



## Charles Orde Wingate

I wish to offer you, as the head of the Zionist Movement, our services in case you should wish to accept them.... It is of paramount importance to look far ahead and avoid mistakes which cannot be corrected afterwards. I know that you could recognize the need of trained and friendly military advice.

● May 31, 1937 Captain Orde Wingate to Chaim Weizmann



Charles Orde Wingate, known fondly as HaYaddid, *the friend*, was born, February 26, 1903, in Naini Tal, India to a British Military family. Two years later his father retired. His parents, conservative Christian members of the Plymouth Brethren, chose to spend the balance of their lives as Missionaries. Orde, his brothers and sisters were raised in a loving, Bible centered home that focused on mission and purpose.

At age 18, Orde continued in the family tradition and attended the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He graduated in 1923 with a gunnery officer's commission. Wingate was small, only 5'6" and sparse in frame, but huge in spirit. He early on displayed his lifelong characteristics of independence, self-reliance, passionate conviction, integrity, fearlessness and eccentricity. He never shied away from challenging his instructors or superiors when he believed they were incorrect.

Wingate was a Christian, reading and quoting the Bible verbatim, but never imposing his relationship with God on others. The Bible and the message of the Bible never left his side.

Wingate was posted to the East Arab Corp in the Sudan. His job was to catch slave traders and ivory poachers. Wingate quickly displayed an innate military genius, transforming the methods of operations from patrolling to ambushes. By 1930 he was a Major, commanding 300 men. He was successful. A key to his success was his mastery of Arabic.

Because of his fluency with Arabic and his deep familiarity with Arab culture, Wingate was posted to the British Mandate in Palestine in 1936. For many this was not the most desirable of postings because it was well known that large elements of the British

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Mandate administration were not the finest that Britain had to offer. Anti-Semitic, philo-Arabists were the norm for British posting to Palestine. Wingate was expected to fit right in.

He arrived in 1936 and was assigned a staff position as an intelligence officer. Wingate had almost no prior experience or interactions with Jews. Arrival in Palestine was a thrill for him. He was in the Holy Land. He could read his Bible and walk where everything took place. He knew nothing about Zionism or the reasons that the Jews were trying to come to Palestine.

What he did know was that the world was rapidly changing. The winds of a future European war were in the air. Britain and her Empire would be threatened. Palestine and the Middle East would be key to protecting the Suez Canal, the spigot of Middle Eastern oil and the water route to India.

Immediately he immersed himself into Palestinian life and began learning about the Jews. He taught himself to speak Hebrew so he could communicate with the Jews and read their newspapers. Traveling frequently throughout Palestine, often alone, Wingate continued learning until he came to a conclusion about the Jews and their place in the British Mandate. In a report to British command after months of research and observation he wrote:

*"The Jews are loyal to the Empire. The Jews are men of their*

*word – they have always been so – in fact it is the Gentiles' main complaint against them. There are 15,000,000 Jews in the world. Palestine will take over a million within seven years. You can have no idea of what they have already done there. You would be amazed to see the desert blossom like a rose; intensive horticulture everywhere – such energy, faith, ability, and inventiveness the world has not seen. I have seen the young Jews in the Kvutso's (kibbutzim). I tell you that the Jews will provide a soldiery better than ours. We have only to train it. They will equip it."*

Wingate recognized the problem and the solution

because of his many trips to the Jewish settlements

near the pipeline in the North. The Jews were fighting from defensive positions against numerically superior forces that controlled the night.

The British patrolled ineffectively during the day while the terrorists, with the assistance of local Arabs, melted into the landscape. Win-



Charles Orde Wingate in uniform

Wingate understood the key to a strong defense was a strong offense. The official policy imposed on the Jews of “restraint”. It was politically acceptable to the British. It was suicidal for the Jews.



Sabotaging the Haifa pipeline, 1938

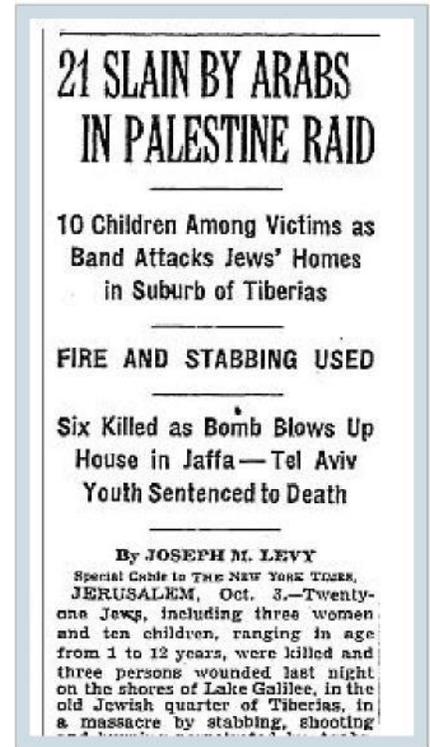
Wingate saw that the Jews must be armed, trained and utilized to defend their homes and to protect the British pipeline. However, the British command was very resistive to arming and training Jews militarily. The Jews, in turn, were very distrustful of the British. Whenever the Arab terrorists attacked and the Jews resisted, the British equated the Jews with the attacking terrorists. It was all very balanced, very politically correct from the British view.

A marriage of destiny in Wingate’s mind, Zionism, the Empire’s needs, and Biblical Restoration merged. He approached the Jews to offer his support. The Jewish response was cautiously negative. No one, certainly no British Christian offered to help the Jews. They had a different, secret motive. At first the Jews thought Wingate was a British spy trying to find out about Jewish self-defense efforts. They feared he was a false guide intent on their destruction. They did not trust him.

