

The Voyage of “Af Al Pi Chen” [Despite All]

The vessel was originally a Landing Craft Tank (LCT) #147 built in Canada in 1941. She took part in the landing of the Allied forces in North Africa, in an attempt to halt the advance of Rommel's forces. After the war it was purchased by an Italian company for hauling agricultural produce. In 1946 the vessel was procured by Ha'Mossad Le'Aliya Bet and soon after - preparations were begun for her voyage to Palestine. In mid-September 1947 she sailed from Italy, carrying 434 Ma'apilim. In the background of that voyage the “Exodus” was arrested by the British and its Ma'apilim were deported back to... Germany. The vessel was named Af Al Pi Chen, meaning – Despite All, to demonstrate the determination and persistence of the Jews and their commitment to continue the tide of immigration, despite the increased resistance of the British.



“Af Al Pi Chen” on display at the Ha’Apala and Navy Museum in Haifa

The vessel was captured and taken in tow to the port of Haifa, where it joined the rest of the “Shadow Fleet” gathered there. Its Ma'apilim were deported to Cyprus. After the British left Palestine the vessel was once again made serviceable and joined the fleet of landing craft of the Israeli Navy. It was used for practicing landing operations during the War of Independence. Following that it was used as a base for the Landing Craft Fleet (Flotilla no. 11) until it was taken out of service.

In 1969 it was placed in the Museum of the Navy and Ha'Apala [Immigration] in Haifa.

(Compiled by Tzvi Ben-tzur)