The Fighting Rabbis: A History of Jewish Military Chaplains, 1860-1945

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following libraries have graciously assisted me in my research, American Jewish Archives, American Jewish Historical Society, National Archives and Nimitz Library United States Naval Academy.

Dr. Bill Galush offered scholarly direction and constant support from the onset of this six year dissertation. Others, such as Mr. Edward Marshal, Dr. Ted Rosengarten, Ms. Barbara Breeden, Dr. Ted Karamanski, Dr. Lewis Erenberg and the late Father Thomas Hogan provided encouragement.

Members of my immediate and extended families have been helpful and supportive from the beginning of my Ph.D. studies. I owe them special thanks.

To all those rabbis and chaplains who have proceeded me, I offer my heart-felt gratitude. Your historical achievements have ensured that the men and women of the United States armed forces were able to seek Divine guidance and comfort in the midst of lonliness, personal challenges, battle and war.

Many prayers were offered in the course of this work. I feel it is appropriate to offer a prayer at this time.

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Blessed are you Lord our God King of the Universe, Who has given us Life, Sustained us and permitted us to reach this momentous occasion.
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INTRODUCTION

The mission involved danger, possibly death. The First Division expected to attack in the morning. The most likely battle area required a night time reconnaissance, so that the troops and tanks would be most effective. Three officers led the all night patrol. Throughout the night they sent back verbal messages by runners. Occasionally they came quite close to machine-gun battles. As dawn approached they returned tired, muddy and exhausted; however, they had gathered invaluable information for the upcoming attack.

One of the Officers in this First World War mission was the 77th Division chaplain, Rabbi Elkan Voorsanger. For acts, such as his participation in the patrol, and for other deeds of bravery and devotion to duty Chaplain Voorsanger received a number of medals. More importantly, however, his troops named him, "The Fighting Rabbi." This title stayed with him his whole life.

It is the reality of this "Fighting Rabbi," and hundreds of others like him, which is an unknown and untold facet of American-Jewish history. One of the main reasons for this lack of understanding about the topic of military rabbis is that most of the prominent American-Jewish historians have not addressed it.
In Irving Howe's comprehensive social and cultural history of New York Jewry, *World of Our Fathers*, no reference is made to new immigrants or their children who entered the military in relatively large numbers prior to the First World War. In Moses Rischin's *The Promised City*, he meticulously detailed the search for community. No mention, however, is made of the armed forces as a possible means of assimilation for a new American community. Deborah D. Moore's focus on the second generation of New York Jews in *At Home in America* is superb. Yet there is no linkage between the emerging values of a new generation and the notion of patriotism and service to the country that certainly existed. Other scholars such as Naomi Cohen, who so extensively chronicled the early years of twentieth century Jewish community growth, are seemingly unaware of the strong and continuous relationship of the Jewish community concerned with the needs of their co-religionists in the United States military.

This paucity of scholarship is not absolute. There have been some attempts made to record the history of Jews and their rabbis in the armed forces. The late Rabbi Bertram Korn, a rear admiral in the Naval reserves, wrote a scholarly record of Jews in the Civil War. One chapter focussed on the chaplaincy issues of that period. Other works about the Jewish chaplaincy have been written by former rabbis in uniform. Rabbis Lee Levinger and Louis
Barish wrote personal and anecdotal stories about their experiences. The problem with the existing scholarship is that it is fragmented and not compiled in a systematic manner.

This issue is also found in other faith traditions. Recently, Father Donald Crosby authored *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II*. This book offers a superb anecdotal account of priests in the Second World War. Broader historical issues regarding Catholic service in the military are not addressed.

This present research is needed from a number of perspectives. Within the American-Jewish community the story of rabbinic participation in the armed forces is a significant element of historiography which has been unstudied. The actual field work, religious services, counseling, educational endeavors and unique battlefield experiences of these rabbis needs to be recorded. The strong and continual association between the general Jewish community and the military deserves chronicling. The strength of this relationship was reflected in the historical development and subsequent growth of the Jewish Welfare Board as the single agency responsible for the spiritual and welfare needs of all Jewish armed forces personnel. The intra-faith composition and longevity of this organization makes it unusual in American-Jewish annals.
This work also relates to issues in the wider context of American-Religious history. This study introduces the notion that in a contemporary society infused with anti-semitic attitudes military functioned as an institutional force representing equity and religious sensitivity. A practical manifestation of this dynamic is found in the examination of rabbis in the military. These rabbis, as all armed forces spiritual leaders, functioned as general chaplains (worked with all personnel) and specifically served as Jewish mentors. This role, in addition to the relationships that the rabbis had with their Christian colleagues, helped develop a practical ecumenism which promoted interfaith understanding and awareness.

A final area that this dissertation addresses is one of false perceptions. Some American Jews believe that the military represented an anti-semitic institution. This is associated with the notion that military service has not been fully embraced by Jews. Both of these beliefs are factually wrong. This void of misunderstandings and misinformation needs to be filled. Jews and their rabbis have, from the country's origins, had a full and participatory place in the armed forces of America.
CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF THE CHAPLAINCY

The story of Jewish Chaplains is part of the larger history of military spiritual leaders. From Biblical times to our own day, soldiers and sailors have wanted their endeavors blessed by Holy men and women. The American military chaplaincy, on the eve of the Civil War, represented the culmination of centuries full of tradition regarding this unique ministry.

The Hebrew Bible described two vivid examples of Holy men inspiring fighters to victory. In the first instance, when Moses held his staff on a mountain top the ancient Israelites prevailed in battle against the Amalekites. When he dropped his staff their fighting faltered. ¹ An account from the book of Deuteronomy showed an explicit connection between the priest and those fighting:

Before you join the battle the priest shall come forward and address the troops. He shall say to them, Hear O Israel! You are about to join battle with your enemy. Let not your courage falter. Do not be in fear, or in panic or in dread of them. For it is the Lord your God who marches with you to do battle for you against your enemy.²


²The Torah, Deuteronomy 20:1-4, 361.
The relationship between those fighting and those blessing the battle developed throughout much of subsequent history.

These spiritual guides eventually received the separate title of chaplain. The title may be traced to a fourth century legend concerning Saint Martin of Tours. During a military expedition Martin offered half of his cloak to a freezing beggar. That same night he had a religious vision and conversion experience which moved him to abandon his military career for a life devoted to religious works. Eventually, he became the patron saint of France. The remaining half of his cloak became a sacred relic and utilized as a rallying symbol in battle by French Kings. The word chaplain derived from the French "Chapelain", which referred to the officer assigned to watch over the sacred cloak. ³

By the sixth century, evidence indicated that an early form of chaplaincy existed. A letter from Pope Pelagius I (556-561) to the bishop in the Etrurian town of Centumcellae, later called Civita Vecchia, requested the Emperor to advance certain soldiers of the garrison to holy orders. These individuals, endorsed by the Pope, helped insure the ongoing loyalty of the imperial troops.⁴


In the eighth century the non-combatant status of the clergy began to evolve. Various Church Councils and Synods forbade clerics from taking up arms and participating in civil or military actions. This principle of clerical military immunity began to evolve at a time when priests and bishops functioned as land barons and defenders of their territories, often against fellow Christians. A capitulary (church document) from 803, forbade chaplains from carrying arms and shedding blood. It also detailed some of their ecclesiastical responsibilities. The clergy selected for military duty needed to know how to offer mass, hear confessions, impose penances, anoint the dying and assist the wounded.\textsuperscript{5}

As modern armies evolved from smaller feudal armies a permanent corps of military chaplains emerged. Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma, in the late sixteenth century, organized an elaborate system of military clerics for Spanish forces. Farnese produced a model Christian army which included clerics as part of the organizational structure. A clergyman served with each company unit. The chaplaincy developed to such an extent that the Pope appointed a representative from the Holy See to function as a vicar-general of the Spanish Army. In November of 1587, Farnese endeavored to create a permanent corps of religious chaplains. He petitioned the Society of Jesus which

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 21.
provided twenty-four Jesuits. They founded a separate ministry that dealt exclusively with military personnel. Eventually, Jesuits also served as chaplains to the Spanish Navy.

As the Jesuits established themselves in the Spanish military during the sixteenth century similar developments occurred in the English armed forces. In the British Royal Navy, as with most sea-going ventures, the crews desired a minister to solicit divine guidance with the hopes of a successful and safe voyage. The famous adventurer Sir Francis Drake, whose father was also a Naval Chaplain, utilized the Bible as a means to rally his crew in dangerous situations. The religious and social benefits of having a chaplain on board were outlined in instructions associated with the Cadiz expedition which set sail in 1596, led by Admiral Charles Howard:

That you are to take special care to serve God, by using of Common prayers twice every day... You shall forbid swearing, brawling, dicing, and such disorders as may breed contention and disorders in your ships; wherein you shall avoid God's displeasure and win his favor.⁶

Having a chaplain helped maintain the morale of the crew.

Large scale English sea movements, such as the 1588 battle with the Spanish Armada, and subsequent journeys of exploration routinely included military ministers. The need for chaplains became so urgent that in subsequent years the

British government raised funds which insured the various ships in the fleet with the services of a sea-going chaplain.  

Military clerics participated in the British armies as well. In the late seventeenth century, the description of the role of the military clergy reflected the contemporary sense of ecumenism.

The preacher, be he priest or minister, whether Lutheran or Reformed or Roman Catholic, his office is well enough known and there is much respect to be paid him; and the laws of war provide severe punishment to those who offer an offense or injury to his person or charges. His duty is to have 'care of souls', and it is well if he meddle with no other business, but make that his only care.  

This early mention of ecumenism became an integral element of the chaplaincy. Chaplains prayed for and worked with all those on their boat or in their unit.

This idealized goal of chaplains ministering to their flocks often broke down in practice. Parker Thompson notes that in the early eighteenth century over two-thirds of the chaplains appointed for military duty never performed their tasks. The British system allowed the local military commander to appoint a chaplain of his choice. Often the

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7Ibid., 19. According to Smith, chaplains served on many ships and had a high rate of continued service with the Royal Navy. During the four years of war with Spain 1655-1659, the Admiralty Commissioners reported a lack of sea-going clergy and the government initiated a recruiting campaign.

local cleric accepted the pay but did not do the work or sub-contracted an assistant to take his place.\(^9\)

The concept and practices of a British type chaplaincy became modified in a colonial American setting. During the early Colonial years, chaplains accompanied various local or provincial militia units and cared for the spiritual needs of the troops. In 1637, in one of the initial attacks against native-Americans in the Pequots wars, Reverend Samuel Stone accompanied colonial forces from Connecticut. A tactical question was referred to the chaplain for his prayer and endorsement. The plan's success supported the minister's role as beseecher of Divine guidance, "We had sufficient light from the Word of God for our proceedings."\(^{10}\)

These early spiritual mentors operated independently; no organization or institution represented their concerns. A local minister became a chaplain in a variety of ways. Governors and Legislatures appointed some military clerics, others were chosen by militia leaders or volunteered for service with a specific military unit. Civilian ministers only needed the permission of their congregations to join the soldiers. Many clergymen offered patriotic sermons exhorting their members to fight the British, then marched

\(^{9}\) Ibid., 14.

off to battle themselves. In many cases, colonial chaplains saw no contradiction between being a religious leader and a military fighter. A number of chaplains not only bore arms but also exhibited superior fighting abilities. Not until relatively modern times were chaplains designated to be official non-combatants and prohibited from carrying arms. 11

George Washington, as a colonel in the Virginia militia, noted the significance of the chaplaincy. In a series of letters sent to the Virginia legislature, Washington repeatedly asked that funds be allotted for a chaplain for his unit. He expressed the need for a spiritual leader in a letter of September 23, 1756:

The want of a chaplain does, I humbly conceive, reflect dishonor upon the regiment, as all other officers are allowed. The gentlemen of the corps are sensible of this and did propose to support one at their private expense. But I think it would have a more graceful appearance were he appointed as others have. 12

Washington’s familiarity and approval of chaplains continued throughout his military career.

In his various papers and correspondence Washington made over fifty references to chaplains. This material

11 The issue of chaplains bearing arms is as recent as Vietnam. Navy chaplains assigned to Marine units occasionally accompanied troops on combat missions. If they came under attack the troop’s attention was sometimes diverted to the chaplain’s safety. An armed chaplain inevitably became a hinderance in that setting. Present day regulations call for chaplains to be court-martialed if they carry arms.

12 Honeywell, Chaplains in the United States Army, 9.
revealed that Washington had four definite ideas about the roles of chaplains. The first involved the most traditional role. Chaplains interceded with Providence to secure protection and victory for the soldiers. Each regiment procured the services of an outstanding chaplain who prayed daily for the rights and liberties for which they fought.\textsuperscript{13}

In a second role, chaplains symbolized the conscience of the Army. They functioned as advocates of moral reform among the soldiers. A third and extremely important activity of the spiritual leaders focussed on troop morale. At Valley Forge, during the difficult winter of 1778, military clerics worked arduously to uplift the failing esprit de corps of the troops. This assistance and encouragement helped the men in their crucial decisions to stay at their posts and to persevere through the harsh weather. The fourth role of military clergy, as envisioned by Washington, considered ways to increase unity and harmony among the troops. Some of Washington’s troops included Roman Catholics and Jews. Washington’s experiences with some Jewish officers, such as Major David Franks, led to his conclusion that a unified Army which practiced the free exercise of religion served as a model of tolerance for the nation.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 14.

By the time that Washington assumed command of the Continental Army in August of 1775, fifteen military clerics serving twenty-three regiments were in place. From 1775 to 1783, one hundred and seventy-nine ministers in uniform served under the revolutionary flag.\(^{15}\)

While these spiritual mentors assisted the American forces, other clergy helped maintain the fighting spirit of our allies. As a result of the American-French alliance of 1777, the French government supplied significant material and troops for the war against England. One hundred Catholic priests ministered to the spiritual well-being of the French soldiers. They stayed with the French Army and Navy for the duration of France's military commitment in America.\(^{16}\) This alliance created further possibilities of inter-religious understanding as mostly Protestant colonists observed the rituals of the Catholic faith being practiced:

> We found that Roman catholics were not monsters, for these very Frenchmen...The soldiers of the Catholic king, and those of the rebellious Protestant provinces, went hand in hand together in worshipping their common Creator.\(^{17}\)

Military clergy in their sermons reflected an interfaith awareness. At the regimental level, chaplains administered to all troops regardless of their

\(^{15}\)A Brief History of the United States Army Chaplains Corps, (Washington: Department of the Army, 1974), 3.

\(^{16}\)Smith, The Military Ordinariate, 60.

\(^{17}\)Dom Aidan Henry Germain, Catholic Military and Naval Chaplains (Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1929, 23.
denominational requirements. Sermons derived from the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) were especially popular. They contained references familiar to most of the troops. Washington circulated to all his troops a sermon written by a civilian rabbi. He correctly perceived that freedom of religion represented a motivating factor for his diverse American forces.¹⁸

Recognition of the importance of the Military Chaplaincy came in an early act of Congress. In March of 1791, Congress authorized the President to establish a new army regiment. The act made a specific provision for a military chaplain.

In case the President of the United States should deem the employment of a major-general, brigadier general, a quartermaster, and chaplain, or either of them, essential to the public interest, he hereby is empowered, by and with the advice of the Senate, to appoint the same accordingly.¹⁹

The Reverend John Hurt of Virginia, an Episcopalian, became the first chaplain of the new republic in March of 1791. Hurt, was an active chaplain through the revolutionary period and experienced seven years of service with the military.

¹⁸Part of the training of a modern military chaplain is to appreciate and study prayers which could bring comfort to those in need regardless of denomination. Also, these padres (chaplains) function as counselors to all their troops. Specific denominational requirements are, secondary to meeting the immediate spiritual and emotional needs of the troops.

Between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, the number of military clerics numbered in the tens and twenties. The armed forces emphasized the chaplain as an educator in addition to the more traditional role as pastor. Military ministers helped found the Military Academy at West Point and the Naval Academy at Annapolis. An 1802 naval regulation ordered by President Thomas Jefferson further delineated this educational responsibility concerning these spiritual guides:

He is to read prayers at stated periods; perform all funeral ceremonies over persons as may die in the service...he shall perform the duty of a school master; and to that end he shall instruct the midshipmen and volunteers in writing, arithmetic and navigation.

This teaching role occupied a significant part of a chaplain's responsibilities in the nineteenth century.

In the early nineteenth century clergy in the Army and Navy began to develop unique interests in their ministries. In 1820, the dozen Navy clerics on active duty became involved in the issue of punishment for sailors. Navy

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20 The chaplains placed a major role in the initial years of the service academies. One of the first ministers at West Point, Thomas Picton described his dual role of teacher and minister in positive terms. "As a minister, my chief duty is to preach on Sundays; as teacher...I am trying to teach them World Geography, World History, Morality and Law among nations...I have reason to commend the young men for their respectful behavior toward me and especially their proper conduct in worship." Herman A. Norton Struggling for Recognition, The United States Army Chaplaincy 1791-1865 (Washington D.C.: Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 27.

clergy participated in the movement to abolish the practice of flogging sailors for any offenses. They also took part in the contemporary discussions regarding the serving of "grog" aboard Navy vessels.\textsuperscript{22}

The Navy evolved new regulations concerning its ministers and their qualifications. In 1823, Secretary of the Navy, Samuel Southard, ordered that only ordained clergy could serve as chaplains.\textsuperscript{23} Later regulations monitored the age requirements for new chaplains to enter naval service. These Navy spiritual advisors participated in significant voyages. Chaplain Charles Stewart sailed on the U.S.S. Vincennes around the world in 1829-1830. Naval chaplains accompanied Commodore Perry on his expeditions to Japan in the 1850's. From 1842, until the onset of the First World War, the number of clergy in the Navy remained constant at forty-two.\textsuperscript{24}

The size of the Army chaplaincy, in the early National period, was small as well. During some years, with the exception of the chaplain position at West Point, no Army

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 54. Often, flogging became standard punishment for minor offenses created by alcohol abuse. Failing a cleanliness inspection, inappropriate talking, or not having a name correctly on a uniform led to a dozen lashes. Medical officers and chaplains initiated the movement to abolish this archaic practice as well as address the issue of alcoholism. By the mid 1830's, flogging began to be discontinued and educational efforts had been made toward control of liquor.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 35.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 62.
clergymen served on active duty. On the western frontier many travelling clergy became unofficial chaplains of Army posts. These chaplain-pastors preached, taught and ministered to the inhabitants of the forts. They performed so well that the inhabitants of the posts wrote letters to Congress requesting that they be appointed as military ministers. In 1838 Congress passed a bill that allowed fifteen frontier installations to chose local clergy who became salaried military chaplains. As in the Navy, many of these pastors administered the educational programs of the forts.\(^25\)

Prior to the Mexican-American War a movement to abolish the armed forces ministry developed. Prominent leaders, such as former President James Madison, opposed the payment of public funds to clergymen serving in the armed forces. Madison feared that a paid military chaplaincy might foster a state sponsored religion in contradiction to the division of church and state as expressed in the Constitution.\(^26\)

\(^{25}\) *A Brief History of the United States Army Chaplain Corps*, 6. Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet* (Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953), 210. Prucha describes that the congregation of these pioneer clergy included settlers who lived in proximity to the Forts, as well as native Americans who were exposed to Christianity for the first time.

\(^{26}\) The legality of the military chaplaincy was reaffirmed by the United States Supreme Court in 1985 in the case of *Katzoff v. Marsh*. In this case, the court held that the military constituted a unique community. Military chaplains and chapels assisted armed forces personnel, often unable to worship in any other place, with the free exercise of religion. The chaplaincy was therefore constitutional.
In March 1849, the House Judiciary Committee responded to many of these criticisms with a report which favored the continuation of the chaplaincy. The report argued that soldiers and sailors serving their country, in places often far away from home, exercised their constitutional rights of freedom of worship when they prayed with chaplains. Further, the perception of the padre involved his functioning as a positive moral and religious role-model for the troops. Some advocates of the military ministry promoted it as a means of strengthening Protestantism in America and the world.

The spirit of Christianity has ever had a tendency to mitigate the rigors of war, if as yet it has not been entirely able to prevent it...and to abolish it, in this Christian age of the world, would seem like retrograding rather than advancing civilization.\(^{27}\)

This concern for the specific moral and religious needs of soldiers and sailors, especially in far-away places, has helped maintain the uniqueness and acceptance of this unusual ministry.

As the chaplaincy grew it evolved in terms of its denominational composition. At the time of the Mexican-American War, military clerics represented various types of and was not to be judged by the standards which were applied to secular communities. "Public Prayer in the Military," Department of the Navy, Naval District Message, July 08, 1992.

Protestants. Mexican propagandists pounced on this fact. They suggested that the American Army wanted to deprive Mexicans of their Catholicism. To counter this accusation, and to minister to the large numbers of Catholic soldiers in service, President Polk requested from the Catholic bishops of New York and Saint Louis two priests for assignment with the Army. Two Jesuits, Father John McElroy and Father Anthony Rey, agreed to serve with the troops in Mexico. Technically they were not official Army chaplains as the President did not have legal permission to appoint them. Congress granted that authority to military generals and to the Secretary of War.

Nevertheless the priests functioned as chaplains with a letter of introduction from the War Department. Father McElroy served as a hospital chaplain ministering to wounded soldiers of all faiths. Additionally he organized a school for local children and taught four hours a day. Father Rey accompanied the battle troops. During an assault on Monterrey he distinguished himself in caring for the wounded during battle. In January of 1847 Mexican guerrillas killed Father Rey. He became the first priest to die on active duty.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{28}Herman A. Norton, \textit{Struggling for Recognition the United States Army Chaplaincy} (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977), 71. The first Catholics officially appointed as Army chaplains saw service in the Civil War. The first priest joined the Navy Chaplain Corps in the 1880's.
Jews exemplified another minority which fought for representation in the chaplaincy. The history of Jews in America involved an early and steadfast embracing of democratic principles and ideals. The first Jewish settlers came to America in 1654 arriving in the Dutch outpost of New Amsterdam. These pioneers fled the Dutch-controlled northern Brazil settlement of Recife, which had been retaken in battle by the Portuguese. Part of their motivation in fleeing included avoiding the Inquisition's sphere of authority in the New World. These Jewish refugees quickly began to assimilate into the larger colony. When they arrived the Dutch Governor, Peter Stuyvesant, sent a petition to his employers the Dutch West India Company requesting that the Jews be expelled. The Jewish group sent an opposing petition which suggested that they be considered as natural allies of the Dutch. The Jews and Dutch considered the Spain and Portugal as enemies. They also reminded the directors of the Dutch West India Company that, "Many of the Jewish nation are the principal shareholders of the Company." Their petition to remain was granted.

This process of sending petitions to the main company in Holland became the vehicle for many of the rights which the Jewish settlers achieved. These rights included the rights of burghership and the freedom to worship and built a

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synagogue. One of the rights denied and then won involved the defense of the colony. In August of 1655, the refugees were denied the right to be part of the colony’s home militia and made to pay a special tax in place of this service. Jewish leaders argued with the local council that they had the right and the responsibility to help protect their homes. As in previous instances, with the approval of the Dutch-based company, these Dutch-Jewish refugees received the right of self defense.

In colonial America Jews of Sephardic (Spanish) and Ashkenazi (Central and Eastern Europe) traditions built synagogues, cemeteries and businesses throughout the colonies. Most of these Jews avidly supported the Revolution. The Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights symbolized ideals which had been historically denied to Jews. America allowed a Jew to practice his religion and be a loyal citizen without contradiction. Most Jews acted as other patriots and supported the revolutionary cause in various economic and political ways. Approximately one hundred Jews enlisted in Washington’s Army, half of them as officers.

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30 Ibid., 14.


Jewish feelings for the new American Republic included congregational greetings which George Washington received upon his election to the Presidency. In August of 1790, after visiting Newport, Rhode Island and receiving the support and felicitations of various religious groups the President responded to a Jewish synagogue with special greetings and hopes:

All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more than toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights...May the children of the stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land...sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. 33

These themes of liberty and constitutional guarantees of religious freedom became an integral part of early America.

In 1779, Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill which established religious freedoms for all Virginians. Passed into law in 1785, this law became the paradigm for most other states. 34 A few states such as Maryland instituted laws which required an allegiance to Christianity as a requirement for public office. Jews and their supporters argued against the unfairness and illegality of the law. By

33 Karp, A History of Jews in America, 23.

1825 this law was amended to allow for other denominations to pledge their allegiance to the state.\textsuperscript{35}

During the early decades of the National period Jewish-Germans emigrated along with Gentile Germans, Irish and other ethnic groups. Many Jews came to America due to political and civic discrimination which they experienced first hand in Germany. The aborted revolution of 1848 also created societal uncertainties for Jews. For many, America beckoned as a land of possibility: "Our goal must, therefore, be emigration, the founding of a new fatherland, the immediate achievement of freedom...Let us go to America."\textsuperscript{36}

During the waves of emigration of the 1840's and the 1850's most of the arriving Jews came without savings. Many engaged in the profession of petty-tradesman carrying goods on their backs throughout the small towns and rural districts across America. Over time, this type of work often led to owning a small store in a newly developing area in the heartland of America and becoming financially secure.

On a communal level, German Jews formed their own social groups and clubs. The Independent Order of the B'nai Brith represented the largest of these organizations.

\textsuperscript{35}Joseph L. Blau and Salo W. Baron, The Jews of the United States 1790-1840 A Documentary History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 33. This study recognized that Jewish and non-Jewish legislators were intimately involved in the resolution of this issue.

\textsuperscript{36}Sachar, Modern Jewish History, 183.
Patterned after the Masons, the B’nai Brith lodges created secret passwords, guards, initiations and special titles for the group’s leaders. Affiliation with a B’nai Brith lodge became a coveted social distinction for German-American Jews. Membership in these clubs exceeded the number of people who belonged to synagogues.\(^{37}\)

Many of these German-Jews came to America as advocates of the Scientific-Historical approach to Judaism as symbolized by the Reform movement. The leaders of this approach made many changes to the traditional Jewish service including: prayers in the vernacular, deletion of references to a Jewish homeland in Israel and the use of an organ.\(^{38}\) The Reform Movement readily adapted itself within the American religious milieu of the day. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who came to America as a newly ordained rabbi in 1846, represented the goals of the American reformers. Wise developed liturgical innovations based on the American experience. Wise wrote his own prayer book, titled, "Minhag America", (The American Rite) which reflected a clear preference for American standards of prayer and decorum. This book shortened the service used many English

\(^{37}\)Ibid., 193.

\(^{38}\)Sachar, Modern Jewish History, 169. This Scientific-Historical philosophy embraced the notion that religions had to change with the times and reflect modernity. Old customs and rituals, to be determined by the rabbis, needed to be up-dated in conformity with societal norms and behavior.
translations of Hebrew prayers and allowed for organs to be played.

Many German Jews by the onset of the Civil War enjoyed success and comfort in their American surroundings. They opposed attempts to convert them and for the most part did not intermarry. They fought, as in the instance of the "Jew Bill" in Maryland, against moves to limit their participation in society. The Jews of America were free, perhaps freer than Jews had been for centuries. America with her never-ending frontiers, offered innumerable economic and religious opportunities.

As part of the process of Americanization, Jews in the North and South fulfilled their patriotic duties in the Civil War. Up to this time, no rabbi had served as a Jewish military chaplain. However, with over 150,000 Jews in America and thousands volunteering for military service with both armies, this changed. In the spirit of the ancient Biblical leaders, Jews in service wanted the blessings of their Holy men as they entered into battle.

39Ibid., 200.
CHAPTER II

THE FIRST MILITARY RABBIS: FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY

One of the crucial elements of the Civil War involved the role and purpose of religion. The prevailing religious ideologies of the North and South performed significant functions in the conduct of the war. Within the armed forces, the prevalence or lack of clerics represented a major military factor. In the context of the war and in the midst of the military chaplaincy came the first rabbis in uniform. These rabbis entered service only after an intensive campaign had been waged to alter a legal provision which prohibited them from service.

Gardiner H. Shattuck has suggested that religious beliefs in the North and South contributed to the ultimate Union victory. In Northern churches spiritual leaders actively involved themselves in the war. Many believed that their role involved the reforming of society toward a greater good. Their philosophy indicated an activist clergy. This belief in the righteousness of their cause was reflected in the increasing number of revivals in Union
forces as it became more apparent that the North would prevail in the conflict.¹

In the south, religious ideology focused more on the moral development of the individual. Most churches made a clear distinction between religious and secular matters. The war, according to this approach, represented a secular endeavor. This attitude, particularly when contrasted with activist Northern clergymen who felt that their task included changing society, was striking. According to Shattuck, religion in the South undermined the Confederate war effort.² Southerners believed in their cause, but with much less religious certainty about God's role in the war.

Two major Northern church organizations revealed the contributions and material assistance of religious groups. The United States Christian Commission and the United States Sanitary Commission made substantial contributions to the Union war efforts. Founded in June of 1861, the United States Sanitary Commission perceived its primary mission to assist the Medical Bureau in the care of troops. As fighting grew more intensive this organization worked closely with medical and nursing army units. Over two hundred salaried employees distributed foodstuffs, blankets,

²Ibid., 9.
articles of clothing and other items for the welfare of the troops. Other funds paid the staffing of hospital boats and maintaining accurate data concerning medical issues. The Commission spent over twenty-five million dollars.³

The United States Christian Commission began in the fall of 1861. The New York, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) called for a national meeting of all Protestant Evangelical organizations to coordinate their war efforts. These meetings produced the Christian Commission. The Board members of this new commission perceived their work as being Holy. They strived to bring an activist Protestant ministry to the soldiers of the Union forces.⁴

Toward the achieving of this goal, thousands of volunteers assisted Army chaplains with their daily ministrations to the troops. One of the main tasks of this group included the providing of religious literature for the soldiers. Additionally, the Commission developed lending libraries that distributed tracts, Bibles, books and other reading material. The Christian Commission raised millions of dollars for their work and enjoyed thousands of volunteers who shared their vision of ministry to the armed forces.⁵ As the war progressed many of the Christian

³Norton, Struggling for Recognition, 124.

⁴Shattuck, Jr., The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies, 26.

Commission members began serving along with Sanitary Commission workers as nurses working with the wounded. Both of these organizations significantly enhanced the morale and spiritual welfare of the Union forces.

While these Commissions performed an important function in the religious welfare of the troops, Military Chaplains lived and prayed with them on a daily basis. Chaplains came into the military with the hundreds of thousands of state militia who volunteered for service with the North. While many of these state militia entered into the federal Volunteer Army with clergy, a sizeable number did not. President Lincoln and his military advisors desired that spiritual mentors be made available to as many troops as possible.6

General Orders numbers Fifteen and Sixteen issued by the War Department in 1861 reflected this desire for military clergy. Both Orders concerned the military integration of the state militia into the larger Federal army. These Orders authorized local regimental commanders who did not have a minister to appoint one. Officers of the various regiments selected and interviewed potential clerics. The only formal criteria concerning the preacher

6Shattuck, Jr., The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies, 16-18. Some mainline Christian Churches preached that the War purified the country for greater deeds in the future. The intensive battles represented a sort of national spiritual cleansing. Other ministers, suggested that the deaths of Northern troops equaled Christ’s death on the Cross. Such powerful images certainly motivated troops.
included that he be approved by the particular state governor and be an ordained minister of some Christian denomination.

