscuits from New Zealand, and when you broke them, what do you think was crawling around? Maggots. You flipped out the maggots and ate it if you could. And what do you think was swimming around in the soup? You tried to avoid eating the maggots, but you're hungry."

"They figured they'd take us back to Germany," he said, "because there were German refugees on the ship, but instead the ship went to *Marseilles*. The French would let only those refugees who wanted to become French citizens ashore, and nobody wanted to come ashore to become a French citizen," Nat said. "So the French were stuck with four-and-a-half thousand Jews, and they didn't know what to do. They made these prison ships lay in the hot sun for a number of weeks. Finally, Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary ordered the British Navy to take the survivors to Germany. They took them up to Hamburg, forced them ashore with fire hoses and clubs, and put them in a former German concentration camp," said Nat. "They were guarded by former German soldiers. They were back in the concentration camp, after being freed two years earlier."

Most of those survivors finally made it to the sovereign State of Israel, declared a few months later. Nat was treated in a Marseilles hospital after he had been badly hurt during the battle on the *Exodus*. "I never made it to Palestine then," he said. He's been to Israel, however, many times.

- Si Spiegelman

Excerpts from *The Jewish Standard*, June 2003

¹ John Grauel died in September 1986. "He knew he was dying, and he told us he wanted to be buried in Jerusalem. We put his body on an El Al flight at midnight in Kennedy. He's buried in an Anglican cemetery in Jerusalem." (Grauel's mourners at the funeral service included an Israel naval honor guard, ex-Haganah members who served in Aliyah Bet operations, and members of the *Exodus* crew.)

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Letters from Jerusalem 1947 – 1948 by Zipporah Porath



“I walked in a semi-daze through the crowds of happy faces, past the British tanks and jeeps piled high with pyramids of flag-waving, cheering children, past the crying, kissing, tumultuous crowds, all shouting ‘mazel tov’, and came back to the quiet of my room...to try and share with you this never-to-be-forgotten night.” (Nov. 29, 1947)

Zipporah Porath’s eyewitness account of Israel’s War of Independence and the birth of the State, *Letters from Jerusalem 1947-1948*, is now an eBook available on Amazon Kindle. Share this information with friends, family and others to whom it may be of interest. A great gift. For additional information contact: zip@netvision.net.il

Esther Friedman: Aliyah Bet Volunteer, Haganah Combat Medic and Machal West President



Esther Shawmut Friedman, an American volunteer who worked as a medic in the Haganah, died on March 7, 2013. She was 89.

Born and raised in Boston, Shawmut Friedman joined the U.S. Navy WAVES in 1943, serving as pharmacist’s mate in Navy hospitals during World War II. After her discharge from the Navy, she worked as a youth organizer for Habonim and as a recruiter for Land and Labor for Palestine, which secretly enlisted World War II veterans to serve in the Haganah or to sail ships smuggling Jews into Palestine.

After an attack on medical personnel on Mount Scopus in 1948, Shawmut Friedman left for Palestine. Sailing aboard the *Pan York*, she jumped ship with other volunteers in the Mediterranean near Bat Galim.

Caught in the riptides of Israel’s coast, she was rescued by a young sabra, Aaron Friedman, who pulled her out and carried her to safety. She would go on to serve as a combat medic in the Israel Defense Forces’ 8th Armored Brigade during the battle for Beersheba and other engagements. Four years after her rescue, she ran into Friedman, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion’s bodyguard, as they shared a sherut (group taxi) ride. The couple married in November 1954.

Back in the United States, Shawmut Friedman served as the Southern California region executive director of the Zionist Organization of America, regional director of the State of Israel Bonds for the San Fernando Valley, director of BBYO and president of Machal West for nearly 20 years. She is survived by husband, Aaron; daughter Shari (Howard) Lesnick; and grandsons, Maxx and Ben.

Shawmut Friedman was laid to rest at Eden Cemetery on March 10 with military honors.

(This obituary was reprinted from the *L.A. Jewish Journal* published March 13, 2013.)

