Experience Heritage

Album of the Jewish Legion

Jewish Public Library Archives
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www.jewishpubliclibrary.org
INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Legion was the name for five battalions of Jewish volunteers established by the British Army as the 38th, 39th and 40th Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers during the First World War. The Jewish Legion fought mainly in Palestine, which at that time was under Turkish rule. It was initially formed as the Zion Mule Corps through the efforts of Vladimir Jabotinsky when the Ottoman Turks entered into World War I against Britain and her allies. At the same time, members of the Zionist movement around the world saw an opportunity to promote the idea of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine; therefore, supporting the formation of the Jewish Legion.

At the beginning of the war, the British government opposed the participation of such a group of people in Palestine, but in 1917 ultimately, the formation of a Jewish regiment was officially announced. The Legion was made up of Jewish men from different countries such as Britain, Russia, the United States and Canada. These volunteers served on the Gallipoli front from 1915-1916 and also in the Jordan Valley in 1918.

The Jewish Legion was a unique regiment who had been awarded in late 1919 a distinctive cap badge; a menorah. After the war, some of the members returned to their respective countries while others settled in Palestine.

According to Vladimir Jabotinsky’s book The Story of the Jewish Legion (New York, 1945), 5000 volunteers came from North America. Of these, approximately 300 came from Canada. This album, which is preserved in the JPL Archives, was collected to commemorate but some of the Canadian volunteers of the Jewish Legion.
The Jewish Legion

INTRODUCTION – The Album

This album was created by Leon Cheifetz, a member of the Jewish Legion. Cheifetz joined the Legion while still under the age of 18. In Montreal he was an active member of the Poale Zion, Canadian Jewish Congress, Histadrut and he was also involved with the Keneder Adler newspaper. Cheifetz took it on to research and collect materials on Jewish Legion members, including Canadians. He was directly involved with the establishment of the Museum of the Jewish Legion in Israel.

It is unclear when this specific album of the Jewish Legion was given to the Jewish Public Library by Cheifetz. Each page of the album includes a concise biography of the soldier, written by Cheifetz. The entries for those soldiers without a photograph are found towards the end of this document. The biographical entries of the album are presented here as written by Cheifitz, without editing.
Bay, Aaron

Born in Jerusalem and brought to Canada prior to outbreak of World War I. Family related to late Avraham Shapiro of Petah Tikvah. Formed Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine with 39 Royal Fusiliers. On return to Canada established home and business in Kamsack, Sask. Finally settled in California where he became successful businessman. Passed away in 1947 after long illness.

Arons, Jack

Member of the first group of Legionnaires from Toronto. Served as instructor in 40 Bn Royal Fusiliers. After demobilization returned to Toronto and entered catering business. Born on March 21, 1895 in Braila, Roumania.
**Bookman, Harry**

Born in 1899. Prior to enlistment in Jewish Legion (in Winnipeg) worked as telegraph operator for Canadian Pacific Railways. He was member of young zionist organization. He served in Palestine with the 39th Bn Royal Fusiliers. On demobilization returned to Canada, and later on made his home in Vancouver. Suffered a heart attack and, died while on a visit to Israel.

**Joseph Bernbaum**

Born in Stopnica, Poland on March 8th 1896. Arrived in Canada in 1910 and became interested in Labor Zionist movement. He joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and helped in recruiting campaign. He left Toronto with first group and served in Palestine with 39th Royal Fusiliers. On discharged, he returned to Canada and resumed activities in Labor Zionist organization.
Brainin, Joseph

Born in Vienna, Austria on June 19, 1895, he attended schools and universities in Berlin, Geneva, Liege and Montreal. He joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 and served as recruiting officer until departure for military training in Palestine with Palestinian battalion; rank caporal. On demobilization, he made it home in the United States; married Salomea Newmark. Ex-vice president American committee for Weizman Institute; also publicist and journalist.

Brainin, Moses

Active recruiting for the Jewish Legion with my brother, Joseph, and my father, Reuben Brainin, in Canada and the United States. Transferred to Palestinian battalion in Haifa. He was in charge of platoon that collected German telegraphic and telephonic equipment along German-Turkish communication lines. At outbreak of Egyptian revolution sent to guard British engineering parts along Suez Canal.
Cadesky, William
Enlisted in Toronto in June 1918. He went from Canada to England, France, Italy, Egypt and then to Palestine. He served in the 38th Royal Fusiliers until 1920.

