

The Tablets

The Official Newsletter of The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund • Fall 2021



**CADETS AND MIDSHIPMEN
GATHER AT THE U.S. NAVAL
ACADEMY FOR JEWISH
WARRIOR WEEKEND**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Jewish Chapel Supports Summer
Training - P. 3-4**

**Cadet Energy Drives Holiday
Celebrations - P. 6-9**

**Catching up with 1LT Noah
Carlen, USMA '19 - P. 15**

DISCLAIMER: "The WPICF is a non-federal entity and not an official activity of the United States Military Academy. It is not endorsed, recommended, or favored by the United States government. The views and opinions expressed in this organization do not reflect those of the United States Military Academy, Department of the Army, or Department of Defense.

Chapel News

Greetings from the Chapel,

When I was growing up, my childhood rabbi had a small sign in his office. It said, “nothing improves your prayer life faster than big trouble.” That observation probably describes people of all religions, but the question it implies has particularly troubled the American Jewish community for generations. Can Jews remain committed to Judaism when they are free to explore everything else in life, or is it only when they are restricted in certain ways that Judaism attracts them?

I had only ever considered this question from a theoretical perspective but it took on newfound relevance as West Point began this fall semester. Last year, Cadets attended Jewish events in record numbers, with overwhelming enthusiasm for Shabbat services, holiday celebrations, and Torah study. It was a dream year at the Chapel, but a COVID nightmare everywhere else. From the canceling of travel privileges to the enforcement of social distancing, the Jewish Chapel was often the only place where Cadets could come to draw strength from each other and escape the daily pressures of Academy life. I wondered, then, what would happen once operations returned to normal. Would Cadets continue to attend Jewish programs in the absence of pandemic restrictions, or would their interest prove more like a dream that faded away when they could once again travel off post and congregate elsewhere with their friends?



Cantor David P. Frommer

In our weekly cycle of Torah reading, we recently concluded the Book of Genesis with the story of our biblical ancestor Joseph. As a teenager, Joseph dreams that he will one day achieve fame and fortune, but this seems unlikely when his jealous brothers sell him into Egyptian slavery and he is later imprisoned on false charges. Against all odds,

Joseph is invited to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and his insights convince the king to elevate him to prime minister over the entire kingdom--the very success that Joseph dreamed of in his youth. Happily, Joseph's is not the only story where dreams become reality. This year, despite the lifting of COVID restrictions on social gathering and travel, Jewish Cadets are attending Chapel events in even greater numbers than in the past! I am inspired that their engagement with Judaism stands strong on its own, whether or not they are limited in other opportunities. These Cadets bring to life the promise of Theodor Herzl, perhaps the second-most famous Jewish dreamer after Joseph: “If you will it, it is no dream.”

Joseph and Herzl's commitment never wavered, but in both cases they ultimately needed help from others to achieve their goals. Just as Joseph's success was aided by Pharaoh, and Herzl's vision was financed by the Rothschilds, the support of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund is critical towards realizing the dream of a vibrant Jewish community at West Point. When the strength of our Cadets' Jewish identity is matched by the generosity of our donors, we join together in building the next generation of Jewish leaders for our Armed Forces and beyond. May the stories in this newsletter remind us that, in times of both trouble and triumph, your support has made a tremendous impact on the lives of our Jewish Cadets, and may you be as inspired as I am in the continued work to make that dream the reality we need in the future.

