



WE WERE THERE TOO THANKS PROJECT VOLUNTEERS WITH A GUIDED TOUR OF BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY

Last week, *We Were There Too* Volunteers joined project team members for a fascinating guided tour of Brookwood, the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the United Kingdom. First opened in 1854, it was at one time the largest cemetery in the world. Today, it continues to be the largest cemetery in Western Europe and since its opening, approximately 250,000 people have been laid to rest within the beautiful grounds, just 40 minutes outside London (The London Necropolis).

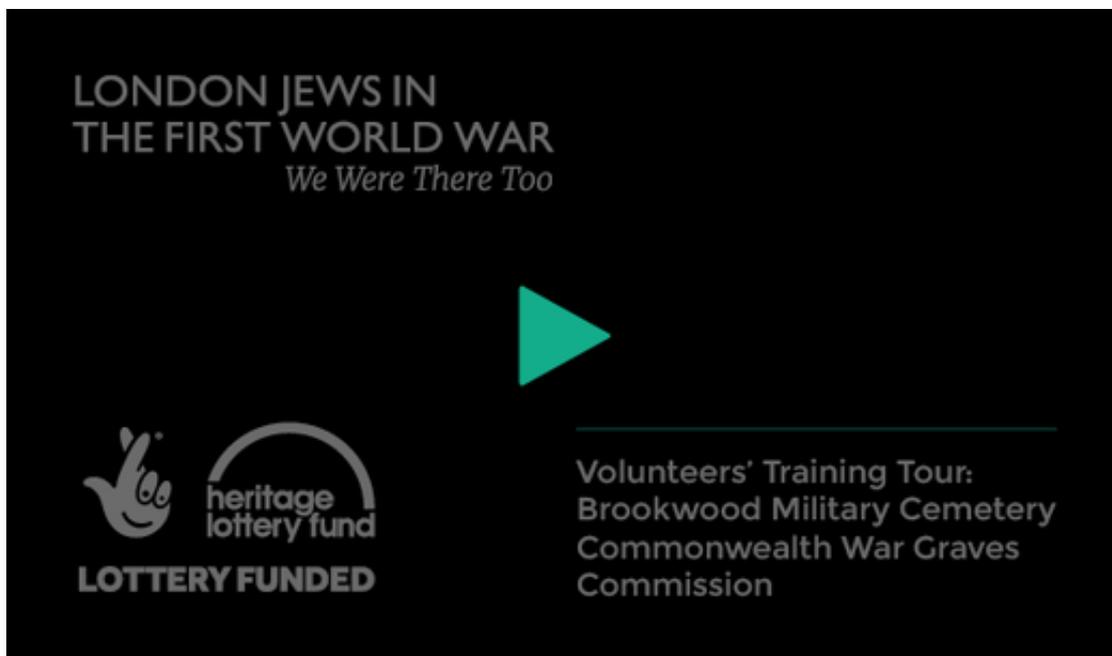
In 1917, an area of land in the Cemetery was set aside to bury men and women from the Commonwealth Forces and Americans, who had died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. Over 37 acres, it contains 1,601 Commonwealth burials from the First World War and 3,476 from the Second World War.

We Were There Too Project historian and educator, Paula Kitching, highlighted many of the Jewish graves on the site, providing an insight into the lives and deaths of English, Canadian, American and Australian Jews who died in service from 1917 onwards. The group planted a Magen David at each grave visited, in remembrance of their sacrifice.

One participant said: *"I had an inspiring experience learning so much about the history of Brookwood, about the individual Jewish soldiers' stories and replacing the poppies really gave a feeling of being involved and made history {come} alive."*

Project Director, Alan Fell, thanked all the Volunteers for their valuable assistance in supporting the project in a wide variety of ways; research, assisting at community events and helping to upload Personal Records.

For more information about our Volunteers' Training Tour to Brookwood click on the arrow below.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Sketch of a member of the Zion Mule Corps in uniform standing in front of two donkeys.
Copyright: Australian War Memorial

ANIMALS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, THE ZION MULE CORPS, IMAGES OF 5 BATTALIONS OF JEWISH VOLUNTEERS...

Over the last few months, the project team has continued to add curated, informative History Windows and new collections to the www.jewsfww.london website. Each one describes an aspect of the conflict with a Jewish perspective. With 21 Windows already available, another 10-15 are currently in process.

Here are just a few examples;

[Animals in the First World War](#) describes the role of the Royal Veterinary Corps in caring for a wide variety of 'military' animals, including horses, dogs, cats, canaries and pigeons. 106 British Jews served in Veterinary Units, just like regular medical units, often stationed close to the Front line, putting both animals and men at risk of their lives.

The famous [Zion Mule Corps](#) was formed during the First World War and became the first regular Jewish fighting force – with a distinctively Jewish emblem and flag – to take active part in a war since the defeat of the Bar Kochba Revolt 2,000 years ago. Some of its men later formed the core of what was to become the modern Israeli army. Martin Sugarman provides a comprehensive description of both the men and their contribution, particularly at Gallipoli, and how they were treated by the British Army.

An [extensive group of images](#) depicts the five battalions of Jewish volunteers, the 38th to 42nd Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, raised in the British Army to fight against the Ottoman Empire. This collection has been added to our resources courtesy of the Jewish Museum of London and the Jewish Military Museum Collection, now at the Jewish Museum London.

Watch out for new History Windows on Food Rationing, the Royal Navy and Third Battle of Ypres and Passchendaele and more collections from the Jewish Military Museum archives, online in September.



Photograph of Lt Samuel Levinson, 39th (Jewish) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Copyright: Jewish Museum London/Jewish Military Museum

30,000 VISITORS TO THE WEBSITE OVER 370 PERSONAL RECORDS UPLOADED

In just 12 months since the launch of the www.jewsfww.london, over 30,000 unique visitors have interacted with the website. It is fast becoming the 'go to' place for UK (and overseas) families to preserve their Jewish stories of the First World War before they are lost

We Were There Too Roadshows, talks at Friendship groups, Synagogues and schools continue to be in demand. By March 2018, over 30 community events will have taken place with over 1,500 members of the public. Each one generates more stories for the website.

Core team members and Volunteers work with families and individuals across London to support them in discovering as much as possible from their own memorabilia, supplemented with materials sourced from the rich archives available through the site – [British Jewry Book of Honour](#), [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) and the [Jewish Chronicle](#).

Over 370 individual histories have already been uploaded to our Personal Records with as many again in the process of being researched. The Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade alone has over 500 records of Jewish Lads who died in the conflict. They will all be remembered on the website.

UNIVERSITY INTERN JOINS THE TEAM

In June, we were delighted to welcome Tara Framp to the team. A student at Leeds University, she has successfully completed the first two years of a degree in History and English. Now embarking on a Year in Industry scheme prior to graduating, she has joined us to experience the practical application of some of the research and reporting techniques she has learned and how they might be used in engagement with the community. Tara will be writing a 2,000-word dissertation at the end of her time with us about her involvement in the project.

After a few weeks of immersion in Personal Record research and interaction with contributors from the Roadshows, Tara said: *'I'm really excited to have joined this heritage project which allows me to get so close to the history we're researching. I've already learnt so much, not only about British Jews in the First World War but also how to research and record history and the importance of preserving the stories that people have to tell. Not only will being a part of this team hugely benefit my own studies, it's exciting to know I'm helping to create a resource that will teach people for many years to come.'*

If you would like more information about any of the topics mentioned, please email contactus@jewsffw.london

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