

ARAVA

Captain Maurice D. Zeitouni

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IN G-D WE TRUST

ARAVA

Inspired.....Weeping.....Laughing.....Intensely..... emotional.....

Arava is an interesting story of an average citizen soldier in the early years of the State of Israel. While there are many informative and amusing parts, certainly the most moving was Capt. Zeitouni's ordeal in the desert.

It is a difficult thing to hold on to one's faith and not give way to despair while in the midst of an admittedly very desperate situation. It is to his credit that he was able to hang on to both his life and his faith.

Another nice touch was the letters to long ago friends at the end of the book. A reply from any would certainly complete the circle.

Good luck Captain Zeitouni and much success with it.

John R. Inzero

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Dedicated

In everlasting loving memory of my parents David and Esther Zeitouni, to my relatives, Israeli Air Force and Defense Commanders, Worldwide Business Associates, Colleagues and Friends in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, the State of Israel, the Arab Republic of Egypt and Switzerland.

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I am grateful to my friends and associates who have in many ways given me encouragement, counsel and guidance in this effort, and also wish to express my appreciation for their help in achieving the Arava book.

I should like to thank those people who also assisted me in acquiring documentary material in their possession and in particular the following countries, civilian and military Academy schools of training, expeditions, employers with whom I performed active duties with responsibilities, local and government officials in alphabetical order:

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Prudential Lines Inc. of New York

Royal Kingdom of Egypt (Arab Republic of Egypt)

Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey

Smith & Johnson Shipping Inc. of New York

State of Israel Rescue & Search Missions of Arava

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United States Power Squadrons of New York

United States Federal Communications Commission of New York

Varig International Airline of Brazil, N.Y. JFK Int'l Airport

Foreword

The writer of unforgettable Arava incidents.

A man of determination and of principles, but who never received credit or clarification.

A man whose character bursts with compassion.

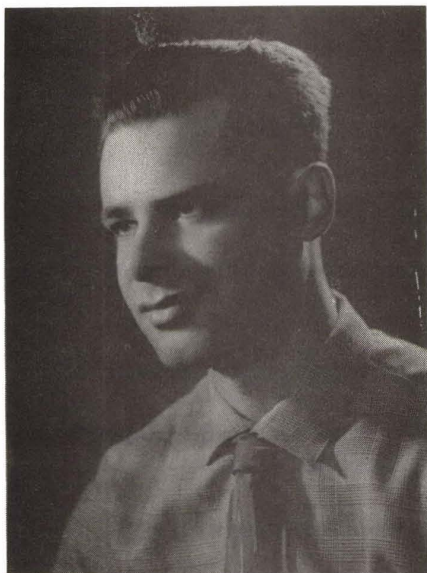
A man who thought all what happened is forgotten and felt the need to clear his conscience after three decades.

A man who worried when the going was tough.

A man who today feels the necessity of writing to his relatives and friends of past events, grief and happiness with confidence that this will benefit his children and grandchildren, mankind and Great Nations, having Trust and Faith in A'mighty Who Is with Us everywhere.

This Arava non-fiction novel that I have written today, 10th day of November 1985 A.D. is dedicated for everyone to share, to care, to believe and remember.

The Author



The Author's photograph taken in Paris in May 1954

Many said: "Bambi, you have changed."

"You are not the guy we once knew."

"Where on earth, have you been?"

I replied: "I came from Arava, enjoyed nature and have a desire to live and let live; C'est La Vie. Qu'est sera, sera."

Preface

Arava is known today by the Arab world “Wadi Al-Arabah” and by the state of Israel “Ha-Arava”. To us, “Israelis” it was named Arava.

It extends about 100 miles or 160 kilometers south from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba.

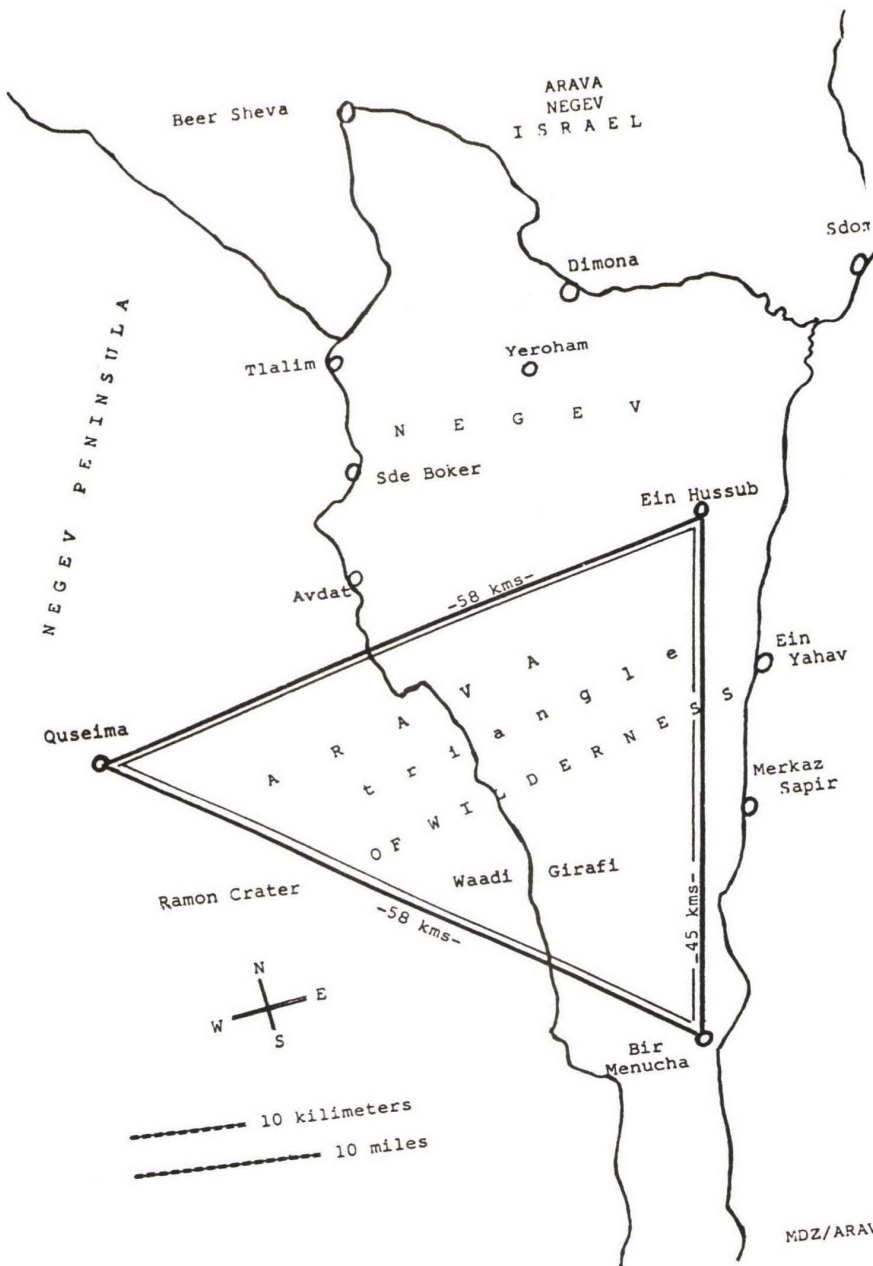
Arava is a part of the Negev Desert, largely sandy, dividing Israel to the west and Jordan to the east. It is referred in this book the “Arava Triangle” intersecting Bir Menucha, Ein Hussub and Quseima in the Negev.

Egypt lies to the southwest of Arava and the Mediterranean to the west. The Waadi Girafi in the Great Negev extends across Arava from the Jordanian border to the Sinai Peninsula. It is infested with lizards, scorpions, insects, camels, deers and wolves.

Arava, in the heart of the Negev, is an arid region, a rift valley in the southern part of Israel, occupying almost 13 percent of the Israeli territory under the 1949-1967 boundaries. It is elevated at about 1500 feet or 450 meters above sea level and is covered by a thick layer of fertile loam which requires water to grow crops. The amount of rainfall varies considerably throughout the region from year to year. In 1953, many Israeli expeditions and exploitations attempted to have Arava soil farmed by irrigation.

Arava receives less than 10 inches of rain a year and is inhabited by Bedouins. It was known as a main transit route of infiltrators from Jordan through the Waadi Girafi to Gaza strip north and to Egypt south through the Sinai Peninsula.

The Author



Egyptian Exodus

In 1938, Sam and myself, Moe, were six years old attending a parochial grammar school within Cairo city limits. We were good pals making our way to school together every morning. We had no city buses, and the distance from our home to school was less than one mile each way.

