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**THE WE WERE THERE TOO TEAM WISH ALL THE PROJECT'S SUPPORTERS, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRIBUTORS A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELL OVER THE FAST.**

As we celebrate the start of 5778, we remember that, a century ago, many British Jewish soldiers were fighting for their country over the High Holydays, at the Front, supported by volunteer Jewish Chaplains.

In August 1914, the British Army had just one Jewish chaplain, the Reverend Michael Adler, minister of the Central Synagogue in London W1. He had been a commissioned chaplain in the Territorial Force since 1909 and applied, aged 46, to serve on the Western Front as a Jewish chaplain. When the War Office refused, Adler applied to visit the Front, which was granted. On his return, in January 1915, he wrote a report for the War Office, which resulted in him becoming the single Jewish Chaplain on the Western Front. As time went on more Jewish ministers volunteered, some well above normal military age. By the end of the war, over twenty Jewish chaplains served with British forces.

The Army supported their Jewish chaplains, on occasion even providing transport to take Jewish soldiers straight from the front line to High Holyday services. There are accounts of men trudging in from the line in full kit with their rifles for a service. Click [here](#) to learn more about the role of Jewish Chaplains in the Armed Services from *We Were There Too* History Window contributor, Jonathan Lewis.

While efforts were made to enable serving men, wherever possible, to observe their

faith, others were required to spend the High Holydays in combat, some dying in the conflict on the holiest days in our calendar. 16 men are known to have died on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur 1914 - 18, 10 of whom died on Yom Kippur 1917 in the **3rd Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele)**.

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### AT THIS TIME, WE REMEMBER THE YAHRTZEIT OF SOME OF THE MEN WHO LOST THEIR LIVES ON ROSH HASHANA AND YOM KIPPUR:

Second Lieutenant [Solomon, Kenneth Maurice Halgren](#)

Died 18/09/1915, aged 26

Second Lieutenant [Leon, Edward Joseph](#)

Died 07/10/1916, aged 21

Second Lieutenant [Lyone, Alexander Martin](#) MC (Military Cross)

Died 26/09/1917, aged 23

Private [Greyman, S](#)

Service Number J/901 - Died 08/09/1918

Private [Rickayzan, Samuel Harry](#)

Service Number 200955 - Died 07/09/1918, aged 23



We remember them

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On the Home Front, Rabbis spoke from the pulpit about the horrors and inhumanity of war. Hermann Gollancz of the Bayswater Synagogue, London gave such a sermon on Rosh Hashana, Saturday, 7 September 1918, highlighting the

resulting rise in racism here in the UK, words that still resonate today.

*'Do the English forget that they are a composite race? Does not history speak of the early settlers in this country, the Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans?.....'*

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*.....Some say (as if in apology for their own vindictiveness): 'Internment is not a punishment; we do not desire to be vindictive; it is resorted to as a measure of self-preservation'. Others go further, and playing the hypocrite, add: 'It is for the safety of the enemy aliens themselves!' What cant! See the methods of some of these agents provocateurs! How could they trust the 'stranger', if they do not trust the Government which they themselves have put into power, and which have given an earnest of their willingness to deal fairly with the whole problem? The legislation proposed is sufficiently drastic to deal with all suspicious cases; and I say, let it be enforced in the most thoroughgoing manner in all cases where there is a scintilla of honest suspicion of disloyalty.*

*But it has always been the pride of English law in the past that a man is innocent until he be proved guilty. Then in the name of common sense and honesty, in the name of Heaven's law of humanity, I say, leave the guiltless alone and undisturbed. Let not people say (as I have heard it said): 'England is no longer a free country'. Is it not, alas, one of the signs of a degraded society, when encouragement is given to the 'espionage' of one's own neighbour, and when one sees displayed in an open thoroughfare the invitation to 'inform against local Huns'?*

Click [here](#) for a History Window where Professor Marc Saperstein introduces the sermons of the Great War.

While this project focuses on the lives and stories of British Jews, we recognise that, across the world, Jews have always given their loyalty to the country that has given them a home and we, therefore, also remember the many German and Austrian Jews who also fought bravely for their countries while endeavouring to maintain their Jewish traditions.

Click [here](#) for Adrian Andrusier's extraordinary collection of photographs, maps and postcards relating to First World War Soldiers in the Jewish Communities.



