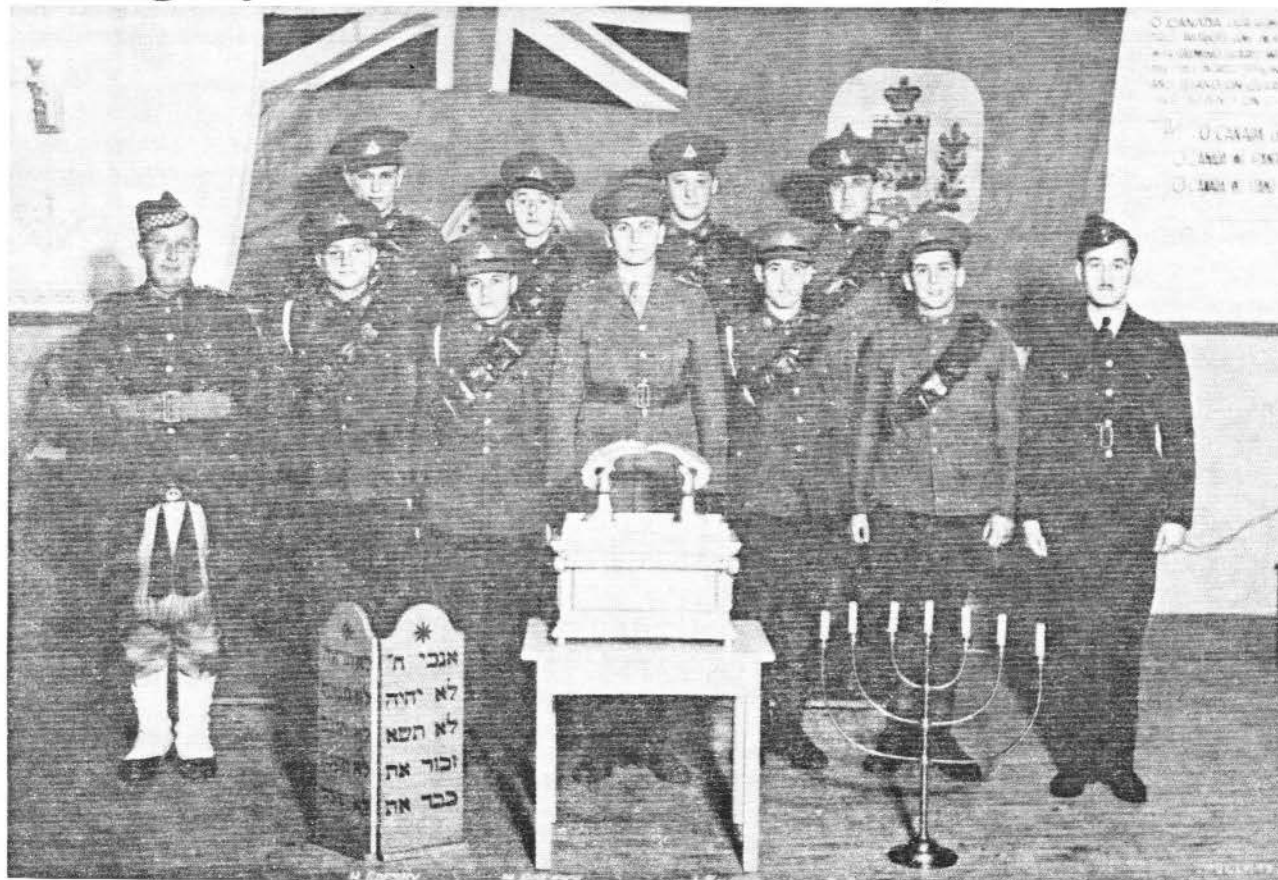


Calgary Jews at War, 1914-1918; 1939-1945



First Jewish servicemen to enlist in Calgary, 1939, at a B'Nai Brith ceremony in the House of Israel Building. The men are: front row, left to right, Charles Ashe, Sam Korbin, Simeon Besen, A. Lerner, Nathan Lipkis, Sam Rosen, Louis Segal. Back row, left to right, Harry Gofsky, Mel Polsky, Joe Silver, Bob Satinofsky (Sattin). Photo - Allan Sattin

Our Military Issue

Fifty years after the the end of World War II in Europe, we remember and honor the Jewish men and women from Southern Alberta who fought, and died, in this century's major conflicts.

One out of every ten Alberta Jews was in uniform during the last war. Many died, were wounded, or became war prisoners. Some were decorated for bravery. All proudly wore the uniform of Canada, and returned to civilian life well prepared to lead Jews into truly full citizenship.

