

Below is a transcript of the audio used in the box.

1. 3D Print of Ajax Memorial from the NMA.

Welcome to your Museum in a Box. By placing the poppies and postcards in front of you onto the museum brain, you can explore the hidden stories of the Jewish Military Museum collection, and discover how we remember the brave Jewish men and women who have served Britain.

The object you're looking at now is the Ajax Memorial, which can be found in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. 'Ajax' stands for the Association of Jewish Ex Service Men and Women, and is made up of 4,000 members who have all served in some way in the British military. Many of them visit the Memorial during Armed Forces Week in June every year.

Remembrance Sunday, which takes place in November every year, is a day for the whole country to remember and honour those who have died during wartime.

Ajax also has its own Remembrance service which takes place in London at the cenotaph, a week after Remembrance Sunday.

The most common symbol of Remembrance is a red poppy, although some people also wear different coloured poppies to help them remember the diverse groups of people who fought for Britain. For example, wearing a black poppy, marks the contribution of soldiers from African and Caribbean countries.

After you have finished looking at the memorial, choose a poppy and place it on the Hearing History Box to learn more about why we remember people and the different ways we can choose to remember them.

2. Poppy 1 (link to Florence Oppenheimer postcard)

During remembrance services, we often think about soldiers, airmen and sailors. But they aren't the only people in the military.

The Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps was set up in 1902. Nurses in this unit look after soldiers in Britain and abroad, and often have to travel to very dangerous war zones to care for their patients.

Florence Oppenheimer was a nurse in the Queen Alexandra's Nursing Corps during the First World War. She was born in North London and left school at 17. Her father didn't like the idea of women nursing men but when Florence was 29 her brother was finally able to persuade her father to let her train.

Florence was taking her final nursing exams when the First World War started. She served on hospital ships around the Mediterranean and Egypt and was mentioned in despatches, made by senior officers, for her bravery.

Pick up the Florence Oppenheimer card and put it on the Hearing History Box, to learn more about her life and nurses in the military.

3. Florence Oppenheimer Postcard

During her time on the hospital ships Florence Oppenheimer wrote a diary, which is now in the Jewish Museum. It includes photos she took of the men she treated and the other nurses she worked with, like the one you're looking at now.

In this extract from her diary, she describes the very difficult conditions she had to deal with:

"...by breakfast time we had 1,980 cases on board. At last I realised what war really meant. All these cases straight from the battlefield, and other ships all round us also taking the poor fellows on as fast as ever they could. All the decks, every hole and corner of the place was utilised. Half our Sisters went off onto another ship during the morning leaving us with our own proper number - 12 - Two of us were ill so we had 10 nurses to look after nearly 2,000 patients."

In this extract she talks about the danger of being on a boat.

"Tonight we are to creep past Gibraltar; in the danger zone once more. Yesterday we started lifeboat drill, we had to parade at 3p.m. practice putting on and off our lifejackets at given signals and we have all been given our places in the lifeboats so that we each know exactly which boat to make for... Being a troop ship we would have no warning but will be simply torpedoed or shelled. I wonder if we are going to be safely landed. Yesterday targets were fixed up and the Officers practised revolver shooting. It was an awful din and I didn't enjoy it."

Why do you think it is important to remember the men and women who serve in the armed forces but who aren't soldiers?

4. Poppy 2 (link to Marcus Segal Postcard)

Remembrance services and large memorial statues allow lots of people to gather together to honour those who have died whilst serving their country. There are also smaller and more personal ways for us to remember those who have lost their lives.

50,000 Jewish soldiers fought for Britain in the First World War and more than 3,000 of those soldiers died. After the war, the Government decided that special, personalised Memorial Plaques, or medallions, should be made and sent to the families of all of the soldiers who had died.

These plaques helped people remember the bravery of their family members. Around the edge of the plaque are the words "He (or she) died for freedom and honour".

Medallions like these were sent to the families of soldiers like Marcus Segal, whose picture you can find on one of the postcards. Marcus was a lieutenant in the army, and he wrote lots of letters from the trenches in France to his family back in England.

Pick up the Marcus Segal postcard and put it on the Hearing History Box to learn more about his life and his family.

5. Marcus Segal Postcard

Marcus Segal was born in 1896. His father Solomon was born in Russia and his mother Esther was from Hull. While Marcus was still young the whole family moved to North London.

Before his 18th birthday he joined the army, to fight in the First World War.

In 1915 he became a temporary lieutenant in the 13th Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment.

In the trenches Marcus tried to follow his faith, keeping the Holy Days and writing to his family about his life. On the 19th June 1917, Marcus was killed by a shell explosion, in France, aged 20 years old.

