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menorah

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Major Graham Hill, LAET Abi Sondack and Mike Bluestone pictured at the
Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Amport House.

Photo 1 Holocaust Memorial Day

Photo 2 AJEX national Remembrance Parade & Reunion

Photo 3 Anniversary of Battle of Britain

FROM THE EDITOR

COL MARTIN NEWMAN MBE DL FCIPR



Here at AJEX and the AFJC we are determined to continue to support our veterans, members and serving personnel throughout the current crisis. Many of our serving members are on the front line in many forms including serving with the defence medical services, helping to build the Nightingale Hospitals and providing logistical support and making sure our essential services receive the supplies they

need. Our thoughts and prayers are with them all. For our veteran members and their families this is a time of immense stress and we will be keeping in touch with them through regular email bulletins. Many of our planned activities will obviously be postponed in the light of Government guidelines but rest assured, we will keep in touch.

In this issue we look at VE Day and VJ Day, although sadly the national commemorations events have been curtailed. Paula Kitching, our education officer, also writes on the 75th anniversary of the Liberation of Belsen by British and Canadian Forces. Our serving members held successful Armed Forces Jewish weekend at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Amport House for the last time before its move to Beckett House in

Shrivenham. You can read the full report and see all the pictures in this edition.

The Annual AJEX JMA Ceremony of Remembrance and Parade last November was bigger, better and more inclusive. It was good to see so many young people, especially from JFS, who in future will be in uniform as members of The Combined Cadet Force. You can enjoy reading about this too.

So, we will be keeping in touch during the current crisis. I suppose you could say we are working under wartime conditions but we will come out of this stronger than ever. I would ask that you keep in touch with us too because we want to hear your stories and news. You can send your articles and photographs to editor. menorah@ajex.org.uk.

In the meantime, keep well, stay at home and stay safe.

EMAIL HEROES

**Help us to stay in regular contact with you
- our members and supporters!**

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or if you need to update it let us know at

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If you don't have an email but have a friend or family member who is prepared to pass newsletters and messages to you let us know that too.

Not only will this help us stay in touch better it saves us high postage costs so we can spend the funds. (We will of course continue to send Menorah by post.)

You are important to us and we want to stay in touch!

FROM THE AJEX NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

A very warm welcome to new and old readers to this Spring/Summer issue of Menorah magazine, and I do hope that readers had an enjoyable Pesach, despite current challenges.

I am delighted that there are lots of good and positive news items to report in this issue, despite the fact that the ongoing global crisis relating to Covid19, is playing havoc with our daily lives and threatens so many in society, including many of our own AJEX veterans and supporters, who might be especially vulnerable at this time. I will return to this issue again below, but in the meantime let's stay positive and reflect on the good news relating to our three core pillars of Remembrance; Welfare; and Education.

On the Remembrance front, in October we saw an excellent annual remembrance event at Willesden Jewish Cemetery, when our service to remember those fallen comrades with no known graves was supported by a sizeable number of AJEX members, as well as members of the local community, including a detachment of local ACF cadets. Former National Chairmen, Ron Shelley and Brian Bloom were on hand to talk to the cadets about Jewish military service. The service was led by our ever-inspiring Chaplain, Rabbi (Major) Reuben Livingstone.

Our Annual Ceremony of Remembrance and Parade at the Cenotaph in November was a huge success, with over 2,000 marchers and 1,000 spectators

lining the route. The incredibly hard work put in by our Head Office team and the many AJEX volunteers, and branch members, was simply amazing. A huge 'Thank You' is due to everyone involved, with far too many to name individually. Our Reviewing Officer, Vice Admiral Chris Gardner was among the many dignitaries to comment positively about the parade and praise the 'warm community spirit' that they felt on the day. Youngsters from Jewish schools were a welcome addition to the parade, and we're delighted to note that the JFS has been successful, with support from AJEX, in its bid to form a Combined Cadet Force contingent. The full story is reported later in the magazine.

On Remembrance Sunday, I had the privilege of leading the AJEX delegation when we marched alongside our comrades in the National Parade. A hugely moving occasion for me as your National Chairman. Equally moving was the opportunity for my wife and I to represent AJEX JMA at the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall, when we witnessed our very own Padre Rabbi Livingstone play a pivotal role in the multi-faith service. The sight of the Star of David on Reuben's cross belt was a source of pride and conversation in the entire community for days after the televised event.

Along with several other AJEX volunteers, I also attended a community event at Buckingham Palace hosted by HRH Prince Charles who approached our group us to ask questions about

AJEX and our new tie!

During the latter part of 2019 Brigadier Simon Goldstein kindly accepted our invitation to become our Special Adviser on Military Affairs, and in January of this year we welcomed our new dynamic and delightful Chief Executive, Fiona Palmer. Fiona has very quickly started to make her mark on the activities of AJEX, having taken over from our respected Major Danny Yank, who has moved on to pastures new. In January both Fiona and I represented AJEX JMA at a most moving Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony in Westminster which commemorated the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Unfortunately, our plans and hard work, led by Vice President, Jacques Weisser, for an AJEX delegation to attend the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of Bergen Belsen in April 2020, were thwarted by the advent of the Covid19 pandemic. We do hope however that we can organise an alternative commemorative event at a later date to commemorate this major event, which we had been working on for many months together with our serving comrades in the Armed Forces Jewish Community (AFJC), as well as with SSAFA and other communal bodies.

AJEX JMA has also been playing its part in combatting anti-Semitism with articles in the media and other lobbying activities. We have also supported the highly successful We Were There Too event and exhibition at the Fusiliers



Museum in Bury in February.

Several new volunteers have stepped forward over the past several months to support our activities, but we still need a lot more, and I urge those readers who are not yet engaged with us to take that step now. Please do it today, not tomorrow, but now. You will be most welcome, I promise.

Finally, this is the last issue of Menorah to be edited by Martin Newman, and I am sure that readers will join me in thanking him for his outstanding work in editing the magazine over many years. Martin remains on board with AJEX JMA as a Vice President.

Mike Bluestone
MA CSyP FSI
National Chairman

chairman@ajex.org.uk



Veteran's Day **SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION 2020**



Sunday 28th June at 11am

This year very sadly, AJEX will be unable to hold its annual Veteran's Day Service of Commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum. With the NMA closed due to the Coronavirus epidemic and consequent restrictions, we have moved this year's ceremony online.

This special online ceremony will take place on Sunday 28th June at 11 am.

This is also the day AJEX would have been holding a special commemoration service at the Willesden Cemetery commemorating those Jewish men and women who gave their lives during World War 1 and World War 2. We will be remembering them on this day too.

Willesden Jewish Cemetery is the site of the first Jewish War Memorial in this country and has two Commonwealth War Grave plots. Many of the individual graves are of parents of those killed in action with no known graves, and which include remembrance for their children on their own headstones.

For more information on how to join us for this ceremony visit our Facebook page, email Headoffice@ajex.org.uk or call 020 8202 2323

from the AFJC CHAIRMAN

BY LT COL DANNY SHARPE FRCEM FIMC RCS (ED) RAMC

As a military community, many of us are used to the periodically departing from the normal order of things and finding ourselves in strange situations often with a degree of trepidation and anxiety. We are used to shrinking our world into the 'micro-environment' afforded by the ship or submarine, our patrol base, or the temporary airhead with a deployed squadron.

These periods, usually far from home and with limited communication with those we love, often become dominated by a repetitive but highly structured routine (the battle rhythm) that helps endless, often very similar days pass by with a comforting familiarity.

We face, as a society, what could be arguably be described as the most significant upheaval to that normal order since 1945. We are embarking on the very strangest of deployments. Earlier this week, I spent some time pondering this question. How does an organisation like ours which is spread out across the country and in many ways exists only in a virtual space add value at a time like this? How can I, as the head of this community best support it during this time of immense societal difficulty?

The answer is clear. Our members, our people, our strongest asset, need only to be given the space to show off their ability. They are already used to unusually arduous circumstances whether that be in phase one training, on exercise or deployment. It is the fabric of their being to reach out to those around them and offer a helping hand in times of difficulty. In fact, my own regimental motto "In Arduis Fidelis" defines exactly what the AFJC is for.

In this time of enforced social distance, our virtual world will become even more relevant. As the whole of British society, and within it, Anglo Jewry seeks ways to unite without being physically together, we as the AFJC must stand up and present ways for our people to connect in order to maintain the spirit we have worked so hard to create.

Over the past few months, the

Leadership Team have been working hard take that spirit generated from events like Amport House out into the wider Defence world. In order to build the profile of the AFJC we have been represented at MOD and cross governmental events celebrating Jewish festivals and remembering some of Judaism's darkest moments. We have actively engaged in the Defence 'Diversity and Inclusion' calendar in order to proudly display they contribution that you all make to your service and your country. As I have said many times, representing our people is our easiest task, simply because of who they are.

In the coming weeks, we will release our strategy for the next three years. My main effort is to greatly increase the offer we make to our members. As part of that, we continue to make stepwise changes to the way we organise

ourselves and how we communicate directly and effectively with our membership. Along with our brothers & sisters in arms at AJEX and the Friends of Jewish Servicemen & Women, we will strive to build a solid financial base for our future.

Coming back to my earlier theme, what is the point of all this? The answer to that is just as clear. By building a thriving and sustainable community we create the environment for you, our people to come together in joy, and to support each other in adversity. It has been a pleasure to see this week how naturally the offers of mutual support flow from you all. Even if those are not taken up, their existence adds bricks and mortar to the virtual space in which we exist.

From mud, through blood to the green fields beyond. I look forward to seeing you all there. ●



HM ARMED FORCES JEWISH COMMUNITY 2020-2023 STRATEGY

The community for Jews serving in the UK Regular, Reserve & Cadet Forces and Civilian staff in the Ministry of Defence

ONE COMMUNITY

Strong foundations for AFJC

- Leadership team elections and meetings
- Enhancing internal communications
- External communications e.g. web presence and social media
- Refreshed constitution and relationship with JCHMF
- GDPR compliant database to support communal engagement

Celebrating moments and milestones

- Marking festivals with cards and gifts
- Social calendar for the year
- Welcome pack/information for new members
- Merchandise including clothing

IMPROVING EXPERIENCE

Support for personal development and families

- Access to communal provision for children (e.g. camps organised by communal organisations)
- Access to cultural and learning experiences (e.g. Limmud festival)
- Access to courses, study and education programmes

Surging support when personnel are deployed

- Supporting deployed personnel in theatre
- Supporting families of deployed personnel

Synagogue services & observance

- Access to network of shuls for Shabbat and festivals
- Burial services
- Linking serving personnel with 'host' local communities
- Support for children to access services (e.g. Bar/Bat Mitzvah or Cheder)
- Provision of religious artefacts

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Relationships beyond Defence

- AJEX and veterans' organisations
- Fundraising streams and partnerships
- Jewish schools, JSOCs and synagogue groups

Relationships within Defence

- Advice to the chain of command
- Diversity and Inclusion engagement and support
- Relationship with and support to Chaplaincy
- AJEX partnership
- JCHMF engagement

LEADERSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY

Talent and development

- Mentoring & reverse mentoring
- Providing materials for OJAR/SJARs
- Internal networks for trades/branches
- Building Community leaders of tomorrow

Fundraising and support through the Friends of Jewish Servicemen and Women (FJSMW)

- Future of the FJSMW
- Partnerships with funders and supporters

Mission: To champion and support the contribution of British Jews to UK defence and to ensure that UK Defence is an inclusive organisation for British Jews to continue their legacy of unbroken service to the Crown.

Vision: That all Jewish servicemen and women have the support they need to lead fulfilling, rewarding lives in accordance with their beliefs and practices.

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HM ARMED FORCES JEWISH COMMUNITY
2020-2023 STRATEGY

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from the
AJEX JMA *Chief Executive*

"What an organisation! A few months into my new role as Chief Executive of AJEX JMA, I am acutely aware of what a unique organisation it is".

BY FIONA PALMER



We have an incredible history and a vital job to do. The three core pillars of our work – remembrance, welfare and education are essential if we are to collectively remember and honour the memory of all those who have served. I warmly welcome the way in which AJEX and the AFJC are working ever closer together, forming a crucial partnership allowing us to also support all our serving personnel.

Both my grandfathers served in the Second World War: Jack Hall at Anzio and Will Polikoff in North Africa. Will had an older brother, Isaac Polikoff, who was killed in action in the First World War. There was a family story that

Isaac was killed in a cavalry charge. This probably arose because of the photograph reproduced here, but his army record shows that he wasn't in the cavalry – that would have been pretty unlikely for a 19-year-old Jewish cap-maker from Whitechapel! He was in fact a private in the 1/5 Battalion of the West Yorks Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own). He was killed near Ypres on 18 April, 1918; his name is engraved on the Tyne Cot Memorial at Zonnebeke in Belgium (pictured).