Warmest regards,
Cantor David P. Frommer

Online Resources

DONATE

Support the West Point Jewish Chapel here:
www.westpointjewishchapel.com



Join Microsoft Teams Meeting for
Online Shabbat Services on Fridays at 1900
+1 347-343-3103 Conference ID: 736 607 19#

The Tablets

The Official Newsletter of
The West Point
Jewish Chapel Fund

Fall 2021

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Superintendent

LTG Darryl A. Williams, USMA '83

Garrison Commander

COL Evangeline G. Rosel, USMA '97

CHAPLAIN CHAIN OF SUPPORT

USMA Chaplain

CH (COL) Keith Goode

Garrison Chaplain

CH (LTC) Don Williamson

JEWISH CHAPEL DIRECTORY

STAFF

Jewish Chaplain

CH (MAJ) David P. Frommer

Chapel NCOIC

SFC Michael T. Nichols

Hillel OIC

LTC Ben Wallen, USMA '96

Choir OIC

Elaine McConnell

CADET LEADERSHIP

Hillel CIC

CDT Amir Udler

Choir CIC

CDT Mark Salzman

Ass't Hillel CIC

CDT Jacob Foster

Ass't Hillel CIC

CDT Brandon Agron

Ass't Choir CIC

CDT Sophie Cohen

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL FUND

President

LTC (USA Ret.) Terry Bresnick, USMA '69

Chapel Curator

LTC (USA Ret.) Robert D. Wolff, PhD.,
USMA '65

Administrator

Melanie Ullah

Visiting Hours: Mon–Fri 0900–1600

Shabbat Services: Friday 1900

Sat, Sun and Holidays: Please call for hours
(845) 938-2710

Welcome to the West Point Jewish Chapel, Class of 2025!



CH Frommer hosts Jewish New Cadets at the Chapel for some serious “morning worship” (of bagels and lox) during CBT. Below, Jewish Yearlings and friends gather with CH Frommer during CFT for dinner and Havdalah (not pictured, but it really happened!) at Camp Buckner.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL CADET SUMMER TRAINING

As soon as the Class of 2021 graduated last May, Jewish Chapel operations shifted to the field for Cadet Summer Training. Out at Camp Buckner, CH Frommer met with Yearlings during Cadet Field Training (CFT) and upperclassmen during Cadet Leader Development Training (CLDT), where he led Havdalah services and, more importantly, brought food for dinner! After Reception Days (R-Days) in early July, the Chapel welcomed the Jewish New Cadets in the Class of 2025 with bagel breakfasts on Sunday mornings during Cadet Basic Training (CBT). The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund generously sponsored all meals during summer training, and was represented among others by COL (USA Ret.) Glenn Goldman, current Fund board member and former USMA DMI-6, who addressed the New Cadets and answered questions during one of their Sunday visits to the Chapel.



Mazal tov to CDT Sebastian Jaget ('22), who represented the Jewish Chapel with his OCP yarmulke while completing the Army's grueling Combat Diver Qualification Course this summer!





Inset: CH Frommer's prayers are marked by colorful language during his helicopter rappel.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL AIR ASSAULT SCHOOL

Every summer, West Point offers selected Cadets the chance to complete Air Assault School for their Military Advanced Individual Academic Development (AIAD). This summer, CH Frommer joined ten Jewish Cadets in completing the course, which included written and practical exams in rotary wing aircraft and sling load operations, two ruck marches and an obstacle course, and the culminating event of repelling from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, hovering at 60 feet—just like in cantorial school!



CDT David Sharp (24) and CH Frommer celebrate never having to do Air Assault School again.



Feeling underequipped on the first ruck march, due to the Army's prohibition of Chaplains bearing arms, CH Frommer carries a shofar the second time around, eliciting scholarly inquiries from the NCO instructors ("What the f@%k is that thing?"). At right, CH Frommer's father pins his wings at graduation.



Where George Washington once stood watch for invading British ships on the Hudson, Jewish Cadets celebrate another week of religious freedom in America with Havdalah at Trophy Point.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

JEWISH COMMUNITY WELCOME WEEKEND

When plans for an off-site Plebe Retreat fell through at the last minute due to COVID concerns, LTC Ben Wallen organized Jewish Community Welcome Weekend as a series of team-building events around post on 28-29 August 2021. Saturday began with the Class of '22 Ring Run, followed by lunch and games at the Jewish Chapel and boating and swimming out at Lake Frederick in the afternoon. After some down time to shower and change, the day concluded with a Havdalah service at Trophy Point and dinner and a movie back

at the Chapel. The next day, Jewish Cadets gathered for a bagel breakfast at the USMA Chaplains Office and then hit the lanes at the West Point Bowling Alley, with pizza offered for lunch. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund's generous underwriting of food costs and facilities fees allowed more than 30 Cadets to participate over the course of the weekend and facilitated the successful integration of 14 Jewish Plebes into the Chapel community.