Since I lived further than Sam, I had to pick him up from his home and walk together to our classroom.

Our spoken language at home was French and were born from Jewish parents. I recall our French teacher, an active educator say, "We should know by now, that over half a million Jews are presently migrating to Palestine, that the war is on in Europe, and that we all should be concerned."

Sam and I sitting close to one another kept on wondering what the teacher really meant. I raised my hand, stood up and asked the teacher to clarify his statement, and also asked him why we feared a World War and what would happen to us Jews remaining in Egypt. I was politely asked to sit down and only listen without questioning.

When our class was dismissed, Sam and I approached our teacher asking for an explanation and were told to go home.

During World War II, we were intimidated, harassed and occasionally cursed by our classmates of being Jewish. We felt stateless. During class recess, Moslem classmates commented asking us why are we living in Egypt and why we shouldn't join our Jewish brothers and sisters in Nazi Germany and why are we so selfish, and so on. By then, Sam and I were eleven years old. We left school that day and reported the incident to our parents. During World War II, realizing that Palestine was under the British Rule and that the creation of a Jewish homeland was in dispute among Arabs, British and Jews, we lived in Egypt with fear and distress and could hardly concentrate on school studies and started to draw plans for an escape.

In 1946, after World War II, Palestine still occupied by the British Mandate, kept the gates of Palestine closed to a large-scale of Jewish immigration despite the United States' repeated demands and continuous requests that the limitation of Jewish immigration to Palestine be considerably eased to the European Jews who survived miraculously as well as to the North African Jews who were persecuted.

I was then 13 years of age when I personally appealed to the American Embassy, seeking a visa entry which was refused. Since I was born in Egypt my status being Egyptian by birth, a duration of ten to fifteen years of waiting-list period of time was required for an Egyptian quota number to be issued.

I was directed to consult the Red Cross of Switzerland for advice on Human Rights. I was given consideration and a temporary "Laissez-Passez" was issued to me to leave Egypt. I was refused an exit visa issuance from the Ministry of the Interior of Egypt claiming that because of my 13 years of age, I was not qualified for either a student visa or a visitor visa. I gave up all plans of leaving Egypt and concentrated in studying English and other educational high school subjects reaching my Matriculation Diploma.

I was then depressed and distressed knowing that the problem of Palestine was in turmoil and was unsolved. We all were already heartbroken learning that the Nazis murdered in cold-blood more than six million European Jews. We were also aware that after World War II, those who survived and had escaped Nazi persecution were determined to go to Palestine to rebuild their lives and were stopped in Exodus Cyprus.

Sam and myself discussed the possibilities of joining those who had survived and reached Palestine on their own. Knowing that any attempt to secure an exit document was in vain to leave Egypt and was almost unsuccessful, we were determined to sneak out through the desert paths.

Unfortunately, all the borders were congested with Egyptian paratroopers, British troops and unnumbered Arab party groups and other Moslem organizations. Our escape was too risky, and if caught, this could jeopardize the safety of our parents left behind, as well as the welfare of all our Jewish relatives and friends.

Those were, in fact, the hardest years of our youth but we somehow grew up in fear. Since we were convinced that our presence in Egypt was undesired, and no other nation offered us asylum the only hope we had left was to reach Palestine and work for a Jewish Homeland.

Since no response and no amendments or change in British rule was given attention and crisis remained unchanged in Palestine, a number of

Egyptian Jews took serious steps, employing violence to smuggle Jewish immigrants into Palestine in defiance of the British.

The underground party of some Jewish patriots were unable to settle the conflict between the British interests, the Palestine Arabs, the Jewish demands and the American continuous requests, it was then, and only in May of 1947, that England turned the problem of Palestine over to the United Nations following the Cyprus Exodus freighter ship.

Accordingly, in 1948, England withdrew her troops from Palestine and declared the mandate at an end on May 15, 1948. The new Republic of Israel was proclaimed with the formation of the independent Jewish State of Israel, and in 1948, migration of stateless Jews around the world became heavy and doors opened to all and every Jew to live in Israel among the Jewish people.

Again, we had some difficulties leaving Egypt. The only possible way to enter Israel was to secure a document of any kind. I was then 16 years old when I applied for an Egyptian passport. I was granted one with stipulation that once I left Egypt, no way should I return without special permission from the Ministry of the Exterior Overseas which was marked in red on my passport.

I was given an exit Egyptian visa on my passport but no foreign consulate would issue me an entry visa to any country. I again, appealed to the Swiss Delegation of Cairo and my request was successful. Instead of having a Swiss entry visa transitting through Italy, I was granted a direct visa entering Italy, a passage to nowhere.

I boarded the SS Esperia at Alexandria on June 17th, 1949 and was on my way to Naples, Italy. I arrived June 19th, and was greeted by the American Joint Distribution Committee who were Representatives of the Jewish Agency and was transferred to France for a physical examination.

I was then on my way to the New State of Israel where I was received with wide open arms and was given an opportunity to start a new life among Jewish people.

Sam's Disappearance from Middle East

The last I heard of my good pal Sam was three days before my final departure from Egypt. What happened was that after he had left school at 5 P.M., he was followed by five or six Arab schoolmates and was beaten up, molested and abducted. He was then picked up by police and

remained in the hospital, his condition was critical. I called and inquired of his health from Alexandria before embarking on the cruise ship and failed hearing of him or his parents.

It's almost four decades since I last saw him in June 1949. I am still exercising all kinds of efforts in tracking him. Many years ago, I came across one of my classmates who was doing extremely well in Paris, France. He told me that Sam, my good pal, could have changed his first name and could possibly be either in Australia or New Zealand. I conducted searches through the Chambers of Commerce of both countries and was informed that Sam emigrated to Australia in 1950 and then went to Israel.

A non-official report received from the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem confirmed that Sam joined the Forces in 1952 but was missing-in-action.

Without Sam's latest photograph and type of blood, I was having difficulties obtaining proper identification of some of those who perished during the 1956 Israeli-Franco-British War of the Suez Canal, the 1967 Six Days War to Victory, or the Yom Kippur war.

I am not losing hope though. I am confident that he is alive and well and the moment he will read my book, he will be in touch with his best pal who grew up with him and spent the hardest years of our youth together in the Royal Kingdom of Egypt.

Aliyah to Israel

Haifa, Israel, July 22nd 1949 at 10:00 A.M. the "Atzmaut" (Independence) cargo freighter touched down on Liberty Haifa Harbor and we stood on the main deck and with full attention sang the "Hatikvah" saluting the Israeli flag. I was then 17 years and two days. My birthday was celebrated on board among boys and girls of my age, all of who became quickly acquainted, as we were all stateless and homeless. Either they fled their country, as myself, fearing their existence as Jews, or were rescued miraculously from concentration camps but determined they were, in either case to be united and live fearlessly among Jewish people starting fresh in a new Jewish State.

The New Youth also called "New Aliyah," majority of whom came from Poland, defeated Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Austria with handsome Jews from Algeria, Morocco and Egypt had been already united on board the vessel a week before entering Israel and pledged allegiance to the flag of the new republic of the State of Israel,

and to the new Israeli Armed Forces for which it stands, a new Homeland for the Jewish People for survival with justice for all and with unity and defense under A'mighty.

Upon entering Haifa's main harbor, we received identity cards with our full name declared from previous documents and a photograph of ourselves was affixed with our right thumbprint testifying, under oath, that our name, the country we came from, and place of birth was true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief. We passed the Board of Health, then Immigration and Customs and declared our intentions to the special Aliyah Jewish Agency Representative who assisted us in solving our demands.

Myself, being single, with no relatives in Israel and without parents, had only one choice, and that was to join the Israeli Armed Forces. I was convinced that I would be taken care of, my board and welfare provided, and my education completed in joining a military academy school. Although I selected the right thing to do, my request was denied due to the fact that I was not yet 18 years of age. Instead, I was turned over to the "Kibbutz" settlement representative who suggested that I first join a "Givaat Brenner" Kibbutz settlement for one year, then be recruited. I honored his advice and was sent to the Kibbutz for temporary residence. All was well and dandy.

Kibbutz Givaat Brenner

With the fresh country air, and with the organized collective farm of "Haveroth and Haverim" (boys and girls) after two days of orientation in this most friendly atmosphere, I felt I was regaining some strength and was in wonderful spirits. I socialized with young boys and girls of my age and exchanged a certain knowledge of French and acquiring some Hebrew practice.

