



# Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

*Chartered By an Act of Congress*

1811 R Street, NW • Washington, DC 20009 • (202) 265-6280 • Fax (202) 234-5662 • Email: JWV@jwv.org • www.jwv.org

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November 30, 2021

Hello Gali,

Thank you for your wonderful Veteran's Day greeting, and I am glad to hear that you are studying about Florida.

Florida is a great state for many reasons, one of them is our beautiful weather. It is nice every day of the year. The weather is perfect for spending time outdoors with family and friends. You can walk, jog, play ball, bike, or just sit in the sun and relax. Since I am still working, I do not get to spend as much time as I would like outdoors, but I do take advantage of our climate over the weekends. Shabbat is the perfect day to enjoy our weather.

Did you know that Florida has the longest coastline of any state? It has 825 miles of beach. We are also the only state that borders both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. The city of Fort Lauderdale, which I live close to, is known as the Venice of America, because it has 165 miles of waterways in its canal system. And as you mentioned on your letter, it has Disney World, which is the biggest and most visited recreational resort in the world! I have been there many times with both family and friends.

Florida is also one of three states that has the largest Veteran population in the United States. Only Texas and California have more Veterans than Florida. I am very active in the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., an organization that helps Veterans. The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest continually active Veterans Organization in the United States, and I am proud to serve as their National Commander this year. This past Veterans Day, I traveled to Washington and spoke along with President Biden and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough at Arlington National Cemetery. Perhaps you or some of your classmates watched it on TV. If you did not, you can view it on You Tube. Just Google my name \_\_\_\_\_, or Veterans Day 2021 and you can see me as I addressed the gathering. It was exciting meeting President Biden and speaking with him about the many Veterans in our country.

Now, a little bit about my time in the military.

I joined the United States Air Force in 1966 at the height of the Vietnam War. I did my basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio Texas, and then was sent to Lowry Air Force Base outside of Denver Colorado for schooling. I was trained to be a weapons specialist on the Phantom F-4 fighter aircraft. A weapons specialist works on and troubleshoots the weapons system of the aircraft, so when something does not work properly, the pilot would speak with me after he or she returned from their mission, and I would work on the aircraft and fix whatever caused the weapons system not to work. It was very exciting work, and I served mainly in Germany, with some temporary trips to both Italy and North Africa. I was not sent to Vietnam, because my older brother, who was in the US Army at the same time as I was in the Air Force, had already received his orders for Vietnam by the time I had graduated from training school. He served for 1 year in Southeast Asia, and fortunately returned home safely.



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I know that your school has visited our museum in the past, but I would like to extend a personal invitation to you and your class to visit it again. The National Museum of American Jewish Military History is located at 1811 R Street NW, and they would love to have your class tour the many exhibits. This museum will give you the story of how members of the Jewish faith served in the defense of our country beginning back in 1657. We can be proud of the contributions Jewish men and women have made since that time, and I know we will continue to serve and protect this great country of ours. Mr. [redacted] is our Museum Director, and he will be glad to work with your teacher to arrange a visit.

Before I close, I want to explain this coin that I have included as a gift to you.

This is the Jewish War Veterans National Commander's Challenge Coin, but what makes it unique is that we had this coin made not to honor me, but to honor our organization, which celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. I hope you enjoy the coin and will keep it as a remembrance of my sincere thanks for taking the time to write your letter to me.

I plan to be in Washington again sometime in March, when I testify before the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. We do not know the exact date yet, but perhaps your teacher could arrange for you and your classmates to come and attend the committee hearing, or if not, I would be glad to visit you at your school during my time in Washington. Either way, I hope to meet you and your classmates soon.

Thank you again for your kind letter.

Sincerely,

A P

National Commander