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HEINE (FRANZ) NISSAN FLIEGLER

By Daniel Fliegler

My father, Heine (Franz) Nissen Fliegler, always felt that all the experiences of his life were preparation for his role in Aliyah Bet.

He was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) and was a lifelong anarchist. He and my mother, Gussie, were part of the crowd that stormed the Nazi passenger ship *Bremen* when it came to New York City in 1935 and tore off its Nazi flag. The judge who heard the case refused to recognize Nazi Germany as a legitimate state, proclaimed the Nazi flag as a pirate flag and dismissed the case.

My father eventually found work as a sailor in the Merchant Marines. With the advent of World War II he was enrolled in the Merchant Marine Academy and became an officer. He sailed on the *Israel Putman* as a Navigator, bringing war supplies to Murmansk, Russia. The convoy he was on later got the name "The Forgotten Convoy" because it had a naval escort going to Murmansk but not coming back, making it an easy target for the Luftwaffe. Out of 20 ships in the convoy only a quarter survived.

After the war, my mother acted at the behest of friends in the Haganah and recruited my father

to sign up for what was to be the first ship to successfully bring in a large number of Jewish refugees (1,300) into Israel in defiance of the British Navy. The ship, which was to be called the *Josiah Wedgewood* was a war surplus Canadian corvette. My father was the Executive Officer. The senior officers were experienced seamen. The rest of the crew were volunteers with no sea experience who had to be trained. The *Wedgewood* was fitted in City Island, New York and sailed off in 1946. It stopped briefly for repairs in the Azores before continuing to its destination, Italy. The British tried to get the Italian authorities to stop the ship after it picked up the refugees. The writer, I. F. Stone, had joined the ship at this time and went ashore to argue with the Italians. In the meantime, with the refugees aboard and the tide being full, my father ordered the lines cut and took the *Wedgewood* out to international waters. In the process, half the leadership of the Haganah in Italy now found themselves on the *Wedgewood* out at sea. My father gave them a lifeboat with instructions on how to steer back to the Italian coastline. Upon approaching Palestinian territorial waters the British Navy came out to stop the *Wedgewood* from entering. My father ordered the ship's engine destroyed, leaving the British with no choice but to tow the now helpless *Wedgewood* to Haifa. Seeing the missing lifeboat the British assumed that

all the *Wedgewood's* officers had abandoned the ship and were making a run to the coast.

As this was the first ship the British caught with such a large number of refugees, the British bussed them to the detention camp at Atlit where they were eventually released. (With subsequent ships, Atlit filled up and the British started using detention camps in Cyprus and other locations.) My father and some of the other crew members were able to give the British the slip and sneak off the bus before it reached Atlit. At the exit to the port, my father was stopped by an Arab policeman asking for papers. Seeing an American naval ship also docked in the port, my father pretended he was a sailor from that ship suffering from the DTs and begged to be allowed to go to a bar just outside the port area. Offering him a cigarette and giving him the whole pack was enough to convince the policeman to let my father through.

Given the name Rudolf Valentino, the Haganah hid my father from the British. At one point, he was staying with a cousin who ran a bar frequented by British soldiers. It dawned on him that sitting in the bar all day nursing a drink and surrounded by British soldiers was the safest place to hide. He hid out at one time in Jerusalem and was about to visit the Western Wall but the bombing of the King David Hotel forced him to flee. Eventually the Haganah smuggled him back to

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Three Gravestones, Two Bodies, One Grave:

The Disappearance of David Livingston

On April 13, 1948, following the battle of Mishmar Ha'Emek, the bodies of three fallen soldiers were brought to Afula Hospital. They were members of the 22nd battalion of the Carmeli Brigade. Two were identified by name, but the third was buried under the name Avraham Ben Avraham, as was the common practice in case of unidentified fallen soldiers.