Wingate’s energy surged. He flew into action. Wingate shuttled back and forth between British command and Jewish leadership, especially with Chaim Weizmann. Weizmann would later become the first president of Israel. Wingate’s intense focus and leadership built trust and confidence with the Jews.

In order to abate the Arab attacks at night, Wingate developed new tactics and a new strategy. Wingate wanted to create fear amongst the Arabs Terrorists who were used to the cloak of the dark. Instead of the freedom to act as they pleased under the cover of darkness, Wingate’s plan was to train Jews to fight the terrorists offensively, preemptorily.

General Archibald Wavell gave Wingate his permission. Cautiously, the Jews did the same. Win-



Wingate’s special night squads acted as solution to these nighttime attacks, such as this one mentioned in the New York Times, circa 1948.

gate began an intensive training program teaching the Jews how to fight. He taught them his advanced ideas of night fighting, of taking the attack to the enemy, silently and swiftly. He was a harsh disciplinarian as he molded his Jews into a feared fighting force. Revolutionarily, he led from the front when an attack was begun. Wingate understood about utilizing the limited resources of the Jewish communities. Women were drafted into support roles to free men to fight.

Wingate refused to have the trappings of authority. He frequently wore local clothing without any insignia or symbol of authority, eschewed saluting and demanded absolute obedience. It paid off.

The terrorists, who had once owned the night, grew to fear the night. The Jewish *Special Night Squads* were more than successful in defeating the assassins of the dark. Arab Terrorism was largely defeated. However, near the end of 1938, after being wounded in a fight, Wingate needed to take leave and allow his injuries to heal.

Returning to England, Wingate did not rest. He campaigned for Zionism and his dream for its realization, a Jewish army. He knew in the coming war, that a Jewish army defending Palestine would free up British units for the struggle. He knew that a Jewish Army was the key to a future Jewish State. He



had dreams of leading that army. His *Special Night Squads* were superbly successful. His military genius was vindicated. His eccentricities, his aggressive pro-Zionist outspoken support, made enemies for him in Palestine and in England.

He returned to Palestine in December 1938 and discovered that he was to be reassigned. His Jewish self-defense units were being dissolved and disarmed. The British rigidly opposed the idea of arming the Jews against the Arabs. They wanted to placate the Arabs. They felt that using Jewish soldiers in offensive missions against Arab Terrorists was provocative.

To this, Wingate noted:

*“If we, in this country, pursue a policy of favoring our enemies at the expense of our friends, what fate may properly await us?”*

The British White Paper, a 1939 policy paper designed to appease the Arabs, closed the doors of Palestine to the Jews of Europe as Hitler prepared his *Final Solution*. European Jewry had nowhere to escape to. The *Final Solution* murdered 6,000,000,000 Jews.

Wingate left for Cairo in May. His passport had a specific, very blunt entry – the holder was not to be permitted to enter Palestine.

World War II began September 1, 1939.

Wingate always planned to return to Palestine someday. Even with his eccentricities, his difficult argumentative character, and his Bible centered life, his military genius stuck out. Wingate defeated the Italians in Ethiopia with native forces. He went on to Burma, now a Major General, to stop the seemingly invincible Japanese advance with his famous “Chindits”,

Burmese night fighters. On an advanced reconnaissance mission, his plane crashed into the jungle. He and his American crew were killed. Years later, their comingled, indistinguishable remains were buried in Arlington Nation Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

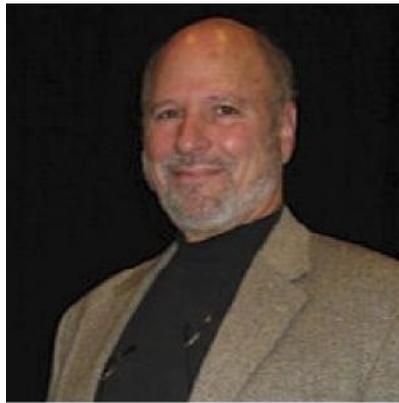
Wingate’s legacy, long after his death, lived on in the newly established Israel Defense Forces. After declaring Independence under the United Nations Partition resolution in May 1948, Israel was attacked by five invading Arab armies. The Arabs were intent on filling the streets of Palestine with Jewish blood. To the miraculous amazement of the world, against enormous odds, the Arabs were defeated. The foundation of the Israel’s Officer Corps, their leadership, tactics, skills and techniques had been men taught and trained by Orde Wingate. Wingate, in a sense, still serves Israel today even as Israel continues to face threats by the Arab world intent on exterminating them.

When no one would come to help, when even the Jews believed no one would come to help, a Christian did.

*Charles Wingate did what no Jew could do.*

*For if they fall, the one will lift up his friend; but woe to him that is alone when he falls, and has not another to lift him up.*

--ECCLESIASTES (4:10)



## About the Author: Jerry Klinger

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Jerry Klinger is President and founder of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation. The Society has completed projects in 25 states and in four countries.

He was born in Washington, D C and is the son of Holocaust survivors. Jerry was Yeshivah educated and as a young man served in the Israeli army.

As an Associate member of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, in coordination with Chairman Warren Miller, built the Jewish Memorial at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. President Obama visited the site in 2009.

Jerry periodically writes for the Jerusalem Post Christian Edition. He is the author of over seventy

articles on American Jewish History and Christian Zionist history. Jerry speaks on Christian Zionism and other topics at Churches, schools and Synagogue communities around the U.S.

He is founder of *To Save A Life*, a charity focused on helping small Israeli and American charities. He is a past President of his Synagogue.

Jerry has a BA, and MA degrees from the University of Maryland. He did Doctoral work at the University of Maryland as well. He recently retired as a senior vice president with Merrill Lynch/ Bank of America. Jerry is married to the former Judith Rice. They have three sons, five grandchildren and a small Cockatzu dog named *Norman*.

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