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200 years of migration to England

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left my friends at No. 42 C.C.S. in the village of Aubigny where I had been most comfortable and took up my residence amid the tents of No. 49 C.C.S. in an Armstrong hut made of canvas stretched on wood. I remained there, throughout a severe winter, amid the ruins of Achiet-le-Grand, near Bapaume, until the great retreat of March, 1918. It was a new experience living away from any town or village in the open field, but the varied interest of my work made the life very absorbing, as it was continuously full of new developments. Moreover, I was especially fortunate in meeting in the mess of my C.C.S. a body of medical men who extended towards me the utmost cordiality and friendship. Their interest in Judaism and in Jewish history was very keen, and I delivered several lectures upon these subjects—both to officers, nurses and men. It is interesting to put to record that as a rule both my brother Chaplains and I found it most convenient for our work to be attached to medical units, both at the front and at the bases, and found many friends among the doctors and surgeons with whom we lived.

Bapaume was a very useful centre for the Third Army area, which extended from Arras to Peronne, about 50 miles, and the line ran about six miles in front, close to Bullecourt and Havrincourt Wood. Next to the ruined cathedral of Bapaume a building had been patched up to serve as a theatre, called by the Australians who had captured Bapaume, the "Fair Dinkum" Theatre, and I was very gratified on visiting the place to find that an Australian Sergeant was temporarily in charge who was a Jew. He was of the utmost assistance in making arrangements for the service. Special electric lights were fitted up for the Reading Desk, and everything passed off most satisfactorily. The vast congregations included, both on New Year and Atonement Day, a number of American Engineers who had recently been attached to the British Army, a party of Egyptian Jews with a Labour Company, and men from all parts of the Empire. The Shofar was blown by a soldier of the 4th London Regiment, who had been a bugler in the Jewish Lads' Brigade. Lieutenant-Colonel F. D. Samuel read part of the service on Kippur, and the local Town Major served out extra rations for a large number of men.

In the month following these impressive gatherings the whole front line was in action, when General Byng made his surprise attack upon the enemy near Cambrai, and again on November 30th, when we were obliged to surrender part of the captured ground, owing to a counter attack. On the

day of the second Cambrai battle I had been called to bury two soldiers, one of whom was a German, in a cemetery at Ytres, near Havrincourt Wood. Large numbers of wounded men were pouring into the C.C.S., including a number of gunners, who reported that hand-to-hand fighting was taking place round the batteries. The noise of the bombardment was deafening, and arrangements were being made for evacuation of the field hospitals, as it was rumoured that the enemy was approaching. I had reached the village of Fins, which was near to the cemetery, when I learnt that the enemy were already on the outskirts of the village of Gouzeaucourt, about three miles away, and I saw the cavalry galloping up to drive back the advancing foe. It was therefore necessary to escape as quickly as possible, and my faithful chauffeur, Cpl. Macintosh, who was with me for three years, sent the car flying along the road home to Achiet-le-Grand. It was a very exciting time, and on reaching Bapaume, which was being heavily shelled, I learnt that a Jewish soldier had been killed the same day whilst standing at the railway station through which I had passed.

In making the arrangements for the services for the High Festivals at Bapaume, an incident occurred which is worth recording. A party of over 100 men from the 4th Infantry Labour Company, Middlesex Regiment, had been brought to the service from their camp a few miles away on the New Year Day, and they reported to me that they had been informed that no permission would be granted for them to attend on Yom Kippur. I accordingly visited their Commanding Officer a few days later and learnt that the report was true, and, in spite of my efforts to obtain leave for the men to attend the service the following week on the Fast Day, I was unsuccessful in moving the Colonel. I suggested that the men might be allowed to work for two Sundays if the Yom Kippur were given to them, and, whilst this offer was being considered, a Canadian Major walked into the hut, who, I was told, was in charge of the Jewish men of the Labour Unit. The decision was placed in his hands, and he informed me that his home was in Montreal. I thereupon asked him if he knew anything about the Jewish observances and the importance of the Fast Day. His reply was that he was a wholesale clothier at home, and that the majority of his workmen were Jews. He therefore strongly urged the Commanding Officer to give way, "else," he added, "he would never hear the end of the trouble."

A feature in the life at the front in which a considerable number of

Jewish soldiers were prominent is to be noted in the Divisional and Army concert parties which gave entertainments for the amusement of the men. The musical talent of the Jewish soldier was fully utilised, and I was present at many performances of very high merit, in which Jewish actors or singers or pianists received the hearty applause of crowded audiences. I also attended boxing competitions in which some of our men did extremely well, and won marked popularity by their fistic prowess.

From the month of December, 1917, to our retreat in March, 1918, the Bapaume sector, in which I lived, received the unwelcome attentions of the enemy airmen night after night, and it was not a pleasant experience to hear bombs exploding around one with no other protection than that afforded by a canvas or tin roof. One night, in my village of Achiet le-Grand, about 40 bombs were dropped, causing many casualties, among them a Jewish driver of the Army Service Corps, whom I had seen the evening before. At the beginning of the month of March an enemy offensive was expected. I held a number of services in the front area which were very well attended, one of them in a recreation shed in the village of Metz-en-Couture—which was in Havrincourt Wood, about 1,500 yards from the front line. It was an exceedingly noisy spot, as many of our "heavies" were hidden in the ruins of the village, and it was difficult to make one's voice heard amidst the continuous din. For Sunday, March 10th, I had arranged a service in Arras; but on the Saturday I received a message from Corps Headquarters to the effect that the service must be postponed. I learnt later that the men were "standing to," expecting the beginning of the offensive. As this did not happen, I was able to hold that service on the 17th March in Arras in the Y.M.C.A. hut, which had been erected on the ruins of the Hotel de Ville. Mr. E. W. Hornung, the novelist, was in charge of the hut, and was very interested in the arrangements I was making for the Passover meetings on March 28th, both here and in the Cinema at Bapaume.

Three days before the 21st, Professor W. Rothenstein, the famous artist, came to stay at my mess. He had previously lived at the C.C.S., where the Rev. H. L. Price resided in the 5th Army, and was engaged in painting scenes of the war area. As I had more than once in the course of my wanderings, especially when searching for graves, visited the old battle areas of the Somme and Ancre, I took the Professor round and pointed out the scenes of famous battles such as Thiepval, High Wood, Delville Wood, the