We also look at the home front - what we were doing as members of a con-

cerned Jewish community in what was called "The War Effort." Alberta Jews came together with a new urgency - to help our men and women in uniform, to buy war bonds, to ease the sufferings of refugees abroad, to welcome refugees at home and to help them abroad, and to strengthen the Jewish presence in Palestine.

The accounts that follow are presented directly from archival sources, in the words of the original sources - newspaper articles and Jewish club records, and for most of the military records, from the 1948 publication of the Canadian Jewish

Congress, *Canadian Jews in World War II*.

Special thanks go to the Calgary Post, Jewish War Veterans of Canada, to David Dworkin, and to the Sattin family. Bob Sattin, first Commander of the Calgary Post, died recently; his many contributions to Jewish life and to veterans' welfare in Calgary are gratefully acknowledged.

Southern Alberta's Jewish War Dead

Southern Alberta's war deaths as recorded in *Canadian Jews in World War II, Volume II, Canadian Jewish Congress, 1948*, and in local newspapers.

Private Samuel Hackman, son of A. Hackman, of Rumsey, Alta., died of wounds on September 24, 1916. He came to Canada eleven years ago from Russia and resided in Calgary for the greater part of that time and was employed at the Royal Crown Soap works. He enlisted in the 82nd Battalion and crossed for active service with the regular unit last May. - *Calgary Daily Herald*, October 10, 1916.

Lieutenant Simeon Besen, Canadian Armoured Corps, was killed in action on October 23, 1944. He was buried in the Canadian Military Cemetery at Bergen-op-Zoom, Holland.

He enlisted in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals on September 14, 1939, and after training at Kingston, Ont., proceeded to England with the 1st Division. He served in France with his unit and was evacuated from England to Brest after the German offensive in 1941.

Lieutenant Besen landed in France on D-Day and saw action with his tank unit in France and Belgium.

Lieutenant Besen was born in Woodstock, Ontario. He was a member of the Calgary lodge of B'Nai Brith and AZA. A brother, Irwin Besen, served with the RCAF.

Pilot Officer Paul Belkin, RCAF., of Calgary, was reported missing after air operations over Japanese territory on October 9, 1943.

Enlisting in the air force in 1941, PO Belkin trained as an air gunner at Trenton, Ont., and Mossbank, Sask. He was stationed in England for a short time before he transferred to India. Later he proceeded to Burma.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Belkin., Pilot Officer Belkin was born in Russia and came to Calgary at the age of six. He attended the Peretz Institute and the Community Centre Hebrew School. PO Belkin was an active member of the AZA. Before his enlistment he was engaged in the news distribution business.

Pilot Officer Bernard Bercuson RCAF., of Calgary, was killed on August 16, 1944, while participating in air operations. He was buried in Magleby Cemetery, Langelans Island, Denmark.



Grave of Pilot Officer Paul Bercuson at Maglesby, a coastal village in Denmark. This temporary marker was replaced by a granite headstone. The Danes found the flyer's body but did not wish to give it up to the occupying German forces. They reported finding a drowned fisherman, and gave Bercuson a Christian burial. Upon liberation, they moved the remains to a military cemetery and properly marked the grave.
Photo - Judy Parker

Pilot Officer Bercuson enlisted in 1941 and graduated as a wireless air gunner. He proceeded overseas in December, 1943. PO Bercuson received his commission posthumously.

Born in Calgary on July 2, 1916, he was the son of Mrs. Sarah Bercuson and the late Jack Bercuson. He received his Hebrew education at the Calgary Talmud Torah. He was employed in the clothing industry in Montreal. His wife Adele resides in Regina.

Private Leonard Arthur Eisenman, Canadian Provost Corps, of High River, Alta., was reported killed in action on May 28, 1944, while serving with the No. 5 Company, CPC, in Italy.

Private Eisenman was the son of Mrs. Eisenman of High River.

Flight Sergeant Charles Green, RCAF, of Calgary, Alta., was reported missing on August 12, 1943, and was later presumed dead for official purposes.

He enlisted in the Air Force at Calgary on May 1, 1942.

Flight Sergeant Green was the son of Abraham Green, Calgary.

Flying Officer Cecil Gurevitch, RCAF, of Calgary, was listed missing after air oper-

ations overseas on January 15, 1945 and was subsequently presumed dead.

He enlisted in the air force in May, 1942, and proceeded overseas in March, 1944.

