

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

WE REMEMBER

2nd Generation Member:
Pat Valentine Ziv

IN HONOR OF MY MOTHER:

Name: Monique (Blanche Andree Alexander) Bental

Date & Place of Birth: November 19, 1929, Marseille, France

Immigration to the US from France in 1958

Monique lived in Evans, GA in an Alzheimer's facility close to my sister. She passed away on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

I will attach some bios and video about her time in Marseille along with her time during the war as a "hidden child." While her family was quite assimilated before the war, and her elder sister married a Christian before their parents were taken away, Monique remained a steadfast proud Jew. She returned to Marseille with her little sister after hiding at age 16 but soon demanded and received emancipation from her family. The little sister joined her elder sister and was sent for her studies to a convent.

Monique then moved to Paris and worked for the Jewish Agency and soon volunteered to fight for Israeli Independence. She left France from Marseille on the Kedma, an Israeli owned boat. You will see in her bio that she sailed to Israel along with many volunteers and remained for 2 years. I have attached her Laissez Passer paper below allowing her to return to France from the new country of Israel - I suppose because she left secretly and without passport.

Monique was tough as a hidden child - acting as the "adult" in her teen years responsible for a little sister (3 years old) and 2 "old ladies." She explained how the trip home was so difficult as the bridges over rivers were destroyed. This forced all the return refugees to mount trains, get down before every river, carry whatever luggage they had and board a barge to cross the river and then back onto a train.

Monique was tough as a volunteer soldier not wanting to work in the canteen and requesting to be on the battlefield. She learned about and accepted the job of truck driver.

There, she met my father, Elie Bental, a volunteer from Egypt. They met again in Paris when she returned and he had gone to Paris to continue his studies at the Sorbonne. They had me in 1953, my brother, Daniel Nissim Bental was conceived in Paris and born in NY in 1958 and my sister, Karyl Yardena Bental was born (1959) and bred in the USA!

Monique was tough as the supervisor of the EIAL terminal at JFK for 20 years. She had to manage bold young Israeli employees, American employees: females who became lifelong friends and men who overpowered and eventually took over her position.

And she was tough always working and studying to ultimately receive a Masters in Social Work at age 60.

The war had interrupted her basic studies. She wrote an excellent paper on The Effects of War on Children called "The Holocaust Generation - The Survivor Children." Please reach out if you are interested in reading this.



Monique with her sisters, Michline and Simone (in carriage) in
Marseille before the war.

- 2 -
ÉPOUX

ALEXANDER Jules décédé le 5 Aout 1943 à
Auchwitz (Pologne).
Domicilié en dernier à La Magistère (T & G)
Hôtel Mourlat.
L'acte de décès est enregistré à La Magistère
Tarn et garonne.

Timbre et signature

1
6
15
Valentine épouse de ALEXANDER Jules
déclaratif de décès. déclarant judi-
caire le décès survenu au Camp 'Auschwitz
dans lequel elle avait été déportée le
11/06/1943.
L'acte est enregistré à Mantes Cassicourt
Eure et Oise

Timbre et signature

LT
21/01/40

1^{er} Juin 1942

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ENFANTS

R9/487
Nom : Alexander
Prénoms : Micheline, Marguerite, Jenny, Madelaine
Né le 1^{er} Sept. 1933 Décédé le _____
à Marseille à _____

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,



Timbre et signature

3

1756
Nom : Alexander
Prénoms : Monique, Blanche, Andrée
Né le 19 Novembre 1929 Décédé le _____
à Marseille 1949 à _____

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,



Timbre et signature

- 4 -

2
H13

Nom : Alexander
Prénoms : Simone Valentine
Né le 25 Février 1940 Décédé le _____
à Marseille à _____

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,

L'Officier de l'Etat civil,



Timbre et signature

Nom : _____
Prénoms : _____
Né le _____ Décédé le _____
à _____ à _____
L'Officier de l'Etat civil, L'Officier de l'Etat civil,

Timbre et signature

Timbre et signature

- 5 -

Nom : _____
Prénoms : _____
Né le _____ Décédé le _____
à _____ à _____
L'Officier de l'Etat civil, L'Offi

Timbre et signature

Timbre et signature

Nom : _____
Prénoms : _____
Né le _____ Décédé le _____
à _____ à _____
L'Officier de l'Etat civil, L'Offi

Timbre et signature

Timbre et signature

Children of those killed in Auschwitz



Postcard sent to Monique showing her Simone's bed in convent.



COVER GIRL MONIQUE

After my job with the British, a friend of my father gave me a job and I was able to hone my new learned office skills, and after I got a job working for the Jewish Agency in Paris. I served as a liaison to the only Jewish ship that Israel owned at that time and helped coordinate survivors to enter Palestine. My own questioning of who am I and why did I have to hide my Jewish connection and lose my parents, fired up a passion for my true identify as a Jew completely. I decided to join the Israeli army and go to Palestine which we entered by clandestine means since Britain would not permit Jews to enter legally.

I had to adjust to be among people who had a burning commitment to create a homeland for the Jewish people. I became a driver of jeeps, tanks, trucks and during the 1948 war with the Arabs, I drove the colonel of a battalion on the North front.

After the Army I lived in Jerusalem for a year and half and worked as a driver and a dental assistance for a mobile dental ambulance, which traveled throughout the country to serve the people.

In 1951 I returned to Paris and continued my studies. I got reacquainted with a young man who I had met in Israel. After a short courtship we married and lived in Paris for six years where our first daughter was born.

In 1958 we decided to immigrate to the US in order to provide a safe haven for our children. Our second daughter and son were born in New York where we established a good life. We were blessed with grandchildren and now even a couple of great grandchildren.

