



COURTESY PHOTO

Powhatan Sheriff's Office Capt. Danny Smith and Chief Deputy Jeff Searfoss display some of the body armor they will be donating to Israel thanks to the efforts of Powhatan farmer Bib Marcellus. Marcellus said that he got the idea to collect the armor from his daughter, a practicing Orthodox Jew in New York, whose synagogue has been packaging necessary supplies to send to Israel.

Local farmer leading statewide effort to send tactical gear to Israel's soldiers

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Staff Writer

Bob Marcellus is the former hedge fund CEO turned farmer, who is now leading the charge to get spare tactical gear to Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

Marcellus said that he got the idea from his daughter, a practicing Orthodox Jew in New York, whose synagogue has been packaging necessary supplies to send to Israel. Through her community, she heard that the IDF is in need of tactical supplies.

Given that he has contacts in government and with leaders in the Jewish community, Marcellus was able to reach out for assistance with this through his network.

He was able to get in contact with Powhatan County Sheriff Brad Nunnally and Goochland County Sheriff Steven Creasey to inquire

about their extra tactical gear. They were able to provide armored plates and vests, which were due to be cycled out for newer models but were still in good condition.

Nunnally and Creasey were able to meet with Marcellus at the sheriff's office in Powhatan and loaded Marcellus' truck with thousands of dollars' worth of this gear.

According to Marcellus, the goal was originally to get it to a couple of the American IDF Reserves that will soon be flying to Israel.

"We wanted to be able to say, 'Here, take some armored plates with you, because you don't know what you'll be landing in to,'" said Marcellus.

Marcellus then called Virginia Attorney General, Jason Miyares, for help for further assistance with this effort.

On Oct. 17, Miyares was

able to get Marcellus in contact with Col. Gary Settle of the Virginia State Police and made a statewide call to 123 sheriffs to help donate any surplus gear to his office for this effort.

Richmond Rabbi Dovid Asher from Keneseth Beth, Israel, has helped support by assisting with coordinating the logistics of transporting the gear to Israel. Other logistics teams from Israel, the Embassies, IDF representatives and a large network of people in the Jewish communities have banded together to further expand this program.

On the morning of Oct. 19, the first load of armor has been dropped off at the Attorney General office.

Over 40 counties have now committed their support to this effort, but Marcellus believes other states will soon be joining in as well.

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