

## New Jewish Records available on TheGenealogist

A new set of records are now available on TheGenealogist commemorating the heroic sacrifice made by Jewish people in the British Army in the First World War. The number of Jewish servicemen was estimated at around 50,000 men, a high proportion were either foreign-born (including those who arrived in Britain as children), or if British-born, had foreign-born parents.

TheGenealogist pays tribute to these men who fell in The Great War with a new set of records of over 2,500 men with details of how they died or were wounded and any military honours they won. Available in the Military Records section on TheGenealogist, the records give biographical details and links to images in the Memorial Records were available.

Five Jewish soldiers win the Victoria Cross. Men like Sergeant Issy Smith (real name Shmulevitch) who was the son of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Private Leonard Keysor and Lieutenant Frank Alexander de Pass were Jewish men who made the ultimate sacrifice but gained the highest military honours with their bravery. Their details and how they died and gained the Victoria Cross is all listed in the new records on TheGenealogist.

The new records combined with the current information available give unparalleled access to information on soldiers from The Great War. A prime example is a Captain Robert Gee, of the Royal Fusiliers, who became a larger than life hero during the First World War.



The Royal Fusiliers (a London regiment) formed three Jewish battalions in Jan. 1918. The 38th Bn was composed of Jewish immigrants from Russia. The 39th was composed of US and Canadian volunteers. The 40th was actually formed in Palestine when the battalions arrived there in June. The badge of all three battalions was a menorah on a scroll inscribed in Hebrew "Kadima" (Forward). The battalions disbanded in Palestine in 1919, and most of the soldiers settled there.

Robert Gee was born at Leicester on 7 May, 1876, son of Robert Gee and of Amy Gee. He was apprenticed at the age of 16 to Mr Shaw, Ornamental Metal and Iron Worker, of Aylestone, Leicestershire. He left his position before ending his apprenticeship, and joined the Army, enlisting in the Royal Fusiliers

He rose to non-commissioned rank, and studied military history, and was appointed a lecturer in that subject. He was given a commission in the Royal Fusiliers, and posted to the

2nd Battn. 31 May, 1915; proceeded to Gallipoli and Egypt and was wounded on 1 July, 1916, and was awarded the Military Cross in 1916. He later served on the Somme, and was present at the battles of Ypres and at Cambrai in 1917. He was wounded again and also in 1918 when he won his Victoria Cross. His full gallant action is listed on TheGenealogist:

"For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and determination when an attack by a strong enemy force, pierced our line and captured a brigade headquarters and ammunition dump, Capt. Gee, finding himself a prisoner, killed one of the enemy with his spiked stick, and Succeeded in escaping. He then organized a party of the brigade staff, with which he attacked the enemy fiercely, closely followed and supported by two companies of infantry. By his own personal bravery and prompt action he, aided by his orderlies, cleared the locality. Capt. Gee established a defensive flank on the outskirts of the village, then finding that an enemy machine gun was still in action, with a revolver in each hand, and followed by one man, he rushed and captured the gun, killing eight of the crew. At this time he was wounded, but refused to have the wound dressed until he was satisfied that the defence was organized."

Robert Gee later became an MP, miraculously surviving the war and then emigrated to Australia.

#### **British Jewry Book of Honour 1914-1918**

This roll of honour is now available for all Starter, Gold & Diamond subscribers. It contains over 2,500 records of Jews who fell in the Great War. To search these records, select "Roll of Honour Records" on the search view, or find them under the military section of the master search.

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