

# The Tablets

The Official Newsletter of The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund • Spring 2026



## MAZEL TOV TO THE CLASS OF 2026!

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## The Tablets

The Official Newsletter of  
The West Point Jewish Chapel Fund

**SPRING 2026**



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Jewish Chapel Fund**

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# Fund News



**MG (Ret)**  
Jeffrey A. Jacobs

Spring is a time of joy in the Jewish tradition. Although I'm sure it's not surprising that any organization associated with West Point adheres to tradition, I'm nevertheless pleased to report that the West Point Jewish community and the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund celebrated three simchas (joyous events) this spring.

On May 23rd at Michie Stadium, 30 Jewish graduates from the class of 2026 threw their white hats into the air. We believe this is the largest number of Jewish cadets in any West Point class (although, as we know, not the largest by percentage—the class of 1802, of course was 50% Jewish!). Many of our board members attended the baccalaureate service on Wednesday, May 20th at the chapel, and I'm sure I can speak for all of them when I say that we were filled with nachas seeing the poise and

professionalism of these young Jewish West Pointers. We wish our newest grads the best of luck as they head out to the Army to lead soldiers, and hopefully, to become leaders in the Army Jewish community. Mazal tov to our new lieutenants and welcome to the Long Gray Line.

On June 12th at Eisenhower Hall, Col. Ben Wallen, Ph.D., '96, our longtime lay leader and Hillel officer-in-charge, retired from the Army after 30 years of faithful and honorable service. As well as serving as a Fund officer and board member, Ben has been the glue that holds the West Point Jewish community together. We all wish Ben well as he begins the next chapter of his life. And West Point, the Jewish community and the Fund are beyond fortunate that his next chapter will be as Dr. Ben Wallen in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at West Point. Even before he hung up his uniform, Ben was informed that he had been promoted from Associate Professor to Professor of Engineering Education. Mazal tov, Ben, on your retirement and on your promotion. A job truly well done! We are thrilled that you'll remain a fixture at West Point and at the chapel.

I have mentioned in this space previously that, five years ago, the Fund created two scholarships for rabbinical students who agree to serve as active-duty Army Jewish chaplains upon ordination. I'm pleased to report that our two scholarship recipients, Rabbis Jesse Paquin and Trish Abrams, were ordained on April 27th after finishing their studies at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Yonkers, New York. The ordination took place at Temple Emanu-el in Closter, New Jersey—fittingly enough, just a short drive down Route 9W from West Point.

The ordination was a special event. Both rabbis, who currently serve as lieutenants and chaplain candidates in the Army Reserve, wore their Army service uniforms and camouflage tallith (prayer shawls) for the ceremony. The ceremony included a prayer for Jewish servicemembers, among other recognition of Jewish service in the United States Armed Forces—something that most of the large Jewish audience probably knew very little about. Rabbi Borshof and three of our board members attended, and one of Rabbi Paquin's guests was his brother, Lt. Col. Jeremy Paquin, West Point class of 2009. A hearty mazal tov to our new rabbis! We continue to work with the JWB Jewish Chaplains Council and the Army to bring them into the Army chaplain corps and onto active duty to serve the Army Jewish community.

As I hope you gather from these three simchas, the Jewish community at West Point is thriving. That is thanks in large part to the people at West Point who volunteer their time and energy to plan programs for our cadets and to ensure the success of those programs, from weekly cadet Torah study, to arranging for food for the Oneg Shabbat, to helping our cadets plan the plebe retreat and choir trips. Rabbi Borshof, Ben Wallen, Elaine McConnell and our Fund administrator, Melanie Ullah, keep the chapel and its programming running.

But none of that would be possible without your continued support of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund. Thank you as always for that support and for helping us send the message that the Jewish presence at West Point has been constant since 1802 and is growing stronger each year.

Go Army!

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



# Chapel News



**Rabbi Heather Borshof**

A few years ago, I wrote an article for the Jewish War Veterans about one of my first experiences living away from a Jewish Community. What I wrote then is still my experience today, and I would like to share it again because I believe that it is important to help distinguish the difference between antisemitism and a lack of awareness and understanding when it comes to how Jewish people are treated in the military.

I grew up in central New Jersey, a county that had one of the largest Jewish populations in the state. Public schools were closed for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover. Even though I was exposed to other faith groups, I never thought twice about having to fight for or explain why I needed off for a Jewish holiday because it was never necessary.

When I first came into the military as a rabbi and Jewish chaplain, I discovered very quickly that Jews, as we are in the world, are a minority. In fact, I learned a new phrase: I am a “low-density faith” chaplain and Jews are a low-density faith religion in the military. This was a completely different experience for me than where I grew up and went to college.

For the first time, I met people who had never met a Jewish person. Many people do not recognize the tablets insignia that Jewish chaplains wear. Throughout my time in the military, and in particular during my time in Afghanistan, individuals would inquire daily and ask what that “symbol” above my name was. I discovered that this was and is a wonderful opportunity to share who I am as a Jewish chaplain, and to communicate about who we are as a Jewish people. When we show our Judaism, whether that be the way we dress (wearing a Jewish star, or a kippah, or for me the Jewish tablets with the 10 commandments and the Star of David), we represent not just ourselves, but all of Judaism. Many people do not realize that Jews serve in the military and have always served in the military.

During my fifteen years on active duty in the Army as a Jewish chaplain, I have been fortunate to encounter very little antisemitism or opposition to practicing my faith freely. In one or two assignments, I have had leadership who did not respect or understand my requirement to serve the military Jewish community in addition to my regular officer responsibilities. However, most people are receptive and often even excited to meet a Jewish chaplain.

But I do know that for those Jewish military personnel who are not chaplains, the experience of finding others to be receptive and understand their needs is not always easy. Many Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen experience resistance when making a request to practice their Judaism. Whether that be for kosher meals or asking to be excused in order to attend worship services for a Jewish holiday, they are often met with opposition and are denied the chance to participate and practice their Judaism.

In the present day and since October 7th, we are facing more antisemitism than we have in recent years. That is not to say that it was not always there, but it is more public today and tolerated in a way that must be considered unacceptable to Americans. However, in the military I find that when Jewish people are refused the opportunity to practice their faith, it is often (not always) more out of ignorance and a lack of understanding than it is out of antisemitism.

After the attacks on 7 October in Israel, Jewish students at many colleges and universities continue to experience antisemitism as they never have before. It is scary, upsetting, and problematic on many levels. I am pleased to see that the Jewish students here at West Point have not experienced that kind of antisemitism. In fact, many of the faculty had reached out and asked how they could be supportive of the Jewish community. It is a breath of fresh air, but I know that this is not what is happening in many places around the country, so it is important that we speak up and speak out when we face antisemitism.

It can be challenging to be a “low-density faith.” Many have experienced first-hand the challenges that come with it, and it is important that we continue to educate others. As a low-density faith chaplain, I feel blessed to be able both to serve the military Jewish community and have an opportunity to work with all of those from other faiths as well. Everyone has so much to learn from one another, and together we can all continue to teach each other, support each other, and make the military a stronger and more cohesive community.

*Eizehu chacham? Ha'lo med mikol adam.*

Who is wise? One who learns from every person. (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

*LShalom,*

Rabbi Heather Borshof

## West Point Jewish Chapel

A Historic Edifice and Center for Jewish Life at West Point

**EST. 1984**

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#### WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL

750 Merritt Road  
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Phone: (845) 938-2710

#### VISITING HOURS

Mon–Fri 0900-1600

#### SHABBAT SERVICES

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#### SAT, SUN AND HOLIDAYS

Please call for hours

#### 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.





## Spring 2026 Choir Activities: Part I

# VISIT TO NYU, PERFORMANCE AND SCHMOOZING AT CASTLE POINT VA, AND MICKEY MARCUS MEMORIAL CEREMONY

**B**raving the February snowstorm, the Jewish Chapel Choir contingent of 12 members spent the weekend in New York City, celebrating and welcoming the Sabbath with students from NYU's Hillel. Following services, the Choir sang a set of musical numbers

**By Elaine McConnell**  
Choir OIC

and answered questions about West Point and life at the Military Academy. On Saturday the Choir joined Congregation Shearith Israel, a Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, founded in 1654 as the nation's first Jewish congregation.