Life in the Kibbutz went on working five hours in the potato fields and learning Hebrew two hours a day. My Hebrew teacher was himself, an immigrant from Poland, and was "Haver" (comrad) Kibbutz for almost twenty five years. He settled in "Givaat Brenner" in 1926 and became Grandpa but his married children joined the ground Israeli Forces and became Senior Officers. He selected to live and protect the Kibbutz. Although he was 65 years old, he looked young - perhaps his healthy ways of life - including good living and fresh air - made him look no

more than 35 years of age. To me, he was a guardian and a good friend. He expired 25 years later at the age of 90. He never ate beef or poultry and restricted his diet to vegetables, fish and milk. His name was Zvi, dedicated to Israel and to his Kibbutz. He was not an A'mighty Believer and that was the only issue I always contradicted his way of thinking and tried to confront his ideology that the A'mighty does not exist and I was unsuccessful.

During Hannukah of the same year, after enjoying four months stay at the Kibbutz in good health and could already speak the Hebrew language fluently, again I felt lonely away from home, parents and relatives that I wished to see them so much and find out of their doings in Egypt. Neither my mail nor theirs could be exchanged directly and had to be conveyed through any peaceful country recognized by Egypt. My cousins in Paris or in the U.S.A., had exchanged the mailing with efficiency, which I always thanked them for their efforts. Although our communications were restricted in wordings, I still felt myself uncomfortable, somehow worried and wanted to hear additional whereabouts of my close friends left behind, and of Sam and of a young girl I just met before my departure from Egypt. No news was ever received from any friends or relatives of their doings, but I was reassured that my immediate ones were safe and well. I wanted to discuss certain personal problems with my parents asking them advice but was restrained and decided to judge my life, on my own, and see what was best for myself. In such a beautiful collective farm of Kibbutz "Givaat Brenner," which was the largest settlement farm close to Tel Aviv/Jaffa, I had a full advantage to visit the wide city of Tel Aviv once a week; and since I was not a wage or salary earner, I could not afford to spend the night out or to eat in a restaurant, and had to make sure to catch the last bus to the Kibbutz. Zvi was annoyed by the fact that I was single, unattached and surprised me on the first day of Hannukah. A new, lonely, immigrant female had just arrived from Rumania whose name was Celia. She was 16 years old, parentless, and depressed. She had lost both her parents when she was 9 years old, and followed the Cyprus Exodus and made her way to Israel. She was transferred to the same Kibbutz. Zvi introduced her to me, after he had a personal chat with her and explained my personal status to her. Celia, knowing Rumanian and some Yiddish, could not understand a word of French or English, but few expressions in Hebrew, I found it hard to communicate with her. Somehow, by means of hands we could manage to exchange past views of horror and nightmares and we went steady for a while.

The Kibbutz Secretariat insisted that we get settled and made plans for the forthcoming wedding. This was only seven days after we first met

at the end of the Hannukah Festival. Although no engagement date was set, a wedding date was affirmed and Celia and I started receiving wedding presents and were confirmed engaged.

So far as I knew, Celia was a nice and quiet girl. She was a brunette, taller than myself, slightly developed and looked so innocent and not ready for marriage. I hesitated and did not want the responsibility of being really settled down in a Kibbutz and forming a new family. It was, in fact, silly on my part and maybe I could have made it, but my mind was filled with ambitions and adventures. Zvi knew something was wrong, he approached me and said, "You are a fool...you have nothing...no one will care about you...who do you think you are? a socialite? Go on, Moe, get married and be somebody, good to yourself and to your country. I'm sure, Moe, that your father and mother would approve of this lovely girl and your good and descent intentions. Move on Moe, and don't be stupid."

I could not make up my mind. All he had said did not change my negative decision. I could not adapt myself to Celia's Rumanian Jewish culture and her way of life. I selected to share my life with someone of Egyptian Jewish culture or someone related to that background. Besides, I was thinking of and promised to someone I already loved back in Egypt. Zvi, being disappointed, decided to stay away from my personal life and two weeks later, the disappearance of Celia from the Kibbutz shocked me terribly and I was personally blamed. I felt so guilty, I inquired the whereabouts of Celia from each surrounding Kibbutz trying to locate her. My intentions were far beyond only bringing her back but to marry her. All efforts failed and I could not trace her. Five years later in July, 1955, after the Arava adventures, I found and met her in a military camp near Beer Sheva where I was appointed as Radio Coordinator for a special 30 day National Guard Duty Compulsory Service. Celia had joined the Infantry Israeli Army Forces when she disappeared. She, then, became a Chief of the Nursing Medical team, joined the army as a career and was promoted to Lieutenant Captain in-charge of the wounded army personnel. I was proud and very happy for her and mentioned how concerned I was because of her sudden disappearance. I learned from her that she also looked for me a year later and she was told that I was somewhere in the Israeli Air Forces. She tried tracing me as well but failed and our friendship remained the same during the years 1955-1958.

I formally decided to leave Kibbutz life back in early 1950 and joined the Air Force. I passed the written and physical tests and was dispatched to army basic training. I was lucky that all written tests were in English since I was still weak in Hebrew and could not possibly solve mathematical problems in that language. Fortunately, since the State of Israel was only

two years old, English textbooks could not be translated into Hebrew so quickly and besides, most of the Senior Israel Army Air Force experts were still volunteering their services in maintaining Israel's new generation militarily supreme.

Israeli Army Training, Awards, and Achievements

After four weeks of military fitness, I was immediately transferred to a military academy school and attended a Radio Communication Program. The English language was required and was essential for radio communication domestic and international, receiving and transmission. The Hebrew language was a requisite for ciphering, coding and decoding. French was also essential and known as an international radio message. The academical three months radio course for me was ideal. My knowledge of English, French, Arabic and Hebrew was of extreme importance that I reached top grades among my landsman. We were regarded as needed skilled Israeli Radio Air Force Coordinators, interpreters and translators. With our military basic combat training, we found ourselves productive and aggressive and our main desire was to serve our new nation with pride, courage and total dignity. We were proud of our Independence and could rest and sleep during those years without fear, oppression, depression, persecution and harassment. We stood up in our Israeli Military Academy and were counted, all for one and one for all.

I cannot recall someone asking us why the hell you came here for...or why you didn't go somewhere else seeking a better life? But I do recall having witnessed our parade saluting our educators from U.S.A., Britain, and the new Israeli Young Lions who were standing passing them returning their salute to us with gratitude, appreciation and the Prime Minister of the State of Israel and his Chief of Staff adding to his speech saying, "Men of Nowhere, you came here to this Land on your own initiative. Your task force job has been achieved. The rest is for you to direct, guide and train present and future generations. You lose this good earth, you will go back where you came from and where you belong. The military training had been given to you not to keep, but pass on to your children and grandchildren. You should never ask what your children can do for you but what you can do for your children."

The fruits of our achievements brought light and wisdom to our daily livelihood in Israel that we threw our hats sky high and kept our awards on hand. I turned back and said, "Oh G'd we just made it and are thankful of being free and independent." I was sad that none of my relatives could be present. Although I was happy and proud, I felt lonely. I was envious of my friends who jumped and hugged their parents. We had a week vacation leave and I went to Yoknaam mountain where my uncle and cousins were residing, and celebrated my grade as Sergeant. The class of 1950 Radio Academy were high achievers and as far as I know, today are all professionals. We retain that good principle of learning, educating and teaching youth of all nations regardless of any race, religion or creed. We could not possibly control Man's intentions or ambitions, but we tried hard showing and proving to our children that education is power and without it we are lost in the wilderness.

In 1952, when I was honorably discharged from the Israeli Forces as Sergeant with a Post Master General license and Radio Coordinator, I was requested by my Commanding Senior Officer, a South-African military volunteer expert, to stay in the army and sign on for an extra three years of voluntary army career service. I was given three days to think it over before he would sign my formal discharge. I selfishly refused, thinking that the civilian world was better for me but was completely wrong and became deeply sorry. As a civilian, and in Tel Aviv, I tried to secure a job opportunity. Nothing was available.

Unemployment in 1952 exceeded the 20 percent margin and the economy was poor and depressing.

You can imagine how well I would be treated as a Chief Coordinator of an Army Radio Station Base. I would have my own studio apartment not far from Tel Aviv. My hot meals ready. My laundry clean and my bedsheets taken care of, and my salary, if I had signed in for a military career, was supposed to be \$50.00 per month. My sundries would be almost free and my bus fare complimentary. Movies and theatrical shows were half price and a brand new jeep was ready for my immediate possession. Selfishly, all I really did think of, was being a civilian. I stayed unemployed for five months and the best job offer that I had was in an ice factory producing five foot long ice blocks. This was on night shift. The pay was very low from which I could hardly pay my rent and cover my meal expenses. I was promoted to Chief Ice Maker Supervisor but could not bear the continuous night hours and was actively seeking another job in my field for which I was best qualified in Radio duties.

