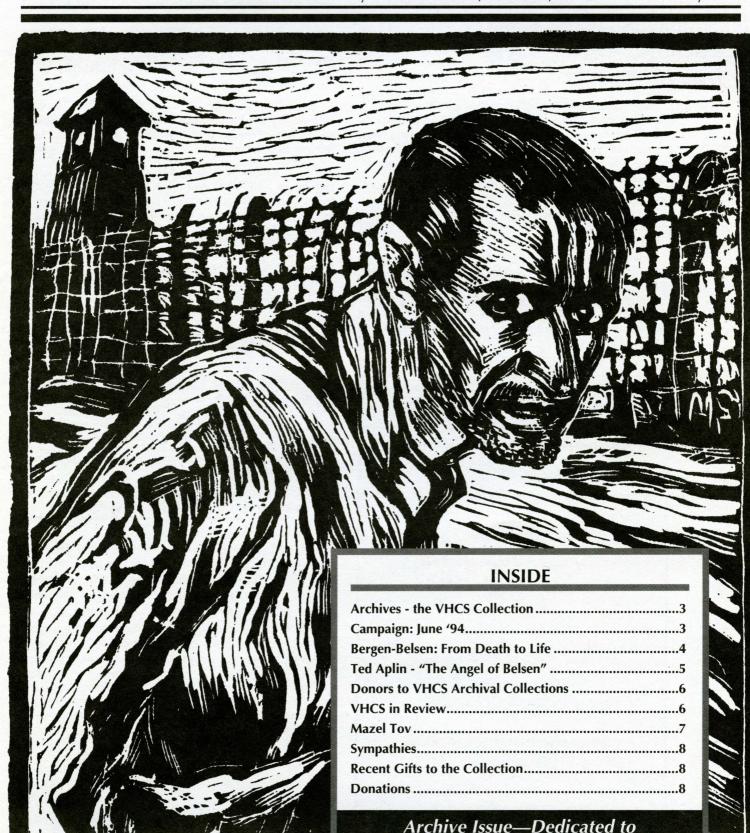
Tel. (604) 734-5325 Fax (604) 734-1182

Zachorember»

The Newsletter of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society 950 W. 41st Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7

May 1994



the Liberation of Bergen Belsen

Special "Archive" Issue commemorating the liberation of Bergen-Belsen April 15th, 1945

FROM THE EDITOR

It is with mixed feelings that I introduce this issue of "Zachor", the newsletter of the V a n c o u v e r Holocaust Centre Society. On the one

hand I am pleased to be able to make a contribution, however small, to the Society's objective of Holocaust remembrance and education; on the other hand I am incensed by its necessity. And necessary it is, not only to help prevent such catastrophes from being repeated, but also to provide an antidote to the poison of the Holocaust deniers.

Today the remaining survivors and witnesses are our most telling educational resource, but eventually we will be left only with our archives. This is the reason for the existence our Society and others like it, which will live on to combat the hate-mongers and to honour the memory of our six million innocent relatives murdered only because of their race. As for myself, I will never forget, neither will I forgive the

perpetrators of this uniquely monstrous horror. Such forgiveness I leave to other generations, if they can, but I commend our children and our friends to the archives of our Society, so that they may be strengthened to oppose the outbreaks of racial intolerance which we see today and expect again.

We are indebted to **Dr. Jacques Barth** for his suggestion of "Zachor"—the Hebrew word for "remember"—as the new name of our publication.

I would appreciate hearing from members and supporters of the Society with their suggestions as to the format or content of Zachor.

We request testimonials or graphics from survivors and witnesses. We need articles from informed commentators. We can use volunteer artists and technicians to assist in the production process. We appreciate any help from supporters and benefactors.

Philip Alderman (922-5800)

ANNOUNCEMENT!

The Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society's Holocaust Education Centre opens

Monday, November 7, 1994 with

Anne Frank in the World: 1929 -1945*

co-chairs
Rita Akselrod & Sharon Harowitz

co-ordinators
Teresa Pryce & Cecilia Kalaw

For further information or to volunteer, call the VHCS offices at 734-5325

*an exhibit from the Anne Frank Centre of Amsterdam and New York



OUR COVER GRAPHIC

"An Inmate" is from a linoleum print by artist Abba Fenichel of a concentration camp prisoner. Fenichel was himself an eye-witness to these tragic events.

