

**POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF NEW YORK**



**Junior Police Officer
TOBIAS GELLIS**

of the 15th Precinct
Memorial Service

**Friday, July 10, 2020
10:00 A.M.**

Hon. Dermot Shea
Police Commissioner

Rabbi Dr. Alvin Kass
Chief Chaplain

**NYPD recognizes line-of-duty death after 100 years.
Memorial to *Tobias Gellis*, 11, boy officer
in NYPD's Junior Police Force**

Today, the NYPD recognizes 11-year-old Tobias Gellis – a captain in the NYPD Junior Police Force of 1914-1918 – for making the ultimate sacrifice while on duty July 10, 1916.

Young Gellis was following orders from his adult captain at the 15th Precinct on Manhattan's Lower East Side to explain to his neighbors the Department of Health guidelines on preventing "infantile paralysis," which was plaguing the Lower East Side in the summer of 1916.

Do to the summer heat, Capt. Gellis chose the roof top of his building at 209 Fourth Street to address his neighborhood audience. The audience became noisy and unruly, according to a newspaper account. Maybe the Lower East Side kids were haranguing him for his neat uniform.

In reaction, Capt. Gellis stepped back away from the crowd and fell seven stories to his death on July 10, 1916. The New York Sun reported the tragic incident the next day: "Devotion to duty caused the death yesterday of Tobias Gellis, 11-year-old captain of the junior police force, who lived at 209 Fourth Street."

In the spirit of the department's motto, "Never Forget," the NYPD formerly recognizes the young captain's ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Though only 11 years old Tobias Gellis was a hero to the young Junior Police Officers he worked with, and to the adult policemen in his precinct and across the city, all of whom recognized a little bit of themselves in the young officer.

The department recently retrieved Capt. Gellis' 104-year-old death certificate and other city records to formerly recognize this tragedy that occurred on Manhattan's Lower East Side just before the advent of World War 1. Public records show the officer's Age: 11; Occupation: school; Birthplace: Lower East Side; Parents' birthplace: Russia; And cause of death: Fractured skull. Fell 7 stories.

According to other city documents, the boy's father, with help from an organization in the neighborhood that describes itself as "A charitable society for burial of poor deceased Hebrews," laid 11-year-old Capt. Tobias Gellis to rest on July 11, 1916, here at Mt. Richmond Cemetery.

All members of the NYPD salute you Captain Gellis. Please rest in peace.