The Post Office offered me a job selling postage stamps. I had to wait for my turn which was sixth on line and waited nine months until I was called in. When I showed up, I was told that the individual who had resigned changed his mind, and that I be patient until someone else quit this post.

I appealed to the Israeli government and volunteered my services on any of the Occupied Israeli borders as a Radioman. That request was taken into consideration and I was called in. The moment I left the "Kiryah", headquarter (government office) and was on my way home. I found a nice lady waiting in front of my door calling me by my name. She introduced herself as Miss Dalia, Personnel Director of all Radio Coordinators stationed in the Negev Peninsula which included Acre (Akko), Haifa (Kaifa), Tel Aviv, Jaffa (Yafo), Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza (Israeli Administered), Rafiah, Al Arish as far as Kantara all of which Radio Communicators were needed to keep ground-to-ground special missions.

I was unaware of what Miss Dalia really needed but after I read the contract with various conditions with small print, I confessed to my dear lady that all I really wanted was to go back to my trained duties for which I was best qualified. I realized that I would be on probation for three months and signed a contract which was witnessed and notarized by a powerful Notary Public of the "Kiryah."

Civilian Employment in Arava

I knew that Arava was a sandy and rocky mountain desert leading to nowhere. I was honestly told that the risk was great and was cautioned that health conditions and facilities were disastrous and the Arava area was not inhabited and was infested with scorpions and attack wolves. By night, savage camels and deer were dangerous and the hazard was great. At this point, I wanted to reconsider my decision however, I was told that since the contract was signed, I could not back out. I was cautioned that I could never abandon my post prior to a formal relief or by a substitute Radioman who must be on duty at all times 24 hours a day, seven days a week and thirteen weeks in three consecutive months. As a trained and qualified man for the job, knowing that someone had to do the dangerous work, I could not hesitate and decided to go ahead and try my luck away from civilian life with no future. Later, I was told that the Arava mission paid outstanding and highly attractive wages.

I departed the next morning. I did not need to pack anything. I was supplied with all I needed besides my toothbrush and my after-shave lotion. I was in uniform as a civilian without an army portfolio. I was also advanced one week's wages, paid my rent for two months in advance and said goodbye to no one.

The Arava expedition was not classified and was far from being a secret mission. No Israeli was restricted traveling to this area but it was assumed that the risk was great by day and worse by night. Bir Menucha was regarded as risky and unprotected near the Jordanian borders and infiltrators crossing Jordanians mountains will hit it first since it was the main base station supplying all expeditions with fresh water, groceries and sundries.

There was only one paved road leading to Bir Menucha from either Tel Yeruham or Ein Hussub which started from Beer Sheva and carried on to Eilat's final destination. The Arava triangle is the three lines intersecting Bir Menucha, Ein Hussub and Quseima in the Negev Peninsula and the Waadi Girafi separating the two lines of mountains ending at the Sinai Peninsula.

On Sunday morning at 5:00 A.M., March 1st 1953, Miss Dalia, the Personnel Director of the Company's interests of the Miksaveh Israel Development and Research Division, and who later on wanted me to call her Dalia, had determined to escort me to Bir Menucha Base for orientation. The Company supplied us with a station wagon driver, and we were finally on our way to Arava. Dalia, repeatedly reminded me that I should consider myself employed with government headquarters of the Kiryah.

Our station wagon was geared with two additional Set 19 Receivers, two transmitters and two spare batteries of 12 volts each. A wood crated generator in the rear seat next to me and a large carton box was filled with stationery supplies. On our way to Beer Sheva once again Dalia underlined that my assignment was adventurous and that I should always be in touch with her headquarters in Tel Aviv, at any time, in case of an emergency by radio. I confirmed that I was reading her loud and clear and copied her instructions.

At 6:30 A.M. before reaching Beer Sheva, the sun rose and the weather was so beautiful that we stopped for coffee and had delicious pastries and bagels with cream cheese. I bought additional jars of yogurt, fresh bread and two containers of orange juice. Then we proceeded to Dimona passing by the "scorpion ascent" which was about 1500 feet high and circled with an unpaved two-way road. Our speed climbing the "scorpion hill" was limited to 15 miles per hour and since no boundaries

or caution signs were affixed, we circled the mountain at 5 miles per hour fearing oncoming trucks Northbound. Our "scorpion descent" southbound was a catastrophe. Our station wagon lost all power control and we could not reduce car speed lower than 40 miles per hour, the brakes being lost, Dalia screamed and attempted to jump out of car. I stopped her with force and ordered the driver to keep his true course to the lowest possible level which he did and he later on gained full control of the car at ground level. We reached Ein Yahav Kibbutz around noon and had a complimentary lunch from the Haverim and rested for an hour, we then proceeded to Bir Menucha our Company base.

Dalia was upset and apologized for her behavior and thanked me for saving her life. I replied that I never allowed a lady to jump without a parachute. I saw her laughing for the first time since I met her.

We arrived at Bir Menucha and stopped by the radio station and met with Danny, the Chief Operator in-charge of all the Arava stations. He was already shaved, combed, dressed in civilian clothes and was ready to leave on vacation for five weeks. Dalia programmed her stay for the night provided that Danny stay with us for one more day and give me guidance and orientation. His schedule was so tight that he had plane reservations for Europe and a bus northbound to Tel Aviv was about to leave in 20 minutes.

I took command of his station following a recess and was briefed on responsibilities. Dalia, being a licensed radio operator herself, stayed the whole night with me. We accommodated the driver inside one of the barracks. After Danny had left Arava and was on his way to Lydda (Ben-Gurion) airport, an electrical engineer socialized with us and reported that Danny had hardship and lack of understanding with the workers. He hoped we would have a better relationship in terms of the workers attitude and behavior.

Bir Menucha

I heard no direct comments from Dalia but she insisted that the base be better protected. Paid guards should perform their duties with more effectiveness, protecting the welfare and safety of the radioroom active coordinators and the safety of all staff personnel in base.

Dalia and myself experienced a one-night training program which consisted of one hour radio watch from the time we arrived at base at

6:00 P.M., until the following morning at 8:00 A.M. The program was most educational and productive and we both felt confident that everything should work with entire satisfaction. The protective and security guards who were on patrol, knowing that their personnel director was on watch, exercised maximum attention, waking us up precisely every hour to the hour for radio contact with all units. Although Dalia or myself had to guard the post, guards could be relieved from duty, meaning that night, they showed concern and performed a superb service.

After Dalia's departure the next morning, things had changed slightly. I was unaware of the system of how they treated Danny, the former radioman and the way they communicated with him. Danny left base so quickly that I was not informed of certain negligences, neither was I notified of occasional get-together around midnight nor I was aware of belly dancers. Around 10:00 P.M., I called their attention in the barrack dining room and formally introduced myself and demanded to speak with their supervisor. They all laughed and kept on laughing and joking insisting that they were all independent workers and the need of supervision was not required. I was distressed but somehow succeeded getting along with two serious individual guard workers and was promised full cooperation from their part, waking me up on time (night hours only) and would manage by day by myself. I also requested them to wake me up, if possible, 5 minutes before each and every night hour from 9:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. constantly and daily.

Life in Bir Menucha base was comfortable from many points of view. We had access of daily post office mail. We were supplied with fresh fruits from neighboring settlements. Meat and poultry was refrigerated. A reservoir of fresh water was available and replenished once a week. We were granted one shower every three days. Laundry could be processed reasonably. Sabbath was observed every Friday night but Saturday was not a day of rest to no one. All Arava workers were committed to seven days work and twelve hours duty work. We, the Radio Operators were committed to seven days work and twenty four hours daily duties, dispatching radio contacts for five or ten minutes every hour, except on emergency and the reception or transmission of messages, if any, between our employer and all army units confirming our safety or requesting assistance when necessary. Failure of hourly radio contact was regarded by army units that a station, shelter or bunker was in distress and that an immediate counter-attack was required.

On Wednesday, March 4th, 1953, as recorded in my diary at 10:00 P.M., I was not awakened and totally neglected by the night guards, and

was asleep until 1:00 A.M. in the morning of next day. That was three hours without a radio contact neither with the Israeli military units nor with Dimona or Tel Aviv headquarters. Consequently and obviously all units were notified that something was definitely wrong in Bir Menucha, and precautions steps of a major alert was declared.