Following Saturday morning Shabbat services, the Choir performed the Armed Forces Medley and the Alma Mater and attended Rabbi Dr. Meir Y. Soloveichik's

lecture, "The Declaration, the Constitution and the Future of American Jewry" which included Dr. Benjamin Rush's observations on the Fourth of July Procession in Philadelphia, as published in the *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 15 July 1788 and Naphtali Phillips' recollections of attending that same celebration. After a brief oneg, sextant and Shamash Zachariah Edinger

conducted a tour of the synagogue highlighting the history and architectural features of this third home of Congregation Shearith Israel. Exuding their usual charm, the choir members (who made fast friends with NYU Hillel students and the entire Shearith Israel Congregation) received invitations for return performances.

Despite the winter snows, spring finally arrived in the Hudson Valley, affording the cadets an opportunity to

spend time at a nearby veterans' home. Five cadets had the honor of visiting residents of Veterans' Village at the Castle Point Veterans Administration facility. Lively discussions ensued as the cadets introduced themselves to the veterans, who shared their military experiences serving in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Mr. Beck, a 100-year-old World War II veteran and the oldest resident at Castle Point, recounted a few of his stories, enthralling the cadets and medical staff alike. One of the nurses remarked that the residents were more engaged, talkative, and alert than she had seen them in a long time.

The cadets spoke about their current training and future assignments, bonding with veterans, who represented the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

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Choir Spring 2026.

Lucas Schwed, choir director and Class of 2026 graduate, said that meeting these service members was one of the most meaningful experiences of his time with the choir.

Putting a wonderful exclamation point on the 2025-2026 academic year, the Choir participated in the annual Mickey Marcus memorial event. Joining with the larger community, the cadets sang at the chapel and attended the wreath laying ceremony and recited Mourners Kaddish at the gravesite in the West Point Cemetery.

## Spring 2026 Choir Activities: Part II VISIT TO HOUSTON, TEXAS

*Editor's Note: In March, the Choir embarked on an exciting trip to Houston to spend time with the local Jewish community – as well as the NASA community and the rodeo community! Cadets Wyatt Cyprow and Parker Brown write about the incredible experience.*

**By Wyatt Cyprow '26  
and Parker Brown '28**  
Choir Leadership

### NASA TOUR

We began our trip section with a tour of the NASA Johnson Space Center. The Head of Protocol at NASA, Andrea Speakman, led the tour. NASA provided two vans to escort the cadets on a private tour. Our first stop was Mission Control, where we were briefed by NASA's Flight Controller in the International Space Station Flight Control Viewing Room, with a special welcome message for us. We then proceeded to the Sonny Carter Training Facility which contained the

Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, a large pool with an exact replica of the International Space Station. Our tour concluded with the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility, where we were able to view the International Space Station Trainers, Orion Medium Fidelity Trainer, Russian Soyuz Trainer, Commercial Crew Program, and we had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Joseph Acaba, the former Chief of the Astronaut Office with three trips to space.

### BETH ISRAEL SERVICES AND CHOIR PERFORMANCE

Before joining the Beth-Israel community for services, we had the pleasure of enjoying a catered dinner sponsored by Brent and Sonya Brown, Shirley Brown, and Jay and Laura



Post-Rodeo Mixer, courtesy of cousin Matt Hague.

Tarnow. The meal served was classic Texan BBQ, a tribute to my grandfather, Marshall Brown, who always loved BBQ. We were then graciously welcomed to Beth-Israel's Friday night services, where the cadets joined the Bellaire, Houston Jewish community in singing various

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*At NASA Mission Control - Houston, we have no problems!*



*Rodeo Access, courtesy of Cousin Laura Hogue.*



*The Choir at Beth-Israel Synagogue.*

prayers. Following services, the cadets joined in Beth-Israel's delicious Oneg. Here, the cadets eagerly conversed with the congregation and answered many questions about cadet life and their experience as Jews at West Point. Then the cadets formed up and sang a series of English and Hebrew songs, including the National Anthem, Hatikvah, Achienu, Esa Einai, Etz Chayim, Eli Eli, the Armed Forces Melody, and the Alma Mater. For many songs, the congregation felt compelled to join us in singing and was very receptive to the music.

## HOUSTON RODEO

The following day, we met at the Cyprow Household, where we were surprised with free cowboy hats for all the cadets and guests! Following this kind gesture, we met with Mr. Matt Hogue, our very own Ms. Elaine McConnell's cousin, at the rodeo. Mr. Hogue provided us with free access to the livestock show, carnival, rodeo, and concert. At the livestock show, cadets could immerse themselves in the experience of everyday farm life, where cattle were on display for auction, and chickens along with other animals wandered around. This was all organized by volunteer groups. The carnival provided a variety of fun rides and games. The food was beyond a doubt a highlight for many, with turkey legs and fried Oreos being some favorites. We then met with Mr. Hogue again as



*A view of NASA Mission Control with our very own welcome sign!*

we were escorted into NRJ Stadium to experience Rodeo Houston. There, cadets were exposed to a facet of American life that many had yet to encounter: bareback horse bucking, bull riding, barrel racing, and roping are just a few of the many events cadets got to witness. Following

the rodeo, Kelly Clarkson performed in the same NRJ Stadium, which made for a mix of cultural exploration and fun. After the concert, cadets joined Mr. Hogue in the Boardroom where he graciously

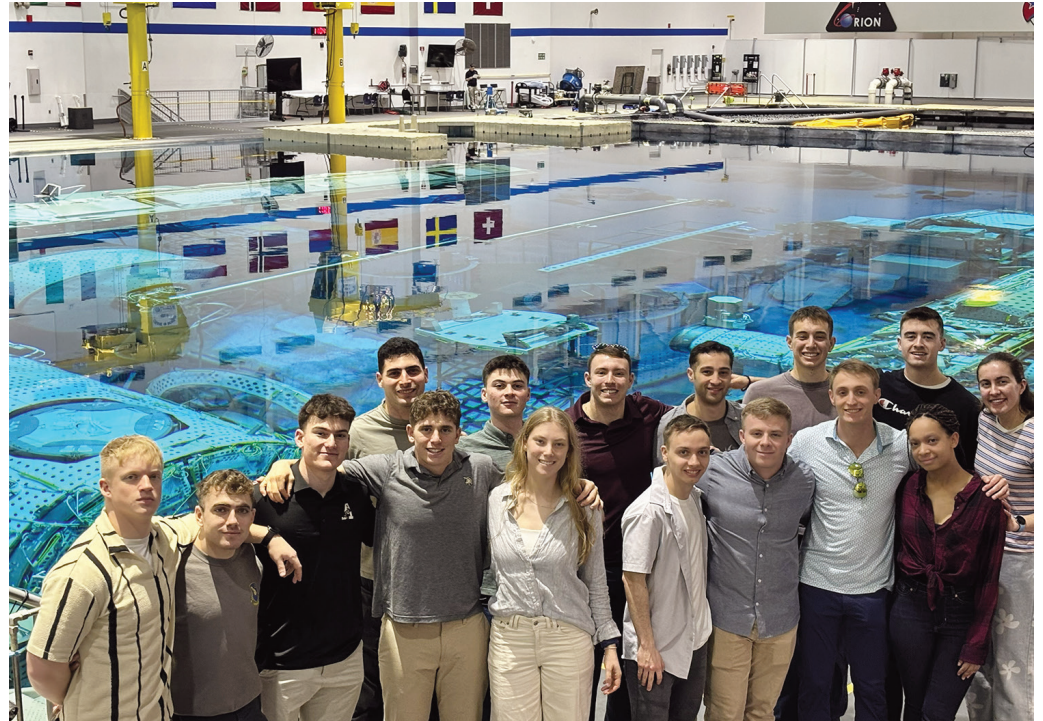
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sponsored a fabulous meal. While in the Boardroom cadets had the privilege of meeting and conversing with many executives within the Houston Rodeo, whose hospitality made us feel very welcomed and honored.

