

HULLO

NACHAL!



STORIES & PICTURES OF MACHAL / NACHAL 1956 -1966



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The Nachal was established in 1949, for the purpose of combining work, agricultural education and training, and defence of the homeland. The name is a combination of the initials of the Hebrew words **Noar Chalutz Lochem**. Nachal has to its credit a long chain of settlements set up all over Israel.

HULLO NACHAL was first published soon after the first group of South African Machal / Nachal had concluded their Basic Training at Machaneh 80 early in 1956 and arrived at Hasolelim for their period on a Kibbutz. The tradition of writing about their experiences continues . . . This modest booklet is a forerunner of, hopefully, a future hard covered book which will contain many additional stories and pictures .

We need your help in this regard and your stories of interesting (and humorous) experiences during your Army period in Israel are very welcome.

Send them to the Editor : Les Amdur at Moshav Manof .

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Many of those mentioned in this booklet are alas, no longer with us . As we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information, we have omitted the traditional Z"L, "of blessed memory" after their name. No disrespect is intended. While all the stories contained herein are true, or based on a true story, at no time was there any intention to offend and we apologise in advance. Not always are the photographs connected to the accompanying story. The Editor and Committee reserved editorial discretion due to space and other considerations.

Many thanks are due to all those Nachlaim that made this booklet possible.

Les Amdur
October 2006

HULLO NACHAL!



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Ari Caspi



ARI CASPI

SOLDIER - LEADER - FRIEND

by Joe Libner

Perspiration, Inspiration & Motivation

by Les Amdur

The Sochnut recognised that the giyus to Nachal could trigger the biggest aliyah potential ever! As a result, they worked through Telfed, The Misrad Habitachon (Ben Moshe) and the Army, to organise where possible, exposure to Zionist education and knowledge of the country, integrated by way of lectures and tiyulim, in addition to the normal training. One fine day, Samal Rafi gives the command - "Kadimah Tz'ad" and off we go, as usual - on another masah. At the first smoke break he tells us we've been "good guys" and have earned a "t'shupar"! We are going on a "tiyul" to see Baron de Rothchild's Tomb in Zichron Ya'acov.

What he didn't tell us, was that we were going to walk there, from Pardes Chana!

At every subsequent hafsakah, we kept asking the segel - how much farther? The answer was always the same - "Shama" pointing Northwards.

Eventually we arrived at the foothills of a hill - (mountain to some!). We asked - "Nu, where is the tomb"? The reply came back - "on the summit".

At this point, Fokie Bernstein threw up his arms and said "I can't - too many blisters - no energy, etc., etc. Out of the blue - comes little Kenny Cash, compared to Fokie - a varsity forward - 200lb. plus - a strong, muscular giant - Kenny was a puny, not too strong, asthma wheezing midget. Kenny grabs Fokie by the arm and pulls saying - "Don't worry Fokie - I'll help you get to the top"!

After schlepping him up (by now, with the help of a few guys), we reached the top and Kenny - proudly proclaims - "See Fokie - we did it!" By this time of course, Fokie was "slightly" humiliated! Now I'm not so sure whether Kenny would have made it by himself - (I also don't know how he passed a medical test for Nachal), but I learnt an important lesson that day and was very proud of Kenny!

"We have got our 2nd Lieutenant". The first time I saw him, he was standing at the side of the road where we had fallen in line. He was wearing a black beret which indicated service in the Negev. Ari Caspi was well over six feet tall and thin to the extent that he almost looked frail, but on a march he carried a machine gun on his shoulder with apparently no more effort than he would a broom stick. His face was stern and mature, and seemed to show the experiences and training he had put behind him. He was direct and confident, but nevertheless he was no older than the average age of the boys he was to train.

The rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the Israeli army is called Segen Mishne. If any of us addressed him directly, it should have been prefaced by "Segen Mishne Caspi". But the term "Hamefaked" (my commander) was invariably used, and it was a form of address that barely did him justice. The boys often discussed the merits of their instructors, and not once, a recruit would say. "I would follow Caspi anywhere." This, to say the least, expressed the confidence we had in him, and there are few other compliments a soldier can pay his officer.