Born in Romania in 1916, he was the son of Mr. B. Gurevitch. Flying Officer Gurevitch attended the Calgary Hebrew School and Crescent Heights High School. He had been a member of the AZA. Prior to enlistment FO Gurevitch worked for an importing concern.

Private Simon Isenstein, Irish Regiment of Canada, of Calgary, died of wounds on June 3, 1944, according to casualty list M-498. He was buried in the Cassino Military Cemetery, Italy.

Private Isenstein's mother is Mrs. Dora Isenstein, Calgary.

Aircraftman Solomon Lavine, RCAF, of Calgary, Alta., was listed missing, believed drowned accidentally. Aircraftman Lavine was one of three men from the Air Force Technical Training School at St. Thomas, Ont., who lost their lives when the cabin cruiser Olga capsized in Lake Erie on June 4, 1944.

He enlisted in the air force in May, 1940. Born in Vancouver on October 27, 1924, Lavine was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Lavine, Calgary. He received his Jewish education at the I.L. Peretz Institute.

AC Lavine was active in the Calgary AZA chapter. A brother, Maurice Lavine, served with the Royal Canadian Engineers.

Warrant Officer Albert Arthur Margolis, RCAF, of Calgary, was reported missing after air operations and presumed dead on September 9, 1942.

Enlisting in the air force in September, 1940, Margolis trained as an observer and was posted overseas in July, 1941. He was attached to the Royal Air Force. Immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor he was promoted to Flight Sergeant and transferred to India. He was stationed at various action stations in the Pacific.

The son of Mrs. Tillie Margolis, Flight Sergeant "Sherry" Margolis was born in Calgary in 1914. He was a member of B'Nai Brith. Prior to enlistment he operated a delicatessen.

Private Leo Smith, Calgary Highlanders of Calgary, was reported to have died of wounds on January 14, 1945. He was

continued on next page

buried in the Argenta Gap Cemetery in Italy.

Private Smith joined the Calgary Highlanders on Sept. 5, 1940, and went overseas with the Canadian First Division. A veteran of four and one half years overseas, he was killed a few days before he was scheduled to return home on leave.

Private Smith was born in Gomel, Russia, in 1918 and came to Canada at the age of five with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Smith. He attended Central High School, and the I.L. Peretz Institute. Before his enlistment he was employed as a presser in a dry cleaning establishment. His wife, Mrs. Columbia Smith, resides in Calgary.

Able Seaman Jack Ziporkin, RCNVR, of Calgary, was reported lost overboard from the steamship Gatineau Park during a storm on December 3, 1942.

His wife, Mrs. Lorna Ziporkin, resides in Victoria.



Captain Albert Hanson, an army Engineer, was one of four Hanson brothers who served in World War II. He was awarded the Military Cross, and was later wounded clearing land mines in north-west Europe.

Photo - Dr. Morris Hanson

Wounded in Action

Captain Albert Hanson MC Royal Canadian Engineers, of Calgary, was wounded in Belgium in 1944. Capt. Hanson joined the RCE as an officer in March, 1942, following his graduation from the University of Alberta.

Born in 1917, Capt. Hanson is the son of Mrs. A. Hanson, of Strathmore, Alta.

Corporal Solomon Gurevitch, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, of Calgary, was reported dangerously ill as a result of injuries on August 4, 1944.

Cpl. Gurevitch returned from overseas on March, 1945. His mother is Mrs. Sophie Gurevitch of Calgary.

Gunner Leslie Libin, Royal Canadian Artillery, of Calgary, was reported wounded in action in France on July 19, 1944.

Gnr. Libin is the son of Mrs. Sonia Libin, Calgary.

Private Alec Lewis Sosinsky, Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, of Calgary, was reported wounded in action in Sicily on July 20, 1943.

Pte. Sosinsky is the son of Mrs. Etta Sosinsky, Calgary.

Lance Corporal Ernest B. Vogel, Canadian Scottish Regiment, 1st Battalion, of Drumheller, Alta., was reported wounded on December 10, 1944, while serving in the North West European theatre of war.

After recovering from his wounds he returned to his unit and served in the campaigns in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany.

L/Cpl. Vogel is the son of Mr. and Mrs. L.M. Vogel of Drumheller. His brother, **Lieut. Max J. Vogel**, served with the RCAMC.

British, Nova Scotia Jews Die in Alberta Military Accidents

The Jewish Post (Winnipeg), January 21, 1943 - RCAF authorities in Calgary announce the death of **LAC Alfred Leder**, 25, a Jewish student pilot in the RAF from London, England, who was killed in a mid-air plane collision on January 7, 1943, north of the Calgary municipal airport.