## MANY THANKS

We gratefully extend our thanks to the many individuals who helped make this Trip Section possible. The Cyprow Family, Ms McConnell, COL Wallen, Mr. & Ms. Hogue, Tarnow Family, and Brown Family all made significant contributions to the success of the weekend. We thank all those who contributed to this amazing experience for the West Point Jewish Choir cadets and we hope to return to Houston in the future.



The Choir at NASA's Training Tank, which contains a replica of the US portion of the International Space Station.

## WHAT THIS TRIP SECTION MEANT TO ME

*"This trip meant a lot to me. For starters it was awesome to see my family and to bring people into my home. NASA was really phenomenal and I learned a lot and it was really cool to speak with an astronaut. Then singing at Beth Israel was great. The community was very welcoming and super happy to have us there which was an awesome feeling and I think made us sing better. The rodeo was a blast and Mr. Matt Hogue's hospitality was next level."*

– Wyatt Cyprow '26

*"The choir trip to Houston was an amazing opportunity to interact and share our music with a new congregation. I learned so much from touring NASA and am excited for all of the future space travel!"*

– Jack Kessler '28

*"I loved going to Texas with the Jewish Choir to interact with the Jewish community and families and get to experience Texas*

*and American culture at the rodeo. It was really special to get to talk to everyone at the synagogue and all the other activities brought us closer as a community. Thank you!"*

– Elly Melton '28

*"[It was amazing] to interact with a Jewish community in a completely different type of American culture than I've ever experienced. I never thought there were large Jewish communities in Texas until I met Wyatt, but this opportunity to meet them was eye-opening. It was also very interesting to participate in services at a Reform synagogue, as all of the other trips this year have been to Orthodox synagogues. The community outreach was really great and I have never felt so appreciated as a Jewish service member, by both the Jewish community and the rodeo community. I feel the connections we have made through this event will serve us and West Point very well in the future."*

– Daniel Gologorsky '26

*"Our choir trip to Houston was an amazing experience. As a space nerd, my favorite part was standing in the control room. It was surreal. Also, it was my first experience with Texas culture. The livestock show and everyone's commitment to helping the children of the community was amazing."*

– Aaron DeBlasi '27

*"I really enjoyed this trip as I got to connect with my fellow members of the Jewish Chapel Choir. I also enjoyed learning about NASA and seeing all the testing equipment up close. Performing at the synagogue was a cool experience and visiting the rodeo was a great time as well."*

– Brock Hochberger '28





## HILLEL INTERNATIONAL ISRAEL SUMMIT IN PHILADELPHIA

This weekend I had the distinct pleasure going to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to be part of the Hillel International Israel Summit, as

**By Cadet Roni Chajmovic**  
Hillel CIC

West Point's Hillel International Campus Representative. Over the weekend, we engaged in a wide range of discussions and workshops about Israel, antisemitism on campus (luckily, I did not have many examples to give!), and Jewish life on campus. Notably, a discussion about current events in the ongoing Iran conflict and the US/Israel's role and partnership in it.

Leading this discussion were experts on this topic: David Makovsky, the director

of the Koret Project on Arab-Israeli Relations at the University of Washington, and Ghaith al-Omari, the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation Senior Fellow in the Washington Institute's Irwin Levy Family Program on the U.S.-Israel Strategic Relationship.

Beyond the education was an incredible opportunity to engage with other Jewish college students around the world, including CDT 2CL Ilan Brejt '27, USAFA, and Etan Malka, representative from Colombia University's Military Veteran Club. This weekend provided a really unique opportunity to both share and learn about Jewish life at USMA, USAFA, and countless other civilian universities. The relationships we created are sure to be lasting, both personally and between West Point and other campuses!



*Making connections with our Hillel peers from universities all over the US!*



*All smiles.*



# BOSTON MEOR SPRING SOIRÉE AND SHABBATON

By Jack Kessler '28

This spring, we traveled to Boston to attend the Meor Spring Soirée and take part in a Shabbaton with college students from across the city. From the moment we arrived, we were warmly welcomed by Rabbi Loketch

learning, and a strong sense of unity—was something I won't forget. It didn't feel like a large crowd of strangers, but rather a connected community.

That sense of connection carried into Saturday, during services and lunch, where I continued building relationships and having thoughtful conversations.



and members of the community, who graciously opened their homes to us. One of the parts I appreciated most was walking to services with Rabbi Loketch on Friday and Saturday, where I had the chance to have a genuine conversation about my Judaism that made the experience feel much more personal.

The highlight of the weekend for me was the Friday night oneg after services. Seeing more than 550 college students come together in one place to celebrate their Judaism was incredible. The energy in the room—filled with singing, laughter,

The weekend concluded with a meal and Havdalah at Rabbi Loketch's home, where he led a discussion on Torah, Jewish identity, and how these values can guide us as leaders. I found this conversation especially impactful, as it tied together everything we experienced throughout the weekend.

Overall, the Shabbaton meant a lot to me. It reinforced the importance of community and shared identity, and I left Boston not only with new friendships, but also with a stronger sense of purpose as I returned to West Point.

## WHAT THIS MEANT TO ME

*"This weekend was an amazing opportunity to build community with Jewish students from Boston and make connections with communities from across the northeast. I learned about different types of Judaism and how they practice. I had a particularly meaningful conversation Rabbi Markowitz about the meaning of the Shema and how its important to the way we live our lives."*

— Daniel Gologorsky

*"The weekend with Meor in Boston was an amazing experience that built on the first semester trip to Monsey and diversified my Jewish knowledge. It was great sharing new religious experiences and interaction with both new and old friends."*

— Mitch Galardi

*"Our visit to Boston was an amazing opportunity for me to be closer to my Judaism while at the same time unite with the Jewish community in Boston. This trip strengthened many bonds and reminded us all what it means to be Jewish."*

— Jack Kessler

*"The Boston Shabbaton was another great experience and opportunity for the Jewish cadets of West Point and regular university students to learn and grow from one another. This trip was special to me because it helped me understand more about my own Judaism and faith."*

— Dan Clare

## WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL FUND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS MARK THEIR ORDINATION

On April 27th, we celebrated the rabbinical ordination of first lieutenants Jesse Paquin and Trish Abrams. Several members of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund attended the smicha in Closter, New Jersey, as the two Army Reserve officers officially became rabbis. Both studied at the Academy for Jewish Religion (ARJ), which provides pluralistic rabbinical and cantorial training.



Members of the WJPJCF (plus Rabbi Paquin's brother, LTC Jeremy Paquin, Class of '09) attended the smicha.



COL Wallen gives a hearty mazel tov to Chaplain (1LT) Jesse Paquin and Chaplain (1LT) Trish Abrams.





