

The Tablets



The Official Newsletter of The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund • Spring 2025



MAZEL TOV TO THE CLASS OF 2025!

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Military Symposium

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The Tablets

The Official Newsletter of
The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund

SPRING 2025



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Jewish Chapel Fund**

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Fund News



MG (USA Ret.)
Jeffrey A. Jacobs

In the span of 10 days in May, I had the good fortune to be in the company of the most senior Jewish grad and the most junior Jewish grads serving in our Army. There's no question that the Army Jewish community is in good hands.

The senior Jewish grad is Maj. Gen. Dave Gardner '94. On May 30th, Dave assumed command of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. What a thrill for me to be there! As a Jewish grad myself, I was filled with nachas. Dave is proudly Jewish, and he and his wife Evee told me of taking a picture of the mezuzah that is now affixed to the doorpost of the commanding general's quarters at Ft. Campbell. Just today, as I write this, the Jewish chaplain at Ft. Bragg told me of Dave helping to erect the sukkah there this past fall during his prior assignment. And as

a former 101st Screaming Eagle (Rakkasan!), I couldn't have been prouder to watch Dave take the salutes of his commanders during the pass in review and to know that the division is in such capable hands. Mazel tov and Air Assault!

The week before, I attended the baccalaureate service at the chapel for the class of 2025. We have 18 new Jewish second lieutenants (seventeen in the Army and one in the Air Force). Eighteen—chai, indeed an auspicious number—kol hakavod, 2025! Those new lieutenants are an impressive and inspiring group of young officers. As a West Point graduate, I'm immensely proud. Although West Point will rightly claim the credit for their 47-month journey that will no doubt result in their success as Army (and Air Force) officers, our Jewish chapel and its programs, which the Fund supports, were a big part of that journey for many of them. As a Jewish graduate, I'm immensely proud of that as well. Mazel tov and welcome to the Long Gray Line!

I'm an old grad, so the compulsion to impart advice to younger grads comes naturally. I'm not going to resist that urge now. So, to the Jewish grads of the class of 2025, and to all Jewish grads still serving in our great Army, here it is: Be like Dave Gardner. Be proudly Jewish; put up a mezuzah. And be involved with the Jewish community on your post. You don't have to volunteer to be the lay leader, but reach out to the Jewish chaplain or lay leader to let them know you support them. Most important, show up. Help put up the sukkah. The Army Jewish community needs you and your leadership. Who better than West Pointers to lead the Army Jewish community?

We have a couple of transitions on our board. Our immediate past chairman, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Bob Rosenkranz '61, has transitioned to director emeritus status. The Fund thanks Bob for his devoted service to and leadership of the Fund for many, many years. He made a huge difference. A job well done, sir.

All of us are greatly saddened by the passing of Col. (Ret.) Pete Gleichenhaus '61. He was a longtime member of the board who never missed a meeting or turned away an opportunity to volunteer. Pete was the lay leader at West Point when I was a first classman. He was a mentor to me then, and he continued that mentorship even after I became chairman of the Fund's board. I already miss his phone calls, which invariably began with "Jeffrey!" and invariably proceeded to leave me with something (or two or three things) to think about. May his memory be a blessing. Be thou at peace, sir.

Two long years after the flooding at West Point, I'm happy to report that repairs to the chapel are underway in earnest. Unfortunately, those repairs mean that the chapel will not be open to welcome the class of 2029 and their parents this month, but it will be back up and running at full speed for the academic year. Please come visit.

Our chapel and its programs for our Jewish cadets would not exist without your continued support. Thank you for that support and for being part of the West Point Jewish community.

Go Army!

Jeff Jacobs '79
Major General, US Army (Ret.)
Chairman

Chapel News



Rabbi Heather Borshof

What does holiness mean to you? What does it mean to be holy?

During our last Shabbat service of the semester here at West Point, our Torah portion was most appropriate for our timing. The Torah portion was *K'doshim*, which comes from the Hebrew word *kadosh*. In Hebrew, *kadosh* translates as “set apart” or “separated.” It signifies a state of being distinct from the ordinary, the profane, or the common. The concept of “holy” doesn’t necessarily imply perfection or one who does not make mistakes, but rather one who is dedicated to God or to something higher than oneself.

The Torah portion states, “The Eternal spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I, the Eternal your God, am holy.’” So, what makes us holy? Is it, as Rabbi Dvora Weisberg

asks in her *D’var Torah*, honoring one’s parents? Is it observing the sabbath? Or is it leaving the produce on the edges of our fields for the poor. Does keeping kosher, giving *tzedakah*, visiting the sick, or returning extra change mistakenly given to us make us holy?

In addition to thinking about what actions make us holy, the Chatam Sofer (the preeminent leader of Judaism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the first part of the 19th century), teaches that only through the power of the collective can the individual be holy; not through one’s power alone. Judaism calls on us to seek holiness in community. This is embodied through so many of the rituals that we have in Judaism: The ability to recite certain prayers with a *minyan* (10 or more Jews), enjoying a Passover Seder with family and friends, inviting others to eat in the sukkah, sitting *shiva* and caring for others during a time of mourning, rejoicing with a couple at their wedding, or celebrating a new life are just a few of the things in which we need and want community to share.

As we discussed what holiness meant to each person during our last Shabbat service of the semester, our Cadets shared an array of thoughts about what it meant to them. For some, they believed that community is needed to create this holiness that the Torah talks about. It was also shared that it keeps us accountable for what we do. For others, they believed that while community is important, one can indeed achieve holiness on an individual level. Finally, some Cadets agreed that holiness can happen both individually and within the community.

As Rabbi Weisberg shared in her *D’var Torah*, each of us as the capacity for holiness. And when we see ourselves as members of the Jewish community, as “*Am Yisrael*” (the people of Israel), we realize that we are in this together, through the joyful times, and through the challenging times. Being holy does not mean being perfect, but we can better each other as we strive for this holiness to which God calls us.

As I stood there listening to each Cadet share what they believed holiness exemplified, I felt the very “holiness” that they were sharing about so passionately. It was truly a moment of kedusha (holiness). This is one of the very special things that separate us from the rest of the community. Our Cadets have come together every week, every holiday, every special occasion, and have created this very sacred place. I am honored to be a part of this remarkable community that our West Point Jewish community has created.