LAC Leder was buried in the cemetery of the Calgary Jewish community.

City Jews Honor Late Airwoman

Calgary Herald, January 29, 1943 -

Representatives of the Calgary Jewish community were present at the CPR station today as the body of **Section Officer Rose Goodman**, first airwoman to be killed in a plane crash while on duty, was sent to Montreal.

Section Officer Goodman was killed in a plane crash near Claresholm late Tuesday night. The pilot of the plane, P.D. Myers, of Vancouver, was not seriously injured.

The late Section Officer Goodman was the daughter of Sol Goodman, one of the leading Jewish residents of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She graduated from Dalhousie University in 1941. She was a violinist and a member of the New Glasgow Symphony Orchestra.

Barrington V. Castle, Royal Air Force, Died Sept. 13, 1941. Beloved husband of Betty and father of David, who have many happy memories. - Inscription on a Jewish headstone in the Medicine Hat military cemetery. (JHSSA Archives.)

Rumsey "Boys" Serve in Two Wars

Alan "Curley" Gurevitch was among the first Jewish men to enlist in the Canadian army in 1939. In an article he wrote for a local history, "The Jewish Farm Colony of Rumsey, Alberta," in 1982, Gurevitch recalled the Rumsey Jews who joined up in both world wars:

World War I took the trio of Sam Hendin, Sam Hamson, and Samuel Hackman. Samuel Hackman was killed in France; the others returned.

World War II had many Jewish boys of Rumsey origin. There were Harold and Ely Raskin, Tom Harold and Willy Sengaus, Ben and Max Gelfond, Eddie Gelfond, Ed Wolfson, Curly and

Solly Gurevitch, Sandor Caplan, and Leon Smehoff - of all things he joined the U.S. Marines, but never got to Iwo Jima.

The only bad casualty was my brother Solly Gurevitch, wounded at Caen, France in 1944. Invalided, at home, a paraplegic, but still lives and sustains himself in his own apartment in Vancouver. He has lots of courage and spirit, visits family and friends every summer.

About Ely Raskin - In 1940 Ely Raskin joined the Calgary Tanks, went over and tried to land at Dieppe in 1942. Was transport sergeant for the Italy campaign and made it safely back to Canada in 1945, but no more truck or tank duty.

Prisoners-of War

Pilot Officer Sam Camerman, RCAF, of Calgary, was reported missing on January 17, 1945, and was reported safe in the United Kingdom on May 10, 1945.

Flight Lieutenant Herbert J. Ludman, RCAF, of Lethbridge, Alta., was reported missing following air operations overseas on August 8, 1944, and was reported safe in the United Kingdom on May 10, 1945.

Flt. Lt. Ludman enlisted in the air force on June 1, 1942. He participated in raids over Germany and Hungary.

Flying Officer Manuel Rabinovitch (Raber), RCAF, of Medicine Hat, Alta., was reported missing on active service on November 26, 1943 and was subsequently reported a prisoner of war in Germany.

FO Rabinovitch enlisted in the air force in 1941 and went overseas after completing his training as a rear gunner. He had completed eighteen months of operations.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. M. Rabinovitch, Medicine Hat.

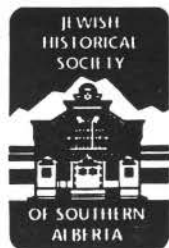
Flying Officer David Rosenthal, RCAF, of Calgary, was reported missing on active service on January 29, 1944 and was subsequently reported a prisoner of war in Germany. He arrived safely in the United Kingdom on May 7, 1945.

FO Rosenthal's father is Mr. Feival Rosenthal, Calgary.

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Jewish Servicemen Decorated for Valor

Petty Officer Max Abramson, Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve, Calgary, was mentioned in despatches for his work in November 1942 on HMCS St. Croix.

"This torpedo gunner's mate maintained depth charges in a high state of efficiency with the result that during prolonged attacks on a U-Boat there were no misfires. The efficiency of PO Abramson contributed in no small measure to the eventual destruction of a German submarine."

Flight Lieutenant David Louis Dworkin, RCAF, of Calgary, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on Aug. 3rd, 1945. The citation read:

"This officer has completed numerous operations against the enemy in the course of which he has invariably displayed the utmost fortitude, courage, and devotion to duty."

