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Convention 2004 Overview

By Cheryl Waldman, Co-Editor

JWV delegates gathered in New Orleans for the 109th Annual National Convention heeded the admonition to “Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler.” The good times did indeed roll for the JWV as old friends were greeted, the business of the organization was conducted, the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America was celebrated, and the sights and sounds of the Big Easy were enjoyed by one and all from our location in the heart of the French Quarter.

On Sunday evening, our delegates enjoyed an abundant buffet and a ravishing riverside view on an evening dinner cruise along the Mississippi. On Monday morning, the JWVs had a chance to enjoy the glory of the city on an extensive city tour, followed that afternoon by a chance to visit Oak Alley plantation and tour its grounds.

Monday evening’s reception hosted by the National Museum of American Jewish Military History featured a fascinating presentation by Julia Lasher, JWV’s Accounting Coordinator, of her recent diving adventures in Antarctica.

Tuesday saw the opening business meetings of the convention with the first of the ongoing series of committee meetings and the meeting of the NEC. Outgoing NEC Chairman, PNC Warren S. Dolny, received a plaque with the thanks of a grateful NEC for his steady leadership over the past two years. The NEC is assured of a continued steady hand at its helm in the election of PNC David Hymes as its new Chairman.

A thought-provoking presentation on the implications of the outsourcing of American jobs for the economy in general and the veterans’ community in particular, by PNC Bob Zweiman and Programs staffer Mike Marcus, ended Tuesday’s events. The program, “Veterans Invest in America,” provided the basis for future action by our members to stem this alarming trend in the American economy.

Our keynote speaker, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon Mansfield, brought greetings from the Department and an update on its activities, including the CARES program. Our distinguished roster of speakers continued at our succeeding business sessions.

On Thursday, we were honored to host Chaplain Rabbi Jacob Goldstein, the Chief Chaplain of the New York National Guard. Chaplain Goldstein shared with us his efforts to bring Judaism to the many Jewish soldiers throughout the armed services, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. He truly brought home to our convention the pride of serving as a Jew in today’s military.



Friday brought us the perspective of two generals. Assistant Louisiana Adjutant General, Brigadier General Hunt Downer, discussed the current conditions and needs of our military as the National Guard and Reserves serve both in our country and overseas.

Retired Israeli Major General Ran Goren, the current chairman of TZEvet, discussed the precarious security situation facing Israel at this time of change and upheaval in the Middle East.

Two special programs at our convention highlighted the theme of our gathering, the celebration and commemoration of the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America. As the Patriotic Voice of American Jewry, the JWV highlighted our proud heritage of 350 years of military service to the nation at a special workshop dedicated to the anniversary. The continuity of Jewish service to the nation was emphasized by the appearance of two young Jewish soldiers recently returned from Iraq. Both PFC Mark Kauffman and SPC Joseph Kashnow spoke movingly of their service in Iraq and the importance of their belonging to the JWV. PFC Kauffman's slide show of his tour of duty gave our gathering a visual image of the conditions under which our soldiers serve. The program continued with presentations highlighting the Jewish heritage of our host city, New Orleans, back to the arrival of the first recorded settler in 1757. Presenters included Dean Bill Menaray of the Tulane University Archives; Catherine Kahn, Archivist at the Touro infirmary; and JWV member and local historian, Dan Alexander.

Our second special program was an Oral History Workshop led by Oral Historian Alan H. Stein, Head of the Louisiana Division and City Archives at the New Orleans Public Library. Mr. Stein, who has conducted oral history interviews of Jewish veterans for the Library of Congress and the Institute of Southern Jewish life, led our group through the steps involved in conducting such interviews and showed us taped examples of the interview process. Mr. Stein has been gracious enough to write an article on the oral history process, which you can find elsewhere in this issue. The collection of these histories will constitute a further corroboration of Jewish military service.

The concluding event of the convention was, as always, the National Commander's banquet in tribute to the outstanding work done by Paul Bernstein, our outgoing National Commander, throughout the past year. Paul, in his final words as National Commander, thanked the JWV for the honor of allowing him to serve, and presented the Murray L. Rosen Award for the outstanding JWV member of the year to George Weinstein of Post 191, long-time Chairman of our Housing Commission and the eyes and years of the JWV NGO at the United Nations.