My Grandpa Will proudly attended the AJEX parade each year, coming up to London from Southend. His medals have been passed down to my older brother and my daughter is eager to bring them to this coming year's parade. She is 14 and her wonderful history teacher encouraged her and some friends to attend last year's national ceremony and parade. While I had previously been to watch the ceremony from behind the barriers, this year was particularly memorable – it was the first time I had been in the parade, accompanying her and my younger son.

It was a humbling experience being surrounded by veterans and the family of past veterans as well as Jewish serving personnel. The whole of Whitehall being shut down for the Jewish community makes for a very moving experience. At a time of increased anti-semitism, I felt extremely emotional walking down the middle of Whitehall instead of dodging the usual traffic.

So what lies ahead?

In light of the unprecedented world situation the focus of work to be done over the coming months is very different to what I thought it would be only weeks ago. The special commemoration at Bergen Belsen were postponed and the annual ceremonies at the National Memorial Arboretum and Willesden Cemetery will not be taking place in their envisaged formats. However,

we are looking to honour and remember in other ways, for instance using social media and online resources. I will be focusing on improving our online presence and providing online lectures and talks. We've also put the welfare of our members as a top priority. If you know of anyone in the AJEX JMA family at this time of isolation who needs extra support or just to hear a friendly voice please do be in touch. Our welfare team are in the process of calling all members we have phone numbers to offer support.

Beyond these important priorities, I will be working with colleagues, members and others to map out a five year strategy for the future. We need to make sure our governance, processes and fundraising are first class and that our members know they are appreciated and are central to the AJEX JMA family. I want us to build public awareness of our work. In addition, I want us to capture more of our members' email addresses so we can communicate with them better. This work will help us to move forward and have a positive organisational future. I hope that reading this edition of Menorah magazine provides some welcome relief from the tough times we are living in. Stay safe and healthy. ●



The 75th Anniversary of VE Day

PADRE'S CORNER

BY RABBI REUBEN LIVINGSTONE CF



No war has so profoundly impacted the course of Jewish history as World War Two. Anti-Semitism was one of the central pillars of Nazi ideology even as the extermination of Jews was one of its greatest aims. The Allies were not just fighting a highly capable military foe but also battling one of the most noxious and murderous systems of thought the world has ever known. Imagine then the existential relief and sense of gratitude at the defeat of this abomination. May 8th 1945 was the date the Allies celebrated the defeat and unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and the end of Adolf Hitler's 'Thousand Year Reich', formally recognising the cessation of the Second World War in Europe. This epic milestone became known as VE (Victory in Europe) Day.

Winston Churchill declared to the nation: "My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not victory of a party or of any class. It's a victory of the great British nation as a whole. We were

the first, in this ancient island, to draw the sword against tyranny. After a while we were left all alone against the most tremendous military power that has been seen...I say that in the long years to come not only will the people of this island but of the world, wherever the bird of freedom chirps in human hearts, look back to what we've done and they will say "do not despair, do not yield to violence and tyranny, march straightforward and die if need be - unconquered."

The Allies had invaded Germany from the west during April as Soviet forces advanced from the east. On 25th April 1945, Allied and Soviet forces met at the River Elbe, and the German Army was all but decimated.

Five days later, Hitler, a puffed up monster in life showed cowardice and brutality to the end. He killed his dog, his new wife Eva and then committed suicide in his Berlin bunker. His successor, Admiral Karl Doenitz, sent General Alfred Jodl to General Dwight Eisenhower's Supreme Allied Headquarters in Rheims to surrender unconditionally from the 8th of May. After six years and untold millions of lives lost, the Nazi scourge was crushed and the war in Europe was finally over.

The Soviets commemorated the end of the 'Great Patriotic War', as 'Victory Day' on 9th May and Russia today does the same. Victory over Japan, known as VJ Day, did not take place until some three months later on 15th August 1945.

VE Day celebrations took place across Europe, North America and the World: in London over a million people participated. Crowds massed in Trafalgar Square and up the Mall to Buckingham Palace,

where King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, accompanied by the ironclad Prime Minister Winston Churchill, appeared on the balcony of the Palace to cheering crowds. Princess Elizabeth (future Queen Elizabeth II) and Princess Margaret enjoyed the celebrations for themselves first hand.

VE Day celebrations were organised annually throughout Europe and North America for many subsequent decades to honour the anniversary - and those who fought and suffered for it. But in recent times, as living witnesses to the war and it's horrors and survivors of the Holocaust have dwindled, memory is fading. The 75th Anniversary of VE Day may be the last 5 year commemorative to still have a living link to that age. As such, we must cherish it.

The Torah tells us;

זכור ימות עולם בינו שנות דור ודור
...Remember the years of the world; understand the days of every generation'. On this 75th anniversary, it is one thing to remember and commemorate an awful history - but it is quite another to understand the experience of the handful of living witnesses as they tell their generation's story; perhaps for the very last time. ●

JEWS' WAR HONOURS

FROM THE TIMES JANUARY 23, 1920

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Reading, presided over a large company, which comprised most of the leading members of the Jewish community resident in this country, at a dinner given at the Connaught Rooms in Holborn last night, in celebration of peace and in honour of the semi-jubilee of the Jewish Historical Society of England. The American Ambassador and the Chinese Minister were among the guests.

The Chairman, in proposing the toast of the Jewish Historical Society of England, said that from the early

records of the Exchequer one might learn the meaning of the term "capital levy" — (laughter) — which formed a not unimportant part of the history of their community in those days. Their community had done its share nobly in the war. They asked no credit for that; they recognized that Jewish citizens should devote the best of their efforts to the defence of this country, which had shown so much regard for civil and religious liberty. (Cheers.) It was computed that the Jewish community in the United Kingdom numbered altogether 275,000 men, women, and children. To that number might be added 145,000 Jews in the British Dominions, Colonies, and Possessions, making a total of 420,000 in the Empire. Of that number just over 50,000 belonged to some branch of his Majesty's Forces. Those who died, died gladly for a cause which was worthy of them. Of those who

served, five won the VC, 50 obtained the DSO, 240 the MC, 70 the DCM, 250 the MM, and 330 were mentioned in dispatches. The struggle was one which commended itself to them because their community throughout the generations had suffered from the denial of liberty and the refusal of equality.

Lord Birkenhead, replying to the toast of Law and History, which was submitted by Mr Israel Zangwill, said he was immensely surprised to learn that in the population of these islands there were only 275,000 members of the Jewish community. If he were a Jew he would be proud of nothing more than that so infinitesimal a proportion of the total population had played so immense and so determined a part in the destinies of our national life.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

VE Day 75

not quite what we expected!

VE Day
(Victory in
Europe Day)

was considered the formal ending of the Second World War following the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and for all the Allies especially any of its Jewish citizens it was finally the end of years of fear and fighting.

Over the last year organisations, including AJEX have been making plans to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. We have worked with schools and collated resources. We readied veterans for speaking events and prepared materials all to recognise that tremendous day 75 years ago when people took to the streets to celebrate with parties and music and servicemen and women (along with their families) breathed a sigh of relief.

The British government even moved the May Bank holiday so that the Nation could spend a day looking back in wonder and with respect on how the country made it through that time. Of course, with Coronavirus many of the plans for commemoration changed. Schools were not there to hold events and communities could not come together to hold tea parties and concerts.

AJEX was not able to hold a physical act of commemoration, but in some ways spending VE Day in lockdown is significant. The 75 years of general peace that the UK and Western Europe has been granted after the defeat of Nazi Germany could be said to have made us complacent and perhaps even selfish. The hardships that previous generations went through had become a distant memory, or a story told in documentaries, while the horrors of the Holocaust during



the Second World War stretch further away. And while war cannot be compared to what we are experiencing during 2020 here in the UK, some of the experiences of those on the Home Front could provide us with an insight into how previous generations have dealt with uncertainty and restrictions. Pulling together, sharing supplies with others, valuing time with our families and reflecting on our good health, and respecting and supporting those who are prepared to work on the frontline.

A new significance? Therefore, VE Day 75 might hold more significance than anyone could have imagined and it might help us respect the wartime generations more and value our security and admire those working to support that security a little more.

The Battle of Britain

This summer it will be 80 years since the Battle of Britain. It was the crucial battle where the Royal Air Force (RAF) fought off the Nazi air attack day after day until the Nazis called off any full attempt to invade Britain.

It was one of the most important battles of the Second World War and arguably the first ever battle fought totally in the air. For Britain it was a life or death

situation which resulted in the Nazis experiencing defeat and the British people remaining free.

The Nazi attack on Britain started on the 10 July 1940 and followed the same plan that they had used to attack Poland and Western Europe – a massive aerial assault that would destroy the airfields and any defences before launching an attack by land, in Britain's case sea.

The countries of Denmark, Belgium, The Netherlands, and France had all fallen in the previous months and any attempt to resist had been quickly overcome. The Nazis seemed unstoppable until they faced the RAF over the skies of Britain.

Using a system of radar, swift coordinated response and determined air crews on the ground and in the air the RAF repelled the attack. The men flying were not just

British pilots they included volunteers from around the world – pilots who had managed to get out of Poland, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium in the Netherlands as well as men from Canada, Australia and South Africa. While the Battle of Britain wouldn't end the war it was the first time that the Nazis had been defeated and it provided people from across Europe and around the world as well as Britain with the



hope and belief that Nazi Germany could be stopped.

We will be releasing a fuller article on the Battle of Britain as well as lectures and a commemoration activity over the summer.

Supporting British and Israeli Disabled Veterans

BY SPENCER GELDING, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BEIT HALOCHEM UK



Beit Halochem was established in 1949 following Israel's War of Independence. Tasked with providing support to the 3,400 veterans disabled throughout the war, it provided veterans and their families with a framework for rehabilitation. Continuing to hold these principles at the core of what it does, the organisation has grown to encompass four centres, treating over 50,000 disabled veterans in Israel.

Eight years ago, I was introduced to Colonel Ilan Egozi, Director General of Beit Halochem who opened my eyes to the transformative work carried out by the organisation in Israel. On my return to London, I was appointed CEO of the newly formed Beit Halochem UK.

We had one clear aim: to form bonds between Israel's wounded veterans and victims of terror and the servicemen and women in the UK.

Having been privileged to be a part of numerous bilateral sessions where British and Israeli organisations have shared their expertise in rehabilitation and the support of veterans, I've learned that there is an unspoken language between these heroes,

regardless of where they are from or what their mother tongue is. It's no surprise that this shared language and understanding also extends to the veterans' families who are often their core supporters.

A little over two years ago, Beit Halochem UK chairman Andrew Wolfson and I decided to channel these core values into a sporting event. And so, the Veteran Games was born. Our dream was to create a shared experience between disabled veterans and their families from Israel and the UK. Last year, this dream became a reality when we launched the inaugural Veteran Games and Conference. Over 100 wounded British and Israeli soldiers came together to celebrate the rehabilitative nature of sport and family in their physical and emotional road to recovery.

Over the course of five days, an inclusive program of sporting and recreational events took place in the Beit Halochem centres in Israel. As part of the Games, we were also able to share the beauty of Israel with the UK veterans and their families, taking them on a tour around the Dead Sea, the British war memorial at Ramleh cemetery and Jerusalem.

We designed the Games with inclusivity and camaraderie at their core, with each event tailored to challenge but not exclude anyone based on physical ability. This is what makes the Veteran Games unique. It was especially heart-warming to see veterans' families supporting each other throughout the week, with their shared language

and experience crossing any linguistic barrier. Alongside the Games, we also ran a conference focusing on veteran PTSD, mental health and recovery which was organised and run by Professor Zahava Solomon and Sir Simon Wessely. These sessions covered discussions around policy changes in relation to veteran welfare throughout the world with global experts sharing their viewpoints and experiences. This event was only made possible by the incredible generosity of our donors and partners. Their financial support allowed us to impact the lives of the veterans, their families and their communities for the better.

Last year's event was a tremendous success; it completely surpassed our initial hopes for the Games. I'm proud that through the hard work and dedication of all those involved, we will be repeating the Veteran Games and Conference in 2020. With additional UK veteran charities involved and an expanded list of partners, Beit Halochem will host more UK veterans and their families in May.

Our core focus has always been to provide veterans and their families with the support that they need. By bringing together injured servicemen and women from Israel and the UK last year, we were able to do just that.

The bonds formed over the five-day trip have remained strong and the support that they continue to show each other has been transformative. I'm excited to be a part of organising this year's Games, where I'm certain we will see new lifelong relationships being formed. ●



THE CHIEF RABBI'S PRAYER

The Chief Rabbi has composed this very special prayer which can be recited at home at a time of your choosing. In addition, Psalms 91, 121 and 130 (Green Siddur pages 582, 510 and 516) can be added.



אֲבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים

Heavenly Father,

We turn to you at this time of deep global concern, to bestow your mercy upon all the inhabitants of our vulnerable world, which is now so seriously afflicted.