Congress debated these General Orders as part of a larger discussion on war-related issues. In this discussion, Representative Clement Vallandigham of Ohio moved to amend the provisions of the Orders regarding the chaplaincy requirements. His amendment proposed that rabbis be added to the law so that they could serve as well. As Bertram Korn notes, Vallandigham's assertions came on his own initiative: "Without any Jewish prompting, he spoke out clearly in defense of Jewish rights." The Congressman based his comments on the assertion that this Order implied that the country was a Christian one, which had not been the intention of the founding fathers. The Ohioan's amendment did not engender much debate, nor did it pass. The bill became law in its original form.


8 The Confederacy did not have this legal inequity. Its chaplaincy regulations required that individuals had to be clergymen, without any reference to a specific denomination. Joel H. Silbey, A Respectable Minority (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1977), 102., recounts that one of Vallandigham's principles and often stated opinions concerned the absolute sovereignty of the Constitution and the liberties it expressed. "I am for the Constitution first, and at all hazards; for whatever can now be saved of preservation of either." His call for rabbinic participation in the chaplaincy reflected this philosophy.
For many Northern clergy the military chaplaincy represented a new area of ministry which simultaneously offered great negative and positive opportunities. The negative experiences developed partially as a result of the way in which clergy became integrated into the military structure. In the initial General Orders submitted to Congress concerning the creation of a federal army two sentences referred to chaplains:

There will be allowed to each regiment one chaplain, who will be appointed by the regimental commander on the vote of the field officers. The chaplain so appointed must be a regularly ordained minister of some Christian denomination, and will receive the pay and allowances of captain of cavalry.9

These brief sentences did not address the job responsibilities or requirements for the spiritual leader. Other significant military details omitted included: the rank, insignia, uniform and official place in the military organizational structure for chaplains.10

On the issue of rank, clearly important in a military environment, governmental authorities offered contradictory regulations. General Order number 44, directed that


10Shattuck notes that pay concerns caused difficulties for chaplains. The law referring to pay for military clerics read, "One hundred dollars and two rations a day when on duty." While the "on duty", modified the two rations, some pay clerks interpreted these words to signify that the clergyman had to be physically present. If he was on leave, hospitalized from a wound or even captured his pay might be withheld. Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., The Religious Life of Civil War Armies, 53.
chaplains be mustered "in the same manner as non-commissioned officers." Later orders recommended that the chaplain be carried in the official muster before the surgeons, who had the rank of majors.\textsuperscript{11} This lack of a standardized place in the chain of authority did not allow for an easy integration into the military system.

In the early months of the war numerous reports surfaced of dissatisfaction with military padres. Part of this negative reaction occurred because many soldiers did not favor having a religious person in a setting where drinking and profanity prevailed. Also, many of the ministers in the military did not possess the highest moral standards and training. The chaplaincy attracted a number of itinerant and unemployed clergy lured by the steady pay which the military offered. The sole legal requirement for the armed forces pastor involved any type of ordination. This criterion allowed any individual, who received a calling to preach from the smallest of churches, to enter the military. Often, as the regiment moved from a training

\textsuperscript{11}Quimby, "The Chaplain's Predicament," 27. Michael J. Winey, "Clergy in Uniform," \textit{Military Images Magazine} 4 (May-June 1983): 3. Winey details articles found in the Army-Navy Journal(1864-1865). These commentaries centered on the feelings of chaplains about the lack of a clear military rank. Many, felt that their status was negatively affected by the uncertainty of their military standing. Others, assumed that their rank equalled that of a captain, as that paralleled their pay.
to a battle phase of operations, many of these initial ill-trained ministers quickly resigned their commissions.\textsuperscript{12}

By July of 1862, the government became involved in this issue. It required that future chaplain candidates could not enter the armed forces without special authority from the War Department. This authority required the potential padre to have letters of recommendations from some ecclesiastical organization or five letters of reference from accredited ministers. A new requirement for Generals included the evaluation of all the chaplains in their commands to determine, "fitness, efficiency and qualifications of chaplains."\textsuperscript{13} This procedure caused some pastors not compatible with the military life to be separated from service.

While the chaplaincy became more effective in the North, in the South it never developed into a highly organized element of the armed forces. In fact, in its initial planning for a military structure, the Confederacy deliberately excluded any mention of an armed forces clergy. A number of factors affected this decision. First,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{12}Norton, Struggling for Recognition, 85. Due to a lack of standardized qualifications regarding educational or ecclesiastical recommendations almost anyone who called himself a minister was eligible to serve in the military. "A Veteran of the Army of the Potomac registered the opinion that at least 75 per cent of the chaplains commissioned during the first year were practically unfit for their work."
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{13}Rollin W. Quimby, Civil War History, 29.
\end{quote}
prominent Southern leaders such as Jefferson Davis and Secretary of War James Seddon thought that ministers functioned better in civilian settings. Second, many southerners believed that the individual churches or denominations held the responsibility of providing for the religious needs of the Southern soldiers. Third, a fundamental principle of Confederate society included decentralized authority. These factors precluded an organized military clergy.¹⁴

After a few months without a military clergy the Confederate Congress, reacting to the protest of some civilian ministers, authorized Jefferson Davis to assign as many chaplains as he deemed necessary to military regiments. These spiritual leaders earned eighty-five dollars per month. Initially, this relatively high pay attracted all types of people into the chaplaincy. Some clerics entered the military for an easy life with good pay. The Confederate Congress decided to initiate a pay-cut. The Congress reasoned that only religiously minded clergy, not those solely motivated by financial considerations, would stay and work for lower pay. Afflicted by the miseries of war and a drop in pay, many of the early chaplains resigned their positions.

¹⁴Shattuck, Jr., The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies, 64.
The lack of community and church backing, in addition to uncertain government support, created an unusual circumstance. By the spring of 1862, more than half of the southern regiments lacked chaplains. In spite of the lack of institutional support some individual clerics developed outstanding ministries among Confederate units. In 1862, some religious publications reported favorably about these men and their programs.\textsuperscript{15}

In the North spiritual leaders for the armed forces became an integral part of the military institution. As regimental clerics they performed a number of functions. The primary function involved the organizing and conducting of Divine Services. This occurred in a variety of circumstances depending on the military situation of the regiment. Often, the theme of the preaching offered at services, focussed on the idea that loyalty to the Union cause equated with service to God. These ministers in uniform, ever aware of the reality of death in battle, crafted their sermons to address the fears of the troops.

\textsuperscript{15}Norton, \textit{Struggling for Recognition}, 140. Kevin Dougherty, "The Impact of Religion on General Stonewall Jackson," \textit{Military Chaplains Review} (Spring 1990): 61-65. Dougherty suggested that military Generals, such as Stonewall Jackson, practiced religion zealously. Jackson's strict interpretation of the Bible forbade him from fighting on the Sabbath. When circumstances forced him into battle, this caused Jackson great personal distress. Clearly, a chaplain operating in this type of environment, received full support for all of his religious and logistical needs.
Another element of a military chaplaincy included pastoral counseling. Clergy in uniform listened to the pain and problems of soldiers from the most junior man to the senior General. Three areas frequently addressed in counseling involved drunkenness, gambling and profanity. Most ministers felt that these traits impacted negatively on the spiritual and military life of a soldier. Troops not under the effects of alcohol, or worried about their pay, fought more efficiently. Occasionally, military pastors volunteered to be the personal bankers of the troops. They carried thousands of dollars to bring back to the home towns and families of the men in their regiment.

Other roles performed by the religious leaders included being the educational officer for their illiterate troops. Chaplains spent much time writing letters home for wounded or dying soldiers. Some clergy assisted in field hospitals, gathering the wounded and helping with their medical care.\textsuperscript{16}

As the war intensified, the number of casualties and wounded quickly grew to very high levels. The Medical Bureau was barely able to keep up with these casualties and meet their needs. Permanent military hospitals began replacing field hospitals which provided basic initial care for the wounded. Diseases such as measles, typhoid and malaria took their toll on the troops as well. In the midst

\textsuperscript{16}Norton, \textit{Struggling for Recognition}, 105.
of so much pain and suffering, the spiritual needs of the sick and dying went unfulfilled.

Men dying from their wounds without the benefits of final prayers outraged many clergy and citizens. Washington area ministers sent petitions to President Lincoln asking that military pastors be provided to these hospitals. While the President agreed with this recommendation he was legally unable to appoint religious mentors to serve in military hospitals. The law providing for military chaplains allowed for regimental clergy only. Lincoln chose to maneuver around this obstacle. He invited civilian clergy from the Washington area to act as voluntary hospital healers. He surmised that a succeeding Congress would resolve the issue.

By July of 1862, Congress passed legislation that allowed for the appointments of chaplains for permanent military hospitals. These clergy, paid slightly more than regimental chaplains, came under the supervision of the Surgeon General of the Army. During the war over 500 clergymen served at military hospitals sites. Many preachers considered the position of a hospital cleric to be desirable. These spiritual healers stayed in one permanent location. This allowed them to move their families to areas close to the hospital. Even though life in a hospital involved pain, suffering and disease it was easier than living in a regimental setting where combat occurred regularly.
An Army Chaplains Manual for new chaplains, written by Reverend J. Pinkney Hammond in 1863, exemplified the professionalism of these clerics. Reverend Hammond was a hospital chaplain and the brother of the Surgeon General. This manual covered, in a detailed and sophisticated manner, the daily responsibilities of the chaplain and some aspects of theology. The guidebook suggested that writing sick soldiers correspondence and mailing it occupied a good part of their day. Other obligations included ministering to the soldiers in a pastoral manner, maintaining of a library and preparing of types of recreational activities which soldiers could do in a hospital to speed their healing. Even if a portion of the pastoral guidance in this manual took place, then a considerable amount of spiritual care of the wounded and their families occurred. 17

As the war intensified, Jews and other minority groups naturally desired to fulfill their appropriate part in the conflict. Jews in the North and South, for the most part, gave their allegiances to the areas in which they resided. The total numbers of Jews in the country numbered around

17 A second military manual for military clerics was written in 1863. Entitled The Army Chaplain by the Reverend W.Y. Brown, this book gave a detailed view of the responsibilities of the regimental as well as the Hospital chaplains and their work. These books symbolize the organization and trust placed with the spiritual leaders of the Northern armed forces.
150,000, of that number, approximately 6,500 served with Union forces while 2,000 joined Confederate forces.\textsuperscript{18}

Some regiments, formed in the North, came from predominantly Jewish neighborhoods. One such combat unit from the Philadelphia area, the 65th regiment of the Fifth Pennsylvania Cavalry, chose a Jewish officer, Mr. Michael Allen, as their spiritual leader. Allen, a native Philadelphian, took this position with a strong educational and Judaica background. He had studied for the rabbinate as a student of Reverend Isaac Lesser a prominent American Jewish preacher.\textsuperscript{19} Local synagogues knew of Allen for his musical abilities as well as his leadership in Jewish communal affairs. Although this choice appeared logical, the law did not allow it.\textsuperscript{20}

When he functioned as the regimental chaplain, as Bertram Korn notes, Allen’s sermons considered the faiths and backgrounds of all his men, "Theologically, his sermons

\textsuperscript{18}Mel Young, Where they Lie (New York: University Press of America, 1991), 15.

\textsuperscript{19}Sacher, Modern Jewish History, 194. Most of the religious leadership in the American-Jewish community in the first half of the 19th century did not come from rabbis but from well educated lay leaders. Isaac Lesser, a highly educated bookkeeper, became at the age of twenty-three, the spiritual leader of Mikveh-Israel, a prominent synagogue in Philadelphia.

\textsuperscript{20}Bertram W. Korn, "Jewish Chaplains During the Civil War," American Jewish Yearbook 4 (1952): 9. The law called for the chaplain to be an ordained clergy of some Christian denomination. Mr. Allen did not fulfill either the religious or theological requirements.
approached the various aspects of religion; immortality, ethics, faith from a common Judeo-Christian Background."  

He gave English lessons to the many new Americans in his regiment and functioned as an able lay-chaplain for all the troops.  

In September of 1861, in response to reports of unworthy and ill-prepared clergy acting as military chaplains, the Young Men's Christian Association visited and evaluated various regimental camps. Their representative came to the 65th regiment and discovered Allen, a non-Christian and a non-ordained lay person, functioning as the unit's spiritual leader. This information, put into a YMCA report, generated a public outcry.

Within a few weeks Allen resigned his commission from the regiment. In his resignation he cited health concerns. Clearly, the attention and notoriety of this case motivated

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21 Bertram W. Korn American Jewish Yearbook, 9. In addition to conducting Jewish services he held interfaith services as well.

22 Throughout most of the wars of this country lay chaplains have functioned. These educated men have acted as lay ministers in the absence of ordained clergy. In some cases, their lack of ordination and enlisted status, made them more acceptable to the soldiers. A good amount of the religious work in the military is done by lay ministers. They receive endorsements from their denominations, as do chaplains, but their jobs are not that of chaplains. They function as lay clergy out of a sense of religiosity and sacrifice for their beliefs.

23 The controversy, focussed not only on the case of Michael Allen, but rather with a number of clergy who did not have the motivation or education to be a military chaplain. Nevertheless, the case of Mr. Allen was certainly a unique one.
him as well. The public discussion surrounding this incident became so widespread that the Assistant Adjutant General of the Army, George D. Ruggles, disseminated an official policy statement on the topic. This statement reiterated the requirements for a military chaplain, "Any person mustered into service as a chaplain, who is not a regularly ordained clergyman of a Christian denomination will be at once discharged without pay and allowance." 24

The 65th regiment decided to create a test case of the legal requirements for a military chaplain. In the instance of Mr. Allen, his argument to remain a chaplain did not have credibility as he was not an ordained cleric. The regiment contacted Rabbi Arnold Fischel, and requested that he become the regiment’s new chaplain designate. Fischel, a New York city cleric, immediately accepted the regiment’s invitation. He seemed to be an ideal candidate for the position. In addition to his work as a civilian clergyman, Rabbi Fischel served as a member of the Board of Delegates of the American Israelites. 25

24Bertram W. Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War (New York: Atheneum, 1951), 58.

25Founded in 1859, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites modeled itself on the British Board of Deputies, a Jewish communal organization. Twenty-five congregations comprised the Board whose purpose involved the fighting for Jewish civil and religious rights in America and abroad. This organization took stands for the admission of rabbis into the chaplaincy and against General Grant’s Order Number 11. In 1878, the Board merged with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform Movement). Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem: 1974), 1149.
Despite his prominence in the Jewish and secular communities Simon Cameron, the Secretary of War, rejected Rabbi Fischel's application to become a military clergy. The basis for the denial revolved around the chaplaincy provisions which clearly called for clergy, "of some Christian denomination." Ironically, the letter of rejection directly affected the regiment which bore his name, The Cameron Dragoons.

The Jewish community responded immediately to Rabbi Fischel's rejection for the chaplaincy. It decided that the law must be changed. The process employed to achieve this goal involved sophisticated and deliberate methods. The three facets utilized to alter the existing military clergy law included: comprehensive publicity, petition campaigns and lobbying efforts.

As might be expected, Jewish periodicals reported on this issue extensively. The father and son editorial team of Samuel and Myer Isaacs wrote for the Jewish Messenger about the dynamics of this topic. They suggested that the chaplaincy provision recognized Christianity as the dominant American religion. Non-Christian faiths did not receive this acknowledgment. The Myers called on the Jewish community to clamor for a change in the law. They averred that equal treatment under the law comprised the pre-eminent issue in this case.26 They further proposed that all

26 Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, 64.
minority religious groups should have the opportunity to be represented in the armed forces. In the midst of a war, the Jewish community actively pursued what their ancestors had asked of Peter Stuyvesant, equal chances to serve their country.

Support for this activist approach came from the secular press. Metropolitan newspapers from New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore offered editorials favoring the constitutionality of Jews having equal representation under the chaplaincy provision. The editor of the *Baltimore Clipper* reminded his readers that Congress itself had a rabbi open a legislative session with prayer. The editor asked, "How was it that the same body could deny Jewish soldiers the right to share the prayers of that same clergyman."27 Opposition surfaced from some Christian groups. Publications, such as the *Presbyter*, opposed the notion that non-Christians might be considered for the chaplaincy. Their concerns extended to, "Jewish rabbis, Mormon debauchees, Chinese priests and Indian conjurors."28

The second element of the campaign to alter the chaplaincy law involved the initiation of memorials or petitions to Congress and the President.29 Petitions came

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 65. It is significant to note that this whole process took place against the backdrop of a country in the initial stages of war. Some prominent community leaders
from individuals while others represented hundreds of people. The typical memorial mentioned the inadequacy of the existing law and then argued that under the constitution all religions should receive equal consideration. The petition then directly referred to the war:

> While many who profess our religion are fighting the battles of our country, exposed to all the hazards of war, the authorities are precluded from appointing even one chaplain who might from his position be enabled to afford religious consolation to such Israelites as may be dangerously wounded or found in a dying condition on the field of battle, or lying in the hospitals.\(^30\)

Though Jewish communities generated a number of the petitions, many more came from towns and cities across America, representing various faith traditions.

In addition to the extensive publicity associated with this issue and the petitions generated, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites formulated a third approach. The Board requested that Rabbi Fischel personally lobby members of Congress as well as the President to modify the chaplaincy law. In December 1861, Fischel met briefly

\[\text{such as Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise strongly supported the Petition drive. "Wherever Israelites live draw up a petition to abolish that unconstitutional law, have it signed by every neighbor you find disposed to do so, and send it to your representative or senator in congress." This encouragement published in Wise's newspaper, The Israelite, further galvanized the Jewish and secular communities.}\]

\(^30\)"Petitions to the United States Senate Concerning Jewish Chaplains in the Army 1861-1862" Chaplaincy Collection, American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio. [Henceforth AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.]
with the President. Lincoln initially responded that the issue, although new to him, had merit. In a written response offered two days later, Lincoln mentioned that he contemplated some chaplaincy changes and the issue of rabbis would be considered in his overall proposals.  

The campaign to modify the chaplaincy regulation began in December of 1861. By the summer of 1862, the sense of the country became known. As a result of the publicity and petitions directed to Congress a clear consensus arose to amend the existing law. A proposal to modify the present law passed quickly through Congress. A new sentence added to the law explained that the word "Christian denomination," could be interpreted as any religious denomination. Under this new interpretation rabbis became eligible to serve as chaplains.

At this juncture, though the appointment of a rabbi in a predominantly Jewish regiment might have occurred, it did not.

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31 Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, 69.

32 Ibid., 74-75. Korn noted that in the spring months of 1862, before the chaplaincy law became amended, Rabbi Fischel, at the direction of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites undertook a mission with the armed forces. He visited military hospitals and sought out Jewish patients for prayer and counseling. A segment of the Jewish community did not support the Board of Delegates and did not financially assist Fischel with this unofficial ministry.

33 Congressmen did not want to go on record seemingly voting against Christianity. The addition to the existing law allowed them to rectify the cause of rabbis in the military without nullifying the original law.
The first rabbis to enter the military did so as hospital chaplains. As large military hospitals began to be built and staffed, as mentioned above, they needed spiritual healers. Two rabbis joined with hundreds of other clergy in this new area of ministry. The first rabbi, Jacob Frankel, was the fifty-four year old spiritual leader of Rodeph Shalom Congregation of Philadelphia. The Board of the Hebrew Congregations of Philadelphia nominated him to President Lincoln who appointed him as a hospital chaplain.

Frankel had a musical background and spent much of his time entertaining the sick and wounded troops. His position in the hospital involved a part-time ministry. In addition to his hospital work, he maintained his community synagogue well. For religious holidays, he arranged for the Jewish personnel to get furloughs so his patients could attend services in town. Local rabbis worked as volunteer chaplains at other hospitals and performed many of the same tasks as Frankel.

Bernhard Henry Gotthelf, from Louisville, Kentucky became the second rabbi appointed to the hospital ministry.

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It is unclear why a rabbi did not immediately apply for a regimental chaplaincy position. Perhaps by this time, the rigors and horrors of war had become apparent and caused individuals to be more reluctant in undertaking such responsibilities. Working as a hospital chaplain guaranteed a separation between the direct battle actions and a chaplain's well being.

Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, 77.
He received his appointment in May of 1863 and served throughout the war. One of his accomplishments included the initiating and maintaining of German language libraries in the various military hospitals. Jewish and non-Jewish patients, more comfortable with German, utilized these facilities. Gotthelf, as did Frankel, submitted monthly reports of his work to the Surgeon General. These reports gave brief accounts of which hospitals they visited and dealt with routine military matters.36

The third and final rabbi appointed as a military chaplain in the Civil War served as a regimental chaplain under somewhat unusual circumstances. Ferdinand Leopold Sarner arrived in America from Germany in 1859, as a thirty-nine year old rabbi with a doctorate in Philosophy, from the University of Hesse. After serving as a congregational rabbi for one year in Rochester, New York his next endeavors were unknown. In April of 1863, he became the chaplain of the 54th New York regiment, known as the Hiram Barney Rifles and the Schwarze Yaeger. This regiment consisted primarily of German speakers. Jews represented a small minority in this group. While the regiment saw military action Sarner's specific chaplaincy activities went unrecorded. In January of 1864 he was wounded at Gettysburg. The serious nature of

36Bernhard Gotthelf, "Monthly Reports by Gotthelf as Hospital Chaplain sent to Surgeon General," Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. A typical report noted that the chaplain had visited a certain hospital and ministered to the Jewish patients.
the injury generated a medical discharge from the service dated October 3, 1864.  

It is unclear whether Rabbi Sarner represented the first regimental Jewish cleric. Bertram Korn raised the issue of a rabbi serving as a chaplain in a non-Jewish regiment but did not satisfactorily resolve it. In April of 1863, Sarner presented his credentials to the Prussian Ambassador's Office. The papers did not reflect the nature of his ordination:

That the bearer, Rev. Dr. Ferdinand Sarner has presented the original documents of his theological studies at the Royal University of Berlin showing that he is a regularly ordained minister and was graduated Doctor of Divinity.  

It is possible that Sarner, seeking employment in a new country, took the opportunity to utilize his religious and linguistic skills and signed on as a general chaplain rather than specifically a rabbi in uniform. Alternatively, he may have served in the context of a liberal Jewish chaplain, much as Mr. Allen did, taking into account the various faith traditions in his regiment.  

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38 "Letter from Prussian Legation Testifying that Sarner has presented documents showing that he studied at University of Berlin and that he is an ordained minister and Doctor of Divinity," Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.

39 Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, 87.
Evidence exists of civilian rabbis who fulfilled their patriotic responsibilities as well. One rabbi, Max del Banco of the Reform Congregation of Evansville, Indiana died in a steamboat explosion. He had conducted High Holiday services for the Union forces at Vicksburg in 1864. Others, such as Colonel Marcus Spiegel, a Jewish officer of an Ohio regiment, wrote letters home and spoke of meeting co-religionists and attending High Holiday services with them in Norfolk, Virginia in 1862.40

Regarding rabbis in the Confederacy, Bertram Korn maintained that no record exists of any formally appointed Jewish Chaplain.41 The service of Rev. Abraham D. Cohen, chaplain for the 46th Regular North Carolinas Infantry, represented an unusual case. Cohen born in England in 1822 functioned as the regiment’s Baptist chaplain. His letter of resignation dated December 20, 1862 kept his specific denomination undeterminable:

I have received an appointment from an association in Georgia to preach to the soldiers in Savannah...Under

40Frank Byrne and Jean Powers Soman editors, Your True Marcus (Kent State: Kent State University Press, 1985), 163.

41Dr. Louis Ginsburg, a Jewish scholar, wrote to the American Jewish Archives that he possessed anecdotal evidence that a Reverend Uriah Feibelman had served as a Jewish chaplain with Confederate forces. No primary or secondary documents supported this assertion. Dr. Jacob Marcus, Founder of the American Jewish Archives, suggested that perhaps Feibelman, as did other Jews, fulfilled their regular military assignments and then functioned as Lay-leaders on a regular basis. Given the relatively disorganized Confederate chaplaincy this suggestion seems the most likely one.
the circumstances I think I could be more useful to the cause of God and our country in this proffered position than the one I now occupy.42

Cohen may have been a Baptist with a Jewish name or a new convert to the Baptist religion. Perhaps he followed the path of Reverend Sarner in the North and took a chaplaincy position based on his religious training and economic needs.

In addition to having Jewish chaplains in the military structure, albeit in a very modest number, other minorities came into national service as a direct result of the war and composition of the armed forces. Catholics represented one of these groups. By the time of the war, Catholic immigrants from Ireland and German represented a sizeable minority in Northern and Southern areas. Many of these new citizens fulfilled their patriotic duty by entering the military. In most cases, these soldiers did not have access to a military priest.

Archbishop John Ireland, who served as a chaplain with the Fifth Minnesota Infantry Regiment, wrote in a 1892 letter that the Catholic Church in America had neglected its soldiers.

Numberless thousands of Catholics scattered through the army never saw a priest during the war. No one was near them at the moment of death. Provision should have been made to have a priest attached to each division.43


43 Smith, Military Ordinariate, 71.
Approximately forty priests served with the Union forces. Some of them, however, served with a regiment for brief periods of time and returned to their home parishes. The Confederacy utilized a similar number of Catholic priests. Protestants represented the large majority of their chaplains; a small number, twenty eight, ministered to Catholic troops.

This limited number of ordained priests received assistance from civilian clergy. Throughout the war, many parish priests made themselves available to meet, as best as possible, the religious needs of Catholic troops. These priests administered the sacraments to the soldiers on a regular basis.\(^4\) Some priests tenaciously followed the troops from location to location offering their care. Father Paul E. Gillen persisted in his ministry to such an extent, that he eventually became the chaplain of the 170th New York Infantry.\(^5\)

Another Catholic concern generated by the war dealt with ecclesiastical requirements. Once priests left their

\(^4\)This approach has its advantages. Civilian clergy were not under any of the military rules and regulations, and if allowed on the base, interacted directly with the troops. The disadvantage to this ministry became apparent when troops received assignments to other areas preventing any long term religious care. In modern times, many religious groups have a special ministry devoted to the military people. They will build churches near military bases and send clergy to work primarily with military people.

\(^5\)Germain, *Catholic Military and Naval Chaplains*, 49.
home diocese they requested approval from the Bishop of any new diocese for religious authority. The war obviously made this issue difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. In August of 1861, in response to a letter from Archbishop Francis Kenrick of Baltimore, the Holy See, Pope Pius IX, decreed that military chaplains kept their religious faculties regardless of location.46 Bishops in the North and South followed this ruling.

Other liturgical issues arose for Catholic pastors. Military priests received approval to wear civilian clothes or army uniforms in place of their clerical garb. Mass could be offered in a variety of places and in a number of differing situations. During the Civil War, no organized group or structure existed to coordinate the activities of the priests.

African Americans represented another minority culture brought into the military. After the Emancipation Proclamation, various states, to meet their quota of troops, began to recruit black regiments. By the conclusion of the war, over 180,000 African Americans served in the Union army.47 The Army designated these troops as, "The United

46Smith, Military Ordinariate, 75.

47Edwin S. Redley, "Black Chaplains In the Union Army," Civil War History 33 (December 1987): 331-335. The issue of black officers was a difficult one for the War Department. It believed that most troops would not follow the orders of a black officer. However, having a black chaplain for black soldiers did not represent such a major risk.
States Colored Troops." While white chaplains ministered to most of these regiments black ministers served fourteen of them. Many of these clergymen became the chaplains of units which they helped recruit. Henry M. Turner, pastor of the Israel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., received his appointed by President Lincoln, in November of 1863, as the first black chaplain.

The work of the black chaplains paralleled other spiritual guides: preaching, counseling, educational activities and dealing with all the hardships and realities of war. Blacks, as the need arose, requested to be assigned to hospitals as chaplains. Black ministers concerned themselves with incidences of prejudice directed toward them and their men.

The inclusion of these minority faith and cultural groups within the military produced increased opportunities for religious cooperation and understanding. One's particular denomination or gender became less important in the face of imminent death or of bodily harm. Nevertheless, prejudices still existed.

General Grant's Order Number 11 best reflected the negative attitude toward Jews. As the war progressed, legal

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48 Herman Norton wrote of the case of Mrs. Ella Hobart, a minister from Saint Charles, Illinois. The First Wisconsin Regiment of Heavy Artillery elected her as their chaplain. Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, disapproved her application to be a cleric in the Union forces. He did not want to set any precedents regarding the chaplaincy.
and illegal commerce between Northern and Southern traders, occurred on a regular basis. During 1862, with the Union conquests in the Mississippi Valley, the pace and volume of such trades dramatically increased. Northern businesses needed raw cotton while salt, shoes, medicine and gunpowder remained in short supply in the Confederacy. These speculative markets created enormous profits for many. Generals Sherman and Grant attempted to terminate the illegal trade aspects with a series of proclamations and military enforcement. These efforts, were for the most part, unsuccessful and the trade continued.

Jewish traders and many others defied these military rules. In December of 1862, Grant issued an order specifically against Jews:

The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department.

Immediately, Jews living in the territory covered by Grant's order were forced into leaving their homes and businesses.

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49 James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 620. Legal traders took an oath of allegiance to the Union. Many took or ignored the oath and continued with a very speculative and profitable commerce, including high ranking officers of both sides. "Every colonel, captain, or quartermaster is in secret partnership with some operator in cotton; every soldier dreams of adding a bale of cotton to his monthly pay."

50 As McPherson notes, most of the traders were not Jewish. However, the word "Jew", became applied to all illegal traders.

Within days, Jewish representatives contacted the President and requested that the order be rescinded, Lincoln agreed. He found it inappropriate, especially since it designated a whole group of people, thousands of whom fought for the Union. The President directed that the order be canceled.

Grant's Order also reflected other instances of anti-Semitic sentiments expressed during the war. Korn indicates that Northern newspapers routinely used the term "Jew", or "German-Jew", when referring to any Jewish individuals accused of disloyalty. Similarly, prominent Southern leaders such as Judah P. Benjamin, a non-practicing Jew, received scorn due to their Jewish heritage. In all areas of the captured Confederacy, where illegal trade occurred, the "Jews" received blame as the primary agents of this process. One newspaper article about Jews concluded, "The people whose ancestors smuggled for eighteen centuries smuggle yet." 53

52 Once the Order had been rescinded it become a political rather than a moral issue. Grant never officially apologized for the Order and its contents. Republicans worked to protect General Grant and his reputation, while Democrats used the issue to sully the Republican administration. The thinking which produced the Order among Grant and his staff was never explored. Nor was the implication of the Order studied in depth.

53 Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War, 162. This attitude was evidenced with other Union Generals. Benjamin Butler felt that most of the Jews in his territory engaged in illegal trading and avidly supported the Confederacy.
The Confederacy reflected similar stereotypical views. Jews incurred blame for the numerous economic hardships that the war brought to the South. The Confederate Congress expressed anti-Jewish sentiments. Congressman Henry S. Foote of Tennessee declared, "Jews have flooded the country and control at least nine-tenths of the business of the land." An editorial in a Charleston, South Carolina newspaper denounced people who made illegal profits. It then suggested that Jews as a class should not be singled out as being the primary agents of this practice. The writing of such an editorial suggested that this belief was widely held.