Enlisting in the air force in January, 1942, Flt. Lt. Dworkin trained at Edmonton, Saskatoon, Mossbank, and Portage la Prairie. He graduated nine months later as an observer. In England he was attached to the Lion and Swordfish squadrons. Flt. Lt. Dworkin completed a tour of operations, and was bombing leader of the 432nd Squadron.

David Dworkin flew 33 bombing missions over north-west Europe. He was born in Calgary in 1923, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sol G. Dworkin, Calgary.

Flight Lieutenant Jack B. Miller, RCAF, of Calgary, was mentioned in despatches in the King's New Year's Honors List of January, 1945.

Private Fred Cooperman, RCASC, of Calgary, was mentioned in despatches in a Department of National Defence release dated May 25th, 1945.

Major Samuel Hanson, Calgary, RCAMC was mentioned in despatches, and received his medal on April 4, 1946. Major Hanson, a physician, was cited for treating wounded soldiers while under enemy fire.

Captain Albert Hanson, Royal Canadian Engineers, of Calgary, was awarded the Military Cross on March 16, 1945. The citation read:

"During the night of August 7th, 1944, (then) Lieutenant Hanson with his platoon of engineers was supporting the Queen's own Cameron Highlanders of Canada in their attack on Fontenay-le-Marmion. His task was to clear a safe lane through mined roads and tracks for the passage of anti-tank guns and carriers to support the



Flying Officer David Dworkin receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross from the Lieutenant Governor.
photo - David Dworkin

newly-won positions.

The only possible approach was littered with derelict enemy vehicles, studded with mines, and under constant mortar and artillery fire.

Despite relentless fire and mounting casualties, Lieutenant Hanson steadily led his platoon forward, encouraged and inspired his men to greater effort, personally directed the work, and finally cleared the three mile route to the battalion forward position.

Still in darkness and under harassing enemy fire he led his mine-clearing parties to each proposed gun-site where additional mines were located and removed.

Through Lieutenant Hanson's outstanding courage and steady leadership the battalion's supporting weapons were brought up without loss, put into position before daylight, and the subsequent enemy counter-attack defeated.

(Albert Hanson was badly wounded shortly after the action described above.)

News from the Home Front

Reports of home front war efforts, as reported in news items, Jewish club minutes and newsletters.

July 4, 1917 - \$2,500 was Raised by Jewish Tag Day, Full Report of Success of the Collection - Many Contributors. (Calgary Daily Herald)

Almost \$2,500 has been collected for the relief of Jewish victims in Palestine. The tag day was responsible for the largest portion, there being \$1,800 raised in this manner, the balance being contributions.

Groups donating funds were the Girl's auxiliary, \$100; Calgary Jewish Relief Committee, \$100; and Calgary Jewish Benevolent Society, \$25.

Hadassah Newsletter October 5, 1940 (Glenbow Archives)

Red Cross Sock Shower - We are holding a sock shower at this meeting, asking each member to contribute a pair of regulation army socks, or the money to purchase a pair. These socks will be sent to England for the use of sailors on mine sweepers, who make the oceans safe for commerce.

Our Jewish women responded very generously when the call for blankets was made, so feel assured that each and every sister of Hadassah will do her share and make this red Cross appeal a success. Amelia Barron - President

War Efforts Committee Reports on Its Activities, By. I. Florence (Izzy Florence was chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress War Efforts committee and the B'nai Brith soldier's aid committee.) *Jewish Community Centre Bulletin*, Sept. 24, 1943.

An appeal was sent forth throughout Canada for ambulances and within three days the Calgary Jewish Community had sent in their contribution for one ambulance, which is now doing service in England.

The Canadian Legion War Services were raising money for their Educational work, and a committee of the Congress together with members of the Bnai Brith provided many teams of canvassers, whose results were very favorably commented upon.

A Red Triangle Hostess Club was opened at the Calgary YMCA. On the



During World War I Leila Rapaport served on the home front as a Red Cross volunteer.

Photo - Harriet Barrett

first appeal appearing in the press for a piano and furniture, the committee at once offered to provide the necessary articles.

A beautiful silk Union Jack flag was presented to the Canadian Legion for parade purposes. We were represented on this occasion by B. Ginsberg, KC, and M. Wolochow.

A piano was sent to the Penhold Station at the request of the Calgary YMCA, and this gift was much appreciated by the men.

A chaplain required funds for a radio at Currie Barracks and this was provided at once from the war efforts fund of the Congress.

At the permanent training camp at Red Deer it was found that the recreation rooms were devoid of chairs and tables. The war efforts committee of the Congress within two days shipped twenty-three armchairs, three tables, and a settee to the camp.

