

Dvir, Yitzchak (Davidovitch)

Nickname: Itcheh

Born 26 October 1926

Joined the Jewish Settlement Police Force and the Coastal Patrol in 1944

Joined the Palyam in 1947

Died 14 January 1997

As reported by Dvora Dvir

This is the Way it Was

Yitzchak (Itcheh) Dvir studied at the "Alliance" Elementary School in Haifa, and graduated from the Technical High School that was affiliated with the Technion. He was active in the Naval Company of Hapoel of Haifa, served in the Mandate's Police Force and in the Jewish Settlement Police (J.S.P.). He also served in the Coastal Patrol. He was active in Aliya Bet and in this activity, was a member of the Port Company. He joined the Palmach in 1947 and was a member of the Naval Company.

Yitzchak participated in the battle for Haifa during the War of Independence. In this context he served as commander of the special force that conquered Wadi Nisnas. He participated in the course for squad leaders at Juara, the course for small boat commanders at Caesarea, and completed the 5th naval officers' course at the Technion in Haifa. At the beginning of 1948 he sailed with the ship "South Africa" to bring weapons to Israel, and in March of that year was transferred together with other Palyamnicks to the "Naval Service" (the future Israeli Navy).

He served in various capacities in the Israeli Navy from the day it was formed, until 1974.

- He was commander of the coastal patrol vessels "Dror" (M21) and "HaPortzim" (M17).
- commander of the landing craft "Ramat Rachel" (P 51)
- commander of the auxiliary vessels "S27" and "South Africa"
- commander of the ships "Maoz" (K24), "Eilat" (A16), "Hagana" (K20), "Misgav" (K30), "Miznak" (K 32) and "Haifa" (K38).

While commanding the "Miznak" he participated in aiding those who suffered from the Greek earthquake of August, 19 1953, and in recognition of his services received a medal from the Greek king (this was donated by the family to the Museum of the Navy). In 1954 he was appointed head of the Operations Section in the Chief of Operations department of the Navy. Following that, he served as Assistant Chief of Personnel. In 1955 he graduated from the Headquarters and High Command School of the IDF. In 1957 there was an exhibit of weapons on the "Haifa" (K38) in cooperation with the City of Haifa, of which Itcheh was in charge. This ship had been the Egyptian destroyer "Ibrahim el Awal" that was captured by the Navy and renamed "Haifa".

In 1959 Itcheh was sent to Europe by the IDF, the Foreign Ministry, and the Zim Lines, to purchase a yacht to be prepared and used by the Government of Ghana for diplomatic events. Afterwards he acted as captain of the yacht and naval advisor to the President of Ghana (Nkrumah) until 1963. When he returned from Ghana, he completed studies and received a certificate for the rank of captain in the Israeli Merchant Marine, and completed his education in other types of vessels.

In 1965 he was appointed by the Navy and the City of Haifa to organize the School for Naval Officers, and he was Director of the School until 1970. In 1970 he was sent by the Navy and the Foreign Ministry to Ethiopia to advise the Ethiopian Transport Minister on everything that pertained to the sea, ships and ports. In this capacity he prepared plans for the reorganization and modernization of Ethiopia's ports. This included laws governing ships of the Ethiopian merchant navy which was being formed at that time. He remained in this position until the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

When relations between Ethiopia and Israel were severed, he returned to Israel and in 1974 retired from the IDF with the rank of Commander. He then worked for the Zim Company as director of shipping, containerization and logistics. From 1978 he was also active in various positions involving coordination and cooperation in the ports of Israel. In 1979, when the era of the use of containers began in earnest, he was asked by the Zim Company to set up a sister company that would handle moving, unloading and storing, and packing and shipping. This company was called "Citrus" and he was its CEO.

In 1987 he retired from the Zim Company and thereafter dealt with consultation and overseeing the loading of vessels for various shipping companies, importers and others. He died on 14th January 1997.

We married in 1949, have two sons, and four grandchildren. Our older son continued in the footsteps of his father and served in the Navy on a missile vessel. He completed his service with the rank of captain. Our younger son served as a helicopter pilot in the Air Force and his son (our grandson) continues to serve in the Navy as an officer on a missile vessel. So the tradition continues.

Editorial Remarks

The voyages of the S-29, the "South Africa":

The first, under the command of the Palyam's commander, now Commander Samek Yanai, took place in early April, 1948. During the voyage, it was reported to the men that they and the ship had all been transferred to the "Naval Service". The second voyage, under the command of Moshe Rabinovitch, was to Naples, and took place in May, 1948.

The roster of vessels in the "Naval Service":

The roster did not include a ship whose number was S-27.