These prejudices, expressed so openly and regularly, held enormous implications for subsequent Jewish history. John Higham suggested that such anti-Jewish incidents and prejudices be considered within the context of other wartime prejudices, such as the attacks against anti-war individuals and secessionists. Yet, he also described Grant's Order number 11 as, "An act that may stand as the

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54 Ibid., 178.

55 Mark I. Greenberg, "Ambivalent Relations: Acceptance and Anti-Semitism in Confederate Thomasville," American Jewish Archives 45 (Summer 1993): 13-25. Greenberg suggests that while anti-semitism existed in many small towns of the Confederacy, Jewish merchants, for the most part, withstood this prejudice and provided needed economic supplies to the townspeople who appreciated their Jewish neighbors.
principal nativistic incident of the war years." Naomi
Cohen avers that later nineteenth century American Jews
singled out the Civil War years as marking the onset of
serious anti-semitism in the United States.  

Overall, the situation of Jews in the Civil war period
was very positive. The entire Jewish community with the
substantial support of non-Jewish communities fought for the
constitutional privilege of equality under the law. The
rapidity of this change was especially significant when
viewed within the backdrop of a war. Within a brief period,
the Jewish community through the most democratic of means:
petitions, lobbying, and publicity changed the law of the
land. Jews and their rabbis participated in the direct
protection and perpetuation of the country and its freedoms.
This service allowed Jews to become more integrated into the
fabric of America.

56 John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New York:

57 Naomi Cohen, *Encounter With Emancipation*
(Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984), 149.
CHAPTER III
A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MILITARY

The five decades bridging the Civil War and the First World War saw a phenomenal growth in the interest that the Jewish community held for their co-religionists in the armed forces. A number of reasons explain this heightened attention: the growth and professionalism of the Army and Navy chaplaincies, an increase of anti-semitism in America, which contained the charge that Jews did not fulfill their patriotic responsibilities and the entrance into the military by a significant number of newly arriving Jewish immigrants whose spiritual needs had to be addressed. The development and maturation of the American-Jewish community and the work of civilian clergy with the armed forces also contributed to increased interest in military Jews. All of these factors laid the ground work for the creation of the National Jewish Welfare Board and for rabbis who served in the First World War.

With the conclusion of the Civil War a reduction in the size of the armed forces naturally included the chaplaincy. In the postbellum era the Army's responsibilities entailed: continuing the occupation of the Southern states, supervising the process of reconstruction and maintaining
law and order on the frontier.¹ Military clergy became involved in all these areas.

In the Reconstruction Army, clergy played a unique role. Their function, as noted in their sermons and religious discussions, emphasized the notion of healing and reconciliation. Two chaplains served as regimental ministers for black regiments serving in the south. Post Chaplain Mark L. Chevers of Fort Monroe offered pastoral care to Jefferson Davis during his imprisonment.

On the frontier, clergy carried out a number of varying tasks. In addition to the traditional clerical roles of conducting services, counseling and offering spiritual guidance Army clergy became proficient in other areas: post librarian, post gardener, manager of the commissary, post baker, post treasurer and, on occasion, a legal counsel for soldiers who needed such defense.² Frontier clergy became advocates for temperance. Many soldiers, in the midst of the frontier loneliness, abused alcohol. In some instances, Army ministers led their troops in signing pledges of


² Ibid., 44. Infrequently, depending on the circumstances, chaplains participated in fighting against Indians. More regularly they officiated at the funerals of troops and civilians killed in battles.
abstinence. They promised to refrain from all intoxicating liquid for a number of years.³

The Army determined that thirty-six military clergy met its spiritual needs. This number remained the same for decades. The denominational composition of the chaplaincy reflected a High-church Protestant dominance. Initially monopolized by Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists slowly joined its ranks. The policy of replacing chaplains who died or retired with members of the same denomination favored these mainline groups. Since many clerics considered this calling a viable and adventurous career, finding a relief occurred easily. The first appointment of a Catholic Priest occurred in 1872, and only a handful served until the time of the Spanish-American War.

During these Postbellum years every military cleric operated independently. No ecclesiastical or military corps existed with responsibility for the growth or professionalism of the Army clerics. While the Adjutant General of the Army handled official reports and military matters, little thought was given to the quality of a chaplain’s ministry. This resulted in a wide span of experiences with military ministers.

Some chaplains received poor evaluations from their fellow soldiers. Many officers portrayed them as being

³This problem is still very much a part of the reality of contemporary troops.
eager for good wages but not hard work. A letter from General Sherman in July of 1882, concerning the large number of potential military clerics illustrated this point:

I think that there are several hundred applicants now, each one more stronger in his faith than St. Paul, and most of whom before appointment are anxious to be martyrs...of course there are no vacancies now, and they are gobbled up as soon as the telegraph announces a death...there are no resignations--and so greedy are the applicants that they will not even wait for the funeral. 4

Despite this reputation most military ministers, blessed with good wages and little fighting, served for lengthy periods. During the last two decades of the 1800's the median length of service for military spiritual leaders averaged almost twenty years. 5

The chaplaincy for Navy clergy developed into different areas in the Postbellum decades. The Navy decided that twenty-four clerics could met its religious requirements. This figure included clergy involved in teaching at the Naval Academy and the Naval Yard in Washington, D.C. Others travelled with ships that circled the globe and visited exotic places. Compensation issues affected all the chaplains. Navy spiritual leaders did not receive the same compensation as surgeons or engineers. Chaplains at their

4Honeywell, Chaplains of the United States Army, 155.

5Drury, The History of the Chaplain Corps, 116. Also at this time, 1882, the newly ratified Geneva Convention recommended that chaplains be classified as non-combatants. During the Civil War chaplains captured in battle had been repatriated.
fifth year of service received one pay increase; after that, their compensation remained the same. This inequality occurred despite the fact that other service members collected substantial pay increments throughout their career. In 1879, a bill to rectify this situation passed the Senate but not the House and the pay of the Navy ministers remained unbalanced.

The Navy preachers also recognized the need for some institutional Chaplain Corps within the Navy. In November of 1878, a self-appointed committee of chaplains submitted to the Secretary of the Navy suggestions for a more efficient military clergy. These ideas included the creation of a Department of the Navy Chaplain Corps headed by a senior Navy cleric, a more stringent process for entering this unique ministry, including physical examinations, and a more structured schedule regarding assignments to ships.⁶ As with the Army, the large majority of these Navy ministers came from Episcopal and Methodist denominations. Over time, other religious groups took their place, albeit on a smaller scale, in the chaplaincy. The first Navy Catholic Chaplain came into service in April of 1888. Three more Catholic pastors

⁶Ibid., 111.
became commissioned in the nineteenth century. No rabbis served in the military until the First World War.  

The Spanish-American War focused new priorities on the military needs of the nation. In 1899, Elihu Root, the Secretary of War, initiated a series of changes to professionalize the Army. These reforms consisted of increasing the size of the regular Army, augmenting regular forces with reservists and establishing an educational system for the professional development of officers. A number of changes occurred within the chaplaincy. Standardized methods for screening and selecting potential chaplains were initiated. By 1909, a newly devised Board of Chaplains made recommendations to the War Department concerning spiritual issues.  

In 1910, church denominations began to take an interest in the number of Army and Navy chaplains. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and other religious groups started a petition campaign to raise the allotted number of chaplains. A typical petition pointed

7Despite the slow rate in which other religious denominations came to be represented in the chaplaincy, new military ministers were urged, in a 1893 manual written by an Army Chaplain, G.W. Simpson to be as broad-minded as possible, "He has members of all churches, peoples of all faiths, and representatives of all nationalities to deal with; both the officers and enlisted are of his flock. George W. Simpson, A Manual for U.S. Army Chaplains, 1893, United States Army Historical Institute, 12.

out that in 1842, the ratio of chaplains to enlisted personnel was 1:508, while in 1908, that ratio had risen to 1:2,251. This type of pressure, in addition to the enlarging of the military as the First World War approached, resulted in some innovative changes. Newly created infantry, cavalry and artillery units incorporated military ministers as part of their complement of officers. The number of available positions for chaplains doubled to sixty. By the summer of 1916, the number of chaplains authorized for new Army regiments rose to seventy-four. A similar process occurred within the Navy Department. By 1914, the number of Navy chaplains increased to forty.

This integration of clergy into the military structure became reflected by the uniforms which chaplains wore. For most of the 19th century, Army and Navy clerics wore clerical type clothing or a modified military uniform. By 1913, they dressed in full Officer uniforms. Chaplains began to be identified with a Latin Cross. The cross denoted military padres from 1899 and on, prior to that time a Shepherd's Crook represented the symbol of the armed forces ministers.

9 Drury, History of the Chaplain Corps, 139.
10 Honeywell, Chaplains of the United States Army, 168.
11 Drury, History of the Chaplain Corps, 146. Recently, the Army added a Muslim minister to its ranks. This chaplain wears a different insignia from his Christian and Jewish colleagues. In the future, a Buddhist religious leader, will require another insignia.
In the decades between the Civil War and the First World War, as military clergy became a more indispensable part of the armed forces, one ethnic group seemed to be becoming less integrated within the contemporary society. For Jews the anti-semitism symbolized by the war-time order of General Grant grew and evolved into other forms of anti-semitism. In June of 1877, Mr. Joseph Seligman a prominent American-Jew and his family, were denied admission into the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga, New York. The hotel owned by Judge Henry Hilton left little doubt as to its intentions, "Judge Hilton...has given instructions that no Israelites shall be permitted in the future to stop at this hotel."¹²

While this incident did not receive universal approval, some accepted it as a precedent to be emulated. Austin Corbin, the developer of Coney Island as a resort area, publicly supported Hilton's stance, "We do not like Jews as a class...they make themselves offensive to the kind of people who principally patronize our road and hotel."¹³ Others suffered from this type of intolerance as well.¹⁴


¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Higham, Strangers In The Land, 62. In 1887, the anti-Catholic organization, the American Protective Association came into existence. The goals of this group were direct and crass: Never vote for a Catholic, never go out on strike with one, or hire a Catholic when a Protestant was available.
One source for this additional form of anti-semitism originated with new immigrants coming to America and bringing anti-semitic ideas. The Jewish community did not understand the exact reasons or remedies for this pervasive prejudice. Sydney Ahlstrom suggests that the Jews took on the role of scapegoats for a variety of society’s ills:

City dwellers, peddlers, bankers, non-Protestants, non-Anglo-Saxons, anarchists, freethinkers...What is important after the 1880's is that the Jews are explicitly included in anti-foreign attacks, while previously this had rarely been the case. 15

The extent of the discrimination and its acceptance can be illustrated by the advertisements of some hotels and resorts, "No Dogs. No Jews. No consumptive." 16

The anti-semitism reflected by the resort owners took on a new mutation when the patriotism of Jews became an issue. In December of 1891, a letter to the editor of the North American Review alleged two very serious charges against American Jews:

I had served in the field for about 18 months...and was quite familiar with several regiments...I cannot

15Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, 854.

16Cohen, Encounter With Emancipation, 250-251. No clear consensus emerged as to the origin of this anti-semitism. Many Jews believed that it represented a continuation of the "traditional" stereotypical attitudes found in Europe. Others felt that Jewish success in America and acceptance into the middle-class created an environment of envy and brought about the prejudicial charges. Forty years passed before a 1913 New York law addressing this issue legally rectified the situation, "All Individuals are entitled to equal accommodations in resorts, taverns, restaurants and other places of recreation and amusement."
remember meeting one Jew in uniform or hearing of any Jewish soldier...I learned of no place where they stood shoulder to shoulder, except in General Sherman's department, and he promptly ordered them out of it for speculating in cotton and carrying information to the Confederates.\textsuperscript{17}

These biased comments on the lack of Jewish participation in the military received some credibility from academic sources.

In 1891, Mr. Goldwin Smith, an historian at Cornell University, averred that Jews functioned as a closed group within American society. Jewish tribalism, he claimed, was set forth in the Old Testament and the Jewish Law Codes (Talmud). This tribalism prevented Jews from being patriotic to the countries in which they lived. Smith also wrote that Jews believed themselves to be a superior people whose ultimate goal included the domination of the world's economy.\textsuperscript{18}

The anti-semitism against Jews in resorts and the question of Jewish loyalty also reflected itself in European

\textsuperscript{17}Simon Wolf, \textit{The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen} (New York: Brentanos, 1895), 1.

\textsuperscript{18}Cohen, \textit{Encounter With Emancipation}, 279-281. According to Cohen, this charge of Jewish non-patriotism was especially damaging for American Jews as it threatened to impede the cherished philosophical ties being developed between Americanism and Judaism. The charge of tribalism also meshed with some of the contemporary eugenic theories of racial superiority being promulgated. Organizations such as the American Jewish Historical Society developed in 1892, partially to counter the image of the alien Jew. To coincide with the Columbus Exposition, Meyer Kayserling wrote a history of the New World, highlighting Jewish involvement.
society as well. In Germany during the 1870's and 1880's, men such as Adolph Stocker promoted the idea of social anti-semitism. Restrictions on Jews began to appear in leading hotels, restaurants and resorts in Germany. Similarly, in France individuals such as Edouard Drumont perpetuated and increased anti-semitism. In his book, *La France Juive*, Drumont blamed Jews for all of France's misfortunes including liberalism and further maintained that every Protestant was a half-Jew. Undoubtedly, this attitude became evident in the series of incidents known as the Dreyfus Affair. Captain Alfred Dreyfus' false conviction and imprisonment were based, to a large extent, on his religion rather than on any evidence. Years later, as the whole trial became a national and world focus of discussion the level of anti-semitism increased:

As the trial proceeded, the anti-semitic diatribes of the Army officers and the royalist-Catholic press reached new levels of irresponsibility, including the warning that the Jews faced "mass extermination".

While Dreyfus ultimately received vindication, prejudice of Jewish non-patriotism and allegiance spread throughout much of the world.

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20 Ibid., 263.

21 Ibid., 267.

22 Jews participated very actively in the Austro-Hungarian Army. In 1896, out of 1,000 officers, 84 were Jewish. While the overall Jewish population in the society equalled five percent, the percentage of reserve officers
Mr. Simon Wolf, a prominent Jewish-American, chose to respond to these anti-patriotic charges. For most of his adult life he actively participated in secular and Jewish political organizations and causes. He advised a number of Presidents on foreign and domestic issues. They in turn, appointed him to a number of prestigious governmental positions. In 1895, he published a book listing by state and family name all the individuals which he authenticated as having been Jewish and served in the Civil War. Wolf, a political friend of President Grant and General Sherman, placed the blame for Grant's Order Number 11 on military subordinates. The publishing of Wolf's book offering facts and figures about Jewish involvement in the Armed Forces rekindled the Jewish community's interest with the military.

Other considerations also factored into the community's re-establishing relations and focus on the military. During the Civil War Jews fought for the right to serve their country. Now the reality of that service came into question. Having to disprove a negative became a difficult


Max J. Kohler, Selected Addresses and Papers of Simon Wolf (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1926), 1-20. Wolf, from 1860-1923, stayed actively involved in varying aspects of the Jewish community, from founding the Independent Order of the B'nai Brith to building Orphanages in Atlanta and Baltimore. He also spoke out against the mistreatment of Jews in Russia and became very involved in the anti-patriotic charges leveled against American Jews.
endeavor. Of the large numbers of Jews coming to America, some joined the armed forces. Also, as the Jewish community grew more sophisticated, it became increasingly aware of its obligations to Jews in the service.

As early as 1896, hardly one year after the publishing of Wolf's book, a new fraternal club formed. The group, organized in New York City, named itself the Hebrew Union Veterans Association of the Civil War. Membership in this organization focussed on former military members of the Jewish faith who had participated in the Civil War.²⁴

In May of 1898, in the midst of the Spanish-American War and a renewed focus on the military, Rabbi Leonard Levy was offered the position of chaplain with a brigade of Pennsylvania Volunteers. Before his congregation released him from his daily duties, fighting had ceased.²⁵

As a result of the renewed publicity about Jewish patriotism, and the presence of a growing number of Jews in the military, the organized Jewish community began expressing its concerns. In September 1898, Rabbi H.

²⁴Perspectives On Patriotism, Jewish War Veterans, Washington, D.C., 8. Seventy-eight Jewish Veterans of the Union Army came together in New York City to react to the prejudicial charges of non-military participation. At their opening meeting they pledged to maintain their allegiance to America and to combat the powers of bigotry. This group later changed its name to the Jewish War Veterans of America and is also the oldest Veterans group in the country.

²⁵"Letter from Rabbi Levy to Colonel C.M. Keegan thanking him for his offer to be the Chaplain for the Brigade of Volunteers for the State of Pennsylvania,"May 26, 1898, Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.
Pereira Mendes, the President of the Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union of America, sent a message to Major General Henry Corbin, the Adjutant General of the Army (the chief administrative officer for the War Department). This letter gave the dates of that year's High Holidays, which change annually, and mentioned the religious significance of these days. The communication concluded with the request that Jewish soldiers be granted leaves of absence in order to reach their homes for these holidays. A direct and clear response came within three days:

I have the honor to state...Furloughs will be granted to soldiers of your religious faith, making application therefor, to celebrate the holidays set forth and instructions will be given accordingly.\(^\text{26}\)

Other Jewish organizations became involved in this type of ministry.

In 1899, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations represented by Mr. Simon Wolf, sent a comparable request to the Adjutant General's office concerning the upcoming Passover holiday. This request included information about prayer services and special Passover food requirements. General Corbin, speaking for the Secretary of War, specified that not only would local Commanding Officers grant such holiday leave but also, "As well as allow them facilities

\(^{26}\)Rabbi H. Pereira Mendes. "Letter to Army Adjutant General regarding Jewish High Holidays. "War Department-Army Adjutant General's Office-Jewish Section, [Henceforth WD-AAGO-JS], National Archives, Washington D.C."
for partaking of such food as prescribed by the religion."27 This ruling allowed individual commanders to make localized decisions based on the unique circumstances of their command.28

This practice of informing the Adjutant General's office of the upcoming Jewish holidays by various organizations continued on an annual basis. Some of the communications raised very specific religious issues. In response to a letter from Dr. Mendes, the Adjutant General's office reflected a familiarity with the prohibition for Jews against eating leavened bread during Passover. The General offered his Department's assistance in an unusual endeavor. He agreed to transport unleavened bread from San Francisco to Manila in time for the Passover holiday.29

In addition to Jewish religious organizations reflecting concern for Jews in the military, Jewish newspapers became involved as well. In February of 1902, the publishers of the Jewish Daily News wrote to Elihu Root,


28This notion of local command decisions did not commit the military to a policy which would invite criticism from other faith groups about special treatment for Jewish soldiers. This practice is followed in our own time. Permission to observe Sabbath and holidays is still based on the needs of local commands and military circumstances.

29"Letter to Rabbi Dr. H. Pereira Mendes from Elihu Root, Secretary of War," February 27, 1901, WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
the Secretary of War. The letter mentioned the upcoming Passover holidays with the appropriate holiday food requirements. The editor expressed an unusual motivation for his letter:

We have been requested by a large number of enlisted men of the Jewish faith to write to you in their behalf and to tell you of their desire to be permitted to participate in the religious services in the eating of unleavened bread which is the feature of the Jewish Passover. This request received the same response as the others. The commanding officers could grant leaves of absence as needed for Jewish personnel.

The interest for Jewish members of the Army and Navy became expressed in the public arena as well. In January of 1904, New York City Congressman William Sulzer, a non-Jewish representative from the 54th District, requested that the War Department supply him with a count of Jews in the military and the number of chaplains and religious faiths in the chaplaincy. The Secretary of War replied that the Department had no means to ascertain the number of any faith group within the armed forces. Root also reported that of the fifty-seven chaplains serving, none were Jewish.


In May of that year, Congressman Henry Meyer Goldfogle from the 57th District in New York City, requested from the Adjutant General's office the number of Jewish personnel who requested leaves of absence to observe Passover and other religious holidays. The Army responded that they had no means of gathering such information. However, the Adjutant General informed his post commanders that they should become familiar with this issue in case such information might be requested in the future.\textsuperscript{32}

By August, President Theodore Roosevelt, through his executive secretary, became involved in the topic of leave for the holidays. A presidential note sent to the Secretary of War on August 29 read:

The President directs that the order of last year granting leave of absence to Jewish soldiers who desired to attend divine services be reissued this year.\textsuperscript{33}

The War Department's response from the military Chief of Staff advised the President that no General Order had been issued in the previous year. However, soldiers of the Jewish faith could request from their commanding officers permission to observe these days. In response to this information another presidential notice appeared. This one

\textsuperscript{32}"Memorandum from War Department to Request of Congressman Henry Goldfogle," May 20, 1904, WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington D.C.

\textsuperscript{33}"Memorandum for Army Chief of Staff responding to Presidential Note," September 02, 1904, WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington D.C.
directed that Commanding Officers permit Jewish soldiers to be absent for attendance at Holiday services. The note further requested that the Honorable Simon Wolf and the Reverend H. Mendes, both prominent members of the New York Jewish community, be appraised of the President's actions. The President's notices insured that Jewish personnel attended any and all holidays and observances.\textsuperscript{34} Annually, these messages became part of the military administrative process.\textsuperscript{35}

As the presence of Jews in the armed forces increased the question of rabbis in uniform meeting their religious needs once again surfaced. Despite the expansion of the Chaplain Corps, the practice of replacing a retired or deceased clergy with someone of the same denomination made entries by different groups very difficult. In December of 1908, a new Jewish fraternal association, the Federation of Jewish Organizations of New York State, addressed the question of rabbis serving as they did in the Civil War, as

\textsuperscript{34}A number of factors may have been involved in such a Presidential involvement. Acting upon a request from community leaders represented sound politics. However, this also may have been an increasingly important issue for military Jewish personnel. A growing Jewish military presence required that military commanders be familiar with the Jewish Holidays and special dietary needs. Also, individuals such as Wolf, used this subject to illustrate the growing number of military Jews to the President.

\textsuperscript{35}Military messages sent to bases around the world carried information about the holidays and special religious requirements.
military chaplains. The goals of the Federation included: "To promote the material, intellectual and moral welfare of Jews and to secure for Jews equal rights all over the world and to repel attacks against the Jew because he is a Jew."  

The group initiated two major resolutions. The first dealt with the Russian government's treatment of American Jews visiting and offering assistance to impoverished Jewish villages in the Pale of Settlement. The second concerned itself with the lack of and need for rabbis in the Armed Forces. A preamble to the resolution noted that the government maintained chaplains of various religious denominations to meet the religious needs of sailors and soldiers. Yet, at the present time, no rabbis served in the

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36 "Resolutions Adopted at Meeting of Federation of Jewish Organizations, State of New York," December 29, 1908, New York Public Library-Jewish Division, [Henceforth NYPL-JD], New York. The preamble for this association stated that it represented synagogues, Jewish lodges and clubs concerned with contemporary Jewish issues. According to Naomi Cohen, Encounters With Emancipation, 322-323; The group formed in 1906 and primarily focussed on the issues of free immigration and a fair distribution system, within the country, of these new citizens. Cohen felt that it was an active, vocal and effective organization, which did not hesitate to let Congress know its position on a topic and received appropriate recognition in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Others, such as Arthur Goren, in New York Jews and the Quest for Community (New York; Columbia University Press,1970), 41, felt that the group functioned as a lobby group with limited impact on the Jewish community. However, the responses by politicians to its requests, indicated that it did have some following and credibility.

37 Ibid., NYPL-JD, New York.
military. The resolution called for Jewish organizations to petition Congress, the President and the Secretaries of the War and Navy to establish a chaplaincy position, "For the religious comfort and well being of Jewish citizens enlisted in the Army and Navy of the United States." Various political leaders received this resolution. A number of Congressmen and Senators responded to the petition by agreeing with its premise and promising to follow the issue closely. Congressman William Sulzer informed the Federation that he had introduced a bill in Congress requesting additional Army chaplains, some of whom would be rabbis.

In a speech given to the same organization, in February of 1909, Congressman Sulzer elaborated on his bill creating additional military chaplaincy positions. His first point mentioned that a considerable number of Jews served in the military. While acknowledging that an accurate number of Jews did not exist he stated: "In war and in peace, on land and on sea, they (Jewish soldiers and sailors) do their duty faithfully, efficiently and courageously."

Sulzer,

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39"Address Given by Congressman William Sulzer to Meeting of Federation of Jewish Organizations, State of New York," February 14, 1909, NYPL-JD, New York. The custom of denominations filling vacant chaplaincy slots still prevailed. Also, the number of total military clergy positions was determined by law. New chaplaincy positions would be partially filled by rabbis.

40Ibid.
concluded that these Jewish personnel required rabbis to meet their religious needs. Upon being informed that no new chaplaincy positions existed, he proposed a bill creating additional chaplaincy appointments. Congressman Sulzer made clear his intentions:

This resolution of mine provides for three additional chaplains; They should all be Jews. Of course we cannot say that in the resolution. I have been trying to get it passed, but have not been able so far to do so.41

In fact, the bill for additional chaplains including rabbis did not become law for years. Nevertheless, broad-based Jewish interest in this topic clearly existed.42

The American-Jewish press reflected the community’s interest in the topic of Jews in the military. The American Israelite in October of 1908, featured a large picture on its front-page of Jewish soldiers from Fort Leavensworth, Kansas participating in that year’s Passover meal.43 This same paper in its February, 1910 edition carried a prominent

41Ibid.

42The War Department, in a March 1911, response to these resolutions contended that the number of Jews in the Army was small and scattered throughout many Posts. The Department suggested that a Jewish chaplain would not have an effective ministry. Not addressed was the notion of a "roving rabbi," travelling to the different bases and offering rabbinic coverage. The letter concluded, that a rabbi would be considered for recommendation as a chaplain, when a sufficient number of Jews entered military service. "Letter from War Department to Mr. Nissim Behar," March 31, 1911, WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

43The picture showed at least a hundred personnel involved in the Passover (Seder) meal. This picture gives another indication of the visibility and viability of the Jewish military population.
story on the career of Admiral Adolf Marix, a prominent Jewish Naval officer. The story also emphasized Jewish participation in the armed forces:

Many of the 5,000 Jewish soldiers and sailors who participated in the successful effort to liberate Cuba from Spanish control (thus refuting the ancient and often repeated libel that Jews will not fight for their country) have just celebrated their tenth reunion in New York.44

In June of 1911 The Hebrew Standard, a newspaper which represented the Orthodox community in New York City, editorialized about President Taft's disciplinary action against an Army officer who made disparaging remarks about Jews. The focus of the Anglo-Jewish newspapers revolved around two concerns. First, the prejudice that Jews did not serve had to be refuted. Second, the needs of the sizeable Jewish military population had to be met.45

By 1912, the efforts of the Jewish community on behalf of their co-religionists in the military and the need for rabbis in service intensified. In March, the Federation of Jewish Organizations created a new entity, the Patriotic League of America. The premise for this new group was simple. Christian chaplains and associated organizations, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, offered spiritual and religious assistance to their military members. Jewish personnel required a similar effort and

44American Israelite, February 10, 1910, 1.
45The Hebrew Standard, June 15, 1911, 2.
organization. This new group advocated lofty goals: "To encourage patriotism, help Jewish soldiers and sailors fulfill their religious obligations, bring together Jewish military communities with near-by civilian rabbis and help get jobs for discharged veterans." 

Within a short time, publicity about this new group spread throughout the country. In January of 1913, the Patriotic League issued appeals to rabbis. The appeals asked that rabbis open their synagogues and temples for Jewish military personnel for the upcoming Passover holiday observances:

If we cannot all of us take our part in the ranks of the Army, the Navy and the National Guard, let us at least do what we can in befriending those who are already in the service of the flag." 

The publicity generated much support. By the next year, a separate committee concerned with Passover observances for military personnel formed as a new group under the auspices of the Patriotic League.

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46 Edward Lauterbach, "Announcement of Founding of Patriotic League of America," March 11, 1912, NYPL-JD, New York. Within a few years, larger Jewish groups undertook such responsibilities. By creating this group more Jewish and non-Jewish attention focussed on the religious needs of servicemen.

47 "Appeal to Rabbis from Patriotic League of America,’ January 1913, NYPL-JD, New York, New York.

48 Traditionally, the Passover meal (Seder) is almost universally observed by Jews. The variety of the meal, the holiday’s stories, songs and socializing have kept it a viable and popular event. In a military context it is very widely observed as a reminder of home.
On April 25, 1912, the House Committee on Military Affairs devoted a session to the question of the need for rabbis in the armed forces. Those called to testify included Mr. Nissim Behar, the President of the Federation of Jewish Organizations of New York. After answering specific questions about the numbers of Jews in the military and how they were distributed throughout the various camps and bases, Mr. Behar gave an apt summary of his group's motivations:

We want to show that the Jew fights; because it has been said even in churches that the Jew does not fight. And we know that the Jew is a patriotic citizen and we want to prove it. And we want to prove that we have our fair proportion of Jewish boys in the Army and Navy. It is also a question of principle which is just in harmony with the freedom from discrimination guaranteed by the American Constitution.49

The bill for additional chaplains did not pass. It did represent however, a significant item of interest for the Jewish community. At this time, major Jewish organizations such as the Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations (YMH&KA), the Jewish equivalent to the YMCA, became extensively involved in Jewish military concerns. The YMH&KA offered Passover and Holiday meals for Jewish personnel. It also began to send Jewish social workers to various military camps to assist the men with social, recreational and spiritual matters. By November of 1914

49Congress, House, Committee on Military Affairs, A Bill To Increase the Number Of Chaplains In the Army, 62nd Congress, 1912, p. 7.
Lewis Landes, the executive secretary of the Army and Navy Department of the YMHA, wrote in *The American Israelite* that a substantial number of Jews served in the military. He claimed that the total number of troops in the Army and Navy exceeded 125,000. Out of this number, he estimated that Jews numbered between ten and fifteen thousand. He could not vouch for the total accuracy of his figures. He based his figures on interviews held with Jewish personnel in Army forts and Naval stations throughout the world.

The community attached great importance to the task of ascertaining an accurate number of the Jews serving in the Armed Forces. The more Jews found to be serving strengthened the argument for the immediate need of Jewish chaplains. This number also proved useful in refuting charges of Jewish non-patriotism.

The reality of pervasive anti-semitism rapidly became an accepted fact of life for many American-Jews. An article written in a 1916 magazine addressed the feelings associated with anti-semitism:

> We start with a handicap. In our relations with the Gentiles I feel that we are, even in the case of the least intolerant of them, starting behind the tape...The question is not about you or me--but about us; and I wonder sometimes whether it is not just

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50 Lewis Landes, *The American Israelite* November 5, 1914. These types of surveys had begun after the Spanish-American War. The first issue of the *American Jewish Year Book*, in 1900, listed by name and service relationship of Jews who participated in the brief war of 1898.
because of this very handicap that the strain of our blood persists through the centuries.\textsuperscript{51}

The military, in many instances, actively fought such stereotypes.