David Livingston was born in New York. He volunteered to serve in the Hagana as a seaman on vessels that brought Holocaust survivors to Eretz Israel. Livingston served on two such voyages: The first was the vessel *Chaim Arlosoroff*, which encountered the British Navy near Haifa Bay on February 27, 1947, with the survivors and crew redirected to Cyprus. It is not clear how long Livingston stayed in Cyprus, but on September 6, 1947, he was sent to Venice to join the crew of the *Atzmaut* (Independence) which headed directly for Cyprus, arriving on January 1, 1948.

In 1958, Livingston's brother came to Israel to look for his brother's gravesite. He met a man who had met David in Cyprus and claimed to have seen him again in Israel not long before the battle of Mishmar Ha'Emek. He identified him as the corpse that had been buried at Afula cemetery. Based on this information, the Chief Military Rabbi, Shlomo Goren, authorized that the name on the gravestone changed to David Livingston.

Livingston is listed on the Army Yizkor list as having served in the Palmach Yiftah Brigade. His name was also added to the list of the fallen soldiers from MACHAL ALIYA BET, the foreign volunteers, as listed in the Palyam website.

Yosef Kochan immigrated to Eretz Israel on board the vessel *Latrun*, which was intercepted and the survivors redirected to Cyprus. At the beginning of



1948 he joined the 22nd battalion of the Carmeli Brigade and was killed on April 13, 1948, in the battle of Mishmar Ha'Emek. His family was notified about two weeks later. When the War of Independence ended, the family wanted to come to his gravesite, and was surprised to learn that the site was unknown. In 1955-56, following a futile search and much frustration, Yosef was recognized by the Ministry of Defense as Missing in Action, and his name was added to the list of MIA at Herzl Mount in Jerusalem. But his relatives and friends from the 22nd battalion contested the decision and demanded that the coffin buried in Afula be reopened and the identity of the body verified. After 50 years, Tzahal (I.D.F.) finally relented and authorized a DNA verification. The findings indicated that the corpse was indeed that of Yosef Kochan, and the gravestone was modified accordingly.

After 65 years, the question of where David Livingston is buried remains unanswered. His status is that of an MIA. Other questions also remain open. At the end of February 1947, Livingston was in Cyprus. What did he do until September 1947? In the



On board the *Atzmaut*: The Commander, Berchik on the left, Livingston on the right.

Operations Log of Ha'Mossad Le'Aliya Bet in Paris, it was noted on September 5, 1947: "To the Ship in Venice I send the 'Sami' [the American] Livingston directly." It is known that he reached Constance, Rumania on board that vessel (*Pan Crescent*, then renamed *Atzmaut*). Did he continue the voyage to Famagusta, Cyprus? Did he serve in the

Yiftah Brigade in April 1948?

Anyone who has heard of David Livingston or who knew him is asked to please contact the Palyam website.

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COMRADES IN ARMS FROM THE U.S. AND CANADA DECEASED IN THE PAST YEAR

NATHAN BACK

Served on the SS *Galila* bringing Holocaust survivors to Israel. He also served in Israel's Army Medical Corps providing support to wounded soldiers on the battlegrounds.

SYD COHEN

Legendary co-founder of the Israeli Air Force. One of the first fighter pilots in the 101st Squadron and an early commander of the Israel Air Force.

DAVID GEN

Served on the *Altalena* bringing weapons and volunteers to Israel. He joined the Irgun and served at the Jerusalem front during the 1948 siege by the Arab Legion.

ABE LEVINE

Served as infantryman in the 72nd Battalion and armored car driver in the 79th Battalion of the 7th Brigade. Participated in the liberation of the Galilee.

MORTON LEVINSON

Served in the 79th Battalion of the 7th Brigade. The youngest known Machal volunteer. He was only 17 years old in 1948.

NATHAN NADLER

Served as an electrician on the *Exodus 1947*, the ship that carried 4,554 Holocaust survivors from Europe across the Mediterranean Sea, challenging the British naval blockade. They were boarded by British marines before reaching mandate Palestine and returned to camps in Germany. In 1948, most of these immigrants made their way to the newly founded State of Israel.

RUTH RAPAPORT

Served in the Foreign Press office of the IDF coordinating with foreign correspondents.