# ALEPH INSTITUTE MILITARY SYMPOSIUM

*By Rafa Shurkin '28*

*West Point Attendees with Rabbi Eli Estrin and Rabbi Dresin.*

**A**s future leaders in the Army, Cadets will hold a lot of responsibility to protect and serve the needs of their Soldiers. As future Jewish officers, it's not only our responsibility to serve and protect our Jewish Soldiers as well, but to become Lay Leaders and serve the Jewish community wherever the Army sends us. The Aleph Institute Military Symposium was the ultimate training and preparation for that role. We

learned about how antisemitism looks in the Army, the best steps to combat it, and how to best serve our Soldiers who would like to practice their Judaism. What's more - we built relationships within the successful Jewish community of Miami, which we will further strengthen over time and set the foundation for future events. Our Cadets feel more prepared to be Jewish officers than they were prior to the symposium.

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*LTC (Ret) Terry Bresnick was a Guest Speaker about Ethical Decision Making.*





*Aleph's Military Participants.*



*Cadets from USMA, USCGA, USAFA and our very own 2LT Olivia Raykhman.*

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*Rabbi Eli Estrin kicks off Lay Leader Sessions.*



*Rabbi Borshof provided meaningful remarks during the weekend.*



*CDT Lucas Schwed responds during the Ethical Decision Making discussion.*



*COL Wallen putting on Tefilin.*

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## REFLECTIONS:

*"Coming to Aleph provided an incredible opportunity to meet Jewish services members from across the branches and allied nations. The connections we've made will doubtlessly be invaluable to us in the future."*

– Philip Markus '27

*"Coming to Aleph and participating in the program was truly an incredible experience. As I wrap up my time at West Point and look ahead to being an Army officer, I am excited at the thought of being a leader for my community but I am reminded that all Soldiers deserve excellent leadership. This Aleph symposium showed me that being a Jewish leader is being a good Soldier and a forward-thinking officer. And the challenge that both bring require my best and I'm ready to give my best."*

– Aidan Djavadi '26

*"Attending the 2026 Aleph conference for the third year in a row was once again a great opportunity. It allowed me to connect with religious leaders from all branches and international militaries. I learned different ways to incorporate religion into military life and how to best navigate challenges that arrive. I was also able to share the weekend with friends bonded by faith and had the opportunity to experience a community many don't often have, allowing us to reflect on it."*

– Alan Berner '28

*"This year Aleph was different. In the past few months I have started to become more religious and this has been the first Shabbat that I have ever truly practiced. It gave me time to reflect and experience the people around me without any distractions."*

– Aaron DeBlasi '27

*"I truly enjoyed my time at Aleph and it wasn't just because of the warm weather. It was truly a blessing to meet Jewish members of all branches of the military and from foreign militaries because it showed me how I am not alone in my service. Before West Point, I had met very few members of the military and even fewer Jewish members. Knowing now that there are so many resources and so many members that are looking out for their fellow Jews in uniform truly means a lot."*

– Brock Hochberger '28

*"The continuity of being back at Aleph after three years was incredible. To see chaplains and friends who remembered me and treated me as kindly as when I was a plebe was the best part of the trip. It was a great way to come full circle on my Jewish life a cadet."*

– Lucas Schwed '26

*"This weekend was an amazing opportunity to meet fellow Jewish service members and bond with my West Point Jewish family. I also was able to observe an orthodox Shabbat which is not possible at West Point. I learned a lot about my faith and how to get resources to practice it to whichever extend my Soldiers or I desire. I was also given a mezuzah and a brand new set of tefillin. Aleph will do anything they can to support us. Knowing that I have this support and family wherever I am stationed is a beautiful feeling."*

– Elias Toren '28

*"Aleph was interesting because it allowed me to see how Judaism operates within all different branches of the military. It was my first time seeing many different rabbis in uniform, invested in the philosophical conversations about the role of a Jew within our armed forces."*

– Avi Cohen '29

*"This trip meant a lot to me as it was something that I didn't think I will ever get to experience anywhere else. The number of Jewish leaders in uniform was unbelievable and I truly believe that [can't be found anywhere else]. Thank you so much for taking us!"*

– Max Wasserman '29

*"Going to Aleph was an absolutely unforgettable experience. Blending the elements of a deeply religious community with that of the Armed forces was unique and special. It is experiences like this that make me a better Jewish leader for our Army."*

– Charlie Aronov '26

*"Coming to Aleph was an event of community coupled with leadership. It was an incredibly insightful opportunity that increased my knowledge of Judaism and being a Jew in the Army."*

– Sam Steinhart '26

*"Attending the Aleph Conference for that last time as a Cadet was an amazing experience. Not only was I afforded the opportunity to meet new friends and fellow Jewish Soldiers, but I made lasting memories with my best friends and grew in my connection with the community. I cannot thank enough the people and organization that made this trip possible."*

– Justin Collins '26

*"The Aleph Symposium was an awesome event that gave me the opportunity to learn about being a Jewish Soldier and how to use the small but close knit Jewish American military community for myself and possibly for other Jews I will serve with."*

– Mitchell Galardi '28

*"The Aleph Conference allowed me to learn what it is that a Jewish Chaplain does in the Army and what support they can provide to my troops. What I took away the most came from a talk we had concerning Jewish pride with a discussion about Jewish values and how to combat ignorance and antisemitism. This discussion allowed me to think about my own Jewish pride and learn about myself."*

– Ozzy Enis '29





*The Purim Spiel Crew*

## THE WONDERS OF SPRING AT WEST POINT: CELEBRATING BEING JEWISH, PREPARING TO SERVE OUR SOLDIERS, AND SERVING OUR NATION

When I think of our West Point Jewish Community, I can't help but smile and be so very grateful for the support we get from the leadership team across the enterprise. From the Directorate of Cadet Activities through the Brigade Tactical Officer, the support we received enabled so many

**By COL (Ret)  
Ben Wallen '96**

amazing experiences for our Cadets. Our Purim celebration through connection to the local community enabled a full Megillah reading prior to the epic re-enactment of the Story of Esther by our Plebes! The celebration continued into the social hall with music and fellowship had by all - which even included a costume contest! March closed out with a Plebe Parent Weekend Shabbat service as our

**Continued** on page 15



*The Megillah Reading.*



*Encore! Encore!*



*And of course it wouldn't be a West Point Purim without Dirtman!*





*Fun, on the rocks.*

## The Wonders of Spring

Continued from page 14

Plebes celebrated the nearing of the end of their first year and all headed out for Spring Break fun.

As our Cadets returned to West Point, we shifted focus as a community to preparing our Cadets to lead the Jewish communities at the Army posts in which they may find themselves. We held five different Jewish Lay Leader training sessions covering topics such as how to become certified as a Lay Leader, leading services, Passover seders, Hanukkah and other celebrations, interacting with other faith groups, addressing antisemitism, and coordinating for support. The culminating session included a remote session with MG (Ret) Jeff Jacobs who is not only the Chairman of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund, but he is also the current Jewish Lay Leader at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. We balanced ever more learning with fun as we held the fourth Lou Gross Mixology Class. The Columbia Bartenders Association student club traveled to West Point to provide a mixology class to our Cows and Firsties (21 and older Cadets) which engendered

good times had by all! We were even lucky enough to have Cadet Mitchell Galardi '28 serve as the bouncer for a second time! Now that's cultivating leadership!