Here is an extract from a letter he wrote to his family in May 1917:

My dearest parents,

I am just dropping you a few lines to let you know that up to the present I am quite well. Now my dear ones in the space of a very few hours I am due with my battalion to go into a very big affair, far greater than has ever before been attempted. We have a very difficult position to take and somehow or another I do not seem to fancy it at all, but I pray to the Almighty that I may come out of it quite safely. If it is not to be my "Mazel" all I pray for you is not to worry. [...] The tremendous fighting due to the excellent weather is impossible to describe and it is not the strong man who is wanted, I mean physically, but it is the cool head which is very necessary to keep under very heavy fire and difficult positions. I got no letter yesterday but hope to get something tonight.

I will now conclude, just going up to the trenches.

Good night,

Your loving son

Marcus

If you had a chance to write a letter to Marcus, what kinds of questions would you ask him about his experiences?

6. Poppy 3 (link to Kasser Postcard)

Military Chaplains look after the religious life of the men and women in the armed forces.

The word 'chaplain' is a Christian word, but there have been Jewish chaplains in the British army since 1892.

After the start of the First World War, the British Government agreed that there should be Jewish Chaplains on the front line, but there were so many Jewish soldiers that it became very difficult to help everybody.

After the First World War, the Jewish Chaplain Rabbi Michael Adler created the 'British Jewry Book of Honour', a huge book which lists all of the Jews who had served in the war.

In 1942, during the Second World War, Private Moses Jakob Kasser joined the Pioneer Corps. He had left Germany 4 years earlier and wanted to fight with Britain against the Nazis. When he realised that there were so few Jewish Chaplains, he became a voluntary chaplain for the 87th company.

Pick up the Kasser postcard and put it on the Hearing History Box, to learn more about the concept of remembrance and Judaism.

7. Kasser Postcard

Before he had left Germany, Private Kasser had been studying to be a Rabbi, and he felt that it was his duty to help soldiers celebrate Shabbat and the Jewish festivals, whilst they were away from home.

Kasser believed it was very important for soldiers to celebrate Hanukkah. The object you're looking at is a Hanukkah card that was sent to him whilst he was on the front line.

In Judaism, remembering and honouring those who have died is very important. Listen to Rabbi Ruben Livingstone, who explains more about his role as the Senior Jewish Chaplain in the British Army today and his thoughts on Hanukkah and remembrance.

"So I am the Senior Chaplain, Senior Jewish Chaplain to her Majesty's Armed Forces and, as such, I work for the Military of Defence but I am also a serving officer Chaplain in the British Army. So, on the one hand, I have brought my rabbinic background and training, offering instruction, pastoral support and everything that goes into being a rabbi. On the other hand, I have been through Sandhurst and I've trained as an infantry officer, as everyone does, actually.

In so far as the real story of Hanukkah, not the one that we know and love but the real story of Hanukkah [it] is a military victory. It is an insurgency of the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans, against the Greek government and lo and behold it is victorious. That's a miraculous military celebration. The Rabbi's didn't like this military celebration so what we see is the recalibration of Hanukkah, into the spiritualisation of Hanukkah and into a celebration of the rededication of the temple, the rekindling of the lamps, the small amount of oil that lasts for 8 days.

And actually, in that, you have captured the military victory, because the small unfeasible amount of oil that burns bright for 8 days, *is* the small group of rebel Maccabees who overwhelm the Greek might. It's the same idea of 'little against large', David against Goliath; the unfeasibility of that, the miracle of that. It's the same thing but it's spiritualised. So at root Hanukkah is one of the first occasions in antiquity, after the Jews no longer held power in the Holy land, it is the first instance where Jews are able to stand tall and celebrate Military service, a marshal victory. Therefore it is a source of Jewish pride, it's a model for Jews being warriors.

As you remember the dead, as you remember sacrifice, and you remember service, that is very, very solemn. But behind that, actually, there's something very positive. There's a debt of gratitude; so we can celebrate what we have because those people made those sacrifices. There is all the stuff that I've already spoken about in terms of Jews standing tall, and paying our price in the community, and we can be very proud of that and we continue to do that. But it's like Judaism itself, life is tragic and life is painful but it's also joyous and you interfuse."

8. Poppy 4 (link to Issy Smith)

The Victoria Cross is the most important award that can be given to a man or woman in the armed forces.

Since 1856, over 1,000 people have been awarded the Victoria Cross. They are hand-made, traditionally using bronze.

They don't cost very much money to make. Their value lies in what they symbolise and what people do to earn them.

The words written on the Victoria Cross are "For Valour", a traditional phrase for bravery. They were personally chosen by Queen Victoria.

