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The Hungarian Order of Merit

MEET THE AUTHORS

Vladimir Bernshtam was born on March 14, 1952, in the city of Kharkov, Ukraine into a family of physicians. He got involved in collecting through his father. In 1974 he graduated with honors in physics at the Kharkov State University and in 1983 received a PhD in physics and mathematics from the Donetsk State University. In 1994 his wife, Tamara, and two children immigrated to Israel where he is employed by the Plasma Physics Laboratory of the Weizmann Institute of Science. It was not possible to bring his collection from the USSR to Israel so he started to gather new coins and banknotes for his collection and to collect badges and insignia of the Israeli Defense Forces, medals and tokens connected with the history of Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora. He also collect Israeli stamps and first day covers. He is a member of the American-Israel Numismatic Association and collaborates with several magazines for collectors in the United States and Russia.

Tim Brown is a practicing lawyer in Austin, Texas, with a specialty in water rights. As an undergraduate in history, he developed and has long held a fascination for Austria. This is his second article in the *Journal* and a second paper that was presented at the annual OMSA convention. Tim is a frequent speaker at legal seminars where a written paper is always expected. For the benefit of members who cannot attend the OMSA convention, Tim urges those persons presenting seminar topics to present their presentations in writing for the benefit of all the members to enjoy.

Ed Emering is an award-winning Chicago-based author of historical books and articles and a photographer. He has contributed more than 50 articles to JOMSA and has also authored numerous books, including three OMSA monographs. He is currently working on his fourth OMSA monograph due out in 2012. Ed also maintains "The Medal Hound" (www.themedalhound.com), an ever-expanding free research service for medal collectors with interests in those areas covered by the site.

Lukasz Gaszewski is an information technology engineer and historian, and an OMSA member since 2000. Orders and medals have been his passion for more than 30 years. He is particularly interested in European medals and medals of the US National Guard. He is a co-author of *Burke's Peerage and Gentry World Orders of Knighthood and Merit* and an author of several articles for *JOMSA*. He is also the author of a website about Polish awards and ribbons of the world.

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN TRENKA

My friend and collector buddy of 40 years, John Trenka (OMSA No. 1102) passed away Tuesday, December 20, 2011 after a long struggle with cancer. He was in the Army from 1948 to 1952 and was a "Circle C Cowboy" serving in the constabulary in Germany. He later joined the National Guard in the 1980s, serving as a weapons specialist with an Ordnance unit.

John was well known in the collector community as an expert on Hungarian, Imperial Austrian and German medals and badges. He was the author of several articles for the *Journal*. He was also well known as an expert gunsmith and collected military rifles and pistols of the same three countries. He will be missed.

Tom Frye

IN THE NEWS

Decorations and Medals Mini-Seminar at the ANA Summer Seminar

The American Numismatic Association Summer Seminar is a two week educational experience held every summer on the campus of Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year a one evening mini-seminar on United States military decorations and medals will be held from 6:30 to 9:30pm on Tuesday, June 26. This mini-seminar will be an introduction to the decorations and campaign service medals awarded by the United States military services. The cost is \$59. For more information visit the ANA website at www.money.org or contact Susan McMillan at 719-482-9850 or mcmillan@money.org

IMPORTANT OMSA CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Effective immediately, all OMSA members using credit cards to renew memberships or make purchases must also supply the 3-digit security code from the back of your card. This is a bank security requirement and transactions without the security code will be rejected. Thank you for your help.

THE ISRAELI COMMEMORATIVE MEDALLION FOR AMERICAN AVIATORS.

VLADIMIR BERNSHTAM

On October 6, 1973 Egypt and Syria attacked Israel. They managed to achieve the effect of surprise and to advance into the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights in the first few days of military operations. Having recovered from the surprise attack, the Israeli Army took the initiative. During the second week of the war Syria was completely forced out of Golan Heights; on the Sinai front the Israelis crossed the Suez Canal and cut off the 3rd Egyptian Army from its supply bases. The United Nations cease-fire resolution followed soon after.

Almost immediately after the beginning of the war a Soviet air bridge was established. It was used to deliver Soviet weapons and ammunition to Egypt and Syria. By October 12th the air bridge had become tremendously active and 60 to 90 Soviet planes a day were arriving at Egyptian and Syrian airfields.¹

The Israeli army required a lot of munitions, weapons and spare parts to replace their losses so Golda Meir, the prime minister of Israel, asked the United States to provide all necessary equipment. On October 12th President Nixon issued an order that establish an air bridge to Israel. The American planes started delivering military cargo to Israel via a base in the Azores. The operation of the emergency aid to Israel was named "Operation Nickel Grass."²

The Israelis warmly greeted the American air crews, treating them to sandwiches and soft drinks. A souvenir keychain with a commemorative medal on behalf of the Israeli Ministry of Defense was presented to each crew member.² Apparently these are the keychains that I have recently obtained for my collection.

The design on the obverse of the medallion (Figure 1) is borrowed from typical Israeli Army sports medals (Figure 2). On the reverse is the English inscription **WITH APPRECIATION MIN. OF DEF. I. D. F. ISRAEL OCT. 73.**¹

Endnotes:

1. Alexander Rozin, "Yom Kippur War. Confronting the Soviet Union and the United States at sea." <http://www.bg-znание.ru/article.php?nid=20332> (in Russian)

2. Nickel Grass. <http://www.sammcgowan.com/nickelgrass.html>



Figure 1: Obverse (left) and reverse of the Israeli Commemorative Medallion for American Aviators.



Figure 2: Reverses of typical Israeli army sports medals.