

**Aniv, Levi (Anukov)**

Born 1923 in Caucasus, Georgia

Came to Palestine in 1928

Joined the Shore Patrol in 1942

Joined the Palyam in 1944

**This is the Way it Was**

I came to Palestine with my mother and my brother, and landed at Jaffa. We traveled by "diligence" to Rishon LeTzion where my father had come as an illegal immigrant in 1925. The family moved to Benyamina, a moshava established by Baron Rothschild, where my father worked at harvesting jasmine flowers grown for the perfume trade. I studied at the elementary school of the moshava and then worked at various agricultural jobs: picking grapes and almonds, harvesting olives and oranges, and working with a touriyah (a mattock) in the orchards. I also became a member of a signaling unit of the Hagana.

In 1942, during the World War, I joined the Shore Patrol, a police unit set up by the Mandatory Government. The unit was supposed to patrol the coast and prevent an invasion. This was done when the Italians joined Germany in the war. The British Government asked the Jewish Agency to mobilize young Jews for this service and the Jewish Agency gave the job to the Hagana. The Jewish members of the Shore Patrol manned several points along the shore near Nahariya in the north, and Nachal Shorek in the south, and Arab policemen were stationed at other points. We had police uniforms but the only training we received were parade drills.

We were stationed at the mouth of the Crocodile River, not far from the village of Jiser-a-Zarka. There were 30 of us manning three different stations. Our sergeant was Yisachar Shadmi of Sdot Yam. Most of the men in the outfit were members of kibbutzim with a few moshavniks thrown in for good measure. We spent days and nights on guard and our conditions were not easy. We received no real training and had no cultural activity of any kind. Many wanted to quit before their terms of service were over, and there was no motivation whatsoever for continuing to serve in that outfit.

In April 1944 the command staff of the Hagana decided to put the Shore Patrol under the command of the Palmach and the whole force was divided into two. The northern company, which covered from Nahariya to Atlit, was put under the command of Maccabi Mutzari who later in the war fell in April, 1948, on the road to Jerusalem. The southern command, which extended from the Crocodile Riverbed to Nachal Shorek was under the command of Yankale Salomon. He was later the commander of the first naval course of the Palmach in the winter of 1943 which started the Palyam. From here on, there was a drastic change at our base at Jiser-a-Zarka as there was in the entire Shore Patrol. We received instructors who gave us field drills and not parade ground drills. We had physical

education instructors, learned topography and the use of weapons and hand grenades, and I was given special training with dogs. I also went to a course for squad leaders of the Hagana at Givat Zaid. When this course was over I went back to my unit and instructed others.

The waves brought an empty rowboat up onto the beach so we practiced rowing. Our instructor was one of our own policemen, named Gad Heilbrun. A library was set up at the base and lecturers came to give lectures and we even had plays presented. There was no doubt that the feeling and atmosphere of the base changed completely. The Hagana wanted to be assured that the coast would be in our hands when it would be ready to bring in immigrants. After two and one half years of service in the Shore Patrol it was only natural that I end up in the nautical section at Caesarea where I participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> course for small boat commanders. The aim of the course was to prepare seamen who would be useful in the bringing in of future immigrants of the Aliyah Bet. We had a great deal of practice in rowing, sailing, and navigation. There were three boats in the Yarkon River that we could use, the "Dov", "Rivka" and "Tirza". One of them is now in the Museum of Aliya Bet in Haifa. We had lessons in navigation and in astronomy. We had physical Ed lessons and jiu-jitsu and in "kapap" (fighting with sticks). We also practiced with revolvers and had target practice.

We had lessons in the use of the rope, which in those days was made of natural materials, such as cotton, jute, or sisal. Today we have nylon. We learned how to tie the end of the rope so that it would not unravel and how to make different kinds of knots for various purposes. Our boat was 12 meters long and was built for 8 oarsmen. It also had three sails. This was a heavy boat for eight oarsmen to handle and was very difficult work. The exit of the small bay at Caesarea was narrow and there were rocks in the water on all sides. We had to be careful and the instructor would tell us about the currents, winds and waves, and everything that had to be kept in mind as we maneuvered the boat.

After several hours of this sort of work our hands became sore and swollen. It reminded me of my work with touriyah and pitchfork. I heard the following story from Samek who heard it from Yoash Tzidon: The boys, ten of them, were going out for a day's practice so they went to Chana Senesh, who was in charge of the kitchen, and asked for ten portions or sandwiches to take with them. Her answer was, "I will give you only two sandwiches." They asked her why only two and her answer was: "Only the person steering and the person watching will be eating. The others will be vomiting."

We learned how to use sails if the wind was in our direction or in the opposite direction. We learned how to judge if we were on course or if the tide and the wind were affecting our direction, and many other things to control our boat, know where we were, and where we were going. We also practiced in the Yarkon with motor launches. The instructors of our course were: Avraham Zakai, the platoon leader, Menachem Cohen (Churchill), and Gad Lasker. Among others in

the course were several who later became commanders in the Israeli Navy, Shmuel Yanay and Yochai ben Nun.

When the course was over the whole platoon was sent to work in the port of Haifa. Some went to work on fishing vessels and others, I among them, worked at stevedoring. In this work we had to compete with the veteran stevedores, the Jewish Salonikans and the Arabs, who held us newcomers as inferiors. This was very difficult work, and it was a matter of pride not to fail but to do what all the others were doing and at the same pace.