Assistance was given in furnishing the YMCA hut at the No. 81 EFTS (De Winton).

A radio was needed for the camp at Macleod. This was supplied immediately. Many other centres were accommodated in this manner.

Many officials of the Congress have joined the militia. The Calgary Jewish community's record of enlistments is most excellent. Out of a population of some 1700 people, 175 of our youth have enlisted, and are at pre-

DISCOVERY

Editors Jack Switzer, Jay Joffe

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sent serving in the various branches of His Majesty's Forces, and about thirty are attached to the various militia units in Calgary. Fifty were rejected as unfit for service.

Calgary Pioneer Women's Organization Reports Progress

The Jewish Post - January 27, 1944

The Calgary Pioneer Women's organization raised in 1943 the splendid sum of \$1200. Their quota was \$900. The annual luncheon netted \$525.

Other monies went towards Moatzath Hapoaloth Emergency fund, Ussishkin fund, United Palestine appeal, and Histadruth. Besides the quota, \$600 was raised towards a new fund - the Child Rescue Fund.

A contribution to the war effort was the raffling of a \$50 War Bond and the sale of \$10,000 worth of bonds. Members also worked for the Red Cross.

Credit for convening the Child Rescue Fund is due Mrs. Z. Lubinsky, ably assisted by Mrs. A. Cohen, president.

Mrs. J.H. Bergman is Red Cross convenor. She also convened the Clothes for Russia campaign. Mrs. E. Walker is secretary and contributes towards the cultural programs under the chairmanship of Mrs. D. Barenholtz.

Community Centre Offered for War Use - Letter to the federal government, Oct. 22, 1941. Source - Glenbow Archives:

I have been authorized by the House of Israel Association to offer you the main floor of the Community Building rent free for the duration of the War. It is naturally understood that you may use this space for any War purpose you deem necessary.

H. Harnick, Community Building Committee.

(The Department of Public Works rejected the offer, with thanks.)

High Holiday Services at House of Israel Congregation (JCC Bulletin Sept. 24, 1943)

Plans have been completed by the synagogue committee of the community centre for the High Holiday Services. Reverend S. Smolensky has been engaged to conduct the Musaf Services, and Mr. S. Nagler will conduct the Shacharith Services.

Mr. H.W. Zemans, Chairman of the Congregation, announces that arrangements have been made to accommodate



Bob Sattin, Royal Canadian Artillery, and Esther Levene were married in London, England, in 1941. Photo - Allan Sattin

members of His Majesty's Forces, to whom a cordial invitation is extended to attend the services.

House of Jacob Congregation, War Efforts Report

(Report by A.I. Shumiatcher, President, to the the Board of the House of Jacob Congregation). Source - Glenbow Archives

On Saturday, Nov. 21, 1942 I attended at the religious service at the Currie barracks together with Mr. I. Florence and W. Josephs, an airman from Wales who attended the Yeshiva in Wales. He officiated at the services, and it was a pleasure to see the airman conducting the services attended by Jewish soldiers.

On November 23, 1942 I wrote letters to (military officials) inviting all Jewish soldiers and airmen to attend the the services on Sunday, November 29, 1942, and every Sunday thereafter.

On Sunday, November 29, 1942, 10 Jewish soldiers attended the Services at the House of Jacob. I promised the soldiers that that there would be homes provided them for Sunday afternoon, where they can have one or two meals as well.

House of Jacob Donates Torah for Liberated European Jews

From the minutes of an executive meeting *February 8, 1945.*

It was moved by A. Belzberg and seconded by Joe Shapiro that the House of Jacob should donate one of their own Sefer Torahs and have same forwarded to the Central Relief Committee, New York ... for the Jewish Communities which are now being liberated by the Allies.

Notice for executive meeting, House of Jacob Congregation, May 31, 1945. ... Business:

1. The purchasing of a special slaughter house for poultry.
 2. Donating a Torah to one of the liberated cities in Europe.
- (Glenbow Archives)

Council of Jewish Women Active in War Work, JCC Bulletin, Sept. 24, 1943.

Report by Mrs. A.S. Horwitz, president.

All the major part of our program has been devoted to war work. One of our main endeavors has been to supply our boys overseas with 300 cigarettes monthly, and with generous food parcels five times a year.

Through the efforts of our Canadian National organization, the government has allowed the release of a number of (German-Jewish) internees. One of these young men has been sponsored by the Calgary section, given a splendid home in the city, and an opportunity to continue his education.