So, what does holiness mean to you?

L’shalom

Rabbi Heather Borshof

West Point Jewish Chapel Fund Mission

The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund, in support of the USMA mission to produce leaders of character, maintains an endowment to support Jewish cadets and programs, contributes to the beauty of the Chapel for the benefit of cadets and the public, and supports and engages with the Army Jewish community.

West Point Jewish Chapel

A Historic Edifice and Center for
Jewish Life at West Point

EST. 1984

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT

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CDT Daniel Clare
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COL Joshua Lubarsky
USMA '96

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

750 Merritt Road
West Point, NY 10996
Phone: (845) 938-2710

VISITING HOURS

Mon–Fri 0900-1600

SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday 1900

SAT, SUN AND HOLIDAYS

Please call for hours



Rabbi Heather Borshof and Cadets Angelique Arfa '28; and Blake Schryer '25 lead Shabbat services.

CADET AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP: SHABBAT SERVICES & TORAH STUDY

In all my years with Jewish communities and even more so with the West Point Jewish community (and this is a lot of years!), I have never seen such an engaged group of Cadets. Rabbi Heather Borshof along with our Cadet leadership team

By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96
Hillel OIC

across Hillel and the Jewish Choir have enabled and empowered our Cadets to integrate into services and Torah study in such a way that they have a vested ownership in these weekly events. This is so exciting to see! Over this past year, during weekly Shabbat services, you would often find Cadet Blake Schryer '25 and Cadet Angelique Arfa '28 helping to

lead services with their amazing voices adding so much *ruach* (רוח)! Every d'var Torah felt more like a Torah study in the middle of Shabbat services. Rabbi Borshof would cultivate a meaningful message which started with numerous Cadets and community members reading a paragraph each to initiate discussion. Then, she would ask a wonderfully crafted, open-ended question to enable meaningful reflection. From there, Cadets routinely jumped in by answering questions like "What resonates with you?" "What do you agree with?" and "What do you disagree with?" In fact, at least once near the end of the Spring semester, Rabbi Borshof asked one question, and the Cadets rapidly engaged in a 15-minute discussion which culminated in tying in foundational Halachic concepts and pride to serve our Nation. Our Cadets are absolutely wonderful! We have had

a variety of Cadets (including Adam Nichols '25 and Samuel Gordon '27) lead their own d'var Torah. We have also had Cadets (including Ellie Davis '25, Olivia Raykhman '25, and Angelique Arfa '28) lead the entirety of Shabbat services. Amazing! Services conclude with the entire community joyously singing a closing song led by our Cadets and then the singing continues in the social hall as they break into song and lead the Kiddush.

But wait ... there is even more amazement to share!! Weekly Torah studies have grown in a way that is so very wholesome! Each week during the academic year, we have Torah study on Tuesday during lunch. Rabbi Borshof runs the Torah study program masterfully and finds ways to incorporate wonderful scholars, educators, and leaders from

Continued on page 5

across the nation – to include some of our Cadets! Over this past semester, guest speakers have included: Hadassah Nitzan (Director, Operations and Outreach, JWB Jewish Chaplains Council), Rabbi Tzvi Teitelbaum (Reserve Chaplain), Rabbi Yosef Vogel (Developing Character Curriculum for the Military), Rabbi Elan Babchuck (Executive VP, CLAL (National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership)), Dr. Yasmine Kalkstein (Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic at West Point), Rabbi Heather Borshof, COL Ben Wallen '96, Cadet Adam Nichols '25, and Cadet Sam Gordon '27. The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund supports each week with scrumptious food!! In fact, we attribute the large amount of Cadets that come each week due to both the great speakers and fantastic food. However, regardless of the primary reason for coming, we have

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Cadets leading Kiddush as one big family.



Cadets leading Kiddush as an even bigger family!

about 80 Cadets each week! That's right folks!!! 80!!!! What is truly lovely is that about 25% are not Jewish. This is significant in that we have non-Jewish future leaders attending Torah study who have the potential to lead Jewish Soldiers in the Army. Through attending Torah study, they are gaining exposure to the Jewish faith and will be more informed and sensitive to the needs of their Jewish Soldiers. For our Jewish Cadets that attend, Torah study provides a weekly venue to connect with their Jewish faith and continue to strengthen the community. This is especially important for those athletes and others who have competing events pulling them from attending Shabbat services.

We look forward to welcoming our wonderful Cadets and community for Shabbat services and Academic Year 26 Torah Study and we truly appreciate the Fund's support.



Cadet Olivia Raykhman '25 leading services with musical support from Cadet Angelique Arfa '28



Cadet Ellie Davis leads Shabbat services

ALEPH INSTITUTE MILITARY SYMPOSIUM: STRENGTHENING THE JOINT JEWISH COMMUNITY



Participants at the Annual Aleph Institute Military Symposium including Col Ben Wallen (O/Dean and West Point Jewish Lay Leader) and 15 Cadets from the United States Military Academy.

On the weekend of 6 to 9 March 2025, fifteen Cadets and two faculty members from West Point participated in the 18th Annual Aleph Institute Military Symposium in Surfside, Florida. Participants from the full joint community came together at

