

Wellington Jews at Gallipoli



Captain David Isaacs.

the dreadful shambles of April and May, despite the authorities having had ample time to plan ahead and ample opportunity to learn from the difficulties involved in the care and evacuation of wounded.

Lieutenant Isaacs was promoted to captain in September 1915. In October 1915 the Imperial authorities decided to send a force to Salonika in northern Greece to protect Serbia and help to persuade Greece to enter the war on the Allies' side. The No. 1 New Zealand Stationary Hospital was included in this force. The hospital, including nurses, other personnel, and its equipment, embarked on the ship *Marquette* along with British troops. Sixty miles out of Salonika it was torpedoed. Captain Isaacs was on deck at the time and saw the wake of the torpedo as it sped towards the ship. There was a direct hit and the ship sank after only a few minutes. Nearly 170 people were drowned, including twenty-two New Zealand soldiers and ten New Zealand nurses. Some survivors spent up to ten hours in the water before being picked up. All the hospital equipment was lost. The surviving nursing sisters were sent back to Alexandria, but the hospital, after new equipment was obtained, was established in Salonika. At this time Salonika was a city of 180,000 people of whom about half were Jews. The hospital remained there several months before returning to Egypt. From there it went on to France where it was stationed at Amiens.

Captain Isaacs remained with the hospital until the end of the war. He returned to New Zealand in 1919 and remained an officer in the territorial force until he reached the compulsory retirement age in 1948. He was awarded the M.B.E. for his community services in war and peace. A testimonial written by a fellow officer in support of his application for the position of supervisor of the school dental service stated that during his war service as quartermaster David Isaacs had shown great resource and initiative, under conditions that were often difficult and sometimes dangerous.

Lieutenant David Nathan Isaacs was a dental surgeon practising at 142 Willis Street. He lived at his parents' home at 21 Kensington Street, just behind the present Wellington Jewish Community Centre. He was born in Wellington in December 1882, the son of Nathan John and Kate Isaacs. His father was president of the Wellington Hebrew Congregation 1877-1880.

Although a dentist, Lieutenant Isaacs acted as quartermaster to the stationary hospital. The hospitals in Egypt had to cope with a continuous stream of wounded men large numbers of whom arrived in Egypt having had no medical attention since a first hasty field dressing some days previously. They had endured a voyage on ships with virtually non-existent sanitary arrangements and which had not been cleaned since transporting mules and horses. By June the flow had abated somewhat, but the August offensive produced in many ways a repetition of

After the war David Isaacs lived at Rona Bay, Eastbourne. He married out of faith, and died in 1978 aged 96. He had attended commemoration services and reunions of survivors of the *Marquette* from time to time in the intervening years. A sister, Miss Daisy Isaacs, lived on in the same Rona Bay house until her death in 1986 aged 100. She also was awarded the M.B.E. for community services.

Trooper Edward Gordon Joseph was born in