

HANUKKAH FEATURE
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charge. To all of them the Jewish chaplain meant something, if only a symbol of respect for difference of religious background, which thoroughly pervades the military community.

How different is the chaplain's involvement from that of his civilian counterpart! The civilian rabbi is embroiled in the multifaceted complexities of urban life. A Bar Mitzvah is almost a routine weekly event. Even if over half his congregational membership does not appear from one Yom Kippur to the next, still his responsibilities tax all his energies.

In contrast, the rabbi in uniform deals with the few in number -- roughly one percent of any installation. To a large extent this means that he has multiple responsibilities, not remaining in any one place more than a few days at a time. Because he is not always "there," contact between the military congregant and his Jewishness is keener than one who is surrounded by a Jewish environment he can take for granted.

A Bar Mitzvah at Zaragoza, Spain, where only ten Jews were assigned, drew over half of the 300 personnel at the local base. Preparation had to be done via tape recordings, but the meaningfulness of the occasion for the family concerned cannot be measured. Then, too, the awareness that the government spends thousands of dollars annually to provide the services of a chaplain even only periodically, is a spur to reaffirm the Jewish servicemen's own sense of worth.

The chaplain frequently has to carry his synagogue with him, prayerbooks and periodicals, Torah and Talmud, a ready suitcase and a sense of humor, a passion to seek out his people at radar stations and aboard ships, on mountain tops and amidst a maze of machines. As he makes personal contact with his own men on the job, in the home, or at the chapel, so the tangible example he represents -- that someone cares -- fortifies the pride of his people, and wins the respect of non-Jews who see him in action.

A civilian rabbi interacts with the bent of his synagogue leadership to forge the particular style and affiliation of his congregation. The military chaplain must be sensitive to the backgrounds of all he serves. While asserting his own position on religious matters, he yet sees a sacred duty and responsibility to meet the requirements of all. A kosher salami from Chicago may mean more than a sheaf of sermons in intensifying the positive Jewish identification of a basic trainee to whom home sounds a million miles away. A letter by a Reform chaplain to a Commander justifying separate rations for an Orthodox enlisted man is not uncommon. Nor is it strange to find readings from the Reform and Reconstructionist prayerbooks incorporated in the services conducted by a Yeshiva graduate. Somehow in the military Jewish congregation, all the institutional adjectives fade into the background; the Jew and his Judaism are the Chaplain's focus.

The Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy of the National Jewish Welfare Board under the direction of Rabbi Aryeh Lev and his staff has been the prime mover in establishing the sense of unity which pervades the military Jewish community despite its global constituency. No better way is this illustrated than in the area of religious education. The military chaplain faces a unique challenge: how to provide continuity, stability, and quality in a religious education program when the turnover in personnel from year to year may be as much as fifty percent, when the age classifications may shift drastically from year to year, and teacher resources are constantly altering. The Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy has gone a long way to overcome these problems through the Unified Jewish Curriculum for Members of the Armed Forces, developed by a board of outstanding educators from the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform, movements sitting together to devise a comprehensive curriculum so that wherever a man may be transferred, his dependent child will have adequate educational materials for his age, and often a full program in which to enter. A religious school organized by an Orthodox lay leader in Madrid, Spain, with a supervisor who once directed a Reform religious school, utilized the Unified Curriculum for sixty children



TAKING THEIR STAND AS PART OF A LIVING MENORAH, YOUNGSTERS FROM THE SCRANTON, PA., JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, AN AFFILIATE OF THE NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD, AND FROM OTHER LOCAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS ARE READY FOR THE COMMUNITY-WIDE HANUKKAH CEREMONIES AT THE CENTER.

in an effective program. Even where there is no concentration of dependent children the availability of educational materials to every Jewish family is of great significance. A core curriculum plus a comprehensive supplementary resource list provides the chaplain or leader maximum flexibility in meeting the specific requirements he may encounter from one year to the next.

Chaplains, who must cover areas ranging from Norway to Naples, from Wiesbaden to Madrid, from Manila to Taipei, and all the outposts of Vietnam, depend heavily on lay leaders to carry on the program during the chaplain's absence. Faced with the alternative of no Jewish program at all, many Jewish servicemen have come forward over the years to take on the responsibilities of lay leadership. In so doing they have not only deepened their own commitment to Judaism, but have reached out to others who otherwise would have experienced a spiritual drought.

Today, under the initiative of Air Force Chaplain, Colonel, Kalman Levitan, in cooperation with the Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, institutes for the training of lay leaders are being held regularly throughout the country. In practical workshops with the full cooperation and financing of the base commanders concerned, Jewish officers and NCO's learn how to make use of the facilities and channels available to them to meet the religious and educational needs of their fellow Jewish servicemen in cooperation with the supervisory base chaplain and the area Jewish chaplain or auxiliary. The kind of support for Jewish life provided by the Armed Services is unique in Jewish experience.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity for the training of lay leaders occurs at the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs, Colorado. Over the four-year academic period each Jewish cadet is exposed to Judaism through a long-term relationship with the Jewish chaplain assigned to the Academy. The Jewish Cadet Chapel, exquisitely outfitted through the support produced by the Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, magnificently designed by Dr. Ludwig Wolpert of the Jewish Museum in New York, is an inspiration in itself. Despite the fact that Jewish cadets comprise only one percent of the total enrollment, their collective presence as one of the three major faith groups and the impact of the Jewish Air Force community as a whole far beyond its numbers, are attested to by the grandeur of the tri-faith Cadet Chapel, Colorado's chief tourist attraction which draws more than 500,000 visitors a year.

Every cadet is trained to be a leader. Every Jewish cadet is trained to exercise leadership and pride as a Jew, so that when he assumes his responsibility in the field, he will also be inspired to assume the mantle of lay leadership where no Jewish chaplain serves.

What is most gratifying for a Jewish chaplain is his knowledge that most of his energies go directly into the areas for which he has been trained: education, worship, personal ministry, and religious counselling -- to enable the individual to find his own place in the spectrum of Jewish life so that he may be at home in his

environment and in the world. Next to that is the opportunity to develop leadership so that each Jew in service will have the desire to fulfill the dictum of Pirke Avot: "In a place where there are no men, strive thou to be a man."

Jews in the military realize that each one is often judged as a prototype for all Jews. This reality of our existence is not hard to bear when one has earned respect through his integrity. Going one step farther, the Jewish chaplain also carries on his shoulders the responsibility of representation for all the positive elements which make up the total Jewish community. His success is a living demonstration of the possibilities that can be realized when the total Jewish community works in harmony for an exalted goal.

NEW YORK: -- The role of camping in preparing Jews of all ages for participation in the Jewish and general community is the keynote of the Jewish Welfare Board's second national conference on Jewish camping, to be held at Grossinger's Hotel, January 4 to 7.

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