

Salomon. Yaakov (Yankale), RIP

Born in 1916 in Transylvania, made Aliya in 1924

A member of the Hagana from 1934,

Was in Wingate's Raiders and the Night Squads

Was at the Aliya to Hanita and in the European Paratroop Detail

Joined the Palmach in 1941

Palmach Staff, Officer for Special Operations

Died 17 October 1963

Written by: Samek Yanai

This is the Way it Was

In January 1943, as a result of the pressure of volunteers within the Palmach, it was decided to start a course for marine training. The Palmach still hadn't decided how to react to this new creature. Yankale Solomon was chosen to organize this first course. The instructors were veteran seamen who had been active in Aliya Bet or in the course of the "23 who were lost at sea": Shmulik Tankus, Berchik Magen, Yaakov Ageyev and Moka Limon, a veteran sailor. Yankale was not a seaman and had no intention of becoming one. He had an altogether different route to travel, but was an experienced commander and knew how to organize a new framework of activity. The new seamen-trainees were eager to begin something completely foreign to them, and were glad to have someone experienced at the helm. Yankale found the mean for directing courses 1, 2 and 3 without being directly involved in them.

At the same time the nucleus of the Palyam was created and as was prevalent in the Palmach, the pressure came from the ranks. At the beginning of the struggle against the British, in the "blowing up the railroad tracks operation", Yankale was still the commander of the Fourth Battalion which included the Palyam. He was adamant in the Palmach staff meeting that the Palyam take its rightful place. Our sector was to be the tracks in the vicinity of Benyamina. We, Nimrod Eshel, Yoske Almog, Ami Zinger and I, Samek Yanai, left Sdot Yam by foot. We returned by way of Jisser-a-Zarka to the beach and continued south in the water so that we would leave no trace. This little walk took more time than we had planned. We arrived at our base before morning and the commander, Yankale, was waiting for us agitatedly. I asked him why he was so worried. "It is easier to go out on a mission than to wait for others to return," was his reply.

In 1945 Yaakov Salomon was sent to Europe in order to organize and instruct survivors of the Holocaust, within the framework of the Hagana, in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. In the case of the two Pans, Yankale was responsible for organizing the concentration and transportation of the Ma'apilim to the ships. The operation became complicated when the British announced that the ships would be returned to the port they sailed from. The Romanian Government refused to let the Pans sail from Romania, so the ships sailed to Burgas, Bulgaria and the Ma'apilim traveled from Constanza to Burgas in order to board the ships. Moving the ships and the passengers took three days and Yankale managed the whole affair superbly.