In 1915, Major Le Roy Eltinge an Army instructor at Fort Leavensworth, Kansas wrote a book entitled, \textit{Psychology of War}. His used this material for a course about warfare that he taught. This textbook detailed the attitude of various ethnic groups to war. Jews did not fare well in Eltingle's opinion:

He doesn't know what patriotism means. Recruiting officers find he does not average up with the other applicants physically...The soldier's lot is hard physical work. This the Jew despises. He does not have the qualities of a good soldier.\textsuperscript{52}

The \textit{Chicago Sentinel} re-published these characterizations and wrote President Woodrow Wilson requesting his explanation. Within days, the War Department officially responded. The Army informed Eltingle:

That the policy of the department is uniformly to discourage in the Army anything calculated to reflect in any manner on men of any particular race or creed

\textsuperscript{51}Harold E. Stearns, "A Gentile's Picture of the Jew," \textit{Menorah Journal} 2 (December 1916): 276. The Menorah Journal was associated with the Menorah Societies which began in 1906. The Societies involved groups of primarily Jewish students, who met and organized on college campuses. The clubs focussed on contemporary Jewish concerns which the group members addressed from various intellectual perspectives. The magazine which the group published represented a high-quality of thought provoking essays and opinions.

\textsuperscript{52}"Anti-Semitism in the United States-The \textit{Chicago Sentinel} (October 1916) WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
and not to tolerate anything that would savor of race discrimination. 53

Eltingle received orders to review his book and expunge all the offensive portions.

Also in 1915, Congressman Walter N. Chandler of the 19th district of New York City, addressed a letter to the Adjutant General of the War Department. Chandler wrote that some of his Jewish constituents felt that Jews did not receive equal acceptances to the military academies of West Point or Annapolis. Chandler further suggested, that even if a Jewish person received an appointment to attend these academies, they anticipated discrimination and ostracism. The Superintendent of West Point responded directly to these concerns:

No consideration of any kind is given at West Point regarding religious faith or belief of any candidate for the Academy...In my more than ten years personal connection with the academy I have never observed or heard of a case of social ostracism at West Point because a cadet was a Jew or of any other religious faith. 54

53 Ibid. There is a vivid contrast between the way which the military dealt with questions of anti-semitism and that of the outside society. In the summer of 1914, in Atlanta, Georgia, the Leo Frank case with its tragic lynching occurred. While this type of hatred and bigotry existed externally, within the confines of the armed forces, it proved totally unacceptable. Troop morale and cooperation required mutual respect not lynchings.

54 "Memorandum to Congressman Chandler from Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison," (December 1915) WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington, D.C. The same documents reported that a 1899 investigation into hazing of Jewish cadets turned up no such incidents. Also included, are letters of personal testimonies from men of the Jewish faith who had attended West Point.
In many ways, the armed forces responded quicker and more equitably to issues of prejudice.

The project of determining the number of Jews in the military came under the aegis of the Statistics Bureau of the American Jewish Committee in conjunction with the Council of Young men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations. An article written for the 1916 *American Jewish Yearbook* by Lewis Landes reviewed the process and its findings. Military Commanders in the Army and Navy received written questionnaires which requested the names of Jewish men in their commands. The methodology of obtaining the data was elementary at best. Notices, placed on bulletin boards in barracks and on ships requested that, where appropriate, Jewish men send in their names to the appropriate office to be counted. This haphazard method left much data unrealized. In some cases the men never saw the questionnaire, in other instances they did not take much notice of their communal bulletin boards.55 Some Jews preferred to keep their religious affiliation a private

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55 "Messages from Commanding Officers Regarding Notice About Jewish Personnel," March, 1913, WD-AAGO-JS, National Archives, Washington D.C. These messages indicated that an original request asking for a count of Jewish soldiers had not been received or placed on Company Bulletin boards. This fact lent some credence to the notion that many Jews went uncounted in the attempt to ascertain an accurate count of Jewish personnel.
concern and did not want to be publicly identified solely on a religious basis.\textsuperscript{56}

Out of the 757 questionnaires sent throughout the armed forces over 300 elicited responses. The findings represented significant results. The project managers concluded that while Jews in America represented about two percent of the overall population they numbered approximately six percent of the total military population.\textsuperscript{57}

These data strongly suggested that a large number of first generation Russian, Romanian, and Austro-Hungarian Jewish men served in the armed forces. Their presence represented a topic of undeniable importance to the contemporary Jewish community.

A lack of historical studies and acknowledgement on the military involvement of pre-1914 Jews is evidenced in the work of eminent American-Jewish historians. Scholars such as Moses Rischin, Irving Howe, Deborah D. Moore and Naomi

\textsuperscript{56}For many Jews this desire for privacy is highly valued. When asked to fill out religious preference forms many Jews still mark, "no preference" as opposed to Jewish.

\textsuperscript{57}Lewis Landes, "Jews in the United States Army and Navy," American Jewish Year Book 4 (1916): 1-4. After the conclusion of the war, the American Jewish Committee conducted an extensive count of military Jewish personnel. Their findings indicated that between 200,000 and 250,000 Jews served in the armed forces. This figure represented four to five percentage of the total military while the percentage of Jews in the total American population equalled three percent. This study extensively utilized thousands of statistical records and data to develop their conclusions.
Cohen have all examined the various cultural changes which occurred as Jews became acculturated to America. In their works little or no emphasis is given to the armed forces connection within the Jewish community. Entrance into the military may have represented the ultimate form of joining a new type of American fraternity, as well as an expression of new found patriotism.

The fact that so many Jews entered the military was even more striking in light of the negative connotations that the Czarist armies held for Jews. The Czarist Army historically negated Jewish traditions. A mandatory 25-year period of service in the Czar's Army represented one of the precipitating factors in Russian emigration to America. Yet, within a short period of time upon arrival in their new country, for a variety of reasons, economic, social, patriotic and others, Russian Jews joined the military.

58Max J. Margolis and Alexander Marx, A History of the Jewish People (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975), 668. Under the rule of Nicholas the First (1825-1855), Jewish boys, at the age of twelve, were forcibly "drafted", into the Czarist army for a period of twenty-five years. If they survived, their religious heritage rarely did. Communities received quotas of children for conscription, if the numbers were unmet, communal agents known as "Catchers", went among the poor villages hunting for young children to send to the Russian army.

59Mrs. Bertha Feldman, Personal interview with the author, January, 1990. The desire to join the military may be viewed as the ultimate form of Americanization. The author's grandmother, born in 1904, recalls that as a teenager, she and her contemporaries prided themselves on speaking English without an accent. They lived, as much as possible, extolling their assimilation to the new culture.
The significance of this omission by major authors cannot be overstated. For whatever reasons, most American Jews are unaware of the continuing military service that Jews have offered to this country. There is an unfounded belief that, except in times of national emergency, Jews did not fully participate in the military. This stereotyping is simply untrue. While most Jews did not go into service, enough did to warrant further study and recognition.

By the summer of 1915 individual rabbis once again attempted to join the service and Jewish organizations recruited civilian rabbis to spent time with troops and provide for rabbinic coverage. These actions indicated the level of importance shown by the organized Jewish community to its military personnel. In July of 1915, Rabbi Julian Shapo of Tampa, Florida sent an application to the Secretary of War to receive an appointment as a chaplain in the Army. He expressed compelling reasons for joining:

Contemplating the considerable number of members of the Jewish faith already attached to, and now enrolling for service with the forces of our National defense and inasmuch as the religious wants of the soldiers of our creed have not received the spiritual benefits which entitles him, by reason of service in the Army to be equal with other denominations, I have concluded to offer my services.60

Certainly, the armed forces provided one definite way of proving one’s new allegiance.

60"Letter from Rabbi Shapo to Dr. Rosenau," (July, 1915) Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. There are no further data to suggest the outcome of Rabbi Shapo’s request. It probably was denied. Rabbis did not serve in the armed forces until the War commenced.
While Rabbi Shapo did not ultimately enter the chaplaincy, his motivations symbolized those felt by Jewish groups. Various associations sent civilian rabbis to minister to Jewish personnel while Congress considered a bill which allowed for additional (Jewish) chaplains.

The extent of the Jewish communities' concern for Jewish military personnel became apparent in the summer of 1916, when three different organizations began providing civilian rabbinic coverage to Jewish soldiers. A large number of U.S. troops arrived in Mexico under the command of General John J. Pershing. These troops included a substantial amount of Jews. Initially, the local branch of the Army and Navy Department of the YMH&KA met the spiritual needs of these men. This group, based in the military forts along the Texas-Mexico border, sent social workers into the base camps to make arrangements for Jewish personnel to get time off for the upcoming High Holidays. Local rabbis and rabbinical students sent to the area conducted high holiday services.

The Department of Synagog and School Extension Branch of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations also worked with the soldiers. When contacted by Rabbi Isaac Landman, the Corresponding Secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), about its group's work with soldiers, the School Extension responded:

We are already engaged in religious work among Jewish soldiers on the Mexico front...Rabbi Samuel Marks has
given up his vacation to devote himself to the religious and general welfare of the Jewish soldiers in the regular army of the National Guard in his territory. At his request we have sent him copies of the leaflet reprints of the Union Prayer Book. Simultaneously Dr. William Rosenau, President of the CCAR, initiated a new plan to meet the needs of Jewish military personnel.

He sent the treasurer of the CCAR, Rabbi Abram Simon, to meet the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker. Rabbi Simon suggested to the Secretary that a large number of Jews serving with the armed forces needed rabbinic coverage. The Secretary proposed that perhaps a rabbi could function as a "detached chaplain", who ministered to Jewish personnel in different regiments. Mr. Baker further recommended to Rabbi Simon, that as soon as the CCAR appointed a rabbi for this mission, he would be provided with "An official order giving you every possible courtesy and attention, but no pay." Within one week, the CCAR, through Dr. Rosenau decided that Rabbi Landman would proceed to the Texas/Mexico border to conduct holiday services and function as much as possible as a military Jewish chaplain. The Central Conference also

61"Letter from Rabbi Landman to Synagog Extension," (July 26, 1916) Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. Both the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis were two related organizations associated with the Reform (Liberal) branch of Judaism. Additionally, some rabbinical students from the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative Judaism) conducted some services as well.

62"Letter from Rabbi Landman to Dr. Rosenau," August 18, 1916 Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.
sent out letters requesting contributions to a special fund, created to reprint prayer books to be utilized by soldiers and to cover any expenses that Rabbi Landman incurred. In a letter addressed to Mr. Jacob Schiff, a prominent American-Jewish community leader, Dr. Rosenau indicated that a permanent Jewish chaplain was possible as soon as Congress passed and the President signed a new armed forces bill. Unfortunately, the President chose to veto an Army bill which contained provisions for such new chaplains.63

As might be expected, the other Jewish organizations initially resisted such abrupt rabbinic guidance from the CCAR. Much correspondence and telegrams were expended smoothing out bruised egos and dealing with problems of authority and coordination. However, Rabbi Landman's pass from the Secretary of War allowed him the maximum access to the military and its chain of command. In his two months at these border areas Landman accomplished extraordinary goals from Jewish and military perspectives. Within days of his arrival, he functioned as the coordinating agent for all Jewish activities. With the cooperation of the YMH&KA, and the Synagog Extension group, he canvassed the civilian and military communities and arranged High Holiday places of worship, liturgical items and the issuance of prayer books.

His Army clearance gave him access to the military

63"Letter from Dr. Rosenau to Mr. Schiff," August 1916 Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.
destinations of the various units. Once he determined the
locations of the regiments, he created a schedule of
holidays services. The Texas/Mexico area was divided into a
grid based on towns. Each town became organized according
to its Jewish civilian and military members. Some towns,
such as Laredo, Texas functioned as central meeting points
for more isolated troops, "By order of Brigadier General
Mann, men of the Jewish faith at 31 outpost stations...were
transported to Laredo for (Holiday) services in army motor
trucks." 64

The impact and meaning of the services which Rabbi
Landman and others led was considerable to him and to those
who attended. In a description of his holidays services,
Landman offered a fascinating view of prayer in a battle-
field setting. During one service, the 150 Jewish men had
500 non-Jewish comrades surrounding them and respectfully
following along with the prayers. For the Jewish New Year
service Landman, assisted by Rabbi Lewis Landes of the
YM&KA, rose at 5 O'clock to prepare his pulpit, a ration-
wagon made into a temporary pulpit:

Not a single star as far as I had a record of them
after the service of the evening before, had
disappeared. Out of the darkness and from all
directions, men sprung up. Some of them were equipped
for the march. These were from the Illinois and

64 "Report from Rabbi Landman about his Activities,"
Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. Landman
requested that over 2,500 copies of a special High Holiday
prayer book be sent to him in time to distribute for the
Holidays.
Wisconsin Infantry. They had to walk two miles through the night to reach Hill B, and back to join their companies after the services on the road. There we sat around the wagon, our numbers being constantly augmented, silent, thrilled with the moment and the occasion, waiting for the sun to rise. Soon the stars began to fade. A gleam of pink showed in the East. The barrels of a gun or two glittered, for a second, in the first rays of daylight. "Rabbi, the sun is rising," said one of the men. Never did the title mean more to me than at that moment. "The sunshine of the New Year," exclaimed another, "May God Bless Us." Silently, I climbed into the wagon and faced the rising sun. The men rose in their places, to the clank of their arms and accoutrements and brought out their precious little prayer books. For my part, I was choked with emotion. I could not begin to read. "Bugler!" I said, trembling, to Bugler Sam Vehon of the Second Illinois Field hospital, whom, the night before, I had taught the sounds of the Shofar (Ram's Horn). "Bugler! Sound the Shofar!" and contrary to all traditions, I began a Rosh Hashanah (New Year) service with the sound of the Shofar. The long steady T'kiah call (Long sustained sounding of a shofar) served to have awakened the sun, to hurry in his course for the sake of these military men who were waiting to worship God, for, when I opened my book, I could read. 

Wherever he went, Landman received good-willed cooperation from military personnel. In all the documents related to his experiences, nothing indicated any notion of prejudice or unwillingness to cooperate. Due to his work, and the cooperation of the local and national Jewish agencies, hundreds of Jewish personnel worshipped and observed the Holidays. In many ways, the work that Landman performed and the subsequent positive publicity which he generated functioned as a precursor to the work that rabbis in the coming world war would do.

65 "Rabbi Landman's Hand Written Account of Holiday Services Sent to CCAR," October 1916, Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.
On the eve of America's entry into the First World War, the Jewish community's interest in military Jews had grown enormously from the time of the Civil War. Attempting to ascertain and meet their needs, prepared the stage for the subsequent development of the National Jewish Welfare Board, and the passing of legislation providing for rabbis in the armed forces. This intensive concern for the Jewish military community answered stereotypical charges of non-patriotism and also addressed the spiritual needs of a significant number of Jews who chose the military as a means of identifying with their new country.
CHAPTER IV

RABBIS IN THE TRENCHES

America's entrance into the First World War realized the culmination of the Jewish community's efforts to have rabbinic representation within the armed forces. The National Jewish Welfare Board evolved with the war to institutionalize the entire community's concerns for Jews in the military. The creation, growth, and subsequent work of this unique organization requires elaboration. In this war relatively large numbers of rabbis served in the Army and Navy. Their actual ministries, and the manner in which they integrated into the military structure, set a model for future generations.

As the First World War commenced in Europe in 1914, the president and government in the United States hoped to maintain a stance of neutrality in the conflict. However, by the early months of 1917, Americans realized that diplomacy had not achieved any substantial change in Germany's war policy. In April, Congress passed a resolution which officially placed America at war. Within a few weeks, measures went into effect which called for a massive conscription of soldiers and sailors to fight the impending battle. By June of 1917, over nine and a half
million men between the ages of 21 and 31 registered to serve their country. The total number of those who fought, including voluntary enlistments and expanded draft ages by November of 1918, reached almost five million.¹

As part of this national call to arms, all citizens including new immigrants rallied to their country. As John Higham suggests, negative connotations followed anyone identified as a "hyphenated American." German-Americans and specific German related products or cultural events received scorn and condemnation. The expectations of new immigrants involved a strong allegiance to their new country and culture.²

In some instances, nativism against various ethnic groups dissipated. Anti-Catholic movements and sentiments rapidly diminished as a sense of national unity and pride swept the country. Notions of anti-semitism, concerns about racial classifications and restrictions on the numbers of new immigrants became secondary concerns as the war began. The War Department and other governmental agencies actively recruited immigrants for military and industrial service. The immigrants responded with a distinguished record of service and support of the war.³


²Higham, Strangers in the Land, 216.

³Ibid.
Within days of the declaration of war, the Jewish community created a new organization to take complete responsibility for all war-related activities. The creation of the National Jewish Welfare Board reflected years of growing ties and relationships between various Jewish organizations and their co-religionists serving in the armed forces. It also indicated the continuing awareness that Jews in the military required rabbis in uniform, to best meet their religious and cultural needs.

Previous attempts within the Jewish community to organize in such an inclusive manner had not succeeded. In 1908 the American Jewish Committee began an effort to create a broadly based Jewish organization known as a "Kehillah". The term came from a European concept of a locally based communal organization. Traditionally, the Kehillah administered religious functions, supervised Kosher food preparations, initiated charitable collections and dispersement and tried to meet any community emergencies as they occurred.\(^4\) Often, a Kehillah functioned as a medium of communication, between feudal governments and their Jewish communities.

The New York attempt at community organization met with some success. Begun during the Progressive era of massive immigration and social reform, its original founders

included Jewish communal leaders such as Jacob Schiff, Oscar Straus and Louis Marshall. They correctly perceived that the new Eastern European Jewish immigrants needed to be represented in community issues. These men strongly advocated a unified Jewish community. In January of 1909, an organizational convention was held in New York City, with a few hundred Jewish religious and communal organizations represented. This convention formally voted the New York Kehillah into existence.

The Kehillah made some impressive inroads in the area of religious education, the field of community fund raising and in fighting crime. However, it never achieved its broad based goals of unifying the very large and diverse community, which included differing religious, social and political groups. The Kehillah declined quickly as war began in Europe in 1914. The focus of many Jews centered on the war situation and relief for Jews overseas. Pledges of funds for the Kehillah went unfulfilled. During the First World War the leader of the Kehillah, Rabbi Judah Magnes, publicly spoke in favor of pacifism. This stance lost more support for the Kehillah.

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5Ibid., 163. One of the more interesting aspects of the Kehillah involved its crime-fighting activities. Its Bureau of Social Morals created an extensive network of informants who gave names of illegal bars, brothels, locations of gambling places and gang activities to private detectives hired by the Kehillah. In turn, the information was passed on to the police who often took immediate action. For a brief time, this operation operated successful.
By the summer of 1916, with the Kehillah declining in popularity and purpose, renewed attention came for a Jewish National Congress. Justice Louis Brandeis called for such a Congress, whose main purpose involved, "to demand full rights for Jews in all lands and the abrogation of all laws discriminating against them."6 While many prominent Jewish leaders agreed about this idea in principle, they disagreed about specific details of its administration. One concern dealt with the type of power that the conference would have. Other considerations included the notion that creating such a congress during war time seemed inappropriate. Additionally, some felt that the proposed organization would become too autocratic.7

These disagreements and concerns engendered intensive discussions. So much that within one month of his initial proposal about a Congress Justice Brandeis resigned from his positions with the American Jewish Relief Organization and the Jewish Congress Organization. The reasons for his abrupt departure seemed clear:

Justice Brandeis had not been pleased by his reception when he and other members of a committee representing the Jewish Congress Organization appeared before the Conference of American National Jewish Organizations held at the Astor Hotel on July 16 last.8

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6American Israelite, July 20, 1916, 1.
7Ibid.
8American Israelite, August 6, 1916.
Given this apparent inability to coalesce as a united Jewish community, and to function in a unified manner the composition and subsequent accomplishments of the National Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) appeared extraordinary.

Prior to the War, the Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations (YMH&KA) coordinated Jewish activities for military personnel. However, as previously noted, other groups such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis, The Federation of Jewish Organizations and other associations also focused much attention on the situation of Jews in the armed forces. The supervising council of the YMH&KA determined that its organization did not have the capability to provide for the large numbers of Jews who entered the military. They decided that the entire community needed to be involved in this effort.

On April 9, 1917, at the invitation of the YMH&KA, representatives from seven major Jewish organizations came to New York City to begin devising a national approach to serving the Jews in the military. This new advisory group created the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in the United States Army and Navy. In March of 1918, the name changed to Jewish Welfare Board, U.S. Army and Navy (JWB).

These groups included: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis, United Synagogue of America, Council Of Young Men’s Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Congregations, Agudas ha-Rabbonim (Orthodox Rabbinic Organization) and the Jewish Publication Society. American Jewish Historical Society, (Brandeis University) Jewish Welfare Board Archives, Cyrus
Even with the participation of these seven groups, other organizations wanted to join the effort. Within one year an executive committee representing major American-Jewish communal societies became part of an expanded administrative board. This board produced a single agency which focused exclusively on providing spiritual and material comfort for Jewish military personnel. The government quickly verified the status of the Welfare Board. In September of 1917, the Commission on Training Camps recognized the Welfare Board, "As the official agency for Jewish welfare work in the military camps of the United States." 10 Both the Jewish community and the government, through a Liberty-Bond campaign, raised significant sums of money to fund the various programs initiated by the Welfare Board. 11

Part of the success of the Welfare Board in its pre-war and war time activities was due in no small measure to its leadership. Prominent personalities, such as Dr. Cyrus Adler associated themselves with the JWB and its mission. He brought an enormous prestige and communal contacts to his position of executive director of the JWB. Adler had a major role in the founding of the American Jewish Historical

Adler Collection, Box 12.


11 Ibid., 10.
Society as well as the Jewish Publication Society. As a community organizer and institution-builder he became a driving force behind the growing influence and prestige of the Conservative Movement and the Jewish Theological Seminary.  

As the Board came together other religious communal organizations developed. According to Sydney Ahlstrom, at the onset of the war, with the exception of the YMCA, no other civilian agencies ministered to Protestant service members. In May of 1917, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America initiated a meeting with representatives from thirty-five Protestant denominations. This meeting resulted in the creation of a General War Time Commission. The primary goal of this body involved the supervision of activities and religious needs of Protestant soldiers and sailors.

Similarly, in August of 1917, the Catholic Church in America, under the guidance of Father John Burke, developed the Committee on War Activities later known as the National Catholic War Council. This committee coordinated the efforts of sixty-eight dioceses, twenty-seven national organizations and the national Catholic press. Father Burke, with the ecclesiastical approval of the Church's

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Bishops, became responsible for coordinating the various Catholic organizations. This association supervised the recruiting, and training for over a thousand priests.

Within the larger Catholic communal framework another association developed which focussed on the theological needs of priests in a military setting. Normal canonical regulations and restrictions needed revision in war time. To deal with this situation the Holy See, via the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, created the position of the Military Ordinary. This Ordinary (Bishop) became the source of pastoral care and religious authority for all Catholic Priests and Catholics in the military.¹⁴ In November of 1917 Father Patrick Hayes the Auxiliary Bishop of New York accepted the appointment by Pope Benedict XV as the Military Ordinary for all Catholics in the armed forces. The military authorities quickly acknowledged Bishop Hayes' role. They refused to accept any priest into the chaplaincy who did not have the endorsement of the Military Ordinary.¹⁵

Structurally, the goals and programs of the three religious coordinating groups paralleled each other. They

¹⁴Smith The Military Ordinariate of the United States, 106.

¹⁵Ibid., 112. The Military Ordinary helped priests resolve many of the special questions and religious issues which the war raised. Topics, such as the time and frequency of the Mass, and concerns about fasting and hearing of confessions, all came under the preview and guidance of the Ordinary.
produced activities which covered a number of areas: recruiting and training denominational chaplains, supplying religious items for service personnel, training civilian workers who worked at military bases and building recreational rooms for troops' entertainment. In general these agencies made concerted efforts to create a positive moral environment for the troops.\(^\text{16}\)

Often, the various support groups such as Knights of Columbus, The Young Men's Christian Association and the Jewish Welfare Board representatives worked together and shared facilities such as common recreational buildings. In one instance Rabbi Jacob Singer, assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas, conducted Jewish services in the Knights of Columbus welfare hut, as the JWB had not constructed its own building. On Sunday mornings, he volunteered to play the piano for the Protestant services.\(^\text{17}\) In one of its first reports, the Welfare Board acknowledged the work and cooperation of these religiously oriented groups. The report continued with an explicit statement of interfaith relations which foretold of the inter-religious cooperation that ensued throughout the war.

The idea is, indeed, to assist the Jewish youth in such a manner as shall enable him to most readily to harmonize with the conditions surrounding him, to fraternize with his non-Jewish comrades, to have a

\(^\text{16}\)Sheerin, *Never Look Back*, 45.

\(^\text{17}\)"Rabbi Jacob Singer Correspondence File," Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.
better understanding of the point of view of those of other beliefs, and in turn to enable the non-Jew to have a better understanding of him.  

This attitude of teamwork and shared facilities prevailed throughout the war.

President Woodrow Wilson acknowledged this spirit of cooperation when he created the United War Work Drive to raise funds for the morale and welfare of soldiers and sailors. He requested that the seven major welfare agencies coordinate their money raising efforts into one drive. This joint venture, mirrored the philosophy of sharing facilities and welfare workers, for the betterment of the troops, whenever possible.

This spirit of consensus applied to intra-Jewish relations as well. Even in areas of liturgical differences, the Jewish movements worked in an environment of teamwork and compromise. One of the first tasks that the JWB undertook involved the issuing of a standard Jewish prayer book. A committee of rabbis representing the three major movements in Judaism, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform came together and in a brief time, created a prayer book which

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18"U.S. Army and Navy Executive Committee Report," December, 1917, American Jewish Historical Society, Jewish Welfare Board Collection, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. 2.[Henceforth AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.]

all armed forces Jews utilized. This represented an extraordinary collaboration of resources.\textsuperscript{20}

This same type of relationship developed with the JWB. The ultimate mission of the Jewish Welfare Board focussed on meeting the religious requirements of Jewish armed forces personnel. Three significant and ongoing programs developed to met this goal: the building of recreational facilities at military installations, the training of Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) field workers, and the recruiting and supplying of active duty military rabbis.

Initially, the JWB utilized spaces in buildings already built by groups such as the YMCA. To meet the increased need for space the JWB constructed fifty new buildings at stateside and overseas bases. These structures held a varied number of programs including social, recreational and educational activities. These included, dances, entertainment, social observances of Jewish festivals, teaching English to the many new immigrant soldiers, discussion groups, and the provision of reading materials.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20}The idea of a separate prayer book for Jews in the armed forces is still operative today. Most synagogues in America use a prayer book identified and endorsed by their specific Jewish faith movement. The notion of a book of prayer that met everyone's needs is a marvelous symbol of cooperation and teamwork on a fundamental level.

\textsuperscript{21}Janowsky, \textit{Change and Challenge}, 8.
JWB field workers coordinated the use of the buildings and developed many of the programs. They became known as the "Star of David" men. These individuals, like their counter-parts in the Knights of Columbus or the Young Men’s Christian Association, represented their denomination on a particular base or station. In the absence of a military rabbi, they also functioned as spiritual leaders and counselors for the Jewish troops.

The training to become a field worker for the Jewish Welfare Board included an intensive two month-long period of instruction. This involved two different courses of study, a month of vocational and educational training followed by a month of field work. The educational training included religious perspectives on warfare, overcoming loneliness, knowledge of draft laws as well as an introduction to the work of other welfare agencies. The field work involved a variety of experiences; how to conduct Jewish services, designing social and entertainment programs, issues of personal hygiene, and administrative tasks, concerning the ordering and distribution of religious supplies. By the end of the war over six hundred people served as JWB field workers. They made an impressive and very significant contribution to the morale of the troops. When a base had a Jewish chaplain these "Star of David" men worked with the

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rabbi in creating programs for Jewish soldiers and sailors. 23

Rabbis became some of the first welfare workers. They functioned as auxiliary rabbis at various camps and bases. A few ultimately entered service when the law for Jewish chaplains passed. Others devoted a few months per year to serve with the troops before they returned to their civilian ministries.

The Knights of Columbus followed a similar process with the creation of a corps of auxiliary priests. These priests did not enter the military but instead worked at various Army and Navy bases. They cooperated with active duty priests and in the absence of a military Catholic chaplain they led services. Furthermore, local priests made special efforts to meet the religious needs of the Catholic troops stationed in their parishes. 24

In addition to training field workers, the JWB took upon itself the task of recruiting rabbis to the military. This task proved to be difficult as no new chaplaincy spaces became available in the military ranks. The Welfare Board and other Jewish groups renewed their efforts to create

23The few active duty rabbis greatly needed and welcomed the support of these workers. The immediate needs of the soldiers already engaged in battle and the relative rapidity of the war kept the welfare workers and rabbis working full time to meet their spiritual and welfare requirements.

additional chaplaincy positions for military rabbis. The Jewish community worked arduously to remedy this situation in Congress.

In October of 1917, five months after America’s entry into the war, Congress proposed a bill which called for twenty additional chaplaincy positions. These twenty chaplains received the rank of lieutenant, earned $2,000 per year and served only during the war emergency. Congressional members understood that although the proposed bill did not specify any religious denomination, minority groups such as Jews, benefitted from the bill’s passage. In Congressional debate Representative Isaac Siegel of New York city made explicit statements about the bill:

The Chaplain Bill was modified to the effect of being enforced during war emergency only. Discussion lasted thirty-five minutes during which comparisons of religious denominations were made. Everyone, however, understood that this bill was mostly for the benefit of the Jews.\(^{25}\)

The bill passed in a matter of days and went into effect immediately. Representative Siegel gave credit for the bill’s passage to the Jewish Welfare Board, B’nai Brith organizations and to other Jewish communal groups.\(^{26}\)

When the United States entered the fighting a few rabbis, immediately enlisted in the Army. Until the bill allowing additional chaplains became law in October of 1917,

\(^{25}\)The American Hebrew, September 14, 1917, 523.

\(^{26}\)The American Hebrew, October 12, 1917, 638.
they served in the enlisted ranks and fulfilled their rabbinic roles as Lay leaders. With the passage of the Chaplaincy Bill, the Jewish Welfare Board made a nation-wide appeal to rabbis and their congregations:

Nothing can be more important than that those who are charged with the performance of this sacred duty shall be men of character, tactfulness and intelligence, men who understand the soul of the Jewish boy and who can keep alive in the hearts of our youth the divine spark of our ancient faith...the services of rabbis are imperatively demanded.\(^{27}\)

This plea also asked that congregations be willing to compensate their rabbis who volunteered for service for the pay disparity between their military and civilian salaries.

As the Jewish Welfare Board issued this appeal for rabbis, so did the Catholic Military Ordinary. Various Bishops and heads of religious communities received requests to release priests to serve in the military. Bishop Hayes stressed the role of the Church:

Were we not to provide chaplains and provide generously, for sons, husbands and brothers who have gone forth to battle, leaving behind at home sorrowing mothers, wives and sisters, the Church in America would be weighed in the balance and found wanting.\(^{28}\)

As these rabbis and priests entered the armed forces ministry, they quickly made their contributions to the war effort.