At left, CH Frommer and LTC Wallen join Cadets in the Class of '22 Ring Run. At right, Cadets relax on the water at Lake Frederick while CH Frommer searches for the shoes his children buried in the sand.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

JEWISH HOLIDAYS – ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR

The West Point Jewish Chapel offered High Holiday services from 06-16 September 2021, conducted by CH Frommer and accompanied on piano (as an additional duty) by Craig Williams and Emily Lapisardi, the Music Directors of the Cadet and Catholic Chapels respectively. Erev Rosh Hashanah was highlighted by remarks from COL (USA Ret.) Woody Goldberg, current West Point Jewish Chapel

Fund board member and former professor in the Academy's Department of Social Sciences. On Yom Kippur morning, 15 Cadets and lay leaders participated in Torah and Haftarah chanting and later that evening the community enjoyed a festive Break-the-Fast to conclude the holiday. In a true measure of the Cadets' commitment, all services drew strong attendance despite falling entirely on school nights and weekdays!



At left, CH Frommer interrupts the Torah service for an “exciting” lecture on the nuanced differences between Shabbat and High Holiday cantillation. At right, Jewish Cadets observe Tashlich on the banks of the Hudson. Below, the West Point Jewish community eagerly awaits Break-the-Fast as CH Frommer concludes N’ilah with a few extra rounds of the niggun for Havdalah.





Inset: For a Rosh Hashanah version of the Leadership Reaction Course, Cadets rely on teamwork to reach those extra difficult apples.

RELIGIOUS CLUB - HILLEL HOLIDAY APPLE PICKING

In celebration of Rosh Hashanah, the West Point Jewish Chapel's Hillel Club organized a trip section for 14 Cadets to Weed Orchards in Marlboro, NY on 12 September 2021. Upon arrival, CH Frommer led a brief Torah Study discussing the connection between apples and the Jewish new year, while Cadets noshed on fresh donuts and cider, sponsored by the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund. Thus fortified in both mind and body, the group enjoyed two hours of apple and peach picking, as well as hay rides, a corn maze, and a range of delicious options for lunch.





Sukkot at West Point celebrates the successful harvest of Highland Falls' bounty with Pizza in the Hut. The holiday's emphasis on the impermanence of material wealth is symbolized by the withering of branches on the sukkah's roof, and the ravenous consumption of twenty-seven large veggie pies by the Cadets at dinner.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

JEWISH HOLIDAYS – SUKKOT AND SIMCHAT TORAH



The Frommer children welcome Cadets to the family sukkah for ancient rituals like shaking the lulav and modern "family traditions," like eating ice cream.

The Jewish holiday marathon continued throughout the week of 20-27 September 2021 with Sukkot events held at three different locations on post. In addition to the main sukkah in the Jewish Chapel garden, and the Frommer family sukkah at their house in Stony Lonesome, the Academy authorized construction of a smaller sukkah in the Cadet Area for easy access during meal times. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund provided critical support by purchasing lulavs, etrogs, and the entire Cadet Area sukkah, as well as decorations and food. The festivities concluded with a community celebration of Simchat Torah (bottom left), which drew over 20 Cadets on a Monday evening! Highlights of the program included dancing to music from the Cadet Shabbat Band, and unrolling one of the sacred scrolls for CH Frommer's annual Explore-A Torah guided tour (bottom right).





