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**JEWISH PARTICIPATION
in the FIRE SERVICE
in the SECOND WORLD WAR
Last Voices**

Author: Martin Sugarman

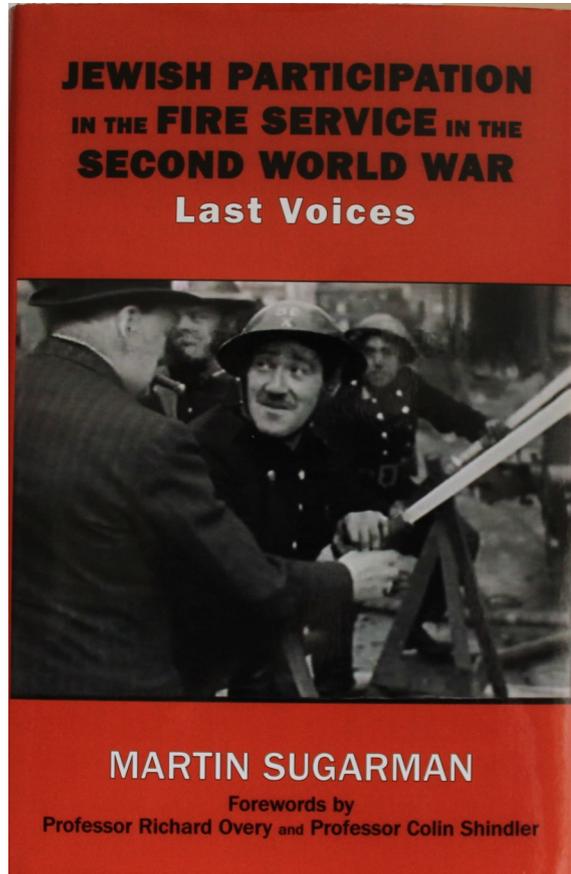
I have read several books about the work of the UK fire service during World War II and I thought that I had covered all the angles until I came across Martin Sugarman's book. I never expected that there would be a history attached to firemen and firewomen that shared the same faith, in this case the Jewish faith. The author has compiled a very impressive number of personal accounts of Jewish members of the AFS, NFS and local authority brigades before they were nationalised. Hours of work must have gone into researching this book and the work was certainly worthwhile because the book records the outstanding contribution made by those who recounted their experiences to the author.

A significant number of the Jewish firemen and women were actually killed on active service and it is fitting that their sacrifice is recorded in the book .

There are very many acts of great bravery recorded in this book but the one that stood out to me was the story of **Fireman Harry Errington GC**. He was the only member of the London Fire Brigade to receive the George Cross during the war, the highest award for bravery that a civilian can receive.

Harry was Jewish and was born into a Yiddish-speaking , poor family who were Polish immigrants. The family name was originally Ehrengott but they changed it once they were settled in London. Harry was born into a tiny two-bedroom flat in Poland Street, Westminster in 1910. Like so many of his Jewish community, he suffered anti-Semitism frequently , particularly in matters of employment. Harry trained as an engraver after leaving school but then changed to become a tailor.

Three weeks before the outbreak of war, Harry joined the London AFS. He was serving at a garage in Rathbone Street close to his home in Poland Street . The garage was being used as a temporary fire station. On the night of 17th September 1940 when Harry and the rest of his crew were awaiting a call out in the basement of a school not far from the garage where their trailer pumps towed by taxis were kept. The school received a direct hit from a bomb and fires were started in addition to the partial collapse of the building. Harry received third degree burns and other injuries but single handed he rescued two of his colleagues that were trapped and severely injured. The book records Harry's gallantry in far more detail than I have space here. The book is worth reading for Harry's remarkable story alone.



JOHN CRAIG