

J-Vault for Memorial Day: American Jews in WWI

Posted At : May 31, 2011 11:30 AM | Posted By : Seth Chalmer

Related Categories: J-Vault, military service, history, war, holidays



This week, from the J-Vault, in (slightly belated) honor of Memorial Day: *American Jews in the World War* (1920)

"From the day that the United States entered the war," writes Julian Leavitt in the American Jewish Year Book, referring to the conflict that would later be called World War I, "the Jews of America perceived the wisdom of keeping an authentic record of Jewish service in the common cause."

The American Jewish Committee therefore assumed this task in November, 1917—at its first annual meeting after the American declaration of war—and has since prosecuted it, with the unstinted co-operation of the Jewish Welfare Board, vigorously and systematically, until to-day it may properly claim a collection of historical and statistical data of the very first importance...

The best available evidence indicates that there were from 200,000 to 250,000 Jews in the service, or from 4 to 5 per cent of the total forces of the United States... The entire Jewish population of the country, according to the latest estimates, is about 3 per cent of the total population. The Jews in the military and naval forces of the United States, however, have constituted from 4 to 5 per cent of the total personnel. On the face of these figures it would seem that the Jews of America contributed at least one-third more than their share to the armed strength of the United States...

[T]he total of Jewish deaths will probably aggregate 3500, or about 5 per cent of the total American deaths recorded to date... [T]he number of Jews who have either given their lives for their country, or shed their blood for the American cause, will probably aggregate from 15,000 to 16,000.

[Download publication...](#)