In the First World War, 5 Jewish Soldiers won the Victoria Cross.

Corporal Issy Smith, won his for great devotion to wounded comrades in France on April 26th 1915.

He left the trenches and crawled towards the enemy line, to help a wounded man, whom he carried 250 yards back to safety. Later he went out again, and rescued more wounded soldiers.

Place the Issy Smith postcard onto the Hearing History Box, to learn more about how the army uses medals to honour and remember the service of soldiers.

9. Issy Smith Postcard

Issy Smith was wounded four times during the war. He had to spend time in hospital in Dublin. Whilst there, a newspaper reporter asked Smith about his heroic actions on the front line; but he replied "every British soldier is a hero."

When asked another question about his bravery he said "when you see your comrades bleeding on the battlefield, your heart is moved and you become desperate." He believed anyone in his position would have acted in the same way.

The object you can see here is a drawing of Issy Smith from a collectable card. People could find these in packs of cigarettes, and they kept them as tokens to remind them of the bravery of the Victoria Cross winners.

Issy Smith also won other medals during his time in the army.

Medals and awards are a way for the armed forces to show their thanks for the work of the men and women who serve.

Some medals are given to all members of the military who fought in a specific war. For example, the Victory Medal, with its multi-coloured ribbon, was given to any person who was 'mobilised' during the course of the First World War. This means there were over six million given out to people in Britain alone.

Other medals were only given for very specific reasons. For example, the Arctic Star medal, which is for those who were sent to the Arctic in the Second World War, has only been given to forty people.

Can you imagine how you would award soldiers returning from war- what would their medals or plaques look like? How would you present them; a ceremony, a parade or a personal gift?

10. Poppy 5 (link to Ruth Bourne Medals)

As well as soldiers, airmen and sailors, there are other people in the military who make very important contributions, who ought to be remembered.

The Women's Royal Naval Service, also called the WRENS, was formed in the First World War. Men who had previously done other jobs, were needed as sailors in the Royal Navy. Women who joined the WRENS could be asked to work as anything from cooks to weapons analysts, electricians and air mechanics.

By the end of the Second World War, there were more than 75,000 women in the WRENS.

Many WRENS were also sent to take jobs in the Intelligence services. The Intelligence services gathered information from the enemy which helped the army decide when and where to attack.

Codebreakers, working for MI6, came to work at Bletchley Park. The Germans sent secret messages to their troops, and the codebreakers at Bletchley used machines to crack the codes and translate the messages from German to English.

Over 70% of the people working at Bletchley were women which was a very high number for the time.

Why do you think that it was important to remember that women took on vital roles during the war, which had previously only been given to men?

Place the postcard of Ruth Bourne's medals on the Hearing History Box to learn more about the contribution made by women in the Intelligence service and the ways in which we can remember those whose work was kept secret during the war.

11. Ruth Bourne Medal Postcard

Ruth Bourne joined the Women's Royal Naval Service during World War 2 and was sent to work for the Intelligence services.

Ruth worked on a Bombe machine, spelt "b-o-m-b-e".

The Bombe was like a huge computer, invented to crack the codes created by the German Enigma machines. It was an incredibly complicated system which needed to work through over 150 million, million, million possibilities in order to figure out what the messages sent by the enemy might mean.

Because the work being done by Bletchley Park was top secret, the people working there had to sign the Official Secrets Act. This meant they couldn't tell anyone about their work, not even their parents or children. It wasn't until 30 years later that people started to find out how important their contribution was and how many lives they saved by cracking secret codes.

Ruth was given a general service medal, which you can see here, after the Second World War.

However, the real work she did helping break codes was never publically recognised or remembered until 2010, 66 years after the war ended, when the Government gave a special commemorative badge to everyone who had served at Bletchley.

Listen to Ruth talk about her experience, and imagine what it would be like doing work in the war that no one could ever know about.

"Well I am ashamed to say I found out that the uniform had been designed by Hardy Amies, who was a very famous couturier so if it was a choice of 3 of the services I chose the WRENS. But the reason behind it I suppose was that I wanted to experience life outside of school.

Everybody my age never considered the seriousness of losing the war. There was never a question of we would lose it which is, looking back on it, very strange. Perhaps it was the upbringing, if you work hard, you'll do OK. Um, and I think behind it all was the fear that if everybody didn't work hard we might have the Germans over here. After all, they were only on the other side of the Channel.

We were training, you know, we have to sign the Official Secrets Act to say that nothing that we ever saw or nothing that we ever did or anything that we heard spoken, we were never to divulge it. So when I saw these machines, for me it was just another machine.