Within those three hours, a mass of paratroopers, enjoined with infantry men and helicopter air force command personnel with a special unit of commando fighters were rushed to the scene of our base. Our password for the day was number 14. Passwords were changed every other day starting from noon time of that particular day to the next day at 11:59 A.M. and so on. When they shouted number 8 we had to shout back number 6. If the password was 9, they shouted 6 we replied 3 and so on. Since I failed to be woken up for three hours and was still sleeping inside my station, I was ambushed with this surprise attack and woke up in anguish and despair and was not given a chance to investigate what went wrong, but later realized that I was ignored.

I was severely reproached by the Senior Officer of all units and was deeply embarrassed and felt guilty.

Investigation revealed that only one guard was on duty and had fever and could not wake me up, while the other workers had time off and were simply unavailable for comments. Since there was no supervision on base, the only two persons who were present was the sick guard and myself. Since no one could be apprehended but myself, I was ordered to report to Dimona Headquarters for clarification of lack of diligence and torts, and concluded the incident by pleading guilty to all charges. Since the blame came to the Radio Operator, myself being on duty and in charge with a portfolio, I urged the commanding officers of all units to supply me with a standard alarm clock. My request was denied, since a Radio Operator should be well guarded and the use of an alarm clock would draw attention to his position leaving him unguarded and unprotected. Besides, many men would be dismissed and unemployed. I further insisted with both my employers and the military force, in this case, appoint a station commander in charge of the paid guards and the number of workers. Again my request was officially denied since we were all civilians and it was only the company's option to decide whether or not a chief man was needed.

I resumed my duties as Chief Radio Coordinator and was given a portfolio. This time I could control, schedule and issue appointment of guards with rotation and ascertain their attendance and it worked better than before and Bir Menucha base was regarded as one of the best or-

ganized. Radio Coordinators of all other civilian stations followed same example and resumed full responsibilities voluntarily with portfolio. In Arava, a man with a portfolio was highly paid therefore, the economy of big enterprises could not afford to pay and maintain such a service. The only way for survival and protection of our safety and the welfare of other workers was to volunteer ourselves performing directive duties.

Five weeks later, I was expecting the return of Danny from his European vacation, but was informed that he resigned and decided to stay in Europe for two years. Dalia was in touch with me and instructed all stations that a new Radio Coordinator was on his way to replace me and that I would be relocated to another post north of Bir Menucha's main road, inside the Arava desert. A new research drilling area was appointed by engineers and was in progress with five workers and heavy digging and drilling equipment. Research was worked on from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. seeking oil and fresh water. The area was part of the Waadi Girafi and was infested with lizards, scorpions, and long reptiles.

Waadi Girafi

The development and research enterprise, which consisted of eight personnel, refused to work by day unless they were protected and their equipment guarded by night for the preservation of their heavy machinery. Therefore, and as a contractual rule, no guard no work. No guard would accept the job unless a Radio communication coordinator was on duty.

Dalia's decision was that I leave Bir Menucha and organize the new Waadi Girafi station and have a new Radio Coordinator take over the Bir Menucha Radio station base. I was instructed to move on the same day and coordinate with Dalia for further details. I carried two sets of Radio communication equipment. One set was exposed by daylight and was properly guarded, and the other was hidden and used only by night on top of a hill.

The Jordanian border was only 5 miles East across the Israeli border and the Waadi Girafi desert, at the center, was leading to the Sinai Peninsula which was then the Egyptian border. As a Radio Operator in the Waadi Girafi area, which was part of the Arava desert, I faced discomfort and hardship fulfilling my nightly duties. I had some accommodation by daylight coordinating with the engineers, transmitting their progress messages and

kept busy with their research work which looked interesting and mostly educational, during my recess of 40 minutes between check-in. I could follow their experimental works and joined them for breakfast and lunch with no difficulties whatsoever. At nightfall, the moment they left the Waadi Girafi from 6:00 P.M. and until 8:00 A.M. the next morning, I was with two protective guards, Yossi and Dubi.

After supper around 7:00 P.M., I had to climb a 95 foot hill and attend radio contact until 8:00 A.M. the next morning. On top of the hill, as I was instructed by military seniors, I had dug a five foot depth by six foot length and three foot width sort of burial sight. I had secured my transmission and reception set 19 with a storage battery charged by means of a generator. On top, the hole was covered with tarpaulin (a heavy duty tent material) preventing moisture of rain if any, and sun heat. Inside the hole, I had a two by five foot mattress to lay down by night and was equipped with a thermos filled with hot coffee or tea, some biscuits, crackers and occasionally fresh oranges. I was a heavy cigarette smoker, but stopped drinking wines and spirits. I had no facilities whatsoever for emergency needs and had to perform those emergencies far away to avoid insects, bees and black scorpions. I was supplied with one gallon of fresh water every day for all my needs and with one dozen of fresh eggs every week.

Both night and day guards Yossi and Dubi were newly immigrated from Morocco and were extremely orthodox. As far as I remember, they never missed one daily prayer or a Sabbath service in the wide Arava desert. I joined their morning and evening prayers, as much as I could and daily Kaddish, whenever I was available.

Socializing Difficulties

April 10th of 1953 was my 40th day in Arava. The night was so cold that I put on all my three woolen sweaters I had with me and woke in the morning at 7:00 A.M. coughing and sneezing and feeling feverish. I also experienced anxiety, temper and exhaustion and needed medical attention for relief. I had a long dream of Celia, and her mysterious disappearance from the Kibbutz. The last time I had any social contact was over one month before I joined Arava radio mission and my strong unbearable desire of love and affection came up after 70 days of loneliness without companionship. I felt remorse for Celia and remembered Zvi's

advice, to marry and form a family in the Kibbutz. My contractual agreement called for addition 50 more working nights and days and I could not just abandon my Radio post. I was, furthermore, aware that I was holding the bunker post not only as a Radio Coordinator but also as a Chief Commander of the expedition itself. I also considered the safety of all Waadi Girafi men and their welfare. My only option was to contact Dalia, my director and I transmitted her a coded, person to person message requesting permission for a half day leave of duty. From noon to midnight the following day would be sufficient. My reasons were not specific, and her reply was negative. Again, I sent her an urgent, uncoded message and asked her to leave the radio open and communicate with me. Since both Dalia and myself were licensed operators, we were aware that the exchange of personal messages in "plain language" of texts was illegal and that I should go to Dimona base, twenty miles away northbound from the main road, and speak to her by phone. After my transmission of the 1:00 P.M. radio call, I jumped on a worker jeep and went to Dimona and contacted Dalia on the phone. I was angry but firm. I confided with her that I had to go to Beer-Sheva and pay a social visit with someone I knew. My intentions were to ride northbound to Beer Sheva leaving Bir Menucha the following day at 1:00 P.M. arriving in Beer Sheva at 5:00 P.M., entertain myself from 5:00 to 6:00 P.M., return with a southbound Eilat bus leaving at 6:00 P.M., which was due to arrive Kilometer 115 main road at 11:00 P.M. then, walk my way to the bunker arriving at 11:45 P.M.

The plan was set. Dalia only granted permission with the agreement that if I failed to be there at midnight, I would be dismissed for good. OK Dalia, I read you loud and clear. She promptly arranged that I pick up a radio Junior from Dimona, drop him at the Waadi bunker then I could go to my social call.

Evening at Dimona, Negev, Israel

A young, pretty French cabaret waitress I once had met and had told me to call her any time I was in passage through Beer Sheva came to mind. The moment I rode the bus, all my intentions were switched. I sat next to a school teacher coming from Eilat and going to Dimona which was a three hour drive from Kilometer 115. We exchanged views and acquaintances so rapidly that we cared for one another and she invited me for dinner at Dimona which I overwhelmingly accepted and had a

totally marvelous evening. I was lucky to catch a ride back to the main road and arrived three minutes to midnight. I was then in complete physical fitness and looked ahead with pride, fulfilling my regular hourly duties with rest, joy and satisfaction.

Yossi and Dubbi Massacre

With deep regrets, things didn't always turn right out, the way I expected. After the lack of radio contact incident which occurred a month before involving the civilian and army units and was officially considered a hoax and false alarm, when the workers at Bir Menucha left base leaving myself and a sick guard by ourselves, the boys who cried wolf wasn't quickly forgotten.

Down below my protective bunker hole, only sixty feet away from my target, I was on duty as usual with my two guard troopers who were well equipped, conscientious and best trained for a counter-attack. Yossi and Dubbi just arrived from Morocco and had escaped their Moroccan exodus. They were fluent in French and I could communicate perfectly with them, although their Hebrew was poor, I found no difficulty whatsoever. I was responsible for approving their recruitment in Arava. They were each armed with an automatic and I was armed with an Italian rifle, which was actively loaded and was ready for action.

