

Gelkin, Baruch

Born 26 February 1927 in Argentina

Mobilized to the Palyam in France in 1947.

Made Aliya as an active member of the Hagana on the "Haportzim" ship on 4th December 1947

This is the Way it Was

After I completed elementary school and the ORT Trade School I opened up a small work shop for leather goods independently. I also dabbled in sport in the Maccabi Club and in the Betar movement, and from 1946 I belonged to the HEBRAICA Club. My friend from Betar and companion at work made Aliya after the State of Israel was founded and joined the navy. He happened to serve on the K-20, (the same ship on which I served) together with another Argentinean fellow named Shmuel Gerber. They were both sent to a non-com officers' course. In one operation in which they participated, they both went to sea in a small boat and the boat disappeared; Yitzchak Prusovitch, Shmuel Gerber and the rest of the crew of that boat are considered 'missing-in-action' to this very day.

I was mobilized to the Palyam when I was still in France, in order to help them there in sending Olim on (illegal) Aliya. Zeev (my brother) and two other Argentinean Olim were mobilized with me; Yosef ben Menashe and Hillel Milstein. The four of us meet every year to celebrate that eventful period in our history (we happened to make Aliya on the first day of Chanuka). This is what happened: We were four sailors, Ze'ev Gelkin (my brother), Hillel Milstein, the attorney Yosef Ben Menache and me. We left Buenos Aires in September 1947 and joined the Palyam in France. We worked in the Olim camps of Grand Arnas and Bandol, and we sailed to Palestine onboard the Hagana Ship "Haportzim" (the Marie Annick). This vessel carried 170 Olim and several Palyamnicks, Yosef Shachar (Tosca) and the Gideon, Beni Gefen. We managed to break through the British blockade and not one of our people reached Cyprus. We arrived in Israel on 4th December 1947 and the four of us live in Israel to this day. Ze'ev and Yosef were drafted into other outfits of the army even before the creation of the State, while Hillel and I went to the Navy.

<A short song is attached here (celebrating their Aliya during the Chanukah holiday in Moshav Amikam) in the original Hebrew version, which is not translated>.