As the Spring semester closed out, we had a fantastic and meaningful Jewish Baccalaureate service for the Class of 2026 as we celebrated their successful journey through West Point which culminated with their graduation and commissioning as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army. The Baccalaureate service began with wonderful words by 50-year affiliate Class of 1976 Colonel (Ret) Elliot "Eli" Rosner prior to the unveiling of the names of all 30 Jewish graduating Firsties. The service moved into the main sanctuary with Elaine McConnell serving as the master of ceremonies as we celebrated our incredible Firsties. Colonel (Ret) Jack Jacobs, Medal of Honor recipient, provided meaningful and inspiring comments as the guest speaker. The Jewish Choir sang and even included the passing of the pitch pipe from CDT



*Cadet Mitchell Galardi 2028 - serving as the bouncer.*

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*Learning portion of the mixology fun from the Columbia Bartenders Association.*

Lucas Schwed '26 to CDT Daniel Clare '27. There was also the passing of the Torah scroll from the outgoing to the incoming Cadet leaders of our Hillel and Jewish Choir. Gifts and certificates were provided by the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund, the Jewish War Veterans, and the JWB. This year's recipient of the Colonel David "Mickey" Marcus Award was presented to CDT Roni Chajmovic '26 and the LTC Jeanne E. Hutchison Cadet Leadership Award was presented to CDT Lucas Schwed '26. The dinner that followed in the social hall was superb

as always and sponsored by our amazing West Point Jewish Chapel Fund, who make so much possible!!!

The final event rounding out the year was graduation and the various commissioning ceremonies across West Point. There is possibly no better testament to the strength in the bonds of our Jewish community than seeing the joy and celebration on graduation day – on the field right after graduating AND the fact that so many of our Jewish graduates chose to conduct their commissioning

ceremony one right after the other in similar locations to be able to not miss each other's! Our Jewish community underclassmen often serve as the holders for the American flag during their ceremonies and their first salute!

Just in case it wasn't clear by this article or any of the others throughout the Tablets, I am so very honored and humbled to support our amazing Cadets and faculty. They are remarkable and we are so happy they were part of our family during their time at West Point. The strength of that family was shown on 12 June

2026 when I had my retirement ceremony after serving for thirty years in our Army. Just as commissioning ceremonies include a first salute, I had a final salute which was given by Second Lieutenant Blake Schryer '25 who I was honored to commission last year! Blake traveled all the way from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to attend. In my heart, I feel that there is simply no better place to be Jewish and begin the adventure of serving one's country than being a Cadet at the United States Military Academy!



*The Lay Leader Group - Learning Together.*



*Lay Leader Training led by COL Wallen.*





*Firsties around the fire pit.*

## “AROUND THE BONFIRE” LAG B’OMER REFLECTIONS

Our Lag B’Omer festival was celebrated in the usual manner: with a bonfire and picnic. All four classes were gathered in the outdoor setting of the Jewish chapel, sharing laughs, memories and food. For me and other Firsties, this was

**By Catherine Brodsky '26**

a particularly special time, marking 17 days before graduation. With nearly two weeks remaining, each moment with friends became more precious than the last. However, this particular time quickly became interesting as a Yuk surprised us by asking the Firsties to sit around the fire and share the wisdom we have accumulated from nearly 47 months at the academy. I’ll always remember that night to be special.

The “purgatory” time of the last couple of weeks before graduation is always filled with bittersweet emotion: elation from completion of the school year, excitement for the upcoming summer, and sadness for the end of a great journey. I was surprised to hear Parker Brown, Class of 2028, ask us for advice because from my point of view, I still have so much to learn. But as we all gave our pieces of advice, I saw the eyes of the underclassmen focus and their heads nod. I realized that we Firsties had a lot to offer: the trials and tribulations of West Point have prepared us well to be leaders of character, capable of leading. But perhaps more importantly, I realized that I desired to teach the underclassmen as much as possible because I was so excited for their future.

This is the fraternity of the Jewish chapel. In circumstances where usually



*A panorama of the Lag B’Omer gathering.*

different classes are separated, here we come together due to our shared heritage, with a shared investment in each other and our future. The underclassmen were excited for us and what lies ahead of us, looking up to us as role-models. We Firsties were excited to share our knowledge to help the underclassmen strive for the success. This community is like none other, where iron bonds are made to last a lifetime.





*Record-breaking attendance - 90 cadets!*

## THE MANY FACES OF TORAH STUDY

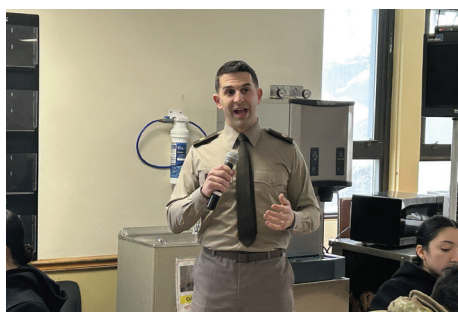
Every Tuesday, the West Point Jewish Community gathers in a side room off the Mess Hall for a delicious, catered kosher lunch and a thought-provoking talk. Members of the Jewish community, including USMA faculty and staff, participate in this weekly event. Torah study has grown in popularity, with a record-breaking attendance of 90 cadets at one of our recent sessions!



*Rabbi Lawrence Hajioff*



*CPT Daniel Fernquist*



*LTC Zach Ciccolo*



*Dr. Andrea Siegel*



*CDT Sam Gordon, Class of 2027*



*LTC Josh Lehman*



*Dr. Yasmine Kalkstein*





*The Jewish Choir sings the National Anthem at the Mickey Marcus Memorial Ceremony.*

## A SOLDIER FOR ALL HUMANITY: DAVID ‘MICKEY’ MARCUS & THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

“Justice, justice shall you pursue” — *tzedek, tzedek tirdof* — appears in Deuteronomy 16:20 in the middle of a passage about appointing judges, avoiding bribery, and maintaining the integrity of Israel’s legal institutions.

**By LTC (Ret) Megan Williams, '05**  
*LTC Williams prepared this article based on her recent talk at the San Antonio JWV meeting.*

David “Mickey” Marcus lived his adult life at the intersection of law and arms. Seen through *tzedek, tzedek tirdof*, his life and career become a lesson in how a single officer tried to pursue justice with both the sword and the statute book, from New York courtrooms to Nuremberg, and finally to the hills above Jerusalem.

### FROM BROOKLYN TO WEST POINT: LEARNING TO FIGHT FAIR

Marcus was born into early 20th century New York as the youngest child of Romanian Jewish immigrants. As a boy, he learned to fight as a survival skill,

and that experience left a mark: if force was inevitable, better to discipline it. His father died when Marcus was young, and he followed in the footsteps of his older brother, Michael, earning the name “Little Mikey” and then “Mickey.”

West Point, which he entered in 1920, was his first exposure to a system that tried to make power and privilege answerable to a code. The Academy did not eliminate class or ethnic prejudice, but it insisted that cadets live under a common standard. That mattered for a Brooklyn Jew trying to find his place. The honor system, a hallmark of West Point, was being formalized and strongly emphasized during his cadet years. The emphasis on integrity in command and the relentless insistence on responsibility gave Marcus a framework for thinking about justice not as vengeance but as ordered, predictable accountability.

His early Regular Army and Reserve service was unremarkable in tactical terms, but he absorbed the culture of a professional officer corps that saw itself as steward of both military efficiency and a certain legal moral order. He would spend

the rest of his life testing how far that ideal could be stretched.

### NEW YORK LAW IN THE 1930S: JUSTICE WITH A BRIEFCASE

In the 1930s, Marcus shifted his primary battlefield to the courtroom. As an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York, he joined the fight against organized crime. This was the painstaking, unromantic work of bringing men like Lucky Luciano to trial through evidence and procedure rather than extrajudicial violence.

Here *tzedek, tzedek tirdof* takes on a specific meaning: justice must be pursued by lawful means, not by the shortcuts of corruption or brutality. Marcus chose to work inside the machinery of federal law, proving that the state could confront organized violence without becoming mob like itself.

Appointed by Mayor La Guardia to Commissioner of Corrections, Marcus confronted another problem: what justice looks like once the verdict is in. New York’s prisons in that era were

**Continued** on page 20



overcrowded, violent, and often casually abusive. His work was clear: prisoners were still subjects of law, not objects of retaliation. He began to see justice not as a moment at sentencing but as a structure that had to be built and maintained every day.