The evening ended as our outgoing national commander was discharged from his post, and his successor, Louis Abramson of Pennsylvania, was sworn in as our new National Commander. Everyone left the banquet secure in the knowledge that the reins of power were once again in capable hands and anxious to go back to their posts, councils, and departments with news of our convention.

JWV Oral History Project

Oral history is a method of gathering and preserving historical information through personally recorded interviews with participants in past events and ways of life. It is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s. Through the collection of oral histories the pride in our past service can be preserved for future generations.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) has its own project and is a proud partner in the Veterans' History Project of the Library of Congress, whose aim is to collect and preserve the extraordinary wartime stories of ordinary people. In 2004, as we celebrate the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in America, it is particularly important for the JWV to forge

ahead with an oral history project as yet another way of documenting the proud history of American Jewish military service, a history that stretches back to the first Jews who landed in New Amsterdam in 1654.

One of the highlights of the 2004 National Convention was the presentation by Oral Historian Alan Harris Stein of an Oral History Workshop. Mr. Stein, who has interviewed numerous Jewish war veterans, is a board member of the Consortium of Oral History Educators. He is currently Head of the Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library.

Mr. Stein stressed the importance of preserving the vivid recollections of the military service of our members as a record for future generations. He discussed the logistics of going about setting up and conducting interviews with an emphasis on the importance of getting a release for the interview to ensure that the oral history can be archived and published.

In addition to discussing techniques and procedures, Mr. Stein showed tapes of highlights of interviews that he himself had conducted and led the group in discussing what techniques were of the greatest value in eliciting the most information from the interviewee.

For the oral histories to have increased value as a teaching tool for future generations, a Post or group of members should partner with a school or youth group. As the young people conduct the interviews, they can have a first-hand history lesson about American Jewish military service while preserving the lessons to be passed on to future generations.

The Library of Congress Veterans History Project can provide materials and information to get your Post started in this most valuable project. Information on the project can be found online at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/vets-home.html>. Their telephone number is (202) 707-4916, and they can be faxed at (202) 252-2046.

While the Library of Congress can provide general sample questions, the challenge for the Jewish War Veterans Project will be to adapt a "generic script" that people can modify and use themselves without a more specific list of questions and topics. To that end, these helpful guidelines and interview questions should serve as a springboard for your oral history interviews. When the interviewer and interviewee work together on the specifics of the interview, they will be able to personalize the script for the particular situation and create an important collaboration that will live on for future generations of American Jews.

START TODAY!

Suggested Interview Script for the JWV Oral History Project

- What is your full name?
- When & where were you born?
- What are some of your earliest memories (going to school)?
- How did your family celebrate religious and national holidays?
- What were you doing before the war?
- Were you married or single?
- • What were your hopes or dreams when you were a young person?
- When did you start working? Describe your first job(s)?
- • Where you in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) or the WPA (Work Projects Administration)?
- How did the Great Depression affect you?
- Where were you when you found out about Pearl Harbor?
- Did you enlist or were you drafted?
- • What was your branch of service? (USA? USN? USMC? USCG? USMM?)
- When did you enter the service?

- Where did you receive your basic training?
 - Describe basic training.
 - What weapon(s) did you qualify on during basic training and what qualification level did you achieve?
 - Describe the people you trained with in basic training.
 - When did you deploy overseas (or in the American Theatre?)
 - Did you receive any training after you were deployed overseas?
 - How did you remain an observant Jewish person being overseas?
 - Were you involved in any invasions? Major/minor battles? (If “yes” please describe)
 - Did you admire your commanding officer? Did you admire the people you served with? Are you in contact with them today?
 - Did you get wounded?
 - Where were you on VE-Day?
 - Where were you on VJ-Day?
 - When did you return to the US?
 - How long did you serve overseas (or in the American Theatre?)
 - Did you receive education on the GI Bill?
 - Did you marry and have children and move to the suburbs?
 - Did your children have a Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah?
 - How did historical events (Korea, the forming of the State of Israel, Vietnam, Civil Rights, etc.) affect you after the war?
 - Have you been to Israel?
 - Did you go to Washington, D.C. for the unveiling of the World War Two Memorial?
 - Do you have grandchildren? Do you see them often?
 - What have been the happiest and saddest moments of your life?
 - What have been the major turning points of your life?
 - What advice would you give the younger generation?
 - If you served during Korea
 - How long did you serve?
 - Was it in Korea or elsewhere?
 - What was your attitude toward the conflict? The attitudes of your fellow comrades?
 - Do you feel that you are “forgotten?” If so, why?
 - If you served during Vietnam
 - How long did you serve?
 - Was it in Vietnam or elsewhere?
 - What was your attitude toward the conflict? The attitudes of your fellow comrades?
 - Do you feel that you were rejected? If so, why?
 - What was your reception like when you returned?
 - What were your attitudes and actions Post-Vietnam?
 - What lessons do you feel were learned from the Vietnam War?
 - Veterans’ Benefits
 - Have you applied for any?
 - Are you receiving any? If so, what kind?
 - What is your appraisal of the VA?
 - Do you belong to any Veteran Service Organizations?
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Veterans Invest in America launched at Convention

The Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. hosted its inaugural Veterans Invest in America Committee meeting at National Convention.

More than two dozen JWV members and staff attended the launching of the program. "We are very encouraged by the turnout at tonight's meeting," said committee chairman PNC Robert M. Zweiman. "This is a very new program for the Jewish War Veterans, but tonight's group and the feedback we've been receiving so far demonstrate the degree to which this program hits home."

Veterans Invest in America is a nationwide initiative assisting veteran stockholders in speaking out against the offshore outsourcing of vital American jobs. Between 2001-2003 high-tech firms shed 560,000 jobs and expect to lose another 234,000 this year. In addition, nearly 14 million jobs, or 11% of the U.S. total, have been identified as at risk for being sent abroad.

"The offshore outsourcing of America's jobs is a threat to our very way of life," Zweiman said. "The loss of American jobs each year to India, Pakistan, Russia and China leaves thousands of American families and veterans without the financial support they need. It is time for American investors, in particular its veteran investors, to step forward and demand corporate responsibility."

The meeting was kicked off by Zweiman before a presentation on the program and a breakdown of the Guide to Action by Mike Marcus, Public Affairs Staff for JWV National Headquarters.

"The Veterans Invest in America Guide to Action contains a step-by-step program for the veteran investor to inform companies of their distaste for offshore outsourcing," said Marcus during his presentation. "The packet takes investors from the beginning to the end of the process of lobbying corporations in which they invest. The first, and probably the most important, part of the packet is a list of companies that are currently outsourcing overseas. This list will be updated periodically on the JWV website in order to provide veteran investors the most recent possible information."

The JWV website features a downloadable Veterans Invest in America Guide to Action and the presentation given at the National Convention. The Guide to Action includes examples and form letters for veteran investors to use when determining the extent to which companies in which they invest are offshore outsourcing, for contacting other investors, and filing resolutions at stockholder meetings.

"This is an involved process made easier by the Guide to Action," said Marcus. "Every investor should be aware of the business practices of the companies in which they invest, and there are business practices that are not necessarily part of a proxy statement of financial report made public. But this information is available to investors, if they ask for it."

The Veterans Invest in America Committee is currently looking for members interested in taking an active role in establishing and encouraging veteran investor activism. Any JWV interested in participating in the committee should contact JWV Public Affairs Staff Mike Marcus at mmarcus@jwv.org.

The Veterans Invest in America Guide to Action and presentation is now available for download on the Jewish War Veterans of the USA website at www.jwv.org.



2004 JWV National Resolutions

PROTECTING OURSELVES AGAINST WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA notes the existence and possession of weapons of mass destruction by certain rogue nations and efforts to possess such weapons by others, including terrorist organizations. The United States must be prepared to protect itself and its allies against rogue nations and terrorists who possess or seek to possess such weapons.

TARGETED BOMBERS AND MURDERERS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the targeting of bombers and murderers by the United States and Israel. The lessons of the past have taught us that the enemy hides among the civilian population and uses innocent civilians to act as a shield. Collateral damage civilian casualties – is most regrettable, unfortunate and unavoidable.

Despite pressure and criticism from others, Israel and the United States must take such steps as are necessary to eliminate terrorists and the murderers of innocent men, women and children.

SAUDI ARABIA: UNRELIABLE ALLY

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA urges that U.S. military assets and personnel be removed immediately from Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have long shown themselves to be unreliable allies. The United States has other allies upon whom we can depend. Saudi Arabia is known to fund and encourage terrorists, terrorism and deserves to be designated as a terrorist country.