Almighty God, who sustains the living with lovingkindness, supports the fallen and heals the sick, grant consolation to the bereaved families and send a speedy and complete recovery to all who have contracted the virus, as the Prophet Jeremiah declared:

כִּי אֶעֱלֶה אֶרְכָּה לְךָ וּמִמָּכּוֹתֶיךָ אֶרְפְּאֶךָ, נָא הִשֵּׁם

"For I will restore health unto you, and I will heal you of your wounds, says the Lord"

Bless with strength those who are suffering. Bless with resilience those in isolation. Bless with hope those who are despondent. Bless with wisdom all those who seek a cure and bless with compassion all those who offer comfort.

Bless the leaders of our nation. Give them and their advisors knowledge and foresight to act with wisdom and sincerity for the wellbeing of all whom they serve.

Bless the doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals and keyworkers who tirelessly seek to heal and help those affected while in so doing put themselves at risk.

Open our hearts in prayer and our hands in generosity to guarantee that the physical distance this virus creates between us will be bridged through compassion and kindness.

Almighty God of healing and hope, at this time of heightened global awareness of our mutual interdependence, enable all of humankind to appreciate the strength that comes from being united in concern and love, rather than divided in hate and prejudice. As we look to the future, may you endow all people with the capacity to build and sustain societies of unity, tolerance, harmony and peace.

O Lord, our rock and salvation, lead us speedily through despair to hope, from fear to trust and from the dread of death to the celebration of life.

וְאֵנִי תַּפְלִיתִּי-לְךָ הִשֵּׁם, עַתָּה רְצֹן

May this prayer of mine come before you propitious time.

וְכֵן יְהִי רְצֹן

And may this be your will,

Amen



FIRST JEWISH CADET UNIT

IN OVER 60 YEARS TO BE ESTABLISHED AT JFS



As part of a joint initiative between the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Education, The Jewish Free School is to form a Combined Cadet Force Contingent in the near future. Following Government approval the school is in the process of seeking officers and instructors for the unit. Once those nominated have completed their basic training the contingent will be ready to open the doors to its first recruits.

The unit, which will wear the prestigious cap badge of The Household Cavalry Regiment, will be established initially for three officers, a school staff instructor and 30 cadets. The move has been welcomed by both AJEX the JMA and The

Armed Forces Jewish Community. Mike Bluestone, AJEX National Chairman, said: "AJEX has provided support to JFS in this important development. This fantastic initiative means that a sizeable number of Jewish uniformed cadets will join us at our national parade and other events. It is hoped that other Jewish Schools might also apply to form contingents." A spokesperson for Deputy Commander Cadets at Regional Command, said: "The Jewish Free School has a long and well established history of services with the British armed forces. The school participates annually in the AJEX parade proudly carrying banners in memory of the many alumni who served during the Great War."

Establishing a CCF at JFS is a natural progression of their association with AJEX and this will significantly contribute to the personal development of those in the contingent. It reflects the school's commitment to active contribution in wider British society and reflecting that loyalty to one's home country is an important Jewish value.

The Head Teacher, Rachel Fink explained how buoyed they have been by the support and encouragement from the AJEX leadership to pursue this

initiative. She said:

“ We recognise that JFS will play an important role in the future of AJEX, having a CCF will strengthen this connection further.

The Cadet branch has been hugely positive about gaining a Contingent from the Jewish Community and have been impressed by the engagement from the Senior Leadership Team at the School. The next important step is to train their Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) so that they are prepared for when the young people join the Contingent and start benefiting from the opportunities the Cadet movement provides.”



AFJC GLOBAL SITR

A round up of training and deployments of serving Jewish Armed Forces

1. UK

Defence Medical Services personnel supported the response to COVID-19
An Intelligence Corps Major started a part time PhD at Oxford University in Oct 2019 with funding from the Army.

11. USA

Flt Lt Joel Forbes, currently SO2 Space Ops at the Space and Battlespace Management Force HQ, HQ Air, completed the US Space 200 course in Colorado Springs alongside colleagues from across the US Armed Forces and other Coalition Partners. This included a final capstone exercise focusing on the conflict in a regional theatre. Additionally as a qualified Space Duty Officer, he provides strategic missile warning to the UK and is entitled to wear US Space Wings.



10. ARGENTINA, URUGUAY, PARAGUAY and THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Major Adam Wise, RLC, has spent the last three years as the Deputy Defence Attaché to Argentina and Uruguay, and the Defence Attaché for Paraguay. Outside of his area of responsibility, he supported UK defence engagement actively in Brazil, Chile, Colombia and the USA, and even managed to spend 8 hours in the Falkland Islands. His most emotive memories were the international efforts to find a stricken Argentine submarine, arranging and attending a meeting between the First Sea Lord and his Argentine counterpart, and leading Paraguayan SF in jungle training with the UK elements. Not to mention fighting for a place for the first ever female Paraguayan OCdt to attend RMAS and being thanked by their president for his efforts.

9. SOUTH SUDAN

Lt Louis Trup deployed with 69 Gurkha Field Sqn, 36 Engineer Regiment as the Field Troop Comd in Malakal, Upper Nile State on a 4-month deployment. This deployment was the final Op TRENTON however as well as working on the redeployment of UK equipment, his team was responsible for the construction of a hospital in support of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.



personnel accross the world



2. FRANCE

Cdr Dan Weil is in Paris for 2 years attending the Ecole de Guerre on exchange with the French Navy working for the Chief of the Marine Nationale on his strateg team.



3. BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS AND GERMANY

An Intelligence Corps SNCO provided Counter-Intelligence and Security assurance for Ex DEFENDER 20, until its curtailment due to COVID-19

4. ESTONIA

An Intelligence Corps SNCO spent winter 2018-2019 as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltics.



5. CROATIA

An Intelligence Corps Major led his Company on exercise in Croatia with 16 Air Assault Brigade in June 2019.

6. KOSOVO

An Intelligence Corps JNCO deployed to Kosovo for a 6-month tour in spring 2019 as part of the UK's Human Engagement contribution to NATO's KFOR peace support operation.

7. CYPRUS and GIBRALTAR

Lt Sam Hewlings, 170 infra Sp Eng Gp, surveyed assets for Defence Infrastructure Organisation in Cyprus in October 2019, and conducted infrastructure assessments for the DIO in Gibraltar.



8. KUWAIT

Capt Leon Debnath deployed with B Coy 2 MERCIAN as the Company 21C on a joint exercise with the Kuwaiti Al-Soor Armoured Bde. The Coy conducted joint CT2 training in urban operations, live fire tactical training with US Forces, and conducted displays for HRH Prince William and the Chief of the Kuwaiti Army Staff.





2020
AJEX JMA
Annual General Meeting
Sunday 26th July 2020
11 am

The AGM will be a virtual meeting on
Zoom Webinar, details to be advised.

For more information contact
Headoffice@ajex.org.uk or call 020 8202 2323

BERGEN-BELSEN

1940 BIS 1945

Images By Rob Atherton at Shutterstock.com

The end of the Second World War and Bergen-Belsen 75 liberation – what now?

BY PAULA KITCHING

The Second World War caused devastation and loss of life across the world, and in particular Europe and Asia. The USSR alone lost in excess of 20 million people. The Nazi war machine had blasted across Europe stamping out any resistance and bringing its chilling ideological vision wherever possible. The Second World War was not just about armies fighting one another, or about sea battles in oceans far away or dog fights in the air it was about ‘Total War’.

But before the war had even begun a far more dangerous war – a war against individuals, an ideological war had begun. At the heart of the ideology of Nazism was hate – hate for those that opposed his ideas and hate for some that simply existed. In 1925 Adolf Hitler

in Mein Kampf ¹ had made it clear what his intentions were for Germany and how he intended to remove Jews from German life. On taking power in 1933 that ideology and intent became a reality. Direction for the persecution of German citizens was driven from the top, with the happy complicity of

many German citizens. The Nazis introduced the Concentration Camps in the first few months of taking control in Germany in 1933. They were created as a way to implement Nazism through the control of the German population by the removal of opponents and ensuring that the very idea of a camp would

instil fear into the population. As the Nazi ideology was embedded into German life, its legislative system (who put up little opposition to the changes), its education system, all of the professions and state organisations, many of those who were threatened by Nazism decided to try and leave Germany. That in itself was not easy – especially for those identified as racial and political opponents. As the state grew stronger restrictions were placed on what goods and finances could be taken out of Germany by those wishing to leave making flight from the tools of control all the more difficult. The concentration camps along with police cells became a means to not just control but to begin to eradicate perceived opponents. Others remained in Germany, convinced that this latest

CONTINUE >>>

bout of antisemitism would pass just like the others – however, the levels to which this antisemitic episode was prepared to go had no precedent and a desire for common sense and decency would be wasted. Once the war started the camp system would be expanded beyond belief. Following the concentration camps were the forced labour camps but perhaps the most terrifying step in the Nazi camp system was to combine the camps structures with a method to murder on mass those it despised was the creation of the Death Camp system.

The Ghettoization process and the mobile killing squads (Einsatzgruppen) that had been sent into Eastern European were key steps in the eradication of Jewish life and the Jews in Europe but for the Nazis they did not go far enough and they did not solve the issue of what to do with the Jews of central and Western Europe. For the Nazis the terrifying camp structure that they had developed offered an answer to the problem of how to remove all the Jews of Europe.

The murderous processes of persecution, marginalisation, isolation, criminalisation, ghettoization, physical and mental torture were brought together to create the events of the Holocaust and the destruction of the victims of Nazism. How they were brought together is often explored in schools and documentaries and time has been dedicated to trying to understand how it could happen. The desire to understand how this process occurred is to be celebrated, society should ask questions about why a relatively

civilised society would want to murder millions of people and destroy the lives of loyal citizens simply because of their perceived race, sexual orientation, mental or physical fitness or political ideas.

Man's inhumanity to man did not start with the Holocaust or even with the twentieth century, there are countless examples of humanity's brutality to its fellow humans – but one of the reasons that marks out the events of the Holocaust is that society had claimed

Germany itself, for many years it had not been the site of the kind of brutality that could be found in the other camps. Situated in Northern Germany near Celle Bergen-Belsen started out as a POW camp and then part of it was used as an exchange camp. People that the Germans thought could be valuable as swaps with other countries or to put pressure on other nations were placed there including Jews. While they were imprisoned and treated poorly the camp did not act as a murdering site.

die, too weak and ill to be saved by the liberators. In a matter of weeks the physical buildings of the camps were destroyed by the British to end the disease and the former prisoners were moved to a near by former SS camp with clean facilities. Like all camp survivors some would never physically fully recover while other would return to health the mental scars remained with all of them.

Liberating those places was one of the most shocking experiences for many servicemen.



to have moved on from such savagery, to be more enlightened. In fact the truth was that modernisation and progress had simply lead to a more effective industrial way to murder innocent people, a way in which those responsible for the murder did not necessarily have to come into contact with their victims.

The Holocaust occurred over many years and while Western Governments and the Allies knew that European Jewry was being murdered in its millions the full extend of the savagery was only truly revealed as the marching Allied armies began to liberate the camps. Bergen – Belsen was a concentration camp in

The Russian POW 's imprisoned there were treated terribly and they were murdered on the site.

In 1944 when the tide of the war turned and Germany started to be on the backfoot Bergen-Belsen started to be a camp that Jews from other camps were sent to and in spring 1945 many of those that had survived the Death Marches from East Europe were also sent there. In June 1944 an estimated 7,300 prisoners were at Bergen-Belsen, by April 1945 there was in excess of 60,000. The overcrowding led to disease especially typhus. When the British troops liberated the camp on the 15 April there were 13,000 unburied bodies - thousands more would

“This was not war”

said one man I interviewed about the liberation of Bergen – Belsen nearly 25 years ago

“this was hell not a battlefield, and I’d seen fighting and my friends killed. These were ordinary people who had been reduced to nothing, women who were barely recognisable as women – that wasn’t war that was something else”.

He couldn’t really describe it – he didn’t want to; he didn’t want his mind to go back there but he did want to convey to me a young researcher only recently graduated what he had seen and how it had made him feel. It made him feel sick and angry that people could do that to other people – he wanted a new generation to know how bad it was and why it should not be allowed to happen again. Similar remarks were made by the Soviet soldiers who

liberated the only Death Camp that hadn't been fully destroyed or abandoned before the Allies reached it – Auschwitz. The Soviet General commented at the time about the piles of women's hair that were found in the stores – startled to think about the number of women that must have been killed to produce that amount of hair.

For the liberators the shock of what they found led to long term mental health issues. For some of the Jewish liberators it led to a long term desire to fight back and never to allow antisemitism to be something to be tolerated again. Jewish servicemen of the UK entered into Belsen in April 1945 and others visited over the coming months. They along with everyone else was shocked by what they found – appalled at the way people had been treated.