Military chaplains played a highly visible and crucial role in the war. In a book written in 1917, for new armed

\(^{27}\)The American Hebrew , October 18, 1917.

\(^{28}\)Smith, The Military Ordinariate, 112.
forces chaplains, Orville J. Nave a veteran chaplain, discussed the responsibilities of a minister in uniform. Besides calling attention to the chaplain's traditional roles of leading chapel services and religious education, Nave wrote specifically about battle conditions and circumstances. He proposed that once fighting began chaplains should be in the trenches encouraging their men. When wounded personnel arrived at a field hospital clerics offered comfort and functioned as medics as well:

The chaplain must provide himself amply on the eve of battle with first aid supplies, with such palliative, including a hypodermic syringe, and such stimulants as the surgeon may think best, to be used with men whom the surgeon cannot reach....He must load himself with canteens of water and a suitable drinking vessel with a spout for men who must not be moved or cannot hold their heads up.29

This type of first aid continued throughout a soldier's convalescence. Words and prayers of encouragement supported in the healing process. Chaplains also assisted in all phases of the recovery process by helping soldiers with correspondence home, providing items of recreation and helping maintain a sense of hope and solace. This book also addressed the military minister's role in the recovery of dead and severely wounded bodies and the conducting of appropriate burial ceremonies for the fallen soldiers. Chaplains had a well defined role to fulfill.

In addition to the duties listed above, Jewish chaplains performed other unique responsibilities. Thousands of Jews who volunteered for service were new immigrants. They requested from their rabbis classes about the English language, American history and government. Other duties of rabbis included: providing for traditional Jewish classes on prayers, Jewish ethics and discussions about contemporary topics.

These discussion groups dealt with a variety of subjects. In Burgundy, France, a weekly group considered a number of topics such as the "Future Function of the Synagogue," "Reconstruction and the Returning Jewish Soldier" and "Zionism and the Future of the Jew." Enlisted personnel played prominent roles in such groups. These men represented the typical Jewish soldier or sailor, well educated and concerned about their Jewishness.

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30 In many cases, the new immigrants had not even been in the country a year before they volunteered to show their patriotism by serving in the armed forces. It was exceedingly difficult to learn the nomenclature of the military in this short time. The chaplains and the JWB facilities gave them an opportunity to converse after a difficult day and to commiserate together about their difficulties. Despite these major obstacles most remained and persevered and served their country.


32 Another group of Jewish soldiers and sailors which the rabbis and JWB workers supervised were Jewish Lay leaders. These military individuals had some religious training, and with the assistance of a rabbi or welfare worker, could help lead a Jewish service. In the absence of a rabbi or welfare worker this Lay leader often represented
The assimilation of rabbis into the armed forces and their subsequent accomplishments occurred very naturally. Their rise in the chaplaincy symbolized the cordial relationships enjoyed by Jews and Christians on many levels. Organizationally, and on an individual basis, the mood during war-time stressed the themes of brotherhood and mutual respect. Prior notions of nativism, eugenic theories and racism had been suppressed. The experiences of Rabbi Elkan Voorsanger illustrated this phenomenon.

In May of 1917, Rabbi Voorsanger enlisted as a private with an Army hospital unit. The bill creating extra chaplaincy positions had not yet become law. Voorsanger previously did volunteer chaplain work with troops assigned to General Pershing in Mexico. His personal beliefs reflected the contemporary ideas about pacifism and volunteerism intermingled with patriotism:

"I am entering this war to register my protest against war...I can do that in no better way than to go to the front to alleviate the suffering of those who know not why they go."

In a letter to his family about the abruptness of his decision to enlist he noted that he did not want to claim any ministerial exemption from his service to the country.

the only religious connection that a regiment or ship had. This system is still in place today and is widely utilized by all faith groups.

"Letter sent from Rabbi Voorsanger to his Parents," May 14, 1917, Voorsanger Collection, United States Army-Chaplains School, Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. [Henceforth VC-USA-Cs, Fort Monmouth.]
He also reiterated his adherence to his dual ideals of being both anti-war and pro-country. Within a few months, Private Voorsanger received his training as a medic and transferred overseas for duty. By June of 1917, he earned a promotion to the rank of sergeant.

With the passage of the law for additional military chaplains in October of 1917, Sergeant Voorsanger received discharge papers as an enlisted person and obtained reassignment as a chaplain with the rank of First Lieutenant with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). He immediately began work as a chaplain. By December, he made a number of recommendations to his commanding officer concerning delivery of mail for overseas troops. By February of the new year he received orders to report to Base Hospital Number One for duty.  

As one of the first military rabbis in the AEF, the demand for his rabbinic services grew quickly.  

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34 Interestingly, a second rabbi paralleled Voorsanger's path. Rabbi Harry Richmond, who espoused pacifist causes, enlisted in the chaplaincy and worked as a medic. He, as Voorsanger, received his commission as a chaplain and served in France. After the war, he returned to the civilian rabbinate. In January of 1941, Richmond was recalled to active-duty and participated in clergy duties during Pearl Harbor. He served for three more years of active service before returning again to his congregation. He received the unique distinction of being the only active duty rabbi to serve in the two wars. Louis Barish, ed., Rabbis in Uniform (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1962), 282.

35 Voorsanger's enlistment and subsequent transfer to an active unit placed him months ahead of other rabbis, who waited for Congress to pass the bill, opening up additional chaplaincy spaces for rabbis. The lack of rabbis kept him
of responsibility included large numbers of troops and widely separated bases. Chaplain Voorsanger communicated his need for more rabbis and welfare items directly to the Jewish Welfare Board. Jewish lay leaders and JWB field workers came under his supervision as well. Voorsanger also became the main point of contact for Jewish activities from French Jewish officials and other welfare agencies.

In March of 1918, the Director of the YMCA in Paris wrote to Voorsanger requesting that he conduct a Passover observance at a military base. The YMCA covered all expenses involved. This Seder, attended by over three hundred soldiers, took coordination from many groups and individuals to be brought to a successful conclusion. Captain Voorsanger singled out the YMCA for praise. They helped him with travel assistance for Jewish soldiers and with room reservations. Voorsanger commented:

> How this war is breaking down prejudice, hatred and petty narrowness is indicated by such incidents as this---a Christian organization promoting a Jewish religious service and offering to foot the bill.\(^{36}\)

Later in his career, Voorsanger worked with a board of chaplains which promoted closer cooperation and coordination with the various religious welfare agencies operating overseas.

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\(^{36}\)"Letter from Voorsanger to a San Francisco Newspaper," April, 1918, VC-USA-CS, Ft. Monmouth.
Voorsanger’s work with all faith groups symbolized the interfaith awareness and respect reflected in the military chaplaincy. Without too much regard for denominationalism, groups worked together to meet the religious and cultural needs of troops. This spirit of cooperation demonstrated the lack of anti-semitism and the congenial environment which existed for the first group of rabbis entering the armed forces.

Chaplain Voorsanger served as a pioneer and mentor for future Jewish chaplains. He ably fulfilled his rabbinic and general chaplaincy roles without any controversy or difficulties. As a military rabbi, he conducted specific Jewish services and ministered to Jewish personnel. The JWB had supplied all its military chaplains with new automobiles. Rabbis in uniform constantly travelled from camp to camp offering services, counselling or coordinating Jewish social events or entertainment.

As a general chaplain, Voorsanger worked on behalf of all his troops. His work in improving mail delivery to the soldiers exemplified his general ministry. The military authorities noted his many efforts on behalf of his troops. In June of 1918, he received a promotion to Senior Chaplain of the 77th Infantry Division. This advancement significantly increased his areas of responsibility. Voorsanger now supervised other military chaplains and also represented the chaplaincy department in meetings with other
senior officers. In the history of the Jewish chaplaincy no other rabbi ever rose to so prominent a position. The ease which he obtained this position and the fact that all involved immediately followed his orders symbolized the ecumenical setting which the military exemplified. His position also symbolized the nation's mood of patriotism and cooperation.

Voorsanger's primary focus lay in the accomplishing of his military mission. He totally integrated his activities with those of his unit. In early November 1918 he received a Letter of Commendation for the work he had done on a reconnaissance patrol. Also, after the Battle of Argonne in October 1918, he received the Purple Heart for bravery. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre and recommended to receive the Army Distinguished Service Medal. These accomplishments earned him the title of "The Fighting Rabbi." His troops knew him as a chaplain who often put himself in the line of fire to minister to wounded and dying men. His earlier training as a medic certainly helped in those situations.37

After the November 11th armistice he represented his division in Paris for an interfaith Thanksgiving service. Voorsanger reflected this spirit of collegiality among the various chaplains in a subsequent newspaper interview:

In France there were no distinctions, "the Fighting Rabbi" says, A Chaplain was a Chaplain, not a Jewish Chaplain, a Catholic Chaplain or a Protestant. Each

chaplain was responsible for the religion of every man, and it didn't matter to us how a man prayed, but that he prayed.\textsuperscript{38}

This attitude represented the military clerics at their finest, caring for all their people.

The burial records of the 77th Division indicated that Voorsanger officiated at the largest number of military burials in his sector. As the senior chaplain, his presence and prayers of committal added dignity to the military honors. Voorsanger became responsible for recording and collecting the personal effects of German soldiers buried by American personnel. Due to his seniority and military activities, in October of 1918, another rabbi, Benjamin Friedman, received orders to the same Division. Rabbi Friedman covered specific Jewish concerns. This rabbinic help enabled Voorsanger to take on more of the administrative, and supervisory tasks of a senior chaplain. Voorsanger reflected the strain of being the sole Jewish chaplain in his division. Upon Friedman's arrival Voorsanger asked, "Why are you so late in getting here"?\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{39}"Correspondence of Rabbi Benjamin Friedman to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus Describing His War-Time Activities," January 1985, Chaplaincy Collection, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati. In all, only six active duty rabbis served with the overseas forces. Others, performed their duties in state-side bases. Some of these rabbis entered service after the war had concluded. The British Royal Army had nine rabbis which covered all their forces. They were similarly stretched in their ability to visit the myriad of military camps, hospitals and training areas."Letter from Rabbi Michael Adler May 1918", Royal Army Chaplain's Department Archives,
In February of 1919, Chaplain Voorsanger resigned from the active duty chaplaincy and became the Jewish Welfare Board's Director of Overseas Operations. His career, while somewhat unique, accurately reflected the ability of rabbis to function as Jewish chaplains and as general ministers in uniform simultaneously. Other rabbis had similar experiences.

Rabbi Lee J. Levinger in 1922, wrote a book about his war time duties entitled, *A Jewish Chaplain In France*. In the opening pages of this book Levinger expressed his thoughts about the role of military rabbis:

> He was first of all a Chaplain in the United States Army and second a representative of his own religious body. That means that all welfare work or personal service was rendered equally to men of any faith...Wherever I went I was called upon by Jew and non-Jew alike, for in the service most men took their troubles to the nearest chaplain irrespective of his religion.\(^40\)

This attitude captured the contemporary thinking of the rabbis. They functioned as rabbis and chaplains to all men.

Levinger's war experiences bore out this approach. As a chaplain in the 108th Infantry he worked in a field hospital unit offering first aid and counseling to gassed victims of trench warfare. Later, in October 1918 he joined a number of other chaplains who had the sad task of searching deserted battlefields for unburied soldiers.

These spiritual ministers collected personal items and sent them home. A pervasive sense of interfaith awareness and sensitivity accompanied this work.

On the last day we held our burial service. We gathered together at the cemetery with a large flag spread out in the middle of the plot. I read a brief Jewish service, followed by Chaplains Bagby and Stewart in the Protestant and Father Kelly in the Catholic burial service, and at the end the bugle sounded "taps" for all those men of different faiths lying there together.41

These types of activities occurred regularly throughout the war in overseas and stateside bases.

It is plausible to explain the ease by which the rabbis became integrated into the military system and the apparent acceptance of a variety of religions in the military within the wider context of the contemporary society. John Higham offers a superb analysis of the prevailing thinking. One hundred percent Americanism became the rallying cry of the war. Millions of citizens embraced this philosophy with enthusiasm.

Only a single minded, even simple minded dedication to a presumably single national objective could, it was believed, prevent other interests or loyalties from competing or conflicting with the luminous will of the nation.42

This belief in a greater good, combined with the military need for order and good morale, permeated many of the activities and works of most Jewish chaplains.

41Ibid., 51.
42Higham, Strangers in the Land, 206.
This philosophy of intensive cooperation, within a military context, existed in the German forces as well. As noted previously, Jews fought on both sides of the conflict. Thirty rabbis worked with the Prussian War Ministry on a contract basis and performed essentially the same roles as their American counterparts except they were not officially part of the armed forces.\(^{43}\) One Protestant chaplain wrote a fascinating incident of interfaith awareness:

The "Jewish preacher" he wrote, told me how he gave a service to a Protestant Army unit, how he let them sing the old Lutheran hymn, how he preached about God who has helped us all and in whom we have confidence...At the end they all sang We stand before God the Just. I shook his hand, "Mister Comrade," I wouldn't have done it otherwise.\(^{44}\)

How paradoxical, that in the midst of a world war, this type of interfaith sensitivity and cooperation existed.

This attitude of collaboration demonstrated itself in very pragmatic ways. The standard insignia for military clergy included the Latin Cross. In January of 1918, Congressman Isaac Siegel from New York, forwarded a request

\(^{43}\)Rabbi Jacob Sanderling wrote of his First World War experiences as a chaplain with the German Army. During the war he conducted a Passover meal (Seder) in which Russian prisoners of war participated. They were counted as fellow Jews not prisoners. These types of religious observances occurred routinely in war-time situations. "Autobiographical Sketch of the Life of Rabbi Jacob Sanderling," March 1961, Chaplaincy Collection, American Jewish Archives, Hebrew Union College-Jewish institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio.

\(^{44}\)Bilder und Texte aus der Soldatenseelsorge 1550-1945, Herausgegeben vom Evangelischen Kirchenamt fur die Bundeswehr, Bonn, 1983, 50.
to the Army from the JWB, that rabbis in uniform be permitted to wear some other insignia in place of the cross. Within two weeks of receiving this memorandum, the Army issued the following directive:

Objection having been made to Jewish Chaplains wearing the prescribed insignia, you are authorized by the Secretary of War to omit the prescribed insignia.45

Almost immediately, the Quartermaster of the Army solicited new designs for a Jewish chaplain's insignia.

Reports from the battle front mentioned the difficulties of identifying rabbis without their insignia. An initial design suggested by the JWB, recommended a six point star (the Star of David). The Army rejected this proposal as the six pointed star appeared too similar to the stars which generals wore. Other designs included a seven branched candlestick or menorah, a shepherd's crook, two lions of Judah supporting the Shield of David and the Tablets of the Ten Commandments surmounted with the Star of David.46

By June of 1918, the issue took an interesting turn. General Henry Jerver, Acting Assistant Chief of Staff, suggested that all chaplains change their insignia back to that used prior to 1898, a shepherd's crook. He saw this return to an earlier insignia as a way of having a universal

45"Army Directive Concerning Insignia," (February, 1918), Chief of Chaplains Collection, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 247. [Henceforth RG 247.]

46Ibid.
chaplains device. Within weeks, this became official policy. While this policy may have had some merit it drew a negative response from many of the Christian chaplains. In August, General Pershing sent a cable to the War Department which noted that his chaplains opposed the proposed change.47

Once again the Army reviewed this issue and considered three alternatives. First, that all chaplains be ordered to wear the same devices. Second, that rabbis be permitted to omit all insignia. The third possibility considered that rabbis wear a separate device composed of the Ten Commandments topped with a Star of David. In a short time, the third option became the standard Army practice. This process occurred while rabbis such as Voorsanger and Levinger performed their battle-field ministries. The insignia issue in no manner affected their ministries.

While the rabbis in the Army had a satisfactory response to the insignia issue, the lone rabbi in the Navy did not have the issue resolved so quickly. Rabbi David Goldberg entered the Navy in 1917. After his basic training and initial processing his first assignment included duty on the U.S.S. President Grant. Prior to reporting to the ship, he asked a senior Navy chaplain about the propriety of a

47Some Christian chaplains felt that the change was appropriate, "I am a chaplain of the Christian faith, but I would welcome the change. The shepherd's crook is symbolic of the chaplain's work---he is a leader, a shepherd. Army and Navy Journal July 20, 1918, 1788.
Rabbi wearing the Chaplain Corps insignia of the Latin Cross. The senior chaplain responded that the men understood that he wore the insignia of the Chaplain Corps and not that of his faith group.48

A member of the Jewish Welfare Board advised Goldberg to take his ship assignment and let the JWB deal with the insignia question. His experiences aboard the Grant led him to request a transfer to a shore billet. Out of six hundred men on the ship, only five practiced Judaism. Goldberg felt that the single chaplaincy position should be held by a Christian chaplain. As part of his ministry aboard the Grant he held services, counseled individuals, and developed educational and recreational activities. Nevertheless, he clearly expressed his feeling about his efficacy:

The difference between a Christian minister and a Jewish Rabbi, in the deep-rooted belief of the men, is so vast and fundamental, that it leaves me almost beyond the pale, and while in the Submarine zone, in the sick bay, or at the death bed, I find that the men are left almost without spiritual consolation, as my own spiritual potency is almost nil.49

Goldberg continued with the process to get a transfer off the ship when he arrived back from the deployment.50

48"Correspondence of Rabbi Goldberg with American Jewish Archives," Chaplain David Goldberg File, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.

49Ibid.

50One of the factors between the ordeal of Chaplain Goldberg contrasted with the experiences of the Army chaplains may have been the situation in which they found themselves. The Army rabbis were literally in the trenches with their men; in these instances, a religious affinity and
When Goldberg returned stateside he received a number of negative letters from rabbinic colleagues finding him at fault for wearing the cross. He responded that the JWB should handle this issue and that he, as a commissioned officer, wore the cross as a part of his official uniform. Nonetheless, in May of 1918, Chaplain Goldberg requested from the Navy that he be allowed to wear the Star of David in place of the cross. His request pointed out that the Army, with the assistance of the JWB, had resolved the same issue. His request was denied. The Navy felt that the Star of David appeared too similar to the star worn by admirals. The Navy did solicit any other ideas.

Goldberg then recommended that the Chaplain Corps wear a shepherd's crook as a universal symbol for all chaplains. This elicited, as it had in the Army, some strong responses from Christian chaplains including Goldberg's senior chaplain, John Frazier:

The Chaplain Corps of the Navy is more than satisfied to wear the Cross, and everyone of us who profess the Christian faith would resent most bitterly any effort belief is more significant than a specific denominational stance. On the ship however, not being in this combat atmosphere, Goldberg may have felt his religious differences more acutely. Also, ship board duty entailed a forced sense of isolation from co-religionists which the Army rabbis did not face. They covered large geographical areas to stay in contact with their men. Nevertheless, Goldberg conducted services and held apparently successful educational and recreational programs.
to substitute any other insignia in place of the Cross.\textsuperscript{51}

Within a month, the Navy authorized Chaplain Goldberg to wear the Shepherd’s Crook.

He finished his two year tour at the Great Lakes Naval Base. During this tour Goldberg, found his niche, his time at the Naval Station included various assignments. While there he edited a small book about the chaplains on the base. Additionally, he spent much time involved with rabbinic responsibilities. At one time there were over 2,600 Jewish personnel at the station.\textsuperscript{52} After the completion of his two years of obligated service Goldberg continued his Naval career as a reservist. He wore the shepherd’s crook as his Naval insignia until the Second World War when the Navy followed the Army’s example and allowed rabbis to wear the Tablets and Star of David.\textsuperscript{53}

With the war’s conclusion most of the rabbis quickly transitioned back to civilian jobs. Some, such as Chaplains Voorsanger and Levinger, took positions with Jewish Welfare agencies. They should be remembered as pacesetters. A

\textsuperscript{51}"Correspondence of Rabbi David Goldberg with American Jewish Archives," Rabbi David Goldberg File, AJA-HUC-JIR, Cincinnati.


\textsuperscript{53}This question of insignia is a contemporary one. Presently, the Army has a Muslim chaplain on active duty. This officer wears the Crescent Moon, denoting Islam. Within a short time, a Buddhist religious leader may enter the Navy, their insignia is being developed.
large group of rabbis entered the military and served their co-religionists and other service personnel in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. They overcame extreme distances and logistics to meet their mission to the troops. The development of the National Jewish Welfare Board and its sophisticated community organizations became a model of communal excellence for meeting the needs of all Jews in the military.

With the conclusion of the war, the JWB stayed in place and continued to offer services and assistance to the military. The experiences learned in this war and the legacies created, came into play within two decades, as the prejudices and stereotypes curtailed during the first war reasserted themselves once again on the world stage.
CHAPTER V
THE INTER-WAR YEARS

The inter-war years represent decades when opposing forces of prejudice and stereotypes contended with the ideals of mutual respect and decency for the hearts and souls of America and the world. The United States military through its Chaplain Corps symbolized the notions of mutuality and reciprocity. The Jewish Welfare Board embodied the Jewish presence within these Corps. The role of the JWB, as it continued to meet the needs of military and veterans, requires examination. Also, the work of individual rabbis within the armed forces continued to be a significant development. These societal conditions, for and against Jews, provided the cultural background for the soldiers and sailors who entered the military in the Second World War. Their thoughts about fairness and religious sensitivities directly affected most Jews and their rabbis in uniform during that conflict.

With the cessation of the First World War the armed forces which had grown to very significant numbers began a rapid process of demobilization. By the summer of 1919, over two and a half million enlisted men and officers received their discharges. By January 1, 1920, both the
Army and Navy reduced to their pre-war levels of personnel. As the military shrank so did the chaplaincy. During the war over two thousand clergy participated in the chaplaincy. By 1922, this number diminished to 120 regular Army clerics. In the Navy, two hundred military ministers comprised their Corps of Chaplains. After the war, that number dropped in half as a result of demobilization.

Most padres wanted to get home and resume their civilian lives and vocations. Church organizations who promoted the chaplaincy now called for the rapid return of military clergy. In the midst of this large movement homeward those spiritual mentors who continued in the service basically operated on their own. The religious denominations, as well as the military structure, did not focus much attention to chaplains in peace time. The military chaplaincy required some institutional structure. Both the Army and Navy responded in a number of ways to this negative situation among their active duty clergy. The Army created the position of an Army Chief of Chaplains in June of 1920; the Navy’s Chief of Chaplains also developed at this time.

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The Army established a school for ministers in uniform. The curriculum involved a five month training course focussing on training chaplains to serve people of all denominations, preparing them to function as army officers so that they could effectively communicate with other leaders and giving clerics an appreciation of the military as an institution, and its history. By 1928, the Army recommended that the school be closed. Training funds became limited and retention among the active duty chaplains remained high. The War Department envisioned that the reserves held a major source of manpower to be activated in times of a national emergency. Most reservists preferred to take correspondence courses to meet their training requirements rather than take time from their jobs.

The government took the responsibility for the welfare buildings constructed by the various social agencies. The JWB donated over twenty-five buildings to various Army and Navy commands, salvaging some twenty-three additional facilities for equipment. Despite this transfer of tangible property, the JWB decided that as an organization it retained a role, albeit reduced, with the military. A July 1919 resolution expressed this policy:

It was unanimously agreed that wherever there is an active camp...regardless of the small number of men of the Jewish faith in any camp or post, that activities

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3Ibid., 17.
of the Board should continue on the principle that the Board functions to all men. 4

This type of devotion to armed forces personnel reflected the success of the Board during the war. 5

Despite its diminished levels of responsibility due to the demobilization, the Board maintained in tangible ways an ongoing commitment to the remaining active duty personnel as well as newly created veterans of the war. The Board contacted military commanders and informed them that it intended to supply their posts with prayer books, Bibles, Jewish literature and to assist Jewish personnel, whenever possible, in the celebration of Jewish holidays. The Board established and supported a lay-leader system where Jewish military men acted as liaisons between the Board and post or

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5This organization realized its own potential in service to Jews in the military and within the greater Jewish community. Where other attempts to unify the overall Jewish community had not succeeded, the Jewish Welfare Board performed marvelously. It would have been a grievous mistake for the leadership to contemplate the Board's dissolution. The Board, over time, took a new direction in that it began focussing on Jewish Community Centers. These Centers represented a new growth area for the American-Jewish community. Nevertheless, it retained the name of the Jewish Welfare Board until 1992, when the name of the organization changed from the Jewish Welfare Board to the Jewish Community Center Associations of North America. This name change reflected the reality that most of the focus and concerns of the organization dealt with the Centers, no longer the military.
station commanders. This system was particularly important due to the lack of active duty rabbis.  

Work with veterans of the First World War occupied a significant portion of the Board's efforts. The JWB through its three national offices, dealt with veteran's concerns, such as disability claims, insurance issues and individual medical and financial needs. The JWB supervised or conducted activities in one hundred and sixty Army Posts, twenty-five Naval Stations, and seventy-five hospitals and sanatoria. Additionally, despite the smaller numbers of soldiers and sailors, new military chapels were built in Honolulu, the Philippines and the Panama Canal Zone.  

Another major role for the JWB involved its work with the military graves and registration process. During the war, many Jewish soldiers had been hurriedly buried, some in graves not marked with the Star of David but rather with a cross. The Board took on the onerous task of working with the military and the American Red Cross in ascertaining whenever possible, the proper identification of Jewish personnel and their graves. Upon identification proper grave markers replaced prior ones and appropriate committal.
prayers offered. Photographs of these markers were sent to the families stateside as final memorials to lost ones.\textsuperscript{8}

Another significant function performed by the JWB, in conjunction with the American Jewish Committee, concerned the creation of a special organization, the Bureau of War Records. The sole purpose of this organization involved the collection of accurate data about Jewish participation in the war. The collection of these data had a twofold rationale: "To serve as an instrument of morale during the conflict and as an enduring memorial after the war."\textsuperscript{9} The process used to collect and verify the data was sophisticated. Jewish fraternal, industrial and religious organizations supplied detailed information about Jewish members in the war. The entire civilian and military administrative structure of the Welfare Board diligently strived to insure the identification of Jewish personnel. Military furlough records for Jewish holidays, as well as records from the Graves registration Bureau, provided additional data to help ascertain accurate figures.\textsuperscript{10}

The Bureau initially collected more than 500,000 records. These documents became further divided by name, branch of service and home town. The net amount of

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{8}"The First Report of War Emergency Activities-The Jewish Welfare Board," AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 82.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 85.

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 86.
\end{quote}
individual records numbered 150,000. The conclusions of this organization provided impressive figures. The estimated number of Jews who served in the war, calculated to be between 200,000 and 225,000. Proportionately, Jews, who constituted three percent of the United States population, contributed more than four percent of the Armed Forces, which by the end of the war numbered 4,800,000.\footnote{Ibid., 87. While the process of gathering data remains an inexact science, no reason appeared which invalidated the relevance of the numbers presented. The methods which they utilized to arrive at their figures indicated a serious empirical approach.}

Two years after the war, a new military-oriented board formed within the JWB, the Army and Navy Committee of the JWB.\footnote{At this time, the Jewish Welfare Board formally merged with the Young Mens Hebrew and Kindred Associations. While they worked together throughout the war on an informal basis, this merger represented the reality that the Welfare Board represented the dominant and recognized organization in the area of military-Jewish affairs. Cyrus Adler, "Report of the Army and Navy Committee," October 31, 1922, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 49.} This group represented the leading rabbinic and community organizations. The concerns of the committee included providing service to disabled veterans, former military personnel, their families, institutionalized individuals as well as active duty personnel.\footnote{Ibid., 40.}

In the 1922 annual report of this committee, a major area of concern involved the lack of any active duty rabbis in the Army or Navy. The rabbis on duty during the war, as
part of the overall demobilization returned to their civilian positions. The Army and Navy Committee contacted the War Department and requested chaplaincy positions for rabbis. The War Department did not accept the Committee's recommendations for two reasons. First, the military had greatly reduced the number of chaplaincy billets in its Table of Organization. Second, Jewish men constituted a minority of personnel at various posts and bases.\(^\text{14}\) The suggestion of a rabbi being a "roving chaplain", covering a number of bases was rejected because, "It would complicate matters from an administrative point of view and would involve similar provision for other minority religious denominations."\(^\text{15}\)

The War Department did, however, encourage rabbis to apply for commissions in the reserves.\(^\text{16}\) The Department

\(^\text{14}\)Ibid., 45. The JWB estimated that approximately five thousand Jewish men served in the armed forces, while over one thousand remained in the care of the Veterans Bureau.

\(^\text{15}\)Ibid., 42-43. Despite this lack of active-duty rabbis the JWB organized High Holiday and other observances at a number of bases, posts, hospitals and in exotic overseas locations such as China, Port-au-Prince and Coblenz. Also Cyrus Adler, "Report of the Army and Navy Committee" October 31, 1924, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 52. This annual report indicated that Jewish Welfare Board workers, many of whom were ordained rabbis, conducted services at state-side and overseas bases in the place of active duty rabbis.

\(^\text{16}\)Weigley, History of the United States Army, 399. After the war, Congress determined that the armed forces could exist with relatively small numbers of "regular troops." Any other troops, needed in an emergency, would come from the National Guard and Organized reserves, which represented the model of citizen soldiers, aiding the country in times of need.
requested that the Army and Navy Committee screen and endorse all the rabbinic applicants. By 1922, a total of thirteen rabbis participated as commissioned officers in the reserves.

In the years immediately following the war societal pressures came to the fore which impacted Jews and rabbis serving in the military. Once the war concluded, forces for national unity and cohesiveness rapidly deteriorated. Ideas of intolerance, nationalism, and prejudice held in check by the war once again dominated the thinking of many Americans. A fear of Bolsheviks, socialists, and renewed attention to anti-semitism, as well as organized campaigns against Roman Catholics, dominated society.¹⁷

For decades prior to the First World War restrictionists and others lobbied Congress for laws impeding the pace of immigration. Proponents of racial theories favoring people from Nordic countries, opposed to individuals from eastern and southern Europe, chose the time after the war to repeat their arguments and request that the doors of freedom to America be closed. The Dillingham Immigration Commission, in its investigation of the immigrant question, utilized these racial theories of superiority and inferiority in their work. The Commission’s conclusions quickly altered long standing immigration policy

¹⁷Link, American Epoch, 339.
and laws, in 1921, and 1924. The flow of immigrants to America dramatically ebbed.  

In a world which had not achieved the universal peace promised by the League of Nations many people endeavored to find a scapegoat for the ills of the country. For some, Jews became the focus of prejudicial and stereotypical ideas and actions. Anti-Jewish notions came from a number of sources. Some Jewish leaders became unfairly identified with the Bolshevik Revolution and its leaders. A fear of foreign agitators deliberately upsetting the American marketplace and society prevailed in the 1920's. Once this Red Scare passed, other prejudices advanced by the spreading of ideas found in the fictitious and highly stereotypical work, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. This work portrayed Jews as international bankers whose goal included the domination of the free world economies.