Jewish Cadets celebrate Chanukah with panache, thanks to holiday-themed neck ties provided by Kosher Troops. Historians now believe that the secret to the Maccabees' military success lay in the guerilla-chic style of their formal dress uniforms.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL JEWISH HOLIDAYS – CHANUKAH

The Jewish community illuminated West Point with several festive Chanukah events during the eight nights from 28 November-05 December 2021. On the Second Night, the Jewish Chapel hosted over 30 Cadets for latkes prepared by Hillel Club Cadet volunteers (bottom left) with donuts provided by the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund and decorations donated by KosherTroops. On the Fourth Night, 19 Cadets gathered to light candles in the Mess Hall at West Point's annual Christmas Dinner (bottom right), and on the Sixth Night, the communal festivities concluded with a mega-celebration at the Chapel that drew more than 60 Cadets in a crowd of well over 100! The evening received support from the Jewish War Veterans and featured special remarks from Ed Goldwasser, longtime JWV Liaison Officer to West Point and former National Commander, as well as a joint concert by the Jewish Chapel Choir and Magevet, Yale University's Jewish A Cappella Group (see Page 12).



Jewish Cadets join the Frommer children at home for candle lighting, Chanukah stories, and the requisite viewing of all their favorite presents.





West Point Jewish Cadets operate behind enemy lines, posing as JWW participants to collect intelligence on the rumored use of kosher food to boost the Midshipmen's performance at the upcoming Army Navy football game.

RELIGIOUS CLUB - HILLEL

JEWISH WARRIOR WEEKEND

One of the usual highlights missing from last year's COVID lockdown was Jewish Warrior Weekend, which returned with great success during the weekend of 15-17 OCT at the U.S. Naval Academy. The event brings together Jewish Cadets and Midshipmen from across the service academies, military schools, and ROTC programs to strengthen their sense of Jewish purpose and community throughout the Armed Forces. This semester, over 80 participants joined from 11 different schools, with West Point strongly represented by a robust delegation of 26 Cadets, accompanied by LTC Wallen, CH Frommer, and SFC Nichols, and organized by Hillel ACIC CDT Jacob Foster. The weekend kicked off with Shabbat dinner and services, led by USNA Jewish Chaplain Steve Ballaban at the Academy's Uriah P. Levy Center and Jewish Chapel. The next morning, participants competed in Physical Training (PT), attended an inspiring keynote address by Jewish Navy Chaplain Yoni Greenberg, and enjoyed free time for the rest of the day in Washington D.C. On Sunday, everyone gathered for a bagel breakfast on the National Mall before departing for further site-seeing and their return trips home. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund generously covered transportation and registration costs for the entire delegation.



Sibling rivalry: CDT Brooke Rosenfeld ('23) reunites with her wayward sister at JWW. Just kidding—MDN Nicole Rosenfeld (USNA '25) is obviously awesome!



At left, an inter-service quartet of Jewish Chaplains leads Friday evening services according to doctrine in JP 613.18 ("Joint Operations for Shabbat Worship"). At right, Cadets and Mids enjoy a friendly debate about which Academy serves the best vegan tofu at Chapel dinners.



Fields of Freylekh Strife: CDT Sophie Cohen ('24) teams up with CDT Paul Budoff ('23) to lead USMA to victory in the JWW Pushup Challenge, with calm encouragement from LTC Wallen on the sideline.



At left, Cadets and Mids share a bagel breakfast at the Levy Center after Saturday morning PT. At right and below, the USMA contingent enjoys some Sunday morning site-seeing before heading back to West Point.



JEWISH CHAPEL CHOIR

PERFORMANCES AT WEST POINT



At left, five singers each from the Jewish and Gospel Choirs join in singing “Go Down Moses” at the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Conference. At right, COL Jennifer Hicks-McGowan, USMA G-1, presents the Jewish Choir representatives with her coin in recognition of their participation in the event.



Above, the Jewish Choir performs “Mansions of the Lord” and the Alma Mater in the Jewish Chapel garden for Veterans Day observance.