AL SCHWIMMER

Iconic founder of the Israel Aerospace Industries. In 1947/1948 he acquired the planes and recruited the Machal pilots and ground crew that turned the war in Israel's favor.

BENJAMIN STEUERMAN

Served on the ships that brought Holocaust survivors to Israel. Helped train Israel's Naval staff.

EDWARD STYRAK

Served as radio operator on the SS *Ben Hecht* that brought Holocaust survivors to mandate Palestine. He also served as a radio operator with the Air Transport Command ferrying weapons from Czechoslovakia to Israel.

GORDON QUITT

Served as infantryman in the 72nd Battalion of the 7th Brigade. Participated in the capture of Nazareth and the liberation of the Galilee.

ZICHRONAM LIVRACHA

**MAY THEIR MEMORY
BE A BLESSING
FOR ALL**

Franz Fliegler continued from page 8

Italy where he signed on to a ship sailing to America.

In later years, my Father sailed with the Israeli shipping company, Maritime Overseas. He finished his sailing career by being a port captain, usually in Texas. After retiring, my father got involved in the publication of a Yiddish anarchist newspaper called the *Frei Arbiter Stime*. A documentary about the paper was made and features my father. It can be seen on Youtube by entering "Free Voice of Labor."

He died in 1995.

Obituaries

and Stories From the Past

MACHAL and the IRGUN

By Harold Kraushar

As one of the Past Presidents of the AVI and a veteran of the Irgun and the Haganah during the 1948 War of Independence, I am writing to relate from memory those Americans who served with the Irgun prior to and after the establishment of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948.

There were several Americans who joined the Irgun during what is known as the machteret (underground) in the fight against the British occupier:

Moshe Brodetsky was a Hebrew University student from New York. He was wounded in the Battle of Ramat Rahel, saving many lives. As a member of the US Army during World War II, Moshe was commissioned Lieutenant on the battlefield for bravery during The Battle of The Bulge.

Ben Zion Rothenstein from New York was wounded during the battle to retake the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Zipporah Levy was the American secretary to Menachem Begin.

Gershon Hakim from New York, but born in the Sudan, helped Jewish fighters escape from British prison camps in Kenya and the Sudan. His brother, **Joe Hakim**, was also active with the Irgun.

The Irgun in America purchased a ship called the S.S. *Ben Hecht*, named for the American Jewish playwright and screenwriter who was instrumental in the 1940's in alerting the American public to the need to save the Jews of Europe from the Nazi inferno. The vessel left Europe laden with 620 Jewish survivors and an American volunteer crew. The British Navy intercepted the ship on March 13, 1947, and dispatched the passengers and American crewmen to detention camps on the island of Cyprus. The partial list of Americans aboard included: **Captain Robert Levithan** of New York, **Walter**

Greaves of Rhode Island, **Louis Binder** of New York, (?) **Mandell** of New York, **Shepherd Rifkin** of New York and **Wallace Litwin**.

Another American vessel, the *Ruth Wang*, sailed from New York in the first week of February 1948, with an American crew and volunteers for the Irgun. It developed engine trouble and just made it to the Azores for repair. Some of the volunteers finally arrived in Israel in late July 1948. They joined the Haganah or the Merchant Marine as the Irgun reached its final days. Some of the Americans who arrived in Eretz Yisroel to serve were New Yorkers, including: **Bernard Ellman**, **Moses Stambler**, **Harry Bieber** and **Harry Hirschkovitz**.

A third American merchant ship, the *Marine Carp*, left the states with American volunteers, destined for Haifa. The majority were recruited by Land and Labor, the organization that arranged for volunteers for the Haganah. Also aboard were future American Irgun volunteers. Upon the ship's arrival in Beirut, Lebanon on May 13, 1948, the American captain informed the Lebanese authorities that there were American Jews aboard the ship who were future fighters for a Jewish state. The 27 Americans were promptly arrested and incarcerated. The women volunteers were released to arrive at the next port of call, Haifa. After several weeks of internment, the Americans were deported back to the States. Some of the names of the Irgun group were: **Raymond Kaplan** of New York, **Steve Esrati** (?) of Cleveland, **Marilyn Shindell** from Boston, **Muriel Eisenberg** from New York, **Jake Zucker** of New York and **G. Steinberg** of New York.