From the collection of Alex Dimant

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Board of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education and Remembrance advises its members of the Annual General Meeting at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, June 16, 1994 in the Zack Gallery of the Jewish Community Centre, 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. All members in good standing are welcome to participate in the business of the Society: Executive Reports, Staff Reports, Elections; Approval of the Constitution; a construction site tour of the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre.

Dated this day of May 1, 1994 at 3476 Oak Street.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Mariette Doduck, Secretary

Please note: only members in good standing may vote on issues or in elections. Memberships will be accepted until 7:30 p.m., June 16, 1994. The slate will be published in the Jewish Western Bulletin

ARCHIVES—THE VHCS COLLECTION

The Archives Issue of "Zachor"...

by Ronnie Tessler

That are archives and why have them? The reasons for building and maintaining archives are answered in archives are answered in our Editor's remarks.. But the question remains for many, "What exactly are archives?" Archives are unpublished documentary records of organizations and individuals, generated in the course of their day to day activities and kept permanently for posterity. The essential functions of an archive, like the VHCS's, are to collect, preserve and make available its holdings. Strictly speaking, the VHCS collection is not an archive, but a "mixed collection" containing books and artifacts as well as the traditional papers, documents, maps and photographs.

The VHCS has been collecting for many years, reaching out beyond the survivor community for other records documenting the Holocaust years. A growing area in archival collecting is electronic and magnetic records. In this area, the VHCS has been in the forefront. Magnetic records includes sound (audio tape) and audiovisual (video tape) recordings. Since 1983, the Society has collected over 200 hours of eyewitness accounts of the events of the Holocaust. These records are carefully preserved in triplicate at several sites, including Yale University's Fortunoff Archive of Holocaust Testimonies.

Amongst the VHCS's many holdings are a large grouping of records relating to Bergen Belsen as a Death Camp and as a Displaced Persons Camp. Our holdings contain more than 30 separate items, three collections and eight testimonies. Following the summary of our Bergen Belsen records on page 4 is a history of **Edward M. "Ted" Aplin** by Stan Winfield, past president of the Jewish Historical Society of B.C. and Yukon. Ted Aplin became known as the "Angel of Belsen" for the good work he did there as a Royal Canadian Air Force Squadron Leader following liberation. The personal album Stan created to commemorate Aplin is one of our important holdings from Bergen Belsen.

Stan's gift to the collection includes two issues of "Unzer Stzyme" (Our Voice), a publication of the Jewish inmates of the Belsen Displaced Persons Camp. Also in our Bergen Belsen collection are many photographs taken by the liberating forces. The photographs came into our hands from many directions and in many ways, some as anonymous contributions. The horror and the truth are evident for all to see and consider: how did this event of such immense and tragic proportions happen in our century, an era that prided itself on its great civility and culture?

Preceeding Stan Winfield's story about humanitarian Ted Aplin are summaries of the accounts of Bergen Belsen survivors in our community. When you are through reading these articles, we hope those of you who have items from the Holocaust years will think about the great role they have to play in preserving history and educating our future generations. We hope you will strongly consider donating them to the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education and Remembrance's Holocaust Education Centre Archive, where they will be treated with dignity, preserved for posterity and made accessible for all to see the truths and lessons of the Nazi Holocaust.

To donate to the VHCS Collection, please call Rubin Pinsky, chairman, at 873-9842.

¹Thank you to Surrey Museum Archives for the definition. Ronnie Tessler is the executive director of the VHCS for Education and Remembrance.

CAMPAIGN: JUNE '94

We just want to get you warmed up for the commencement of our 1994 campaign!

OUR EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENTS!

HONORARY CHAIRMAN

THE HONOURABLE JOHN FRASER

CO-CHAIRMEN

LEON KAHN & DAVID SHAFRAN

Your generous gift will enable us meet our goals in the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre's final campaign in our community.

FURTHER WONDERFUL ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Come see and hear the famous Australian

THOMAS KENEALLY

Author of "Schindler's List"

Venue to be Announced

Tickets \$20 through Ticketmaster, 280-4444
Only 1200 Seats!

Mr. Keneally's visit arranged by ICM ARTISTS LTD., Lecture Division

BERGEN-BELSEN: FROM DEATH TO LIFE

Summaries from the VHCS Audi-Visual Collection

Collated by Ronnie Tessler

he VHCS audio-visual collection of Holocaust testimonies contains more than 200 hours of eyewitness accounts of prewar Jewish life in Greater Europe, Holocaust histories and resettlement stories. Eight of these testimonies document experiences in Bergen-Belsen Death Camp, liberation by the British and the Displaced Persons Camp

administered by them. Of these, six are from the perspective of inmates, forced into the camp by Nazi persecution. One is from a Jewish survivor who lived and worked in the camp after liberation.

