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## Kaddish at Arlington Memorial Day, tour honors Jews who served

by Suzanne Kurtz

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As in years past, American flags will grace the graves at Arlington National Cemetery this Memorial Day, as the service of those buried there is honored and remembered.--

At some of these graves, reciting Kaddish would also be an appropriate tribute.

To honor the **Jewish** servicemen and women buried in Arlington, the **Jewish Historical Society** of Greater Washington organizes tours each May, **Jewish** American Heritage Month.--

"It's just very fitting, and adds an extra note of poignancy, that the tour is usually right before Memorial Day," says Laura Cohen Apelbaum, JHS' executive director.

Earlier this month, on a clear Sunday morning, nearly a dozen turned out for the tour, led by Shirlington resident Les Bergen, 63, and District resident Ernie Marcus, 53.

A retired Army civilian employee, Bergen said the exact number of **Jewish** graves in the 624-acre cemetery is unclear. Prior to 1918, religious symbols were not allowed on headstones, nor were records kept of soldiers' religion. Today, it is estimated that there are more than 3,600 **Jewish** graves, possibly making it the largest **Jewish** cemetery in the U.S., he said.

As the tour visited about a dozen graves and memorials, Bergen wove lessons of American history and military protocol with biographical anecdotes. For additional reference, each participant received a prepared packet of information with headshots of the individuals whose graves were visited.

Among them, Adm. Hyman Rickover, who served 63 years of active duty and was known as the "Father of the Nuclear Navy"; Arthur Goldberg, a Supreme Court justice, secretary of labor and U.N. ambassador; Samuel Berger, a career diplomat; and Robert Guggenheim, an Army colonel and ambassador to Portugal, as well as member of the art-collecting Guggenheim family.

The tour also included a visit to the graves of Col. Mel Rosen, a recipient of a Silver Star, Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts, who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and Lt. Col. Rae Landy, a nurse during World Wars I and II, as well as one of the first nurses sent to Palestine by Henrietta Szold in 1913 to help start Hadassah Hospital.

The group visited the Challenger Space Shuttle Memorial, where **Jewish** astronaut Judith Resnick is memorialized. Next to this stands the Columbia Space Shuttle Memorial, with the name of crew member Col. Ilan Ramon listed next to a tiny, engraved Israeli flag.--

The tour included a stop at the USS Maine Memorial, a ship that was sunk off the coast of Cuba in February 1898 during the lead-up to the Spanish American War. Fifteen Jews, including Lt. Cmdr. Adolph Marix, the ship's executive officer, were aboard.

The cemetery's far western edge, section 16, features the Confederate Memorial, designed by Sir Moses Ezekiel, a **Jewish** graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. Ezekiel, a well-known sculptor in his day, fought for the South during the Civil War and is buried at the base of the memorial.

At the memorial, Marcus, a South Carolina native, shared family stories of several ancestors who served with the Confederate Army during the War.

"Of the 2,000 Jews who served in the Confederacy, there are 15 buried in Arlington," said Marcus.

Although not part of the tour, the chaplains' section includes headstones for two rabbis buried there: Capt. Joshua Goldberg and Rear Adm. Bertram Korn, a historian and the only **Jewish** chaplain to achieve that rank.

During the tour, Bergen pointed to stones resting atop several non-Jewish gravestones. Visitors, he said, would see stones placed on top of nearby **Jewish** graves and adopt the custom.

"They recognize it as a nice tradition, and you don't have to be **Jewish** to appreciate it," said Bergen.--

For Phyllis Coburn, 57, of Potomac, participating in the tour was an opportunity to reflect on the role of American Jews in a U.S. military history that extends beyond service in World War II.

"It is an amazing insight into a part of **Jewish** history that we don't often think about: the American **Jewish** military history," she said. "And it is a long history."