

**Christian Broadcasting
Network docudrama In Our
Hands-The Battle for
Jerusalem – a review**



Last night, the eve of Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day in Israel , upwards of 400,000 people in 700+ theaters across America watched the engrossing, and at times emotionally

charged, *Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN)* production of [*In Our Hands-The Battle for Jerusalem*](#). Those of us who were young adults in 1967, with fear and anxiety were glued to transistor radios waiting to hear whether Israel would survive annihilation. Viewing this excellent factually based production with superb Israeli casting brought back memories of the miracles and sacrifices made by the heroic and valiant commanders, soldiers, airmen and sailors of the T'zahal.

Mike Bates and I had interviewed Shoshana Bryen , senior director of the Washington, DC – based Jewish Policy Center about the legacy of the June 1967 Six Day War that we [published](#) in the *NER/Iconoclast*. She discussed the significance of how the stunning victory against enormous odds transformed the Israel that we have come to know, today: happy, confident, a technological powerhouse with a global reach and democratic, with a small “d” ally of the US in the Middle East.

For those of us who have served in the military the camaraderie, heroic resolve and raw emotions of liberation and reunification of Jerusalem, the eternal capital of modern Israel, depicted in the film gave it persuasive power. The interaction between Col. Mordechai “Motta” Gur, charismatic commander of the 55th Brigade and his intelligence officer , Arik Achmon, as well as combat battalion and company commanders had the ring of truth. As an ex US Army Intelligence officer, I appreciated the scenes between Gur and Achmon when he dragooned the later away from his Economics studies at Hebrew University to ‘learn’ how to be his intelligence officer. Then there was the exchange when in preparation for the War, Gur asked Achmon to prepare a battle plan for a jump by the 2,000 strong brigade into the Egyptian town of El Arish behind enemy lines. Then , Gur informed Major Achmon that plans had been changed, and in less than 10 hours he had to prepare for the critical Battle of Jerusalem.

In Our Hands deftly segues between dramatized exchanges like these and interviews with the Achmon, 71st battalion company commander Zamosh, the son of the 66 Battalion commander killed leading troopers in the 'alley of death, battle,' when they had lost their way and were confronted with Jordanian fighters. The depiction of the bloody battle of Ammunition Hill, reminiscent of WWI trench warfare was realistically portrayed. The episode commentary noted that 39 IDF troopers and 71 Jordanian Legionaries were killed and many maimed and wounded on the Israeli side. The surviving troopers of the Ammunition Hill Battle in the film version are shown digging a mass grave for the Jordanian dead. Later there is the recollection of a meeting between a brigade survivor and a Jordanian legionnaire commander at an occasion 45 years after the battle for Ammunition Hill when they could laugh and talk of peace.

In Our Hands depicts a dinner given by a Jewish family in Jerusalem on the eve of the battle that was most effective. An 86 year old grandmother, a refugee from the Jewish Quarter in the Old City overrun by Jordanian legionnaires brings out an Israeli flag that had been taken down when she and 1,600 others were forced to leave at the end of the siege. She gifted it to Zamosh with the hope for returning to fly from the Temple Mount.

One Battle for Jerusalem episode depicts Gur confronted by IDF Chaplain Rabbi Goren who had driven by jeep from the front in El Arish in the Sinai running breathlessly carrying a torah and shofar to pray at the eventual breakthrough at the Temple Mount. Goren urges Gur not to wait for orders from General Uzi Narkiss of the Central Command. Nevertheless, with Jerusalem surrounded on all sides there is a dramatized conference on the southern overlook involving fabled Gen. Moshe Dayan, IAF operations Commander Ezer Weizmann, General Narkis and Col. Gur when the decision is made, despite some trepidations. to enter the Old City. *In Our Hands* shows

archival color footage of the breach of Lions Gate and audio of the race to the Western Wall and Temple Mount, amidst sniper fire with Gur's dramatic radio transmission, "the Temple Mount is in our hands."

Gur's intrepid troopers find a ladder and scamper up with Zamosh's gifted Israel flag to fly it from the Dome of the Rock Mosque. Minister of Defense, Dayan sees the act of reclaiming Jewish sovereignty and requests Gur by radio to have it taken down. That act of Dayan redounds to this 50th Commemoration given the unresolved matter of Israel's sovereignty over its eternal capital of Jerusalem. The flag is then flown on the Temple Mount fence overlooking the Western Wall. The dramatized scene of two soldiers at the wall, one Orthodox, the other secular, the latter being trained to pray the *shema* was most effective. Another touching scene was Gur breaking down when he asked Achmon to read the list of the 55th brigade fallen in the retaking of Jerusalem. 55th brigade commander Gur eventually becomes IDF Chief of Staff and enters politics to serve in Israel's Knesset. Tragically he took his own life after contracting terminal cancer at the age of 65.

Gordon Robertson, head of CBN and producer of its Israel documentaries of which , *In Our Hands* was the latest, is shown narrating a 10 minute afterward using scripture from Old and New Testaments about the Jewish heritage of Ha Shem's gift to his covenanted people of Jerusalem. Robertson addressed the attack on Israel's legal and biblical claims to Jerusalem in UNSC 2334 passed in December 2016 with a 14 to 1 abstention by the former Obama US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power. He notes the election of President Trump with promises to recognize Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem and long delayed move of the US Embassy to Israel's capital. However, following the President's first trip to Israel and dramatic pictures of him and his entourage praying for the

Peace of Jerusalem at the Kotel or Western Wall appears not in the cards in the foreseeable future.

We commend your reading and viewing the video excerpts in Professor Miriam Elman's [review](#) published *Legal Insurrection* of the CBN production of *In Our Hands-The Battle for Jerusalem*. It sent an important message about the legacy of the June Six Days War in 1967 portrayed vividly in the CBN docudrama emblazoned on every Hanukkah dreidel: Nes Gadol Hayah Sham – “a great miracle happened there”.

If you missed the one night showing of *In our Hands* reprise performances in selected theaters as well as the eventual sales of DVDs by CBN.