In April 1945 the naval company of the Palmach, the Palyam, was created. I was sent back to Caesarea to be an instructor for a platoon of the Palmach that had come for a special ten-day course. This was to give them a little more experience and to encourage them to volunteer for the Palyam. In May 1945 I was sent to Kibbutz Ein Hayam at Atlit as platoon leader for young volunteers to the Palyam. They were graduates of the nautical school at Haifa. Other individuals joined them, including Benny Bougoslavsky, a former Canadian, who was later among the 35 who fell going to the defense of the Etzion Bloc.

August–September of 1945. Illegal Aliya has started again and we are expecting a ship. The “Dalin” was to appear shortly and each has been assigned his job. Some were to take the immigrants off the ship and others were to row them to shore. Others surrounded the beach and were on lookout. Members of nearby kibbutzim and moshavim were ready to take olim in and scatter them about the country. The ship arrived on a very dark night with only 35 olim, but everything went like clockwork and the immigrants came ashore and disappeared. Palyamniks and other members of the Mosad for Aliya Bet boarded the ship in their place and the ship immediately returned with them to Europe so that they may go to the job of bringing more ships and more immigrants.

During the last quarter of 1945 the nautical section of a whole group from the Borochov neighborhood of Tel Aviv joined the Palyam. They were sent for training to Sdot Yam at Caesarea and their commander was Bill. The squad leaders were Chaim Poznansky (Poza), who later met his death at Nebi Samuel near Jerusalem, Ezra and I.

In November 1945 the “Berl Katznelson” was caught off the coast of Shefayim. Most of the olim were removed from the ship safely but before the operation was over the British appeared and caught several boats of Palyamnikim and they were sent to the camp at Latrun and imprisoned. In reaction to their arrest the Hagana decided to attack the police stations at Givat Olga and Sidna Ali. Our platoon participated in the attack on Givat Olga .

### **The trek to the Judean desert**

In line with the tradition of the Palmach we went on an eight day trek through the Judean desert. Ephraim Bloch who was known as “the Goat” was our leader on

this hike and he was very experienced. The Mandatory Government had declared this area “off limits” and if you did go there you were cut off from the rest of the world. Therefore, one carried on one’s back everything that would be needed, except water. During the winter months water could be found in the rocky crevasses of the narrow gullies. We traveled by bus to the mouth of the Zohar Valley, and hiked from that point for 7 hours to the foot of Masada. We arrived at the base of the hill cold, hungry and very tired. We had a bite to eat and went to sleep. We were up early before sunrise and started to climb to the top of the fortress with the aid of ropes. We reached the top and surveyed the surrounding area, taking note of the construction of the fort, the Roman dike, and the camps at the base of the hill.

We made our descent and continued towards Sdom. We descended from Mt. Sdom toward evening and reached the Dead Sea Works. Strangers were not welcome there but our man, Ephraim had connections with the Hagana men there. They were helpful and even gave us a lift for several kilometers in the direction we were headed. We continued to the Small Machtesh (Box Canyon) and on to the Ovdar spring and to where Sdeh Boker is today. Our last stop was the Nabatean site of Shivta where vehicles were waiting to take us to Revivim, where we had a good meal and a good rest. From here we went back north.

### **The immigrant ship “Shabtai Luzinski”**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> March an immigrant ship succeeded in escaping the blockade of the coast of Palestine and came ashore near Nitzanim, in the south. The ship came as close as possible to the shore and ran aground in the sand about 120 meters from the shore. We swam out to the ship and stretched a rope from ship to shore. We filled rubber boats with the olim and tugged the boats to shore. Some of the olim preferred to jump into the water and we brought them to the ropes so that they could pull themselves along to the shore. At the same time a call went out for people from nearby settlements to come and pick up the olim and take them to their settlements or elsewhere inland. British destroyers appeared and sent launches with sailors to round up the Olim but the launches flipped over and several of the sailors drowned while others swam to shore.

Most of the immigrants and members of settlements were taken by the British army to its camp at Ashdod. The members of the settlements and the Palyamnikim, and all the Israelis, destroyed their ID’s and whoever the British asked for identity, gave the same answer: “I am a Jew from the Land of Israel”. We were all taken by truck to Haifa and loaded onto the evacuation ships. As we refused to go and offered passive resistance, each one had to be carried into the deportation ship. We were all sprayed with DDT and once again questioned by detectives. Once again I said that I was a Jew from the Land of Israel and the detective removed me from the ship and I was returned to Ashdod. The next day we were released.

One week later I organized a squad of Palyamnikim and we went to see what had become of the "Shabtai Luzinski". From a distance we could not see the masts and when we came closer to go on board, we saw that the ship had been vandalized, burned, and was a complete wreck. The Arabs from the nearby villages must have done this and there was nothing to do about it.

After I was discharged from the Palyam and the IDF, I studied at the Kibbutz Seminary and have been a teacher for the past thirty years. My wife is also a teacher. I also studied at the school for nature study, the Avshalom Institute, am a licensed field guide and also work in this area.. I have continued to study and have a BA and MA in Bible study and Israeli history. I participated in the Kadesh Campaign and in the Six Day War.

I add my sincere good wishes to those who have initiated this project to gather the stories and memories of those who contributed so much for the ingathering of those who were pounding on the gates of the country, in their effort to come to Israel. More power to you!