Bradis, Pascal
Born in Galatz, Roumania in 1898 and migrated with his parents to Saskatchewan, Canada in 1903. His parents homesteaded and farmed until 1925. He joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine. On demobilization, he returned to Canada and farmed for some time until he went into business. Now travelling salesman, married and father of two sons and one daughter.
Chaitman, Benjamin

Born in 1899 and educated in Montreal. At the age of 15, he became an active member of young Paole Zion and later joined Hechalutz. He was among the first Montrealers to join the Jewish Legion and went overseas with fourth contingent. While in Palestine, he served in transport and was member of the group court-martialed by Capt. Smalley (one of a number of anti-Semitic incidents in battalion). Stay in citadel (Cairo) affected his health; he contracted tuberculosis and died in a sanitarium at the age of 23.

Caiserman, Moishe

Born in 1897 in Roumania. He arrived in Canada in 1910 and became one of the builders of the Jewish Labor movement in Montreal. He joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 and was honorably discharged in January 1920. He was a founding member of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union; member of Poale Zion and Leon Blum Branch of Farband. Active in folks shulem and Idistadrut Campaign. Married to Yocheved Charness. father of Aviva and Myer; grandfather of 5.
Cheifetz, Leon

Born in White Russia and brought to Canada at the age of 9. He joined young Poale Zion at the age of 15 and a year later became member of Hechalutz organized by Itzhak Ben Zvi and David Ben Gurion. While still under 18, he was among the first to join the Jewish Legion group in Montreal. He left for camp on May 23, 1918 and, after serving one year in the ranks, he became a member of the Orderly Room Staff where he rose to rank of sergent. On demobilization, he returned to Canada in 1921 and resumed activities in Labor Zionist movement; Histadrut campaign; Jewish National Funds; Canadian Jewish Congress, etc... He was editor of Jewish Eagle and prior to, he was for 10 years national secretary for the Labor Zionist movement.
Epstein, Mordechai

Born in year 1894. Sent to Palestine in 1910. Emigrated to Montreal, Canada in 1913 and active in Poale Zion. Among the founders of Jewish People’s Schools. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and served until 1920 when returned to Canada. Made alujah in 1924 and became a permanent settler of Raananah. Recently, deeded a large tract of land to the Hebrew University.

Eisenberg, William

Member of the first group of Legionaires from Toronto. He was active in Poale Zion, Farband and Histadrut Campaign. After demobilization, he returned to Canada. He visited Israel a number of times. His oldest son was employed by Israel government.
Feldman, George
Born November 16, 1890 in Roona, Russia and emigrated to Canada in 1913. Joined Jewish Legion in Kamsack, Sask. and served in Palestine with the 39th Bn Royal Fusiliers. Discharged in 1919, married in 1922, have three sons.

Feldman, Abraham
Born in Bobruisk in 1893. Emigrated to Canada in 1913. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and remained in Palestine (after demobilization) until 1923. Returned to Canada where remained until 1925. Then, came back to Palestine with whole family and operated a barbershop in Tel Aviv.
Fenkell, Charles G.
Born in Opatow, Poland. Migrated to Canada in 1912. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918. After discharge, travelled across Canada as commercial salesman. In 1923, migrated to [vtrait] and stayed there until early 40s when returned to Toronto and was associated with his brother, Louis L. Fenkell in the hair goods business. Survived by wife and one married daughter.

Feldman, Jack
Born in Russia and came to Canada in 1907. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and arrived in Palestine with first Toronto group. Served in Palestine. After his return, became active in Jewish War Veterans Organization. First return visit in 1967 to participate in celebration of Legion Jubilee.
Finkelstein, Sam
Born in White Russia on Jan. 5, 1890. Arrived in Canada in 1911. Enlisted in Jewish Legion and served in Palestine. After demobilization remained in Palestine for four years and then, returned to Canada and lived in Montreal and Toronto. Carpenter by trade; later on in business. Since 1964 in Israel.

Ferman, Harry
Freeman, Harry

Friedgeit, A.H.

Glazer, Saul

Born in 1890 in Kritchev, Russia. Came to Canada in 1914 and began work on a farm until 1917. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers. On demobilization decided to remain in Palestine and became a settler of Naklad Yehuda where he remained until the day of his death.

