

Hadassah Convoy

By Burt Keimach

There are 76 names on the memorial near the Nashishibi bend of the Sheikh Jarrah Road in Jerusalem. But no one will ever really know exactly how many lives -- Arab and Jewish -- were snuffed out that Tuesday, April the 13th, 1948.

The memorial attests to a bloody battle. Some call it a pre-planned ambush of the most callous and dastardly kind -- an attack on a civilian medical convoy. In this instance the Hadassah transports led by Dr. Chaim Yassky, then the Director of the Hospital. Yassky, along with 75 of his colleagues, paid the ultimate price for their concern for the hospital on Mount Scopus.

In the violent, bitter, and impassioned days just before the formal proclamation of the State of Israel, the Scopus university complex formed the heart of medical activities in Palestine. With mounting Arab attacks, three fully supplied convoys a day were deemed the bare minimum just to keep the hospital in handages. Doctors and nurses were lucky to see that many in a week, but they determinedly resisted the Red Cross offer to put Scopus under the international flag -- a move the Jews considered tantamount to surrender.

The actual Jewish convoy consisted of nine vehicles, four of which never left Sheikh Jarrah under their own power. We know that over 100 people started out at 8:00 that morning from the clinics on Ha-Sofel Street. Although no lists were kept of those who rode in the vehicles, the hospital tally sheet of the dead and wounded has 102 names.

Led by Lieutenant Asher Rahav, the three trucks, two escort cars, two armored ambulances, and two lightly armored busses, revved up their motors and headed up Mount Scopus by way of the Sheikh Jarrah road.

No one will probably ever know how long in advance the ambush was planned, or indeed if it was planned at all. Just as no one will ever learn why the Scottish troops didn't disperse the attackers with a few bursts from their heavy machine guns and bazookas positioned at Antonius House. Questions were asked

and are still being asked why the passing details of British troops and police did virtually nothing to intervene, and why only one lonely British major named Jack Churchill even made a gesture toward freeing people from one of the burning busses.

As soon as the first electrically detonated mine went off, ripping a four foot trench in the road, the lead car bogged down in it, and all hell broke loose. Bullets rained down from all sides. The last vehicles -- those that hadn't yet arrived at the bend -- were able to turn around. Under heavy fire, with failing brakes and shot-out tires, the drivers managed somehow to get their vehicles back down the road.

But that still left four vehicles, plus a rescue car sent by Jerusalem Hagannah Commander David Shalteil, hopelessly trapped. Rahav ordered his gunner, Baruch Nussbaum, to fire at the British cars blocking the escape route for the fleeing convoy.

Gunner Nussbaum, who later tried to get to the Scots to ask for their intercession, was killed for his efforts before he could reach Antonius House. Many were the tragic deaths that day. Shoshanna Ben-Ari from the Hagannah, rose to help a wounded doctor inside their besieged ambulance, and lost her life when a bullet struck her in the mouth. Scores were burned to death -- charred beyond recognition, so that to this day fewer than forty of the bodies have been positively identified.

Dr. Yassky was cut down by a bullet in his liver. With him went the hope of holding on to Mount Scopus. He had organized the biggest convoy ever as an effort to stave off fate. He and the nascent Jewish State paid dearly for their forlorn hopes, for it was not until 1967 that the hospital and the university were regained by the Jews, during the Six-Day War, enabling the rebuilding of the Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University Campus on Scopus.

Mount Scopus isn't mentioned in the Bible, but it is referred to in Talmudic literature as the place where Jews must rend their garments, because it is from that height that the destruction of the Temple area can be seen. It is also from that elevation, and from that direction that classic invasions of the City have been staged.

The events of April 13, 1948 led to the division of a city and the loss of a university, a

hospital, and some of its most dedicated people. The besieged Jews of Jerusalem were reduced to eating wild khibeizeh weeds; and looking back, one can see this as part of the terrible price paid by the Jews thirty years ago for independence and Statehood.

NEW YORK -- The art of Israel, a unique blend of ancient and new shaped into its present form by that nation's stormy history and indomitable spirit, will be saluted by ARTnews Magazine on the occasion of Israel's 30th anniversary.

Passover Greetings



George Garrett's

INTERIORS INC.

Complete Home Furnishings
Sealy Mattresses
Union National Karges

CARPETING WALLPAPER DRAPERIES

1000-A EAST SAHARA AVENUE
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89105
PHONE 735-7182

Best Wishes For a Happy Passover

TO ALL OUR JEWISH FRIENDS





"ECONOMIZE WITH QUALITY"



VEGAS PAINT CO.

Professional Assistance Backed by 45 Years' Experience

A FULL LINE OF QUALITY PAINTS & ALLIED PRODUCTS

VINYL WALL COVERINGS - WALLPAPERS - MURALS
DEVILBISS SPRAY EQUIP. - BRUSHES - ROLLERS - DRY WALL TOOLS
NELSON SWIMMING POOL PAINT

COMPETITIVE PRICES S & H GREEN STAMPS

VEGAS PAINT CO.

FOUR LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

TROPICANA AT MARYLAND
736-2994

3324 E. LAKE MEAD BLVD.
N. LAS VEGAS • PH. 643-5374

4237 W. SAHARA AVE.
PH. 876-4482


1604 S. COMMERCE
PH. 382-4994


★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PAT GINN

extends warm and sincere greetings in honor of

PASSOVER





PAT'S CHINESE KITCHEN

and his BRAND NEW COCKTAIL LOUNGE

953-30 E. SAHARA
(COMMERCIAL CENTER)
735-5795

MARRIOTT HOTEL GROUP TOM RUSBY