By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96
Hillel OIC

the Shul (an Orthodox Synagogue) for faith, fellowship, and training focused on providing support to our Soldiers and Jewish communities wherever deployed or stationed. The theme for the conference addressed resilience, readiness, and moral clarity within crisis. Guest speakers included Chaplain (Maj Gen) Trent Davis (USAF, Chief of Chaplains), Chaplain (Brig Gen) Jack Stumme (US Army Deputy Chief of Chaplains), Maj Gen Borys Kremenskyi (Ukrainian Air Force, Defense Attache

to the United States), Lt Col Annie Kleiman (USAF, INDOPACOM), Mr. David Oxfeld (Miami Marlins CCO), Chaplain (Col, Ret) Sanford "Sandy" Dresin (Rabbi for the Pentagon and Aleph Institute's Director of Military Programs and Endorser for US Military, Veterans Affairs and Secret Service Chaplains), Col (Ret) Jack Jacobs (Medal of Honor Recipient), Lt Gen Michael Cederholm (USMC), and many more. During the weekend, there were two special sessions dedicated to West Point Cadets as well as a Lay Leader breakout session for all Lay Leaders present. Panel members for these discussions included Chaplain (Maj) Elie Estrin (Aleph Institute's Military Personnel Liaison and Executive Assistant to the Endorser), First Lieutenant Mikael Smits (USA), Chaplain (Capt) Michael Harari (USA), Capt (P) Menachem Felzenberg (USA), Chaplain (Capt) Noteh Glogauer (Canadian Armed Forces), Chaplain (Maj) Elisar Admon (USAR). Cadets had numerous engagement opportunities with

symposium participants across all service components along with Lieut Col (Ret) Terry Bresnick (USMA '69 and President of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund), Andrea Bresnick (Distinguished Advisor to the President of the WPJCF), Chaplain (Col) Shmuel Felzenberg (former West Point Jewish Chaplain), and Chaplain (Maj) David Ruderman (former West Point Jewish Chaplain). During the weekend, the group attended a variety of services, group meals, participated in religious traditions (e.g., putting on tefillin), team building hosted by David Schwartz (Senior Vice President & Loan Production Office Manager, The Federal Savings Bank), and shared in Havdalah with their sponsor families who housed our Cadets for the duration of the conference. The weekend was made possible through superb support from the Directorate of Cadet Activities and the coordination efforts of Ms. Elaine McConnell.

More photos continued on page 8



USMA Cadets sharing in the love of being Jewish through putting on tefillin, singing to celebrate Havdalah, and joining in community building ruach (רוח)!

More photos continued on page 9



One of two panel discussions organized specifically for West Point Cadets led by Chaplain (Capt) Michael Harari (USA), Capt (P) Menachem Felzenberg (USA), Chaplain (Capt) Noteh Glogauer (Canadian Armed Forces).

More photos on page 10



Maximizing engagement opportunities with West Point Class of 1992 graduate, Michael Shapiro.



WHAT THIS CONFERENCE MEANT TO ME:

I learned so much on this trip about what Judaism is about. By staying with an Orthodox family, I learned about their customs and how they observe the Sabbath. I have never experienced this type of Judaism before or seen such a vibrant community of young children enjoying the Shul. It was incredible hearing from generals from the different branches and even from Ukraine. I was so moved seeing the Ukrainian general cry when he spoke of the Holocaust survivor Roman Schwartz. This was a wonderful opportunity to explore Judaism in a new way, and I seriously will consider the process of becoming a chaplain in the future, something that I have already talked about to Rabbi Borshof a bit about already. Thank you for the opportunity to come. It was an honor and a pleasure to be here.

– Angelique Arfa, USMA 2028

I had an amazing time on the trip. I especially loved the discussion about how

being the chosen nation doesn't mean we are better than other people, but rather we have more responsibility to be good people.

– Wyatt Cyprow, USMA 2026

I am grateful to learn from such a diverse group of Jewish chaplains. I made friendships with fellow Jewish Soldiers from all over the country. We learned from the wisdom of some former grads who showed us the importance of being true to your faith.

– Jack Kessler, USMA 2028

This trip was incredibly important for any cadet that wants to be a lay leader. The many wise words by chaplains helped me understand the significance of having one at any base. In addition, the connections we made with Jewish military members helped me feel a strong sense of community that I thought I would never get to see outside of West Point.

– Aaron DeBlasi, USMA 2027

Aleph, for me, meant that I got to spend time with fellow Jewish service members and bond over the love for each other, country, and God. I was able to bear witness to the wisdom of Jewish leaders in the military and experience their dedication to service and Jewish values that I hope to one day emulate.

– Adam Nichols, USMA 2025

The Aleph trip is a very special and important trip that brings together Jews from across the military to explore and celebrate their Jewish pride. The Aleph trip gives an opportunity to meet and create inter-military service connections with Jews in units around the country. I wish every Jewish Soldier and Cadet could attend an event like Aleph to bring us all closer together.

– Daniel Clare, USMA 2027



Choir at the Mickey Marcus Ceremony led by Cadet Daniel Clare.

JEWISH CHOIR – SUPPORTING SPECIAL EVENTS, WEST POINT, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND COL BEN WALLEN!

Talk about a crescendo of Jewish Choir events! That's right! The West Point Jewish Choir was incredibly active this past semester which was facilitated by the superb Cadet leadership of Blake Schryer '25 and his

By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96
Hillel OIC

Assistant Cadet-in-Charge, Lucas Schwed '26. The powerhouse behind enabling all trips and events was none other than Ms. Elaine McConnell! The excellence which is our Jewish Choir didn't just happen overnight. Oh, no! They worked hard to increase their repertoire through weekly practices in the USMA Chaplain's Office, in the Mess Hall breakroom during Passover, and up at the Jewish Chapel as they helped set up for the Purim spiel. The choir performed at West Point during the Mickey Marcus Memorial Ceremony, in the local New York area at the Sommers

Retirement Community, and in New York City for two special events. They sang at the Town and Village Synagogue Hebrew School followed by singing at the Larry Epstein Award Ceremony where Colonel Ben Wallen was the 2025 award recipient. The Colonel Larry Epstein Award is given to an individual for support of the Jewish War Veterans, for support of veterans or for support of the Armed Forces of the United States. According to Rabbi Heather Borshof, COL Wallen has spent the last 29 years supporting the Jewish community as a Jewish Lay Leader at every Army post he has been assigned. These efforts have impacted Jewish War Veterans and support of the Armed Forces of the United States and beyond – yes beyond, especially in Iraq (three times). But enough about Colonel Wallen, let's get back to the amazement which is the Jewish Choir. The choir received special permission from West Point leadership to travel during the last week of the Spring semester to sing at the United Nations. They joined the Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations to celebrate Israeli

Independence and even sang Hatikvah with Ambassador Danny Danon. Throughout the semester, the choir also broke into song at different events which ranged from Shabbat services, the Yale Shabbaton, and while attending the Aleph Institute Military Symposium. In fact, a video highlighting our West Point Cadets was posted on [Instagram](#) and resulted in 31,016 likes! How's that for our Cadets being great ambassadors for Jewish life at West Point!!!

