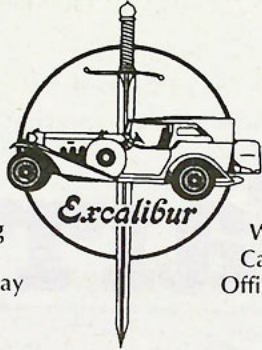


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Top left: Rabbi Bonnie Koppell conducts a nighttime Havdala service at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz., circa 1992. Koppell, a Reconstructionist rabbi, paved the way for Rabbi Julie Schwartz, the first Jewish woman to serve on active duty as a military chaplain.



Left: Lisa Stein in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield (1990). The military requested that American women wear the traditional black gown and cover their hair while in Saudi Arabia. Stein agreed to wear the gown, but refused to cover her head.



Right: Ethel Gladstone of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps (World War I) served overseas as part of the Fifth Army Corps Expeditionary Force.

Lawrence, Wash., performing administrative duties, when her superiors took note of her artistic talent and put Fortang to work drawing confidential maps, charts and graphs. Eventually, Fortang illustrated the very recruitment posters that had drawn her and so many other women into the military.

Fortang noticed the increase in women's responsibilities in the military, commenting, "By the end of World War II, we early volunteers experienced a century of evolution in the deployment of females. We found ourselves clearing a path toward women's liberation," she says.

Women in the military continued to take strides toward equality after World War II and after the second wave of feminism washed over the country.

The progress of female enlistees in the religious arena is brought to light in a section of the exhibition entitled "Keeping the Faith." In the early 1980s Bonnie Koppell became the first female Jewish chaplain ever to serve in the U.S. military, as an army chaplain reservist. A photograph of her conducting an evening Havdalah service for troops at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., illustrates the two-fold dedication of Jewish women in

the military — to country and to God.

This dual devotion brings Jewish women together, and at times one kind of devotion reinforces the other. As women have become increasingly involved in combat situations in recent years, religion has taken on a new importance.

Lisa Stein, who served in the Air Force in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war, says, "We didn't flaunt our practices, but [my religion] was important to me, especially considering the grim odds [for survival] predicted at the beginning of Desert Storm." □

The exhibit "Women in the Military: A Jewish Perspective" runs at the National Museum of American Jewish Military History, 1811 R St., NW, Washington, D.C., through spring 2000. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 1-5 p.m. Sundays. Admission is free, but contributions are appreciated. For more information, call (202) 265-6280.