

List of Jewish soldiers of the First World War, buried in St. Petersburg

Mark Giguzin, the creator of the public ["Jews of St. Petersburg"](#) , during the weeks of coronavirus quarantine, collected information about the Jewish soldiers of the First World War buried at the Jewish cemetery in St. Petersburg.

This is a list of 170 names - and information about these people that we managed to find by comparing data from various archives.

Mark Giguzin's interest in this topic is not accidental, the history of his family is deeply rooted in St. Petersburg. His paternal ancestors in the 30s-40s of the 19th century were recorded in St. Petersburg by the military.

Research Background

It is known that there were no military operations in the vicinity of Petrograd during the First World War. Nevertheless, about 170 Jews - participants in the war - are buried in the Jewish cemetery of our city. Basically, these are soldiers who died in hospitals and hospitals of Petrograd from diseases and wounds in the period from 1914 to 1918. Among them are many who returned wounded and sick from German and Austrian captivity. There were cases when the bodies of those who were killed or died far from Petrograd were brought to the capital. The vast majority were buried in the Jewish cemetery, in a special military area. In those years, it was called the 6th military department of the 3rd category. This section has not been preserved; the surviving graves can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The reason is clear: they were soldiers from all over the Russian Empire. By the will of fate, they all found their last refuge in St. Petersburg, where most had no relatives. Perhaps the relatives did not even know where they were buried. The graves were not visited and, apparently, fell into disrepair. At some point (we do not

know exactly when), fresh burials began to be made on top of these old graves. The place where this department used to be can be found today on the 2/5 old section.



Modern plan of the cemetery. The 2/5 old section is marked in green. It was here that the 6th military branch of the 3rd category was located. Photo jekl.ru



Site plan "2/5 old". Green marks the graves of the 6th military branch, which have survived to this day. Photo jekl.ru The plan shows three graves from the 6th military department that have survived to this day:

- Grave 95 (formerly the 77th grave of the 6th military department), [Poshemansky Yakov Simkhovich](#)
- Grave 128 (formerly the 104th grave 6th military branch), [Kadysh Esther Leibovna](#)
- Grave 222 (formerly the 191st grave of the 6th military branch), [Temkin Samuil Moiseevich](#) (Shmuil Movshevich), cadet

From what sources did I collect information about the buried

The so-called "Books of the Buried" (documentation of the Jewish cemetery) contain records of the burial places of these people. In the "Metric Books on the Death of the Jews" - records of their death. That is, information about these people is available in two sources at once. Both "Books for the Buried" and parish registers (until 1917) are in the Central City Historical Archive (TsGIA, fund 422, inventory 1 and 3) and have been digitized.



These books contain the following information: names and surnames, military rank, in which regiment he served, where he was treated, cause of death, address of residence (mainly a hospital in Petrograd).

The "Books for the Buried" indicate the place of burial, the plot, the number of the grave, the category of the monument (from 1 to 5, the fifth is the simplest. The military was usually given a monument according to the 3rd category). Most often you can see the entry "rule". This probably means that the funeral was at the expense of the Jewish community.

I'm not the first to work with the above documents. But there is another source of information that I used to learn more about these Jewish soldiers. This is a database of participants in the First World War, hosted on the site gwar.mil.ru. There I was able to find additional information about about 60% of these 170 people. For

example, place of birth (province or county, and sometimes a city or town); age (it is not always indicated in the register of births), profession, military awards, where he served, whether he was in captivity. This information is not exhaustive, there is still a lot of work to be done. It is not always certain that in the database and in the register of births we are talking about the same person: there are discrepancies in the patronymic, in the spelling of the surname, in the place of service. Nevertheless, we can say that now we have the most complete information about most of the Jewish soldiers of the First World War buried in St. Petersburg.

Who are these people?

These are Jews from all over the Russian Empire: from St. Petersburg, Smolensk, Tauride, Arkhangelsk, Kazan, Vitebsk, Courland, Baku provinces, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, Belarus, Bessarabia, etc.

Mostly, these are the lower ranks of active service (Jews, as a rule, were not given officer ranks): warriors, gunners, riflemen, corporals, non-commissioned officers, bombardiers, or just privates. The list includes militia/volunteers, military doctors, orderly, clerk, etc. But still there is one ensign (in the pre-revolutionary period it was the lower officer rank). All the men except one are female doctors.

Five cadets who died at the hands of the Bolsheviks during the October uprising of 1917 were also buried in the 6th military department (the grave of one of them, Shmuil Movshevich Temkin, has survived to this day), the head of the Petrograd Red Guard department, a policeman, a Red Army soldier. And all this only until the end of 1918, when they stopped keeping books of Jews located in the TsGIA. The list that we publish today does not include these names. Let's make it up in the future.

Basically, as I said above, they died from diseases and wounds. But several people were transported to St. Petersburg after their death - from Galicia, Batumi, Riga, Revel, Vilmanstrand and other places. There is only one way to explain this: apparently, their relatives just lived in Petrograd and its environs and ensured that the bodies of the dead were transported to their homeland.

These people deserve a memorial obelisk

I had an idea: to erect an obelisk on the site of the old military section of the Jewish cemetery and carve all 170 names on it - in memory of these, one might say, forgotten Jews, whose graves have not been preserved; in memory of the price that the Jewish communities paid in that terrible war. It is symbolic if this happens in a city whose Jewish community began to develop precisely thanks to Jewish soldiers, cantonists who suffered for their faith. The idea of the obelisk resonated with the board of the Jewish community of St. Petersburg. God willing, when the epidemic ends, the process of official approval and fundraising can begin.