

Gidron, Yosef (Breen) י"ר

Nickname: Yusuf

Born: 10th March 1911 in Budapest Hungary

Joined the Palmach in 1944

A commander in the Palyam in 1947

Died in Kibbutz Beit Hashita on 6th December 2000

Written: by his daughters

This is the way it Was

In a letter of the 21st January, 1996 to his friend from "D" Company, Eliyahu Oren, Yusuf gave details of his life [and Eliyahu adds some].

I was born in Budapest, Hungary on the 10th of March 1911 and made Aliya with my parents (Shalom and Tikva Breen) and brothers in 1921. (My father had a big bakery. He was both traditional in his religious views and Zionist, which was not very common in those days in Hungary.). We lived in the 'Old City' (the Moslem Quarter) of Jerusalem and this is where I picked up my nickname Yusuf. Later, the family moved to the more 'upper class' quarter of the Bukharams. I studied at the elementary school, and then the secondary school, in Rehavia. I was a member of the Hatzofim youth movement which later united with the 'chugim' movement and became "Machanot HaOlim".

After Gymnasium (high school), actually after I had finished 10th grade, I went to work in the building trades. I worked on the King David Hotel, the Y.M.C.A. and other buildings. I worked to help support my family, and also to prepare myself for a life of work. In 1930 I joined a group of the 'Chugim' at Maayan Harod. This group settled at Beit Hashita. I was a member of the Hagana and attended a course for squad leaders at Hanita, and afterwards a course for platoon leaders at Juara. I also served in the British police force as a sergeant, and was responsible for a patrol car which patrolled the Gilboa region.

I joined the Palmach and was made Company Commander of "D" Company (1944). When I turned the company over to another commander, I acted as an instructor of a course for platoon commanders. At Palmach Headquarters I was responsible for the reserves. During this period I took part in the "Night of the Bridges", was wounded, and hid in a nearby cave together with another reservist during a search at Hanita.

I served as commander of the Palyam for more than a year. I took part in the unloading of immigrants on a number of occasions, including from the "Shabtai Luzinsky". At the beginning of the War of Independence I went to a short course on tanks at Sharona (Tel Aviv). The commander of the course was Yitzchak Sadeh.

For a short time I served as commander of a company in the armored division, and our equipment was halftracks with turrets added to them (an invention of the Israeli Army.) This was within the framework of the 7th Brigade, to which four company commanders of the Palmach had been co-opted. After the Battle of Latrun I went down to the Negev as company commander of halftracks in the "Wild Animals of the Negev" outfit. Before being discharged I commanded "Beit HaYod Daled" in Nes Tziona (named after 14 members of the Palmach who fell in the action at Gesher Aziv) . As a reserve officer I was commander of the Gilboa region until 1962. (Yusuf was a beekeeper and worked at that several hours a day until he died.)

Yusuf added, in a letter from the 18th of January 1999: "As for my family, the Breens, they made Aliya during the Third Wave (1919-1921) and they had no small stake in the building of the country. You will not find politicians or merchants among them. Two years ago there was a family reunion in Jerusalem and 300 attended. Someone made notes of who did not attend, and there were an additional 200. They live all over the country – in the cities, the moshavim and the kibbutzim, but not one of them is a politician."