

## United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives Finding Aid

**Accession Number:** 2006.83

**Title:** Kurt I. Lewin Israeli War of Independence collection, 1946-1978

**Extent:** 6 folders

**Provenance:** Kurt I. Lewin donated this collection to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives on Jan. 3, 2006. Please see 1997.A.0076 for materials regarding Kurt I. Lewin's experiences during the Holocaust. Please also see 2004.365, the Rabbi Dr. Jecheskiel Lewin collection, and 2004.609, the Metropolitan Andrew Graf Szeptycki collection.

**Organization and Arrangement:** Organized in six series: Series 1: Papers related to Kurt Lewin's experiences in pre-war Palestine and at Hebrew University; Series 2: Papers related to Kurt Lewin's military activities; Series 3: Letters of appreciation for Kurt Lewin's service; Series 4: Papers related to Kurt Lewin's discharge and subsequent activities; Series 5: Documents related to the 1947 Haganah Commanders' Course; Series 6: Documents and Medals identifying Kurt Lewin as a veteran

**Restrictions on access:** No restrictions on access.

**Restrictions on use:** No restrictions on use

**Language:** Hebrew, English

**Preferred citation:** Standard citation for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collections Department, Archives.

**Biography:** Kurt I. Lewin was born in Lvov, Poland, on Feb. 28, 1925, and is the son of Dr. Jecheskiel Lewin, a progressive rabbi in Lvov. When Rabbi Lewin was killed in 1941, Kurt escaped to Rawa Ruska, Poland. In May 1942, he returned to the Lvov ghetto and, with the help of Metropolitan Andrew Graf Szeptycki (Sheptytsky), he and his brother Nathan went into hiding in Sept. 1942 in the care of Studite monks. They were aided by Ihumen Clement Graf Szeptycki (Sheptytsky) the superior of the Studite order, who personally forged documents for Kurt as "Roman Mytka," a novice in the Studite order. After the German retreat in 1944, Kurt joined the Polish army and fought in the final days of World War II. He then became a displaced person and traveled to Italy before reaching Palestine in 1946. He fought in the Israeli War of Independence and emigrated to the United States in 1955. With the help of Mr. Lewin's testimony, Clement Szeptycki was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 2001.

**Scope and Content:** Consists of documents related to the post-war life of Kurt I. Lewin, originally of Lwow, Poland, in Israel after World War II. Mr. Lewin became a member of the Haganah, and a Major in the Israeli Defense Forces during the War of Independence. Includes

recommendations, identification papers, commissioning documents, and veteran commemoration materials.

## **Inventory:**

### **Series 1: Consisting of papers related to Kurt Lewin's experiences in pre-war Palestine and at Hebrew University**

#### **Folder 1:**

1. Copy of identity card for Kurt Lewin issued by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, 5/1946, stamped by the British, allowing him to remain permanently as an immigrant (original located in 1997.A.0076)
2. Identity card for Yitzhak Kurt Lewin issued by the state of Israel
3. Identity card for Yitzhak Kurt Lewin (Kurt I. Lewin) issued by the British government of Palestine, 11/19/46, Jerusalem
4. Identity card for the Mandate of Palestine for Kurt I. Lewin
5. Copy of certificate stating that Kurt Lewin has legally entered Palestine from Italy, 1946 (original located in 1997.A.0076)
6. Identity card for Kurt I. Lewin issued by the Association of Students of Hebrew University
7. Letter announcing Kurt I. Lewin's receipt of the Sherf prize, received for a paper written for Professor J. Klausner at Hebrew University, 1947
8. Hebrew University Department of Humanities transcript for 1946-1947
9. Translation of Hebrew University, Department of Humanities record of study for Kurt I. Lewin, academic year 1946-1947, including a list of classes taken, hours per week of study, and listing of professors, dated 1951.
10. Student record for Kurt I. Lewin, Hebrew University, Humanities Department, 1946-1947. Records information regarding classes taken by Kurt Lewin, including Philosophy, History of the Jewish People, International Relations, the Bible, and Classical Studies.
11. Student identity card, identifying Kurt I. Lewin as a regular graduate student at Hebrew University, 1946-1947 and identifying that his tuition has been paid, as he is a Holocaust survivor