Scan for
[Instagram](#) post!



More photos continued on page 12



Choir Practice in the USCC Chaplain's Office.



Choir with Col Ben Wallen at Larry Epstein Award Ceremony.



Choir practice at the Jewish Chapel.



Choir at United Nations with Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon singing Hatikvah.



Choir Practice in Mess Hall Break Room.

HAVDALAH AT WEST POINT

By Cadet Daniel Clare '27

Havdalah, meaning "separation," helps remind us to distinguish between the mundane of the week and the holiness of Shabbos. Every Saturday evening Cadets gather to share this Jewish tradition together and bring in the new week with a renewed sense of joy and Jewish pride.



Cadets enjoy the light of the Havdalah candle against the majestic backdrop of the Hudson River.



The 2025 Purim Spiel. Next stop, Broadway!

'TWAS THE SEASON OF CADET FLAIR ADDED TO PURIM AND PASSOVER OBSERVANCES AND CELEBRATIONS!



Dirtman brings the ruach!

By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96

That's right folks! It was indeed the season! Yet again our Jewish community Plebes acted out the entire Megillah (Book of Esther). This is such a wonderful team building event and draws so many Jewish Cadets and their friends as we celebrate standing up for one's faith! All present certainly learned and enriched their understanding of Judaism. After the Purim spiel, we had a fantastic meal thanks to the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund. However, the extra flourish to the evening came in the form of the post-meal entertainment in the Jewish Chapel social hall. The Cadet Band known as "Take One" opened the festivities. Of special note, Take One is a band comprised entirely of our Jewish Cadets. Indeed!!! Following Take One's energetic songs, the Cadet Band "No Strings Attached" continued the fantastic

live music extravaganza which included raising Dirtman up to the beat of the music. No Strings Attached plays at numerous venues throughout the year; however, they have adamantly professed that their favorite venue to play is at the Jewish Chapel for our Hanukkah celebration and our Purim celebration. We definitely get into the groove! To close out the evening, every Cadet was able to depart with their own Purim care package, compliments of Kosher Troops.

Passover provided numerous special moments where Cadets were fantastic towards each other and the community as a whole. With the first night of Passover starting on Saturday, there was a special opportunity to begin with Havdalah. Cadet Daniel Clare '27 jumped at the opportunity to lead the community in Havdalah to kick off the Passover seder.

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Purim and Passover

Continued from page 14

In fact, he initiated the request to do so and was so inspirational that he had almost every Cadet join him. Then the group sang some humorous and motivational songs to transition into the first Passover seder, which was held in the Riverside Café of Eisenhower Hall. The venue was amazing and the support was first class! Rabbi Heather Borshof led a beautiful seder where she ensured to include participation from all present to enhance the sense of community. The following night, Cadet Adam Nichols '25 led a Passover seder at the Jewish Chapel for the Cadets. In all my years, this Cadet-led Passover seder is easily in the top five I have ever attended! Truly wonderful, warm, and meaningful! One of the items that made the Cadet-led Passover seder so special was the added, spontaneous d'var Torah by Cadet Rafael "Rafa" Shurkin '28. During a break in the Seder, Rafa got up, walked up to our table where our Cadet leaders were sitting, and said "I have an idea for a for a quick d'var Torah." The focus of the message centered on the meaning of the word Pharaoh and how the head, the heart, and the mouth are all connected. What we say connects what is in our mind and our heart. His message was delivered beautifully; however, even more lovely was the fact that we have created an environment in our community in which the Plebes feel super comfortable and encouraged to be able to bring something up to our Cadet leaders. Equally as delightful is that our Cadet leaders are so open and flexible to adjusting their plan to incorporate great ideas. For the remainder of Passover, the community had Kosher for Passover meals in the Mess Hall break room where we host our weekly Torah studies. The meals, which were truly quite delicious, were provided through the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund as well as the Army supply system! This was the first time we had individual, frozen dinners throughout Passover. So much variety, so tasty, so fantastic! Thank you to Rabbi Borshof for masterfully navigating the supply system to get these dinners for everyone!

More photos continued on page 16



Take One, featuring Cadets Justin Collins, Bradley Demeritt, and Roni Chajmovic.



Cadet Aiden Djavadi proudly showcasing the Kosher Troops care packages during Purim.



Six out of five stars for this delicious dinner!



Cadets enjoy kosher-for-Passover fare in the Mess Hall break room.

Purim and Passover

Continued from page 15



Smiles and happy faces as the community Passover Seder.



Team Passover takes it to the Mess Hall!



Cadet Daniel Clare leads Passover Seder Havdalah.



Cadet Adam Nichols leads the Cadet Seder at the Jewish Chapel.



Cadets follow along and participate as Chaplain Borshof leads the Seder.



Setting up for the Cadet-led seder on the second night.

KOSHER TROOPS: SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR SOLDIERS

*By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96
Hillel OIC*

Our West Point Cadets continued their tradition of supporting Kosher Troops once a semester! It is always so meaningful to help pack care packages for service members across the globe. What make this community service effort so meaningful is that we often find ourselves packing a box for one of our former West Point Jewish Cadets who is requesting supplies for their community. It's truly wonderful! We certainly thank Sara Fuerst and Ava Avidar-Hamburger for keeping Kosher Troops as such a beacon of support to Jewish servicemembers everywhere!!!



The cadets stand proudly with their lovingly-packed boxes and shipping labels.



The Class of 2025 succeeded in beating the Dean!!

JEWISH BACCALAUREATE SERVICE – A TRIBUTE TO A TRULY AMAZING CLASS!