Recruit training is difficult, and very often the soldier feels he is being treated like an animal or merely a number. When Ari spoke to you, you got the feeling that you were once more a human being. He took a serious interest in each of us. Very often he went much further than his duty required. Few of us will forget the party in Pardes Hanna, the visits to the peoples' homes and the 5 day tiyul which he organised and conducted. We only knew him as our officer, but we shall remember him as a soldier, leader and friend. Who can forget his answer when one of the boys on the tiyul asked him why he never smiled at the training base. "I didn't smile because there was nothing to smile about."

In an ambush somewhere in Sinai he fell. With him went a part of each person in our platoon, and in every person who knew him, you will find a little of Ari Caspi.

OPERATION NO SLEEP

by Les Amdur

During Tironut at Machane 80, we were getting used to being woken at any hour for "misdar" at any time during the early hours and then were sent back to sleep until Hashkama at 06-00. However, on one of these "targilim", the whole Plugah were given the command - "on the double" and had to remain in this mode, whilst going to the Cheder Ochel for early breakfast, sherutim, etc. All the mefakdim were "whipping" us with light branches, as we passed them shouting "maheir !"

It seemed like a blurr after a while - there were odd memories of arriving at Caesariya and jumping off the fortress into the sea. At the top of one of the towers, the MM of the other Machleka "Natke", recognised me and shouted - "Les, kvotz !"

I turned, lost my balance and fell onto a rock, while jumping into the sea. I then passed out. The next thing I remember, was being on the summit of a hill (still in "on the double mode"), somewhere at night (with a bandaged foot ?) and listening to the Mefakdim shouting the commands "dig in !"

We dug furiously with our entrenching tools, fold up backpack spades) and everyone fell asleep! We were woken by the Mefakdim calling us - "Boker Tov!" The sun was low in the sky.

At first, we were afraid we would be in trouble for falling asleep, but we noticed trucks arriving on the flat area at the bottom of the hill, off loading trestles, tables, cold drinks and party food. We were told to come down and sit on the slope. Then a few jeeps arrived and out came a lot of "big brass" (lots of falafels on the shoulder tabs) who sat at the tables.

One of them (we learnt afterwards was a psycologist), started asking us strange questions - viz.

Who knows what day it is?

When did you leave Machane 80?

Where have you been ?

What did you do? etc., etc.

The answers were weird !

Lots of jumbled memories were related, but no one knew the correct answers.

Then he gave us the correct answers:-

This was 3 days later !

The "whipping" and keeping us in "on the double mode", was an exercise, which almost turned us into "thinking" mechanical robots! This "state of mind" would have been broken, had we been allowed to stop or rest! -We were far from base! We did jump off the fortress of Ceasariya (I sprained my ankle - hence the bandage and couldn't walk properly, but kept up, without remembering pain, like everyone else who experienced injuries).

The next speaker explained that we had successfully completed a Nachal tradition celebrating our 1,000km on foot -at the actual arrival point !

Then we had a party in the middle of nowhere !

We however, carried on marching in our training (with full pack), for many, many more kms!

(See story of the Army walking, International annual competition in Holland).
N.B.

1. The first part of this targil was subsequently discontinued.
2. Our C.O. Ari Caspi fell, parachuting into the Mittleh pass, in the Sinai Campaign.
3. Natke - the C.O. of the other machleka, was also killed in action.



READY TO JUMP



This interview appeared in
HULLO NACHAL No. 7 (1958)

MOOKIE TOOCH & PHIL MYERS REPORT

The second Mahzor of S.A. boys have just completed their parachutist course in Imun Mitkadem and we thought it would be interesting to hear their reactions and their feelings after this first stage of their training. We got there about 3 hours after their first jump and took a few notes. The general atmosphere in the bungalow was one of suppressed animation and most of the fellows had a little expression of content on their faces. It must have been quite a relief after the strain and difficult training they had to go through before they jumped. Nachal training is at no time easy and not knowing what the next thing to be done is, makes the training even more trying and nerve racking. In this case, however, it was good to see that the boys had sparkle in their eyes and were eager to tell us all about it.