After my husband retired and had some health issues we moved to Florida where ~~unfortunately~~ he passed away in 2000.

My life has been full of obstacles and searching, why did my life take me on a path of trying to survive and losing my precious parents? Regardless of my personal pain the one belief that is strong in me is that my survival and struggle stands for the generation of Jews who were oppressed and won after all. I have been in the front lines of seeing the nation of Israel reborn and have seen my children represent themselves with dignity as good and kind Jewish people.



Monique's Short Bio

When the Germans occupied France including Marseilles, my uncle, father's brother, counseled father to have the family converted to the Protestant faith to protect us from the imminent persecution, which we did.

Soon after our family and grandmother, grandfather had died by this time, moved into a small village, La Magistere in County Tarnet Garonne, while I was sent to a boarding school in a nearby city. I was very unhappy being away from the family and after a year I came home.

The mayor of La Magistere supplied the Gestapo with a list of all Jews in town and in June 1943, at seven in the morning, a loud banging on the door was a shocking awakening, not knowing what it meant. Four Gestapo soldiers, with machine guns pointing, demanded that we get into the street. Father literally begging on his knees in German, asked that my grandmother, sisters and I be left in the apartment, not taken away. Apparently he had promised them our trunk of valuables, which apparently did work. As my parents were preparing to leave the apartment, father distracted the soldiers and indicated to me to get some money out of the trunk without being seen and pass it on to Grandmother.

That day is a picture that is clearly etched in my mind. My parents were loaded on a truck with the trunk and waited almost the entire day for the other unfortunate Jews to be added to the truck. As I stood nearby struggling to understand what was happening, mother tried to reassure me that all will be well and that I should be a good girl and keep an eye on my little sister and grandmother, as she passed her gold chain from her neck to me. This chain, a link to my happy childhood, was a gift that hurt so much and I could never bring myself to wear it. I kept it hidden and through the years have lost it. This chain, the gift, that day, serves as my connection to my Jewish parents and my losses. The truck disappeared in the distance. My mother and father and all the Jews that had found supposed safety in the village, were on it except a few children.

The next day, we received a telegram stating that we must flee. It was from a Jewish organization that saved a number of children during these catastrophic times. We moved to farm where we stayed for about a week and then joined my great aunt, grandmother's sister at her maid's son's farm in a remote area. The conditions were primitive, no electricity, no water, no sanitary facilities, no civilization. My grandmother and her sister had some valuables stashed away and were able to board me with a French old lady in a nearby town in order to continue my education since the farm area had no school. My little sister remained with them. I returned to the family in the summer.

All these changes, all these moves, and maneuvers I did not question, I just obeyed. The reality of danger reached us when we heard that just two kilometers away, everyone in a little village was murdered by the Germans. Fortunately this was right before the liberation and we escaped a murderous outcome. The news that the Germans were defeated and France was free was expressed with dancing and singing in the streets. We finally felt safe to return home.

We never experienced the furor of the bombs and fighting; we only saw for ourselves the disastrous damages that were incurred during the war when we tried to return to Marseilles. Every bridge was in shambles, not passable. Our progress was very slow and disrupted, only able to cross the rivers on barges and then we continued on another train and so on. Finally we arrived in Marseilles.

My hope of my parents waiting for us at home was a hope that made my heart pound with excitement. All along I thought that they were detained in a jail somewhere.

We entered the building and opened the door of our apartment. All was intact; our furniture and household goods were all there but no sight of my parents. The reality of what happened to them I found out after liberation. My grief overwhelmed me for days. I could not accept this reality that my dear parents were selected for murder in Auschwitz.

The Day her parents were taken.

CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DE FRANCE
A JERUSALEM

République Française

Jérusalem, le

19



LAISSEZ-PASSER
VALABLE POUR UN SEUL VOYAGE

No 280.

Le Consul Général de France à Jérusalem prie les
Autorités Civiles et Militaires de la République
Française et des pays amis ou alliés de la FRANCE de
vouloir bien laisser passer librement :

Mademoiselle Monique ALEXANDER
née le 19 Novembre 1929 à Marseille
de nationalité FRANÇAISE

Profession : Secrétaire.

Le présent laissez-passer est valable six mois
et pour un seul voyage de retour en France, pour per-
mettre à l'intéressée de regagner son domicile à
Marseille, 73 Rue Grignan./.

Fait à Jérusalem le trente Juin 1950
mil neuf cent cinquante.

Le Consul Général et p.e.
Le Vice-Consul

Jacques Pélissier



Return from new state of Israel to France with Laissez-Passer since she left secretly without papers.

Ashrei Ha-Gafrur
(Blessed is the Match)

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.
Blessed is the flame which burns in the heart's secret places.
Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake.
Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

- Hannah Szenesh (1921-1944)
(Haganah fighter and WWII parachutist, KIA)



"They came to us when we most needed them, during those difficult, uncertain days of our War of Independence in 1948..."

- Yitzhak Rabin

AMERICAN VETERANS OF ISRAEL
LEGACY CORPORATION



MICKEY MARCUS MEMORIAL SERVICE
FOR THE FALLEN NORTH AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS
ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1947-1949)

April 29, 2012
7 Iyar, 5772

46th Commemoration at the Jewish Chapel of the
United States Military Academy at West Point

American Veterans of Israel
Legacy Corporation
136 East 39 Street
New York, N.Y. 10016
www.israelvets.com

Honoring female volunteers of Israel
Independence War including Monique





Family of Monique Bental (front in black blazer) at the West Point honoring Female Volunteers of the Israeli Independence War. Monique has 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren (3 great-grandchildren were later added to this group)