It was after my transmission was completed with all units and ceased final radio contact at 2:09 A.M. I had woken up myself up this time without the need of guards, due to a nice moonlight and bright sparkling stars and since it was Sabbath, I assumed the two boys needed rest. I felt like having some tea and wanted to invite Yossi and Dubbi to join me with some cookies and a can of grapefruit preserves which I wanted to share with them. Besides, I wanted to chat with them referring to the Korean and Indo-China wars which were going on and on and the casualties. It was already 2:35 A.M. I could stay awake with them until 3:00 A.M., complete transmission, and sleep until 4:00 A.M. I whispered to them at first and received no reply. I shouted 11, password for the day, with no response. All that I heard was an empty can dropping on a rock. I abandoned my bunker and was ready for action. "Who is there?" No reply. "Yossi, Dubbi are you there? Answer me and now." I slid down the Waadi on my belly aiming my rifle. I moved away from the back of the hill, as we were trained, avoiding unexpected enemy surprises and

saw moving objects. I opened fire and shot one air bullet. At a distance of 500 feet, two camels were noticed with load packs covered with bedsheets. The camels were running and behind them four Bedouins. I could remember hearing their "Yalla, Yalla" statement meaning "Come on, Come on." I responded to them in Arabic stating "Halt and don't move." I could see them taking off their shoes, running speedily across the Waadi valley.

I opened fire aiming at their legs. I was determined to catch them alive with full precautions. I shot eight bullets hitting one Bedouin in the leg and because the other three were running too close to the camels, I hit one camel that fell wounded. The other camel kept on running in the Waadi and was soon out of sight, while the Bedouins sped towards the hills and disappeared.

My instructions were to keep the bunker guarded and stop hunting. My concern was to trace my men and be assured of their safety. I directed my attention, looking after the locked grocery supplies and the hidden ammunition supplies, which were intact. Again, I was concerned of the whereabouts of Yossi and Dubbi and fired two more bullets and screamed to shoot back acknowledging their safety. I waited four minutes and still no response was given.

I returned to bunker immediately alerting all units to please come in and transmitted the Mayday signal three times calling all stations and kept on re-transmitting Mayday calling full attention to any radio station, civilian or military. It was 2:43 A.M. No reply was ever received or confirmed. Same Mayday full alert was transmitted in French, English and in Hebrew plain language by the book rules and regulations and the only sudden reply that I received was at 3:00 A.M., the regular contact hour. Command number one came from Dimona's nearest unit, ordering me to stop transmission by Morse Code and use radio-telephone. I followed instructions, although the book said radio-telephone contacts were restricted by night and morse code should be used. Command number two came from army headquarters near the city of Auja, instructing me that I should stay in bunker and protect myself. Command number three was received from Tel Aviv headquarters, ordering me to be in touch with Bir Menucha base station and have them rush me an ambulance which I did.

It was 3:44 A.M., all transmissions came to a dead end and taking into consideration the false alarm which took place back in Bir Menucha five weeks before, and which was confirmed months later.

Normal radio normal contacts at 4:00 and 5:00 A.M. were transmitted and received with indication that they were fully aware of the situation

and that I should keep myself protected in the top hill bunker until further instructions.

It was 6:00 A.M. of the same morning that a paratrooper car showed up and the password was initiated and confirmed. The Lieutenant in-charge questioned me regarding Yossi and Dubbi. I told them that the last I heard of them was at 1:00 A.M. and since then had lost sight of them.

Some 200 feet, way behind a desert hill, both Yossi and Dubbi were recovered. They were found tied up, both hands behind their backs and were butchered. Their ammunition, wallets and watches stolen. Their golden rings were removed from their fingers. My daylight transmission set was intact. However, all canned food and fresh provisions were gone, apparently loaded on the camels, as well as our personal belongings, magazines and medical supplies.

I hand-delivered a detailed report to all concerned officials and requested whereabouts of Yossi and Dubbi's families. I was informed that everything was being taken care of and that I should not be concerned of their welfare. Months later, conducting an individual research, I was informed that their next of kin still remained in the Tunisian exodus and that Yossi and Dubbi originally had fled Tunis as visitors, went to Morocco and emigrated to Israel via Marseilles, France. Consequently, I had no possible way to notify their families and made a formal petition that whenever their families arrive in our new State of Israel to contact me, request of which was granted favorably.

I had another 35 days left with the Miksaveh Israel of development and research workers at Waadi Girafi of Arava. It was depressing to realize that what had happened to my guards could have happened to me. Having no guards, I had been left in bunker by myself for three days and again felt terrible anxiety and depression. I was extremely discouraged from this tragedy which lowered my morale.

Being alone, having no one to talk to, to relieve anxieties, I started to blame myself, on what I did, and what I could have done. But I understood that I couldn't change destiny and that was what A-mighty wanted and life had to go on. I tried to occupy myself by reading and re-reading everything I could put my hands on. I followed up with the news through BBC of London radio daily news and listened to classic musical, and somehow entertained myself during those long nights and days.

The foreman of the expedition and exploration demanded triple guard protection. I was approached by all eight workers, since I was in charge as Radio and Chief Coordinator, it was my responsibility to bring those

protective men no matter from where, but I should see that it was done. I sent an urgent message to Dalia and copied same to military headquarters that unless that was granted, all operation in the Arava Waadi Girafi shall be stopped.

We had no immediate replacements and manpower right after Yossi and Dubbi tragedy, was unavailable. Israeli military assistance intervened temporarily for a few days and we later on secured five civilian workers. We put them on watch eight hours a day, with instructions that no one will be guarding the Waadi alone and were restricted to stop smoking by night, as it appeared that Yossi was a heavy smoker by night and could have been attracted the Bedouins when he was lighting his cigarette.

Living and Working Conditions in Arava

We experienced a shortage of grocery and fresh water supply for five days. We went hunting by day, camels and deers and we ate their meats. Since we had no electricity we couldn't have refrigeration to protect any leftover meats. Consequently, cooked or barbequed beef had to be disposed of if not eaten the same night. Fresh oranges and golden apples could last only six to eight days without refrigeration while fresh vegetables could only last three days. Hot beef or chicken soup from concentrated cubes with noodles added to hot water, was available at all times and could be prepared at any time. The same was for coffee, tea or hot chocolate with concentrated powdered milk.

Our first-aid kit consisted of regular aspirins, bandages, iodine, rubbing alcohol, sucrets and castor oil for stomach pains. A,B,C,D, and E vitamins were also available and so were cotton rolls.

On May 10 1953, I had only 21 days left of duty, and started to program my future plans. All my Arava wages remained with my employer. My Arava expenses were drawn from these wages.

I was 20 years and 10 months of age and was promoted to Lieutenant beginning 21 years. Maturity in Israel was at 18 and no commissioned officer could be under 21. Misdemeanor charges committed by an officer under 21 were affirmatively dismissed by court but charges recorded with warning for future offenses. I was practically immune of my doings as Chief Radio Officer in-charge then of 13 men and kept a clean record from felonies, defraud with intent, false accusations, forging or aiding in making and altering message texts. Radio license clearly stipulated "Shall be guilty of any misdemeanor charges as stated and upon conviction

shall be punished for each offense, reprimanded by imprisonment of 5 years and shall be dismissed from radio post duties.” We were informed of the serious convictions in Arava among radiomen who had used profanity and were warned to avoid those circumstances. It was my goal to join El Al training course for employment as a Radio Crew Operator after Arava, which I did. I had a strong desire to travel around the world and explore new ways of life.

An important feature came up involving the deceased Yossi and Dubbi. A sermon was administered by an army chaplain.

We attended services with grief, tears and anguish. We blamed ourselves regardless of what happened. It could have been a punishment from A'mighty that Sabbath was to be accepted as Sacred Day by all Jewish people. It was also believed that earning a living in Arava and on the Sabbath was in direct violation of the Sabbath law. We were told that it was sinful to perform emergency active work on Sabbath on one hand, but as Arava patriotic men, we also knew that someone else and only of Jewish faith, had to do the job for the Israeli National Security. We wanted to observe Sabbath law, but could not stop being on watch fearing the enemy. Under normal condition of life we found it possible to observe Sabbath law. Yossi and Dubbi had vested all their efforts uniting us with Biblical continuous lectures on Sabbath that we would never forget. The Army Chaplain concluded that their death was G'd's Will and that we always keep on praying for forgiveness and remember their wrong doings, follow at all times good the path of life as it comes, and keep hoping for better days ahead observing the Sabbath law.