Putting the inevitable question to them, namely: "What sensation did you have while jumping?" I got a variety of replies ... terrific, fantastic, overrated..., I wish it was over, I'd rather jump for the rest of the training than go on sidra, they should give you a badge for every sidra rather than passing this course, I don't know what happened, I had my eyes closed and many similar answers.

Tackling each chaver in turn, I started by questioning David. Small and acrobatic, I asked him when first he felt nervous. David: "I really was looking forward to it so much that the only time I really got nervous was when my turn came at the door. None of the other boys had hesitated so I also took the plunge. It's the greatest feeling I've ever had when my chute opened. The noise had all died away and everything was serene and peaceful. My next object was to get as close to the "T" as possible and with a bit of manipulation I dropped within 5 meters of it. Contact with the ground was no more than jumping off a bed and I even managed to get in a perfect gilgul.

"(somersault)". At this stage I had to interrupt him just as he was starting on the technicalities of how a chute opens, at what weight the strings break, etc.

The next person I spoke to was our old acquaintance, Victor. Vic had that glint in his eye that already told half the story and all I had to say was Nu to bring forth a string of adjectives "wonderful, marvelous, superb and much like". Incidentally, Vic made the most of his first jump and even managed to take a photograph of himself. Needless to say he didn't quite manage to get in the perfect gilgul.

Not so pleased with the whole affair was Stan. Stan was a bit reserved with his statements and we soon found out why. "The feeling once the chute opens is one of the greatest experiences I have ever had, but I suddenly saw the ground coming up fast and I found myself landing in amongst a clump of bushes. I got up to run round my chute but found the thing stuck above my head which meant hard work taking it down. Let's hope it goes better tomorrow".

During this time the boys were walking in and out all the time going to lectures (and bunking them) and also visiting the Marpeah. The chief of these cases was Sam. Sam would be out of action for a while. Sam undaunted was working out ways of how not to land on his hurt foot. Baruch, the youngest of the S.A. boys could hardly believe that this was finally "it". Now a few hours after the jumps he was pretty bucked up and looking forward to the rest of the jumps. We saw and spoke to most of the other boys, Shoshie, Irish, Irvine, Barry, Benny, Ruby and all had very much the same to say about the terrific feeling of getting away from the noise of the plane and the blast of the wind and being almost unconscious until the chute opens "you seem to remain on one spot and then float gently down to mother earth".



Parachute Training - Tel Nof 1957

l toR: Rodney, David Bloomberg



IS THE NACHAL SCHEME A SUCCESS ?

by Simie Weinstein

This interview appeared in
HULLO NACHAL No. 7 (1958)

I am often asked the question: "Is the Nachal Scheme a success?" With humble apologies to Kipling's famous "IF", I reply as follows:

IF Jewish Youth, boys and girls were told by their responsible leaders through headlines in the general and Jewish press that a "chronic emergency" existed in Israel, and that their services were needed in order to strengthen the security of the borders and the young State;

IF they were told that a land is not acquired by money alone but by the blood, sweat and tears as well as the devotion of those who want to inherit it;

IF they understand that by coming here they are the living links between vast Jewish communities of the diaspora and the young Jewish Nation of Israel;

IF they sense that their physical presence has raised the morale of those whom they have come to join; and to help and who feel that they are no longer alone, but that world Jewry stands shoulder to shoulder with them all the time;

IF they realize - each young Jew, that he or she cannot come to live in Israel, then at least because of the spirit that burns within them, as a Jew, they should spend 15 months of their lives in the service of their people at the discretion of the State and it's rulers;

IF they acknowledge that it is an honour to be actual participants in this Jewish history making epoch and it's greatest instrument - the Tzva Haganah Le Yisrael - The Army of Israel, of which Nachal is an honoured, vital and integral part;

IF they learn to appreciate that the time spent on the Meshek enables them to understand that without "Kibush Ha-adamah" the conquering of the soil - the country will never be fully redeemed;