I had never heard the word enigma and we never saw and enigma and we never realised the complexity of these machines. We were just presented with the machines and we knew, this is what you have to do. You have to be 150% accurate. There was no room for a mistake. So from that point of view, they were initially intimidating. You could only watch to begin with, what the operation was doing, with another WREN obviously who'd been there. You knew that. Um, you were amazed at the noise because they all made a terrific noise and there were at least 12 in each BOMBE room, if you like. Bay, they called them bays and there were 12 of those in the bay and they made clattering noises. And when I found the difficulty and the

complexity of this machine and how hit and miss it was to actually get it going and the ramification, because by then I had learnt about all the things we had done. You had to sink the Scharnhorst and the Bismarck, the Battle of Britain. I mean, the whole thing was from information and how we won. I think the only thing all of us did which was equal was keeping it quiet.

My mother would say 'oh you can tell me, I'm your mother.' But it would be all over Birmingham in 5 minutes time. You would be amazed but my parents never knew of course.

Yes, it was very nice to have a badge. It wasn't a badge from the Queen. We were sad about that. I think the land girls got badges and I think our director Simon Greenish picked up an awful lot of angry moans as the land girls get a real badge with the Queens crest and some of them were invited for tea at Buckingham Palace! You know, what about us? They began to prick up their ears and they invited us to some tea parties and got some very important charming people from The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire or Bedfordshire or somewhere came to give us tea. It was a wonderful gesture really, all in their uniform giving us cups of tea and cake."

12. Poppy 6 (link to Ajex Window postcard)

Listen to this poem by Laurence Binyon called 'For the Fallen'. Think about the images used in the poem and how they make you feel.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

Look closely at the image of the window, and imagine what other works of art could be made to help remember those who served. Could you design something which would help people to remember all of the roles that Jewish men and women have played in the British Armed Forces?

Now pick up the Ajex Memorial Window Card and put it on the Hearing History Box, to learn more about what the window means, and why Ajex was formed.

13. Ajex Memorial Window Postcard

Some ways of remembering people are very personal and private; medals, memorial plaques and names in books allow families and loved ones to keep special tokens which they can use to remember those who have served in the military.

The Ajex Remembrance Parade allows people to gather together, in public, to honour and celebrate those who have died.

As well as honouring the memories of those who have died, Ajex also helps veteran soldiers who are still alive and need support once they have returned home from combat.

In 1987, Ajex asked the designer Abram Games to create a memorial window, which you can see on the postcard in front of you. Games was an official war artist in the Second World War.

Each of the coloured strands at the centre represents a medal ribbon from a British campaign that Jewish service people fought in. The medal ribbons create the shape of a Star of David and are surrounded by colours that represent the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Now, listen to Ron Shelley talk about the work that Ajex does and why it is so important for all people to remember.

“It was part of the *raison d’être*, what we were fighting for. What did all these guys, these 50,000 guys who served in World War 2, forget earlier than that let’s say World War 2, what were they fighting for? They were fighting, as the country was fighting; we were opposing fascism and Hitler-ism. We were trying to fight for the decency of an ordinary man to be able to run an ordinary life, irrespective of where he prayed, or what his colour was.

So when we came back after the war, when my guys came back after the war (don’t forget I was only a boy during the war, when I joined I did National Service and then I was involved in AJEX) but for these guys who served that was part of the *raison d’être* of joining AJEX. And when they saw Moseley on the streets of London in the late 40s they were appalled. And we opposed Moseley in every way we could, as we opposed the National Front 30 odd years later.

Don’t forget in 1979 when the National Front put up 300 candidates for Parliament, we issued a million leaflets throughout the country, showing people what the National Front stood for. We oppose all forms of discrimination because that is what being part of the service was about.

When I go there [to the NMA] it’s not just a question of looking at or being proud of the Jewish memorial. It’s being proud of the fact that I live in a country which has been prepared to fight everywhere in this world on behalf of the underdog, or for a cause which was great for humanity. That’s how I see it. That’s how I see it, that’s why we went to war in 1914 and certainly why we went to war in 1949 because what was happening; somebody has to stop Hitler, and that’s part of our task.

So I look around when I go to the NMA and I’m proud to be part of a country, and that all these guys, who are no longer with us, you stand on the Armed Forces

Memorial and you look at the names there of all the guys who have died (I use guys in the plural, with women) who've died in service and by terrorist action since 1945, and what is sad, every time I go there, the blank walls are less blank. Only one year, I don't know about 2016, but only one year, 1968 I think it is, where there's not a name on that wall.

So, when I go there it's not a narrow reason I go there, and I hope my colleagues are the same. Although we go there and are very proud of the Jewish memorial, we go there because we see this epitomising what this country is all about."