Garbuzento, Jack

Member of first group of Toronto volunteers and served in Palestine with 38th Bn Royal Fusiliers. On return changed his name to Gordon and was active in organization of Jewish War Veterans.
Gurevich, Julius

Born in Russia in 1889. Family emigrated to Canada and he entered Manitoba University as student of agriculture. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and after service in Palestine made his home England where he married and raised his family. In 1936, finally went on Aliyah. He spent the last years of his life in Kibbutz with two of his children. Died in 1958. Three of his children live in Kibbutzim.
Joseph, Bernard

Born in year 1889 and brought to Montreal as a child. Educated at Laval University and London. As a youngster organized Young Judea and served as president until joined the Jewish Legion. After services in Palestine returned to Montreal to complete his studies in law. Returned to Palestine in 1921 and joined a well-known legal form. In 1936, appointed legal adviser Jewish Agency. Military Governor of Jerusalem during war of liberation. Later on, member of Israel Government and treasurer Jewish Agency.

Hazen, Michael

Seventeen-year old Michael Hazen was a member of young Poale Zion and Hechalutz. He enlisted in Jewish Legion, spent a few weeks in camp Windsor and then brought home by his parents as under age. Later, killed in a road-accident.
**Kohnberger, Ernest**

Born in Russia and educated in Germany. Came to Canada before World War 1 and active in Poale Zion organization as lecturer and propagandist. In 1917 he emigrated to the U.S. where he joined the Jewish Legion. Although desired to remain in Palestine, he was forced to return. Disillusionment brought him to suicide. His tragic death was a great loss to Labor Zionist Movement.

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**Kates, Robert**

Born in Brooklyn, NY on May 28, 1895 of Russian Jewish parents (father took great pride in the fact that I had served in the Jewish Legion). Service in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers. Member of the first group from Toronto. Now residing in Montreal.
Korbow, Laz


Koldofsky, Louis

Active member of Paole Zion. Came to Windsor, N.S. with first Legion group from Toronto. After service in Palestine returned to Canada and became active in Labor movement. Prior to his death, he was close to communists, but did not share their extreme views on Zionism in Palestine.
Lank, David

Born in Montreal. Joined the Jewish Legion in 1918 together with his brother, Nathan, and served in Palestine with the 39th Royal Fusiliers. Returned to Canada on demobilization, but later on made his home in the United States.

Kramer, Matityahu

Member of first Legion group from Toronto. Active in Poale Zion and Farband. During legion service, he was member of Soldiers’ Committee which negotiated with Zionist Commission on possibilities for settlement in Palestine. Serious malaria attack forced him to return. He was for a number of years director of Youth Aliyah Committee and active in Veterans Organization. Twenty years after his death remains reburied in Legion section of Avichail Cemetery.
Levin, Ali
Born July 31, 1893 in Russia and migrated to the United States in 1911. Joined the Jewish Legion in Toronto and served in Palestine with 38th Royal Fusiliers. Teacher in modern Yiddish schools and author of stories in Yiddish. On demobilization, returned to the United States, but in 1955 made his home in Israel where preceded by two daughters; one at Gesher Haziv and one in Urim.

Lank, Nathan
Magonet, Louis


Maiberg, Aaron

Paige (Petrofsky), Philip

Born in Rogachev, Byelorussia on July 15, 1902. Came to Canada with his parents who settled in Montreal (August 1914). Although under age, joined the Jewish Legion in May 1918 and served in Palestine under Col. Eliezer Margolin. After demobilization in November 1919, he returned to Worcester, Mass. where his family had moved during the war. Married in 1923 and is the father of three children.

Nemchek, Max

Reiser, Myer

Born in Galicia. Brought to Canada as a youngster, was a member of first Legion group from Toronto. Remained in Palestine after demobilization. Married and became a settler of Beer Yaivo. Later on, settled in Avicahil, rejoined army in Second World War. Died in 1954, leaving a wife, son, and daughter.

Pruzansky, Jacob

Born in year 1884 in Brisk, Lithuania and emigrated to Canada in 1905. Counter and secretary of Poale Zion. Left for Palestine in 1912 (considered first Halutz from Canada). Until enlistment in Jewish Legion was active in Labor movement; helped organized kibbutzim Givat Hashlosha and Yagur. Also illegal immigration. For many years headed department for veterans aid in Histadrut.
Reisler, Harry

Born in Poland and came to Canada in 1914. Active in Poale Zion, Jewish People's Schools, Jewish Public Library and other institutions. Was among the first volunteers to the Jewish Legion. Returned to Canada in 1920 and resumed activities in Labor Zionist Movement. Revisited Israel in 1951 to attend son's wedding. Active worker for Israel bonds and Jewish National Funds.