The Red Cross Sewing and Knitting Group, sponsored for the Jewish women of Calgary by our Section, has been at work since war began. This group sews at the Peretz Institute every Tuesday afternoon.

We have had complete charge several times through each war year at the red Triangle Hostess Hall at the YMCA, and have assumed all financial obligations.

We were most successful in sponsoring an Aid to Russia tag day and received full co-operation from all, the other Jewish Women's organizations.

With the assistance of our Bride's Group and the Junior Section we have answered all calls for assistance from the community at large, and have helped the Red Cross, the Ration Board, the War Savings Stamp Booth, the Community Chest, and many other worthy causes.

Lethbridge Flyer Aids Jewish Refugees in Italy

Before his RCAF bomber was shot down over German territory, **Flight Lieutenant Herbert Ludman**, of Lethbridge, joined Jewish servicemen from other nations to help Jewish refugees in Italy.

According to a CJC account, "Ludman was in Italy during the liberation of that country, and participated in the voluntary program which the men of the Canadian, Palestinian and other allied forces carried out to relieve the needs of Jewish refugees in the freed areas before the American Joint Distribution Committee was able to come on the scene.

"In a letter home (*Israelite Press*, Winnipeg), he wrote: 'The Allied armies freed the Jews from the concentration camps at once but they had nowhere to go and no means of livelihood. Rations were distributed but there was little of this. Living conditions were hard and food was hard to get.'

'The Palestinians (British-trained Jewish soldiers) helped out and I joined them in this work. We all got together with some American Jewish servicemen and bought several Italian farms where we brought all the children from the camps.

"We settled a number of adults on these farms to manage and supervise them. They are doing very well. It was hard getting what we needed but we set out over the countryside and our collection was a success.'

"I keep fairly busy. When I am not flying I travel the country collecting things for the refugees. Eventually we get together with the Palestinians and we have a fine time. The food in their officers' mess reminds me of home.'

"In a later letter he reported that the children had all been sent off to Palestine."

Herb Ludman's bomber was shot down and he became a German POW in August, 1944. The Jewish Post reported that "Lethbridge B'Nai B'rith extended a welcome home in the form of a smoker Aug. 15, 1945, to a B'Nai B'rith member, Herb Ludman, who has recently returned home after 14 (sic) months as a prisoner of war in Germany. Leo Singer was chairman of the evening."

Bergen-Belsen Liberated - Canadians Help Camp Survivors

by Stanley Winfield

This article originally appeared in Zachor, the Journal of Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society.

Stanley Winfield was born and educated in Calgary, and moved to Vancouver after his war service. A retired lawyer, he is past-president of the Historical Society of British Columbia. Winfield was a sergeant in the RCAF and in 1945 was aide to Squadron Leader Ted Aplin.



Stanley Winfield (right) and Ted Aplin at Belsen, Germany, April, 1945.
Photo - Stanley Winfield

On April 15, 1995, fifty years will have passed since Bergen-Belsen concentration camp was liberated by the British 11th Armoured Division. I arrived in Celle, about 20 km from the camp, on May 11, 1945, as a member of an RCAF group charged with the task of disarming the shattered Luftwaffe.

It was there that I had the honor of serving with the late Edward M "Ted" Aplin, truly a "Righteous Gentile" who, in the ten months that followed, conducted a personal crusade to give the camp survivors some comfort, dignity, and hope.

Ted was able to visit Bergen-Belsen early in June. He returned shaken and aghast at a regulation that forbade the survivors all contact with the outside world, except through British military channels.

Even though the army and the British Red Cross were providing minimal food and clothing (requisitioned from German communities in the area) to the survivors, there was never enough, nor was any thought given to their recreation.

And worst of all, their futures remained in question. Most dreamed of going to Palestine, but this was very much against British policy.

Within weeks of our first exposure to the inferno that was Belsen, we were enlisting the aid of our fellow Canadian and British servicemen, wherein their families and friends at home would send parcels containing food, clothing and other necessities.

These parcels were marked with a B by the sender. Our postal clerk would pull these parcels off the mail truck, and Ted and I would ferry them them to the British Red Cross or the Jewish relief unit in Belsen.

Such flagrant abuse of duty time and misuse of military vehicles to transport this "contraband" made our senior officers furious, but Ted was not to be deterred. He wrote letters to friends in Canada, soliciting aid for Belsen survivors and went out to the camp while I did my best to cover him - not always successfully.

