

Broshi, Baruch

Born 1928 in Rumania, came to Palestine in 1944

Joined the Palmach in 1946

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This is the Way it Was

I was born in August 1928 in a town in northern Romania and my name was Jan Beno Breitchneider. I completed the town's elementary school and in 1939, and after the death of my father and older brother, we went to live in Bucharest. During the period the Germans controlled Romania, the Romanians carried out their orders, I managed to complete my education at a technical school in lathe and machinist skills. The Russians entered Bucharest in August 1944 and my mother managed to send me off to Palestine with the aid of people active in Aliya. I came by train via Bulgaria, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, and arrived on the 1st of November 1944. My first two weeks in Palestine were spent in quarantine in the Atlit Detention Camp. I then went to Kibbutz Beit Hashita through the auspices of Aliyat HaNoar. There was already a group of youth there from Romania, Poland and Hungary.

Going to the Palmach – Palyam

By the end of 1946 our group was consolidated and we were all inducted into the Palmach, 2nd platoon of B Company, and took up our post at Givat Brenner. At the beginning of 1947 we were transferred to the Negev to safeguard the water pipeline in the Ruchama-Dorot area. By order of Ben Gurion I also changed my name to Baruch Broshi and was given the nickname: "The Romanian". Our platoon was ordered to send one man to the Palyam, so I volunteered and was accepted immediately to the 8th course for small boat commanders at Caesarea.

After the course I helped in unloading olim who arrived near the Nahariya shore, and also in the south. Several volunteers, including myself, were transferred to the port company under the command of Yochai. It was our duty to protect the Jewish workers of the port from the Arab workers. We worked in shifts and each shift had two launches that belonged to the Haogen Company. We also patrolled the port area on foot. Our weapons were concealed on the launches. At night we would infiltrate the British ships anchored in the harbor and pilfer weapons of whatever sort that could be found. We would see that those weapons were removed from the port and given to other units. We also participated in taking over the lower part of the city of Haifa. We cleared buildings, ascertained that no booby traps had been left, and made the area safe for other forces which took over.

An operation, in which we took part, was support for the force that was to blow up a bridge at Ras el Abiad – in Lebanon. The point of departure was the Shemen coast. From there we sailed by boat to our destination. My job was to put the explosives under the bridge and blow it up. After a squad landed to check the

shore near the bridge, we set off for the bridge itself in a rubber craft. When we got there we were shot at by guards on the bridge but we succeeded nevertheless in planting the explosives. In retreating from the bridge, one of our men was shot and killed and another was wounded. Actually, the reason for the shooting was that we chose a poor password for contact between us. The word was "Yaoud" and when one of us called out, the Arabs heard it and asked who was there. They received the answer "Yaoud", and thought it was "Yahud", so opened fire.

Transition Period

Between the 3rd of August 1948 and the 5th of November 1948 I passed the 4th course for infantry officers at Eliyahu Camp near Natanya. When the course was over I was appointed platoon leader in a marine battalion under the command of Aryeh Schwartzman (today Shachar). The battalion was located on the outskirts of Atlit. We practiced marine landings on the shore. When this unit was disbanded, almost everyone was transferred to an armored corps unit except for a few, who remained in the navy as candidates for an officers' course. While awaiting the start of the 4th (D) course for naval officers in 1953, I served in naval intelligence. My main job during this period was to check the southern coast between Eilat and Aqaba for suitable places to establish a beachhead in the case of an invasion. We also did likewise for the Mediterranean coast.

Service in the Navy

When the officers' course was over I was assigned to the Fifth Fleet and served in various positions. I was second-in-command of a patrol boat, in command of a torpedo boat, etc. In 1958/1959 I was head of the personnel department, after which I served as operations officer of the submarine's fleet. Upon my completion of the course for commanding officers I became operations officer in Naval's H.Q.

Between the years 1963 – 1967 I fulfilled various positions such as: commander of the 11th fleet. During these years, 3 small landing crafts were built (30 meters) and 3 larger ones (60 meters). A team was created to examine these vessels that had been built in Israeli shipyards, and I was appointed commander of the team. We made many tests on these vessels to guarantee that they would be able to perform their functions. In order to expand my theoretical knowledge on the subject of marine landings, I was sent to a course for planning landings, at San Diego, California. After returning from the course, we set up a team and wrote a treatise on marine landings for the Navy.

From July 1967 until 1970 I was appointed commander of the Ashdod Naval Base and, at the same time, commander of Fleet 11. I was discharged in 1970.