

FASCINATING FACTS 5.21.22

From the time that Jews began to return to the Holy Land with the intention of establishing a community there, hostile Arab neighbors opposed their presence. When the State of Israel was established by UN mandate in 1948 those hostile Arabs waged war to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel. The Arabs lost that war but did not give up. In May of 1967, Gamal Nasser, head of state of Egypt ordered his troops to take up positions in the Sinai desert from which they could stage an invasion of Israel and drive out the Jews once and for all. He then ordered a naval blockade of the Israeli port of Eilat. Fearing for its existence Israel decided to take action and launch a preemptive strike on Egypt. The war broke out on the 26th day of Iyar 5727 or 1967. When it was over six days later, Israel had enlarged its borders many times over and had dealt a crippling blow to its neighbors all around. The success of the Israel armed forces shocked the world and the Israelis themselves.

When the Six Day War is analyzed one can see military prowess and heroism but miracles both revealed and hidden were abundantly on display. The first attack destroyed half of the Egyptian air force 204 planes, all but nine of them on the ground in a little over a half hour. This exceeded expectations by 100%. As the Israeli planes took off, they were picked up by Jordanian radar. The Jordanians promptly informed their Egyptian allies that an attack was headed toward them. The message repeatedly sent and resent was never received. The Egyptians had changed their encoding frequencies the previous day but had not updated the Jordanians. Egypt had 100 anti-aircraft batteries. Even after the attack started none of them fired. The commander of the Armed forces was flying that day and was afraid his plane would be mistaken for an Israeli plane, so he left orders for all anti-aircraft batteries to hold their fire. One Israeli pilot said "whatever we did seemed to work out. It was like someone in Heaven was watching out for us".

A tank officer in the Sinai recounted that he came over a ridge to find himself directly in the sights of three Egyptian tanks. "I didn't stand a chance, then inexplicably the tanks turned on each other and blew each other up".

The stories are well documented. It behooves all of us to read them and to pause and ponder especially this week on the anniversary of these amazing events.