The Arava mailing system was slow. I had no way of contacting prospective employers. I recall having sent a letter to a friend March 16th and was received April 20th. His answer back marked “rush” was received May 9th. I had asked George in my letter who was the 3rd assistant under secretary of the French Vice Consul to register me for the El Al Radio-free training program which he did, and received confirmation. He also insisted that upon my return from Arava I share his one room apartment and stay as long as I wished. I was delighted of his gesture and thanked George gratefully in my letter which reached him two months later. I had only 19 days left and was determined to honor my contractual obligations with Dalia, which was to expire May 31, 1953.

In the meantime, I enlarged my bunker facilities extending it to seven feet long, five feet wide and six feet deep, and by means of an extension cord, I added a small lighting fixtures for night reading. The bunker was heated by day but chilly by night. I exposed a small framed photograph of my beloved parents and affixed my radio operator license which was

issued by the Department of Transportation and Communication and also my awards from the Israeli Air Forces. My lavatory facilities were located far away from my bunker. My orientation training program was extremely restricted and called for: a) Waste to be covered by sand, avoiding bees and scorpions. b) Disposals to be buried two feet away from Bunker. c) Water disposals to be covered avoiding flies and insects, lizards and black scorpions. d) Rubbish to be assembled into paper carton and be disposed of 60 feet away from bunker. e) Waste paper or written classified documents to be burned. Maximum precautionary measures were taken by day, and we were compelled to crawl down the hill by night for relief, avoiding unexpected visitors such as Bedouins, infiltrators and wolves.

By mid-May of 1953, the Department of the Army's occasional inspection with the Board of Health, suggested digging a 20 foot by 4 foot hole for lavatory needs and disposals for each individual, nearby bunker avoiding walking distance and this hole was to be hard wood covered at all times. It never materialized because of the water shortage.

We were facing a major problem. No physician was available, and emergencies became catastrophies. The nearest available doctor could be reached at Dimona, about twenty miles away and the closest hospital was at Beer Sheva, approximately 85 miles away. By day, injured workers on the job, could be rushed to Dimona for first-aid attention. By means of a distress radio message, severely wounded workers or pneumonia sufferers could be transported by helicopter to the nearest hospital. By night, it was almost impossible to reach immediate help. We were supplied with aspirins for pain or fever, but what happened if we suffered with any unexpected internal or external injuries, was vital. Dalia had petitioned for a physician and an ambulance request was approved, and supposedly to be taken into effect immediately. No doctor was available. A military Medical Officer was sent to Bir Menucha until a regular physician would volunteer to take the position. The distance between the Waadi Girafi and Bir Menucha was 7 miles on the main road plus six miles on the rocky desert.

The Arava weather was usually pleasant in the morning hours, at sunrise 78° Fahr. or 26° Cent. There was occasional or no rain for months. Sun heat increased gradually to 95° Fahr. Evening hours were a steady cool from 9:00 P.M. to midnight with a normal temperature range of 60° to 70° Fahr. Heat with 80% humidity reached 108° Fahr. Windstorms struck us occasionally round 4:00 P.M. and stopped before sunset.

I was in possession of a Swiss automatic winding calendar watch which George had offered me on my last birthday. Inside my shoe box which was hidden under receiver and transmitter set were charts, various

maps, classified documents, location of Settlements (Kibbutzim) or Collective farms (Mochavim), with road maps pointing north to Tel Aviv and south to Eilat. We were fully protected by the National Guard called (Hail Hasfar). A useful tiny navigational direction finder compass was also available. Digital instruments, wake-up device to music or ringing clocks, pocket radios, walky talky, electric shavers, blowers or any noisy device were not available and were forbidden to use during radio contact hours meaning during 24 hours.

Distress Signal From U.N. Unit 35.

Among the guard's many duties, were to clean rifles, hunt for food, stock groceries, replenish generators with gasoline, grease wheel rigs and wash drilling equipment. Their top priority task, however, was to keep a firm watch by means of binoculars aimed at the enemy from 1500 feet range. Also an important function was to wake up the radioman five minutes before every night hour precisely.

One last item that I was given was a suicide pill to hide on me and keep handy at any time. Similar to the size of an aspirin, it was wrapped, sealed from moisture and preserved from heat. I was instructed for its use, under what circumstances and conditions. As usual, four minutes past midnight on Wednesday, May 20, 1953 following a contact routine with all units, I was assured that all stations ceased transmission. It was a practice to leave the radio open for another 5 or 6 minutes just in case. During the lapse of those last minutes, I received a distress message calling all stations "CQ CQ CQ DE UN35 UN35 UN35 k k k." The same calling signals were repeated 4 times with no interruptions meaning, "ATTENTION ALL STATIONS, THIS IS UNITED NATIONS LOCATION 35 COME IN PLEASE", proceeded with "MAY DAY" 6 times.

I confirmed station UN35 reading them loud and clear and requested text transmittal. Message read "DEMAND ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATE." I reconfirmed acceptance of message in French requesting more clarifications. Their reply was "CINQ BLESSE" meaning 5 wounded. Received loud and clear...state position for conveying message, Over. I repeated the message without interruption 13 times to all units and received no reply. I conveyed same message to nearest army unit and kept re-transmitting from 1:56 A.M. to 2:15 A.M. and missed my regular 2:00 A.M. regular radio contact with all units and had to catch them back at 3:00 A.M. In the meantime the French SOS experienced atmospheric

disturbances. I could hear them, but they could not receive me. I used the radio-telephone mike and had French operator on VHF. Position was received nearby Gaza strip unit 17. I relayed their position at 2:30 A.M. to Dimona station. They received text and I was requested to "cool it" since everything was being taken care of and that I should come in at 3:00 A.M. and be on watch with all units, GN over and out. I was then instructed to keep my radio open until 6:00 A.M. and keep listening to any further French coordination, which I did. All was quiet as we were standing by. I informed Mickey and Dicky my new watchmen, of all that had happened and they stayed awake with me until the wee hours, warming tea every 15 minutes.

It was then confirmed at 6:16 A.M., the UN observation post unit 17 was attacked by Jordanian infiltrators near Gaza strip and needed 3 ambulances, medical assistance, cover-up and that their Radio Operator was killed.

Their station was estimated at about 90 miles away. No paved roads could lead a rescue convoy across Arava mountains and aerial transportation was the only answer. That was a military matter and not a civilian concern. In consultation with our Tel Aviv base headquarters we were refrained to handle radio contact with the French and were to turn over any further messages to military units. We then assumed that matter was over from our end.

At 7:35 A.M. I had breakfast. I recorded the incident in my diary as usual, and upon completion, a helicopter approached my bunker and stopped 20 feet above my head. I answered their code and signal and was asked by the pilot to hold ladder cords and come on board.

They identified themselves as rescue military missionaries. It was a four seater helicopter cab. The pilot, a lieutenant and a sergeant. My seat was reserved. I refused to leave my bunker unattended, but was convinced and assured that an army radio officer was on his way to take over my duties. I refused, disobeying an army command and flew with them for about 16 minutes over Arava above 2,900 feet high mountains. Dalia had instructed me that under no circumstances should I leave the bunker, without her authorization. I could not reach Dalia at 7:40 A.M. by radio, even knowing that she calls in her office at 8:00 A.M. I had no choice but to obey the military command on emergency matters, being part of our national security system. We landed at the army base and reported to the commanding officer, identifying myself, stating my position in Waadi Girafi station. I was asked to clarify the French SOS texts which was sent in distress and was given a radio set communicating with other UN units, which I did.

I rushed to lavatory, took a 45 minute shower, laid down on a comfortable bed, sat on a wooden seat, had two fried eggs on a china dish, ate fresh army bread, pastries made on premises, drank fresh orange juice, enjoyed the black Greek olives, Tnuva cream cheese, yogurt, and kibbutz marmalade. Again I ate soft boiled eggs later on, and finally french toast. I have not had such a good meal for almost 88 days. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to stay for dinner and taste the good old army meals of fresh cooked beef with rice and gravy, soup, without ignoring the fresh fruit salad of grapefruit mixed with peaches, mangos and grapes.

We exchanged home news, whereabouts and worldwide news, but I was not lucky enough to join them for dinner. The army's intentions were to keep me at base for at least two days, but orders had changed three hours after I touched down in paradise. I was to go back to my old bunker hole immediately. What happened was that the replacement was diverted to another target in distress, and Dalia insisted that I go back post-haste. The helicopter had gone back to Dimona, and no transportation other than helicopter was available to go back to the Waadi. I was relaxed, OK, but I needed some rest and time away from my bunker. Since no helicopter was available, the next and only possible way was to walk back, with a military convoy. Wearing a French beret, I was escorted with two army corporals, and we all three were on our way to Waadi. We rushed so fast that I forgot to refill my knap-sack for the unexpected return trip knowing I was going for a very long walk on foot across the wide desert. It was too late to go back, the army base was out of sight.

