MARTYRS' MEMORIAL, ROOKWOOD CEMETERY

MEMORIAL TO MARTYRS, CONSECRATION

A Martyr's Memorial Monument dedicated to the memory of the six million Jews who perished during World War II has been built at Rookwood Cemetery. It is the first such Monument to be erected in New South Wales and is unique in its design and symbolism.

In its simple dignity, the Memorial evoked a sense of confinement, symbolising the enclosure of a concentration camp, while the basic shape—that of an egg—conveys both the concepts of mourning and immortality.

The focal point in the "compound" of the Memorial is a large 14 feet central wall carrying the simple inscription cut into polished black granite :

"IN MEMORY OF SIX MILLION JEWS KILLED
BY THE NAZIS DURING THE WAR 1939-1945
MAY THE WORLD NEVER AGAIN WITNESS
SUCH INHUMANITY OF MAN AGAINST MAN."

Continuously around the 6ft. 6ins. high enclosing concrete walls (poured in rough-boarded forms) are the twenty names of the most infamous extermination camps. The names have been cast into the wall and form an integral part of the stark design.

The entrance is formed by a half-elliptical assembly space, defined by black granite seats. From it a path leads into the compound through bronze gates. The path is paved with cobble stones in the characteristic wavy pattern used on the streets of many central European cities—the streets over which most of the victims would have been herded to their death.

The rest of the compound is surfaced with jagged gravel, uncomfortable to step or walk on—an appropriate foreground to the names of places, the horror-meaning of which the Memorial aims to imprint on the mind of the visitor.

The Martyrs' Memorial, set in lawns and trees on the edge of Rookwood Cemetery was designed by architect Mr. Harry Seidler, with Messrs. P. O. Miller, Milston and Ferris as consulting engineers. All kindly donated their services to the project.

The Jewish Cemetery Trust and the Sydney Chevra Kadisha co-sponsored and financed the Memorial at a cost of more than $20,000.

The Memorial was consecrated at Rookwood on Sunday, May 3, 1970 (27th Nissan 5730), at 2.30 p.m. when more than 1,000 people attended the solemn service conducted by Rabbi Dr. I. Porush, O.B.E., Av of Sydney Beth Din with the participation of Rabbi O. Abramson, Rev. I. Gluck and Rev. A. Winkler. Mr. S. D. Einfeld, M.L.A., Deputy Leader of the N.S.W. State Opposition and President of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, unveiled a commemorative plaque.

Mr. Simon Green, Chairman of proceedings at the Service of Dedication, paid tribute to the untiring efforts of Mr. Felix Freeman, Chairman of the Jewish Cemetery Trust, who with the support from Mr. Max Mann, President of the Sydney Chevra Kadisha and together with the Trustees of the Jewish Cemetery Trust and Board Members of the Chevra Kadisha originated the project and saw it through to completion.

Mr. Freeman opened the gates of the Memorial and the dedication closed with the planting of trees by Mr. Freeman, on behalf of the Jewish Cemetery Trust and the Sydney Chevra Kadisha, and Mr. Z. V. Nebenzahl, an executive of the Board of Deputies, on behalf of N.S.W. Jewish Community.