Of the six survivors of Belsen, one was from Belgium, one from Poland, and four were taken exactly fifty years ago, in 1944, in the last horrific surge of Nazi mass deportations from Hungary. Co-incidentally, two were from the same town, although they did not survive under the same circumstances. All but one arrived in Bergen-Belsen from Auschwitz, but not one escaped either hard labour or other concentration camps. Five of the six were liberated April 15, 1945 by the British. (One was liberated from Dachau.) Each account contains many similarities; corroborations of historical data documented by others, Nazis and allies. Each story, however, is unique to the teller in its details.

In March, 1945, Mrs. F. was moved to Bergen Belsen from another camp. When Belsen was liberated, she succumbed to typhus and was very ill for six weeks. She later worked in the camp as a translator. In August 1946 she returned illegally to her home country. Mr. G. was forced to march to Bergen-Belsen after a train ride from Auschwitz on which many froze to death. He recalls the trains arriving in Belsen with Jews from Hungary. Mr. G. wished to return to his home after liberation but permission was not granted by the British administrators of the camp. He and eighteen other boys escaped by crawling under the wires. In March, H.G. was put on a train for Belsen after a forced march of 50km. They could hear the allied front advancing. Her four weeks in Bergen-Belsen were the worst part of her eleven months under Nazi domination since leaving Hungary. After liberation, she had a job in the camp, met and married her husband. In 1946, they tried to make their way illegally to Palestine. Returning to Belsen, her oldest daughter was born there in 1947. Mr. P., a partisan during the war, came to the camp in 1946, where he and his sister were reunited with their only living family member, a brother. His sister married in the

From death to life; the irony of a hell that gave life to the survivors. A former hell that provided food, clothing, nursing and a sense of organization and purpose to life. A former hell that still had rules and regulations, but could yet generate enough life and love to produce marriages, children and the rebirth of culture¹. Its indelible memories survive in the words and photographs in our archive for all to see and learn from.

Summaries from the VHCS Audio-Visual Collection



Cover of "Unzer Sztyme" (Our Voice) published by The Central Jewish Committee, Bergen Belsen—"10 IX 1945". "Redaction": Rafael Olevski, David Rosenthal, Paul Trepman. The inside cover dedicates the publication "To all our brothers and sisters in the camps, in Eretz-Yisrael, in the Caluth (sic), Jewish Relief Workers, soldiers in the Jewish Brigade, British, American and Russian Forces, We send our greetings for a Happy New-Year"

From the collection of Stan Winfield

TED APLIN—"THE ANGEL OF BELSEN"

by Stanley H. Winfield

n April 15, 1994, forty-nine years will have passed since Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the British 11th Armoured Division. I arrived in Celle, approximately 20km. from the camp, on May 11, 1945, as a member of an RCAF group charged with the task of disarming the shattered Luftwaffe in the British zone of occupation. It was there that I had the honour of serving with the late **Edward M. "Ted" Aplin**, truly a "Righteous Gentile" who, in the ten months that followed, conducted a personal crusade to give the survivors some comfort, dignity and hope.

Soon after our arrival, we recognized that our official military duties had become meaningless. Our mission was to ensure that the Germans would have no ability to rearm. In fact, there was nothing left of the German Air Force in our area of operations. Despite army regulations prohibiting entry into Belsen, Ted obtained permission to do so in early June. He returned shaken and aghast at a regulation that forbade the survivors all contact with the outside world, except through official channels. Even though the army and the British Red Cross were providing minimal food and clothing (requisitioned from German communities in the area) to the survivors, there was never enough, nor was any thought given to their recreation. And worst of all, their futures remained in question. Most dreamed of going to Palestine, but this was very much against British policy. Just three months earlier, in March 1945, Britain had endorsed the creation of the anti-Zionist 'Arab League'. We Canadians were under the command of the British Army Of The Rhine, and for our Canadian senior personnel, mostly career officers, Belsen was a political hornet's nest.

An excellent and moving article about Ted entitled "The Angel of Belsen" appeared in the January, 1989 French edition of Readers' Digest, followed in November, 1990 by the English edition¹. I am proud to have been the source of much of the material² that went into the piece, written by Robert "Bob" Collins. Bob described Ted as "a man of unshakable convictions, no matter the cost." How true! Within weeks of his first exposure to the inferno that was Belsen, we were enlisting the aid of our fellow Canadian and British servicemen, wherein their families and friends at home would send parcels containing food, clothing and other other necessities. These parcels were marked with a "B" by the sender. Our postal corporal would pull these parcels off the mail truck, and Ted and I would ferry them to the British Red Cross or the Jewish Relief unit in Belsen.