One industrialist, Henry Ford, not only personally accepted and endorsed these notions but utilized his newspaper The Dearborn Independent to pursue an anti-Jewish campaign. As early as 1920, in the midst of an economic downturn his paper, described Jews as international bankers dominating the American economy. In later years his paper

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18Cohen, Encounter With Emancipation, 245. In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Act limited immigration to this country, for most Europeans, to two percent of the foreign born residents of each nationality represented in the 1890 census. This action severely limited the number of Jews and Slavs who entered the country.
published sections of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, giving further credibility to these charges.\textsuperscript{19}

Hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan promulgated many of these prejudicial notions. This group achieved great influence in the twenties. It appealed to white Protestants who felt that they exemplified the only group capable of genuine patriotism. The Klan attacked Catholics, Jews, Blacks, and most aliens. By 1925, perhaps its strongest year, it numbered approximately five million members.\textsuperscript{20}

This type of ongoing prejudice soon became institutionalized. Beginning in 1919, colleges of the Ivy League began implementing quotas on the number of Jewish students admitted. Soon this became the standard practice in many colleges and universities.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Leo P. Ribuffo, "Henry Ford and The International Jews," *American Jewish History* 4 (June, 1980) : 452-457. Jews, in the pages of the Ford newspaper received blame for a number of topics: the mocking of Christian clergy, ridiculing rural life, welcoming radicalism and the teaching of murder and safe-cracking. Henry Ford and his Independent staff collected articles about Jews and edited them into books. Sometimes, over 200,000 copies were printed. Influential citizens, especially clergymen, bankers and stock-brokers received these works. Also, "Jewish Communal Life in the United States" *Jewish Social Service Quarterly* 3 (November 1924): 21. The *Dearborn Independent* generated anti-Jewish sentiment by publishing articles such as: Jewish Degradation of American Baseball; Jewish Jazz Becomes Our National Music... Jewish Idea Molded Federal Reserve Plan; The Economic Plans of International Jews.

\textsuperscript{20} Link *American Epoch*, 341.

\textsuperscript{21} The military Academies did not accept a "quota" system for Jews. In response to a letter about the ethnicity of an applicant the Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy, in May of 1926, responded emphatically, "The
opportunities and vocations became almost impossible to
obtain if a person with a Jewish name applied. Jews were
systematically denied access to whole sectors of the
economy, including commercial banking, insurance business
and working in the public utilities industry. Often
employers used employment agencies to screen their
prospective workers to insure that Jews did not receive
employment. This method proved quite effective, so much so,
that out of 23 commercial employment agencies surveyed in
1929:

One refused to register Jews and another said it could
place no Jews. Eight were discouraging because they
thought their efforts would be an exercise in futility.
Seven were willing to chance an effort to place Jewish
clerical workers and only six said that they could find
jobs for Jewish girls. 22

During the decade of the twenties, the activities and
official documents of the military served as a counter

United States Naval Academy is a federal institution
operated under the laws of the United States with equal
rights for all". "Lieutenant Commander William G. Greenman,
Letter from the Secretary of the Academic Board for the
Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy," May 5,
1926, Special Collections, Archives, United States Naval
Academy, Nimitz Library, Annapolis.

22Belth, A Promise to Keep-A Narrative of the American
Encounter with Anti-Semitism (New York: Times Books 1979),
112. Many job advertisements described the positions as,
"Christian Only." Also, Bruno Lasker, "Jewish Handicaps in
the Employment Market," Jewish Social Service Quarterly 3
(March 1926): 170-174. Lasker described a study undertaken
by the American Jewish Congress to secretly survey
perspective employers on why they did not hire Jews. Of the
forty to fifty people who responded, their reasons for not
hiring Jews spanned the gamut, from Jews being too clannish
to Jews being too assimilated.
balance to these negative societal images. The interfaith thinking and ecumenical nature of the military were particularly revealing at a time of restrictionism, isolationism and nativism.

In April of 1924, the House and Senate Subcommittees of the Committee of Military Affairs held hearings about increasing the number of active duty chaplain positions in the Army. These positions became necessary due to the increased number of small posts and camps being developed by the armed forces. Another change under discussion concerned altering the ratio of chaplains to personnel from one chaplain per 1200 people to one per 800. During this testimony, a diverse body of religious organizations participated including the Federal Council of Churches, the Roman Catholic Military Agency, other Protestant groups and the Jewish Welfare Board. This group of church and military representatives offered support for these measures. When the Army presented testimony it offered a broad and inclusive definition of its military clergy.

Chaplains serve as friends, counselors and guides without discrimination to all members of the command to which they are assigned, regardless of creed or sect, and strive to promote morality, religion and good order therein. There are no denominational rivalries, for each chaplain has his definite field and specific duties.23

23Congress, House, Subcommittees of the Senate and House Committees on Military Affairs, To Increase The Number of Chaplains In the Army, 68th Congress, First Session, April 16, 1924, 34.
The symbolism of these various faith communities pursuing a common agenda reflected an enlightened approach to interfaith relations.

Another proposal, initiated at this Congressional hearing, involved elevating the rank of the Chief Army Chaplain from a Major to Brigadier General. In a statement to Congress concerning the validity of this and other proposals, the Chief of Army Chaplains, John T. Axton, made an emphatic statement about the practice of a diverse group of military ministers being supervised by a single chaplain:

The experience of the World War had demonstrated that Army chaplains of all creeds could work together under one ecclesiastical head who had surrounded himself with advisors representative of the various schools of religious thought...chaplains of all faiths have found that without sacrificing anything of loyalty to their respective denominations they can magnify points of agreement and unite to develop and strengthen those things which men hold in common as being essential to the spiritual welfare of the Army. There have been no conflicts."\(^{24}\)

A further indication that the military reflected an organization with a sense of interfaith sensitivity came in a 1926 Army chaplains training manual. Prepared under the supervision of the Chief of Chaplains, the book contained an

\(^{24}\)Ibid., 37. Axton had an excellent background to be the first Army Chief of Chaplains. He worked as an administrator for the Port of New York and the Young Men’s Christian Association. Robert Gushwa suggests the daily functioning of chaplains was enhanced by the presence of a Chief of Chaplains who administratively watched out for all chaplain’s interests. At this time, the first Director of Navy Chaplains, John B. Frazier, was appointed. Initially, the Navy Chaplaincy Bureau functioned as part of the Bureau of Navigation, later, it developed as a separate entity.
overview of the various aspects in becoming a successful armed forces cleric. Interspersed throughout the document a number of statements gave clear and affirmative expressions of the military chaplaincy model. When addressing the role of religion the document emphatically stated:

The United States Government clearly expects each chaplain to be conscientious in the performance of his sacred duties and to maintain a high ideal of his obligations to all the religious needs of his military family. 25

This manual constantly urged potential military clergy to offer services beyond the specific requirements of their denomination.

This text recommended that at least two Sunday morning services be held. The first liturgy fulfilled specific denominational requirements. The second ritual functioned as a general religious program for the benefit of all personnel. This attitude of considering every individual reflected a tolerant religious perspective "The Chaplain is the servant of God for all, and no narrow sectarian spirit should color his utterances, nor should his personal work assist only a special group." 26 New clerics worked to insure that soldiers in their organization had access to appropriate religious devotions. Visiting clergy and their liturgical needs became the responsibility of the active

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26 Ibid., 14.
duty chaplains. Another section of this guide included an explanation of Jewish holidays. The responsibility rested with the Christian chaplains to insure, in the absence of a rabbi, that Jewish personnel worshipped as required.27

The manual also identified the different religious organizations responsible for endorsing chaplains into the military. In addition to the mainline Protestant, Catholic and Jewish agencies, additional faith groups included the Unitarian Church and the Christian Scientist Church. This wide ranging acceptance of different denominations symbolized institutional openness. These men became spiritual leaders for everyone.

This type of leadership became reflected in the variety of tasks which contemporary chaplains undertook. In addition to conducting divine services and counseling, military padres involved themselves in a number of responsibilities. These included administering various types of educational activities, visiting with the sick and dying and other programs associated with the general morale and welfare of the troops. Chaplains also provided entertainment for the troops. This often involved utilizing

27 It is still today the responsibility of all military chaplains to facilitate the free exercise of religion for all personnel. Thus, a military rabbi is obligated to provide a place of worship and the necessary religious items of worship for any and all who need it, regardless of their faith.
the latest technology of motion picture projectors, record players and slide projectors.\textsuperscript{28}

Armed forces clergy also participated in the Citizen's Military Training Camps. The purpose of these camps, initiated in the 1920's, focussed on the training of young men. Over a period of four summers they received the military training in preparation for a reserve commission with the Army or Navy. Between 1921-1936 over 450,000 men attended these camps. In all fifty-one of the camps military chaplains led courses on citizenship and morality, significant components of the camp philosophy.\textsuperscript{29}

In addition to the military which created a counter-force against the prevailing forms of racism and prejudice, other groups existed which actively opposed these stereotypical views. The National Conference of Christians and Jews exemplified one such group. In 1923, a number of prominent rabbis and Protestant ministers organized to address various aspects of Jewish-Christian relationships. Reverend Alfred W. Anthony, a Baptist minister and executive secretary of the Home Missions Council, persuaded the Federal Council of Churches in America, the coordinating body for many Protestant groups to form a new subcommittee. This new committee became the Committee on Goodwill between Christians and Jews. This group proposed extensive goals:

\textsuperscript{28}Gushwa, \textit{The Best and Worst of Times}, 40.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid.
To ascertain the causes of racial ill will and to see how they could be removed or mitigated; to establish contacts between Jews and Christians where feasible and to further understandings between them... and to create a literature to help shape favorable public opinion on the utility of religious goodwill.  

Within a short time, this Protestant Committee of Goodwill met with a rabbinic group founded by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. These liberal rabbis initiated their own Committee of Goodwill which worked and coordinated with the Protestant organization.

The formation of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) in 1927, resulted from the two religious groups working together. The goals of this new association focussed on the need to further religious tolerance and understanding, through programs of education and cultural awareness. A typical event involved a seminar held in Washington D.C., in 1932. Led by prominent clergy of all faiths small study groups dealt with subjects such as common historical traditions, a discussion about intergroup relations, preaching, and interfaith similarities.

Despite the efforts of organizations such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the depression decade of the thirties was not noteworthy for its programs

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and initiatives for fighting racism or ethnic animosities. Some have suggested that as Nazism with its racial policies became promulgated, the United States should have mounted a campaign emphasizing ethnic tolerance and democracy. Yet, by the time these programs came into the public arena much of the damage of prejudicial ideas had been done. In fact by 1939, the American Jewish Congress estimated that over five hundred anti-semitic groups existed in America. Groups such as the Service Bureau of Intercultural Education founded in New York City, worked directly with organizations devoted to countering anti-semitic propaganda. If anything, good religious relationships which existed seemed to be threatened. For American Jews various sources of anti-semitism in the country and the world helped created a crisis environment.

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32 Morris D. Waldman, "The International Scene in Jewish Life," Jewish Social Service Quarterly 1 (December, 1932): 19. In this probing essay, Waldman, the Secretary of the American Jewish Committee, attempted to describe the contemporary anti-Jewish conditions. He was not able to understand it rationally, "It is a mass psychosis, more virulent than many other mass psychoses, the remedy for which will only be produced by rational attitudes of ethnic groups toward one another."


One major element of anti-semitism in the thirties concerned groups associated with the rise of Nazism. Organizations such as the German-American Bund often functioned as direct extensions of racist propaganda. Many of their activities focused on anti-Jewish pronouncements. Despite its affinity for Nazi-like storm-trooper uniforms and relatively small numbers of adherents, this group in February 1939, on the occasion of George Washington's birthday, attracted over 19,000 people to a rally in Madison Square Garden. Disregarding a pledge to be fair in their speeches, every speaker indulged in anti-semitic threats and polemics.\(^{36}\)

This type of open and public prejudice created an environment across America of individual citizens with increased exposure to and acceptance of anti-semitic attitudes. The Bund associated with other hate groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, and occasionally held joint rallies and meetings. Other Nazi associated groups, like the Silver Shirts, also disseminated anti-semitic tracts and literature. While the actual membership in these groups remained small their ideas influenced many through the sale of tracts and literature.\(^{37}\)

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The radio became another vehicle of communication with an even wider range of influence. In the early 1930's, Father Charles Coughlin a Catholic priest from Detroit, used this new medium to broadcast religious themes with the hope of attracting new church members. Coughlin's following and popularity grew at an astonishing rate. As his influence grew Coughlin began expressing his opinions about economics, politics, and governmental issues. He supported the candidacy of Franklin D. Roosevelt for President in 1932 and opposed Herbert Hoover. Coughlin offered a number of new economic and fiscal policies to alleviate the Depression. Turning against Roosevelt by 1935, he determined that a third party candidate was a viable option for the upcoming Presidential election. He joined with Dr. Francis Townsend and the Reverend Gerald L.K. Smith to create a temporary union of political ideas and goals. Despite extensive

38Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1973), 34. By 1933, Coughlin acquired widespread publicity from his broadcasts, so much so, that over one hundred people were required to handle the volume of correspondence that he received.

39David O'Brien, *American Catholics and Social Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 166. Coughlin offered thoughts on a variety of issues including: the country's monetary policies, problems of the unemployed, taxes, prohibition, a deterioration of religious practices and Papal Directives of social action proclaimed by Pope Pius XI.

40David Gerber, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 31. According to Gerber, "The 1930's were the high point of organized, ideological anti-semitism in the nation's history." Individuals such as George Viereck, William
campaigning for his third party candidate, Congressman William Lemke, Coughlin's party and candidate were decisively defeated.

As a result of his political defeat Coughlin gave up his radio ministry. However, he maintained control over a weekly magazine Social Justice, which he developed to help disseminate his ideas. In January of 1938, due to public pressure on the Catholic authorities, partially prompted by editorials from the Social Justice, Coughlin returned to the air.

When he continued his broadcasts sixty-three radio stations across the country carried his program. His new broadcasts took on a decidedly anti-semitic component. At this time he also organized a new group associated with his ministry, the Christian Front. The explicit goal of this new organization involved racism: to defend the Christian nation from the threats to it by communists, Jews and the followers of President Roosevelt. In New York City many Pelley, Fritz Kuhn, Reverend Gerald L.K. Smith and others, epitomized this phenomenon.

Chicago (Ill) The Sentinel April 20, 1939. This organization became very aggressive, radio stations which did not carry Father Coughlin's broadcasts were picketed, and advertisers associated with these stations received protests. The Social Justice magazine was distributed in the subways and in front of department stores known to be under Jewish management. Christian firms were listed in the magazine. Each Christian had supposedly dedicated themselves to the defend America against all Communist forces. The last page of the magazine asserted, "CHRIST himself sponsored this little leaflet for your protection". These types of attitudes and activities certainly caused
of the group's members included blue collar Irish-Catholics. Often meetings of the Front turned violent, as Jews and Front members attacked and fought each other. 42

In the summer of 1938, Coughlin's magazine began printing portions of the infamous anti-semitic work previously disseminated by Henry Ford The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. In November the tenor of his radio broadcasts became quite aggressive toward Jews. In attempting to explain the reasons for the atrocities associated with the events of early November in Germany known as the "Night of the Broken Glass," or Kristallnacht, Coughlin made two major stereotypical charges about Jews. The first asserted that Jewish bankers in New York financed the Russian Revolution. The second suggested that Jews, somehow manipulated the news media across the country and therefore controlled the way people thought. 43

consternation and concern for the Jewish community and much of general community as well.

42 Ronald H. Bayor, Neighbors in Conflict (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 99. Bayor posits that the main source of frustration between Jews and the Irish focused on the Irish perception that Jews took many of the Civil Service jobs away from them. This type of inter-ethnic rivalry is not uncommon when differing groups are in competition for many of the same economic opportunities.

43 Alan Brinkley in Voices of Protest (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) 269. Brinkley suggests that by 1938, Coughlin was no longer a major political force in the country. As a result of this loss of power he became an embittered and spiteful man. This resentfulness, according to Brinkley, resulted in his strident anti-semitism.
After this speech a number of organizations, Jewish and others, attempted to refute Coughlin. Some of the groups proved that much of Father Coughlin’s materials came totally from German propaganda. Nonetheless, Father Coughlin and his broadcasts indicated the mood of the country and the depth of anti-semitism which existed at that time. The reason for Coughlin’s embrace of anti-semitism remained unclear.\(^44\)

This pervasive level of anti-semitism translated into political reality in a number of instances. In many cases people’s lives became endangered. In 1939, in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, Congress proposed a child refugee bill. This bill allowed ten thousand refugee children, mostly Jewish, into the country where they would be raised for the duration of the war. Part of America reacted with an immediate and impressive humanitarian response to this bill. Yet formidable opposition to the bill also arose. Groups such as the Allied Patriotic Society offered testimony against the bill. They suggested that the bill’s intent did

\(^{44}\) In a dissertation written in 1982 by Mary Athans, *The Fahey-Coughlin Connection* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982) she suggests that Coughlin was significantly influenced by an Irish priest, Father Dennis Fahey. Fahey had published a number of anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi pamphlets. His printed ideas were very similar to those later expressed by Father Coughlin. His motivations, may also have included a desire to be important to the public in terms of contemporary issues. Regardless of his motivations Coughlin’s tacit endorsement of anti-Jewish prejudices, symbolized a contemporary society that failed to emphasize mutual respect and religious sensitivity.
not involve all refugees, only Jews. This assertion made the bill unacceptable and it did not pass Congress.\textsuperscript{45}

Groups, such as the NCCJ and others, worked diligently at countering many of these prejudicial and anti-semitic notions. The message of the Council for Democracy reiterated the notion that Americans needed to live and work together harmoniously.\textsuperscript{46} Organizations such as "The Council Against Intolerance in America" formed and attempted to utilize radio and public gatherings to focus on the ideal of tolerance of others as an integral part of American democracy.\textsuperscript{47} The efforts of such groups lessened the amount of prejudice and intolerance in the later war years.

The Jewish community responded to the racial prejudices and practices in differing ways. Sydney Ahlstrom suggests that the Zionist movement in America received much impetus for its growth partially in response to this blatant anti-

\textsuperscript{45}Throughout the war, the terms Jew and Jewish were not utilized when referring to Jewish individuals or issues. The term refugee became the preferred euphemism. At the same time, counter efforts promoting racial tolerance and humanitarian instincts occurred. In June of 1939, more than five hundred clergy, organized by the National Conference of Christian and Jews, came together and pleaded for Americans to, "Repudiate doctrines which pit class against class promote racial and religious hatred and aim to destroy liberty." \textit{The Sentinel} June 8, 1939.


\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 22.
semitism. One of the more unusual forces against this tide of prejudice came from within the military.

Armed forces chaplains embodied the ideals of tolerance. In the Civilian Conservation Camps (CCC) developed in the 1930's chaplains functioned as itinerant ministers, amassing thousands of miles in making their assigned visits. In addition to the regular Army chaplains assigned to these camps, three hundred and thirty-eight reserve chaplains participated and ministered to over two million people.

Military rabbis participated in these types of ministries as well. Two rabbis from the reserves served at Citizens Military Training Camps. Other reserve rabbis served as chaplains in various Civilian Conservation Corps Camps. While their work equalled that of other ministers, rabbis also noted the differences. One rabbi, Solomon Jacobson, noted three:

First, there were small numbers (of Jews) sometimes one to a camp. Second, visiting periods set for Sunday did not coincide with the Jewish sabbath. Third, he held more informal services and lectures than the other chaplains.

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48 Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, 974.

49 In March of 1936, out of the 300,000 young men in this Corps over 2,200 registered as Jewish. Cyrus Adler, "1936 Annual Report Army and Navy Committee," AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 2.

50 Gushwa, The Best and Worst of Times, 44.
Except for these minor variations, whenever and wherever feasible, Jewish chaplains constituted an integral element in the chaplaincy practiced by the reserve forces in the inter-war decades in America.\textsuperscript{51}

The Jewish Welfare Board through its committee on the chaplaincy developed a number of new programs and initiatives which kept a strong Jewish presence among active duty and reserve forces in America and around the world. Reserve rabbis provided rabbinic coverage at some of the major veterans hospitals across the country. The JWB also expanded its staff of Jewish professional workers. These individuals, including some civilian rabbis, travelled around the world to meet the needs of Jewish personnel. Jewish military congregations in Panama, Pacific coast areas, and Hawaii maintained themselves as a result of the efforts of the JWB. Other initiatives developed to insure a constant number of rabbis for the Reserve Officer Corps. By 1936, a total of nineteen rabbis participated in the reserves. The breadth of the Board's responsibilities was

\begin{footnote}
This phenomenon of rabbis covering vast amounts of territory and being responsible for large numbers of people accurately reflected the experience of Rabbi Dayan M. Gollop the sole Jewish chaplain for the British forces in the mid-thirties. Dayan M. Gollop, "The Chaplains' Department and the Jewish Soldier," Royal Army Chaplains Department Journal (July 1932) 205.
\end{footnote}
evidenced by the 270 Army posts, Naval stations, government hospitals and overseas areas under supervision.\textsuperscript{52}

In its 1937 annual report, which marked the twentieth year of the Board's existence, an overall review examined of the organization's work and goals. After noting that its mission, whether in war time or peace, continued to be the ministry to Jewish personnel, the report elaborated on some of the Board's major accomplishments. These achievements consisted of distribution of Jewish prayer books and Bibles, appointments of rabbis to active duty and reserve status, the approval of special insignia for rabbis, and the elimination of distinctive symbols in the military's interdenominational chapels.\textsuperscript{53}

Some of the reserve rabbis held positions of great importance. Rabbi Benjamin A. Tintner, a Major in the Army Reserves, received appointment as the first rabbi to provide bi-weekly services for Jewish cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point.\textsuperscript{54} A similar effort by the JWB to have a reserve Rabbi conduct services at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis received a different response. The senior Naval Academy chaplain felt that the Jewish midshipmen met their religious needs by marching into

\textsuperscript{52}Cyrus Adler, "1937 JWB Annual Report," AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 3.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid.
town on Sunday mornings to a local synagogue. This system of Jewish coverage stayed in place at Annapolis until the assignment in 1987, of the first full time active duty rabbi, Chaplain Norman Auerback.  

As war in Europe became a horrible reality, the JWB drafted a number of far-sighted plans which dealt with the rejuvenation of its scope and responsibilities. In the summer of 1939, leaders of the Board developed a "Mobilization Plan." This Plan involved an expansion of the Army and Navy Committee of the JWB. JWB field workers spread across the country organizing local Jewish communities in vicinity of military camps and bases. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, recognized the Board as, "The official representative of the Jewish religious groups in matters pertaining to the religious and moral welfare of Jews in the Army". The number of rabbis in uniform slowly increased as the war escalated.

While the Board had a record of twenty years of achievements, and although some groups existed that actively worked for interfaith understanding the rest of America remained exposed to different types of ideas and

55 Whether with a reserve rabbi or by walking out in town, the true spiritual needs of any Cadet or Midshipmen cannot be met solely by having weekly services. The true ministry to such individuals, comes on a daily basis, when their personal or religious problems are dealt with in-depth and in privacy.

56 Janowsky, Change and Challenge, 33.
experiences. The concepts of nativism, racism, and prejudice prevalent in the twenties once again asserted themselves in a number of negative and vicious ways during the thirties. These views directly influenced the persons entering the military service in the late thirties and beyond. These attitudes affected the jobs and roles of military rabbis.\textsuperscript{57} The military and the Chaplaincy became one of the societal forces promoting interfaith tolerance and understanding in the shadow of the Second World War.

\textsuperscript{57}It should be noted that the military maintained segregated forces until 1948. The integration of forces at that time was a major step forward in race relations, despite the inequality of the initial segregation.
CHAPTER VI
THE WORLD AT WAR AGAIN

By the onset of the Second World War, Jewish participation in the military had met various historical challenges. In the Civil War the Jewish community fought for rabbis to be legally included within the ranks of the chaplaincy. By the First World War the Jewish community’s abiding interest in their co-religionists in the armed forces helped create the National Jewish Welfare Board. The Board acted as the Jewish institutional representative with the War Department and served as the focal point for the recruiting and training of rabbis and welfare workers. In that conflict, rabbis served in sufficient numbers to create a living history and examples of rabbinic participation within the armed forces.

During the Second World War, three hundred and eleven rabbis served in the military. They ministered directly to over 500,000 Jews and millions of other service personnel.¹ They became involved in a myriad of issues and concerns. Topics involved confronting the contemporary views of anti-semitism, providing interfaith activities, fulfilling their

unique roles as rabbis and general spiritual mentors in war, and a few issues dealt with individual acts.

As the world attempted to deal with increased belligerency from the German government war enveloped parts of Europe. The German attack on Poland and subsequent victories in Denmark, Norway and France caused the United States Government and military planners to actively prepare for a war of immense proportions. By 1940, a number of significant changes evolved concerning the armed forces. Congress began passing larger appropriations for the military. This included increased funds for personnel, training and equipment. President Roosevelt commenced industrial-military planning sessions anticipating the cooperation of major plants such as General Motors in any war effort. In the fall of 1940, the National Guard and other reserves units became mobilized to serve a year of active duty. Similarly, a bill authorizing a process of conscription also for one year, quickly passed through Congress.²

forces. The training, equipping and caring for these men, women and their families represented an almost unbelievable task. A substantial amount of the spiritual and practical care of military personnel naturally centered on the Chaplain Corps of the Army and Navy.

As the Army enlarged with reservists called to active duty the chaplaincy program experienced a parallel growth. Many of the officers, including chaplains, received "temporary appointments," for the duration of the war. By the attack on Pearl Harbor, almost fifteen hundred clergy volunteered to serve. This number increased dramatically, to almost eight thousand chaplains, by the war's conclusion. To insure a wide and fair distribution of chaplaincy positions, the Army devised a quota system based on the 1936 census figures.

This procedure identified the forty faith groups most prevalent in the military. In accordance with these figures, each faith group received a proportional amount of clergy. Roman Catholics represented the Army's largest group with over 30% of the allowable chaplaincy positions. Other Protestant denominations followed the Catholics. Judaism exemplified the fifth largest group with a quota of

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3 Ibid., 435.

4 Honeywell, Chaplains of the United States Army, 215.
almost 4%. The Navy's share of military clergymen in the war totalled three thousand. Their system of apportionment listed Roman Catholics as its largest group. The Jewish percentage, 0.8%, indicated a much smaller number than the Army. Of the three hundred and eleven rabbis who participated in the Second World War over two-thirds served in the Army.

The Army created a Chaplains School at Harvard University, for the training of its military clergy. The curriculum included Military Law, Map Reading, Defense against Chemicals and Physical Conditioning. One element of the course included crawling through mud under a stream of live ammunition fired over their heads. Clerics serving with the Army-Air Force received additional weeks of training. Interfaith awareness represented a significant part of the formal and informal education which took place at the school. To foster this notion school officials engineered room assignments to insure that rabbis, Catholic

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5Ibid., 208. These numbers functioned as guidelines which determined how many clergy of that denomination eventually entered the ministry. In some instances, the particular group did not meet their numbers and the other faith groups utilized the extra slots.

6Drury, The History of the Chaplain Corps United States Navy, 51. The smaller numbers in the Navy reflected the greater need for rabbis in the Army. Also, the Navy's more stringent physical and officer requirements may also have been a factor.
priests, and Protestant ministers of different faith traditions shared common quarters.  

The Navy established a Chaplain’s School at Naval Base, Norfolk Virginia. In 1943, it moved to the College of William and Mary. The Navy’s educational process for chaplains focused on teaching the new chaplains military thinking and terminology. Walls of a building became bulkheads, toilets renamed as heads and the floor became a deck. This two month course also included Naval History, Working with Marines, Knowledge of welfare agencies, the Navy’s disciplinary system and how to survive when abandoning a burning ship and swimming through burning oil. As part of the training clergy of all faiths learned the appropriate prayers to be said if they ministered to a service member of another faith. Chaplains received copies of the necessary prayers for the dying, which under battle circumstances could be offered by any cleric.

From the first day of the war at Pearl Harbor, military clergy played an essential role in the spiritual and emotional health of armed forces personnel. During the attack on Pearl Harbor two Navy chaplains, Thomas L. Kirkpatrick and Aloysius H. Schmitt made the ultimate

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7 Honeywell, *Chaplains of the United States Army*, 248.
9 Ibid., 64.
sacrifice as they went down with their respective ships. After this attack the phrase "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" became popular.\textsuperscript{10} From that day on, throughout the war, clergy in uniform remained an integral and essential part of the military. Chaplains conducted services, counseled personnel and their families, parachuted into battle, became chaplains in prisoner of war camps, and prayed with and for the thousands of dead and dying. They brought comfort, solace and hope to their people.\textsuperscript{11}

Rabbis, lay-leaders and the Jewish community became an intricate element of the overall chaplaincy endeavor. The Jewish Welfare Board (JWB) became involved in this massive military build-up. On one level, the experiences of military rabbis paralleled that of other faiths who braved battle and served. Yet, on another level rabbis faced unique factors and realities. The role of the JWB, its rabbis and their circumstances require analysis on an annual basis beginning in 1940.

The JWB made a highly significant effort during the war. As in the First World War, the organization initiated a concerted effort to involve most of the American-Jewish community in its war activities. The National Army and Navy

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 24.

\textsuperscript{11}Army and Navy Chaplains remained with military troops taken captive by the Japanese in the Philippines at the beginning of the war. They ministered to their captured and starved personnel throughout the next four years. Most of the clergy involved did not survive this experience.
Committee of the JWB represented thirty-seven national Jewish groups. The over three hundred Jewish Community Centers participated as well. This power base, as well as historic role precedent of representing Jews in the military, helped create an efficient and significant welfare organization.  

Another significant development in the stature and growth of the JWB involved its work with the United Service Organization (USO). The JWB joined with other welfare agencies in the initial planning, fund raising, implementing and programming for this massive organization devoted to helping service personnel and their families. As the war progressed, JWB hired individuals to work on the USO staff as well.  

The national organization developed a number of sub-committees which focused the war efforts of the wider community. These groups included the Committee on Religious

12 "Directory: Army and Navy Service Division," January, 1942, AJHS-JWBS, Brandeis, Waltham. In addition to developing a sophisticated network of local support the JWB divided their geographic areas of responsibility. Using a military system they set up facilities and concentrated resources near major military bases and posts. By the conclusion of the war, almost every local Jewish Community Center had a direct connection to some aspect of the Jewish Welfare Board.

13 "Report of the Army and Navy Committee," March, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. The groups involved in the founding of the USO, in addition to the JWB included: Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Salvation Army, National Catholic Community Service, and The National Travelers Aid Association.
Activities, Publications Committee, Women’s Division, Bureau of War Records, Army and Navy Public Relations Committee, Committee on Personal Service and a Veterans Service Committee. As in the First World War, the JWB developed plans to re-establish buildings, facilities and the training of Field workers to supplement the Jewish chaplains.

The Committee on Religious Activities (CRA) directly impacted on the lives of service personnel. In 1940, David de Sola Pool, an Orthodox Rabbi of the Sephardic (Spanish) tradition led, this major group. He had many qualifications for this role. In the First World War, he served as a field organizer and Director of Army Camp work for the JWB. In the inter-war years he held a number of significant rabbinic positions in various Jewish organizations including the New York Board of Rabbis, Synagogue Council of America and president of the Union of Sephardic Congregations of America. Rabbis Pool’s stature in the American-Jewish and secular communities constituted a crucial element in the effective and substantial accomplishments of the JWB.

