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Documentary tells of American Jewish pilots fighting for Israel's independence

**by Susie Davidson
Advocate Correspondent**

Three years after the liberation of the Nazi death camps, a group of Jewish American pilots, members of Machal ("volunteers from abroad"), secretly, and at great risk, smuggled planes out of the U.S. They went on to train in Czechoslovakia behind the Iron Curtain, and to arially assist Israel in its 1948 War of Independence. A new film, directed by Roberta Grossman and produced by Steven Spielberg sibling Nancy Spielberg, tells their story for the first time in a full-length documentary format.

"Above and Beyond: The Untold True Story" will screen this Sunday at 2 p.m. at Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Chestnut Hill. The event is presented by Newton Brookline Jewish War Veterans Post 211 in partnership with the American Association of Jewish Holocaust survivors and Descendants (AAJHS) and Mishkan Tefila's "Hazak" Committee.

The movie was also shown on April 20 at Brandeis University

"I received a call from a woman in New York Lisa Zarrow, whose father, Gerald Zarrow, belongs to our post," said Jewish War Veterans Post 211 Commander George Marshall by phone from his home in Newton. "While working as an assistant to Barbara Walters, she happened to see this film, and wanted her father to see it." Zarrow came in to Boston to help arrange the

location, date and logistics for the screening.

"I thought that this film would be ideal for our April meeting," said Marshall, a graduate of Massachusetts Military Academy who served in the National Guard 13 years during the Korea era. A first lieutenant and former Raytheon career employee, he was the chief negotiator of the Sparrow missile. Next month, Marshall will be assuming the role of State Commander of the the Department of Massachusetts Jewish War Veterans.

Post 211 , which Marshall said is the largest and most active post in New England, meets 6 times per year. JWV, he said, is the oldest veterans organization in America. "The most important reason that we exist is because we look out for not only all veterans, but for Jewish veterans as well," said Marshall, who seven years ago founded Socks for Homeless Veterans, which has thus far given away over 20,000 pairs of socks.

Marshall, who speaks at local schools and synagogues about the JWV, said that in general, members are low key about their military experience. They do not wear uniforms per se, but do wear "overseas caps" with logos, pins and badges denoting their service, as well as personally meaningful memorabilia, such as a pin of Lincoln that Marshall wears on his cap.

In anticipation of showing the film, Marshall contacted Congregation Mishkan Tefila, where he is a member, and also Janet Stein, who is President of the American Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants (AAJHS). He also contacted the synagogue's Hazak committee, named for a passage recited at the end of every section of the Torah, which translates to "be strong, be strong."

They all agreed to show the film and to serve kosher coffee and pastries, as well as popcorn, which will be made on Mishkan Tefila's popcorn machine.

Approximately 50 members of Post 211, including some World War II veterans, are expected to attend on Sunday. Marshall said that at this point, WWII veterans, of which 20 belong to his post, are over 90 years of age. "They still attend meetings," he said, adding that because most can no longer drive at night, he slated this Sunday afternoon time to accommodate them.

"As a veteran, I am always very anxious to hear what other veterans have done, especially regarding Israel," said Marshall, who is himself looking forward to seeing the film and has taken 10 trips to Israel. "I love Judaism and am a Zionist at heart," he said, adding, "It's hard for anybody to love one without the other."

Marshall said that membership of the Jewish War Veterans is open to any former active duty members, as well as National Guardsmen and reservists, and anyone who wishes to become a friend of the JWV can also become a

patron.

Tickets are \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door, and include coffee, popcorn and pastries. For information on becoming a JWV member or patron, please call Marshall at [617-965-0141](tel:617-965-0141).