However, these Jewish servicemen also had another emotion and that was anger. That anger often found itself channelled into activities back home. They worked tirelessly for AJEX and other became involved with the anti-fascist group the 43 Group. 75 years later the whole world does know the full extent of the Holocaust and the Nazis murderous aims. Millions of those that perished have their names recorded, though tragically not all. Each one of the six million or more Jews, the thousands of Roma and Sinti (gypsies) and the victims of Nazi persecution had a name and identity. To simply reduce them to just numbers and categories is to remove their personality and individuality just as the Nazis did – they were Barbara, David, Aaron, Ben, Mala, Anne, Margot, Simon – real people.

In intervening years and especially in the last 25 years the testimony of the liberators and the survivors have been recorded where possible, though many were lost through that inability and unwillingness to confront the full horror of the Holocaust.

Some people in the 1940's and 1950's did face up to the full horror of

what had been done in the name of the Third Reich. At the Nuremberg Trials (and the following trials at Nuremberg of Nazi officials such as judges)² were put on trial for their actions and some of the surviving victims of Nazism were able to give publicly the testimony of their experience. However, the trials began to falter just as denazification did with the development of divisions between the Allies and the increasing tensions of the East West split that led to the Cold War. The vast majority of those responsible for the Holocaust were never brought to account.

What was significant about the Trials and the public testimony was they emboldened some officials and led to others having the evidence and impetus to try and make substantial changes for the future of humanity. The concept of a 'Crime Against Humanity' was introduced as a part of International Criminal Law at Nuremberg in 1945. The end of the war and the liberation of the camps provided ordinary people with an insight to what can happen when hatred is allowed to go unchallenged. The creation of the international community on the back of the conflict was the action of idealists wishing to create a better world – a sign that even in the midst of war and suffering hope could still be kept alive.

Now 75 years after liberation we still hope that the world can be a better place, sadly antisemitism seems to be rising once more – just as those that witnessed the Holocaust are leaving us. While the anniversary is a time to reflect and commemorate – it is also a time to reassert the sentiment of those liberators that felt anger. It is time to shout again that the Jewish communities of the world will not be cowered again and that the fight back is being taken back up. As part of the 75th anniversary AJEX is working with schools to explore how to remember that past and how to ensure it is not only not forgotten but also not allowed to be repeated. ●

¹ *Mein Kampf* – the 1925 book by Adolf Hitler that set out his ideology and hatred against Jewish people.

² *The Nuremberg Trials and the Subsequent Trials* were carried out between 1945 to 1949. The trials were organised by the Allies to make the Nazi regime accountable and were partly to carry out the denazification process. The success and outcomes of the trials has been debated by politicians and historians in the following years.

WHY WE MARCH WITH PRIDE

By Mervyn S Kersh

We clean our medals, don our hats
To let the whole world see
It's we who manned the war machine
To keep these islands free.

We fought the Hun in Africa,
We fought him on the sea.
But he beat us at Dunkirk
Despite our bravery.

The Germans ruled the British sky
But we withstood the Blitz.
But then we made much better planes
And the Hun soon feared the Brits.

Our Allies from around the world
Rallied to our side.
Then finally our boys did land
On a summer morning tide.

We took the war to Germany,
Their towns began to burn,
Hamburg, Leipzig and Berlin hit;
Their "safest" towns in turn.

The war they boasted they would win
Changed their arrogance to fear.
But like Dunkirk not so long before,
Our landings cost us dear.

From East and West the Allies closed,
Heading for Berlin,
Freeing all the murder camps
To reveal their greatest sin.

They tried to stall and talk to us
But Churchill closed his ears;
"We'll not with them negotiate,
Not in one thousand years".

"Total surrender" was what we said
And they had to obey.
Japan was next, and then they too
Surrendered without a say.

That's why today, much older now,
We parade and march with pride.
We have to show just what we did
At least, those who have not died.

We carry standards in the breeze
To show the crowds galore,
For we are proud to claim that we
Saved Freedom in the War.



THE AJEX REUNION & 85TH ANNUAL PARADE & REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY 2019

BY JEFFREY FOX MBE



Once again, the “sun shone”, and in other words, “it did not rain” as the 85th AJEX National Remembrance Parade and Reunion took place on November 17th, 2019.

This time we inaugurated a Brunch before the Parade rather than the Post-Parade Tea of previous years. Held at One Great George Street, a location which is much closer to both the Cenotaph and Horse Guards. The Buffet format allowed Guests to mingle and circulate and provided an opportunity to speak to a much wider number of Fellow attendees. This was met with wide acclaim and will be the format for the future.

Following the Entry of the AJEX Standard the AJEX National Chairman, Mike Bluestone made a brief welcoming speech before introducing Vice Admiral Chris Gardner CBE who spoke warmly of his pleasure in having been asked to be Reviewing Officer. The Chief Rabbi then spoke, and he was followed by Marie Van der Zyl, President of the Board of Deputies.

Following this very successful innovation Official Guests moved to the Commonwealth & Foreign Office and Members of AJEX & Serving Personnel

joined their comrades and other marchers on Horse Guards. The Parade formed up under the eagle eyes of Parade Commander, Ron Shelley MBE & Lt Col Simon Soskin, Parade Marshall. A great deal of assistance from the JLGB has been provided for many years and this was no exception. On time the Parade marched off down Whitehall led by the Band of the Scots Guards, AJEX standards and many other Standards. It was heart-warming and emotional to see so many marching on this occasion, many more than in previous years. AJEX Branches were joined by representatives from Synagogues, Communal Organisations, Cadets, Youth Groups and Relatives of those who served but are no longer with us. They were joined by Representatives from Israel, the USA and France.

On reaching the Cenotaph the Parade formed up in traditional manner and the Reviewing Officer, AJEX Executives & Patrons together with other Official Guests spoke to many of the Marchers during the traditional walk-about. As the Band played “Nimrod”

silence fell and the Remembrance Ceremony led by the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Rabbi Major Reuben Livingstone CF LLB LLM, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg & Rabbi Anthony Gilbert began. One of the most moving parts of the service is the Laying of Wreaths, and on this occasion, as is usual, the AJEX Wreath, In memory of all Jewish personnel who died in the service of the crown was laid by the Reviewing Officer. Many further Wreaths were also laid and a detailed commentary by AJEX Vice-President & Parade co-ordinator Jeffrey Fox MBE, kept the large crowd watching informed.

At the conclusion of the Remembrance ceremony all present joined in the singing Adon Alam. This always brings

“a lump to the throat and a tear to the eye”!

The Parade then marched back to Horse Guards where, following the March-Past and the Salute, the Reviewing Officer addressed the Marchers who responded with three Cheers. This most moving event ended with the final command “Parade Dismiss”. ●





“ This year we changed the format of the Parade day with a reception and lunch before the parade. This meant that more people than ever were able to hear the speeches and see the new AJEX pop-up exhibition – all involved thought this was an excellent way forward. ”



FAREWELL TO AMPORT

WITH A FANTASTIC ANNUAL WEEKEND

Amport House closed its doors for the last time in February, but not before our annual Armed Forces Jewish Community weekend in January. Our annual Shabbat, reunion and moral leadership course yet again was packed with religious, cultural and social activities and open to everyone.

The event kicked off with a Kabbalat Shabbat service led by our Padre, Reuben Livingstone, who welcomed everyone to Amport. Before our Shabbat dinner, our special guest speaker, Dr Lynette Nusbacher talked about the future of Israel's strategic alliances and partnerships ahead of an informal welcome from Lt Col Danny Sharpe on behalf of the community.

An engaging explanatory Shabbat service was conducted by our padres, Rabbis Reuben Livingstone, Ariel Abel and Colonel (Rabbi) Menachem Sebbag of the Royal Netherlands Army. We were joined for our post Shabbat mess dinner by Nicola Williams, Service Complaints Ombudsman for the Armed Forces (SCOAF), who spoke about the important role of the SCOAF and how it supports the important work to ensure our Armed Forces

are the best in the world for its people. All present thanked the staff of Amport House for their dedication and excellent service over so many years and presented gifts of thanks. After dinner, we were entertained by the fantastic band of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force.

Other speakers over the weekend included Wilf Owen, Editor and co-founder of Infinity Journal and the co-founder and Deputy Editor of The Journal of Military Operations and leading Islamic scholar Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini. Meanwhile, much focus was given to understanding the needs of serving personnel with several discussions

and sessions led by the AFJC Leadership team to talk through our new community strategy.

Lt Col Danny Sharpe, Chairman of the Armed Forces Jewish Community, said

"Our community serves as an extended family to all Jewish personnel. Our annual Amport experience has been an important part of our community calendar, but it doesn't define it. With a move to Beckett House next year, we will continue to evolve our work to meet the needs of the community, with other opportunities to get involved."

Next year in Shrivenham... at Beckett House, UK Defence Academy, to be precise. Chag Pesach sameach to you and your family. ●



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: MAJOR (RABBI) REUBEN LIVINGSTONE, SENIOR JEWISH CHAPLAIN TO HM ARMED FORCES; COMMANDER DANIEL WEIL RN, CHAIRMAN, JEWISH COMMITTEE FOR HM FORCES; NICOLA WILLIAMS, SERVICE COMPLAINTS OMBUDSMAN FOR THE ARMED FORCES; LT COL DANNY SHARPE, CHAIRMAN, HM ARMED FORCES JEWISH COMMUNITY

INSPIRING EXHIBITION

at THE FUSILIERS MUSEUM *in* BURY



BY PAULA KITCHING

In February AJEX teamed up with one of its partners 'Britain's Jews and the First World War' to deliver the 'We Were There Too' project's first regional exhibition at the Fusiliers Museum in Bury, Lancashire. The exhibition told the story of the British Jewish contribution to, and experience of, the First World War using display boards alongside personal and historic artefacts.

For the first time since moving to the Jewish Museum items from the Jewish Military Museum (JMM) collection, which is part of the AJEX family, were transferred to Bury on a temporary loan to be displayed as part of the exhibition. The items included medals, official registration documents, a pocket watch and a prayer book providing visitors with an opportunity to learn about the men and women who part of the incredible history.

In addition to the main narrative there were a few display boards telling the story of local Jewish men and women from the

North West. One of those whose story was covered was Louis Loofe.

Loofe was born in Riga in the Russian Empire and moved to Britain in 1891. Once the war started, he enlisted into the Royal Flying Corps and was later transferred to the RAF. He served in Egypt, it was there that he became a boxing champion, appearing in a number of newspaper reports as such. Louis was also a successful boxer and while stationed at the Heliopolis Prisoner of War Camp in Cairo took part in several boxing matches with local men and fellow servicemen. He survived the war and died in May 1973.

The Fusiliers Museum was keen to host the exhibition as both the Lancashire and Royal Fusiliers became the regiments of choice for many Jewish families during the First and Second World Wars due to their recruiting areas. The Royal Fusiliers (a London Regiment) was of course expanded in 1917 to create 3 new regular battalions made up primarily of Jewish recruits.

The exhibition was launched on the Monday evening and was a tremendous success, with an attendance of about eighty people. Guests included, The High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, the Mayors of Bury and Trafford, a number of Deputy Lieutenants, the Leader of Bury Council, other serving councillors and the President of the Manchester Jewish Representative Council. AJEX education manager was one of the keynote speakers. She also wrote the text for the exhibition selected the JMM artefacts and delivered educational workshops.

On the following two days there were visits from three schools (over 100 pupils) who took part in workshops - all learning about the Jewish contribution the First World War. The exhibition was extremely successful and may well be the start of activities to utilise the JMM collection with other AJEX initiatives around the country. ●

As the UK's oldest, tri-service military charity, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity reached an important milestone in February 2020.

Formerly known as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, SSAFA has trailblazed, for 135 years, support provision for those in the military community in need since the late 19th century. Rich in history, the charity is still relevant and needed today to relieve need, suffering

'THERE THEN, HERE NOW' **SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity - 135 years on**

AJEX and SSAFA are both welfare organisations whose history goes back decades as does the friendship. Let us tell you more about what they do:

SSAFA was one of the first charities to recognise the hardships and unique challenges that military families face.

Before SSAFA was established, military families had little or no help from the British Government. In the 1800s, men even had to ask permission from their Commanding Officer to be married and without this permission, wives were not allowed to live with their husbands, and they were

refused a military pension if their husbands were killed in action.



Major James Gildea set out to change how military families were treated, so in February 1885, he wrote to The Times newspaper. He appealed to the public for money and volunteers to help those who would be left behind. Following his petition, a small fund was set up for married women irrespective of whether their marriage was recognised by the regiment or not. Within three months, SSFA (The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association) was born, which later became SSAFA to incorporate 'Airmen' in its title to include the formation of Royal Air Force in 1918.

SSAFA was the first to set up a 'nursing service' even before the NHS existed.

In 1892, SSAFA set up a Nursing Branch to offer home care to the UK families of serving men in large garrisons and seaport towns – a revolutionary idea at a time when home nursing or the NHS was not available. The nurses were hugely successful, having a significant impact on lowering the child mortality rates and helping combat the influenza outbreak of 1918. Such was their success that the UK's National Health Service adopted the Alexandria Nurses practices for the District Nursing Service when it was set up in 1948.