Such flagrant abuse of duty time and misuse of military vehicles to transport this "contraband" made our senior officers furious, but Ted was not to be deterred. He was angered at what he perceived to be a waste of taxpayers' money keeping so many men overseas on a futile task when they longed to be at home and getting on with their lives. He began stalking out of meetings, writing letters to friends in Canada, soliciting aid for Belsen survivors or going out to the camp while I did my best to cover for him - not always successfully.



R.C.A.F. Squadron Leader Edward Aplin (left) with Sergeant Stan Winfield at Belsen, 1945. Aplin was, as the sign indicates, in charge of area "Plans"

We continued ferrying parcels to Belsen, all the while Ted collecting exercise books and pencils for education classes, taking children on picnics, and befriending the friendless. Ted collected Belsen inmates' art, which he wanted to send on a tour of England and North America. He sought the sponsorship of the Canadian High Commissioner in London but was turned down. However, he did succeed in mounting a small show in England with the help of a British Red Cross official, but never the grand tour he envisioned.

During all this time Ted was fighting a bitter and recriminatory battle with his superior officers, facing demotion, or worse, in his view, "to be sent home." But his integrity and determination won out. Ted sought redress through the RCAF Overseas Headquarters in London, with the result that the proceedings against him were struck out. Our working relationship, however, was completely severed. I was transferred to a squadron in Oldenberg, and although Ted remained in the Celle Headquarters, a new job was created for him: raising the troops' flagging morale. He tackled the job with characteristic vigour, inaugurating study courses,

Continued next page

Ted Aplin: Continued from previous page

lectures, hobby groups and debates. But, if our senior officers thought it would divert him from his obsession, they were wrong. He worked ceaselessly to locate the relatives of survivors in other parts of the world. To this day, in Canada and Israel, Ted Aplin is remembered for his efforts in bringing families together. He worked successfully to bring fifty orphaned children to England for adoption, and with the help of British aircrew colleagues, we spirited twelve young boys to Palestine. In fact, Ted spent all his free time at Belsen where he "felt at home".

Returning to Canada in March, 1946, Ted Aplin lived a full and productive life with his wife Elinor and their four children. He was active in Ontario politics and was an unflagging supporter of Israel. Our friendship remained constant. It was my good fortune to spend time with him at least once a year until his death in 1973. Our families are still close. During my time with Ted, I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Josef Rosensaft, a Holocaust

survivor and chairman of "The Central Committee of the Liberated Jews in the British Zone of Germany." In an article that appears in "Holocaust and Rebirth" , published on the twentieth anniversary of the liberation of Belsen, Mr. Rosensaft writes: "Out of this evil time there come to mind events of such great humanitarian significance, that permit us to say with regard to certain institutions and individuals, that they achieved lasting fame with one single deed." Squadron Leader Edward M. "Ted" Aplin most certainly belongs in that distinguished group.

Stan Winfield, a retired lawyer is immediate past-president of the JHS of B.C. and Yukon. In 1945 he was a sergeant in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was Ted Aplin's aide at Celle, Ger many

- both in VHCS collection, donated by S. Winfield
- ² from the personal album of S. Winfield, gift of S. Winfield to the VHCS collection
- ³ Bergen Belsen Memorial Press of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Associations, New York-Tel Aviv, 1965.

DONORS TO VHCS ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

10 Anonymous Donors
Jewish Historical Society of B.C.
Presentation House
Shalom Branch,
Royal Canadian Legion
Lola Apfelbaum
Rudi Baerwald
Fritz Bowers
Josef Brandt
Larry and Esther Brandt
Celia Brauer

Jeff Claman Shirley Cohn Willie Cooper Ruth Hess-Dolgin Steve Drysdale **Barry Dunner** George Eisler **Bonnie Elster** David and Regina Feldman **David Fishman** Erika Fleischer Larry and Ann Flynn **Graham Forst** Jack Gardner **Bernard Goldberg** Dr. Dina Golovanevskava

Sid Gritz
Paul Grunberger
Suzanne Hirschmann
Sally Hogg
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Willie and Helen Jacobs
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Asya Zozulya

VHCS IN REVIEW

Visit of Leopold Pfefferberg Page

Schindlerjuden Poldek and Mila Page's visit to Vancouver, sponsored by the VHCS, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland and the JCC of Greater Vancouver's Cultural Arts Department was an unqualified success! A dynamic speaker who held an overflow crowd of 900 enthralled for more than an hour, Mr. Page remained to sign books until 1:00 a.m. He was also featured in several newspapers, television and radio shows, as were Vancouver Schindlerjuden Else Dunner, Esther Kaufman and Bernard Goldberg, as well as Prof.William Nicholls, Kit Krieger and Dr. Robert Krell, VHCS president.

