



# NEWS

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## DR. GARY P. ZOLA ASKED TO BRING CIVIL WAR MEDAL FROM CINCINNATI'S AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES TO WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA

*Zola recently appointed by the President to a key Administration post as member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad*

CINCINNATI, OH:--- Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati (AJA)—located on the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)—has been invited to a White House reception on Tuesday, May 17, by President and Mrs. Obama to commemorate Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). **The White House has also requested that Dr. Zola bring with him one of the most iconic holdings within the collections of the American Jewish Archives: The**



Dr. Gary P. Zola

**Congressional Medal of Honor received by Union Soldier David Urbansky during the**

**Civil War.** Urbansky received the nation's highest honor for gallantry at two of his major fighting engagements during the war.

Zola also received an invitation to attend a White House briefing in the morning prior to the afternoon reception. The briefing, with key White House officials, is expected to provide an update on current Administration policies.



**The Congressional Medal of Honor received by David Urbansky for gallantry during the Civil War.**

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“I hope that the State of Ohio and friends of the American Jewish Archives from around the nation will take pride in this development,” said Zola. “I am deeply honored that the AJA and Hebrew Union College will play such a prominent role in the JAHM reception at the White House.”

In April, President Barack Obama has announced his intention to appoint Dr. Gary P. Zola, to a key Administration post as *Member, Commission for the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad*. The Commission—an independent agency of the Government of the United States of America—is directed by law to fulfill two primary functions:

- To identify and report on cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings in Eastern and Central Europe that are associated with the heritage of U.S. citizens, particularly endangered properties, and
- To obtain, in cooperation with the Department of State, assurances from the governments of the region that the properties will be protected and preserved.

Dr. Zola has previously served in a number of leadership positions that have heightened the awareness of how American Jewish history illuminates the history of the American nation. Dr. Zola chaired the congressionally recognized *Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History* (2002 to 2005), and served as a member of the *Academic Advisory Council of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission*.

For more information, please contact Joyce Kamen at 513.543.8109/ [joyce@kamencreative.com](mailto:joyce@kamencreative.com).

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*The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 by its namesake on the Cincinnati, Ohio, campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. The Marcus Center contains over 15,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, nearprint materials, photographs, audio and videotapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials.*

ATTACHMENT

## Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to David Urbansky in 1879

David Urbansky (1843–1897) of Cincinnati, Ohio was the only known Jew and one of only eighteen of Ohio's 310,364 Union soldiers to receive the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award. He was one of six Jewish soldiers nationally to be awarded the medal in the Civil War. Approximately 8,000-10,000 Jews fought for the Union (out of a population of roughly 150,000).

As a teenager, he immigrated to America with his parents in 1857 from Lautenburg, in the Kingdom of Prussia (now part of Poland). He was listed as a cabinet maker. After several years in New York state, Urbansky moved to Columbus, Ohio to start a mercantile business.



**David Urbansky**

When the Civil War erupted, Urbansky promptly enlisted with the Columbus B, 58th Ohio Volunteers. Throughout the war he served under Generals Grant and Sherman, among others. His highest rank was corporal.

His Medal of Honor citation specifies "Gallantry in Action" at two of his many fighting engagements: the 1862 Battle of Shiloh, TN (where both sides suffered combined casualties of nearly 24,000), and the seven month siege of Vicksburg, MS.