## WORLD WAR II: LAW, WAR, AND THE NORMANDY DETOUR

When war loomed, Marcus went back into uniform. By 1944 he was a full colonel in the War Department's Civil Affairs apparatus, hardly a glamorous front line billet. He worked on surrender terms, occupation policies, and the architecture of military government for territories that had yet to be conquered.

And then he did something distinctively Marcus like. He insisted on seeing the consequences of those decisions under fire. Leveraging his West Point connection to Major General Maxwell Taylor, commanding the 101st Airborne Division, he secured permission to accompany the division into Normandy, jumping into D-Day. He had not completed formal parachute training; he was, strictly speaking, a senior staff officer with no need to be there. But from his perspective, a civil affairs planner who had never seen a contested landing zone was writing policy in a vacuum.

On the ground, Marcus did what competent officers do in chaos: he helped gather scattered paratroopers, imposed a modicum of order, and made sense of terrain that had previously only existed on briefing maps.

His recall back to duty seems to be just as dramatic. Major General John Hildreing, head of the War Department's Civil Affairs Division, realizing that he was no longer getting the responsive answers from Marcus in London, issues the order "Find Marcus. Arrest him if you have to – but send him back!" Shortly after, Marcus was on a plane back to Washington in a dirty field uniform.

He rewrote plans with blood and mud reality fresh in his mind.

Justice, for Marcus, meant aligning policy with the lived experience of Soldiers and Civilians. There is an ethical humility in that move. He accepted risk not because the system demanded it, but because he believed he had no right to govern from absolute safety.

## NUREMBERG AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Marcus moved into one of the most consequential legal roles of his career: organizing and leading parts of the War Crimes Division. Here, *tzedek, tzedek tirdof* becomes almost literal policy. Marcus helped design a process that insisted on charges, evidence, defense counsel, and reasoned judgments, even for those whose guilt seemed self evident.

Marcus oversaw organization of judges, prosecutors, and staff for the trials in Europe and the Far East. He worked on procedures that still shape international criminal law today: the handling of documentary evidence, the articulation of crimes against humanity, the relationship between command responsibility and individual culpability. The goal was not just to punish but to articulate a legal grammar for atrocities that the prewar system had barely imagined.

Marcus's contribution was to insist that if the Allies were going to judge, they had to do so through recognizable law. Having walked through Dachau and other camps, his answer to what he had seen was not to abandon legalism but to deepen it, to say that the only way to honor the dead was to prove that law



*Rabbi Borshof leads the invocation.*

could stretch far enough to name and condemn what had been done to them.

## PALESTINE, 1947–1948: FROM LEGAL ARCHITECT TO FIELD COMMANDER

By the late 1940s, Marcus could have retired comfortably into American public life as a respected Soldier lawyer. Instead, he accepted David Ben Gurion's request—initially to help find an American officer to help form a Jewish military, and then, failing that, to go himself—to advise the Yishuv on building an army.

In Palestine, Marcus's leadership took on its most improvisational form. He found courageous but fragmented forces: Haganah units with local loyalties, Palmach formations with their own ethos, supply systems held together by willpower and string. He began writing doctrine: organization charts, training guidelines, staff procedures. He pushed toward a national chain of command, knowing that without it, justice for Jews and Arabs alike would be left to the whims of local commanders and irregulars.

In taking the rank of Aluf, as Israel's first general, he accepted responsibility for a professional army with discipline, control of violence, and accountability for orders into a space that could easily

Continued on page 21



have slipped toward unbounded irregular war. Again, the pursuit of justice was a commitment to institutions: creating a framework within which force is directed and limited, not unleashed.

## JERUSALEM AND THE BURMA ROAD: JUSTICE AS PROTECTION

The situation in early 1948 was grim: Jerusalem's Jewish population was under siege; the Latrun heights, held by the Arab Legion, dominated the main supply route; repeated frontal attacks failed with heavy casualties.

Marcus did not double down on attritional heroics. Instead, he looked for a way around... literally. He directed creation of the "Burma Road" to Jerusalem: scouting terrain, pushing bulldozers and men through the hills,

unnecessary sacrifice. His task was not to produce noble last stands but to keep people alive.

Just as in Normandy, Marcus insisted on seeing things firsthand. He spent time on the line, talked with company level commanders, and moved at night to inspect positions. The same trait that had taken him into a parachute drop he did not need to make now took him along a front he could have managed from a map. It was a strength and, in the end, a vulnerability.

## ABU GHOSH AND THE LIMITS OF HUMAN SYSTEMS

Marcus's death by friendly fire has often been described as tragically "unheroic." He was shot by an Israeli sentry who did not understand his

English response to a challenge. A man who survived Brooklyn streets, mob prosecutions, Normandy, and the bureaucratic wars of Washington was killed in the dark because of a language barrier and a nervous finger.

There is a leadership

lesson here as well. *Tzedek, tzedek tirdof* is a command; it is not a guarantee of results. You can build institutions, write doctrine, and model courage, but you cannot finally eliminate friction, error, or fear from human affairs. The pursuit of justice is just a pursuit, undertaken by finite, often frightened people holding rifles in the dark.

Marcus died inside the world he had helped create: a nascent army groping its way toward professionalism, manned by refugees and volunteers fighting for survival. Even just causes, even carefully led forces, produce irreparable mistakes. The question is not whether those mistakes can be avoided entirely, but whether the overall structure of command strives to limit them, to recognize them, and to learn from them. This was the structure he had spent his life trying to build.

## WEST POINT, MEMORY, AND THE DOUBLE IMPERATIVE

After the war, Marcus's body returned to the United States and was buried at West Point. Lieutenant General Maxwell Taylor was the Academy Superintendent. Marcus occupies a unique place there: an American officer interred at the Academy for service under a foreign flag. His headstone's epitaph reads "A Soldier for All Humanity." His life was a sustained argument that a Jew could be a fiercely loyal American officer and still feel bound, in conscience, to help create a state capable of defending Jews anywhere.

"*Tzedek, tzedek tirdof*" demands that justice be pursued with just means, in every sphere. Marcus pursued it with warrants and indictments in Manhattan, with policy memoranda in Washington, with trial procedures in Nuremberg, and with bulldozers and night convoys on the road to Jerusalem. That his life ended in a burst of confused fire does not negate that pursuit; it clarifies how precarious the whole project is.

For those of us who study war and its institutions, Marcus offers an uncomfortable but necessary model: an officer who refused to separate effectiveness from ethics, who understood that the pursuit of justice after catastrophe requires both rifles and rules, and who accepted that the work would remain unfinished long after he was gone.



*Lighting the memorial candle, with Dr. Ben Wallen, CDT Daniel Clare, and the NYC Corrections Department.*

and running convoys by night over a precarious track. He received permission from the head rabbi of Jerusalem for construction to continue during Shabbat. He chose maneuver over martyrdom.

Protecting Jerusalem was not just a military objective; it was an obligation to a civilian population that had nowhere else to go. *Tzedek* here meant minimizing



# From Plebe to Officer: How the Jewish Chapel Shaped the Class of '26

By Randy Gorod

Every May, the families who fill Michie Stadium know they are witnessing something extraordinary. The cadets crossing that stage have endured four of the most demanding years any institution in America asks of its young people. But for the Jewish cadets among them — the ones who spent four years balancing the rigors of the Long Gray Line with the rhythms of Jewish life — something more was at work.

Jewish cadets have been part of West Point since the very beginning. In 1802, Simeon Magruder Levy became the first Jewish graduate of the Academy — one of only two cadets to commission that year, making that inaugural class 50% Jewish. More than 1,000 Jewish officers have followed him since, their names engraved on plaques in the Alumni Gallery of the Jewish Chapel. The Class of '26 has now joined that line.

