

**Yones, Hanan**

Born 1923 in Germany, made Aliya in 1939

Joined the British Shore Patrol in 1941

Joined the Palyam in 1944

**This is the Way it Was**

I was born to Jewish parents in a small town in Upper Silesia, Germany in 1923. I had a brother and three sisters. There were only three Jewish families in this town and in 1937 completed my studies in a Catholic elementary school. I then wanted to learn carpentry, but could not. My brother worked for a company that did iron smelting, but he had a fight with a German boy and was fired from his job. This was 1938, and we were both still dependent on our father for our keep. Because of the anti-Semitic decrees it was impossible for me to learn a trade in Germany. We turned to the Hechalutz Organization in Berlin and were received for training by the Zionist Youth Organization in 1938.

In 1939 my brother and I made aliya, with certificates. We were sent for training in Kibbutz Ashdot Yaakov for 2½ years. My brother joined the British Army and served in an artillery unit. I remained with Youth Group "Gimel" that relieved the nautical company in the Krayot. We were called Hachotrim and worked in and around the port of Haifa. We worked on the fishing vessels, "Karish", "Nitzachon" and "Nakdimon", and also worked for the British navy. We cleaned boilers of their destroyers, which was very dirty work.

The British set up an organization called the "Beach Patrol" and Jews were asked to volunteer for this unit. Our group was asked to give one person to serve in this unit and I was the one chosen. All kibbutzim were giving men at the time. It was under the supervision of the Palestine Police. We guarded the coast from the Kishon River to Acre. A man would be on duty for 48 hours and then be free for 48 hours. Once while I was walking along a beach, I saw a small aluminum container for film. There was a note inside written in German which said: "We are sinking. We have been attacked from the air." There were coordinates marked on the note, so I could see that this had been somewhere off the coast of Morocco and sent from a German submarine.

A short time later the Palyam was looking to mobilize men from among those in the Beach Patrol, and was teaching them sailing near Shemen Beach in Haifa. I was one of those who went to the Palyam. One day a Palmachnik took us for a trek. His name was Yehuda and he was a scout in the Palmach. Ten of us went with him from Kfar Ata to Shfar'Am, Kafar Manda and the Netofa Valley from which we climbed Mount Atzmon. We slept on the mountain and then went by way of Wadi Atzmon to the Beit HaKerem Valley (Carmiel today) and then took the road to Peki'in where we met \*Yitzchak Zinati. This was on a Sabbath eve and we had some religious fellows with us. We spent the Sabbath at his and his

wife Margalit's house and slept on straw pallets on the floor. We also visited the synagogue there.

We left when the Sabbath was over on a moonlit night, passed the Druze village of Beit Jan and continued through the fields of the village as fast as we could to reach the top of the Jermak (the highest mountain in Israel). Not far from the peak, on a shoulder of the mountain was a big mulberry tree. One fellow noticed a shepherd's crook hidden between the branches and was happy with his find. His good mood did not last very long when an old shepherd came by and demanded the crook from the young fellow, who shamefacedly handed it to him.

With dawn, we arrived at the top of the mountain and the scenery on all sides was beautiful. We went down the mountain toward Sasa and Meron until we reached Wadi Hinadag; this is a very steep Wadi but at the bottom there was a spring; – that is what Yehuda told us. There really was one there with a strong flow of water. We undressed and had a good bath for the first time in 3 days. We then continued our trek toward Jish and Nebi Yusha. As we approached Manara we went close by the village of Hunin. Yehuda was the only one who had a weapon; a small revolver hidden in his canteen. We continued via Dafna and Dan and the Hatzbani until we arrived at Tel El-Kadi. We made camp for the night at the falls of the Banias. I must have been bitten there by a mosquito, because two weeks later I came down with malaria. We continued along the banks of the Huleh and Dardara and came to the point where the Jordan leaves Lake Huleh. At this point, our scout did not know where to cross the Jordan, but along came a Bedouin girl who raised her skirt and waded across, and we followed her. We then came to the Rosh Pina-Tiberias road where we celebrated the end of the trek with cold beer. This was one trek that I have never forgotten.

