

## Charles Winters Pardoned by Bush After Aiding Israel During Wartime

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On Tuesday, December 23, Charlie Winters—convicted of breaking the law to supply aircraft to Israel in its 1948 war of independence—was granted a pardon by President George W. Bush nearly a quarter century after his death. Mr. Winters, who died in 1984 at the age of 71, is only the second person on record to be granted a pardon posthumously.

In 1948, Mr. Winters, along with two other individuals, helped transfer military planes to Israel's defense forces, flying a B-17 bomber himself from Miami to Czechoslovakia. The B-17s were the only heavy bombers in the Israeli Air Force, and they have been credited with helping Israel survive as an independent state. While his efforts were praised by Israelis, Mr. Winters was considered a criminal in the United States.

In 1949, he was convicted of violating the 1939 Neutrality Act and breaking an embargo on weapons to Israel for conspiring to export aircraft to a foreign country. He was fined \$5,000 and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Herman Greenspun and Al Schwimmer—with whom Mr. Winters worked to help Israel—also were convicted of violating the act, though they did not serve time and were pardoned in 1961 and 2000, respectively.

The pardon of Mr. Winters “rights a historical wrong and honors Charlie’s belief that the creation of the Jewish state was a moral imperative of his time. ...Charlie Winters helped shape human history for the better,” said WilmerHale’s [Reginald Brown](#) as quoted by the New York Times.

Mr. Brown was the lead WilmerHale lawyer in the effort to obtain Mr. Winters’ pardon. The WilmerHale team included Gina Haschke, [Jamie Gorelick](#), [Jay Urwitz](#) and Summer Associates Erica Ross and Jonathan Parnes.