Ruthbard, Jacob

Joined Jewish Legion in Montreal, Canada and left with second group. Served in Palestine until demobilization. Accepted repatriation when informed of difficulties involved by remaining in country. Died not long after his return.
Rudenko, Abraham
Born in Russia in 1898 and arrived in Canada in 1908. Residing in Montreal before coming to Vancouver in 1950. Enlisted in Jewish Legion and arrived in England with the last American contingent. For personal reasons did not go to Palestine, but remained at depot until demobilization. Passed away at Vancouver General Hospital on Jan. 19, 1972.

Rosenblum, Srulick
Seigerman, Tom
A reserved bad serious-minded, sportsman at heart, lots of fun. Thomas was a Eastern Canadian who joined the Legion like scores of others from every part of the Dominion. Everybody liked him, a good friend, splendid companion, a drug comrades, loved Israel.

Schwartzbaum, L.
Born in 1895 in Chenstochov, Poland. Received religious education in Heder. In 1913, emigrated to Canada (Toronto), became active in Poale Zion. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine. On demobilization returned to Canada. In 1930, emigrated to Palestine and became a farmer in Kfar-Hadar. In early 60th again returned to Canada.
Siener, Max

Walkley, John
Commandant of depot at Windsor, Nova Scotia, where all American and Canadian Legionnaires had received their preliminary training.
Yuditzky, Max
Born in 189?. Joined Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine with 38 Royal Fusiliers. Survivors at time of his death (Oct. 6, 1934) in Winnipeg, his wife, Katee and four sons; Dave, Harold, Joseph and Bernard.

Wolofsky, Felix
Born Montreal where received general and Jewish education. Joined Jewish Legion and departed with first group on May 23, 1918. While in Palestine was attacked as clerk to an Indian Division stationed in Egypt. Returned to Canada after demobilization and joined his father's publishing firm as bookkeeper. Many of his letters relating to his Legion experiences were published in the Jewish Eagle and Jewish Chronicle.
Committee for the Legion

From left - Moishe Caiserman (legionaire), Shlome Wiseman (sitting), H.M. Caiserman, Hyman Weiss (legionaire), Eliazer Greenberg (sitting; many years executive secretary of the Jewish Public Library), Velvet Sirote, 1917.

Legionnaires photographed at Heizl Forest.
Mordechai Magidzohn - from the front.
# Jewish Legion

## Biographical Entries without Photographs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myer Bereskin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in Propaisk, White Russia and served in Russian Army until the end of Russo-Japanese War in 1895. In 1905, he came to Canada (Winnipeg) and became active in Poale Zion. In 1908, he went on a mission to Palestine for the Shiloh movement. Although married and father of two children, he joined the Jewish Legion and served in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citron, Charles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among the members of the first group of volunteers from Toronto. He served in Palestine with the 39th Royal Fusiliers. On demobilization, he made his home in New York.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohen, Israel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1898, he arrived in Canada in 1909, together with his parents, brothers and sisters. He became member of Zeire Zion. He joined the Jewish Legion 'to fight for a free home for the Jewish people' and served in Palestine with the 39th Royal Fusiliers.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eisenstal, Harry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born in Slabodka, Russia in 1895. He received traditional and zionist education. He came to Canada in 1913. Barber by trad., he joined the Jewish Legion in April 1918 and served in Palestine with the 39th Royal Battalion. He remained in the country after demobilization.</td>
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| Feldman, Bert |
Jewish Legion

Biographical Entries without Photographs

**Goldman, Arthur**

**Goldman, Louis**
Enlisted in 1918 in the city of Toronto and served in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers. Discharged in 1920. Married Palestinian girl and established home in the United States.

**Gordon, Myer**
Born in Rashkov, Russia in 1890. Brought to Montreal as minor. Was a member of the first group to join the Jewish Legion. After services in Palestine, returned to Montreal and established his home and business. Married Rivkah Shapiro. Was loved by all.

**Gorsky, H.**
Born in year 1900 in Kiever Gubernia, Russia and came to Canada in 1911. Joined Jewish Legion in Winnipeg and served overseas with the 38th Bn Royal Fusiliers. Discharged in 1919 and returned to Canada.