### **Series 2: Consisting of papers related to the military activities of Kurt Lewin**

#### **Folder 2:**

1. Permit to carry a gun issued to Yitzhak Lewin, Commander, issued 10/15/48, valid until 10/14/49
2. Identification card for Yitzhak Lewin (Kurt I. Lewin) stating that he has enlisted for national military service at the Civil Service Command Center; identity card issued by the Jewish Agency
3. Identification documentation stating that Itzhak Lewin is a reconnaissance officer of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and is authorized to move freely throughout the region, signed by Ben-Zion Eldad, operations officer of the Brigade
4. Identity card and certificate of temporary service issued to Yitzhak Lewin, a

- fully enlisted member of the 62<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade during the Beit Choron period, issued by the IDF, Jerusalem District, 7/14/48
5. Letter requesting the transfer of Kurt Lewin from the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade to the General Staff, also requesting that he stay in Military Intelligence, 1948
  6. Handwritten letter of appreciation for Kurt I. Lewin, dated 9/21/48 signed by Major Meir Zorea (Zaro), subsequently Major General, stating that Mr. Lewin is efficient and loyal as an intelligence officer, and recommending that he be transferred to a task which will enable his further development. This letter recommended that Mr. Lewin be transferred from the 62<sup>nd</sup> battalion to the General Staff.
  7. Certificate stating that Itzhak Lewin has been promoted to the rank of Captain, effective March 3, 1949 and is entitled to wear the insignia of his rank, dated July 2, 1949, signed Major Benjamin Givli
  8. Documentation stating that Captain Lewin was sent by Military Intelligence in Tel Aviv to keep them informed on the progress of operations in the South. He served as a liaison between Gen. Yigal Yadin, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army and Gen. Yigal Alon and Brigadier Itzhak Rabin, who were commanding the Southern Brigades, dated Dec. 25, 1948, signed Major Arie Simon, Acting Director of Military Intelligence
  9. Documentation stating that Itzhak Lewin served as a Brigade combat Intelligence officer with distinction and is an example of how to reorganize and redirect an intelligence unit, dated Aug. 2, 1949, signed Major Daniel Dagan, Operations Officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. After the defeat at Faluga, Capt. Lewin had requested transfer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.
  10. Letter from the Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, Brigadier Benz Zev, stating that Capt. Itzhak Lewin serviced as an intelligence officer in his Brigade from Jan. 13, 1949 following the defeat at Faluga. He served the third Brigade with precision, speed, and intelligence. Dated Aug. 8, 1949.
  11. Certificate of a change in rank for Kurt I. Lewin, stating that from 1/10/49, he is a major, dated 2/13/50, appointing him commanding officer of the military intelligence training base
  12. Certificate of appointment issued to Yitzchak Lewin by the Military Training Command, appointing him to the Chief Umpire of Manuevers
  13. Personal letter to Maj. Lewin from Commanding Officer of Military Intelligence, Benjamin Givli, regarding instruction and training for intelligence officers, undated (probably spring 1951)
  14. Identification papers for Major Kurt I. Lewin, issued by the IDF, identifying him as a Chief of Staff observer and stating that he is to carry his identification papers on him and is authorized to move in areas of green and blue units, dated 8/30/51
  15. Letter of appreciation for Yitzchak Lewin related to the participation in a program related to Maneuver Operations, written by Deputy Chief of Staff General Maklef, 1951
  16. Identification papers for Major Kurt I. Lewin issued by the IDF (Israel

Defense Forces) stating that he may use military vehicles and may move freely in the areas of operation of the blue and green, effective from 9/16/51-9/30-51, signed General Zadok Moshek

