ADDRESS BY
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OF THE NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD
TEMPLE EMANUEL, 1 EAST 65TH STREET
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YOU AND YOUR ARMY

Ladies and Gentlemen, I was very happy to accept the invitation to address the National Armed Services Rally of the National Jewish Welfare Board. My pleasure springs from the fact that I have had the opportunity to observe the work of the National Jewish Welfare Board in assisting those members of the Armed Forces for whom I have shared responsibility from time to time. Also, I have had the opportunity to know some of the leaders of the National Jewish Welfare Board -- leaders whom I have come to admire for their civic mindedness and for their contribution to the happiness and well-being of Jewish servicemen. As a commander, often responsible for many Jewish soldiers, I have viewed the members of the Board as colleagues supplementing and extending the work of military commanders in the endeavor to assure the physical and moral well-being of their troops.

At the outset, as a military man of some thirty-four years of service, I should like to pay a tribute to the quality of the Jewish soldiers who have served under my command. One is often inclined to think of the Jewish contribution to the nation in fields other than military. Why this should be I do not exactly know, since most of us grew up in God-fearing families, where we came face to face with the old Jewish warriors on the pages of the family Bible. There, the pictures of Joshua, of David, of Gideon and his men made these sturdy warriors of the past fully as real to us as the soldiers of our contemporary history.

Our American past, in terms of military history, abounds in many examples of military contributions ~~to our country~~ by citizens of Jewish origin. It would be impossible to make even an approximate list of the individuals who are responsible for this record. I would mention only such ~~historic~~ individuals as Colonel Franks, the friend of Jefferson; Haym Salomon, broker of the Revolution; Simeon Levy, who was the second graduate of West Point;

Commodore Uriah Levy of the War of 1812; Sergeant Karpoles, the Medal of Honor soldier of the Battle of the Wilderness; Judah P. Benjamin, the statesman of the South. These names make up ~~by~~ a token list of Jews who have moved across the pages of our early military history. The work of the Jews in the World Wars is fresh in the memory of most of us here. Over a half million Jews served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II, gaining some 36,000 awards and citations for gallantry and conspicuous service.

In the course of my military service I have often had occasion to remark that courage and devotion to country are the monopoly of no one race, creed, or nation. I have attended many decoration ceremonies during World War II and the Korean conflict, where the individuals to be honored come out in line to receive their awards for gallant service rendered. It has been my privilege to place many medals and ribbons upon the breats of our brave soldiers. Often, as I faced a line of men about to be decorated, I found myself reflecting upon how different were their origins. By their names I could guess their racial background, and it was always of great interest to try to discover some pattern, or some formula, in the recurrence of racial strains among these men. Is there any breed among our people which produces the best soldiers? I have found no final answer to this question, but I became convinced to my own satisfaction that no racial formula exists. The Anglo-Saxon, the Italian, the Irish, the Latin American, the Jew -- all of these composite types which make up the racial pattern of our great nation have served the United States with equal devotion and have contributed to the final victory essentially in proportion to their numerical strength.

Today, if we exclude consideration of the armistice which exists in Korea, we are fortunately at peace throughout the world. Service in battle is no longer required of our men in uniform. However, there is a requirement for a steadfastness and devotion to duty comparable in importance to the requirements of combat. The members of the present generation have not been born to a period of care-free ease. They are faced with stern obligations and responsibilities to country. The hard facts are that our nation has assumed the burdens of world leadership in the most critical period of the earth's history. If we are not headed for another global war with the Soviet power bloc, we face, at a minimum, a long period of watchful readiness during which time we cannot relax our guard, or weaken our defenses. Hence it is that the young men of this period must adjust their lives to the continuing obligations and requirements related to national defense.

I know that in this gathering there are many families of servicemen or families with sons facing possible military service. To these I would like to say a few words about the attitude of the Army toward its responsibility for the young men entrusted to it for training.

The Army, as a part of the national defense organization, recognizes that it has a heavy responsibility for providing adequate leadership to the young men who come to its ranks in these important times. We prepare our officer corps by careful training to lead the young men who come -- sometimes voluntarily, sometimes involuntarily -- to discharge their military obligations within our ranks. I am often concerned by the false impressions of Army life which our young people receive from the movies, from television, and from current literature. I am afraid that the concept of the officer as a sharp-tongued martinet and the noncommissioned officer as a hard-boiled taskmaster has often predominated in the minds of young men as they have approached their military service. I can assure you that leaders of this type do not belong in the Army of which I am Chief of Staff. The officer corps as I know it is one dedicated to the welfare of its men, a corps which recognizes that the symbols of rank -- the bars, the leaves, and the stars -- are not indications of privilege, but rather emblems of responsibility, responsibility for the men whom they lead in peace and in war. Of necessity, our officers and noncommissioned officers have been taught to exact from their troops essential discipline, without which armies could not be distinguished from mobs, and without which there is no hope for victory in battle. But the kind of discipline imposed in the U.S. Army is not the yapping discipline of martinets. It is a form of discipline inscribed on a bronze plaque set in the hard granite walls of West Point where many generations of cadets have paused to read the words spoken in 1879 by a former superintendent, General Schofield. This definition of discipline reads as follows:

> "The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to impart instruction and to give commands in such manner and such a tone of voice to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey. The one mode or the other of dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them regard for himself, while he who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his inferiors, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself."

It is in the spirit of this definition of discipline that the Army trains its young men today. Do not mistake me. This individual training must be hard in order to develop the habits of body and mind necessary for survival in modern combat. Once the soldier has the required skills and attitudes as an individual, then our training stresses team play. We recognize that successful military action depends upon the proper blending in mass action of the initiative, the dash, and the courage which are the natural characteristics of American young men. These individual qualities, however, cannot be commanded by a general order. They are forthcoming only where the spirit of team play animates the members of the military unit. These units fight successfully only when there is that feeling of confidence and reliance developed between the men on the right and the left of the firing line. It is respect for one's fellow men, and the desire for their reciprocal respect, which weld individuals together into a great military brotherhood. It is in this spirit that your Army is formed today.

In the course of a young man's service in the Army, we leave no stone unturned to send him back to civil life physically, mentally, and morally a better man. On the physical side, the Army gives thorough recognition to the importance of the stomach in developing an effective army. It is a strange fact that many sons of this rich nation come to the Army suffering from malnutrition. It is not that their parents have not been able to provide them with adequate food, but rather that many of our young people have acquired unorganized habits of living. We find that upon joining the Army many of our recruits initially lose weight as fat disappears from places where it does not belong. Shortly thereafter, however, muscle starts to form and weight goes upward. The statistics of the Quartermaster show that at the conclusion of 14 weeks of basic training many soldiers have gained up to twenty pounds in weight. Army food is no longer the "bacon and beans" menu of the comic strips. We have a scientifically organized food service that guarantees balance and maximum nutritional benefit. I would invite you parents who have sons in the Army, or who may go into the Army, to visit an Army mess and verify the quantity and quality of food offered to hundreds of thousands of our men each day.

But a soldier does not live to eat -- at least that is not the primary purpose of his being in the Army. In addition to a balanced diet, he must have balanced exercise so that his physical condition will constantly improve. There is no place in the modern Army for the soft or for the flabby. The finest mind is useless to the Army if not supported by a sound body, capable of enduring the conditions of battle which are often rigorous to the extreme. Our peacetime training must be adequate to prepare young men for such conditions. The Army must always be combat-ready, never knowing

when its units may be called upon to perform under conditions testing endurance to the utmost. Consequently, our recruits are constantly conditioned to better physical performance. We exact nothing unreasonable, and we apply the standards progressively. However, we want our soldiers to be able to run a little faster, jump a little farther, and stand a little straighter, week after week as their service progresses.

Progress is measured not only in physical standards, but in mental norms as well. The modern Army is an increasingly complex organization in terms of its equipment and its operational procedures. I have often had occasion to say that it has a place for men of all skills and of all attainments. We need the artisan, the repairman, the scientist, the combat leader, the scholar, yes, even the genius will find a task appropriate to his capacity. Our Army school system is one of the largest educational ~~systems~~ organizations in the world today. We train promising young men in the hundreds of skills required in the Army, many of which are common to the requirements of civilian society as well. Perhaps we train too well, because many of our men after receiving valuable instruction return to civil life much sooner than the Army would desire.

Not only does the Army instruct in military and technical subjects, but it has great concern for the underprivileged man who has never been allowed to complete his basic education. Each year we receive many young men who have never completed fourth-grade primary education. We put these men into classes and, on duty time, raise their standard so that, as a minimum, they can read and write and thus become better soldiers, and eventually better citizens. I ~~personally~~ have also been greatly interested in raising the standards of our noncommissioned officers, some of whom have displayed great leadership potential, yet have not reached high school before going in the Army. This group the Army singles out for schooling, so that the man who wears the chevrons of a noncommissioned officer will ~~also~~ have minimum educational qualifications. The peacetime Army is a great school, open to all men according to their talents.

