

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH EX-SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN

THE JOURNAL



SPRING 2010



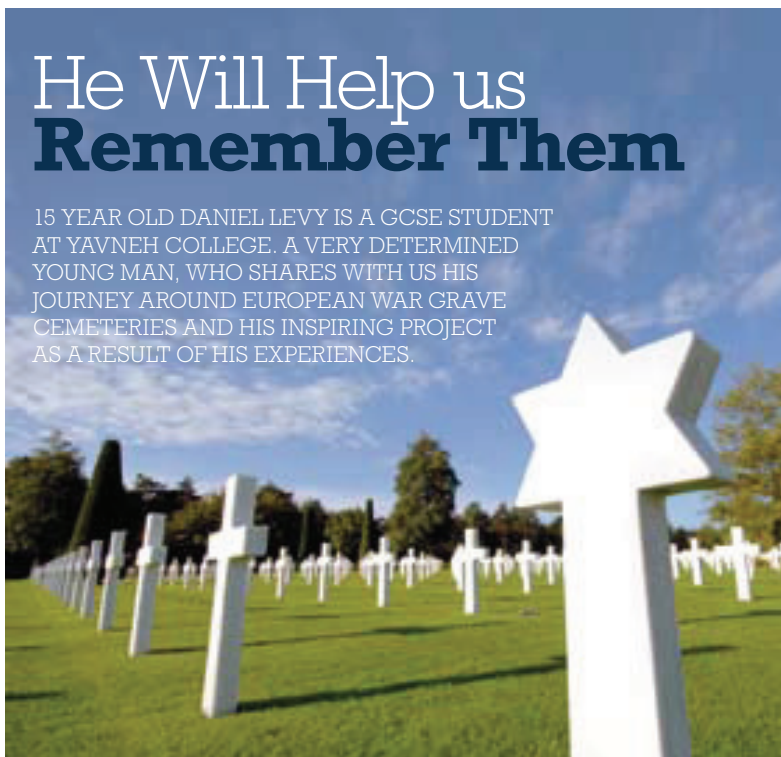
Metzger Family Reunite after AJEX Parade

ROBBIE & TELIA METZGER TELL US OF THEIR MOVING EXPERIENCE AT THE 2009 AJEX REMEMBRANCE PARADE.

BRANCH NEWS // AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW JEWISH CHAPLAIN // TRIBUTE TO PETER RUSSELL // PLUS MUCH MORE INSIDE

He Will Help us Remember Them

15 YEAR OLD DANIEL LEVY IS A GCSE STUDENT AT YAVNEH COLLEGE. A VERY DETERMINED YOUNG MAN, WHO SHARES WITH US HIS JOURNEY AROUND EUROPEAN WAR GRAVE CEMETERIES AND HIS INSPIRING PROJECT AS A RESULT OF HIS EXPERIENCES.



In 2007, I spent a week camping in Belgium with my Scout troop. One of our outings was to Tyne Cot cemetery, one of the biggest Commonwealth War Grave Cemeteries in Europe. As I walked past row after row of fallen soldiers lying under white headstones, I passed an occasional grave with a carved Magen David on the face, one in particular was a headstone commemorating Private Marcus Leslie Marks of the Australian Army Medical Corps, he was killed on the 4th October 1917 – exactly 77 years to the day before I was born. This coincidence led me to do some research into Marcus Marks and I found out that he was 28 when he died and his parents were Maurice and Sarah Marks of Melbourne. At the bottom of his headstone is a Hebrew message that reads “Mordechai son of Moshe fell on the third day of Sukkot 5678, 18th Tishrei 5678”.

Marcus Mark’s original grave was lost in fighting for the area and the headstone is a memorial to him. Of the 11,954 soldiers buried in Tyne Cot, 8,367 are unnamed.

It was here that I became aware of how hundreds of thousands of young men died on the Western Front in the Great War, and what a huge debt of gratitude we owe to them and also the fallen of the Second World War.

Although I have been to the Annual AJEX parade for many years, first to watch my grandfather march, and more recently, marching myself with the Scouts, I was largely unaware of the scale of sacrifice made by the Jews of the Commonwealth.

My first visit to Tyne Cot left me with a strong sense and a wish to return to the Western Front, and find the graves of other fallen Jewish soldiers, take a photograph of their headstone, say Kaddish for them and leave an AJEX grave marker by their grave. My Dad

agreed to take me and we planned a camping trip for summer 2008, which covered CWGC cemeteries in The Somme and Ypres. We tried to find all the headstones for the Jewish soldiers, but it was a difficult task and I know we missed many.

Last year, we decided to go to Normandy for a few days to pay our respects to those Jewish soldiers who fell in World War Two. What was clear from our experiences in 2008, was that it would be really helpful to have some kind of guide, cemetery by cemetery, listing the plot addresses of all the Jewish soldiers, but unfortunately, no such database existed.

On our return, I decided that I would like to work with AJEX and compile a listing of all the known fallen Jewish soldiers which could be searched by name or sorted by their final resting place, so that anyone who wanted to visit a particular CWGC cemetery would be able to easily find the locations of all the Jewish soldiers laid to rest in that cemetery.

I approached Henry Morris, who lent me his wonderful books “We Will Remember Them (published in 1989) and the Addendum (1994). With his support,

Above

Normandy Cemetery, Omaha Beach

Below

Daniel Levy



“
...I decided that I would like to work with AJEX and compile a listing of all the known fallen Jewish soldiers... so that anyone who wanted to visit a particular CWGC cemetery would be able to easily find the locations of all the Jewish soldiers laid to rest in that cemetery.
”

together with encouragement from Leonard Stern, AJEX’s communications director, I have been working on this project for six months and have now created some 500 records from WW2 - about 20% of the casualties.

My aim is not only to have the list available to all, but to link each record to the CWGC website Debt of Honour Register and also to carry a photo of the headstone (where possible) and perhaps a photo of the soldier as well. I may also include any biographical information relatives might supply in respect of their loved ones.

I see this as a long term project, and would welcome any pictures of headstones, photos of soldiers (ideally in uniform) and personal recollections, so I can make this piece of work a tribute to those brave soldiers who gave their lives so we may live in freedom.

Please send photographs of the fallen or their gravestones to Daniel at jewish.wargraves@gmail.com, together with any biographical notes. Or send them for Daniel Levy’s attention to AJEX Head Office, address can be found at the front of the magazine. Please indicate if you’d like your photos returned and clearly state to which address. ☺