Outreach Program

This year, the committee has experienced a dramatic increase in requests for survivors to visit schools. Following is a listing of invitations from Oct./93 -April/94: Louise Sorensen - Vancouver Art Gallery Facing History and Ourselves program, cast of Anne Frank, Robbie Waisman - Collingwood High, Centennial (Coquitlam), Adult Education Centre (New Westminster), Como Lake Secondary (Coquitlam), couples study group; Lillian Nemetz - Ideal Mini School, Corpus Christi, Beth Tikvah; Bronia Sonnenschein - UBC Psychiatry residents, Vancouver Art Gallery, McGee, student interviews; Robert Krell - Winnipeg survivor and 2nd generation workshops, JFGV Mechina young leadership group; couples study group; David Ehrlich - Van Tech, Beth Tikvah, Port Moody Secondary, The Incentive School (Richmond); Peter Parker - Mary Jane Shannon (Surrey), Chatterleigh Secondary (Sechelt); Bill Gluck - Hatzic Secondary, Fraser Valley Christian High, Yale Secondary; Marion Cassirer - Southlands Elementary, Palmer Secondary; Leo Lowy - North Delta Secondary, story for Vancouver Sun; Larry Flynn - Vancouver Art Gallery;

Michel Mielnicki - Maimonides (x2) Montgomery Junior Secondary, David Thompson; Frances Hoyd - student interview; Rubin Pinsky - March of the Living; Vera Slyomovics - March of the Living, Dickens Elementary; Peter Gary - Victoria schools, Courtney and Comox schools; Else Dunner - Sentinel (West Van.), Surrey, B'nai B'rith, National Council, Workers for Zion, Shalom Branch RCL, article for the Province by Kit Krieger, interviews with CBC 50 UP, CBC Afternoon Show, Petrie in Prime, NW radio, Radio Portugal; Esther Kaufman - Phil Donahue Show, article for Vancouver Sun, Bernard Goldberg - Petrie in Prime, article for Vancouver Sun.

Annual Yom Ha'Shoah Memorial Service

Yom Ha'Shoah was observed April 8 (27 Nisan 5754) at the Holocaust Memorial in Schara Tzedeck Cemetery. Rabbi Wilfred Solomon officiated at the memorial service commemorating the 50th year since the Nazi deportations of the Jews of Hungary, Romania and Carpathia. All the participants were survivors of the deportations. The Survivors Message was delivered by David Ehrlich. Sixty-five new names were unveiled on the monument.

Visit of Anna Rosmus

The VHCS very much regrets that Ms. Rosmus could not meet her obligation in Vancouver due to bad weather. She will return at a later date that will be well publicized. We would like to thank those among the 600 disappointed audience who opted to take a tax receipt for their tickets. Thank you as well to our patrons.

Child Survivor and Second Generation Groups

For information, please call the Society office at 734-5325

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Joe Auerhahn - from Esther Kaufman, Lil & Dave Shafran, Mr. & Mrs. Harold Silverman, Regina Wertman & Family Susan Bluman - from VHCS Sam Haber - from Ida Kaplan

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Fay Davis & Gerri London, co-chairs, An Evening With Anna Rosmus

Louis & Marion Eisman, hosts of patron's dinner

Judith and Graham Forst - beyond the call of duty!

Susan Mendelson for her time and advice Frank Kurucz, Sicklemore Flowers Jodie Dales - a special volunteer Maryla Patrasewski - new Founder Peter Parker - new Founder

Christopher Foundation - Project Donor

TRIBUTE CARDS

This month the VHCS inaugurates a new Tribute Card, courtesy of the artist Angela Grossmann and the Diane Farris Gallery.