By Colonel Ben Wallen USMA '96

As the West Point Class of 2025 prepared to close out their 47-month developmental journey which prepared them to lead our Nation's sons and daughters, we reflect on our 18 Jewish graduates. How wonderful is it that each year we feel as though the leaders from the current year moved our community forward by leaps and bounds from the previous year? Well, I will tell you. It is indeed wonderful!! We were blessed to have our trio of Hillel Leaders in Cadets Adam Nichols, Ellie Davis, and Olivia Raykhman, plus Cadet Blake Schryer as our Jewish Choir Leader. They fostered development and supported the entire Jewish community, which has strengthened us all. The Jewish Cadets of the Class of 2025 include five

Infantry officers (two of those being branch detailed to Engineers and one to Military Intelligence), two Field Artillery officers, three Aviation officers (one of those aviation officers will become a MEDEVAC pilot), two Chemical officers, one Armor Officer, one Air Defense Artillery officer, one Engineer Officer, and one cross-commissioning into the Air Force.

The Baccalaureate service began with Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Terry Bresnick (President, West Point Jewish Chapel Fund) talking about the significance of having the firsties' names unveiled and added to the wall of graduates. The guest speaker during the ceremony was Rabbi David Wolpe, widely regarded as one of the most influential Rabbis of our time. He delivered an amazing message! Each

Class of 2025 Cadet received a number of special gifts from Command Sergeant Major (Ret) Gary Ginsburg (National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans), Maj. Gen. (Ret) Jeff Jacobs (Chairman, West Point Jewish Chapel Fund), and Hadassah Nitzan (Jewish Welfare Board). The choir performed one last time with the Class of 2025 as they sang the Alma mater and the Army song. A huge thank to you Ms. Elaine McConnell for developing the script and serving as the Master of Ceremonies. To make the day even more meaningful, the 15th Dean of the Academic Board, Brig. Gen. Shane Reeves attended in support of the community.

More photos continued on page 19



Lieut Col (Ret) Terry Bresnick kicks off the baccalaureate by unveiling the names of West Point's newest Jewish graduates.



Cadet Blake Schryer conducts the choir for the last time.



Rabbi David Wolpe delivers the baccalaureate speech ...



.. and is presented with photos of the cadets for his office!



Cake-cutting saber skills are in full effect!



Cadet Joseph Bardales supervises Cadets Lillian Baker and Justin Rogers as they work on their cake-cutting skills.

More photos continued on page 20



Cadets Ellie Davis and Olivia Raykhman awarded the LTC Jeanne E. Hutchison Cadet Leadership Award with Cadets Adam Nichols and Blake Schryer awarded the COL David "Mickey" Marcus Leadership Award.



Cadet Justin Rogers proudly poses with his baccalaureate swag, compliments of the Jewish Chapel Fund, the Jewish War Veterans, and JWB.



The force behind it all - Melanie Ullah ensures that every detail is perfect prior to the service.

Congratulations to the Class of 2025

As we depart from thee... Serving on land or sea



Lillian E. Baker
Infantry
Ft. Wainwright, AK



Joseph K. Bardales
Infantry
Ft. Irwin, CA



Alexander D. Boarnet
Infantry
Ft. Bragg, NC



Samuel A. Budoff
Medical Services
Ft. Novosel, AL



Eleanor W. Davis
Aviation
Ft. Novosel, AL



Jack H. Feldman
Engineer
Ft. Stewart, GA



Corey D. Field
Chemical
Ft. Carson, CO



Adam R. Gottlieb
Military Intelligence (Branch
Detail Infantry)
Ft. Campbell, KY



Sam G. Kreitzman
Infantry
JBER, AK



Sander F. Margolin
Armor
Ft. Hood, TX



Jacob R. Meyer
Air Defense
Ft. Sill, OK



Adam M. Nichols
Field Artillery
Camp Casey, South Korea



Jeremy H. Poster
Engineer (Branch
Detail Infantry)
Ft. Campbell, KY



Olivia S. Raykhan
Air Force - Information
Operations
Stanford University
Eglin AFB, FL



Justin L. Rogers IV
Aviation
Ft. Novosel, AL



Olivia K. Santo
Chemical
Vicenza, Italy



Blake L. Schryer
Field Artillery
Ft. Campbell, KY



Fionn E. Yapkowitz
Infantry
Grafenwoehr, Germany

*Thanks to Academy Photo for once again
providing pictures of our graduating cadets.*

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL FUND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

By Billy Medof, USMA '94 and
Randy Gorod, Development Advisor

Thank you to our generous donors who have supported the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund this year. Your contributions help sustain a wide range of activities that enrich Jewish life at West Point, including Shabbat and holiday services, kosher meals, Torah studies, Jewish Warrior Weekend, cadet retreats, and Choir Trips to other academies and Jewish communities. These efforts ensure that Jewish cadets and the broader West Point Jewish community

continue to benefit from a vibrant and inclusive Jewish home.

As Vice President of Fundraising for the Chapel Fund Board, I have reached out to Jewish alumni to help rekindle connections with one another and with the Jewish Chapel. Like many of you, I found that the Chapel and the people I met there had a profound impact on my life, during my time as a cadet, as an Army officer, and long after graduation.

Thanks to your generosity and engagement, we've seen a significant increase in the number of donors and the total funds raised. You can always make a gift online to support the Chapel at: www.westpointjewishchapel.org/support/donate.html



I've invited you to reconnect, shared exciting updates—many of which you'll find in this issue of The Tablets—and asked Jewish alumni to consider serving as class captains. These volunteers play an essential role in keeping our community close-knit and informed. If you're interested in learning more about what it means to be a class captain, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for helping keep our community strong

THE NACHAS PAGE

SHARING THE JOY OF BEING JEWISH AT WEST POINT

By COL Ben Wallen, USMA '96

What a year of amazing opportunities orchestrated by our fantastic Cadets! They continually found ways to share the joy of being Jewish within our own community at West Point, the larger Cadet community, and communities throughout the surrounding area.

The Spring semester included activities hosted at the Jewish Chapel such as a Superbowl watch party, a special dinner with the MirYam Institute, and a discussion with Dr. Frank Luntz. A special Shabbat service included the combined Jewish and Gospel Choirs which was coordinated by Cadet Blake Schryer '25 who is the Cadet-in-Charge of our Jewish Choir, but also sings as a member of the Gospel Choir in order to build relationships across organizations!

