

## METAL (PELED) DAVID 1924 – 1949<sup>1</sup>

In 1933, he immigrated to Israel with his parents<sup>2</sup> and two sisters. He first studied at the *Tachkemoni* elementary school in Tel Aviv and later at the *Moriah* Gymnasium. He was mainly attracted to technical studies. Member of the *Bnei Akiva* organization and later one of the first in the religious sports association *Elitzur*. The 13-year-old, while still in school, entered the defense ranks and remained loyal to her until his last day. He was noted for his simplicity and willingness to fulfill any role, without taking into account the danger involved. In the early days of *Elitzur*, he devoted himself to the *Elitzur Shifts* which were part of the *Haganah* and dealt with all areas of its operations.

After graduating from high school, his parents moved from Tel Aviv to Rehovot. It was the second year of WWII. His studies at the school were discontinued, since his heart was drawn to kibbutz and guarding. He went to train in the *Yavne* group of *Hapoel Mizrahi*. During the day – a farmer, at night – a field guard. After a while, he was called to training positions in charge at *Elitzur*, and he became overly interested in weapons theory and modern warfare theory. He immersed himself in pamphlets and forbidden books, and became well-versed in the types of weapons and battle theory. At that time, he entered the *Watchmen*<sup>3</sup> as a *Haganah* envoy and worked at the Southern District Headquarters. In the meantime, he participated in many courses in various places in the country, where he acquired a special expertise in topography and became one of the most talented and great instructors in this profession in the ranks of the *Haganah*. This profession conquered him entirely. He spent many days and nights on charts, maps and photographs. He was promoted to platoon commander and made long hikes and range practice with his subordinates, whose souls clung to love him because of the simplicity of his demeanor. Responsibility positions were assigned to him at the Southern District Headquarters and he filled them with faith and talent. More than once he was swiftly rescued from the eyes of the British police who stepped up their operations in those days.

In 1945 he married a woman and about a year later they had a son, Ehud. Even before UN General Assembly decided on the partition, even before the IDF, he was entirely devoted to the War of Independence in the South and would go into action almost night after night. He told about them only after the fact, with kindness and natural simplicity. With the declaration of the state and the establishment of the army, he was transferred to the Galilee and as a company commander participated in the battles of Mishmar HaYarden.

During the first respite, he was transferred to topography instruction, in courses for officers in all the

troops (artillery, etc.) and worked in the service of maps and charts. At the time of the resumption of the fighting he requested to be transferred to a combat unit. His efforts continued for a month and he was transferred to the Negev as commander of *gah"al*<sup>4</sup>. He fell in Operation *Horev*, near Bir Asluj, on the December 23, 1948<sup>5</sup>, and was buried in Revivim. He fell as an officer in the 152<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. His name is engraved among the liberators of the Negev in Yad Zichron, in Bir Asluj.

David and I had the same age, but I have always seen him as a guide and educator. I was eleven years old when I came to Israel. And David was already a "veteran".



Metal David

He forwarded me a number of news, led and guided me as a housemate in the playgrounds, in youth groups in which he has already been absorbed and in the Hebrew language that was familiar to him. At school we studied together and of course, here too, I needed his guidance and advice. Days passed, years passed, we grew up. I continued to see him as the older brother. In the meantime, David revealed to me the great secret of his life: he was one of the *Haganah* men. In doing so, he also gave me the impetus to come to their secret. So, it was natural to me, when I appeared as a trainee in a course for officers in 1948, at the end of ten days of battles and found David among the instructors. It was no coincidence that he instructed his department in essential professions. Such as topography and aerial photography in which he was most specialized. This meeting in that course, after a breakup of a few years, seemed to renew our friendship. We had so much to talk to each other about the past and its consequences. And indeed, our hearts were opened and the mouths dubbed. I will never forget the day.

It was close to the end of the course, when the tension of the resumption of the battles was already hovering in the air, when David came to talk to me. I will not forget the sincerity and depth of emotion that surrounded his words. David explained to me that it is difficult for him to continue training, while others put his teaching "in practice" on the battlefield. And at the end of the war what could he tell his tender son? Although the

<sup>1</sup> TN: 26 May 1923 – 23 December 1948.

<sup>2</sup> TN: son of Zelig and Chana.

<sup>3</sup> TN: Jewish policemen under British Mandate.

<sup>4</sup> TN: "גיוס חוץ לארץ" Foreign Recruits, recent emigrants, Shoah survivors.

<sup>5</sup> TN: memorial says 26<sup>th</sup>.

battles we had experienced in the South at the beginning of the struggle were already behind him at that time, his work did not end there. He wants to continue the war as a company commander and when the days of calm come, he will be able to tell his son his experiences. I felt that he was right. But I prayed that this would not be our last conversation.

David went into battle as a company commander in the glorious *Horev* operation to liberate the Negev and expel the Egyptian invader from the country. He did not return from this operation and did not even get to tell his son, but it is clear to me that his son knew what his father had done and would be proud of him. The doctrine he instilled in hundreds bore fruit and will continue to bear fruit. Many will be saved when needed.

His friend and student:  
Zvi NEIMAN, Captain

### **David, Commander of the Religious Department**

After the "Yeshivat HaDarom" moved from Pardes Hanna to Rehovot, the students continued their activities in the *Haganah* as part of the field unit in Rehovot. And when we organized religious classes, David was appointed commander of a religious department. In the underground conditions of that period, the people hardly met David. They knew the training officer. And on special occasions also met with the platoon commander and the company commander. However, the writer of these columns, who was a link between the *yeshiva* and the company headquarters, had more connections with David that, over time, even developed into an honest friendship.

David saw himself as a soldier and, from this point of view, acted. But not all individuals volunteer for defense. As a Torah institution that strives to maintain its special character and spirit, it was therefore necessary to coordinate its time and activities and the days of going out for training and their hours. Frictions could often break out on this issue. But with mutual understanding and will, difficulties were always overcome.

David was educated in a religious home and was saturated with a tradition of Torah and piety. And here he met in the circle of work in a whole crowd, presenting lifestyles contrary to his way and education. And yet things did not lead to arguments and controversy. He accepted things as a fact and this point was always out of the realm of arguing and exposing the lesions. He accepted things as a fact and this point was always out of the realm of arguing and exposing issues.

I remember a short conversation between us in the courtyard of the Great Synagogue, in Rehovot. He came to announce the dates of the courses. In a conversation about war and the roles of the commander, he summed up his opinion: "I am going to fight, I am also ready to fall in the war, as long as my son does not know what war is." Even then, and from other conversations, I felt how much

he lived the bloody life of our generation. He knew only one thing: a vicious circle of blood that should be brought to an end, and even at the cost of many and good lives.

And he changed his life, his memory lives on in the hearts of all his acquaintances and his words resonate in their ears like the day they came out of his mouth. Only a question gnaws at the heart: does our people know how to keep the unwritten legacy of its unknown soldiers?

And did David's son, together with the sons of those soldiers, have a creative life in peace, without storms and wars?...

(From "*La'Oram*"<sup>6</sup>, a booklet in memory of the family members of Healthcare Maintenance Organizations' employees who fell in the War of Independence, Tel Aviv, 1959).

M. HOVEV

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<sup>6</sup> TN: "In Their Light".