Moreover, led by our ostensible ally Saudi Arabia, OPEC has manipulated the production of oil effective April 1, 2004. This manipulation will maintain the high price of oil and can only further destabilize the World's economy and can only serve the purpose of those who wish to cause World economic instability and hinder progress. Furthermore, the push for higher petroleum prices plays directly into the aims and action of Al Qaeda and other Islamic fundamentalist groups.

MOURNING PERIOD FOR FALLEN MILITARY

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) has always held in the highest regard the members of the military who defend this nation's values and freedoms.

We hold the principles of liberty most dearly and our members, along with their spouses and families, pledge never to forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice for this nation. We are deeply saddened at the loss of life that is ongoing in the current hostilities and the casualties suffered by Americans in defense of liberty anywhere in the world. JWV continues to support those families left grieving due to the loss of a loved one on the field of battle or protecting America's interests.

The President of the United States authorized specific periods of mourning for those killed in battle. Likewise, state and local jurisdictions often proclaim official mourning periods for those killed in battle.

JWV supports these official mourning periods for all those members of the armed forces recently killed in hostilities against Iraq and those killed as a result of this nation's war on terrorism. We instruct all echelons to engage in appropriate signs of mourning and participate in local programs.

JWV calls on all veterans' organizations to join with us in appropriate memorial commemorations for those men and women who give the ultimate sacrifice for this nation.

ISRAEL MEMBERSHIP ON SECURITY COUNCIL

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) demands that Israel be extended all the rights that are extended to all other members of the United Nations without any further delay. JWV also demands the United Nations, UN Secretary General, the President, and members of Congress, to grant membership status in the Security Council to Israel.

VETERAN TOURISM

Europe, more specifically, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium depend upon tourism for stabilizing their economy. The governments of these countries have not taken effective forceful steps to prosecute the individuals and organizations that practice anti-Semitism within their borders.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA urges that all tourists plan their vacations to go to other countries than France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and other countries until such time that the various governments take appropriate action to protect their own citizens and tourists from anti-Semitic actions and acts of harassment.

COMPENSATION OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL FORCES

Many Americans, combatants and non-combatants, were forced to work as slaves in Japanese factories, brothels, mills, etc. As a result of various treaties between Japan and the United States, these individuals are barred from seeking proper redress and compensation from Japan. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to establish a Compensation Review Board to review individual cases of forced servitude and, if appropriate, authorize just and proper compensation and support the suits by individuals against Japanese corporations, which had a financial interest in the use of slave laborers.

RE-EVALUATION OF AMERICAN FORCE DEPLOYMENT

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) calls upon the Administration to reevaluate the positioning of American forces throughout the world. America's security interests should be paramount at all times.

JWV states that a flexible troop deployment will create a more efficient and effective military presence throughout the world.

MEETING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF WOMEN VETERANS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) recognizes that there are service-related problems unique to the woman veteran which continue to be met inadequately by the Department of Veteran Affairs. JWV supports the allocation of VA resources to fully fund women's centers at all major VA medical facilities and provide specially trained medical professionals at each veterans' outreach clinic. The services required include gynecologists, mammograms, mental health and rape counselors, as well as PTSD and Agent Orange screening.

A VISION FOR DEMOCRACY

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) has strongly supported the U.S. efforts to bring democracy to Iraq and its citizens. We recognize the special considerations inherent in establishing a democratic government in a non-Western society.

JWV reaffirms its support for a democratic Middle East, but one that is established, not with the model of a Western society, but one that takes into account the needs and traditions of the people of Iraq themselves.

JWV supports the fledgling efforts of a free and democratic Iraq and looks forward to the establishment of a society that reflects the needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people.

UN FORCES

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has refused to lift his head from the sand to recognize the potential for frivolous, politically-motivated anti-American abuses of the International Criminal Court (ICC) against United States peacekeeping forces. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA is frustrated that the U.N. Security Council's decision last year to extend U.S. peacekeeping forces' immunity from the court, Annan is again lobbying Council members to end U.S. immunity despite threats to cease participation in peacekeeping operations. Annan's action will do nothing but weaken the U.N.'s ability to end regional conflict.

The end of U.S. immunity from the ICC would allow groups a politically-motivated retaliatory means to attack U.S. forces participating in U.N. peacekeeping operations with unfounded war crimes accusations. The U.N. must protect U.S. troops from these frivolous actions if American participation in peacekeeping operations is to be continued.