IF they learnt the eternal values that work brings dignity to the individual, and only Jewish work can transform our sorely tried people into a powerful and prosperous nation, that brotherhood, devotion, sacrifice, equality and unity are the values which will ensure our survival;

IF they learnt that the Hebrew language, and through it, the vision of our prophets and the God idea, are the unifying factors and the secret of our immortality;

IF they learnt that "rock and roll", the ease and comfort which they left behind in the "flesh pots" of the country from which they hail, is not all that matters in life, but these are but part and parcel of a general trend in the existence of the individual, whose objective must be higher and nobler;

IF the experience in facing the rigorous, drastic changeover from civilian life to the army; the long and boring days and nights of guard and patrol duty, the tense and fearful moments of reconnaissance along the Gaza Strip, and

demarcation lines, the exciting and exhilarating times on maneuvers, the hours of longing and yearning to be back with their parents and those who love them dearly;

IF the sun beats mercilessly down upon their backs in summer, whilst they are weeding the vegetable fields, driving the tractors, picking the bananas, conquering the soil, or doing the 101 jobs without which a settlement cannot exist;

IF the wind blows coldly in the winter and the patter of the raindrops beats on the tents and drenches the skin of those who guard the homes of the pioneers and children of the motherland;

IF they jump from skies with a prayer on their lips through moments of fear and trepidation;

IF enforced thirst and hunger have made them tough and conditioned for a life of hardship, risk, daring and sacrifice;

IF this experience had moulded their young characters, above all - if this experience has left the indelible impression upon their hearts and minds;

IF they have passed through this experience and found that they are better men and women with a greater sense of responsibility and an objective in their lives, to encourage and to help, in bringing about the complete redemption of the whole of the Jewish people;

IF this is what the Nachal scheme has done to them, I say it is a success !





SALUTE TO SIMIE



SIMIE WEINSTEIN AT THE WEDDING



ZVI FRIEDMAN'S DARING BICYCLE RIDE

by Arnie Friedman

"And this, yeladim, was my first home in Israel" - this is what I always said to my children years later, whenever passing "Machaneh Shmonim". A kilometer before passing the camp, I could already sense the kids nudging each other, whispering and giggling and saying to each other - "And this, yeladim was my first home..."

"Machaneh Shmonim" was indeed my/our first home in Israel! To this day I cannot drive past without remembering those heady, difficult and sometimes frightening days of our basic training at this venerable and famous army camp, built & used by the British between two world wars. "

April-May 1956 : Our madrichim were doing their best to knock us into shape, no easy task. Our all-South African company was finding the initial training period pretty rough, and when our officer Ari Caspi (a few months later killed in the Sinai campaign) announced in his dry and taciturn manner that we were due for our first "after" (weekend leave) the coming weekend, we were beside ourselves with joy : after all, we had already absorbed the words of the latest hit of Lahakat Hanachal, which went, in part - "Bo-i Ruthie after - duty, yom Shabat ani ve-at". How full of promise, relaxation, luxury and good food the weekend promised to be! "But" - said Mefaked Arik without blinking, in his quiet, "I - mean - every - word - I say" voice - "You will all be back here on the parade-ground at 9.59 a.m. SHARP, out of your dress uniforms and with your SPOTLESS CHECK rifles : do I make myself clear ?" He had!

So off we went (early on Friday morning) sporting, our new uniforms, to taste a bit of Israeli hospitality with family and friends on Moshavim, Kibbutzim, towns and cities, in a land which we knew about in theory, but were now tasting for the first time. Needless to say we got back to camp at the crack of

dawn that Sunday morning. At five-minutes-to-ten we were already in three rows on the parade ground, everything not only spick, but also span. All, excepting Zvi Friedman, a sign-writer (from Jo'burg) who had overslept, arriving at Hadera at 9.45, hitched a lift to Pardes Hanna, and made a headlong dash towards the camp, about a kilometer away.