While the Jewish state was created on May 15, 1948, Jerusalem was not then considered by the United Nations as part of Israel. The Old City of Jerusalem was captured in May 19, 1948 by the Arabs with the assistance of the British-led Arab Legion. To protect the new city of Jerusalem, the Haganah, Irgun and Lechi (the Stern group) maintained forces within the new city limits. The Irgun purchased a ship, the *Altalena*. It had an American crew and about two dozen American volunteers. The vessel left France on June 13, 1948.

It was loaded with weapons and 800 immigrants destined for Eretz. Prior to its departure, an agreement was reached between the Irgun and the Haganah that the Irgun would retain 20% of the arms for its Jerusalem detachment. The ship's port of call was the Labor Zionist moshav Kfar Vitkin near Netanya.

When the ship arrived on the 20th of June, Ben Gurion demanded the entire cache of weapons. After the refugees disembarked, the Palmach opened small-arms fire. The American captain, **Monroe Fein**, pulled out and sailed the ship toward Tel Aviv. When the ship arrived in Tel Aviv, the Haganah opened fire, killing 18 Irgunists aboard. Among the dead were two Cuban volunteers, **Mitrani** and **Levi**. Several American volunteers were wounded. The vessel was completely disabled. The names of some of the American volunteers and crew included: **David Gen**, **Isiah Warshaw** (a much decorated GI during WWII), **Monroe Fein**, **Vincent Panaramo** (who was wounded), **J. Horn**, **Harry Green**, **Harold Kraushar**, **David Smith**, **Richard Fallon**, **Jules Zarchin**, **Al Rosoff**, **Jerry Solomon**, **Joe Kahn** (later killed in the Irgun attack on the Old

City), **Jack Blank** (Canadian), and **Leslie Solomon** (the radio operator).

After the bloodletting, several of the crew and volunteers returned to the states. Several Americans joined the Haganah, but another group decided to join the Irgun force in Jerusalem, traveling on a perilous route via the Burma Road. The following Americans arrived in the New City: **David Smith**, **Isiah Warshaw**, **Harry Green**, **Harold Kraushar**, **Leslie Solomon**, **Muriel Eisenberg** (who later married the future defense minister of Israel, Moshe Arens), **Marilyn Shindell**, **Jules Zarchin**, **Al Rosoff**, **Joe Kahn**, **Moshe Brodetsky** (wounded in the Old City in 1948, and previously wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, 1944), and **Ben Zion Rothenstein** (wounded in the attack on the Old City).

Other battles that the Americans participated in included the attempt to retake the Old City from the Arabs and the capture of the town of Malcha in July 1948. At the end of August, 1948, the Irgun was disbanded. The majority of its members then joined the Haganah.

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MACHALNIKS: Have You Received Your ALEH Medal? Your Victory Medal?

Palyam-Aliya Bet is trying to identify any Machalniks who may have not received the ALEH medal of the War of Independence. They are trying to give those Machalniks a small token of their service to the newborn State of Israel. If you participated in Aliya Bet before or during the War of Independence, by working either on an Aliya Bet ship or on a ship which brought weapons to Israel), then you are probably entitled to receive the ALEH medal (Fighters Ribbon). Please write the account of your participation giving as much details as possible, name of vessel, dates of departure & arrival from what ports, companions on voyage etc. If the Machalnik has not survived and his immediate family members can supply the necessary information then they may be able to receive the medal in lieu of the deceased. This information should be sent ASAP to: malkin@eindor.org.il

In addition, all Machalniks, including those participating in Aliyah Bet, are entitled to receive the Victory Medal as well. Contact Doreen Bliss of Machal for more information: doreen@sw.co.il

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