HOMELESS VETERANS

Almost 300,000 veterans are homeless, and more than half a million are homeless at some point over the course of a year. Although only 2% of homeless veterans are female, they also have the additional burden of dealing with shelters and other programs that turn them away because they may have children.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) urges that there be an increase in services for these men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend our freedoms. These homeless veterans, men and women, have served their country, often in far-away combat zones. Their country should honor their service with adequate programs to integrate them and their dependents back into society with all of the support they may need to overcome homelessness and its often attendant post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse.

Furthermore, JWV demands that the VA, local community organizations, and veterans service organizations come together to help those who have borne the burden for us all.

PROPER AND PROMPT PAYMENT FOR OUR SOLDIERS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that the inadequate and antiquated payroll system currently in use for our National Guard and Reserve troops be replaced as soon as possible by a modern system that will ensure fair and timely compensation for our troops. It is an outrage that those soldiers who are protecting our freedoms far from home have to fight another battle to receive the compensation to which they and their families are entitled.

According to a study of the problem by the General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress, "Some soldiers did not receive payments for up to six months after mobilization." These problems with fair payment to our troops are an insult to those who are shouldering the burdens imposed upon them by their deployment.

It is unacceptable that American soldiers from the National Guard and Reserve, who have been sent to fight in the distant battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, also have to fight to receive the salaries and other compensation to which they are entitled.

HONORING AMERICA'S WAR DEAD

The preamble to the National Constitution of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) binds its members "to preserve the memories and record of patriotic service performed by the men and women of our faith; to honor their memory and shield from neglect the graves of our heroic dead."

In solemn testimony to these values, JWV marched behind the caisson carrying the remains of Major Irwin S. Lerner, as he was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on January 16, 2004. We were honored to participate in the service bidding farewell to an American hero who was finally laid to rest more than three decades after his death.

JWV recognizes its solemn duty to pay its last respects to our fallen comrades just as we did for Major Lerner. We will forever carry the flag that they carried, forever tend their graves and forever say the Kaddish prayer in their honor.

THE LAW OF THE SEA TREATY MUST BE REJECTED

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) demands that the U.S. Senate not ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty that had been rejected by President Ronald Reagan in 1982. It must be rejected again. The Treaty, has proffered and by its very terms and language cannot be amended. Unlike other international treaties, it permits no reservations which will protect America's sovereign interest. It provides for an international tribunal that would have criminal jurisdiction over our legally elected officials. Moreover, it was drafted over 20 years ago and would severely limit the interdiction of possible terrorist threats coming by sea and interfere with our intelligence-gathering capabilities. Mandatory information-sharing provisions of the Treaty could warn our enemies about our knowledge of their activities.

The Law of the Sea Treaty was rejected once. It is vitally important that it be rejected again.

ABU GHRAIB PRISON

The Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. strongly recommends that the prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison be transferred to other prison venues, and that the prison structure itself be demolished. This will act to preclude it from becoming an anti-American monument to Arab hatred of our country. The empty site can be assigned for some social benefit to the Iraqi people such as a school, hospital or other worthy cause.

SHOW TRIALS WILL NOT SOLVE THE IRAQ QUESTIONS

Abuse of prisoners of any kind is never acceptable. That the Congress was lied to is unconscionable. The military must not be guilty of scapegoating those enlisted personnel who are at the lowest reaches of the chain of command.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that any trial gets at the truths underlying the horror of the pictures being splashed daily across our newspapers and television screens. It is imperative that this rush to justice and judgment be a thoughtful effort to arrive at the truth of these allegations and not be a "show trial".

HONOR DUE ALL RETURNING AMERICAN VETERANS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that all returning veterans be treated with the dignity and honor they earned and that there be absolutely no difference in the way they are treated regardless of whether they are members of the National Guard, Reserve or Regular components.

TIME MAGAZINE'S DESIGNATION OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER AS ITS PERSON OF THE YEAR

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA commends the selection of The American Soldier as Time Magazine's person of the year.

It is very rewarding that Time recognizes that, this generation of American soldiers stands for freedom and democracy against those dictators and terrorists who wish to deny those basic rights to the peoples of the world. By Time's selection, the service of all veterans in all wars has been finally acknowledged and honored.

CIVILIAN BRUTALITY GUERILLA TACTICS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA decries the guerrilla attacks that continue to kill and wound American and other coalition troops in the aftermath of major combat in Iraq.