Now, a word about the moral influences which the Army creates and fosters. The Army is a decent, clean-living, God-fearing society, with no place for loose livers or evil doers. The primary protection for the young men who enter the Army is found in the character of the leaders who command our small units. We carefully select these noncommissioned officers and junior officers, eliminating all those who fail to maintain the required standards of leadership. In the last analysis, it is the company commander who sets the standard of conduct within his company. If he is a man of principle and of character, imbued with the proper concern for his men, there will be no question about the environment in which our soldiers grow. Apart from the command system, we have the Corps of Chaplains, with representatives scattered liberally through our troop units.

They are men of all faiths, so that your soldiers of Jewish faith will never be far from Rabbis wearing the Army coat. I often recall the great Passover services which I attended in Korea, services which were often attended by people from home like Colonel Harry Henshel and other representatives of the National Jewish Welfare Board. These meetings were great outpourings of faith on the part of our Jewish soldiers far from home.

There is another way in which the Army contributes importantly to the development of the character of our soldiers. We have what we call the Troop Information Program in which we try to present the important world issues to our men. I am convinced that it is a most important task of our national leadership to develop the habit of critical thought on the part of our young people. They cannot be moral fence-sitters in a period when the issues are so important. They must have strong convictions as to what is right and wrong. In order to develop such convictions, our young people must know the issues and the alternatives. Thus, the Army tries to stress to its young soldiers the need for studying world issues. We try to explain to our soldiers the "why" of things, hoping that in this way they will interest themselves in all of the issues and problems which confront our nation. I am sure that if they leave the military service, understanding both the place of America in modern history, and their place as citizens of this great country, they will carry back to civil life attributes of great worth in developing the future strength of our country.

By the foregoing, I have hoped to explain to the members of this audience, many of whom are vitally concerned with the Armed Forces, that the Army is not an unfeeling, unthinking, mechanical type of organization in which human values are ignored and in which all men lose their individuality in anonymous serial numbers. We who lead the Army understand American characteristics too well to expect results by stifling individuality. The greatest assets of our American soldiers are their enthusiasm and initiative, springing from their individual characteristics. No man has ever led American soldiers successfully in battle who failed to impress upon them that he regarded them and respected them as men and not as faceless automatons.

The Army will receive and train your Jewish young men who come to its ranks, in the spirit which I have described. Now for my part, as Chief of Staff, I would ask for help from you in preparing ~~these~~ young men for military service. The Army is often held responsible for the conduct of its men to a degree which I do not feel is entirely ~~reasonable~~ fair. In our national concern over the conduct of a very limited number of soldiers who yielded to Communist propaganda after being taken prisoner of war, many of our citizens have been critical of the Army for not developing men capable of resisting all Communist blandishments. Without seeming to shirk the heavy responsibilities which the Army has for every man in the ranks, I

would point out that the conclusion reached by our civil leaders who have studied the prisoner of war problem is that the fundamental corrective action should have been taken in the American homes. If, from the cradle, parents instill in our young Americans a sense of responsibility and the importance of service to the nation, then the work of the Army will be greatly lessened and our young men will be more adaptable to the requirements of military life.

Once your young men are in the Army, please do not forget them. Write to them often, and tell them how proud you are that they are serving their country in uniform. Mail call is a tremendously important moment in any military unit. It is important to the soldier who receives the letter which tells him that he has not been forgotten -- that father, mother, wife, ~~brother, and sister~~ are always thinking of him, wishing him well, and are grateful to him for performing an important mission in safeguarding and defending the country. That letter is important also to your soldier's company commander, because, in effect, you are reinforcing all of his efforts to maintain good morale, and a proper attitude toward national service. In combination you two are unacquainted colleagues and allies, performing important service in strengthening the fiber of a distant man in uniform.

You can also help in this important work by taking an interest in the Army as an institution. Your young man is serving in one small unit of a vast enterprise designed to prevent war, or to win a victory if war is undeterred. The Army needs your understanding, support, and interest. I would urge you to visit Army camps and installations in your vicinity and see what is taking place there. I have often had occasion to say that the Army will never be any better than the nation insists that it be. You can indicate your insistence by interest shown and questions asked. You can indicate your interest by the support given the National Jewish Welfare Board which, in turn, sends its representatives throughout the world visiting the Jewish soldiers and ministering to their needs. Such consideration shown to our Armed Forces will give them the feeling of being supported and appreciated. It will reinforce their sense of mission without which their numbers and their weapons are of little value. By your actions and interest on behalf of your men and women in uniform you can strengthen the moral fiber of our fighting men wherever found -- fighting men whose one purpose is to deter war and to insure the peaceful existence of the United States.

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