**Series 3: Consisting of letters of appreciation for service**

**Folder 3:**

1. Thank-you note issued at a meeting of the combat team of the Southern Front, 4/6-7/1949, discussing the current conditions of the front as well as thanking the officers involved, issued by General Major Yigal Alon
2. Note thanking Kurt Lewin for an excellent job acting as an umpire in the maneuvers, signed by Benjamin Givli, General, Head of the Intelligence Service
3. Letter of appreciation for Kurt I. Lewin from Lt. Col. Benz Ziv, dated 8/5/49
4. Letter written by Aloof Mishne Benjamie Givli, head of IDF Military Intelligence, thanking Yitzchak Lewin for a lecture given to the Intelligence Branch of the General Defense Service, dated 4/8/1954
5. Letter of appreciation for Kurt I. Lewin from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed by K. Katz, director of the school, Hakiryia, Israel, 1951

**Series 4: Consisting of papers related to Kurt Lewin's military discharge and immediate subsequent activities**

**Folder 4:**

1. IDF certificate of discharge from permanent service for Kurt I. Lewin, dated 8/31/54. Identifies Mr. Lewin as a member of the IDF from 1/12/47—8/16/54, and a major from 1/10/49. Mr. Lewin is identified as a commander of the Military Intelligence Training Service, Chief Combat Intelligence Officer of the Army and a teacher of courses for intelligence and infantry officers. He is honorably discharged at his request upon the end of his obligation. The evaluation states that he is a capable officer, suitable for staff and guidance, loyal to his commanders, devoted, and responsible.
2. Letter of appreciation for Kurt I. Lewin upon his discharge from the military, sent by General Zus, Chief of Manpower
3. Letter of admission to Columbia University as an undergraduate in preparation for admission to graduate school, dated Sept. 27, 1951

**Series 5: Consisting of documents related to the 1947 Haganah commanders course**

**Folder 5:**

1. Letter of explanation regarding the structure and participants of the 1947 officers course of the Haganah, written by Kurt I. Lewin to Joseph Kopilov at the Archive of the Haganah, 1/21/78
2. Thank you note from Moshe Nyhorai of the Ministry of Defense, thanking Kurt Lewin for the information he provided to the Archive of the Haganah in his 1/1978 letter and enclosing a reconstructed list of the

- survivors of the 1947 Haganah commanders class.
3. Reconstructed list (enclosed with above) of the survivors of the 1947 Haganah class
  4. Invitation to the 1978 reunion of the graduates of the officers school of the Haganah class of 1947
  5. Letter from Kurt I. Lewin to Mr. Moshe Nyhorai, Kibbutz Ganigar, 5/15/78, regretfully stating that he will be unable to participate in the 1947 Haganah officer's course reunion on 5/26/78
  6. Handwritten list of participants in the 1947 Haganah commander's course
  7. List of participants of course for commanders, consisting of graduates of Class 4 Haganah commanders, 1947. Kurt Lewin is listed on page 4.
  8. 1947 list of participants in the school of platoon commanders; training was from August 29-November 22, 1947, commanded by Moshe Bar-Tikvah. Includes list of senior instructors, instructors, and participants. Kurt Lewin is identified by a mark.
  9. Letter, in Hebrew, (with translation) from retired Gen. Zvi German to Kurt I. Lewin on June 3, 1999, thanking Kurt for sending him a copy of A Journey Through Illusions and recalling memories of the Haganah commanders school.

**Series 6: Consisting of documents and medals identifying Kurt Lewin as a veteran**

**Folder 6:**

1. Veteran's identification card for Kurt I. Lewin, identifying him as a commander and veteran of the Haganah, Tel Aviv district, dated 9/7/69
2. Card identifying Kurt I. Lewin as a founder of the state of Israel (ALEH)
3. ALEH pin issued to founders of the State of Israel
4. Haganah ribbon
5. Photographs of numerous medals and ribbons awarded to Kurt Lewin for service
6. Permit for Kurt I. Lewin to wear the Haganah ribbon on Independence Day and at official assemblies, issued by the IDF
7. Permit for Kurt I. Lewin to wear the pin for the ALEH, issued by the Israeli Department of Defense, 1979 to signify founders of the State of Israel