U.S. Forces must fight guerilla bands with guerilla tactics. Only in that way can we hope to protect our troops and bring about the stability and peace that will bring about a viable democratic regime in Iraq while ensuring the safety of our young men and women who are serving so ably in harm's way. The old saying of "fighting fire with fire" is very appropriate in today's fighting.

AID FOR MILITARY SERVICE PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA proudly supports our troops who are currently serving, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, to protect the freedoms that we hold dear.

We, also, wish to express our support and honor their families, who are carrying on with their lives, often under grave financial hardships while their loved ones are serving overseas. This is especially true for those National Guard and Reserve troops who have been deployed for active duty in this time of peril. Many of these families are facing a sudden and substantial decrease in income for the main family wage earner and are suffering under the strain of decreased resources, especially should a family emergency arise.

LOANS FOR IRAQI RECONSTRUCTION

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the current Congressional plans to have a major part of the money for the reconstruction of Iraq take the form of loans rather than grants. In that way the Iraqi people have a greater stake in their own future.

We further support the proposal that with every dollar in grant aid to Iraq, an equal amount be set aside, allocated, and used for the needs of Americans here at home. While we celebrate the liberation of an oppressed people, we must not neglect the needs that continue to challenge our resources at home.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR TERRORISTS

The United States and Coalition Forces must adopt a zero tolerance policy against all terrorist cells and the acts of terrorism, no matter where they occur, in Iraq, Israel, Afghanistan, Indonesia, New York, Washington, D.C. or London. No act of terrorism or terrorist group should be tolerated, whether it is the remains of Saddam's loyalists or a large terror network like Al Qaeda, whatever nation or area it is in. All nations involved are at risk from terrorism.

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) recognizes that, while many opposed the initial mission of our country into Iraq, now we Americans must reunite in supporting this worldwide war against terrorism, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq or anywhere else in order to lessen the likelihood of any further attacks on our own shores.

Rather than relying on the massing of extensive ground forces, JWV urges the U.S. military to maintain SWAT teams that can be deployed rapidly to respond to terrorist acts in the Middle East and elsewhere. A quick response to, and zero tolerance of, any terrorist act are important to protect American security, peace and democracy throughout the world.

IRAN'S NUCLEAR THREAT

Iran's response to the International Atomic Energy Agency has been that it will not approve additional protocols to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) of which Iran was one of the first signatories three decades ago. Iran has replied to the IAEA that its Islamic Republic should be accepted as the latest member of the "nuclear club."

The policy of the U.S.A. and the free world must be to embark on an extensive “educational campaign” in Iran to communicate to the 50% of that society, the women, students and moderates, that the free world understands their plight and supports their vocal opposition to the tyrannical reign of Mullahs. That same 50% of Iranian society calls out for our moral support and will not accept leaders who push their welfare to the brink of nuclear disaster.

A RESPONSE TO BEHEADINGS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) believes that the powerful emotions generated by the recent beheadings do not change the fact that appeasement of terrorists only encourages more brutal killings. The only appropriate response: no give, no negotiation. The beheadings reveal the nature of the war on terror the U.S. declared after the 9/11 attacks. The people now being abducted are the unwilling soldiers in this unconventional conflict. The goal of Al-Qaeda is to destroy the values that America stands for – freedom, democracy and human rights.

While the hearts of JWV members go out to the victims’ families, the best tribute to their memory is to hunt down their killers and to stiffen our resolve to win the war on terrorism.

INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES AT GUANTANAMO BAY WITH REGARD TO THE HIGH-VALUE DETAINEES UNDER CIA JURISDICTION

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) recognizes that we are dealing with a new kind of enemy, terrorists who do not believe in the rule of law, the Geneva Conventions, or a free society.

JWV favors methods of interrogation, which are consistent with the laws of the United States where we are dealing with the worst of terrorists at Guantanamo or other sites, where the CIA has jurisdiction and where those detainees are deemed to have material information necessary to protect the immediate national security of our country.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) supports the efforts of the Coalition of Veteran Services Organizations working with the Department of Veterans Affairs in the creation of new US Postage Stamps recognizing the work of veterans organizations.

The new commemorative stamp sheet would enable each organization to have its own stamp as part of an undivided sheet themed “Serving Veterans.”

JWV endorses the efforts to create a new commemorative stamp sheet recognizing the work of all veteran organizations, themed “Serving Veterans.”

ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCES

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) realizes that the Western World is dependent upon Mid-Eastern oil. In the long run, the only way to end that dependency is to develop alternative fuels. Therefore, JWV supports the extensive funding into the research and development of alternative fuels and high efficient vehicles.

NATIONAL GUARD & RESERVES

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that all members of the National Guard and Reserves be treated as equal partners in America’s total force structure entitled to all of the rights and benefits afforded to those in the active components and they be equipped with all assets necessary to perform their mission.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that the words of the Pledge of Allegiance “one Nation under G-D” remain unchanged. We are a Nation, not under a king, not under any sovereign but under a higher authority, Ha Shem, the almighty G-D.

PATRIOT ACT

The Patriot Act is both a great source protection and a great threat to American Security. The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) acknowledges the dichotomy and conflict. Therefore, JWV demand that Congress and the Courts balance our security from attack with our need to protect our constitutionally protected civil rights and civil liberties.

ASBESTOS TRUST FUND

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the establishment of a Trust Fund that would include veterans, their dependents and survivors which will ensure that claimants are adequately compensated for the illnesses and deaths arising out of their exposure to asbestos. Moreover, we believe it is only appropriate that any payments received from such Fund be in addition to and not offset by any compensation received from the Department of Veterans Affairs for service-connected disability.

ASBESTOS TESTING & PRESUMPTIVE DISABILITY

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that all veterans who might have been exposed to asbestos be immediately tested by the Department of Veteran Affairs at no cost to the veterans and that any disability thus found be presumptively service-connected. It appears that those men and women who were transported on troop ships might have suffered from a sufficient exposure to asbestos so as to feel the ill affects of that exposure today.

ORDER OF THE SILVER ROSE

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) congratulates and supports the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) on its Order of the Silver Rose. The Order of the Silver Rose is VVA’s program which recognizes those men and women who are suffering the ill effects of Agent Orange poisoning. JWV asks those suffering from Agent Orange to come forward and be recognized by the VVA in the Order of the Silver Rose.

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) acknowledges and applauds the contributions of women in today’s armed forces. Women have been appropriately integrated into America’s modern military. Any effort to go back to the “old ways” is totally unacceptable. Equally unacceptable would be any effort to single out for disparate treatment women members of the military who were involved in the abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. JWV is aware of rumors that women in the military are being outfitted with uniforms and equipment designed for men. If these rumors are true, these women must be provided with gear designed specifically for their torso.

CARES

It appears that some of the data studied by the CARES Commission were outdated and clearly did not take into consideration the needs of the men and women returning from frontline service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA asks the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to forego any closures or realignments until after updated data are evaluated and the needs of the returning veterans are ascertained.

A MORE PROACTIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to be more aggressive in its outreach program to the veterans' population. DVA should seek out those sectors that are not adequately utilizing the DVA resources and partner with local community activists so as provide services to these unserved and underserved veterans.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

1. Supporting the absolute necessity for mandatory full-funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
2. Opposed to DVA refusal to serve all veterans and the establishment of Category 8.

ISRAEL

1. Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel and embassies should be relocated to Jerusalem, including that of the United States.
2. There should be a complete termination of any funds – US or EU – to Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Authority as well as any country which supports or encourages terrorists and terrorism.

AMERICAN IMMUNITY DEMAND

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA renews its previous demands for blanket immunity of US Forces and citizens from any national or international criminal court claiming extra-territorial jurisdiction.

IRAQ AND IRAN

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) supports the establishment of a government within Iraq which respects the human dignity of all Iraqis. JWV opposes the formation of a government in Iraq which is linked to Iran.

VA – CUTBACKS

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV) expresses deep concern that, under the guise of a lack of funding from the Congress, the VA has taken the easy way by creating a category 8 and halting the health care enrollment of an expected 164,000 additional veterans. This is no time to cut them off. The fault lies with both the Congress and the Administration, which has failed to fully fund the VA.

JWV believes that under-funding is ridiculous when under the "Homeland Security Act of 2002" Congress has approved 100 billion dollars to bail out insurance companies. Two billion dollars more for the VA would solve its under funding and make up in part for the recent two-year moratorium in funding for the VA.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Jewish War Veterans of the USA restates its long standing position that sexual misconduct has no place in the military, including the academies, and supports the prosecution of those accused of sexual misconduct. Procedures must be available to military prosecutors to facilitate their bringing the justice those who violate rules against harassments.