Shabbat services traditionally conclude with a delectable oneg dinner; however, we had numerous added community building events which kept our Cadets



A Shabbat-Poker Night mashup - next stop, Vegas!

entertained, educated, and engaged after dinner. Cadet Parker Brown '28 led a Poker Night. Jewish Community Cadets Justin Collins '26, Bradley Demeritt '26, and Roni Chajmovic '26 provided a rockin' time during their performances as the West Point Cadet Band "Take One." Cadets Daniel Clare '27, Roni Chajmovic '26, and Blake Schryer '25 led Cadets and community members in a "Tisch." In case you are unfamiliar with a tisch, think

of the most spirited singing of Shabbat songs and then crank that up to an eleven! Yes! It was OUTSTANDING!

Cadet Adam Nichols '25 has led additional Torah discussions in the Jewish Chapel Library which beautifully integrated the weekly Torah portion and infused current events and take-aways from the Cadet experiences at West Point.

Continued on page 27

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL GRADUATE UPDATES

PREPARED BY LTC (RET) ROBERT WOLFF, '65

OLDEST LIVING WEST POINT JEWISH GRADUATES

CLASS OF 1941

COL(R) Herbert Stern, USA, SS, LM

CLASS OF 1947

Robert Haas

CLASS OF 1949

COL (R) Norman Katz, USAF, 2LM

CLASS OF 1946

Norman Wahl

CLASS OF 1948

LTC (R) Jay Josephs, USAF

JEWISH GRADUATE DEATHS SEPTEMBER 1, 2024 – JULY 1, 2025

We remember the following Jewish graduates and thank them for their service to our country.

CLASS OF 1947

Robert Beckelman, died 30 September 2020
(recently reported by Association of Graduates)

CLASS OF 1950

Harold Libert, died 20 February 2017
(reported by Association of Graduates
in January 2025)

CLASS OF 1949

LTC (R) Edwin Triner, USAF, died 27 December
2023 (recently reported by Association of Graduates)

CLASS OF 1961

COL (R) D. Pete Gleichenhaus,
died 25 December 2024

WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST

- First Shabbat of the Academic Year
- Plebe Retreat

SEPTEMBER

- First Torah study of the Academic Year
- First choir practice of the Academic Year
- Annual Apple Picking Trip Section
- Rosh Hashanah

OCTOBER

- Yom Kippur
- Sukkot (Sukkot Set-up at the Chapel, Services, Sukkot Party)
- West Point Family Weekend (Family Shabbat)
- Simchat Torah
- Jewish Warrior Weekend (at US Air Force Academy)
- Vigil for 7 October Hamas Attacks on Israel

NOVEMBER

- Choir Trip (TBD)
- Kosher Troops

DECEMBER

- Hannukah (and annual Hannukah party at the Chapel)

BE THOU AT PEACE:

REMEMBERING PETE GLEICHENHAUS, CLASS OF 1961

By Emma Goss, Staff Writer at J. The Jewish News of Northern California

Reprinted with permission of Emma Goss and J. The Jewish News of Northern California.

Col. D. Peter Gleichenhau, or “Col. Pete,” as friends liked to call him, lived a life devoted to service, both in his nearly 30-year career in the U.S. Army and in his role as a Jewish community leader.

Gleichenhaus died on Dec. 25 in San Francisco. He was 85. The cause of death was complications after a fall he took while playing tennis, according to his adult children.

“The first night of Hanukkah is the night he passed, surrounded by his family,” son Army Col. Joseph Gleichenhaus told J.

A memorial service was held at Congregation Am Tikvah in San Francisco on Jan. 3, followed by graveside burial with U.S. military honors at Salem Memorial Park in Colma.

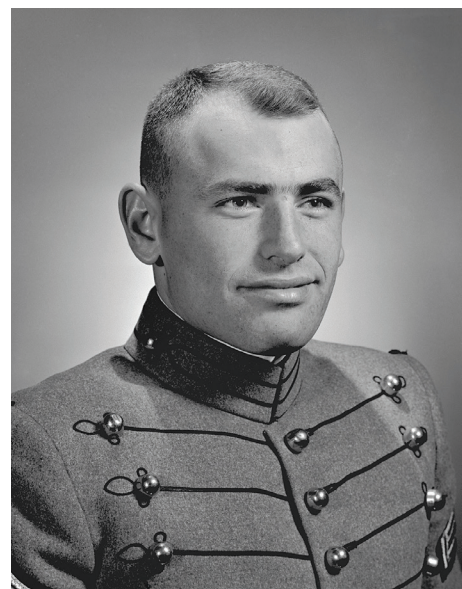
“Peter was a generous, compassionate leader — husband, father, brother,

coach, congregant, and friend,” Rebecca Goodman, director of Jewish community engagement for the Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area, wrote in a Dec. 30 email. Gleichenhaus served on the JCRC board from 2019 until the time of his death. In 2018, he received JCRC’s Lifetime Distinguished Leadership Award after having led the organization’s “Hiring Our Heroes” project to match returning Bay Area veterans with jobs.

On a memorial site, dozens of people shared fond memories of Gleichenhaus, including one lauding him as “a decisive leader and a mensch.”

“Pete was an exceptional leader and a remarkable human being,” Rabbi Doug Kahn, executive director emeritus of JCRC, wrote on the site. “When we worked together on a program to engage the Jewish community on behalf of veterans, Pete said it’s about ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’ and then he approached the S.F. Giants and the next thing I know we have a major jobs fair for veterans.”