Puffing and panting, he met a young boy from Pardes Hanna peddling his bike slowly on the dusty strip next to the road. In his fractured Hebrew Zvi managed to persuade the youngster to lend him his bike to get urgently to "Shmonim" promising faithfully to return it to its owner. With a quick "Toda" and an even quicker jump onto the saddle, our hero peddled furiously towards the camp.

Meanwhile, back at "Shmonim", Samal Rafi was doing roll-call to make sure that the "Drom Afrikaim" had returned to base.

We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw Zvi flying down the camp road towards us, at a speed which would have done Lance Armstrong proud:

Wheels and brakes squeaking he hopped off the two-wheeler standing stiffly at attention at the end of the three lines of soldiers, rifle in one hand, and bicycle handle-bars in the other :

"YOU ARE TWO MINUTES LATE!!" roared Samal Rafi - "and WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH A BIKE?"

Without blinking an eyelid, utterly poised, calm and confident, Zvi replied:-

"But - "hamefaked" - wasn't everyone issued with one" ?

All's well that ends well: Even the officers smiled (sort of...) - the bike was returned to the boy from Pardes Hanna who was waiting patiently at the camp gate to claim his property - and the story of Zvi Friedman's daring bicycle ride, became legend.



FROM MADRICHIM IN BNEI ZION, TO TIRONIM AT MACHANEH 80

NACHAL BOOT CAMP

24th April 1958

by Luke Lukovsky

I can still remember clearly my first days in the army. On Thursday going through a thorough medical examination, and on Sunday already reporting to the induction centre to be signed up and to receive all my kit which would have to last me two and a half years. Then, being whipped off to boot camp where I was to spend the next five longest and hardest months of my life.

As the truck drew up outside headquarters, we all made for the opening to catch our first glimpses of what was to be our home from home, and the first thing that struck me was the fact that nobody there was walking. In all directions soldiers were scurrying to and fro, each with his rifle in his hand. I began to wonder at this, and to speculate as to when we would be issued with rifles.

Well, it did not take us long in finding out. The truck had not yet stopped for half a minute, before a tall, wiry -bearded sergeant suddenly appeared and in a tone full of contempt for us rookies told us that we had half a minute to be off the truck and lined up in threes with all our kit. It was here that we had our first lesson in army methods. When he said half a minute, he meant it, and we soon had another half minute to climb back onto the truck and try again. It was after climbing on and off about six times that we eventually got it right and I began to realize why nobody was walking.

At his next command, we hoisted our kit bags to our shoulders and followed him at a quick trot to our tents, but the only snag was that there were no tents there, and again we wondered what next! Well, once again it did not take us long to find out, and before five minutes were up we were busy pitching our tents. After finishing the job, putting in our beds and trying to catch a couple of minutes rest, the sarge (the sight of whom we had already begun to hate) suddenly appeared and very calmly asked us if we were enjoying our holiday. Before we could answer he was already telling us to sweep out, line up the beds, tighten the guy ropes, dig up, water and clear an area of ten feet right around the tent, line this area with stones (in straight lines) and white wash these stones. Of course this all had to be done in the remaining hours of light as the next morning we were already to start our training.

After supper, with the job half done, we all had to report to the company stores to receive our remaining

kit, among which, of course, was a rifle which we proceeded to examine on the spot. Darkness had already fallen and everybody was looking forward to getting a good night's sleep, but as we were all standing in a square, on the floodlit basketball field checking our equipment, putting it together and adjusting it to fit. It was here that we learned that our rifle was to become a part of us, that we were to eat with it beside us, sleep with it in the same bed, and have it accompany us wherever we went. In fact we were "married" to our dear rifles, never to part through thick or thin.

At about 2.30 a.m. we eventually got to bed, everybody looking forward once more to a "good night's sleep." But once more it was not to be so. At 4 a.m. on the dot, our "beloved" sarge again materialized telling us that we had five minutes to be lined up on the road with full kit. This time we took him at his word and four and a half minutes later saw us lined up on the road shivering in the morning cold wondering what was to come next and longing for the warmth of the beds we had just left.