The Jewish Chapel Choir returned to full operations with a busy slate of appearances around post this semester, organized by OIC Elaine McConnell and directed by CIC Mark Salzman ('22). On 08 September 2021, the Choir performed at the USMA Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Conference with several VIPs in attendance, including guest speaker LTG Gary Brito, 49th Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, U.S. Army. On 05 November 2021, the Choir traveled to New York City to participate in Central Synagogue’s Veterans Shabbat (see Page 13) and on 11 November 2021, it supported a second Veterans Day ceremony at the Jewish Chapel (see Page 14). The Choir wrapped up its semester in a joint concert with Magevet, Yale University’s Jewish A Cappella Group, which the Chapel hosted for Chanukah on 03 December 2021. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund provides critical support for the Choir, often covering travel expenses and, more importantly, delicious dinners during weekly rehearsals.



CH Frommer is thrilled to welcome Magevet to the Jewish Chapel from his alma mater. Singing in Magevet for four years during college convinced him to become a cantor, which ultimately led him to military chaplaincy and his first, best, (and only) assignment at West Point.



Above, the Jewish Chapel Choir performs in Central Synagogue's majestic sanctuary, built in 1872 and designated as a National Historic Landmark over a century later. Inset: a photo of the Choir from their last visit to Central Synagogue in 1951.



JEWISH CHAPEL CHOIR

PERFORMANCE AT CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

By CDTs Mark Salzman and Sophie Cohen

On 05 November 2021, Central Synagogue in New York City welcomed the Jewish Chapel Choir as special guests at Shabbat services in honor of Veterans Day. Rabbi Sarah Berman led the Cadets on a tour of Central's historic sanctuary and Senior Rabbi Angela W. Buchdahl shared stories with them of her personal connection to Judaism in the military. During services, the Jewish Choir performed "Mansions of the Lord" and "Kol Ha'Olam Kulo" while CH Frommer delivered the sermon and offered the Prayer for U.S. Armed Forces Personnel with Senior Cantor Dan Mutlu. Afterwards,

Cadets spoke with several Jewish veterans in the congregation (as well as with families whose children are hoping to attend a service academy in the future) and enjoyed a complimentary dinner organized by Rabbi Dan Ross. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund provided transportation to the event, which marked the return of the Jewish Choir to Central Synagogue exactly seventy years after its last performance. Current West Point Jewish Chapel Fund Board Member Ben Breslauer (USMA '54) sang in the choir's ranks during a special program there for Memorial Day in 1951. Jews in the Long Gray Line continue from generation to generation—*l'dor vador!*



At left, CH Frommer returns to the bimah where he became bar mitzvah--this time with a sermon he actually wrote himself. At right, the Jewish Chapel Choir with Central Synagogue's clergy team.

RELIGIOUS CLUB - HILLEL

KOSHER TROOPS SERVICE PROJECT

On 14 November 2021, nine Cadets traveled with LTC Wallen and CH Frommer to the Kosher Troops charity organization in Suffern, NY to help pack Chanukah care packages for Jews serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Cadets worked hand in hand with civilian volunteers from neighboring Jewish communities to assemble specially-tailored packages for individual service members, families, small units, and entire congregations of up to 75 people. They shared stories about Jewish life at West Point and learned about the logistics of sending donated Jewish supplies to forward deployed personnel. Overall, Kosher Troops sent more than 150 packages to over 70 locations, including Syria, Italy, UK, Germany, and Korea, with many of West Point's recent Jewish graduates among the recipients.



Above, CH Frommer, LTC Wallen and Jewish Cadets present Kosher Troops directors Sara Fuerst and Ava Hamburger with plaques of appreciation for their work supporting Jewish service members. At left, CH Frommer's children assist with quality control by tasting as much gelt as possible for any deficiencies.

