

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.

Dear Henry,

12/21

Thank you for writing to me on Veteran's Day. I like living in North Carolina very much, but I used to live in Washington, D.C. and I miss it a lot! Please say hello to your city for me.

Something I think is interesting about North Carolina is that a very famous and feared pirate lived here. His name was Edward but he was known as "Blackbeard," and his ship was called the Queen Anne's Revenge. Blackbeard lit small fires under his beard and hat to look extra scary! He was killed in a battle off the coast of North Carolina in 1718. The Queen Anne's Revenge sunk and it wasn't found until 1996. Scientists are still going through and learning from all the artifacts they found onboard.

I hope you had a fun Hannukkah and that you enjoy learning more about North Carolina this year.

Sincerely,

Jennifer B

DATE 30 Nov 2021

No. 66/100

Dear Mattan -

It was a pleasure to receive your letter and read what you're learning about Maine. Though I was in the Army, most of my family actually served in the Navy, and you're right - Maine has a long history of shipbuilding and association with the Navy. I often drive by Bath Iron Works, where they still actively build the very newest "stealth" destroyers like the USS Zumwalt.

My family and I have had the chance to live in many places before we moved to Maine - I grew up in Georgia, but also lived in California, Texas, Massachusetts, and in England. But Maine is definitely our very favorite - it's very clean and the ocean, beaches, mountains, lakes, and woods are all amazing. My son and I often go camping and hiking.

I hope you and your family are well and healthy and I look forward to hearing from you again. All the best -

Sgt Ken G

MAY YOU BE FILLED WITH LOVING KINDNESS. MAY YOU BE WELL. MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL AND AT EASE. MAY YOU BE HAPPY. ANCIENT TIBETAN BLESSING

November 30, 2021

VIA US MAIL

Selma (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade)  
c/o Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School  
Kay and Robert Schattner Center  
6045 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 200011

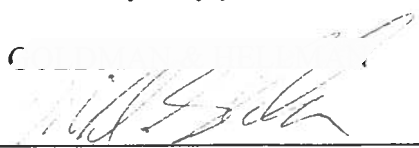
Dear Selma,

I was delighted to receive your letter and I'm very happy to hear that you are learning about the history of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The history of the Native American tribes before the arrival of the Pilgrims fascinating.

I'm very grateful for your thanks concerning my service in the military. It was my honor to serve as an infantryman in the United States Marine Corps. In 2004, I served in Okinawa and the Philippines, as well as aboard the USS Juneau, with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment.

If you'd like to share anything else about what you're learning at school, please write to me whenever you'd like. Also, if there is anything else I can tell you about Massachusetts, my service with the Marines, or anything else that interests you, just let me know.

Very truly yours,

  
By: MICHAEL I. G



# 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

12/21

Dear Ovadya,

Thank you for writing to me on Veteran's Day! I got to visit Washington, D.C. with my family this fall. We went to the zoo and the Air and Space museum. Maybe one day you can visit North Carolina.

Something interesting about North Carolina is that our state used to grow a lot of tobacco. But farmers needed something else they could plant and sell. Can you guess what they picked? Sweet potatoes. North Carolina grows more sweet potatoes than any other state. In fact, we grow almost 2 billion pounds of them every year. Some are orange inside, some are white, and others are yellow or even purple.

It can be hard to be a farmer in North Carolina so many farms have fun activities for kids and families, to earn extra money. This weekend, I visited a farm where they let us play with and feed baby goats and take a tractor ride. I loved feeding the animals but my kids liked feeding themselves because we also got to make smores!

Are there any farms in Washington, DC or maybe in Maryland or Virginia? I wonder if they grow any sweet potatoes...

Sincerely,