SSAFA was the first military charity to offer a home for

families with loved ones undergoing medical treatment. SSAFA set up the Norton House legacy, a home-away-from-home for military families whose loved ones were undergoing treatment.

This was started following a campaign led by Major Peter Norton's family, after he was injured serving in Iraq. The house first supported the work done at Headley Court but relocated in 2018 to support the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre. The house provides free accommodation to friends and family of service personnel, so they can focus on providing comfort and strength to their loved ones.

SSAFA was one of the first military charities to offer one-



and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans and their families - in order to support their independence and dignity.

to-one, face-to-face transitional mentoring to service leavers.

Their mentoring service launched in 2014 to help motivate and empower service leavers in their transition to civilian life. Most service leavers thrive in civilian life. However, if someone is struggling and complications aren't addressed early – more drastic intervention may be needed later. SSAFA's mentors provide emotional and practical support during transition and for up to two years post discharge. The service first launched for wounded, injured or sick service leavers but has now been rolled out to all those service leavers across the UK.

Sir Andrew Gregory, CEO of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity said:

"Since its creation 135 years ago, SSAFA has supported those serving in this Nation's Armed Forces, veterans and their families when they need assistance. All of us in the charity – staff and volunteers, are very proud that we remain true

to the vision of our founder, Sir James Gildea, as we let those in need to regain their independence and dignity. And in all that we do, we seek to live our core values of being understanding, showing commitment, being fair and non-judgmental and exhibiting courage.

This special milestone is not only a chance to take stock of our substantial achievements – but also to look forward and ensure that we remain robust and responsive as we continue to serve those who have served our country, past and present, as well as their families.

Every year, we are seeing an increase in demand for our services, so support for our work, whether through giving your time as a volunteer or a financial contribution, is more important than ever".

SSAFA's free, confidential helpline for the Armed Forces community.

In 2019, Forcesline received 29,551 calls & emails; 10% more than 2018 to our helpline, which is available to the whole

of the Forces community. The team of advisors and counsellors listen, they don't judge, always respond with empathy and understanding – whilst being outside the chain of command. The team signpost callers to the support that's right for them, so those who seek our help know SSAFA are here for them. Last year, Forcesline received the most calls about issues relating to housing, debt, physical and mental health. In September 2019, SSAFA launched a facility for online chat web – allowing direct access to their advisors, with a good uptake with younger audiences needing help.

Volunteers at the heart of the charity.

Through their UK-wide branch network, SSAFA have more than 5,000 volunteers, including trained caseworkers who provide personalised, face-to-face support to those in their local area. Our trained welfare advisors and volunteers work with each person to find out exactly what they need, once they've assessed what is required, they'll help the individual or family access the required

assistance. They may just need someone to listen, but SSAFA can put them in touch with the right support services they need to help them get their lives back on track. Whether it's financial, practical or emotional, we provide the right kind of support – ensuring independence and dignity are protected at all times. Last year their teams of volunteers and employees helped more than 82,000 people in need, from Second World War veterans to young men and women who have served in more recent conflicts, and their families. Sometimes even the strongest among us need help. When anyone in our Forces family finds themselves in need, SSAFA is the charity they can turn to. ●

To find out how to support SSAFA and get involved, visit: -
ssafa.org.uk/volunteer
– to volunteer
ssafa.org.uk/donate
– to make a donation
ssafa.org.uk/get-help
– to get any support



LOUIS WATKINS

1897 - 1968

BY PHILIP MOLEMAN

Born Lewis Watkin, in Dvinsk (then Russia) in 1897, he was the second of three children. Around 1900-1902 my grandparents, together with his elder sister, my mother, Shayna (Jane) migrated to London and settled in Brick Lane. Louis followed a few years later, accompanied by an elder cousin. His younger brother, Jack, followed later. The family had a tailoring business - my grandmother having been a dressmaker in Dvinsk- and when aged 14 Louis worked as a tailor.



In 1916, aged 20, he enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps, described as a sailmaker (sailmakers repaired a plane's fuselage with linen and glue), and served in France, being billeted in a tent on the coast near St Omer. There he served as a bombardier navigator, in a two-seater Sopwith Camel, in No 13 Squadron, his pilot being a Lieutenant Albert Ball, who flew reconnaissance and bombing missions and whose first dog-fight was in a two-seater with his observer controlling the machine gun. It was during such a dog-fight that my uncle sustained a head wound - hence a noticeable bald patch on his forehead. While Louis was hors de combat, Albert Ball was transferred to No 11 Fighter Squadron to become the leading flying ace, receiving the D.S.O (twice), Military Cross and, after crashing to his death in France on 7th May 1917 aged 20, a posthumous Victoria Cross. In a tribute, the German flying ace Manfred von Richthofen

described him as "by far the best English flying man".

Following transfer to the reserve in 1919 and demobilisation in 1920, Louis married in 1927 and he and my aunt became couturiers in Knightsbridge. Their only child, my late cousin David, wrote:

"After the Second World War my parents took me on holiday to France and my father especially wanted to show me where he had been billeted, which was in a tent amongst the sand dunes on the coast. He could not find the spot and I had to remind him that sand does shift after thirty years! Nevertheless, he insisted we went to

the town of St Omer where he used to visit a young French woman called Berthe, the daughter of the owners of a small shop which sold tobacco, sweets and newspapers. When we found the shop, it was still there exactly as he had remembered it. We entered the premises and saw a middle-aged woman behind the counter. She came forward and peered at my father, and he gave her a long look. "Louis"? she asked. "Berthe"? he inquired,

and they fell into each other's arms laughing and crying".

During WW2 Louis served in the Home Guard in Wembley. His previous wartime experience enabled him to train his unit in the use of its machine gun.

Louis Watkins died on 28.11.1968. He is buried at Bushey U.S Cemetery. ●

ROYAL AIR FORCE Form 207.

CERTIFICATE OF THE DEATH OF THE SUBJECT TO THE ROYAL AIR FORCE OF

1917-1918 **WATKINS, Louis**

Issued in consequence of the airmen named having reported the loss of his original Certificate of Service and Discharge from the Royal Air Force.

Enlisted **R.F.C. 1st January 1916 transferred R.A.F. September 1917**

Age on Enlistment **20 years**

Transferred to Class **Reserve** on **28th January 1919**

Discharged on **30th April 1920**

Reason for Discharge **Demobilisation**

Description of service: **Very Good** (This is the highest honour which can be awarded in the R.A.F.)

Character: **Very Good** (This is the highest honour which can be awarded in the R.A.F.)

Trade: **Sailmaker** Degree of Proficiency: **Intermediate**

Campaign: **France 1916-1918**

Medals, Decorations, etc: **British War Medal**

Course of Instruction

7 June 1968

* Unless otherwise stated this is correct.

BOOK REVIEW

The Walls Have Ears: The Greatest Intelligence Operation of World War II

Helen Fry, Yale University Press

REVIEWED BY SGT DAN FOX

In our highly-networked, technologically-saturated modern world, the term ‘intelligence’ tends to conjure up the practices of open source (OSINT), imagery (IMINT) and signals (SIGINT).

The traditional (and arguably original) trade of human intelligence (HUMINT), can be seen as anachronistic or unnecessary.

However, 80 years ago, as the world spiralled into conflict again, enhancing the human contribution to intelligence was quickly recognised as having vital potential for the nation’s security. Nowhere was this applied more comprehensively than with the mobilisation of The King’s Most Loyal Enemy Aliens.

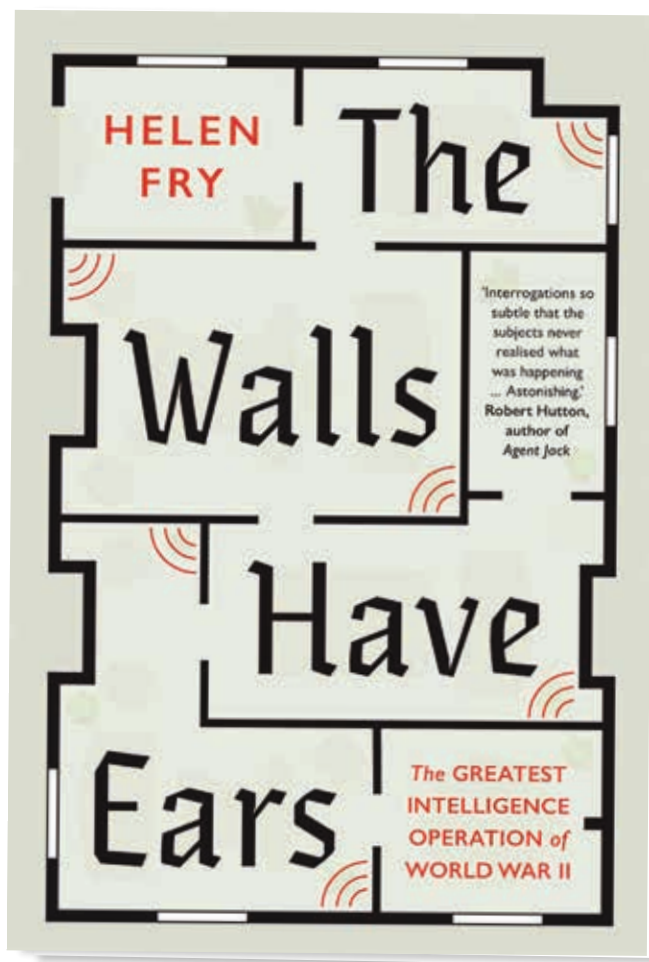
These were the 10,000 German and Austrian Jews, including 2000 women, who fought and served for Britain in World War II. Having fled from Nazi persecution, they were originally interned (and even deported to Australia in some cases!), before their value to the war effort was soon recognised. While they filled roles throughout the military from the frontline down, one of the most common destinations was the Combined Services

Detailed Interrogation Centres (CSDICs). These were stately homes and other sites (including the Tower of London) where German Prisoners of War were held. After a deliberately incompetent and benign initial debrief, the captured personnel were left to their own devices in the accommodation, unaware that the walls had ‘ears’: state of the art listening and recording devices from which teams of ‘listeners’ could garner hours of information from unguarded conversations.

It soon became apparent that native German speakers were required to penetrate the thick accents and fully assimilate the various dialects, and the more vernacular and idiomatic terms. The scheme’s founder and commanding officer, SIS’s Thomas Kendrick, turned to the Jewish ‘aliens’, many of whom were now in the middle of basic training with the Pioneer Corps, for M Room operations (the M standing for “microphone”).

Helen Fry is the leading historian of Jewish participation in the British and Empire forces during World War II.

In *The Walls Have Ears*, she forensically charts the development of the CSDICs



and their contribution to the allied victory. Intelligence on Nazi technology and production capabilities and locations, unwittingly given up by the special guests, was crucial in winning the Battles of Britain and the Atlantic. Overall, Kendrick described the work “as important as... fighting on the frontline.” CSDICs were also established in Germany as the allies advanced to Berlin and talk exposed there formed a large part of the evidence base for the prosecution of war crimes after VE Day.

Only two of the ‘listeners’ are still with us. But *The Walls Have Ears* is

relatable to contemporary and complex security challenges, reminding us of the importance of language skills, cultural awareness and local knowledge, whether alone in HUMINT or mixed with the data gained from IM- SIG- or OS-INT. As information, and what we see and hear, becomes not just part of the threat, but the battlespace itself, Fry reminds us that ‘aliens’, in all their diversity, are assets, bringing unparalleled understanding, experience and value to the gathering of information and the processing of intelligence. ●



GIBRALTAR GOVERNOR

AWARDS HIS COIN OF EXCELLENCE



The Governor of Gibraltar, Lt Gen Edward Davis, presented Colonel Martin Newman with The Governor's Coin for Excellence. Pictured with commanding officer of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, Lt Col Simon Dyson who also received the award, the presentation was a parting gesture prior to His Excellency's departure from office and his return to the UK. General Davies, whose wife Lorraine, is Jewish, had a very close and warm relationship with the Gibraltar Jewish community and they will be sadly missed. ●

A ROYAL TRIBUTE TO HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS



THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES MEET SIR BEN HELFGOTT

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge joined Holocaust survivors in London to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. A commemorative service, run by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, remembered victims and survivors of Nazi persecution as well as subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. During the ceremony, the Duke read an extract from a letter written by a friend of his great-grandmother

Princess Alice - famed for saving a Jewish family from the Holocaust - about her good deeds. It described how Princess Alice, the Duke of Edinburgh's mother, had asked to be informed about the fate of the Cohen family and when told, decided to hide Rachel Cohen and her young daughter in her home, despite the inherent danger. The royal couple lit candles in memory of those killed, which were used to share lights until 75 candles were burning, to mark the 75 years since Auschwitz was liberated. They also met survivors



MIKE BLUESTONE AND FIONA PALMER REPRESENTED AJEX AT THE NATIONAL EVENT.

following the ceremony at Central Hall in Westminster. AJEX was represented at HMD events around the country. ●

REMEMBERING LT PAUL MERVIS

AJEX has supported an initiative to establish a new Learning and Resource Centre at the Mosaic Jewish Primary School in Memory of Lt Paul Mervis, RIFLES, who was tragically killed in action in Helmand

Province on 14 June 2009. Paul was an outstanding officer and cared deeply about his troops and the development of young people in general. The new facility is a fitting memorial to Paul. The National Chairman represented AJEX at the event. A Sefer

Torah owned by the Army was rededicated in memory of Paul in a ceremony held at Amport House in 2011. A soldiers' siddur, previously owned by Serjeant David Newman MM of the Rifle Brigade, and carried at El Alamein, was passed onto Paul by the Newman family

for his use in Afghanistan. The siddur is now on display at The Rifles Museum in Winchester. Mike Bluestone said: "This was a wonderful project for AJEX to support. It is good to see that Paul, a dedicated Jewish officer, has been remembered in so many ways." ●





ROYAL APPROVAL

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex made a point of visiting the AJEX plot at the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. The Duke is pictured with AJEX National Chairman, Mike Bluestone. ●

CONGRATULATIONS



Mazel Tov to Under Officers Jamie Morris and Amber Cooper on their recent engagement. A former Regular Sapper, Jamie and Amber who both serve with Kent Army Cadet Force and are due to marry in September. ●

MAZAL TOV



Mazal tov to former Sapper and Army Public Relations Officer, Capt. Mike Poloway and Gill on their recent marriage. ●

MAZAL TOV

Congratulations go to Jon Littman on his substantive promotion to Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy Padre Ariel.