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

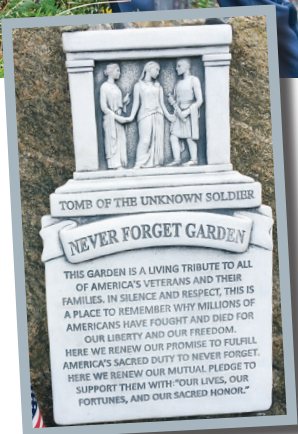
VETERANS DAY OBSERVANCE



Above, Jewish Chapel leadership gathers for the Veterans Day program. At right, Cadets in attendance honor the memory of fallen service members by placing stones atop the Never Forget garden marker.

The West Point Jewish community paid tribute to the nation's veterans and commemorated the Centennial of the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier with a short service and ceremonial emplacing of a garden marker at the Jewish Chapel on 11 November, 2021. The event was attended by nine Cadets and highlighted by remarks from COL (USA Ret.) Woody Goldberg, current board member of the

West Point Jewish Chapel Fund, who spoke of his work supporting the Tomb Guards at Arlington National Cemetery and of the imperative to never forget those Soldiers who came before us. Music support was provided by the West Point Jewish Chapel Choir and a bugler from the USMA Band, and the proceedings concluded with a luncheon sponsored by the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund.



(NEW) OLD GRAD PROFILE

1LT NOAH CARLEN, USMA '19

What have you been up to since graduating from West Point?

I graduated USMA in May 2019 as an Air Defense Artillery officer. After finishing BOLC in Fort Sill, OK, I moved to Camp Carroll, Republic of Korea as my first duty station. I served for about two years as a Fire Control Platoon Leader, Battery Executive Officer (XO), and Battalion S-1 OIC in 2-1 ADA BN, and am currently serving as a Battery XO in 1-1 ADA BN in Okinawa, Japan.

What was your Jewish life like at West Point and what is it like now in Korea?

I was very active in Hillel and Jewish Choir at USMA, which had complemented my observant upbringing, so coming to a country with almost no Jews was a bit of a culture shock for me. I found myself alone in my faith, as Jews in the military so often do, but I've used this as an opportunity to explore my own personal connection to Judaism, finding out what about the religion and culture is most important to me and what I can afford to sacrifice. Things like studying Hebrew and going to Shabbat services have taken a back seat, due to my lack of



LTC Wallen administers the Oath of Commissioned Officers to Noah at his Commissioning Ceremony in 2019.

time and opportunities here. In exchange, per se, I've focused more on other parts of my identity. I've always eaten kosher, and getting kosher MREs for FTXs has been a good way to stay connected. Havdalah is my favorite service, so I always make sure to do the ritual in some capacity every week, inviting my non-Jewish friends to participate occasionally as sort of a Jewish outreach event; this has been a fun way

for me to stay in touch with my faith, as well as keep the spirit of the "Havdalah Chaverim" from my USMA class alive.

How did the West Point Jewish Chapel prepare you for Jewish service in the Army?

I volunteered as my unit's Jewish Lay Leader, and was immediately appointed as a Jewish representative for all of Area IV, the entire southern half of South Korea! Camp Carroll is about the size of the West Point campus and only hosts around three battalions, so there are very few Americans, let alone Jews, in this area. There is a stronger Jewish presence to the north at Camp Humphreys, where they even host Jewish services twice a month, but that is a four hour drive away so it is difficult for me to get there very often. Overall, I'm so grateful for the opportunities I was given at USMA to build connections and figure out why Judaism is so important to me. I cannot wait to see what else the Army will send my way as I continue to explore my faith and my place in the world.



At left, Noah (center) celebrates with fellow Jewish Cadets at the Chapel's Baccalaureate Service in 2019. At right, different uniform but same result: Noah looks equally sharp in his AGSUs for a recent unit formal.



**Help kindle the lights of Jewish life at West Point.
Support the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund today!**

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
PARAMUS, NJ
PERMIT #105

West Point Jewish Chapel
P.O. Box 84
West Point, NY 10996

The Tablets