For these graduating cadets, the West Point Jewish Chapel and the

## DEVELOPMENT REPORT

West Point Jewish Chapel Fund were not simply amenities. They were a foundation. As they prepare to pin on their gold bars and step into service as commissioned officers, they've shared what that community meant to them — and what it made possible.

### A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

For many of the Class of '26, the Chapel offered something harder to quantify than programming or trips: it offered belonging. West Point is deliberately disorienting,

**Continued** on page 23





especially in those first months. The institution strips away the familiar on purpose. What replaces it is meant to be something stronger — but that process is not easy, and for Jewish cadets, it can carry a particular weight.

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*“The Jewish Chapel has been my home away from home — a place where I formed my closest friendships, created lasting memories, and deepened my Jewish learning.”*

– Catherine Brodsky '26,  
heading to Duke Medical School

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Daniel Gologorsky '26 describes the Jewish Chapel as “my second home at West Point,” citing the community, mentors, and friendships he found there as “a core part of my West Point experience and my life.” He’s grateful, he says, for opportunities to connect with Judaism “whether it be in our Jewish Chapel, at Air Force and Navy, or at Jewish communities across the country” — all made possible by the Fund’s support.

Wyatt Cyprow '26, Co-CIC and a member of the Jewish Choir, frames it simply: “The Jewish Chapel has been a place of community that has provided an escape from the rigors of West Point. The Fund has been the driving force that created the space.

## FINDING FAITH IN THE LINE TO PRE-R-DAY

Perhaps no story captures the Chapel’s impact more vividly than Jacob Crossman’s. He arrived at West Point with “no religion” on his dog tags, uncertain whether Judaism had a place in Army life. Then, standing in line at pre-R-Day registration, he met Wyatt Cyprow — and

accepted an invitation to visit the Chapel.

What followed were four years of choir trips to Boca Raton, group lunches, Shabbat onegs, and a community that gradually became his own. “I leave West Point as a proudly Jewish Officer,” Crossman writes, “with a network of friends and mentors.” It started with a conversation on a registration line. It was sustained by your generosity.

## WARRIORS OF FAITH

Catherine Brodsky '26 — headed to Duke Medical School, where she will train as an Army physician — connects the Chapel experience directly to her understanding of Jewish identity in uniform. Through the trips the Jewish Chapel Fund made possible, she writes, “I came to understand what it truly means to be a Jewish warrior, committed to both my faith and to serving the American nation in the Army.”

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*“I came into West Point with ‘no religion’ stamped on my dog tags because I wasn’t confident about Jewish presence in the Army. I leave West Point as a proudly Jewish Officer with a network of friends and mentors.”*

– Jacob Crossman '26,  
Society of American Military Engineers  
Co-CIC

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It’s a phrase worth sitting with: a Jewish warrior. Simeon Magruder Levy was one. So were the more than 1,000 Jewish West Point graduates who followed him. What the Chapel — and the Fund that supports it — ensures is that every Jewish cadet who passes through those gates today knows they are part of that story and never has to set their faith aside to continue it.

## CONTINUITY: THE CLASS THAT FOLLOWS

Lucas Schwed '26, CIC and a member of the Jewish Choir, speaks for many of his classmates when he reflects on what the WPJCF has meant: “The consistent supporter of all Jewish activities during my life as a cadet. It was their support that allowed for trips and religious activities that brought the Class of 2026 together and allowed Jewish cadets to enjoy their Judaism.”

As the Class of '26 receives their commissions and disperses to posts around the world, a new class is already preparing to arrive. They will stand on their own registration lines. Some will have questions about whether there is a place for their Jewish identity in the Army. Some will need someone to say: come, visit the Chapel. There is something here for you.

That welcome — the Shabbat tables, the choir, the trips, the mentors, the Friday night meals — is what you make possible. L'dor v'dor. From generation to generation.

As we gear up to welcome the new Jewish Plebes, and the class of '27 takes its place at the head of the Corps as Firsties, please consider a gift to the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund today.

PLEASE SCAN TO DONATE







## THE BACCALAUREATE SERVICE



*The nachas of more Jewish cadets joining the Wall of Names.*



*The Brodsky Family awaits the unveiling of the plaques.*



*Reciting the prayer for new second lieutenants.*



*COL (Ret) Elliot (Eli) Rosner represents the Class of 1976 at the Class of 2026's plaque unveiling.*



*Choir OIC Elaine McConnell addresses the audience.*

**Continued** on page 25





*CH (MAJ) Heather Borshof leads the baccalaureate service.*



*One last choir performance for the firsties.*



*With Medal of Honor Winner COL (Ret) Jack Jacobs, the evening's guest speaker.*



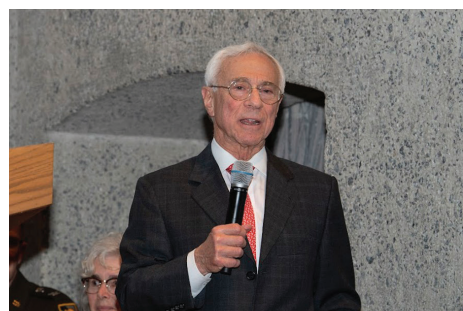
*Traditional cake cutting. Weapon of choice - the cadet saber.*



*Cadet Aidan Djavadi introduces the guest speaker.*



*Mazel tov, Class of 2026!*



*COL (Ret) Jack Jacobs speaks to the cadets and their guests.*



*The firsties reunite with the chaplain who supported them as plebes, Ch (MAJ) David Frommer.*



*CDT Lucas Schwed turns over the responsibilities of the Choir OIC position to Cadet Daniel Clare.*

**Continued** on page 26





COL Ben Wallen speaks to the gathering.



Cadet Angelina Pfister plans to bring all her swag to her first duty station.



Grad Swag!



Cadet Lucas Schwed receives the Jeanne Hutchinson Leadership Award.



Cadet Roni Chajmovic receives the David (Mickey) Marcus Award.



Cadet Aidan Djavadi thanks COL (Ret) Jacobs for his words of wisdom and presents him with a painting of the Jewish Chapel on behalf of the cadets.

## OLD GRAD SPOTLIGHT



The Class of '96 at their 30th reunion. From left to right: Brandon Kulik, Ben Wallen, Ben Ring, and Josh Lubarsky."

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

Send pics to the Fund Administrator at [WPJCF@outlook.com](mailto:WPJCF@outlook.com).

#### LTC MEGAN WILLIAMS, '05, PUT A POIGNANT SPIN ON "DAYENU" TO COMMEMORATE HER RETIREMENT FROM THE US ARMY THIS PAST SPRING.

