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BACKGROUND TO AJEX

1955

1. The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (popularly known as AJEX) has been in existence for the past 28 years. It came into being through the initiative of 12 Old Comrades of the Jewish Regiment (The 'Judeans') who had served under General Allenby in World War 1.
2. The Association is run on democratic lines, guided by a National Executive Council, whose members are elected at an Annual Conference of Delegates from each of the 59 Branches, representing a membership exceeding 10,000. *(60,000 Jews in Brit. forces 1939/45)*
3. The National Chairman is Major S. C. Speelman, T.D.
4. Membership of AJEX is open to all Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women who have served in H.M. Forces or the Allied Forces including Ex-National Servicemen, or with the British Mercantile Marine during hostilities.
5. Although non-political in essence, AJEX takes a firm stand to counter-act racial and religious intolerance in any form, and has continued to protest vociferously against the resurgence of Nazism in Germany and the release of Nazi War Criminals.
6. Welfare is one of the main activities of the Association, and assistance has been given to scores of needy Jewish Ex-Servicemen and women throughout the Country. The British Legion, and other ex-service organisations, as well as the Jewish Board of Guardians work closely with AJEX for this purpose. Funds for this work are raised through a variety of functions during the year, as well as by contributions from members' subscriptions.
7. Branches of the Association engage themselves in social and cultural activities, and continually seek through these functions to foster and maintain a 'good-neighbour' policy with other organisations, (both Jewish and non-Jewish) in their respective areas.
8. The Annual Remembrance Parade is the highlight of the AJEX year. The Inspecting Officers in preceding years have been:-

- 1954 Marshal of the R.A.F. Lord Tedder of Glenguin, G.C.B.
- 1953 Field Marshal the Rt. Hon. Earl Alexander of Tunis, K.G., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.O.
- 1952 H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T.
- 1951 General Sir Frederick Pile, Bt., G.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.,
- 1950 Air Marshal Sir William Forster Dickson, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C.,
- 1949 Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, K.G., G.C.B., D.S.O.,
- 1948 Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham, K.T., G.C.B., O.M., D.S.O.,
- 1947 Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, K.G., O.M., G.C.B., D.S.O.,
- 1946) - ) War Years
- 1939) Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., C.I.E., D.S.O.,
- 1937 Major General the Rt. Hon. Earl of Athlone K.G., P.C., D.S.O.,
- 1936 Field Marshal Lord Milne, G.C.B.,
- 1935 Field Marshal Sir Archibald Montgomery Massingberd, G.C.B., K.C.M.G.,
- 1934 Major General Sir Frederick Maurice, K.C.M.G.,
- 1933 Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes, G.C.B., K.C.V.O.,
- 1932 General Sir Webb Gilman, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.,
- 1931 Field Marshal Allenby, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.,
- 1930 General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.S.O.,

Further information about AJEX can be obtained on application to the Secretary, or to the Press Officer, at 98/100, City Road, London, E.C.1.

WREATH PARTY 1955

BRIGADIER E. F. BENJAMIN C.B.E. Is a Canadian who became a Regular (R.E.'s) in the British Army. He has served in Malaya, Madagascar and Middle East, and commanded the Jewish Brigade Group in Italy in the last War. Is in command of the Wreath Party this year.

LIEUT. T. GOULD V.C., R.N.V.R. Served in submarines in the last war. Awarded the V.C. when a Petty Officer in Submarine Thrasher in 1942. As his damaged submarine lay on the surface in enemy waters and with every prospect of having to dive to avoid heavy enemy attack, Gould, with an officer (also awarded the V.C.) removed two unexploded bombs from gun casing, a position which would have given no chance of escape if the submarine had submerged. The bombs, too, were of a type which might have exploded on being removed. Will lay the Wreath with Lieut. David Sharp B.E.M.

LIEUT. DAVID SHARP B.E.M., AMERICAN COM. MEDAL, ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT T.A. An ex-Korean Prisoner of War from Birmingham. Lieut Sharp was awarded the B.E.M. in April 1954 for "... integrity, loyalty and courage ... frequently above the normal call of duty." The citation states: - "Shortly after his capture he became suspected by the Chinese and he underwent a brutal and prolonged series of interrogations during the greater part of which his arms remained bound, and he was denied even the simplest requirements of daily life ..." "Throughout his captivity," the citation adds, "Sgt. Sharp set the highest example of integrity, loyalty and courage".

He is sharing the honours with Lieut. T. Gould, V.C., R.N.V.R. of laying the Wreath at the Cenotaph.

MAJOR EDMUND L. DE ROTESCHILD, T.D. A Joint Trustee of AJEX, who was a most energetic chairman of the Remembrance Parade Organising Committee 1946-49. Served in Royal Bucks Yeomanry, Field Regiment R.A. 1935-9. When the War broke out was at Territorial Camp - went to France with B.E.F. and later saw service in North Africa and Italy.

COLONEL MARCUS J. SIEFF, O.B.E. A Joint Trustee of AJEX and frequently member of Wreath Party in which he takes his place again this year. Served in London Ack-Ack, subsequently served in the Mediterranean operationally and staff. Awarded the O.B.E. for services in connection with the Sicily assault and was twice mentioned in Despatches, once in connection with operation in Tripoli and the other in Italy.

WING COMMANDER LIONEL COHEN, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C. Awarded the D.F.C. for service as air-gunner observer on active operational service at the age of 69. The citation stated "He set a magnificent example to all by his untiring energy and courage". Flew in 70 operational missions, including attacks on the Scharnhorst and Gneisenau when the German warships were at Brest in 1941. When 18 he served in the Matabele Campaign in 1893; he was in the South African War 50 years ago, and he won his D.S.O. and M.C. in German East Africa in the 1914-18 War.

HIS HONOUR JUDGE COHEN, M.C., T.D. Elder son of Mr. Reuben Cohen, who until retirement, was Registrar of the Stockton and Middlesbrough County Court, in which Judge Cohen himself now sits. Called to bar in 1929 - was Assistant Recorder of Hull Quarter Sessions and was Reserve Chairman for the Medical Appeals Tribunal for Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire. Was Territorial in 9th. Battalion Durham Light Infantry, and on outbreak of war, was transferred to the 1st Battalion The Tyneside Scottish. Served with Regiment in France and was P.O.W. Germany for five years. Awarded M.C. on release for gallantry in the field. Also awarded the T.D.

MAJOR SIR J. BRUNEL COHEN, K.B.E. Fought with the B.E.F. in France in 1914 and was severely wounded at Ypres in 1917. When M.P. from 1918-31 he was a great champion of the cause of ex-servicemen in Parliament. A former treasurer of the British Legion for nearly 25 years. Created Knight Bachelor in 1943 and K.B.E. in 1948.

CORPORAL FECTOR JOHN REECE Enlisted in the 2nd Northamptonshire Regiment in 1897 and served in Regular Army for 23 years. Fought throughout Boer War 1899-1902 and was one of the Old Contemptibles at Mons. in 1914. Saw severe service in Flanders battles.