• Rebbetzin Shulamit Abel on

the birth of a granddaughter.

• Milton Josephs, former RAF Air Cadets officer, on his promotion to Assistant Director of Special Education at the Levittown School District on Long Island, NY. ●



RAF AND CHELSEA FC TO REMEMBER JEWISH WAR HEROES

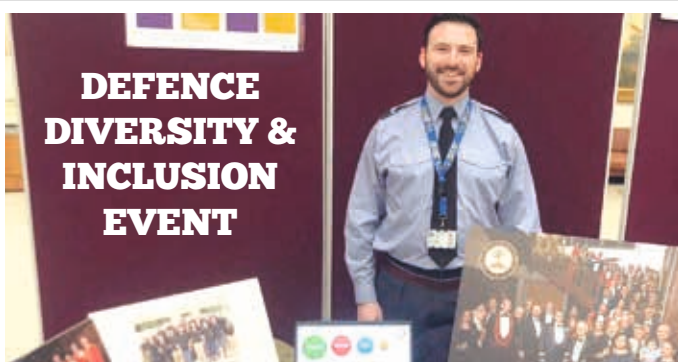


Inspirational stories of Jewish war heroes have been revealed for the first time, thanks to a new project backed by the Chelsea Football Foundation. The Foundation is backing the RAF Museum's 'Jewish Hidden Heroes' scheme which aims to capture wartime stories from RAF veterans and their descendants for sharing on the Museum's website ahead of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. AJEX

is helping with this project so if you have, or know of a story that could be included, please contact the AJEX office. The project, which has the backing of club owner Roman Abramovich, was launched at Stamford Bridge. During the event, attended by former Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech, Israel's envoy to Britain Mark Regev and the government's antisemitism adviser Lord John Mann, a video telling the story of

Jewish Squadron Leader Lawrence 'Benny' Goodman, 99, was shown to guests. A moment's silence was then held for his fallen RAF friends and colleagues before a remembrance candle was lit by Goodman. The 99-year-old was part of the elite 617 Squadron – also known as the 'Dambusters' – while Bernard Carton, 96, another veteran who was also present, was part of Bomber Command, and worked

as a flight engineer. The family of rear-gunner Alfred Huberman, 96, also attended, after the veteran was too unwell to be there in person. Armed Forces Chaplain Rabbi Reuben Livingstone said Goodman was "one of the survivors, but we mustn't forget your colleagues, we mustn't forget the sacrifices that everyone made. And that is a peril slipping away from us, as time marches on, the greatest casualty is memory. ●



A FJC joined other Defence networks at the Defence Academy in March promoting the importance of diversity & inclusion across the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. Lt Col Danny Sharpe and deputy AFJC chairman, Flt Lt Joel Forbes represented AFJC and met the Chief of the Air Staff who called for 'relentless leadership' to support minorities and other communities in Defence.

BALFOUR ANNUAL LECTURE WITH LORD DANNATT AND MARK REGEV



Members of the Armed Forces Jewish Community were delighted to join HE Mark Regev, Ambassador of Israel to the UK to hear from General Lord Dannatt, pictured centre, former Chief of the General Staff, who delivered the annual Balfour Lecture sharing his insights on the fight against terrorism, shared defence challenges and co-operation. ●

CELEBRATING CHANUKAH ON OPERATION TRENTON IN SOUTH SUDAN



a community Chanukah event on the first night which had 15 members of the community come together. ●



Pictured celebrating the eighth night of Chanukah is Lt Louis Trup of The Queen's Own Gurkha Engineers on Op TRENTON. Lt Trup, who is a member of the AFJC leadership team,

was deployed to support the UN Peace Keeping Mission in South Sudan over the festival. Padre Earl of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department participated in the Menorah lighting. Members of AFJC also hosted

A JEWISH FIRST AT FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE



For the first time in the history of the famous national event at The Royal Albert Hall, a Jewish chaplain participated in the ceremony. Padre Reuben Livingstone was selected to carry the Book of Remembrance into the auditorium and place in on the drum head altar. He then represented the Army during the prayers. ●

OBITUARY

*Tom Robertson
By Jeffrey Fox MBE*

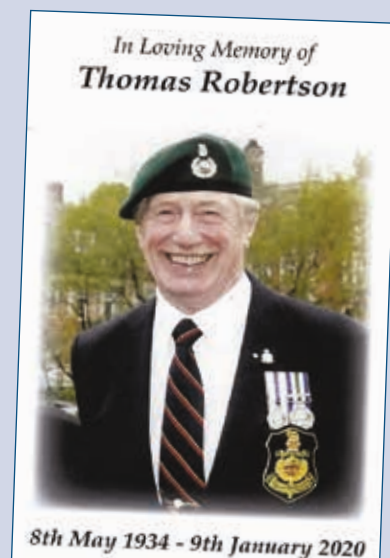
Tom Robertson was a man of many parts. In his youth he was a notable footballer and later a respected Referee. A skilled carpenter he later ran his own joinery business.

His military career was also notable and he was a respected RSM in the Royal Marines. He came to the notice of AJEX as OIC the Veterans Brigade

at the local Remembrance Parade in Newcastle upon Tyne. He willingly accepted the invitation to help AJEX at the National Parade each November. His advice and professional marshalling skills were greatly valued by us all.

Sadly, Tom passed away in January 2020 after a lengthy illness and the large gathering of Colleagues, Friends and Military Standards were

a tribute to the respect he commanded. In addition to a letter of condolence from the National Chairman, his funeral was attended by Vice President Jeffrey Fox who was asked to join the Guard of Honour, Newcastle Branch Chairman Barry Speker & AJEX member Harris Clarke. Tom will be greatly missed by all who knew him. ●



AGONY

Poor annual report?

Since my last intervention in Menorah magazine discussing how to respond to poor management and leadership, I have since received multiple complaints about bad OJARs and SJARs. The Officer or Serviceperson's Joint Appraisal Report (O/SJAR) is the annual report that all service personnel receive from their line management. Reports for all three Services are fundamentally the same format, however they are used and interpreted differently across the RN, Army and RAF. I won't go into the intricacies of how to meet the needs of your own Service, but here I can share more about reporting in general and how you can help your line manager to help you.

So firstly, what's a bad report? When you complain that you received a bad one, was it because you received a poor grade or was it just badly written? Or both? You might deserve a poor grade - we can't all have egos and performances that demand an A+ every year. Let's break down a poor report so that we can then work out how to make it better for next time around...

I want to dispel a myth and make an important point. You get graded

on both performance and potential. The bit that truly matters is your potential grade i.e. could you be promoted now, soon, perhaps or never? And the opinion of your 2nd Reporting Officer (2RO - your boss' boss) is more important than your immediate 1st Reporting Officer (1RO - your line manager). So, look again at your report, get over your average B-/B performance grade and look for the Yes, High or Exceptional grades for promotion one or two ranks up. Has that made you feel better or worse? Indeed, look past that wonderful A you got for performance and spot the No for promotion - that for me should be understood as some serious expectation management!

The other type of bad report is one that is poorly written. This could range from virtually empty text boxes with the reporting officer having clearly failed to get to know the individual, to copy and paste jobs with names of other personnel mistakenly included - I have seen reporting officers guilty of both of these sins. A more subtle crime is to give you a grade, normally above or below average, and provide no evidence to justify the reporting officer's position. Perhaps they emphatically declare that you should have been promoted last year

but if the text justifying your potential is full of meaningless platitudes and clichés and no actual evidence as to why you are a future Chief of the Defence Staff, then the promotion board will probably overlook you for someone else who has real evidence to support their promotion recommendation.

So, if the 2RO's potential recommendation is the most important thing on a report then the second most important bit is the "Front Page" or Subject Officer's input. This is the opportunity for you to sell yourself, highlight your ambition and be clear on how much you have achieved. The 1RO and 2RO should then reflect their opinion of you against this ambition and your effort so the report becomes a coherent narrative of your year at work. It is typically the second thing any selection board will read after your 2RO's potential recommendation, so it is your input that will set the tone of their first impressions. This is where 'owning your report' comes in and here's how to do that:

1 Before you can even begin to work on your report with your boss

you need to know when it is due. Are you aware of the reporting calendar for your trade and your rank as it varies across the military? Most importantly have you had a **Mid Period Appraisal Review (MPAR)**? This is an absolutely vital tool for communication between leadership and reporting subjects. If you are a subject, and haven't had one around the 6-7 month point in the annual reporting cycle, book one with your 1RO. As a reporting officer, if you don't have an MPAR with the subject, you will need to be prepared to change a report at best or face a service complaint at worst as you will struggle to give a poor grade without having informed them first and given them time to improve and redeem themselves.

2 Make sure your **Roles and Responsibilities** are correct for your job on the draft version. These are not created by you but they can be changed if required. To find out more about updating them you will need to speak to your unit HR admin office. It's important these reflect what you are actually expected to do as your core job. They are remarkably useful for maintaining a record of your developing experience throughout a career and can be used

UNCLE

Just Be "Objective"

as evidence for continual professional development and responsibilities held when seeking future employment.

3 Your **Aspirations, Comments and Job Preferences** are very specific to your Service and trade so I won't go into that here. That said, do not leave your Aspirations and Job Preferences empty. Knowing what you want to achieve and how you want to be employed demonstrates ownership of your report and your career and reflects your ambition. Empty boxes reflect poorly on you to your line management and also the promotion board. Don't worry, there is nothing wrong with asking your Line Manager for help to fill these, especially if you are junior or early on in your career. Page 1 reviewing is a great job for a mentor of you have one.

4 The most important thing you can do to own your report is to work with your 1RO and define your **Objectives**. DO NOT (I repeat DO NOT) leave these 8 boxes blank. Again, that would show lack of effort and thought by the subject and also a lack of interest by the line manager. At the start of the reporting cycle sit down with your line

manager and define 8 or so objectives for the year including work tasks, sport and AT objectives, diversity and inclusion objectives and maybe even a personal challenge. As I described in my last article make them SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound. At your MPAR, review how you are doing against those objectives and add, remove and adjust as necessary.

And to finish I will now sprinkle the gold dust...

5 Engage your Reporting Officer in the lead up to report writing time (circa 10 weeks ahead of your reporting date). Have a face-to-face discussion or do it by email but make sure they know: all the details on your front page are up to date, what you have done throughout the year including how you have done against your objectives. This is evidence gold for reporting officer; no more half-filled narrative boxes for you! any particular training or assessment successes or awards of additional responsibility for periods, any particular highlights that the reporting officer may be unaware of (being an absolute mensch of the AFJC for example).

And with that, my work on the Front Page of your reports for this year is done, except for one more thing...

Dear Reporting Officers - this is a really challenging and important task which is time consuming but also one of the biggest differentiators of engaged leaders versus those who are just going through the motions of people management. Demand more of your reporting subjects but also demand more of yourselves in this regard. DO schedule MPARs months in advance. DO demand evidence from the subjects and other personnel on your unit. And most importantly, if you report on reporting officers, DO reflect on this aspect of their performance as people managers and leaders; assessing their potential for greater responsibility for our people who

deserve the very best engaged leadership.

