

November 28, 2021

Matilda C. of the Third Grade
C/O Gottesman Jewish Day school
6045 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20011

Dear Matilda:

It was very nice of you to write me as part of your school's celebration of Veterans Day this year. I can truthfully say your letter was the best greeting I received this year as part of Veterans Day 2021.

I hope you are having a great Chanukah. Many of us who are Jewish Veterans think of ourselves as modern day Maccabees.

I'm impressed that you have taken the time to learn so much about Illinois and your ability to write in Hebrew is just great. I live in Chicago not far from Lake Michigan. The Chicago Metropolitan area has about 9,800,000 folks who live here and about 290,000 of us are Jewish. This is very similar to how many Jewish people live in your city. Lots of menorahs getting lit in both our cities I hope. When I was a young soldier I was stationed in Falls Church, Virginia very near where you live. It was 1980-1981, the Metro and the Vietnam War Memorial were just being built. I still visit your city often to ask our government for better health care for veterans and to just enjoy the monuments and the Smithsonian. Have you been to any the Smithsonian's museums?

Last year I was the elected leader of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and I am still actively involved in a related museum, The National Museum of American Military Jewish History located at 1811 R Street, NW, or about a 20 minute drive from your school. Consider this letter a personal invitation to come by a learn how American Jews have been involved in our country's defense since before the Revolutionary War. Did you know that on a cold dark night at Valley Forge, General George Washington while visiting his troops by walking about camp on Christmas Eve came across a jewish soldier sitting above the flames of a menorah. He told the General the story of Chanukah: the victory of a tiny group over a large and not to nice empire. It was truly an inspiration for General Washington at a tough time for the American revolutionaries.

I am including with this letter my personal coin from this year - special coins are often used by soldiers to recognize very good work and your letter brought me joy.

Sincerely yours,



J. S.

AKA Papa to my grandkids

P.S. I like Bananas too.