

Sports photog's pricey book turns from diamond to gridiron

RON KAPLAN
NJIN Features Editor

In 2007, veteran sports photographer Neil Leifer published *Ballet in the Dirt: The Golden Age of Baseball* (Taschen), a hefty limited-edition coffee table book festooned with gorgeous snapshots from the 1950s and 60s. It had a list price of \$400, but some souped-up copies went for as much as \$700; a much more democratic, paper-back edition was released a few months ago for a reasonable \$49.95.

Leifer is at it again with his just-published *Guts and Glory: The Golden Age of American Football, 1958-1978* (Taschen). This one will set you back at least \$500.

Guts and Glory was culled from more than 10,000 rolls of football work he shot primarily for *Sports Illustrated*; it also includes hundreds of previously unpublished pictures. He captures the big personalities and moments from the field in an era when photographers actually used film and worked in a darkroom.

It's impossible to conceive of modern-day players hovering over a wood fire on the sidelines during a blizzard, but Leifer captured the New York Giants from the


1962 NFL Championship Game doing just that. Leifer adjudges the game, which was played at Yankee Stadium, far colder than the famous Ice Bowl, the 1967 NFL Championship Game played in Green Bay, Wis., between the Packers and the Dallas Cowboys in temperatures that dipped to 13 degrees below zero.

Guts and Glory features such legendary players as Johnny Unitas, Jim Brown, Terry Bradshaw, Joe Namath, Dick Butkus, Frank Gifford, and "Mean" Joe Greene, as well as the coaches, including Vince Lombardi, John Madden, Tom Landry, and Weeb Ewbank.

Even though one picture can tell a thousand words, actual words still count and the book brings back some memorable writing from the best football columns of the era by columnist Jim Murray.

A press release for the book indicates that an even more limited edition of 200 will be available, "numbered and signed by Neil Leifer and

accompanied by one of two chromogenic prints, numbered and signed below the image by the photographer." A bargain at \$1,350.

Hey, Hanukka is just around the corner. 

rkaplan@njewishnews.com