The main function of the Committee on Religious Activities revolved around the single issue of how best to identity and meet the religious and spiritual needs of Jewish service people. The CRA’s tasks included the


15Encyclopedia Judaica, 1974, "Rabbi David de sola Pool."

recruitment and endorsement of rabbis for service as military chaplains, the immediate religious needs of new prayer books, and other liturgical objects for Jews in service and questions regarding holiday furloughs and observances. This group also took the responsibility for coordinating activities of newly trained Jewish Welfare Workers with rabbis in uniform.

As it became apparent that America would enter the war, the Committee on Religious Activities began the process of recruiting rabbis for the chaplaincy. This committee wisely determined that, as much as possible, all its subsequent decisions and policies equally represented all three major branches of American Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The respective rabbinical schools became involved in this work as well. The task of this group consisted of interviewing and recruiting rabbis and ultimately granting them ecclesiastical endorsement. Without the JWB imprimatur rabbis did not receive certification by the military to be a chaplain. This diverse group of rabbis symbolized a unique institutional togetherness far beyond the norm. Typically traditional and liberal rabbis only occasionally worked

together. By the end of 1940 35 rabbis received endorsement for service, and 19 served at Army and Navy bases.\(^{17}\)

Another significant decision made by the JWB involved the recommendation to the Army that a Jewish chaplain be assigned to the Army Chief of Chaplain's staff to act as a liaison between the two organizations. The Army accepted this proposal and Rabbi Aryeh Lev served in that position for most of the war. The Navy did not have a rabbi on the Chief of Chaplains staff in Washington, although Chaplain Joshua Goldberg the senior ranking rabbi, unofficially served that role.\(^{18}\)

In early 1941, Chaplain Lev traveled extensively throughout the United States soliciting support from Jewish communities for the National JWB and the chaplaincy. These visits unified the Jewish community and helped focus their support of the chaplaincy.\(^{19}\) However, not everyone in the

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\(^{17}\)This decision to be as representative as possible had many ramifications. As the war progressed, decisions involving a host of Jewish related issues arose. In almost all of the cases the JWB responded with a unanimous judgment. Rather than the normative practice, which entailed each denomination offering its own opinion, often contradictory to another's. This sense of a greater good and higher purpose prevailed throughout the conflict and much of the subsequent history of the JWB.

\(^{18}\)Lev's position proved to be significant as most of the 311 rabbis who served in the war were in the Army not the Navy. Forty-two rabbis ministered to the Navy. Lev was in a crucial place to help make decisions about JWB and Army related concerns.

\(^{19}\)"Letter from B'nai Brith to Chaplain Lev," March 4, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. In one three day trip Chaplain Lev spoke at four B'nai Brith fraternal lodges from
Jewish community accepted the dominant leadership role of the Board.

In March of 1941, a small group of Orthodox rabbis, the Federation Of Orthodox Rabbis of America, complained to the War Department about the chaplaincy requirements. Becoming a military cleric required a secular bachelors degree and three years of theological training. However, according to Orthodox tradition, a man received rabbinical ordination through proving proficiency in certain Talmudic (Rabbinic) texts. Obtaining a secular college degree became irrelevant to this traditional practice. This lack of a secular degree disqualified such individuals from chaplaincy service.

This association also felt that the JWB did not fully represent their needs, primarily because of the Board's composition of Conservative and Reform rabbis, which this very traditional group considered to be unrabbinic. As Rabbi Lev noted:

Reform and Conservatives are by no means regarded by the Orthodox rabbinical Boards and people as well as rabbis in the true sense of Rabbinical leadership or rabbis in Israel, neither in private affairs and especially not in Army Life 20

North Carolina, South Carolina, and Jacksonville. This type of public relations benefitted the JWB and the military.

20 "Letter from Aryeh Lev to Louis Kraft Executive Director of the Jewish Welfare Board," March 19, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. In contemporary Judaism this belief continues. Traditionally oriented rabbis do not consider their more "liberal" colleagues as rabbis. The distinction is one of belief. Traditional rabbis believe that Jewish Law, both Written and Oral, was divinely given by God to Moses in its entirety. All early Rabbinic interpretations
The Federation requested a special meeting with Rabbi Lev and the Chief of Army Chaplains in Washington. The response from the Chief of Chaplains written by Rabbi Lev reiterated a clear message. The Jewish Welfare Board embodied the sole recognized civilian agency which dealt with the Jewish chaplaincy and any religious issues should be taken up with them. After some discussion the issue was resolved. Orthodox rabbis from this group received invitations to speak in military bases throughout the New York area.

To further solidify its position regarding Orthodox Jews and their rabbis serving as military chaplains Rabbi Samuel Berliant, the President of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America and associated with JWB, asked Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik his opinion of this issue. Rabbi Soloveitchik was recognized as a rabbinic genius and master of Jewish Law. His responses to Jewish questions affected people's religious practices. Rabbi Soloveitchik's conclusions about military service were definitive:

> It is not only permissible but it is also the duty of every Orthodox Rabbi to enlist in the armed forces for the purpose of rendering spiritual guidance to Jewish soldiers.\(^{21}\)

carry almost the same weight as the Biblical Commandments. More liberal rabbis consider the Bible to be a "Divinely Inspired" text, which lends itself to new interpretations and meanings. This difference in philosophy and outlook created a chasm between the Jewish movements. The JWB is unique in its ability to bridge this distance.

\(^{21}\text{Sidney B. Hoenig, The Orthodox Rabbi As A Military Chaplain (New York: Rabbinical Council of America, 1976), 55.}\)
Thus, while some minor dissatisfaction with JWB existed, the vast majority of Jews in America felt that the JWB overwhelmingly represented their needs.\footnote{Ibid. In our own time, adherents of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) are allowed to function as military chaplains without the required theological training. Mormon clergy come directly from their laity. These chaplains are classified as "Protestant" for chaplaincy purposes. Mormon chaplains take part in preaching and teaching at military Protestant chapels. Occasionally, someone will object to their Mormon orientation or lack of ordination.}

Anti-semitism reflected a continuing contemporary issue involving the Jewish community. Another one of the major committees initiated by the JWB in the summer of 1941, focussed on this topic. Named the Army and Navy Public Relations Committee the group developed three objectives. The first was to educate the general public that Jews fully participated in the national defense. A second task of the group concerned the verification and countering of anti-semitic rumors related to military issues. The third task reflected an internal community problem. The general Jewish community needed to be educated about the spiritual and welfare requirements of Jewish personnel in service and how best to met those needs.\footnote{"Public Relations Committee Organizational Outline," July, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. Using its technique of total community involvement this group had representatives on its working committee from: other Jewish Defense Organizations, the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish War Veterans and the Jewish Labor Committee. The group promulgated a fairly detailed program for utilizing the local and national media to help accomplish its aims.}
The Public Relations Committee decided to utilize the media whenever possible to promote religious sensitivities. Items about interfaith cooperation and understanding received special attention. Accounts of Jewish soldiers having duty on Christmas represented the types of stories utilized as a means of rebutting anti-semitic rumors. Local citizens initiated and formed speakers bureaus which stressed the Jewish role in the national defense and the desirability of interfaith cooperation.\(^\text{24}\)

The nature of anti-semitic rumors circulating at the time indicated the pervasive nature of this prejudice. Some rumors suggested that Jews did not fulfill their patriotic obligations. Others averred that Jewish doctors granted medical exemptions for Jews. The recommendations of the Public Relations Committee placed the responsibility for identifying such rumors on the individual Jewish citizen.\(^\text{25}\) These rumors illustrated part of the reality of Jews and rabbis in contemporary society. The fight against such rumors persisted throughout the war.

Recruiting of rabbis also remained a high priority for the JWB. By the summer of 1941, Rabbi Lev as the Chief of

\(^{24}\)Ibid.

\(^{25}\)Ibid. The Public Relations Committee recommended that Jewish citizens attempt to deal with local anti-Jewish rumors. If they were unsuccessful than the JWB became involved. The JWB's extensive organizational ties with the military and civilian communities greatly assisted in these efforts.
Chaplains representative and a liaison with the JWB, went to rabbinic conferences to promote the chaplaincy. Lev’s presentation contained a mixture of information and patriotism:

Once again, our national need had dissolved the barriers between man and man. They gather under freedom’s banner forgetting their differences, remembering their common liberties. They stand shoulder to shoulder, bound in a new comradeship.\textsuperscript{26}

The rabbis raised a number of issues in conjunction with their potential service as military clergy. One primary concern involved job security. The rabbis wanted to insure that those individuals who volunteered for service would have jobs upon their return. These types of questions had to be adequately addressed before some rabbis entered service. Lev, as an active duty chaplain, provided a contemporary picture about the chaplaincy. Despite such publicity and the changing situation in Europe rabbis entered service somewhat slowly.\textsuperscript{27}

In the summer of 1941, to partially compensate for the lack of active duty rabbis the JWB announced that a number of civilian rabbis would take positions at military posts for the summer months. These rabbis with no military rank, served under the aegis of the Welfare Board. They helped

\textsuperscript{26}"Copy of Chaplain Aryeh Lev’s Speech," March 1, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.

\textsuperscript{27}In fairness to these men, the war in Europe seemed distant. Many predicted that the fighting would cease and there would be no call to arms. Once war was declared, issues such as job security, became much less significant.
meet the religious needs of the soldiers and sailors. An August, 1941, letter from James G. Heller the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Reform (Liberal) rabbinic organization, reflected this concern about the lack of rabbinic commitment to the armed forces:

We rabbis are falling down in an important national responsibility. Our boys are deprived of vital help and there is a great danger of creating a harmful and unjust attitude to our people in the Army and in the nation as a whole...Thousands of our boys are asking why there are no rabbis in their camps to conduct services and provide counsel and guidance in the same way that the Christian boys are receiving...This is a call in the name of our faith, our country and our people.  

Heller's letter went on to detail the pay and role of the chaplains. The letter also addressed the rabbis' concerns of job security upon return from service. The response to this message appears to have been minimal.

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30 While this need for rabbis existed the JWB, and the military maintained high standards for those chosen to serve. In November of 1941, Senator Henry C. Lodge wrote the Army Chief of Chaplains Office requesting a waiver for a rabbi, one inch short of military requirements. The response from the Chief of Chaplains, Brigadier General, William A. Arnold, written by Chaplain Lev, noted that Army regulations had to be followed without any deviation. In a separate note to the JWB, Lev noted that with JWB's approval wavers would be contemplated. "Memorandum from Chaplain Lev to Rabbi Pool," November 10, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.
The process of recruiting rabbis into service became a moot point after Pearl Harbor. Within days of the attack, the JWB sent telegrams to rabbinic and Jewish organizational leaders calling for a meeting in New York to address, "The pressing shortage of Jewish Army chaplains calls for emergency action." At the meeting held December 16, the representatives decided that the recruitment of rabbis and lay welfare workers represented the highest task for the JWB. As the war commenced rabbis, as did millions of others, volunteered in record numbers for service.

Other faith groups underwent a similar experience in trying to secure an acceptable number of military chaplains. The Catholic Church, in some ways, paralleled the same type of expansion that characterized the JWB. In April of 1941, following patterns established in the First World War, the Sacred Consistorial Congregation granted the Military Ordinary of the United States and his chaplains special dispensations. These allowed the Military Vicar to be the spiritual leader of Catholics in the armed forces regardless of their home of record. The Military Vicar, Archbishop

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31 "Telegram from Frank L. Weil-President of Jewish Welfare Board to Jewish National Organizations," December 9, 1941, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.

32 "Once again, the major rabbinic, congregational and theological groups agreed that they would be most effective by coordinating their war-related activities with the JWB. "News Release-from JWB," December 16, 1941, JWBC-AJHS.

33 Smith, The Military Ordinariate, 149.
Francis J. Spellman, became involved in recruiting priests for military service. Archbishop Spellman and Bishop John F. O'Hara spent much of 1941 adding priests to the military rolls. Eventually, in April of 1941, a special appeal for priests, similar to that for rabbis, went throughout the country:

While the response to appeals of the Military Ordinariate for chaplains has been gratifying, the need for priests is still great. Posts with 2,000 Catholics have been left for weeks without Catholic Chaplains; some camps with many times that number have an inadequate supply of priests...Not a single transport has a Catholic chaplain because there are none to spare.34

By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, over 500 priests served on active duty. By the conclusion of hostilities, 3200 priests had ministered to the armed forces. Additionally, civilian auxiliary Catholic chaplains assisted military posts whose active duty clergy transferred overseas.35

In January of 1942, as the country actively entered the war the Committee of Religious Activities of the JWB underwent a significant reorganization. First, a new executive director Rabbi Phillip Bernstein working with Rabbi Pool, took on the daily administration of the ever-growing program. A new committee formed, the Committee on

34Ibid., 155.

35Ibid., 158. A parallel process occurred with rabbinic coverage as reserve rabbis, ordained Jewish Welfare Board workers, and trained Lay-leaders filled the places of rabbis who went to overseas assignments.
Army and Navy Religious Activities (CANRA). This new group increased the number of denominational rabbis and rabbinic groups which comprised its membership. It also reflected the notion of denominational parity among the major Jewish religious branches. This sense of equity prevailed in all of CANRA's sub-committees. Each sub-committee regardless of the group, contained three rabbis representing the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements. In subsequent notification to the Chiefs of Chaplains about the reorganization which produced the new CANRA Rabbi Pool proclaimed, "The Committee is completely and officially representative of the whole of the American Rabbinate."  

This equality created an environment of effectiveness. Major religious decisions occurred with a unanimous or near unanimous vote. The notion of parity expressed itself in the initial screening process for rabbis with the JWB. These future Jewish spiritual guides affirmed, that regardless of their specific denominational orientation, they could accommodate the religious needs of all Jews.

Within months the CANRA became a significant element in the Jewish community. It assumed full responsibility within the JWB for all spiritually related war activities. These included re-publication of the Jewish Prayer Book and Bible, issues of Kosher food, religious messages for Christian and

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Jewish chaplains and arranging on-site visits by CANRA leaders with military chaplains.\(^{37}\)

Within the CANRA, each rabbinic organization provided rabbis for military service. These rabbinic groups used various approaches toward recruiting. The Reform movement, represented by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, used a sophisticated system for securing candidates. The movement held regular meetings with its synagogue and seminary representatives. All recent seminary graduates received an evaluation regarding their availability for service. The order of rabbinic eligibility began with single rabbis, followed by married rabbis without children and concluded with married rabbis with children. Senior rabbis from around the country visited these graduates and informed them about their obligations regarding the chaplaincy.\(^{38}\) These senior rabbis requested that the congregations pay the differential between the rabbi's civilian earnings and his potential military compensation. Rabbis who refused to consider the chaplaincy at all received counsel that their rabbinic careers would not

\(^{37}\)Additionally, CANRA contacted our military allies and offered support for their Jewish military personnel.

\(^{38}\)Barnett R. Brickner, "What's What With Chaplaincies, Hebrew Union College Monthly March, 1942. Congregations agreed in principle that whenever a rabbi returned from service he would, as soon as possible, take over his prior position in the Temple. The Reform Seminary, Hebrew Union College, also agreed to ordain its upcoming classes on an accelerated basis, providing more rabbis for the armed forces.
advance due to the fact that others had volunteered for service. 39

The Conservative (Moderate) Movement chose a voluntary draft system. It formed a rabbinical availability committee, which summoned rabbis to serve as the group deemed necessary. The Orthodox (Traditional) movement was not represented by a single seminary or rabbinic group. Often some of the rabbis with a more traditional orientation, did not meet the chaplaincy requirements. The CANRA decided these on a case by case basis. By the end of the war, 311 rabbis had been endorsed and served. Of this total, 147 came from the Reform movement, 96 from the Conservative and 68 from the Orthodox. 40

Within two months of entering the war, the first wartime conference of military rabbis sponsored by the JWB convened in Atlanta, Georgia. Seventeen Army and one Navy rabbi came together to discuss a multitude of topics. Most of the topics dealt with concerns about their new and expanding ministries. These areas of discussion included the type of services to offer (Traditional or Liberal), how

39Ibid., 2. Under newly revised guidelines chaplains appointed to the military in war time came under a new designation, "Temporary Acting Chaplains". This meant that as soon as the fighting ceased they would return to their civilian status. They held their commissions for the duration of the war. They were not in the reserves or full active duty which would have entitled them to serve in the military after hostilities.

to get maximum attendance at services, military protocol, developing educational programs, relationships with local Jewish organizations and communications with JWB welfare workers. This conference also spent time dealing with relationships with Christian chaplains and issues of inter-faith chapel construction. Chaplain Aryeh Lev attended as a representative of the Army Chief of Chaplains office. He discussed with the group the issue of future military assignments.  

This rabbinic chaplain’s group recommended that the JWB set up a supplemental fund. These monies assisted the rabbis in their far-flung ministries which often included a great deal of travel and the lending of money to Jewish men for Kosher food or personal emergencies. The rabbis felt that the conference had been successful. This conference led to future meetings as events made it feasible.

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41 "Memorandum of Conference of Jewish Chaplains," February, 1942, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. Lev’s position of working for the Chief of Chaplains as the official liaison with the JWB gave him a unique perspective concerning the rabbis in service. He addressed both the JWB and the Army as the need arose. He played a significant role in the assigning of Jewish chaplains.

42 Ibid. 10.

43 Ibid., 11. For the most part, the military rabbis functioned in isolated duty assignments. They begrudgingly accepted minimal contacts with fellow rabbis. Military rabbinic conferences acted as morale builders for the relatively few rabbis. It allowed them to pray in community, share stories and commiserate together.
One of the issues which affected the Jewish chaplains during the war concerned societal prejudices. In the First World War few if any documented cases existed of anti-semitic incidences between soldiers. In this war, many people came into the military with preconceived prejudices which conflicted with notions of national unity and patriotism. A number of organizations attempted to confront and counter such prejudicial beliefs. A pamphlet published in 1942 by the Council for Democracy and National Committee on the Causes and Cure of War delineated the differing types of prejudices and rumors which their organization opposed. Contemporary rumors included the belief that the entire U.S. fleet had been destroyed at Pearl Harbor and that the Government would not be able to pay off its war debts. Rumors directed toward Jews existed as well. Anti-semitic allegations suggested that Jews somehow initiated the war and that President Roosevelt was controlled by a clique of Jewish advisors. This group worked to expose such allegations as false rumors which harmed the country.44

Another type of prejudice directed against Jews revived the old stereotype of Jewish non-patriotism. David Wyman, a scholar of Holocaust studies, has suggested that the most recurrent slander directed against the Jews emphasized that somehow they avoided military service while Christian men

44 American Jewish Congress, Chicago Division, December, 1942.
went off to war. He cites a popular ditty to affirm this idea:

So its onward into battle,
Let us send the Christian slobs.
When the war is done and victory won,
All us Jews will have their jobs.  

Nazi propagandists also promoted this theme of Jews not doing their fair share of fighting. Propaganda pamphlets dropped from airplanes to American armed forces showed a caricature of a Jewish man with his arm around a slim girl. The title of the caption, "The Girl You Left Behind" and the paragraph under the picture left no doubt as to its purpose:

Like many other home warriors he (Levy) made the grade piling up dough and growing fat on the sacrifices of young American boys fighting on foreign battlefields...Bob (the soldier) was shipped to Europe to fight for the causes of Sam Levy and his kind.  

The military, with other groups, actively fought these types of allegations.

The large majority of Jewish chaplains spoke of the remarkable cooperation which they received from their Christian colleagues. Many felt that their successful ministries owed much to the assistance of their non-Jewish religious leaders.

Somewhere in the history of the Jewish military chaplaincy there should be recorded the simple fact that our ministration to the half-million or more men entrusted to us would never have been possible were it not for the cooperation of our Christian colleagues.

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46 Rabbi Eric Friedland, Personal Interview by author, Chicago, November 1986.
not for the active help and blessing of our Christian colleagues. 47

The military throughout the war, exhibited its characteristic qualities of emphasizing fairness and equal treatment, especially in the area of religious sensitivity. Chaplains surrounded by an anti-semitic society and a world full of Nazi propaganda led the way for fairness and interfaith awareness.

The National Conference of Christians and Jews, working with the armed forces organized two major programs to counter prejudicial notions. In June of 1942, the Conference announced the creation of a new committee, the Department of Camps and Other Military Bases. This group created a speakers bureau of distinguished religious leaders of all faith groups to visit military installations. In conjunction with the chaplains or morale officer, they offered lectures about the common objectives of American citizens during the war and in the post war era. Within its first year, different speakers travelled to hundreds of bases and by their estimation addressed over two million

service personnel. The program constantly portrayed a clear description of American ideals:

The program of the National Conference is very simple...As children of God, we should all share a brotherhood which calls for individual and social responsibility and reciprocity. America is a demonstration of this brotherhood. Its citizens thrive in understanding, not prejudice; in mutuality, not selfishness; in giving to and receiving from each other equality of opportunity and respect for personality.

Military camps and bases also received films and messages also promoting this attitude.

Another program the National Conference developed for the military involved dinners honoring individuals who represented the ideals of the organization. In December of 1942, the Conference recognized Father William A. Arnold, a brigadier general and the Army Chief of Chaplains. High ranking generals attended this program, including General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff. The generals' knowledge of the group and its ideals of tolerance and mutual respect helped insure the success of this program. The wisdom of utilizing the military as an arena to fight prejudice was apparent. Prejudice in a military environment...
undermined the morale and fighting ability of the forces. Men and women united in their efforts to maintain democratic institutions and way of life were certainly more motivated as a result of these types of programs.

In the midst of this work, the military and chaplaincy build-up continued. Rabbis came into the armed forces in increasing numbers. As 1942 concluded, over one hundred rabbis accepted endorsement for military service. Thirty-two others failed to receive certification for a number of reasons: age, physical disabilities or incompatibility with the military. Of the hundred active duty rabbis, over half went to overseas assignments. Early in the war, the military and the JWB decided that soldiers and sailors overseas had a greater need for religious coverage than did their counterparts stateside. This decision to place rabbis and other chaplains with combat and overseas troops put them in harm's way meant, some chaplains made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Rabbi Alexander Goode embodied the type of man who represented Judaism for American Jews. Chaplain Goode, was married with one daughter. He received his ordination in 1937 and served in civilian congregations. Rabbi Goode earned his Ph.D from Johns Hopkins University in 1940. He entered the Army in August of 1942 at the age of thirty-one. After his basic training and orientation he received orders to travel overseas to a base in Greenland. Initially, Rabbi
Goode attempted to get these orders modified. Chaplain Goode suggested to the Army that other bases needed rabbis more than Greenland.\(^{51}\) Nevertheless after some time, he prepared for his departure to the overseas assignment.

In late January 1943, Goode along with three other Army chaplains boarded the United States transport ship "Dorchester," accompanying over 900 troops ordered to the European theater. In the early morning hours (1:00 AM) of February 3, 1943, 90 miles from Greenland, a German submarine torpedoed the ship. Immediately, the ship began to sink. The soldiers, asleep below decks, were jarred awake. Within a few moments, the order to abandon ship came. The few available life boats were launched. Due to the abruptness of the attack and the chaos and panic below decks, many of the troops came to the decks of the ship without life jackets or gloves. Without these items they would not survive long in the frigid waters. At this time of crisis, the chaplains began giving their own life-jackets and gloves to the panicked soldiers. They offered words of calm and encouragement in the face of the catastrophe. Within minutes, according to legend, the chaplains stood arm

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\(^{51}\) "Memorandum from Aryeh Lev to the JWB," December 1942, JWBC-AJHS, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Goode wrote to Lev in the hope that he would be able to have the orders changed. Lev responded that, "orders were orders," and that if the Army and the JWB made a determination that a need existed, then that person should obey the orders. In a personal note Lev wrote, "This man is bitter. He is away from his family. His wife is not settled and his child may be sick...his mind is not at peace."
in arm offering their final prayers as the ship slowly sank into the dark waters. In addition to Rabbi Goode, Chaplains George Fox and Clark Poling, both Protestant ministers and John Washington a Catholic priest, perished with the ship.52

Throughout the war, in countless circumstances, interfaith acts occurred most with the ultimate purpose of serving the troops. Rabbi Robert I. Kahn described a situation where he as the only available chaplain held a prayer service for troops going into a combat area. Chaplain Kahn was on a ship heading into combat within two hours. Assembling the men he arranged for a Catholic and a Protestant lay-leader to lead the appropriate prayers. He then held a brief Jewish liturgy. Afterwards, he passed out Bibles, rosaries and Mezzuzahs (Jewish amulets). Many of the soldiers took all of the offered objects.

Chaplain Abraham Avrech, emphasizing the vast distances over which his congregation was based, told of a fellow Protestant chaplain who personally notified Jewish personnel of the approaching High Holidays. The Protestant chaplain

52"Four Chaplains Collection," United States Army Center of Military History, Washington D.C. The brave acts of the chaplains led to the apocryphal saying attributed to one of the chaplains, "Take this, my son, you need it more than I do." The story of sacrifice helped lift the morale of the entire country in the winter of 1943. The chaplains were awarded medals, Distinguished Service Crosses for bravery posthumously. A postage stamp was created in their memory and a chapel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania is named after them.
insured that all personnel desiring to attend the services received furloughs. Most impressively when he discovered that there was no Torah available for the service, the chaplain requisitioned a military plane flew hundreds of miles, borrowed a Torah and returned to the base in time for the commencement of the services.\textsuperscript{53}

The military led the way on interfaith sensitivities. When Congress in 1942, appropriated monies for new military chapels the Army, through the Chief of Chaplains, specifically determined that any new chapels be constructed as multi-purpose units. This allowed all faith groups to utilize them without any liturgical difficulties. Chapel usage regulations reinforced this idea. No permanent religious items should be placed inside the chapels. Any paintings, or religious fixtures needed to be movable so that within a brief period, another faith group could quickly utilize the chapel. This powerful symbol of one house of prayer for all explicitly affirmed mutual respect.\textsuperscript{54}

While most of the rabbis served in the Army, some forty-two, fulfilled their active duty with the Navy and Marines. The Navy supplied chaplains and doctors for the Marines. In March of 1943 many of these rabbis met in Norfolk, Virginia with representatives of the CANRA to

\textsuperscript{53}Barish, ed., \textit{Rabbis in Uniform}, 310.

\textsuperscript{54}Gushwa, \textit{The United States Army Chaplaincy}, 114-115.
discuss contemporary issues. One of the major areas discussed involved the differing chains of communication between the Navy and the CANRA. Unlike the Army, which designated a chaplain to be the liaison with the JWB, the Navy did not follow this procedure. Furthermore, the Army Chief of Chaplains, acted independently as an autonomous military branch. The Navy Chief of Chaplains often acted only after consultation with his superiors in the Chief of Naval Operations Office. Chaplain Joshua Goldberg, the Navy representative to the JWB, did not have the access to official chaplaincy information which Chaplain Lev enjoyed.

The differing status of the relationship between the CANRA and the Army and Navy evidenced itself in two ways. Army rabbis routinely sent monthly status reports to the Army and CANRA. Navy rabbis were under no military obligation to send such reports. Army chaplains required annual re-endorsement from the JWB, while Navy rabbis only required their initial endorsement. Much discussion at this conference focussed on developing a clearer working relationship between Navy chaplains and the JWB. This lack of an ongoing relationship may have been a factor in the relatively small number of rabbis who served with the Navy or Marines.

As with the Army rabbis Navy and Marine rabbis experienced a multitude of demanding assignments which challenged their creativity. One chaplain Samuel Sandmel,
who later became an expert in Christian-Jewish relations, emphatically defined his service as a military clergy, "A Naval Chaplain is a chaplain to men of all faiths, and Jewish, only during periods of divine services or when the problem of the consultor was specifically Jewish." 55

Another rabbi, Julius Mark, explained that in addition to his Sabbath services, he held Sunday morning services as well. 56 The Naval chaplains as a group, affirmed the attitude that they functioned as non-sectarian ministers for most of the week. They visited hospitals and their men perceived them to be the spiritual guides for the entire unit.

Another aspect of the Norfolk discussions concerned the requirements of a good Navy rabbi. After some general recommendations, such as the desire to work with young men and a sympathetic understanding of Christianity, the Navy rabbis suggested that more traditional rabbis did not do well in a Naval setting:

The consensus seemed to be that while no general rule could be laid down, the nature of the work and the measure of the liberal adjustment required, led to the conclusion that the chaplain should come from the


56 Ibid. In Judaism, while the Sabbath Day has its own set of prayers, daily services are observed in many congregations as well. Having a Sunday morning service in a military context made sense, because it gave the Jewish personnel a place to go when their peers were attending their own worship services. Depending on the base this practice is still followed.
reform group; the Sabbath and Kashruth (dietary laws) cannot be observed as they can in certain Army set-ups.\textsuperscript{57}

Another area of discussion by the Navy rabbis dealt with anti-semitism. The rabbis generally considered that this topic represented, "no problem at all."\textsuperscript{58} In a recent interview with one of the attenders at this conference, Chaplain Joshua Goldberg mentioned that in his position as a Naval Chaplain based in a Naval District office he did not encounter anti-semitism. He suggested that while individuals in the military may have been anti-Jewish, for the most part the system reacted appropriately and dealt with all concerns raised. He further stated that "The Navy represented a fair institution which treated him with great dignity."\textsuperscript{59} A JWB representative reminded the Naval Chaplains that all cases of suspected anti-semitism should be forwarded to them for investigation.

A similar conference of Army rabbis, held in July of 1943 in San Francisco highlighted some of their concerns. Chaplain Lev represented the Chief of Chaplains Office. One of the major topics of the rabbis concerned current and

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid. To a large extent, this is still the custom. Liberal rabbis join the Navy, where more traditional rabbis serve in the Army and Air Force.

\textsuperscript{58}"Conference of CANRA Representatives and Jewish Naval Chaplains," March, 1943, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham, 4.

\textsuperscript{59}Rabbi Joshua Goldberg, Personal Interview with author, Palm Beach, Florida, November, 1992.
future assignments. Speaking for the Army and the JWB, Chaplain Lev estimated that by the end of 1943 there would approximately 225 rabbis in the Army. Over one half of their assignments dealt with overseas posts. This need for rabbis overseas came from military commanders. The basis of these requests concerned the large number of Jewish wounded as well as those killed in action, who required hospital visits or funeral duties. As stateside-assigned rabbis received orders for overseas duty, JWB welfare workers and local community resources attempted to provide religious coverage as needed. The War Department received requests for Jewish chaplains from all points of the globe. As an example of the demand, Chaplain Lev indicated that more rabbis would be ordered to North Africa to be with our troops there.