The following two months, although they were tougher, seemed to pass much faster, as by then we had become more used to conditions. We had learned to exist for days without sleep, and last but not most important we had become used to the night. As we were to find out later, the Israeli army loves the night and everything that can be done at night (except sleeping of course) is done. I remember times where morning, afternoon, evening or night had no significance to us - they were just periods in the twenty four hours that we had at our disposal, and eating, sleeping and training were just fitted in at the most suitable times. So that it was nothing to have breakfast at 8 p.m., walk the whole night, have supper at 6 a.m. and then sleep till 2 p.m., have lunch, train till 11.30 p.m., have supper, sleep till 5.30 etc. Then of course, there were the times that we saw very little of the sun at all for up to ten days - sleeping all day and training all night.

As the days ran on, we began to lose track of time, every day being the same except for Saturday when we had our well earned rest. Before we knew it, we were practising for our graduation parade when we would be discarding our rookie badges and receiving our Nachal tags with infantry badges. This is what we had sweated and suffered for, for three months. I can still remember how proud we were that day, when we could say for the first time that we were soldiers of Nachal and no more rookies.



A STORY FROM
Bernie Suskin (S.Africa)

We'd finished Tironoot and, the group that were on Tel Katzir, elected to go back for our Kibbutz period awaiting the callup to do emoon mitkadem at sivoov Bilu. Anyway we had a very good time on the kibbutz, I worked in the Banana fields. During October of '58 "Porky", as we affectionately referred to the commanding officer of the ezor, arrived at Tel Katzir and informed the guys that we were going to Mahaneh shmonim and within a few weeks we were going to be tzanhanim!! Well you can imagine how excited we were. We packed our kit bags, except for Henry Levitz who somehow had only his toiletry bag left, and piled into the truck and off we went!!

We arrived at the camp in time to watch the passing out parade of the previous machzor . We lined up on the road inside the camp and watched the proceedings... eventually a samal came along and without much ado told us that we had been called there to all the "avodah ha shchorah" till the start of the next mahzor!!! Well you can imagine our reaction!!! We had come to be fighters not to clean up the camp!!! It was already late afternoon so we got our kit, rifles, etc. and went to our tents still feeling very disgruntled. The following morning Arnie Sher and myself were assigned to go and collect supplies at Tel Hashomer.

When we got back in the late afternoon and returned to the tents we were greeted by a meeting of our "action committee". It had been decided that early the following morning we going to break out of camp through a hole in the fence at the top end beyond the tent area. We got up and went to hand in our rifles telling the sleepy guy in charge of the neshakia we were told to!! We then slipped through the fence, formed up into threes on the sand road and proceeded to run in formation to sivoov Bilu. I ran alongside as if I was in charge of the group.

We then split up into smaller groups and some took the bus, others hitched and we took a sheroot. Amongst our group was the late Chesi Lotkin, he spotted an army jeep approaching and in true Hollywood fashion said to the driver "Lose him!!" ... We all packed up laughing. We arrived at the Malon Eden and were given rooms. Later that evening Arnie and I went off to visit a girlfriend in Ramat Gan. When we got back around 10pm everyone was upstairs in the room on the roof. Apparently around 8pm a military truck had arrived wanting to take us back, a few soldiers had jumped out the back and came into the hotel asking where we were and telling the lady to advise us to come back asap!!!

The next morning we set off to see Simie at the Fed... We split up into small groups not to attract attention and arranged to meet in the lobby of a building across the road in Hayarkon Street. We then all piled into the Fed and Simie called us into his office and said in his familiar Oudshoorn accent "You boys are giving me a lot of trouble!" We then explained our side and he called Ben Moshe of the Misrad Habitachon who came over and soothed things over. Then Simie said "You boys must go back to your unit!!" So off we went and when we got back were told that another group were coming the next day to partake in the work. A couple of days later we had a mishpat with Danie Maat the camp commander and were each given a 7 day suspended sentence. After that we really didn't do much work and played k'labajas with our "sarge"!!

