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THE FIVE V.C.'S

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Meritorious Service Medals	..	..	..	66
Mentioned in Despatches	..	..	..	336
Foreign Honours	..	..	..	138
Mentioned in Home Despatches	..	..	..	155
Total	..	..	..	1,596

**THE FIVE JEWISH V.C.'S.** The official records of the exploits of the five V.C.'s are as follows. (For photographs see Plate I.)

Lieut. FRANK ALEXANDER DE PASS, late 34th Prince Albert Victor's Own Poona Horse.

"For conspicuous bravery near Festubert on November 24th, 1914. In entering a German sap and destroying a traverse in the face of the enemy's bombs and for subsequently rescuing, under heavy fire, a wounded man who was lying exposed in the open. Lieut. de Pass lost his life on this day in a second attempt to capture the aforesaid sap, which had been re-occupied by the enemy."

No. 168 Sgt. ISSY SMITH (SHMULOVITCH), 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment.

"For most conspicuous bravery on April 26th, 1915, near Ypres, when he left his company on his own initiative and went well forward towards the enemy's position to assist a severely wounded man whom he carried a distance of 250 yards into safety, whilst exposed the whole time to heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. Subsequently Sgt. Smith displayed great gallantry when casualties were very heavy in voluntarily assisting to bring in many more wounded men throughout the whole day, and attending them with the greatest devotion to duty regardless of personal risk."

No. 958 Pte. (later Lieut.) LEONARD KEYSOR, 1st Battalion Australian Imperial Force.

"For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Lone Point

trenches in the Gallipoli Peninsula. On August 7th, 1915, he was in a trench which was being heavily bombed by the enemy. He picked up two live bombs and threw them back at the enemy at great risk to his own life, and continued throwing bombs, although himself wounded, thereby saving a portion of the trench which it was important to hold. On August 8th, at the same place, Pte. Keysor successfully bombed the enemy out of a position from which a temporary mastery over his own trench had been obtained, and was again wounded. Although marked for hospital he declined to leave, and volunteered to throw bombs for another company which had lost its bomb-throwers. He continued to bomb the enemy till the situation was relieved."

No. 18105 Pte. J. WHITE (WEISS), 6th King's Own Royal Lancs. Regiment.

"During an attempt to cross the river Diala (Mesopotamia) on March 7th, 1917, he saw the two pontoons ahead of him come under machine-gun fire, with disastrous results. When his own pontoon had reached mid-stream, with every man except himself either dead or wounded, finding that he was unable to control the pontoon, Pte. White promptly tied a telephone wire to the pontoon and towed it to the shore, thereby saving an officer's life and bringing to land the rifles and equipment of the other men in the boat, who were either dead or dying."

Captain ROBERT GEE, M.C., 2nd Royal Fusiliers.

"For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and determination when an attack by a strong enemy force pierced our line south-west of Cambrai on November 30th, 1917, and captured a brigade headquarters and ammunition dump. Captain Gee, finding himself a prisoner, killed one of the enemy with his spiked stick, and succeeded in escaping. He then organised 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 organised."

As has been pointed out in dealing with the subject of Casualties, the full total of Honours and Distinctions gained cannot be ascertained with certainty, although every copy of the *London Gazette* with its record of awards published since the beginning of the War has been carefully scrutinised.

The number of five Jewish V.C.'s compares favourably with the total of 578 awarded among the six million men on active service. A large proportion of the D.S.O.'s, M.C.'s and M.M.'s were won by deeds of personal gallantry in the field, and Jews of all branches of the Forces are included in the lists. For detailed records of many of these deeds of heroism, see pp. 127 to 156.

**JEWISH UNITS.\*** Early in October 1914, a movement was inaugurated in London to raise a battalion consisting entirely of Jews. The War Office approved of the idea and granted facilities for this proposal to be carried into effect. Public meetings were held, and recruiting was opened in the East End of London and other parts of the country on the lines of the "Pals" units, which had been so successful in some of the provincial cities. After a short time, however, the movement was abandoned owing to lack of support. Nothing further was heard of this proposal until the subject of the recruitment of Russian Jews was raised in 1917.

On the initiative of Mr. (later Lieut.) V. Jabotinsky, the War Office authorised the formation of a battalion in which Russian Jews could serve together, arrangements being made for Jewish observances to be maintained while the men were on service. A number of Jewish soldiers already serving were allowed to transfer to this battalion, which became the 38th Royal Fusiliers, under the command of Lieut.-Col. J. H. Patterson, D.S.O., of "Zion Mule Corps" fame (see below), and was officially gazetted as a unit of the British Army on August 24th, 1917.

\* See Articles by V. Jabotinsky and H. Wolfensohn, pp. 59 to 67.