Subsequent discussions at the conference dealt with the procedure utilized for choosing rabbis for dangerous assignments. Rabbi Goode's death stimulated concern about this. Single men received the first overseas assignments followed by married men without children and then men with children. Another factor considered in assignments involved the rabbi's specific religious orientation. Throughout the war the need for rabbis overseas exceeded the supply of available rabbis.⁶⁰

The need for rabbis overseas was constant. Chaplain David M. Eichhorn was assigned to the XV Corps of the Third Army. In 1944 he found himself in the town of Luneville, France, which American forces barely controlled. Since the High Holiday of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) would take place within a few hours, he hastily made arrangements for services. His account of this prayer service is memorable:

The next evening the unexpected happened. Jewish soldiers from all over the XV Corps sector—dirty, bewhiskered and fully armed...With no American military units of any kind between themselves and thousands of German soldiers 4 miles away, they came, 350 of them...I tell you unashamedly that, for the first time since I have been in France, I broke down and cried...But this was too much. The noises of battle raged around us as we intoned our traditional prayers. The men kept their full battle dress and their guns at the ready.61

Another area of discussion at the conference centered on the various types of ministry which rabbis offered. In addition to their regular schedule of services, counseling and visitations, some chaplains offered unique programs. Chaplain Jacob L. Halevi described a special service he wrote with Hebrew readings and participation of soldiers. Christian chaplains shared in the service entitled, "They Shall Not Die" his liturgy commemorated Jewish teenagers who had been killed in the war.62

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61 Barish, ed., Rabbis in Uniform, 134.

Much conference time centered on the various types of Jewish programming. Many chaplains participated in orientation lectures given to incoming troops. Some, such as Chaplain Robert S. Marcus, met the troop trains as they arrived to his unit and gave all the soldiers schedules of chaplaincy-related programs. Chaplain Martin M. Weitz took pictures of all those who attended his services and made them available to be send home to family and friends. Chaplain Isidore Barnett described his "Jeep' ministry. His troops bivouacked in widely scattered desert areas so he travelled from camp to camp conducting multiple Sabbath and, as appropriate, holiday services. Chaplain Nathan E. Barasch, indicated that part of his responsibilities included conducting services for other faith groups.

We have the responsibility of conducting general services (Protestant) and for this we use non-denominational hymns in the Army and Navy Hymnal. These types of imaginative approaches to ministry reflected the creativeness of military clergy.

63Ibid., 14-18. Many of the rabbis covered large areas to visit their troops. Military transportation was not always available. The JWB, provided interest-free loans which the rabbis used to purchase vehicles to help them in their visitations.

64Ibid. Recently, the author of this dissertation travelled aboard a nuclear submarine, USS Maryland, during the concluding days of Passover and on Easter Sunday. On that morning, a non-denominational service and sermon was offered to all. As a Navy chaplain, I had the obligation to lead these sailors in prayer on a special Holy day.
One example of a chaplain's innovativeness belonged to Rabbi Earl S. Stone. Assigned to an army division in Tunisia, Chaplain Stone made plans for the upcoming Passover festive meal, the Seder. The day before the Holiday he was sworn to secrecy and told that the entire Division would on the night of the Passover be on an all-night march and surprise attack on a German stronghold. The Seder meal would be impossible to hold. That same evening Stone called all his troops together in an open field in the Tunisia desert and offered a fascinating service:

In an open field that night, I stood before some 300 hundred hardened veterans of six arduous months of battle...I asked them to sit on the ground and to conjure up in their minds the memory of a seder at home...I recited the Kiddish (Wine Prayer) with an imaginary cup of wine in my hand and had everyone break an imaginary matzo (Unleavened Bread)...At the end of the service man after man, with tears flowing down his cheeks, bade me Gut Yontif, (Happy Holiday).

This type of flexibility is consistent with conducting services in a battle-field circumstances.

A final minor area of discussion raised during this July conference reflected ongoing difficulties between the local JWB workers and Jewish chaplains. While they both worked for the same goals, the assisting of Jewish personnel, their specific focus often differed. In many bases the Welfare workers devoted their time to USO commitments and then to specific Jewish concerns. With the arrival of a Jewish chaplain, areas of responsibility and

65Barish, ed., Rabbis in Uniform 157-158.
leadership occasionally proved difficult to determine. For the most part however, the rabbis and workers worked together as a team.

In 1943 the Army issued its annual report of the chaplaincy which indicated the level of danger that all chaplains faced during war. Twenty-four clerics died in battle while thirty-nine perished in non-battle accidents or from illnesses and another thirty-three became prisoners of war. Military clerics received one hundred and twenty-nine awards for heroism and bravery. Rabbis accumulated their fair share in all of these categories. Dangerous conditions became a standard element in some people's ministries. Chaplain Edgar E. Siskin, serving with the Marines on Peliiiu island described one Yom Kippur service which certainly held plenty of risk:

The altar rigged by Chaplain Murphy, division Chaplain was improvised out of ammunition boxes, and was covered by a length of captured Japanese silk...There we were not 200 yards from a ridge still held by the Japs, within range of sniper and mortar fire. And throughout the service the artillery kept up a shattering fire overhead. While these actual battles continued the fight against societal anti-semitism proceeded. As mentioned above, the pervasiveness of anti-semitism represented a factor in the Second World War that for the most part had not existed

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66 Chief of Chaplains, The Chaplain Serves: 1943 Annual Report, Department of the Army, War Department, March 1944.

during the First World War. This reality manifested itself in a variety of ways. While some cases involved individuals, others included the general public. In April of 1943, a public outcry ensued about anti-semitic references in an Army approved book of Biblical readings. The book entitled, My Daily Readings From the New Testament, contained a footnote which referred to Jews: "The Jews are the synagogue of Satan, The True Synagogue is the Christian Church." 68

The Protestant Textbook Commission initially brought this issue to the public's attention. The mission of this group included eliminating anti-semitic references from American textbooks. In this case, the JWB, Military Ordinariate, and the Army Chief of Chaplains became involved. They worked together in a highly cooperative spirit. Within weeks, the book's publishers offered an apology. None of the offensive copies were distributed and future editions received a modified text. The thousands of copies already distributed remained in use. 69

Another aspect of a military rabbi's life dealt with his relationships with non-Jewish clergy. Their experiences varied widely. A personal letter written by Rabbi Frank


69 Ibid. In this instance the various religious, and military officials used to cooperating and working together brought this issue to a quick conclusion with a minimum of negative publicity.
Bennett in August of 1943 described some of the Christian clergy that he met as he entered the chaplaincy program. He wrote that most of these individuals came from small towns across America. They brought with them widely accepted Jewish stereotypes. One common belief suggested that Jews possessed more wealth than most Americans and that if Jews served in the military, they did so as supply officers. When Rabbi Bennett spoke to his chaplain colleagues about the plight of Jews in Europe he received some startling responses:

They feel sorry for the Jew but will do nothing about it. They sincerely believe Jewish suffering is part of God's will and who are they to oppose the will of God. Jewish suffering is due to either (a) punishment for rejecting Jesus or (b) as a necessary principle for the second coming. 70

These types of informal exchanges constantly occurred throughout the life and careers of the chaplains. Navy chaplain David Goldberg mentioned that he went to the Navy's chaplaincy school at William and Mary College on a regular basis throughout the war. During these visits, he and a Catholic chaplain engaged in a friendly debate about the various tenets of their religions. Goldberg said that the Protestant clergy especially the Baptists, "loved it." 71

In September of 1943, a report from Rabbi Norman Siegel described a high Holiday service held in the Central Pacific

70 "Rabbi Bennett Correspondence with JWB," August, 1943, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.

71 Rabbi Joshua Goldberg Interview, November, 1992.
Command which demonstrated another type of interfaith cooperation and sensitivity. A number of high ranking officers and Christian chaplains attended this service. The Ark, which held the Torah scroll and other ritual objects, had been fashioned and sown by Christian friends of the Jewish chapel. These types of activities helped the troops learn the value of interfaith cooperation. The level and type of these programs fluctuated during the war.72

By 1944, some rabbis felt the physical and emotional toll of intensive fighting and separations from home. Rabbis often covered enormous geographical areas to minister to personnel. In the Pacific command, rabbis did not receive any reliefs nor adequate rest or recuperation time as intense fighting against the Japanese progressed from island to island. These types of stressful and strenuous conditions led to physical and emotional breakdowns for some rabbis. They returned to the states as medical patients.73

To alleviate this situation the JWB recommended to the military authorities that rabbis be assigned to the main headquarters of a Division or theater of operations. This change gave them more access to needed religious supplies as well as proximity to supervisory chaplains and officers. The JWB also suggested that more rabbis be assigned to

72Barish, ed., Rabbi In Uniform, 310.

73Janowsky, Change and Challenge, preface p. vii.
particularly large chaplaincy areas. The military adopted many of these suggestions.\textsuperscript{74}

The stress that rabbis and many chaplains experienced manifested itself in a number of ways. One such indicator involved rabbis who attempted to leave the chaplaincy. All military clergy received an endorsement by civilian religious agencies which attested to their theological training. If the religious group withdrew the endorsement the military had no choice but to let the officer return home. He lost his official standing as a cleric in the armed forces.\textsuperscript{75} In September and October of 1944, two rabbis indicated their desire to have their endorsements withdrawn by the JWB. Rabbi Ephraim Bennett, indicated in correspondence to JWB that he no longer felt suited for Army work:

\begin{quote}
I have developed a great resentment against the Army, (of sufficient intensity to be labelled a complex), and do not intent to do another day's work as long as I remain a chaplain. I am pleading with CANRA to withdraw their endorsement in order to spare the necessity of having recourse to other means which may prove to be very embarrassing to myself in order to get out of the Army.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{75}The religious and welfare agencies hesitated to utilize this option. If they did it too often, the military might lose confidence in the clergy and perhaps change the role of chaplains in the armed forces.

\textsuperscript{76}"Correspondence from Rabbi Bennett with JWB," October, 1944, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.
Within weeks of this letter, another arrived at JWB sent by Rabbi Charles Freedman stating his desire to get out of the Army on the basis of an emotional family problem. In over four years of active service, the closest assignment to his family was over 1,200 miles away. His younger son suffered from a chronic disease which prevented his family from accompanying him during his initial stateside tour. His letter reflected his anguish:

Upon leaving the service, I intend to continue my profession but under conditions which would not violate my conscience...To continue in my present path would shortly end in personal disintegration and probable embarrassment to CANRA. Of equal importance is the fact that I would have my family with me and be able to assist in the care of my baby.  

In both of these cases, the Welfare Board in conjunction with the military acted but did not withdraw their endorsements as chaplains. The JWB worked with the military to help alleviate specific concerns. Medical discharges or humanitarian transfers often met the immediate concerns of those in need. The loss of an endorsement rarely occurred. Nonetheless, the stress of rabbis became exacerbated by the great distances which they covered.

In most cases however, these vast areas of coverage created innovative and interesting solutions. The career of

77 "Rabbi Charles Freedman Correspondence with JWB," October, 1944, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.

78 The danger of endorsements being withdrawn was clear. Chaplains might view it as a standard option for avoiding harsh military circumstances.
the late Rabbi Harold H. Gordon illustrated his unique approach and ministry which covered enormous territory. In 1944, a senior chaplain asked Chaplain Gordon if he liked air travel. Having flown once and enjoyed it Rabbi Gordon answered in the affirmative. Within a few months he received orders to the Army Air Corps and a chaplaincy assignment which covered an immense geographical area. One typical ministry circuit took him from a home base in Maine to the following bases and locations: Canada, Labrador, Baffin Island, Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, Prestwick (Scotland), the Azores, Bermuda, Laguardia field (New York) and Manchester, New Hampshire. During these travels Chaplain Gordon amassed over 200,000 miles, at a time when transoceanic flying was neither safe or luxurious.

In all these travels, Rabbi Gordon in addition to his personal gear, religious supplies, Jewish periodicals and Kosher snacks carried a Portable Torah (Hebrew scroll containing the first five books of the Bible). He used this Torah as the spiritual basis for any religious service that he conducted. This Torah, kept in a separate travel box, became known as, "The Flying Torah." While most rabbis did

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not travel as extensively as Chaplain Gordon, the pattern of wide-area coverage prevailed.\textsuperscript{80}

One of the most essential areas of responsibility for military rabbis concerned questions of Jewish law and rituals. Under war-related circumstances, certain Jewish observances, proved difficult to maintain. In a military setting, especially in combat, soldiers wanted to insure that they adhered to the correct rituals. Throughout the war questions of Jewish practice and ritual observances came from a number of sources: the Chiefs of Chaplains Office, civilian and military rabbis, and of course, the troops. Questions, with wide-ranging ramifications for all personnel, were passed on to the Committee of Army and Navy Religious Activities for appropriate responses. In Jewish tradition this process of asking and answering questions became known as "Responsa." In responsa literature questions asked and answered by prominent rabbinical leaders often had the force of religious law, i.e., they became the normative practice for Jews.

The response committee formed by the JWB faced difficult tasks. First, it operated on a tri-rabbinic level, attempting to represent all three movements of Judaism. This comprised a daunting task as each branch

\textsuperscript{80}Today this pattern is still operative. Military rabbis assigned to major bases have responsibilities for providing rabbinic coverage for large geographical areas. These other areas include other branches of service in varying states or countries.
viewed Jewish tradition and religious requirements from varying perspectives. A second concern dealt with the questions themselves. The committee needed to respond to a question but also qualify their answers. They felt obligated to inform the civilian community that their answers referred to a war emergency-circumstance and not applicable to civilian setting. To further emphasize this point, the committee carefully chose the queries which they responded to. The committee confined most of their responses to war-related issues. Many of these, unfortunately, focused on Jewish practices during war in regard to death, funerals, burial practices, interment and reinterment.

The response procedure followed a set pattern. Jewish tradition was studied to ascertain if the question at hand had been addressed, in any context, historically. Any precedents from within the tradition were then reconciled with the war-time experiences of the JWB rabbis on the committee. Some of the questions dealt with traditional issues of marriage and divorce altered by war circumstances. Technology such as airplanes brought up new issues. Often, questions involved a number of issues.

The following query typifies this procedure. The question to the committee concerned a military rabbi who was asked to participate in a funeral service on the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday. Funerals in the Jewish tradition are not
conducted on the Sabbath. The background to the question provided more details. A military plane crashed killing a number of military men, including a Jewish soldier. The appropriate authorities made all the arrangements for a military memorial service and funeral to take place on Saturday. The bodies, mangled and inseparable, were to be buried in a mass grave. The active duty rabbi said he could participate in the military aspects of the service but not offer any prayers. Jewish tradition clearly forbade burial on the Sabbath. Yet there existed some historical rabbinic exceptions to this general rule. In the event of an epidemic where the civilian authorities ordered a burial on a Friday evening, (the beginning of the Sabbath), burials could take place. This precedent, added to the exigencies of the war situation, produced the following response from the committee:

On the battlefield where a burial detail is specifically ordered to bury the dead, the Jewish chaplain and whatever Jewish soldiers receive the order must bury the dead even on the Sabbath.

81Beginning in Biblical times, not working on the Sabbath Day has been a Jewish legal imperative. Any work including preparations for a funeral were prohibited. The funeral itself took away from the joyful observance of the Sabbath. Jewish practice always took the Sabbath day into consideration. For example, if a person passes away on a Wednesday or Thursday, without any special factors, a burial will occur prior to the Sabbath. People dying on a Friday will either be buried hurriedly, or held till Sunday. Jewish cemeteries and funerals homes do not operate on Saturday.

82Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, Responsa in War Time (New York: Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, 1968), 59.
The committee qualified their response somewhat. First, they recommended that the on-site rabbi ask for a one day delay of the ceremony. Also, the Committee recommended that sections of the Hebrew service be changed to reflect the fact that they were offered on the Sabbath.

These responses successfully met different criteria. First, all the Jewish movements participated in the decision. A similar process of deciding Jewish law did not occur in the civilian community. Second, the ruling related to the realities of a battle-field setting and gave rabbis needed permission to carry out their religious and military duties. Finally, the scope of this committee remained limited to the specific war-circumstances. If these opinions circulated into the larger Jewish community more traditional rabbis would certainly have argued against them and the "Orthodoxy" of their Orthodox colleagues on the committee. After the war, the committee published a pamphlet containing the other issues which they had wrestled with.\footnote{Ibid. The "Responsa Committee" over the course of the war dealt with a number of topics including: problems with Dietary Laws, marriages performed over the phone, Laws of Jewish Divorce, Cremation issues and many questions raised regarding burials and funerals procedures.}

Catholic religious authorities underwent a similar process. Archbishop Spellman, head of the Military Ordinariate, received ecclesiastical permission for a number of liturgical changes regarding Catholic personnel generated
by war related circumstances. Military chapels used by other faiths became appropriate for Catholic services. Changes occurred concerning the timing of Mass. Due to troop movement at night and the rapidity of battle, permission for Mass to be held at any time during the day or night became acceptable. However, as with the JWB, concern existed that this exception be understood as a temporary one:

The privilege, however, had to be used only for the benefit of military personnel in the strict sense, because the concession used the word milites. It did not apply to civilians of any group, no matter how closely they were related to the military establishment.\(^4\)

The JWB, the Military Ordinariate and other faith traditions constantly attempted to synthesize their religious requirements with the ever-changing realities of war. In times of battle troops wanted the blessings of their chaplains and religions.

Military rabbis also became very involved in war-related deaths and subsequent religious burials. In the middle of the war, the CANRA notified the government that they selectively studied death records. This committee concluded that nearly half of the Jewish personnel killed in battle received burial without the benefit of a Jewish funeral ceremony or appropriate grave marker. Different factors contributed to this phenomenon. First, some Jewish

\[^4\]Smith, The Military Ordinariate, 171.
soldiers removed their dog-tags, which designated them as Jewish for fear of being captured by the Nazis. Others, died in explosions, or crashes and deaths at sea where proper identification proved impossible. Also, paper work which verified religious preferences often remained unavailable at the time of a funeral service. Additionally, at the time of burial, a rabbi may not have been present to officiate. 85

To remedy this situation General George C. Marshall directed that Jewish chaplains, in each theater of war, be afforded the opportunity to visit cemeteries in their commands. The rabbis replaced Jewish grave markers where appropriate and offered a memorial service. After the completion of these rituals the Army Quartermaster General altered the official military records to reflect the Jewish service.

As mentioned above, the persistence of anti-semitism pervaded throughout the war. Anti-semitism reflected itself in a variety of places and situations. In 1944 the Bureau of War Records of the Welfare Board devised an elaborate system of local committees which reported almost every

instance of a Jewish war hero, a war-related death or injury or some one who had become a prisoner of war. 86

Despite the years of fighting a world war and extensive participation by the Jewish community some people still believed that Jews did not fulfill their fair share of patriotic responsibilities. A letter complaining about Jewish doctors, responded to by the War Department in 1944, typified this attitude:

We have a hospital at Camp Fannin that seems to be operated by Jew Doctors exclusively. It has come to my attention that Jews seem to get all the soft jobs as well as medical discharges. 87

The military, as always, responded directly and clearly. All armed forces personnel received their placements where they would be the most effective. An individual's religion

86"Bureau of War Records-Annual Report," JWBC-AJHS, December, 1944, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. 1-10. The scope of this committee was quite substantial. It estimated that it represented over 96% of the American Jewish Community in towns with over 1,000 Jews. The committee kept data to refute all sorts of anti-semitic notions. It collected information on the ratio of Jewish dentists in the military, the percentage of Jews in the Navy and Marines and the number of Jews who received deferments for agricultural service. Near the end of the war, this group utilized early International Business Machines (IBM) techniques to quantify this data. The extent of the dissemination of this data after the war remained uncertain as many Jews appeared to be unaware of these figures.

had no bearing on their assignments or discharges since "No discrimination is tolerated by the War Department." 88

As the final year of the war began the participation of Jews and their rabbis became reflected in official messages. General Dwight Eisenhower sent a request for more military rabbis. The General asked for an additional fifty rabbis for the European theater. Military and civilian hospitals needed rabbis to work with recuperating Jewish soldiers and with troops heading into battle. The Chief of Chaplains responded that the Army could not meet the number requested; however, they would send as many rabbis as possible. 89

At the same time, the Pacific theater requested additional rabbis. The JWB recommended to the military that rabbis in state-side bases and posts be ordered overseas. The JWB coordinated a new attempt to recruit rabbis for the military and solicited civilian rabbis to support military bases stateside in place of rabbis going overseas. 90

In light of a persistent need for more rabbis and the almost unachievable job requirements of active duty rabbis, the continual support of Christian colleagues as previously demonstrated, proved essential. Joint funeral ceremonies,

88 Ibid.

89 "Memorandum from Chief of Chaplains Office to Members of the CANRA," January, 10, 1945, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham. The possibility of rabbinic needs in the concentration camps, soon to be liberated, did not factor into this request.

90 Ibid.
sharing of counseling cases, and working as members of the military chaplains team represented the norm for most chaplains. Hershel Schachter, an Orthodox rabbi, served three years in the Army through intensive combat operations around the globe. During all his experiences, he recalled that his fellow chaplains assisted him on numerous occasions. He did not have any personal or professional instances of anti-semitic to contend with.  

However, in some isolated cases, areas of miscommunications or theological differences occurred. In April of 1945, Father Thomas Bryant, a Catholic Chaplain was asked to provide some volunteers to assist in the preparation of the Jewish Passover meal. Chaplain Bryant did not comply with this request and received a reprimand from his commanding officer for practicing religious intolerance. In a letter to the Army Chief of Chaplains, also a Catholic priest, Father Bryant explained his actions:

Since the Colonel still did not agree with our attitude and considered it uncharitable and being exclusive on our part, I had to explain that since we Catholics considered our religion true, we could not take part in religious services of a religion we considered false.  

These types of theological misunderstandings often grew into even larger incidences.

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91 Rabbi Herschel Schachter, Personal Interview with author, New York City, February, 1992.

Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, a Navy Chaplain, served with the Marines. In the spring of 1945 he accompanied them throughout the Pacific as they encountered extremely heavy fighting island by island. In May of 1945, Chaplain Gittelsohn’s senior chaplain asked him to deliver the main address at the dedication of the Fifth Marine Division Cemetery at Iwo Jima. When this news reached the other Navy Chaplains, a majority of the clerics protested. They felt that a Jewish Chaplain should not offer prayers over Christian Marines. They suggested that if he did speak they would advise their congregants not to attend the ceremony. After he heard of this dissension Rabbi Gittelsohn requested that the senior chaplain find a replacement speaker. He delivered the address that he prepared for the main dedication to a small group of Jewish soldiers and a few Protestant chaplains, who sided with him in this incident. One of these fellow chaplains borrowed a copy of the speech, reproduced it, and distributed it among the Marines. Some of these copies were sent stateside where the speech received prominent press coverage and further
dissemination. 93 Chaplain Gittelsohn's words remain prophetic:

Indeed here lies officers and men, Negroes and whites, rich and poor together. Here are Protestants, Catholics and Jews, together. Here no man prefers another because of his faith, or despises him because of his color...Among these men there is no discrimination, no prejudice, no hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy. 94

These instances of non-cooperation certainly exemplified the exception, rather than the rule of intra-chaplain collaboration.

In this context of interfaith cooperation it should be noted that the British royal military involved no unified chaplain corps. Instead, separate chains of command existed for Protestant and Catholic chaplaincies. A unified clergymen department attempted in 1939-1940, had failed. The British determined that a senior cleric of one faith remained incapable of supervising others. 95

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93 Roland B. Gittelsohn, Here Am I- Harnessed to Hope (New York: Vantage Press, 1988), Chapter 9. Gittelsohn, in his account of this incident, filled in some of the background. He suggested that his fellow chaplains bore him animosity for a number of reasons. First, as a rabbi, he received assignment to the Division Headquarters, a position coveted by more senior chaplains. Also, he avidly supported Black troops, at a time, when this was not a popular stand. Finally, he was accused of being a communist sympathizer, due to his request for some literature from a socialist source.


Fortunately, the American tradition of a chaplaincy which reflected the variety and religious traditions found in the country prevailed. In most instances, the chaplaincy led the way for interfaith activities and sensitivities. In other cases, as with Chaplain Gittelsohn, the chaplaincy reflected contemporary attitudes and prejudices.96

As the war concluded, military rabbis played a life-saving role for thousands of people. As the Allied armies swept across Europe toward a meeting with Russian forces and the final defeat of Nazism, they began liberating country after country. In these areas they found concentration camps, camps with gas-chambers and crematoria and still filled with victims. Many of these individuals were more dead than alive. These people became designated as, "Displaced Persons."97 The Allies presumed that once liberated these victims would want to return to their country of origin. Jews did not follow this thinking. Many Jews spent time in the camps because the indigenous population collaborated with the Nazis against them. In most cases, they felt no desire to return to their place of

96In many ways, the contemporary armed forces chaplaincy still leads the country in its interfaith work. Immediately on the same "team", clergy of differing genders, races and religions work and achieve together on a daily basis.

97Alex Grobman, Rekindling the Flame (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1993), 9. Grobman identified over 90 Jewish chaplains who contacted and worked with these refugees.
origin. In many instances, military rabbis came with advancing troops. They quickly functioned as unofficial points of contact and hope between military authorities and the displaced persons. In Dachau, Chaplain David Eichorn found himself as the unofficial liaison between the Jewish inmates, the camp’s International Prisoner’s Committee and American military authorities. 98 Military rabbis attempted to meet the immediate needs of the victims. Rabbi Lee Levinger, a chaplain from the First World War, gave a succinct account of some of the problems faced by the rabbis:

The needs were endless--legal status, housing, clothing, food, religious comfort, literature, organization and medical treatment...For months no civilian organization was permitted in the occupied areas, while the army was not organized to care for vast numbers of Displaced Persons, but to win wars. 99

In the days and weeks after liberation, and before international agencies began to operate, individual Jewish chaplains, with the support of their Commanding officers, and with the help of fellow clerics and soldiers made a vast difference in saving the lives of these refugees. Each rabbi, depending upon his location and circumstances, did something different for the welfare of these victims of hatred. Chaplains Robert Marcus and Herschel Schacter 98Lee J. Levinger, Chaplains to the Rescue (New York: Jewish Welfare Board, 1946), 1-16. 99"CANRA Report on Displaced Persons," March, 1946, AJHS-JWBC, Brandeis, Waltham.
organized groups of orphan children and arranged for them to be transported from the concentration camp of Buchenwald to France and then Switzerland. From there most of the children travelled on boats for a final journey to Palestine.

Other chaplains dealt with more immediate concerns. Many of the victims were quite ill and died in spite of their liberation. Basic human needs such as ample clothing, food, medicine and shelter proved difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Chaplain Max Braude gave insights into the determination of the rabbis to help obtain such crucial supplies:

Daily we find more and more of the remnant of Israel and daily we continue to fight against great odds. We beg, we borrow, we cajole, we cuss and we get the stuff that is needed...The task is mammoth but not hopeless and slowly we keep things going until this transition period is past.\(^{100}\)

These rabbis represented the first religious figures that the displaced persons had seen in years. The rabbis spent much time praying with the victims. Countless prayers were offered on behalf of loved ones and lost families. The victims, deprived of religious artifacts, fought for prayer items distributed by the rabbis.

The tasks of the rabbis seemed insurmountable. Rabbi Samuel Blinder accompanied the Second Armored Division. The division captured a transport train of camp victims. Within

\(^{100}\)Ibid. 7.
moments the occupants of the train received their freedom. After a brief celebration, Rabbi Blinder's almost impossible task began. He worked with the refugees as they started the painful and very slow process of reorienting themselves to freedom and its responsibilities and choices. 101 Any work that rabbis did with refugees came within the context of the almost overwhelming daily ministry which they accomplished.

The Displaced Person's situation proved so complicated that General Dwight Eisenhower, in August of 1945, at the suggestion of the War Department appointed active duty Rabbi Judah Nadich to a newly created position, "Advisor to the Commanding General on Jewish Affairs." The General also promulgated new regulations for Jewish refugees. One rule allowed for special camps to be established for Jewish victims who refused to return to their country of origin. Chaplain Nadich's task involved travelling from camp to camp to insure that U.S. military authorities adhered to these new regulations. Nadich also functioned as a coordinator between military authorities, German civilians, United Nations, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and all other relief and welfare agencies. 102 Working directly on the staff of General Eisenhower allowed Chaplain Nadich to correct many of the problems which he uncovered. The

101 Ibid., 10.

heroic efforts of a relatively small number of Jewish chaplains made a substantial impact on the lives of these victims in an immeasurable way.\textsuperscript{103}

With the conclusion of the war most of the rabbis quickly returned to the civilian vocations of pulpit work, educational pursuits, and other aspects of the rabbinate. A few chose to work for the Veterans Administration while a very few remained in the military as a full time career. In this conflict rabbis achieved an inestimable amount of accomplishments. In the midst of a society filled with anti-semitic tendencies they provided ministries to their personnel and thousands of others. They covered vast distances and counseled innumerable soldiers, sailors and Marines of all faiths. They preserved and prevailed. In the end the need for more rabbis went unfilled. Those who answered the call to service made an indelible mark on the history of the chaplaincy and their country.

\textsuperscript{103}Often, other chaplains and service personnel helped the rabbis with their work for the Displaced Persons. Rules and regulations often were ignored or circumvented to save some of the lives of these tortured souls.
CONCLUSION

Rabbis in uniform, led by their rabbinical ancestors in the armed forces, are now an established and recognized part of the chaplaincy. In fact, much attention and publicity is placed on newer denominations and faith groups entering the spiritual ministry of the armed forces. Islamic and Buddhist religious leaders are the next groups to expand the chaplaincy.

Hopefully, the data uncovered in this research can help the American-Jewish community put to rest its misunderstandings about the Jewish relationship with the military. Jews and their rabbis have always played an integral role in the defense of this country. The organized Jewish community has maintained a definite and significant function in this regard. From the early days in New Amsterdam to the Civil War, it was the community which organized, and fought for the legal and moral right for rabbis to serve as ministers in uniform.

Prior to the First World War, so much attention was focussed on Jews in the military, that the impetus to create an organization, such as the Jewish Welfare Board, already existed. The growth and accomplishments of this association were phenomenal. Representing almost the entire spectrum of
American Judaism for both World Wars, this group recruited rabbis, trained welfare workers, supplied troops with religious articles and met the spiritual needs of men and women heading into battle. After the War and through the present the Jewish Welfare Board, now named the Jewish Chaplains Counsel, provides Jewish spiritual leaders to the armed forces.

Ultimately, however, this work has been about rabbis and their deeds. These, "Fighting Rabbis," included even Elkan Voorsanger and Harry Richmond, who did not even have to serve. They felt, however, guided by their consciences, to be with their co-religionists and others in the service of the country. They did unusual things in unbelievable circumstances. Some, such as the 90 rabbis, who came in contact with the Displaced Persons of the Second World War made a difference between life and death for countless individuals. Others, like Rabbi Alexander Goode, made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for their nation.

The history of these unsung heroes continues in our own day. Male and female rabbis do their part in the military arena. From services in the desert of Kuwait to High Holiday services held in Haiti and Cuba, rabbis in uniform are present. A new generation of Fighting Rabbis has arisen to fulfill their role in history.
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*Bilder und Texte aus der Soldatenseelsorge* [Pictures and Text of the German Army Chaplains Newspaper]. Bonn: Herausgegeben vom Evangelischen Kirchenamt für die Bundeswehr, 1983.


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