This Ask Me Anything response highlights the role of a mentor. The AFJC runs a mentor matchmaking scheme. If you are looking for a mentor or reverse-mentor then contact our Chairman, Lt Col Danny Sharpe, who will direct you to individuals or organisations who can help you to identify a mentor from within our community or indeed more widely.

If you have a question for our Ask Me Anything writer, we welcome queries from both within and outside the Services. Our experienced correspondent will attempt to reply to all questions with the best or most relevant responses for a wide audience published in Menorah Magazine. Send your queries (including anonymous questions) to the Editor at editor.menorah@ajex.org.uk who will forward them as appropriate.

THE JEWISH MILITARY MUSEUM

A history of many parts

BY SUSAN GORDON & KATHRIN PIEREN

2020 is an important year in the history of the Royal Air Force as it has been 80 years since the Battle of Britain. Although it would take nearly another five years to the end of World War II, the battle was decisive to avert an invasion and many commemorations of the war this year will therefore rightly focus on it.

Yet, with all due respect that the fighter pilots involved deserve, it is important to remember that the war was fought on many different fronts simultaneously, requiring the contribution of large parts of the population and affecting everyone. Even in the Battle of Britain itself and the following Blitzkrieg on London, for instance, radar operators, plotters, typists, and civilians on the ground, serving in the Air Raid Precautions or in the Auxiliary Fire Service all did their bit, and the consequences of the war in the air was of course heavily felt by those being bombed on the ground.

Approximately 60,000 Jewish men and women served in World War II, around 20,000 men in the RAF and over 1,000 women in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). Samuel (Sam) Miara and Doris Miara née Volpert, both from Cardiff were two of them. Their example illustrates that men and

women were involved in the war effort and they belonged to those who volunteered before war was even declared. According to their daughter, they decided to join the RAF Voluntary Reserve during their honeymoon in Paris in 1936 because they were so disturbed by the atmosphere there. They eventually enrolled during the Munich Crisis in 1938 and would have served part-time until the mobilisation in autumn 1939.

Both were posted at Cardiff Airport first. Doris served with the 12th WAAF Balloon Barrage, a defence system that hindered aircrafts in flying low to the ground by raising aloft steel cables with the help of a kite balloon. She was later posted in Wembley where, now a corporal, she was working in the depot. Her daughter tells us that she was one of the first six women wearing the WAAF uniform: although the very first uniforms came in one size only, the women were determined to wear theirs to go home for the

weekend. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about Doris' later service, but she seems to have served until at least 1940.

Sam was first posted to 614 Sq, an auxiliary squadron in charge of supporting defence at home and overseas. He volunteered to join aircrew, trained as a wireless operator at RAF Yatesbury in Wiltshire and was posted to 38 Sq, Bomber Command, a night bomber squadron flying Wellington aircrafts in crews of six. He first served in Western Europe and in the Mediterranean. His command was sent to the Middle East in November 1940 to form a night bomber wing attacking the Italian held ports in North Africa that were supplying Axis forces in the Western Desert. Being posted in the Canal zone near Suez and Port Tewfik, Sam was able to visit his family in Haifa. It is of these visits that the Jewish Military Museum has a few letters and photographs in the collection.

These trips appear to have been very important for Sam who was far away from his Welsh home. In the letters to his cousin Henia who lived in Haifa he wrote how much he had loved visiting her and her family. He also seems to have spent Hanukah with them as one picture shows him in a family home with a map of Haifa and a hanukah lamp in the background. Sam wrote to Henia: 'I shall remember

Palestine and its people as long as I live' and he was keen to show the country to his wife as well. Back in Egypt he missed his cousin and berated her when she did not reply his letter immediately, and he even invited her to visit him in Egypt.

Sam was very concerned for his wife 'Dolly' back in the UK and sent her letters with multiple declarations of love that are held at the RAF Museum, together with his diary, some documents and





SAM IN FULL FLYING GEAR THE SMALL TORAH SCROLL SAM CARRIED ON ALL HIS FLIGHTS.

photographs of the couple. He was particularly worried once he learned that she was pregnant. When the birth was imminent, Doris returned to Cardiff causing Sam more anxiety when the town was being blitzed in early 1941. However, Doris seems to have been fine and on 17th May 1941 she gave birth to their daughter Ruth. Tragically, however, Sam never met Ruth as he was lost one month earlier. On 13th/14th April his plane took off to bomb the Derna Aerodrome in Libya, never to return. Only two weeks before his death he had written to Henia regarding a prospective future visit: 'In any case, I'm saving some good news [censored words] I'll have a lot to talk about'.

Sgt Samuel Miara RAF is commemorated on the War

Memorial on Cardiff United Synagogue in Cyncoed Gardens and on the El Alamein Air Forces Memorial.

The Jewish Military Museum has a mini Torah scroll belonging to Sam, several photographs and few letters written to his cousin Henia that add a small piece to the greater puzzle of his story and the history of the RAF.

The Jewish Military Museum Collection has been held at the Jewish Museum London since 2015 and the highlights are included in the museum's History Gallery on the second floor. Anybody interested in the Jewish contribution to the Armed Forces is also allowed access to the vast reserve collection. Write to curator@jewishmuseum.org.uk to make an appointment. ●

Max Caro

BY SGT DAN FOX

As this edition of Menorah was going to press, news reached us of a discovery relating to Jewish cadets in the archives of the City of London & North East Sector ACF, at their HQ in Whipps Cross, Leytonstone.

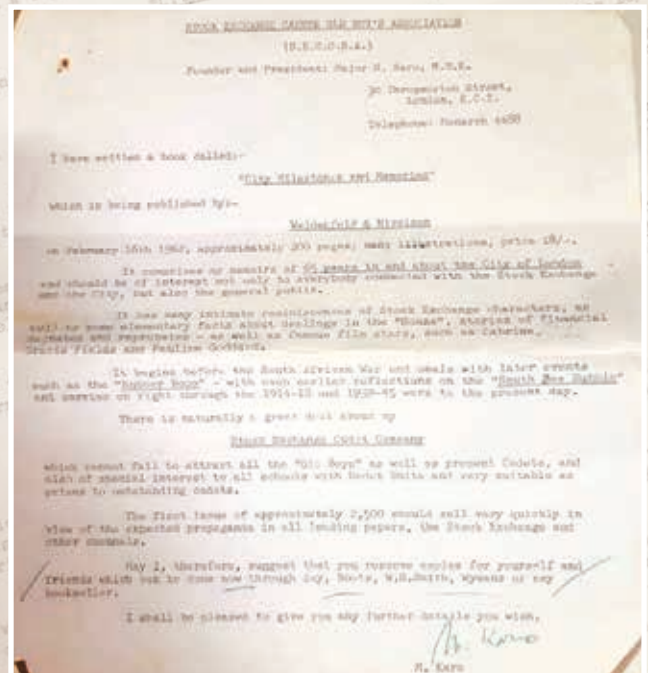
A box of photographs and papers relating to

Max Karo was uncovered at the beginning of March by SMI Mark Jones, a cadet instructor in East London.

Max was Company Sergeant Major of the 38th Battallion Royal Fusiliers, the Jewish infantry unit established in 1917. Had originally volunteered for the 26th Bn, at the age of 38! In 1909, he had become a member of the Stock

Exchange and after the war was commissioned into the Jewish Lads' Brigade, then part of what is now The Army Cadet Force, and formed the Stock Exchange

Cadet Company. The finds include this photo of Max as an ACF officer and a letter signed by him promoting his memoirs to the Old Boys Association. ●



MOD HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY EVENT 2020

SALUTING SURVIVORS AND THE BRITISH ARMED FORCES: 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF BERGEN BELSEN

BY RABBI REUBEN LIVINGSTONE LL.M. CF AND JAMES KAYE, MOD SENIOR SPEECH WRITER

The Ministry of Defence marked this year's Holocaust Memorial day with an event in MOD Main Building's Memorial Courtyard, Whitehall on 22nd of January. This is the fourth year that the Armed Forces Jewish Community and AJEX have partnered with the MOD, the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to support Shoah remembrance. This partnership continues with ambitious plans for Holocaust education and anti-Semitism training to be rolled out in 2020 in the Armed Forces.

Seventy five years on from the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, departmental staff and serving Armed Forces members were joined by colleagues across Whitehall in a large gathering to hear Mala Tribich, a Belsen survivor, describe her poignant experiences as a child in the concentration camp.

She said: "We were taken into the camp and what I saw defied description....It was like something out of hell. I still have the scene ingrained on me, I can't forget it.... there were people there but they were skeletons...and they were shuffling along in this smog aimlessly just shuffling and then [they] just collapse and die.

"It's very difficult to describe what it feels like where you are stripped of your identity. You just become like objects. You don't look human anymore. It does a lot of things to you. But the important thing is that it makes you

lose hope and without hope there is no survival." Kirsty Parsons, a curator from the National Army Museum, gave a unique insight into the role of the British Armed Forces during the liberation of the camps, drawing attention to the exhibition in the courtyard that featured extracts from the war diaries of several British soldiers, Major MA Staniforth and Lt Col Taylor's, who both took part in the operation.

She said: "The British Army's 11th Armoured Division were the first unit to occupy Belsen. They were completely unprepared for what confronted them there. Over 60,000 prisoners were in need of serious medical attention and over 13,000 had already died and were visible all around the camp....It took a month for the daily death rate to drop from 3 to 400 deaths a day to under 100. Almost 14,000 people died in the first months after liberation."

Karen Pollock, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Education Trust, spoke about the HET's campaign new educational project 'Belsen 75' that is being delivered in the spring.

She said: "The role of our Armed Forces in defending our freedoms underpin us as a nation. Their role in the liberation of the camps of Europe is something that even today Holocaust survivors speak of with such gratitude... remembering the kindness and humanity that the soldiers showed them....As the Holocaust moves from living history to just history we need to work harder to ensure the horrors of the past are not forgotten... "Thanks to recent Government



support thousands of young people this year will also get the opportunity to visit Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. In fact in less than two weeks the first of a number of visits that we are running will be able to see the site themselves. They'll see the mass graves that British soldiers, many of them young men, battle-hardened had to dig to stop the spread of disease. They'll hear testimonies of liberators who saw unimaginable horror. They'll visit the British Army garrison and understand the legacy of the camps liberation for the British army. It's really important that the next generation understand the history of the Holocaust." Minister for the Armed Forces, Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

"Holocaust Memorial Day reminds us about the importance of standing together. Just as it once took a mighty alliance of many nations to overthrow Nazism so it will ultimately take, not a combination of many armies, but the coming together of many communities to tackle the divisions that lead to misunderstanding, conspiracy and hate. So each of us whether we are in the Armed Forces, the civil service, Parliament, has a role to play in providing not just the education but the

understanding that will make the oldest of hatreds ancient history. Because only then we'll be able to say with absolute confidence never again." The Senior Jewish Chaplain to the Armed Forces and AJEX Chaplain, Rabbi Reuben Livingstone, chaired and concluded proceedings. In his closing remarks he said: "In Judaism there is a long tradition of memory. But memory means nothing if it isn't coupled and linked to action. How then to remember the Holocaust? In fact, the Holocaust is an object lesson for all of humanity. Whilst there is no single victimhood which is superordinate, the Holocaust in scale and systematisation is surely utterly unique and therefore teaches us to remember the horrors that can and do happen when good people don't raise a voice and don't do what they need to do. So we constantly need some action attached to memory. If I can ask each and everyone of you to be an ambassador for Holocaust memory, an ambassador for humanity and an ambassador for the august words that we've heard today then I think action will indeed attach to poignant memory and become indelible."



JACK BARNSTON CEREMONY

BY JON TYLER

On a windswept, rain-soaked hill in Dover on 17th February an unusual ceremony occurred. It was the 80th anniversary to the day of a particular death in the Second World War, remembered by the regimental descendants of the Artists Rifles Regiment.

The Artist Rifles was the original regiment that eventually formed 21st Special Air Service (Artists) Reserves. The elite 21 SAS Regiment is very proud of its heritage and as the decades go by its members honour the fallen from their history through the Artists Rifles Association (ARA).

It recently came to light that the first member of the Artists to become a fatality in the Second World War

was Jewish, dying on 17th February 1940. He was Jack Emanuel Barnston, born in 1922, the son of Montague and Q. Bertha Barnston, originally of Guildford, in Surrey. He attended Marylebone Grammar School between 1932 and 1938 and enlisted in the Artists Rifles, Rifle Brigade, soon after leaving school.

Jack Barnston's regimental number was 6970504 and he served with 'A' Company. From 29th July

to 12th August 1939 he attended Annual Training as a Private at Warminster Camp. He would have been undergoing officer training, because the Artists Rifles had, like in the 1st World War, been designated as an Officer Producing Unit. The intention was that when war was declared each member of the regiment serving in the ranks should be capable of commanding a platoon.

By 2nd September 1939, 603 men serving in the ranks of the Artists Rifles had been called up in preparation for war service. The regiment had been converted into No 163 OCTU (Officer Cadet Training Unit). The links with the Artists Rifles were retained and the arm badge of the unit was the old cap badge of the Artists Rifles, which featured the heads of the Roman gods, Mars and Minerva.