The VHCS gratefully acknowledges contributions through Tribute cards. To order a card for any occasion, please call

Grace Ehrlich (327-8064) Regina Feldman (327-3358) or the office (734-5325)

MAZEL TOV

Cecil Sigal

special birthday from Yale & Carole Malkin

Gary & Sheila Romalis

anniversary from Lyliane, Larry, Ricki, Tod Thal, Esther Kaufman

Ella Northy

special birthday from Susan Bluman

Sharon Switzer & Elliott Sud of Calgary

on your engagement from Gary Feldman

Nuri Fisher

Bar Mitzvah from Naomi Rozenberg

Peter Gary

on his 70th birthday from VHCS Outreach Committee, Ronnie Tessler.

Leonore and Milton Freiman

on their 50th anniversary from Sol and Shirley Kort; Hilda & Tom Everall

Joel Buller

on his special birthday from Joe & Esther Blumes

Sam & Sella Heller

Terry Szajman

on her special birthday from David & Regina Feldman

Peter Hill and his grade 11 English class

special thanks from Larry Flynn

SYMPATHIES

Elsie Dunner & Family

in memory of Samuel Dunner from Anna Rosenberg & Children

John Festinger

in memory of his father from Shelly & Perry Seidelman & Family

Rita Propp & Family

in memory of her father from VHCS

Miriam Eisner & Family

in memory of her husband and father from VHCS, Lil & Dave Shafran, Emmy Krell-Stelzer, Esther Kaufman, Mr. & Mrs. Harold Silverman, Regina Wertman & Family, Bernice Neuwirth, Saul & Rosalie Dimant, David & Regina Feldman, Henry & Pola Nutkiewicz, Sharon Harowitz & Bob Willmot, Ronnie Tessler, Jean & Harvey Gerber, Erika & Zoltan Fleischer, Susie & Marc Kierzenblatt, Bernard & Vera Rozen

Terry Szajman

on loss of her brother from VHCS, Lil & David Shafran, Esther Kaufman, Mr. & Mrs. Harold Silverman

Terry Szajman

from Bernice Neuwirth, David & Regina Feldman, Henry & Pola Nutkiewicz, Estelle & Dave Fogell

Zelma Charkow

in memory of her brother from Esther Kaufman

Pam Groberman

in memory of her father from Larry & Lyliane Thal

Mr. & Mrs. Gil Schneider

in memory of her brother Sidney from Henry & Julie Gutovich

Mr. & Mrs. Laurie Mainster

in memory of a brother from Henry & Julie Gutovich

Margaret Fraeme

in memory of her uncle from Bernice Neuwirth

Vishing you all the best on this commemorative Bergen Belsen issue

Shalom Branch, #178, Royal Canadian Legion

RECENT GIFTS TO THE COLLECTION

Alicia & Fred Notzle—1945 German news article Robert & Marilyn Krell— Elie Wiesel: Witness to the Holocaust video album, in memory of Joe Eisner

Shirley Cohn—prewar letter from a relative in Hungary

Barry Tessler—photo

Consul General of the Republic of Poland—books Richard Menkis—book

Jane Shadley—book, in honour of Ronnie Tessler's special birthday

Wendy Oberlander—article

Gerri & Mark London and Herb & Barb Silber— 2 books in honour of Joel Buller's 50th birthday

DONATIONS

Lillian J. Nemetz, Robert Krell, David Shafran, Leon Kahn, Paul Pinsker, Bernard Goldberg, Renia, Morris & Sharon Perel, Helen Berger, Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Golumbia

Lynne & Mitch Gropper— in honour of Ronnie Tessler's 50th

Emmy Krell-Stelzer— In memory of my beloved family from your daughter & sister.

Jacob A. Stelzer, Kreindle Stelzer, Izak
Stelzer, Mendel Stelzer and Raizele
Stelzer

Martin Donner, Odie Kaplan, Jacob Rempel, Margaret McKean, Regina Feldman, Lola Aplefelbaum, Frieda Ullman, Paul Meyer, Lawrence Books, Felix Plumbing

Leo Vogel—in memory of his benefactor, Wim Polak

VOLUNTEERS—THANKS TO

Susan Bluman, Lisa Kafka, Gary Zumar, Gavin Wiener, G.W. Productions, Debbie Kafka, Marilyn Krell, Lyliane Thal, Gloria Waisman, Shirley Schwartz, Tamsin Berman, Gretchen DuMoulin, Joelly Segal, Heather Korbin, Nora Ferera-Pullmer, Rubin Pinsky, Rita Propp, Roberta from Carousel Theatre, Debbie Rozenberg and Bronia Sonnenschein

"Remember. For there is, there must be, hope in remembering" — Elie Wiesel