

# New Britain Native Experiences War In Israel

August 18, 2014 | By ANERI PATTANI, apattani@courant.com, The Hartford Courant

For one New Britain native, the war between Israel and Hamas is not just something to hear about on the evening news or scroll by on her Facebook news feed.

Judy Weinstein Goldberg is experiencing it firsthand.

Currently living in Ashkelon, Israel, Goldberg is just ten kilometers – a little more than six miles -- north of Gaza. Her city is a target for missile fire from Hamas, the Islamic militant group based in Gaza.

"We have been greatly disturbed by all of these attacks on us, because they go on indiscriminately and at all hours throughout the day and night," Goldberg wrote in an email to the Courant. "For the last month, we have been awakened on the average of every two hours during the evening. I have not had a full night's sleep since more than 30 days ago. We hope that this will stop."

Although Goldberg, 73, has lived in Israel for over 40 years, her life has changed greatly since the rocket fire between Israel and Hamas began earlier this summer. She is restricted to staying at home so that she can run to the safe room as soon as the Red Alert system sounds, notifying residents that the city is under attack.

Although the majority of rockets have been intercepted by the Iron Dome antimissile defense system, "some rockets have exploded on houses, on people and wreaked havoc," Goldberg wrote. "We are never out of harm's way."

Israel has been countering with airstrikes against Hamas for months in the conflict that can be traced back to before the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Goldberg moved to Israel permanently in 1972 with her husband, Harvey, and two children. That was hardly her first experience with the country, though.

Goldberg's interest in the political situation of Israel began during her studies at Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City.

It was on her first day in the city in 1959 that she met Harvey, and the two have been together since. They were married in 1962 at the B'Nai Israel Temple in New Britain.

The couple took their first trip to Israel in 1963 for Harvey to complete anthropological fieldwork as part of his doctoral studies. They went with their newborn son, Daniel, and returned two years later with a new daughter, Ilana.

The Goldberg's made their next trip to Israel in 1968, a year after the country had undergone the Six Day War. Seeing the nation rebuild inspired Judy and Harvey.

"We were already infected with the bug to live in Israel," Goldberg wrote. "Israel had been through the Six Day War and we felt the need to go there and contribute whatever we could to the budding state."

The Goldberg's moved to Jerusalem in 1972 and spent nearly 40 years there, working and raising their family.

While Harvey took a post as senior lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Judy worked at a public relations firm that organized academic conferences. Here, she met current Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, who back then, was a young man, trying to organize a conference on the effect of terror on western governments.

Goldberg assisted in the preparation of this conference, which was held in Jerusalem in July 1979. Heads of states, leading journalists and future U.S. president, then head of the CIA, George H.W. Bush, attended the conference.

The nearly constant missile warnings she experiences today remind Goldberg of that initial exposure to the fight on terror.

"It is quite remarkable that my first lesson in the war against terrorism was taught to me by the young Benjamin Netanyahu," Goldberg wrote. "I had the fortunate experience to have worked with him, and known him well. All this making life here in Israel all the more colorful."

During her years in Jerusalem, Goldberg gave birth to and raised two more children, Michal and Joshua. Today, all four of Goldberg's children live in Israel along with her 10 grandchildren. The entire family, including Judy and Harvey, hold dual citizenship in Israel and the United States.

Nowadays in Ashkelon, where the couple moved after Harvey retired in 2007, Goldberg enjoys staying up late to catch live NBA games or tennis tournaments. She joked in her email that "war is not the only thing that disrupts my sleep."

Goldberg only laments that too often she has to abandon a match to respond to the Red Alert system. She hopes the war ends soon, but only if Israel can ensure the security of its citizens.

"Israelis have nothing against the ordinary people of Gaza. It is the political leadership of Gaza, that has been in the hands of a violent terrorist organization whose purpose of existence and desire is to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. We will not let this happen," Goldberg wrote.

Goldberg plans to return to Connecticut in September for New Britain High School's 55th reunion. She looks forward to the chance to return to her roots, and "meet and share with the people who helped form me and make me the person I am today," she wrote.

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