

Goldring, Aryeh
Born on 26th May 1926 in Pietrakov-Tribunelski, Poland
Made Aliya in 1945
Joined the Palyam in 1947

This is the Way it Was

I went through the Holocaust during the Second World War and came out of the embers of the concentration camps and the extermination camps. When I was still a boy I was freed from the Buchenwald concentration camp by the American Army on the 11th April 1945 and several months later made Aliya to Palestine via France on the ship, "Mataroah". I was sent to the agricultural boarding school for boys of the Youth Aliya at Magdiel. I studied there for two years until 1947.

In 1947 I volunteered for the Palmach – Palyam together with my friend Reuven Shadmi. We joined the 10th Company of the 4th Battalion. Toward the end of 1947, when fighting and riots began, we were sent to the Negev where we took part in the fighting, while protecting the Negev settlements. The settlements lived under conditions of virtual siege.

I am a graduate of the 9th course for small boat commanders in Caesarea and when that ended, was attached to the scientific branch for two months. I participated in the battles for Latrun, helped the artillery, (6" mortars), and protected convoys on the road to Jerusalem and on the Burma Road. At one stage at the end of 1947 I, and my whole outfit, went to protect the water line to the Negev, in the area of Dorot, Ruchama, etc. Afterwards we were moved to Beit Eshel and Nevatim. We also protected the vehicles that carried foodstuffs to the eleven new settlements in the Negev. Finally, we were returned to course No. 9 of the Palyam. Afterwards I was transferred to the Navy and served on small patrol coastal vessels until 1950. When my military service ended, I worked in Haifa harbor for 32 years. Today I am a pensioner of the port workers, have three children and am a grandfather to 7 grandchildren.

Why I volunteered to the Palyam and to work for Aliya Bet:

I was a 'survivor of the Holocaust', had finished studies, the security situation in Palestine was very bad, and because all the rest of my family had been killed in the Holocaust and I was the only one left, I decided to volunteer for the Palmach-Palyam. I recall that the day I volunteered for the Palyam was the happiest day of my life. I considered it to be an immense privilege to be able to work for the redemption of the State of Israel. I felt it to be my duty to try to bring other immigrants and survivors of the Holocaust to Israel. The Palyam at that time was the most active. It was an operating arm of the Jewish community in Palestine. It was a privilege to be a part of this 'holy' operation.

Personal memories:

I am writing as a man of the Palyam who has undergone the Holocaust. I am Aryeh Goldring, born in Poland, the son of Yitzchak and Perla, and had two brothers. Our home was a warm and loving one and we lived at peace with the world until the catastrophe. I am not writing anything new when I say that the Palyam did more than anything else to bring the remnant of the Holocaust to Israel, and it was the cream of Israeli youth that tied themselves to this endeavor. I was one of them and as Samek (Shmuel Yanai, my commander and my teacher) said, at the Palyam convention at Sdot Yam in May, 1990: "Those who volunteered for the Palyam did not do so to receive a prize or to make money or for any other material benefit. They volunteered because bringing the remnant of the Holocaust to the shores of the Land of Israel was a holy cause, even if it meant endangering their lives. Therefore, despite my being the only member of my family left on the face of the earth, and despite my having gone through all the seven stages of the Hell of the concentration camps, I saw it as my duty and an honor to be a part of this worthy cause.

Of course there were other Jewish youth who had gone through the death camps and had reached the shores of Palestine legally or otherwise. They, too, were motivated to come to the Palyam and the Palmach for the very same reason. I remember one of them who was carried on the ship "Exodus 1947," and immediately volunteered to join the Palyam. Tzvi Tirosh (Weinberg) is today a retired commodore of the Navy. We were all honored to be a part of the rebuilding of the State and of our lives.

I would like to stress that in our home there was a love of Israel and of Jewishness. I could never have imagined that such a cultured nation as Germany would be capable of descending to the depths that it did: of destruction of another nation. Of course, the Poles helped them willingly. Although many believe so, the Jewish people did not go to their death as sheep to the slaughter; certainly not the youth. The French Army had 100 divisions at hand and the French people were defeated. The Russian people had, some say, fifteen million deaths, yet no one would say they were slaughtered like sheep.

When I was freed by the Americans I was nothing but skin and bones. Yes, these bones grew together and started to gather strength. After several months in Israel I was a member of the Palyam and ready to fight and do my share. We were offered other easier alternatives but no, I wanted the Palyam. I do not regret that decision, not for one moment! This was an opportunity that I never had during the Holocaust.

As I said, after I was accepted together with my friend Reuven Shadmi, we went to the 9th course for small boat commanders at Caesarea (Sdot Yam) and we took part in the War of Independence. During the course, I, together with Reuven Shadmi, Tzvi Tirosh and others, were sent as reinforcements for the marine platoon that was in the Negev. I was stuck in Nevatim until Beer Sheva was liberated. We then returned to Caesarea to finish the course. In later years

I continued to serve and took part in most of the wars of Israel. I am proud to say that I was among those who helped in the founding of the State of Israel and I hope that the day will soon come when we will have peace with our neighbors.

On one hand, I bear within me the weight of the tragedy of the Holocaust. On the other hand, I am also a happily married man who has built a family and a home. I am the father of three sons, all of whom did their service in the IDF and are all happily married. I am the grandfather of four children and a pensioner of the port of Haifa.