Later Arnie and I decided to go into pluga gimmel as we had walked passed the office and heard that it was going to be the first one to go to parachute training! It was the makim plugah so the training was extra tough but it was great



Jacky Nissbaum Johnny Lipshitz Freddie Sohn Cecil Kroll Charles Sheftz

Zalman Flink Ronnie Hope Andrew Green Michael Silver



THE DAY OF THE CHICKEN

by Les Amdur

As part of the Sinai Campaign, we were attached to assist the U.N.R.W.A. troops who were guarding the food distribution in G-d forsaken refugee camps - (like Dir el Balach and Malek T'ubi, near Chan Yunis), for a few months. Of course "our" food was al hapanim to say the least! One day our ex "S.A. Army Scout" - Issy Shifren, volunteered to scrounge food and went on tiyul nearby. After a while we heard a rifle shot! Soon, Issy returned with a freshly killed chicken. Thanks to the U.S. marine helmets, with removable interiors, we soon had an "arucha chagigit" cooking over a fire (with chips) guess who "donated" the potatoes and oil!

Our Mefakdim were fascinated at the ingenuity of the South Africans and joined us. For them, it was their first introduction to "chips"). We also started a business!

Most of the chyalim threw away their dog biscuits and powdered milk. So we collected same, mashed together with water in the - you guessed it - U.S. helmets and sold "Dysa" - for a few grush per messtin - to the chyalim. That's entrepreneurship for you!

GREAT STORIES

by Bernie Suskin

Our pluga was doing masah chuliot up in the Galil. We started out at kibbutz Sasa and I was together with Arnie Sher of Cape Town. Can't remember how it happened but suddenly we found ourselves at Hasolelim. Quite a few of our mahzor had done the initial pre-tironoot period there, Ronnie Richter and his brother Joe, Lionel (Yehudah) Gordon, to mention a few. Anyway to cut a long story short we came there and were treated like royalty, great grub, a hot shower and sent on our way feeling one helluvah lot better than on arrival.

There's another story that sticks out in my mind involving all our group on Tel Katzir before tironoot: The South African "fighterim" were put into the original wooden "tsrifim" on the one side of the hill about a hundred metres away from the relatively new buildings.

A few nights after we arrived we were awoken by loud gunfire and noises of things falling onto the roofs of the tsrif plus other explosions etc.. It was pitch dark and all we heard was the shouting of the guys from the kibbutz telling us to get out and lay low. One of the guys in my room got such a fright (as if we all didn't !!!) and grabbed his bed and lifted over his head for protection..

When we were all outside on our stomachs someone began to shout "dum (blood) and then the guys from the kibbutz told us to crawl along the dirt road towards the kibbutz....a couple of our religious guys were praying loudly. As we rounded the corner leading there we were greeted by the whole kibbutz who were killing themselves laughing and saying ruefully, " you'll make very good fighterim". We all took it in good spirit but I can tell you it seemed very real at

the time being right under the sights of the Syrians on the Golan!!! I think that at the time Tel Katzir was only 7 years young.

Wish I could remember some of the kibbutzniks!! They were a great bunch!!



SPORT IN ISRAEL

by Leon Glasser-Efrat, Israel

The Bnei Akiva chevra did the shalat part of their Nachal service, at kibbutz S'de Eliyahu in the Bet Shaan valley – hot as hell in summer.

We were invited to compete in the Alifut Tzahal in swimming and water polo at the Bat Galim Pool in Haifa, two weeks later. I had played first league water polo for WITS in 1952, but to become fit again was a problem – the kibbutz had no pool!

So I trained in the fishponds. The carp related to me as bait, especially when getting in and out of the bots! I always liked gefilte fish made from carp – but this was the opposite – it was a fishy, slimy business getting fit that way. Ha Kol for Nachal! At the competition, I won 2 gold medals and 1 silver medal for swimming and water polo. "Lekker so". I did not participate in competitive swimming for 45 years.

When I went on pension, my grandchildren enrolled me at the swimming pool at the Gush Etzion Matnas. I competed in the Hapo'el Alifut 2002 in Givat Chaim. This time I won 2 gold medals and 1 silver medal – exactly as I had done in Nachal in 1957 and broke the Israeli record for the 200m freestyle for the 65-70 age group.