I participated in two conventions; one was at the Harod Spring and the other at Juara, above Kibbutz Mishmar HaEmek. We left Kibbutz Alonim in the evening and when we crossed the Kishon, I had to carry Kochavi, the wife of our leader, across on my back. At the meeting in Juara there were various sport and semi-military competitions. The kibbutz gave us boxes of delicious Santa Rosa plums. In the evening I did guard duty and was given a machine gun (Schwartzlose) to carry. It was new to me but I managed it. When I recovered from the malaria I went for training at Ein Hayam and Caesarea, and then to the 3<sup>rd</sup> course for small boat commanders.

Our course commanders were Avraham Zakai. Berchik Magen from Ramat Hashofet, Yaakov Salomon, Menachem Cohen, Yair from Beit HaShita and Yechezkel. This was in 1944.

The entire course was at Caesarea, where we trained in rowboats, sailboats and theory. Once, a small vessel arrived with 40 ma'apilim. After they were unloaded we had to load barrels of fuel onto our boats and take them out to the vessel. This was extremely hard work. When a second ship came to the beach near

Givat Olga, I was given a hand grenade with which I was to halt any interruption by the British. We were in the Hadera river bed, not far from a British radar station, but everything went off without a hitch. We then worked at Kibbutz Maabarot, and Shaike Ophir and Dan Ben-Amotz were there as well.

On 22 November 1945 we left Caesarea in a sailboat and headed south. A British plane followed us. We reached the coast opposite Shefayim and when we received a signal from the shore, put into the beach and waited for whatever was to come. At about midnight we heard a ship of ma'apilim and the noise of an anchor being lowered into the water. We brought our boats to the side of the ship and loaded as many of the ma'apilim into them as possible. It was very difficult to row them to shore, so we got out of the boats in shallow water and pushed the boats onto the beach. We had to carry some of the ma'apilim from the boats onto dry land. A Palyamnik next to me was carrying a girl on his back, and in her excitement, gave him a resounding kiss. He was working too hard to enjoy it and told her, "Do me a favor and stop." We had to carry about 3 or 4 ma'apilim each and before we completed the operation, a British destroyer approached the ship that had brought the ma'apilim. When we saw the destroyer we stopped what we were doing, got back into our sailboat, and headed back in the direction of Caesarea.

The British had two motor launches so it was easy for them to catch up to us. Their officer ordered us to sail south and they followed closely behind. We sailed by Sidna Ali in the morning and could see the English on the shore watching us. We were towed into Jaffa where we were taken prisoner and brought to the Latrun detention center. In all, we were 12 Palyamniks. At first we were questioned by CID detectives who wanted to know who was in charge but we had agreed not to give them any information. We told them we were fishermen and all that we had in our boat was a net.



We settled down to the normal routine of the prison camp. At first the food was poor, but then we started getting boxes of fruit from "Tnuva" (a large company that marketed milk, fruit and vegetables). Letters and money were also smuggled in via the boxes. There was a suspicion that we might be sent to Eritrea as had been done to the men of the "Etzel" and "Herut" (right-wing Jewish extremist groups of resistance.) The commander of the camp was Mr. Claude and his assistant was an Irishman named Roger. There was also a Jewish sergeant named Shvili who spent most of his time at the camp gate. If visitors came without a letter of admittance he would tell them; "You're not coming in the right manner," and he would rub his hands in such a way that it was obvious that he expected a bribe.

We passed some of our time in various handicrafts and I made a belt out of string which ended up with Yigal Alon's wife. We also started to learn Arabic from two Palmachnikim who were born in Syria, Anton and Jamil. We did not know many of the others in the camp, some of whom were probably Etzel or thieves. Once, a group of Jewish soldiers in the British airforce was brought to the camp. They were suspected of stealing a truckload of weapons in Egypt and handing them over to the Hagana in Palestine. There was a double fence of barbed wire which surrounded the camp and watch towers with searchlights, but enough on this subject.

We were at Latrun for six months, after which we were set free. I returned to Hachotrim and married a girl from Afula.

In 1948 I left the kibbutz and went to live with my wife's parents in a small shack in Afula. I worked at many different jobs but finally settled into the building trade. I worked for 27 years as a foreman for Solel Boneh in Afula, until I retired.

### **Editorial comment:**

**Hanan mentioned that "Once, a small vessel came with 40 Ma'apilim". It was probably "Dalin", the 1<sup>st</sup> Aliya Bet ship after WW-II (which brought 37 ma'apilim).**