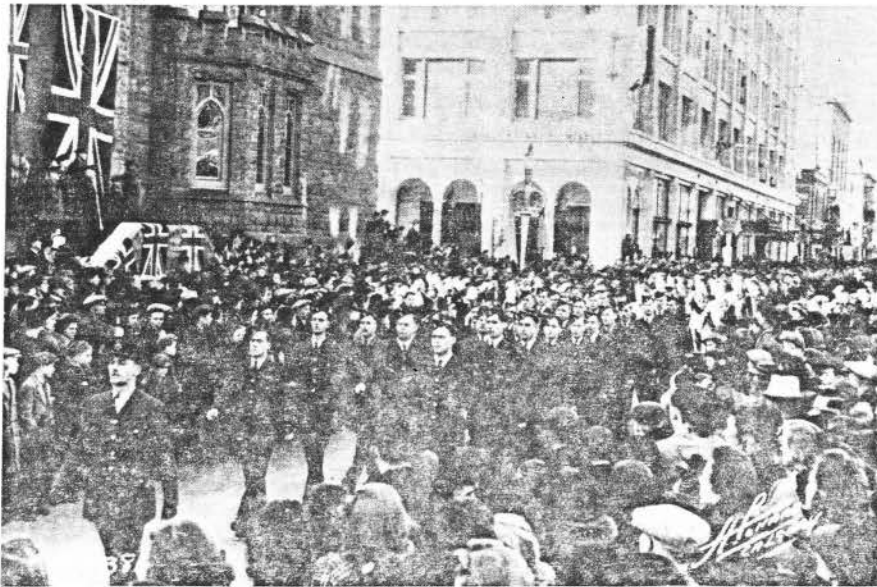
We continued ferrying parcels to Belsen, all the while Ted collecting exercise books and pencils for education classes, taking children on picnics and befriending the friendless. Ted collected Belsen inmates' art, which he wanted to send on a tour of England and North America.

Our working relationship, unfortunately, was severed. I was transferred to a squadron in Oldenburg, and Ted was given a new job at Celle, as morale officer, a job he tackled with characteristic vigour.

But if our senior officers thought the new job would divert him from his obsession, they were wrong. Ted worked ceaselessly to locate the relatives of survivors; he is still remembered in Canada and Israel for his efforts in bringing families together.

Aplin worked successfully to bring fifty orphaned children to England for adoption, and with the help of British aircrew colleagues, we spirited twelve young boys to Palestine.

Returning to Canada in March, 1946, Ted Aplin lived a full and productive life with his wife Elinor and their four children. He was active in Ontario politics and was an unflagging supporter of Israel. It was my good fortune to spend time with him at least once a year until his death in 1973.



War Bond parade on 7th Avenue West, Calgary, 1940, looking west, past Central United Church and the Hudson's Bay store.
photo - Dave Spindel

JHSSA News

Tribute Cards

Beautiful museum-photo tribute cards displaying five scenes from this area's Jewish history are available to honor special occasions. Minimum donation (tax-deductible) to have a JHS card sent out is \$5.00.

Please call Tiby Presma at 281-3910 to have your cards sent out.

Land of Promise - the Book

Most chapters of *Land of Promise* - the book version of our popular photo exhibit - have been sponsored, but donations are still being sought for inclusion as Friends of 'Land of Promise'.

Your name can go down in history. A minimum donation of \$100 will prominently note the support of you, your family, or your organization.

Publication of *Land of Promise* is expected early in 1996. Almost three

hundred photos will be included, as will an index of all names and places noted in the text and photo captions. Therese Nagler and Barbara Joffe are co-ordinating photo selection and captions for the book.

Yiddish News Clippings

Calgary news items from *Der Yiddishe Vort*, a Winnipeg Jewish newspaper, have been photocopied from microfilms supplied by the Manitoba Archives. About 100 pages of Yiddish-language text have to be translated to English. If you can help us with this project, please call Jack Switzer, 281-3520.

JHSSA Library

Most non-archival books and videotapes in the Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library may be borrowed by JHSSA members. The JHS office is open every Wednesday afternoon, 1:30-3:30.

Editor's note - our apologies to the families and friends of Jewish military casualties whose names may have been unintentionally omitted from our lists. We have no information about Simon Zudaima (Army WWI) and Edward Lavine (RCAF WWII), whose names appear among those honored on the Calgary Jewish Centre war cenotaph.

Thank You to All our Friends

Special thank yous to all our supporters: to the members, patrons, benefactors and corporate sponsors, and other friends of the Society. Your interest, your volunteer hours, and your donations are keeping local Jewish history alive. We now have over 200 members; they include the following special donors:

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