**Gorvich, Charles**
Joined Jewish Legion with first group from Winnipeg. On demobilization returned to home town where instrumental in organizing general Monash Br. of Canadian Legion. On outbrak of Second World War joined Cameron Highlanders. Demobilized in 1944, then moved to Vancouver. Died in military hospital after lengthy illness.
Jewish Legion

Biographical Entries without Photographs

Isaacs, Bennet

Isenberg, Louis
Born on May 24, 1899 in Warsaw, Poland and came to Canada in 1912. Joined Jewish Legion in May 1918 and served in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers. Demobilized in 1919 and returned to Canada. A year later, joined American Army for four years. On discharged worked two years on Canadian railways. Planning to make home in Israel.

Israel, Harry
Born in Negulest, Romania and arrived in Canada in 1912. Enlisted in Jewish Legion in 1918 and served in Palestine with the 38th Royal Fusiliers. Demobilized in spring of 1919 and made his home in Victoria, B.C where he was a used furniture dealer.

Lackman, Samuel
Born 4-23-1900 in Zhitomir, Russia. Migrated to Winnipeg in 1904. Enlisted in 1918 and served in Palestine with the 39th Royal Fusiliers. On return to Canada graduated University of Manitoba Law School and admitted practice as barrister in 1921. In 1923, he migrated to the U.S where practicing law together with his son. Active member of Z.O.A, Bnai Brith and other organizations.

Lavivens, Joseph
Born Minsk, Russia on Aug. 18, 1899. Arrived in Canada in 1913. Enlisted in Jewish Legion in May 20, 1918 and served in Palestine with 39th Royal Fusiliers. Was litographer by occupation.
## Jewish Legion

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mendes, Arthur</strong></td>
<td>Born in Russia in year 1900 and brought to Canada in 1906. Member of first group in Montreal Legionnaires. Served in Palestine with 39th Royal Fusiliers. Now residing in Los Angeles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oelbaum, Charles</strong></td>
<td>Member of first contingent of Jewish Legion volunteers from Toronto. Served in Palestine with 40th Bn Royal Fusiliers. After demobilization lived for a number of years in Montreal as representative of his family's business interests. Canadian born and received his education in Toronto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pascal, A.H.</strong></td>
<td>Born in Lurga Okna, Roumania in year 1898. Came to Canada at age of six and received education at local (Winnipeg) schools. Worked as reporter for Free Press and Tribune. Member of Zeive Zion. Joined Jewish Legion in May 1918 and served in Palestine with 39 Royal Fusiliers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paskowitz, Charles</strong></td>
<td>Joined Jewish Legion with first group from Toronto. On arrival in Egypt, transferred to railway operating division. Royal Engineers E.E.F worked as telegraph operator in El Arish. Later transferred to Haifa. On demobilization, returned to Canada. For many years connected with Hebrew Journal; acted as secretary of Legion Veterans group.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Biography</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shinbang, Herman</td>
<td>Born on April 28, 1899 and educated in Winnipeg public schools and University of Manitoba with degrees of Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Medicine. Served in Palestine with 40 Bn Royal Fusiliers. Practiced medicine in Canada and United States for 4 years. Retired due to permanent disabilities. During Second World War, served as Major in U.S Medical Corps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solokov, Hyman</td>
<td>Born Jan. 11, 1897 in Rudzin, Russia. Lived in England from 1901-1907 then went with parents to Canada, lived in Winnipeg. Joined Jewish Legion, served as signaller then posted to area headquarters until demobilization on October 1919. Worked as journalist, then graduated law in Manitoba University. Appointed Q.C 1960. Wife (Rebecca Rusoff) and three children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swartz, Paul</td>
<td>Born in Roumania on July 1, 1893. Arrived in Canada in 1913. Enlisted in Jewish Legion and served in Palestine; stationed at El Arish, Rafa, Ludd, Haifa, Kandara and Ismailiah. Demobilization in 1919 and returned to Canada. Married and father of four children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiss, Hyman</td>
<td>Born in Poland and came to Canada prior to outbreak of World War. Member of Poale Zion. Joined Jewish Legion in Montreal and served in Palestine with 38th Royal Fusiliers. After demobilization, lived in Ottawa and then in Toronto where active in synagogues and veterans groups of Jewish Legion.</td>
</tr>
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