Born on Jan. 29, 1939, Gleichenhaus grew up in the Bronx in New York City. After graduating high school at 16, he

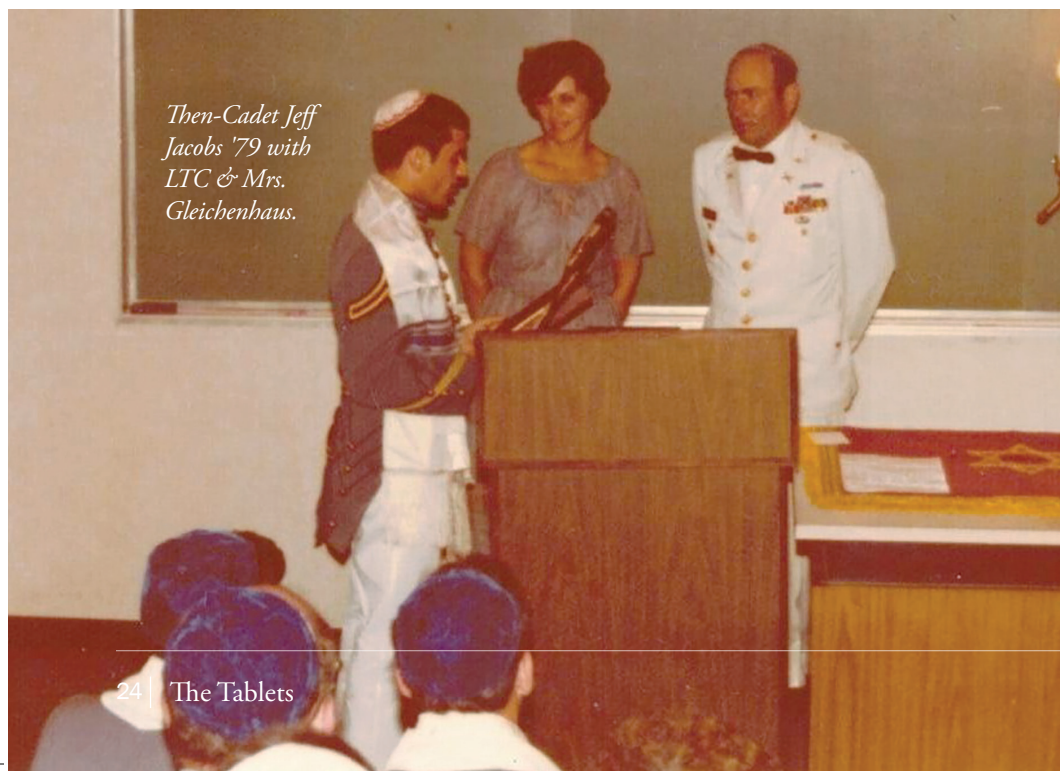


Col. Pete Gleichenhaus, USMA '61

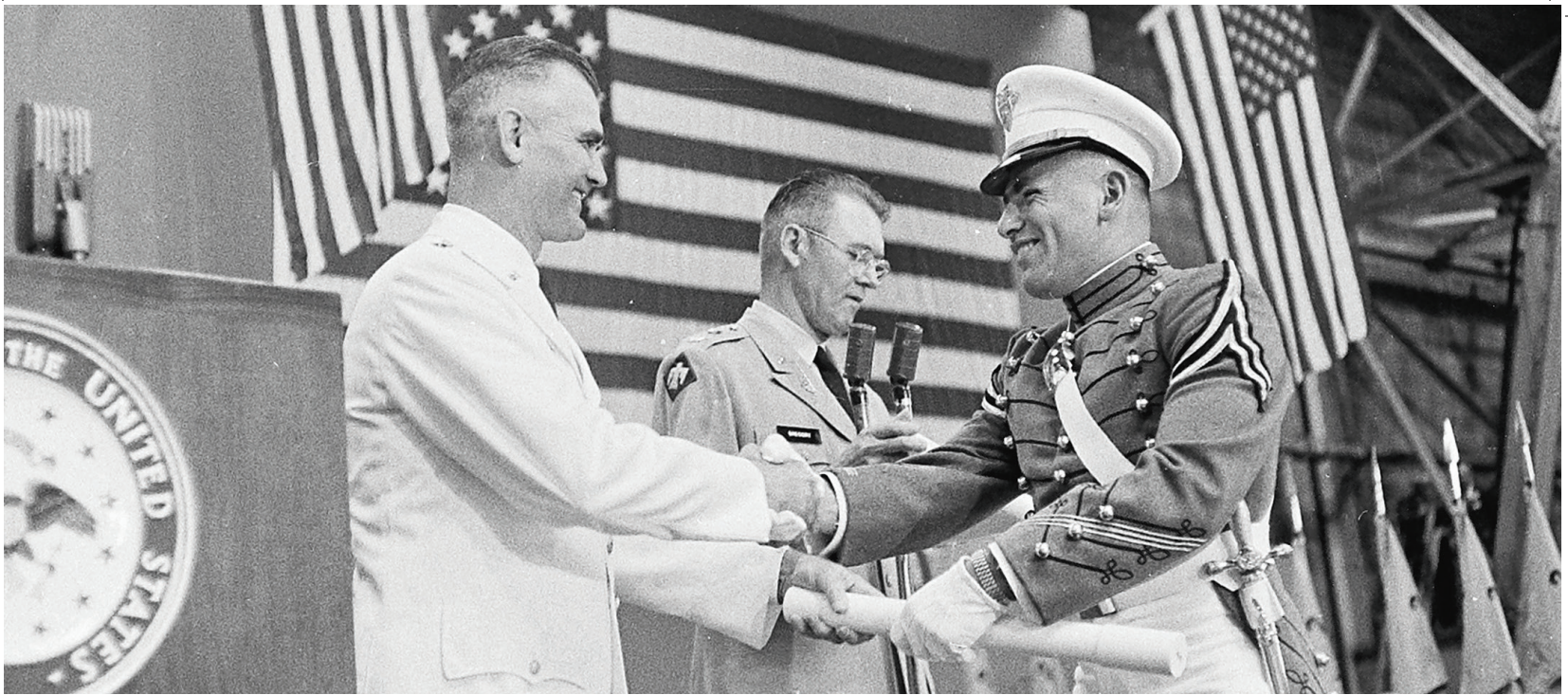
attended Blair Academy and Cornell University, eventually leaving Cornell to attend his dream school, the United States Military Academy at West Point. He graduated from West Point in 1961 and later earned a master’s degree in physical education at the University of Wisconsin.

Gleichenhaus’ three-decade Army service included two combat tours in Vietnam, first with the infantry and later in the artillery, according to family. He was highly decorated, earning three Bronze Star Medals, five combat Air Medals, two Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses, a Combat Infantryman Badge and an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. He was stationed overseas in Panama and in Germany. He also spent several years at the Pentagon and had two assignments in the physical education department at West Point.

In 1985 he came to San Francisco, where he was assigned as deputy post commander and, later, inspector general at Sixth Army headquarters at the Presidio.