If you ask how I have managed to keep fit for those 45 years since Nachal – Nu, it was by blowing the SHOFAR on Rosh Hashana, which also needs gezunte lungs as in swimming!

OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING

by Arnie Friedman, Kibbutz Israel

"EVERYBODY UP - GET DRESSED! INSPECTION IN 15 MINUTES ON THE PARADE GROUND! - WITH ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT - BEDS AND MATTRESSES TOO!"

This dreaded 2 a.m. order, given now and then, was just to keep us on our blistered toes and was part of our lives. Days were long and tiring. Hebrew lessons included, and sleep was always top priority.

A 2 a.m. Surprise inspection was the last thing we needed.

Only when seven of the eight guys in our tent were up and moving, did we realize that the "order" had come from number eight, still in dreamland: Harold Kaufman, a known "sleep talker", even from faraway Habonim camp days (in South Africa) - had given the order, quite unaware of the frantic activities in our tent...

We all collapsed back to bed, muttering and moaning, thinking what we would do to Harold that morning to get even ...

CHANGE OF PRIORITIES

BOOT CAMP - March 1957

by Les Amdur

First pictures that went up on the tent walls were "nudes" (mostly from Playboy centrefolds).

After a while, the pictures changed to sumptions meals and food (especially juicy steaks).

A short while later, again pictures changed. This time to comfortable shoes (especially sandals).

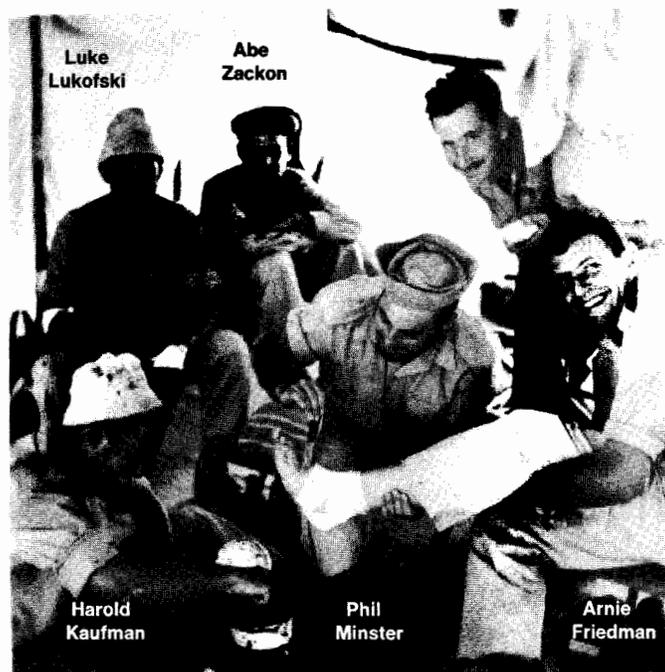
To illustrate how important the latter meant to us, let me relate a short story about the day we went to a shooting range (mitvach), walking with full pack, the "Nachal tradition," ofcourse.

On arrival, our fairly new C.O. Ari Caspi - (with black beret), gave us a treat, by allowing us to remove our boots and socks! One has to remember that we all developed many blisters (from the "tradition"). Issy Shifren was the only one who claimed that he had only one blister! (From his big toe to his heel)!

Removing our boots was truly a bonus! While lying down waiting for my turn, I noticed a pair of smooth skinned "baby feet", standing next to me, I couldn't believe it and looked up to see who it was and lo and behold, there was Ari checking the targets with binocs. I asked him how it was that his feet were in such excellent condition?

Back came his retort

- "after a few thousand kms., you guys will also learn how to walk"!





Rafiel Lewis, Percy Buntman, Henry Werb, Norman Gordon, Dave Zeffert, Jake Margolin, Eric Katzer, Luke Lukowski, Solly Blacher, Arnie Friedman, Eli Zakin, Harold Kaufman, Percy Sanzli, Yehuda Kaplan, Phil Minster, Benny Touyz, Chaim Krut,

1962