*If I had only been given the chance to serve my country, and not to attend West Point, it would have been enough. Dayenu.*

*If I had been given the chance to graduate West Point, and yet not commission as a Military Police officer, to stand in a branch defined by discipline, justice, and care for Soldiers, dayenu.*

*If I had been given the chance to commission as an MP, and not to lead Soldiers in combat, dayenu.*

*If I had not been given the chance to lead America's sons and daughters in Iraq, to learn that leadership is presence and shared hardship, dayenu.*

*If I had not been given the chance to lead again in Afghanistan, to see courage lived out daily by young men and women far from home, dayenu.*

*If I had not been given the chance to attend the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), to be sharpened again in my profession so I could serve more wisely, dayenu.*

*If I had not been given the chance to rejoin the Soldiers of the Gauntlet, to shoulder the privilege and weight of caring for Soldiers, families, and mission together, dayenu.*

*And if, in all of this, had I learned only this one lesson: that leadership is a sacred trust, and that the greatest honor of my life has been to serve and to lead America's sons and daughters, dayenu.*

*But I was blessed with all of these things and more... and for each step, for each formation, for each Soldier, my heart is full of gratitude. Dayenu.*



# 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 1946

Norman Wahl

### CLASS OF 1951

LTC (R) Alan Herman, USAR

### CLASS OF 1947

Robert Haas

### CLASS OF 1948

LTC (R) Jay Josephs, USAF

## JEWISH GRADUATE DEATHS AS REPORTED SINCE PREVIOUS TABLETS PUBLICATION

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

“Well done ... be thou at peace”

### CLASS OF 1949

COL (R) Norman F Katz, USAF, 2 LM  
Died 2 December 2025  
Interred at Sunland Memorial Park, Sun  
City, Maricopa County, AZ

### CLASS OF 1966

LTC (R) Joel M Gartenberg, USA  
Died: 26 March 2026  
Interred at West Point Cemetery

### CLASS OF 1968

LTC(R) Stephen M. Herman, USA, PH  
Died: 25 February 2025  
Interred Bonaventure Cemetery,  
Savannah, GA

### CLASS OF 1954

Alvin S. Milder, USAF  
Died: 6 April 2026  
Interred at Mount Sinai Memorial Park,  
Hollywood Hills, Los Angeles, CA

### CLASS OF 1968

MAJ (R) Michael P Einbinder, USAR,  
BSMv, PH  
Died: 18 April 2024  
Interred Houston National Cemetery,  
Houston, TX

## WEST POINT JEWISH CHAPEL UPCOMING EVENTS

### AUGUST

- First Shabbat of the Academic Year
- Plebe Retreat
- First choir practice of the Academic Year

### SEPTEMBER

- First Torah study of the Academic Year
- Annual Apple Picking Trip Section
- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Sukkot

### OCTOBER

- Simchat Torah
- West Point Jewish Chapel Fund Meeting
- West Point Family Weekend (Family Shabbat)
- Ben Dubetsky's (Class of 2025) Wedding at the Jewish Chapel
- 7 October Remembrance of Hamas Attacks

### NOVEMBER

- Jewish Warrior Weekend (at US Naval Academy)
- Lou Gross Mixology #5

### DECEMBER

- Hannukah
- (Tentative) Jewish Choir at Oculus (NYC)
- (Tentative) Jewish Choir at White House with US Air Force Academy Jewish Choir





## THE NACHAS PAGE

# CELEBRATING COL WALLEN'S RETIREMENT AND CONTINUED SERVICE AT WEST POINT

On June 12th, the West Point community (and we really do mean that; it felt as if the entire West Point community was in attendance, from the Supe on down) celebrated the beautiful and light-hearted retirement ceremony for our very own beloved Colonel Ben Wallen.

The ceremony, expertly planned by COL Wallen, was hosted by COL Mark Read who praised COL Wallen for the many incredible accomplishments of his 30 year career. The USMA Superintendent, LTG Steven Gilland, recognized COL Wallen and his family for their devotion to the military.



*Almost retired!!*



*We're all surprised when Dirt Man shows up!*

**Continued** on page 29



Highlights from the ceremony included a group USMA rocket, hand-written thank you notes from COL Wallen to every single guest, rock-the-black-gold pom poms for extra motivation, and even a surprise appearance by Dirt Man! This is the first time in West Point's collective memory that COL Wallen and Dirt Man have been seen in the same room at the same time.

Following the ceremony was a delicious lunch in the Ike Hall Ballroom, which gave all guests a chance to nosh, kvell, and schmooze.

Mazel tov to our amazing COL Ben Wallen on a very successful military career, and we look forward to your continued leadership in the West Point Jewish Community!



*The Supe recognizes the service and sacrifice of the Wallen children.*



*COL Wallen is recognized for his 30 years of service to the nation.*



*Cara receives the Meritorious Public Service Medal for her dedication as an Army spouse.*



*LTC (Ret) Terry Bresnick presents COL Wallen with a beautiful retirement gift on behalf of the Fund.*



*The Final Salute – from our very own LT Blake Schryer.*



*And now it's official!*



# Congratulations to the Class of 2026

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



**Charles "Charlie" Aronov**  
Engineer Branch Detail Armor  
Fort Hood, TX



**Elizabeth "Ez" Bardales**  
Cyber Corps  
Branch Detail Field Artillery  
Camp Casey, Korea



**Alexander Bigelow**  
Field Artillery  
Fort Carson, CO



**Catherine Brodsky**  
Medical Corps  
Duke Medical School



**Claudia Brodsky**  
Logistics  
JBER, Alaska



**Ron Chajmovic**  
Aviation  
Fort Rucker, AL



**Jared Cohen**  
Infantry  
Fort Hood, TX



**Justin Collins**  
Infantry  
Fort Bliss, TX



**Jacob Crossman**  
Cyber Corps  
Fort Gordon, GA



**Wyatt Cyprow**  
Infantry  
Grafenwöhr, Germany



**Bradley Demeritt**  
Aviation  
Fort Rucker, AL



**Aidan Djavadi**  
Infantry  
Fort Bliss, TX



**Ethan Espinosa**  
Signal Corps  
Fort Campbell, KY



**Zachary Farrell**  
Field Artillery  
Fort Bragg, NC



**Magnolia Flamhaft**  
Engineer  
Fort Campbell, KY



# Congratulations to the Class of 2026

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



**Kiran Goldstein**  
Aviation  
Fort Rucker, AL



**Daniel Gologorsky**  
Infantry  
Schofield Barracks, HI



**Louis Hover**  
Field Artillery  
JBLM, WA



**Henry Kaye**  
Infantry  
Vicenza, Italy



**Colby Keck**  
Engineer  
Schofield Barracks, HI



**Simon Kirschenbaum**  
Engineer  
Fort Campbell, KY



**Sam Lipschutz**  
Field Artillery  
Grafenwöhr, Germany



**Avi Mehl**  
Infantry  
Fort Bliss, TX



**Jonah Naidus**  
Field Artillery  
Fort Stewart, GA



**Ezekiel "Zeke" Orlow**  
Infantry  
Fort Bragg, NC



**Angelina Pfister**  
Adjutant General  
Camp Casey, Korea



**Lucas Schwed**  
Military Intelligence  
Branch Detail Armor  
Fort Hood, TX



**Josh Shefter**  
Infantry  
Vilseck, Germany



**Samuel Steinhart**  
Infantry  
Fort Drum, NY



**Peyton Warner**  
Engineer  
Fort Polk, LA

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



# *Mazel Tov to the Class of 2026!*



*Jacob Crossman marching towards his seat for graduation.*



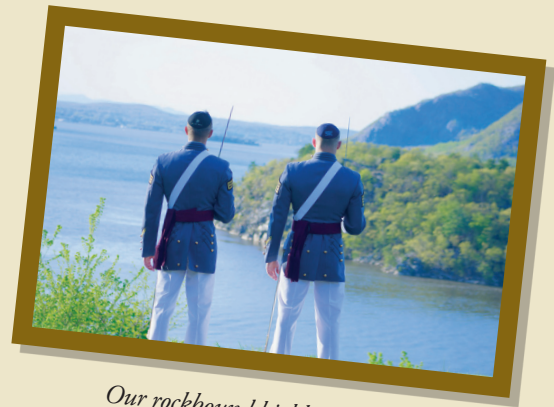
*Officially an Old Grad.*



*It's never goodbye - "it's see you later".*



*Graduation celebration at Michie Stadium with Ez Bardales '26 and Joseph Bardales '25.*



*Our rockbound highland home.*



*Our home away from home.*



*Graduation celebration at Michie Stadium with the newest Old Grads - Claudia and Catherine Brodsky '26.*