Then-Cadet Jeff Jacobs '79 with LTC & Mrs. Gleichenhaus.



x

Be thou at peace

Continued from page 24

After retiring from the Army in 1990, Gleichenhau worked in various jobs. He managed a medical group, had a short stint at a Silicon Valley startup, and served as dean at a business college in San Francisco. In 2001 he became the director of public works in Daly City, where he worked until he retired six years later.

Gleichenhau and his wife, Barbara, were married 61 years and raised

three children together. They had four grandchildren.

Gleichenhau's son told J. his dad led with generosity and knew how to make people feel seen and special.

"He had that unique ability, you were the only two there if he was engaging with you," he said.

In a 2018 JCRC video that accompanied the leadership award, Joseph Gleichenhau described his father as a "morning person" who made productivity part of every day.

"That's how he operated. When you get things done you get them done quick, you come back, and you find you have lots more time to do a whole bunch of things," he said, noting his father's "extreme patience and amiability."

Gleichenhau's eldest daughter, Wendy Veneris, spoke in the same video of her dad's devotion to family, describing him as "honest and humble."

"He always impressed upon us: If you are able to do something for your family, you do. If you can show up, you do," she said.

Gleichenhau was the president of San Francisco Congregation B'nai Emunah before it merged with Beth Israel Judea to become Am Tikvah. He served as chairman of Goodwill Industries and on the boards of the Bay Area Council of the Boys Scouts of America, the Lake Merced Golf Club, Interfaith Center at the Presidio, the Korean War Memorial Foundation, the JCRC and the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund. He was involved in numerous other projects and organizations.

"He was genuine and authentic and he saw the best in everyone," Morissa Gleichenhau, his youngest child, told J. "He never said a bad word about anybody. He sought out what made people spark and he would help enhance that. That's what he did all the time. He focused on the positive."



Col. Pete Gleichenhau carries a Torah scroll in a June 2023 ceremony (photo courtesy of Congregation Am Tikvah of San Francisco).

OLD GRAD SPOTLIGHT



LTC (Ret) Bob Wolff (USMA '65) and his wife Phyllis, flanked by Army West Point Men's Gymnastics coach JD Reive and fellow gymnast David Fulton (USMA '86), during January's Wall of Distinction awards ceremony at West Point. Bob received the prestigious 1LT Howie Pontuck award for his distinguished military service.



LTC Dmitriy Sheykman (USMA '08) had the honor of commemorating America's Greatest Generation by laying wreaths on memorials for the American and Allied Soldiers who liberated the Czech Republic from Nazi totalitarianism 80 years ago.



Our very own COL Ben Wallen (USMA '96) is flanked by Jewish leaders (including COL Josh Lubarsky (USMA '96), USMA Jewish War Veterans Liaison and CSM (R) Gary Ginsburg, National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans. COL Wallen was this year's recipient of the distinguished Larry Epstein Award for his support of the Jewish community.



LTC Megan Williams (USMA '05) relinquished command of the 720th Military Police Battalion at Fort Cavazos, Texas on June 13th. She is surrounded by some of her fellow Old Grads, post-ceremony (from left to right, Jennie Choi '05, Anthea (Hernandez) Chlebek '05, Ryan Chlebek '05, Allison Morse '05, and Tania (Moreno) Donovan '06.



MG David Gardner (USMA '94) took command of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky on 30 May.



LTC Ari Fisher (USMA '05) celebrates his wife Candace Fisher's (USMA '04) retirement alongside dear friend and former first sergeant David Brown. Ari and David were an all-Jewish company command team, serving for 22 months together.

OLD GRADS, LET US KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!

Send pics to the Fund Administrator at WPJCF@outlook.com.

Special Shabbat celebrations occurred locally at Rabbi Borshof's home with celebration of Havdalah and a bonfire to close out Shabbat. The community also had a Lag B'omer celebration which came complete with a bonfire where we learned that you can roast more than marshmallows on the fire – indeed – you may also heat up your pizza! Cadet Daniel Clare '27 coordinated a Shabbaton with the Rutgers Chabad which opened the door for future engagements. Cadet Clare stated, "spending a Shabbos at Rutgers was a warm and welcoming experience. It was very eye opening to speak with Jewish students whose campus environment and experience with antisemitism is vastly different from ours. We are excited to be welcomed back for another Shabbos and hopefully continue to build connections with our communities." These sentiments were shared by those that attended along

with the following remarks by Cadet Daniel Gologorsky '26 that "Shabbat at Rutgers was a great experience to meet other young Jewish students and see their community and how they're able to practice their faith in a different environment from West Point. We made a lot of strong connections and hope to continue events with the Rutgers Chabad in the future."

Cadet Blake Schryer '25 coordinated a Shabbaton with the Yale University Hillel which included attending Shabbat services, Torah study, a tisch, a variety of optional activities, and a group dinner during which all contributed to fostering fellowship. All of these events have enabled our Cadets to share the joy of being Jewish with others internal and external to West Point. Our Cadets are superb ambassadors for the Jewish community, Cadets at West Point, and Jews serving our nation.

To learn more about events from this past Spring semester, please feel free to view a recording using the following link (<https://youtu.be/eAED-hAvu1k>) or QR code below of a discussion of the wonderful events and amazing Jewish community hosted by COL Ben Wallen, Jewish Lay Leader for West Point.



Superbowl Watch Party - we are here for the food and the commercials!



Cadets gather round for a little Tisch.



Excellent entertainment and ruach provided by Take One.

CADETS' THOUGHTS ON THE SHABBATON AT YALE:

"I loved going to Yale as an opportunity to connect with other college students and form relationships. I especially loved getting to learn more about Judaism and getting to contribute to and be part of the Jewish community."

– Elly Melton, USMA 2028

"It was super fascinating to meet the broad spectrum of students at Yale and expand my viewpoints on current events like the tariffs and Israeli-Palestine conflict. It was very insightful to learn beyond what I have seen on the news and on social media. Additionally, I was able to reconnect with some of the people I met at the PDLI Israeli-Palestine Conference in New York a few weeks ago."

– Parker Brown, USMA 2028

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