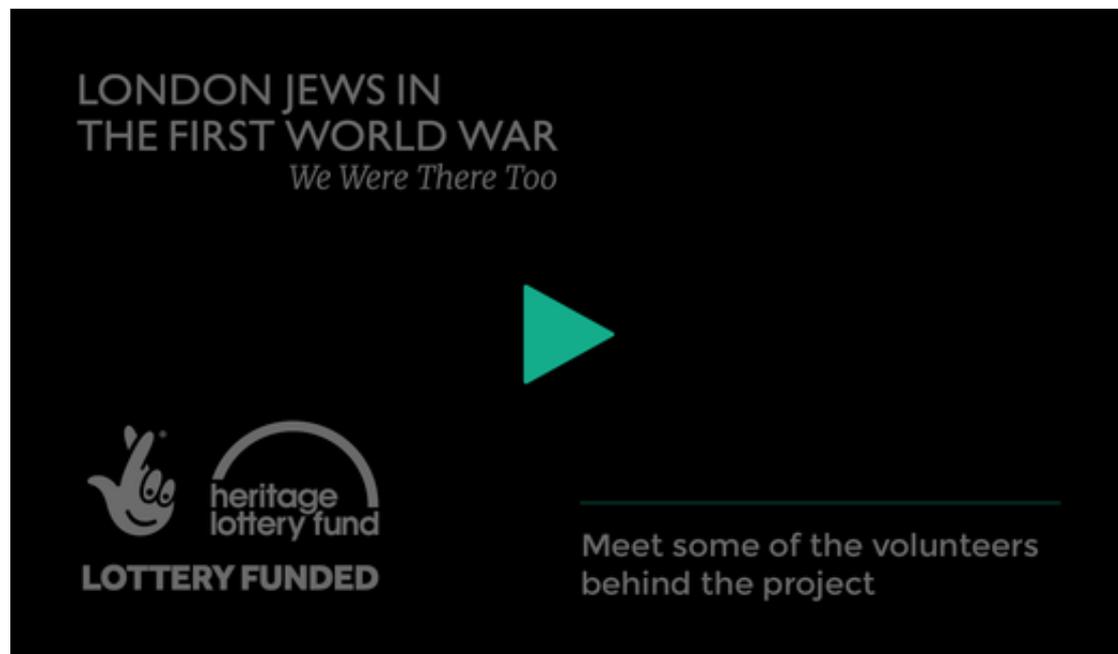
German troops observe Yom Kippur, Brussels 1915, Adrian Andrusier Collection.

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## MEET SOME VOLUNTEERS BEHIND THE PROJECT

Volunteers have been vital to the success of the *We Were There Too* project from its first conception. People with expertise and interest in a wide variety of disciplines have been giving their time and knowledge to help with technology, research, history, education, evaluation, fundraising, administration and community engagement.

In recognition of their contribution and to add to their skill set the project has supplied heritage training, educational walks and visits and support in their area of interest. Click on the link below to hear what some have to say about the experience.



## SAVE THE DATE

### TRIP TO THE SOMME AND ARRAS AREAS OF THE WESTERN FRONT 18TH-21ST MARCH 2018

Responding to a number of requests for another trip to the Battlefields, we are now planning a 4-day visit to the Somme and Arras areas of the Western Front, in March 2018.

Travelling down by the 1915 battlefield of Loos, the *We Were There Too* group will explore the First World War through the lives of those affected by it forever. With Project Historian, Paula Kitching, leading, we will examine the tragedy of the first day of the Battle of the Somme and its legacy; changes in technology; and the Battle of Arras.

We will see the sites, museums, cemeteries and memorials which inspired some of the key poems of the period and we will reflect on the thousands of Jewish names that are carved on gravestones there; an eternal reminder that *We Were There Too*.

The places we will visit include Pozieres, Thiepval, Lochnagar, Delville and Mametz Woods, the Arras Cemetery and Memorial, Vimy Ridge and the Ring of Remembrance at Notre-Dame-de-lorette.

A full itinerary and travel details will be available in a few weeks' time – please register your interest by emailing [contactus@jewsffw.london](mailto:contactus@jewsffw.london)



Arras Cemetery and Memorial

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