Jack Barnston was posted to No 1 Company of 163 OCTU at Risborough Barracks, Shorncliffe, Kent. His father's address was registered as 8 Thayer Street, in Marylebone. Jack died at the age of 18 and is buried in the Dover Jewish Cemetery, Grave 101.

British Jews have always proudly fought for Great Britain and there are countless records of patriotic and brave endeavour in the archives of the The Jewish Military Association, UK, known as AJEX (Anglo Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women).

A wreath and Magen David was laid on Jack Barnston's grave in the presence of 7 senior ex members of 21 SAS. Those present included the President of the ARA, Colonel John Crosland CBE MC, and the Chairman Lieutenant Colonel Milan Torbica MBE TD, along with two Vice Presidents. Jonathan Tyler, also an ex officer of 21 SAS and a member of AJEX, read prayers.

Commenting on the ceremony, Colonel Crosland said,

"It was really very moving. It is important for us to recognize Jack, not only because he was our parent Regiment's first casualty of WW2, but also because he was Jewish, and in these days of rising Antisemitism we need to show we are a diverse Army and are proud of our serving Jews, and indeed all personnel whatever race, creed, colour, religion or gender they represent."

Any surviving family members can receive more information from jonmt Tyler@hotmail.com.

NB The Artists Rifles had been raised in 1860 by a group of artistic individuals, mainly painters, sculptors, architects and poets, as the 38th Middlesex (Artists) Rifle Volunteers. During the First World War the regiment became an Officer Producing Unit and trained and commissioned over 10,000 young men into most of the regiments and corps of the British Army as well as a smaller number into the Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps. There were a large number of famous members of the Artists Rifles such as Wilfred Owen, John and Paul Nash and later, Noel Coward. There were many Jews in the Regiment, one member was the famous artist Simeon Solomon who was befriended by Rossetti, Burne-Jones and the poet, Algernon Swinburne, along with other members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle. The Artists Rifles Association has recently helped to pay for the renovation of Solomon's gravestone in Willesden. ●

How do you find another Jewish service member while on an operational deployment on a 500-person camp of multiple nationalities including Poles, Hungarians, Greeks, Swiss, Ukrainians, and Americans? This isn't a rhetorical question; I genuinely don't know as I completely failed to find a single other Jew during my recent six-month tour.

There must have been some among the multinational environment – and I suspect an American official called Dan Solomon may have been one but professionalism and the nature of his job and our meetings prevented asking personal questions – yet the mix of languages, convention of limiting social conversations between allies to small talk, and the strange suspicion of anyone engaging another national in actual discussion, meant the hot topic of religion never came up. I arrived in the Balkan theatre shortly

before Passover, buoyed by the tale from a US Army colleague of a 2004 Seder held on the banks of the Euphrates for Jewish US Army personnel, conducted by a military chaplain who had been helicoptered in especially. Alas, in the dog days of a low priority, low profile peace support operation in spring 2019 the British Army didn't offer quite such cool

The only Jew in theatre

...or so I thought

BY CORPORAL S.



dit-spinning opportunities to mark Passover. Only marginally less awesome but no less uplifting was the timely arrival of a Passover care package, pictured, from our own spiritual leader, Padre Reuben, and the AFJC, complete with matzah, raisins, chocolate and marshmallows, which gave much culinary delight over the following months.

The day Passover started was spent heavily carb-loading in optimistic determination of avoiding anything leavened for the following eight days. It turns out the options provided in the cookhouse already challenged even the most blasé vegetarian, and, combined with an uptick in stamina and fatigue-testing phys during the

period (i.e. a 30 mile loaded march over rough terrain), alongside eating every meal with my new team who were already thoroughly judgemental about me not eating meat, made it hard work avoiding porridge, rice, beans, pasta and bread.

In my half-hearted effort to find a fellow member of the tribe I kept my eyes open for anyone else showing the tell-tale sign of a reluctant avoidance of carbs, but as I fast realised it's a desperate but nonsensical way of trying to identify a deployed Jewish soldier as we come in all forms of ritual observance, and frankly it's hard enough to tell the difference between 500 hungry uniformed troops let alone bother trying to differentiate between those

with an unbalanced diet and those avoiding carbs with religious intent. Over the next few months no obvious signs of Jewishness appeared. The most likely source would surely have come from the Americans but I wasn't sure the Iowan or Alaskan National Guard would be brimming with co-religionists. Having their names emblazoned on their uniforms certainly heightened curiosity with some credibly Jewish 'sounding' surnames on show (Abrahams, Ehrlich, Israel, Moses, Toledano), alas the prospect of the lone female British soldier in theatre starting conversations with random US National Guard troops would surely have been the talk of camp and my team faster than an elevated threat status, so I refrained from enquiring and waited for some divine sign. Surely one would come.

The arrival of the New Year, Rosh Hashana, was marked by ritualistically eating slices of apple slathered with honey for dessert – apparently a bizarre combination according to the blokes, but easier to explain to squaddies than the origins of avoiding pasta and bread for eight days.

The situational awareness tool that is Twitter led to the revelation of a synagogue in the capital city that evidently occasionally hosted Ambassadors and local politicians working on their international diplomatic relationship credentials. Any thought of trying to drop in there during Yom Kippur were put in the too difficult box due to a combination of a busy operational period on top of various theatre constraints which would have required some negotiation with various authorities - i.e. are

you okay with me coming to services in uniform and with my pistol? Instead I cut away for 20 minutes in the late afternoon blazing sun, found a nice corner of a foreign field -aka the edge of the unoccupied HLS, googled Yom Kippur prayers and recited some lines about penitence and forgiveness while discreetly pounding my fist on my chest. Naturally the day I decided to exercise self-discipline (the best kind?) and fast for Yom Kippur was the day the boss directed me to conduct a patrol on foot for some visitors in 30c heat and – this was a direct order – to take them to the city's infamous cake shop. Cakes, peer pressure and not wanting to be awkward in front of visitors are particularly cunning challenges to self-discipline but it turned out that doing the right thing on a difficult day was a strong counterweight. Twenty-five hours of fasting turned into 28 hours without food or water as Evening Prayers, the Army type rather than the religious kind, inevitably ran late that night thanks to the presence of our well-fed visitors, by which time the cookhouse had closed. As ever in the Army, no good deed goes unpunished.

I didn't succeed in finding another Jewish service member there but four months after the end of tour I happened to catch up with a US Colonel who I had briefed weekly for five months while in theatre. We had a good chat about the mission, tour and various things, and I discovered that, in the most clichéd possible ending to this story, one of the only other military Jews on that tour had been standing right in front of me every week for five months. ●

Germans reintroduce Jewish Chaplains

Germany's government is to reintroduce military rabbis, backing a proposal by the Central Council of Jews to restore religious counselling for Jews serving in the armed forces after more than a century without such assistance.

"Today, we set an important example for our Jewish soldiers,"

German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer tweeted after the decision by Chancellor Angela Merkel's Cabinet.

Kramp-Karrenbauer said the addition of military rabbis was a clear commitment to Jewish life in Germany.

The German army does not document the religious affiliations of its members. But according to estimates about 300 Jews, 1,400 Muslims and 94,000 Christians are in the Bundeswehr armed forces, German media reported. During World War I, many Jews fought for Germany. Rabbis were relatively common in the military until Adolf Hitler's Nazis came to power in 1933 and excluded Jews from all spheres of public life.



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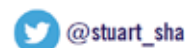


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Picture courtesy of The Invictus Games Foundation

SINGING FOR *a Prince*

BY SUE WARNER

Susan Warner writes about her experience of recording with the Invictus Games Choir and Bon Jovi and the honour to meet the Duke of Sussex.

AJEX came into our lives when we were researching for a World War II exhibition to be held at our Belfast Jewish Community and discovered that my father and a relative, who had both served during the war, were on the AJEX Roll of Honour. Julian, my husband, and I felt that it was important to join AJEX and to be part of the ex-forces Jewish family community, as I had also served with the Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) and the National Health Service (NHS). Following in my grandmother's

footsteps, nursing was important to me from a very young age.

After joining the QARNNS, I completed my nurse training at Royal Naval Hospital Haslar and served in the Falklands War on Her Majesty's Hospital Ship Uganda, in 1982. This was a changing point in my life and I studied further, at university, and returned to the QARNNS as a Senior Nursing Officer, working with the NHS, humanitarian causes, and in war zones. Being injured in service was another turning point. To recover from injury, I learnt to swim in my late 50s and had the honour to compete

in the Invictus Games in 2016, taking bronze in backstroke.

At the Games, I saw the Invictus Games Choir perform and was so touched by their singing. The Choir is financially supported by Help for Heroes, for wounded, injured, and sick veterans and serving personnel, from all branches of the United Kingdom Armed Forces and from all ranks - to use the gift of singing to help recovery is awesome. Seeing the choir led me to develop my own singing - I realised how therapeutic singing could be for the soul - and am currently undertaking a course in learning music theory and developing singing. Exercise, such as swimming and Pilates, is good for the body and for mental health and singing adds a further dimension. In 2020, I was privileged to be one of the twelve representatives of the Invictus Games Choir, invited to sing with the United States rock star Jon Bon Jovi. We re-recorded a version of his song 'Unbroken', to support the Invictus Games Foundation.

We met at the Abbey Road Studios, which is steeped in history, and has featured artists, such as Daniel Barenboim and Jacqueline du Pré, and perhaps most famously, the Beatles. We recorded 'Unbroken', with lyrics subtly adapted to the United Kingdom Armed Forces. The original Beatles microphones, in Studio 2, were used. The words of 'Unbroken' brought to life the experiences of serving on deployment and of being back at home. They touched hearts deeply - to reach out to others and to help one person find renewed hope and purpose means so very much. We hope that the broken can be un-broken and restored.

Bon Jovi showed real concern for the members of the choir and was inspirational and generous with his time and expertise. The Duke of Sussex gave great enthusiasm and tireless dedication. The Choir reciprocated with energy and devotion and enjoyed the mutual camaraderie. It was a great honour to re-enact the Beatles' crossing at Abbey Road, sharing this privilege with a fellow veteran, Bon Jovi, and the Duke of Sussex - something I will always treasure. ●

A JEW ON THE OCEAN WAVE

BY AB GABRIEL KAGAN RNR



On joining the Royal Naval Reserve in November 2018, I was unaware of the precedence that I, with the assistance of many others, would set for Orthodox Jews in the Military.

It would come as a surprise to most people that someone with my background would have joined the Armed Forces. A young religious Jewish boy from the suburbs of North West London, as the limitations across the board that Jewish Law presents can prove to be quite a challenge. With no family having served in the HM Armed Forces, it did in fact surprise me that there is an active and enthusiastic group of Jewish Serving Personnel, most of whom are members of the Armed Forces Jewish Community (AFJC). The group has and continues to provide all round support when it comes to catering for the requirements of Judaism in the military and acts as a

virtual synagogue for all.

It may have been naivety or my lack of insight into the wider non-Jewish community that made me assume that Kosher laws, or the Sabbath, would be universally understood. It was after my first weekend away at HMS Raleigh where I realised that not everyone may understand Kosher or the restrictions involved when preparing the food.

It was then when I reached out to the Senior Jewish Chaplain to HM Forces, with the hope that there was a simple solution. Little did I know of the immense amount of work carried out by the Chaplaincy and executive staff at HMS Raleigh, as all that appeared in my inbox was a comprehensive set of 'kosher' joining instructions for my rifle acquaint course in April 19. It was decided that kosher ration packs, which already existed in the thousands, were to be provisioned for a

week, along with a kosher (new) microwave and disposable cutlery. This was a system that worked incredibly well, the ration packs were nutritious and surpassed my expectations, however, when it came to longer courses, instructors questioned whether vacuum sealed food would be able to sustain me for two weeks.

A meeting was held at HMS Raleigh with executive, training and chaplaincy staff. This was not only to decide a course of action with regards to dietary requirements, but for the observance of the Sabbath as well. A plan was drawn up for frozen kosher meals to be ordered from a catering company in London, as well as Kosher ration packs when out on Dartmoor. The course was tailored that all activities on the Saturday (The Sabbath) would be in line with the restrictions of the day.

Successfully completing basic training was an incredible experience, especially with

the feeling of being fully integrated as a Jewish Sailor in my division. It was a small step, however, one that would open up wider opportunities for observant Jewish personnel. The AFJC continues to consistently provide support in all aspects, with regular socials to encourage engagement between personnel and annual leadership events at the British Army Chaplaincy Centre. I can only express my deepest thanks to those involved in providing this incredible experience for myself and I look forward to what is proving to be an exciting career in the RNR.

For more information on the Armed Forces Jewish Community, contact them at AFNetworks-Jewish-0mailbox@mod.gov.uk or follow them on Twitter @HMAFJC. ●

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