

PILOT BURIED AT HEBREW CEMETERY

The Airco deHavilland bomber that plummeted to earth January 15, 1918, near Hicks Field north of Fort Worth was piloted by Lieutenant James J. Joffe, 23, a Russian-Jewish immigrant from New York. Newspapers reported that this was the thirtieth crash of a local training flight and that the "machine fell" from the sky. In accordance with Jewish tradition, Rabbi Charles Blumenthal officiated at the funeral after the Hebrew burial society – called a *Chevrah Kadisha* – had ritually washed the aviator's body and dressed it in a hand-stitched linen shroud. The flyer was laid to rest at Congregation Ahavath Sholom's Hebrew Cemetery in a grave never visited by his next of kin. The granite monument marking his grave is inscribed with Hebrew words and an English inscription that reads: DIED IN SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY.

Rabbi Blumenthal, although not a military chaplain, acted in that capacity. He visited Camp Bowie daily, counseling patients in hospital wards and convalescent tents. He was a regular at the "hut" operated by the Jewish Welfare Board, a new national organization on a par with the YMCA, which assisted soldiers of his faith. Jewish doughboys served alongside men of many ethnicities. They confronted prejudice face-to-face as it arose and gradually became comrades in arms. By necessity, Jews in the armed forces relaxed their dietary restrictions. Contrary to ethnic stereotypes, 51.7% of Jewish soldiers fought in the infantry.

Joffe, James J. No ASN. *White *Colored

(Surname) (Christian name) (Army serial number)

Residence: 224-W 122 St New York NEW YORK
 (Street and house number) (Town or city) (County) (State)

* Enlisted * R. A. * N. C. * E. R. C. * Inducted at New York N Y Aug 15/17 on 1917

Place of birth: Asia Minor Age or date of birth: 22-11/12 Yrs

Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:
 Aviation Sec Sig Reserve C to death

Grades, with date of appointment:
 Pvt

Engagements:
 XXX

Wounds or other injuries received in action: * None.

Served overseas from † to † from † to †

Died of Aeroplane Accident Jan 15/18 (Cause and date of death) 1918

Person notified of death: Joseph Joffe brother (Name) (Degree of relationship) N Y

Remarks: 141 Broadway (No. and street or rural route) (City, town, or post office) (State or country)

Form No. 724-S, A. G. O. *Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S. C



A) DH-4. Air Force Museum

B) Ahavath Sholom Hebrew Cemetery

C) James Joffe Service Card. Texas Military Forces Museum, Camp Mabry, Austin, Texas