Back To The Waadi

On our way back to the Waadi, we experienced long and dusty paths, rocky ascents and dangerous descents. The army convoy and myself were following vehicle tracks which were sighted leading down the mountain paths. It was Wednesday, May 20, 1953, 4:00 P.M. and I had eleven more days to go in Arava, ending at midnight, May 31. We followed the tracks directing us to the wide Waadi. From a distance, we were shot at, we shot back, then we ceased fire. We dispersed, avoiding total casualty. That was part of our training, "keep distance in case of ambush." The truck paths were still seen, but gradually diminished, and soon disappeared completely.

Although we were each armed with loaded shot guns, three active grenades and 30 rounds, we felt lost. I had full faith in my convoy men, and realized that they were best trained and had to rely on them for a

safe arrival to my bunker. When they radio-telephoned their unit, they were ordered to return to base before dark. I was pointed in the correct direction, which they did with a Shalom, see you soon.

Under heated sun and winds, I moved on all by myself and walked nine miles. According to my map, I had more than 22 miles more to go. Visibility was 5 to 1, which means very poor because of a sandstorm. It was 7:00 P.M., and darkness was quickly approaching. I could not walk straight ahead. I was turning right and left and all vehicle tracks were out of sight. I turned back, trying to relocate path and was directed to unknown area, unfamiliar to me. I realized I was lost in the wilderness. It was a moonless night, dark, windy, cold and very humid. I sneaked in between two rocks, hid myself from dusty winds, picked up dried bushes, assembled them and put a fire on. I was concentrating on finding a logical solution without panicking. Shot one round in the air to attract or alert anyone's attention in the area but received no response to my signal. I repeated another round every 15 minutes. The chances for me to be rescued during the night were hopeless.

I had half a canteen filled with fresh water—about two drinking glasses, a can of sardines, some waffles, some concentrated foods, eleven cigarettes, matches and two candy bars. I looked for my navigational pocket compass, which was secured in my rear pocket. The pivot was removed and got loose inside the compass so that I was not able to point East. My true course was towards either Dimona or Bir Menucha, to reach my Waadi bunker.

At nightfall, I managed to light a fire and warm some water. I had soup concentrate made with little water and also a little hot coffee. I knew I had to save water for the next day. I heard hungry wolves howling from a distance and put out the fire immediately. Night crickets were noisy, and flies were buzzing. I tried to sleep and was awakened by howling wolves approaching. I had nightmares thinking of my family, of Dalia, Celia and George. I reached for my pencil and wrote my name, position and gave George's address, requesting that finder contact my friend George.

Thursday morning, May 21st, 2:15 A.M. I shouted very loud, then again, lower and again whispering and asking anyone for help, stuttering uncontrollably. Somebody, anybody, do you hear me? You see what Dalia did to me? After all, I saved her life. Would she come now to help me? Dalia put me in this hell of a mess. So many thoughts were going through my mind. I was thirsty and hungry. I felt like smoking and was restless. I remember that woolen blanket my Dad gave me before departing from

Egypt. I could use it now. Those Australian leather navy shoes from the service, (that I saved until the day of this writing), Boy, do I need them now. The overcoat that I kept from the Israeli Air Force and that long sleeve shirt and underwear woolen outfit that my uncle offered me in Cairo, I could use them, this freezing night.

I was shivering and mumbling. Where is the beef, that I missed in army base for dinner? I was promised hot beef stew, Hungarian goulash with bread, gravy, rice and home fries with pickled onions and cucumbers. The apple sauce, the beef soup, the marmalade dessert and pastries with preserves "oulalah"!! How could I forget all of the above on the menu that I missed, just because Dalia had called commanding officer of Arava unit ordering my immediate return to base? Without her interference, I could have stayed at least for the night. But Dalia had to fulfill her obligations with her directors and had no choice. I believe she had to execute Arava obligation and conditions to protect all men in the Waadi. Had I stayed for the night in base, I would have flown to bunker in 15 minutes the way I came. But my fate now, as G'd wanted it to be, is that I be here watching the blue skies and sparkling stars with messages that I could not possibly read or understand.

During those days, no female radio coordinator was granted employment in Arava. Back in Bir Menucha, the first week of March, I had interviewed Rina, after her discharge from the Infantry for replacement. Her application was rejected by Dalia, who strongly objected. Although the army rules and regulations had confirmed the duties of female same as male, civilian employers reluctantly denied the hiring of female Arava workers. I objected that it was quite impossible to secure only men for the job, and that was the reason why we were compelled to stay in bunker post for a period not less than 90 days, on 24 hour watch. Later on, by December of 1956, following the Anglo-Franco-Israeli war, revisions and modifications permitted qualified men and women to perform equal Radio assignments in Israel, under the same conditions everywhere in the country.

I kept thinking, remembering Celia and her disappearance from Givaat Brenner Kibbutz, and Hanna, the pretty nurse I met the previous afternoon in base who gave me a general check-up. She was a Yemenite, long haired and cute. She was a military intern taking blood pressure, diagnosing urine tests, examining eyes, nose and throat, colds and exposures under the heated Arava sun. I had socialized with her and made a date. She had informed me that a movie show "Bataan" was to be projected that night, she would enjoy my company, and that I should pick

her up after dinner at 8:00 P.M. from the infirmary. Sure, sure. Where am I right now? I don't know what to say anymore. It's too late now. I can't go back to the base where I came from, but maybe I should try to go back by morning before sunrise.

The odds were against me. I had enough common sense to stay where I was, as they would eventually take appropriate actions in searching for me. After the death of Yossi and Dubbi I had taken extra precautionary measures in training Mickey and Dicky, during their leisure while guarding the bunker, in case the unexpected incidents happen.

1. I instructed them that in case something should happen to me they should know how to operate the radio transmitter frequency, the distress call to all stations as such: *MAYDAY*, 3 times; *this is TARA 2*, 3 times; *Come in please*, 1 time, and then receive reply from station *Roger, Over and Out*. They were taught to send text quote and unquote and so on. I trained them, and with some practice, they found it interesting.
2. I showed them the use of the alphabetical Morse Code transmission which seemed to them difficult at first. Later they learned that A is .- dot and dash, B is ...- 3 dots one dash, C -.-. dash dot dash dot, D -.. Dash two dots, and so on, but mainly I insisted they keep the radio open and keep transmitting SOS ...---... 3 dots 3 dashes 3 dots, at all times, then use radio. They had practiced both radio and Morse for two weeks, and they did very well. They were confirmed ready for an emergency.
3. I refrained to teach them military codes, bearing in mind that in an emergency, plain language was permitted and all rules and radio regulations are ignored by law.
4. I directed their prompt attention, pointing out that they work together performing radio contact duties every hour on the hour.
5. I reflected and drew their attention to where the enemies were positioned, as I was oriented. I remember the Chief Army Staff say upon graduation "Men, do not keep basic training for yourselves and pass them on to your next of kin, children and grandchildren and to all those you feel will protect Israel."
6. I showed them how to operate the generator and fill the battery, keeping gasoline away from heat and sun exposure.
7. I taught them some English sentences to use in an emergency, in case they received air-radio contact.
8. I forbade and cautioned them to destroy waste disposals away from their post and refrain from smoking by night.

9. I called their attention to lowering their voices at night and to behave normally by day, refraining from playing card games attracting infiltrators.
10. Since both of them were from Algerian descent and knowing French, I encouraged them to learn Hebrew.
11. I repeatedly boosted their moral, assuring them that after 6 months of Arava work, they would have enough money to look forward to a home, a job, getting settled, marrying and forming a happy Jewish family.
12. Realizing they had not completed their 2 years of compulsory army services, (which was increased first to 2 and one half and then to 3 years) I said to them that I was sorry to be discharged from the Air Force after 2 years. As a civilian, I was unattached, lonely and wished to return to the military life as an officer.
13. I encouraged them, mentioning that Israel would be proud of their good work and that they should be happy and work with pride, honor and dignity.
14. I reminded Mickey that since his sister was a French graduate in law, upon my return to Tel Aviv within a week, I would process her immigration papers bringing her to Israel to live among Jewish people.
15. To make their life easier in Arava, I brought to their attention that the existence of Israel and the dignity of every one of us depended of our efficiency and good behavior.
16. If attacked, captured or wounded, never surrender to the enemy. To standby and be ready for counter-attack and shoot back, the choice being better kill than be killed.
17. I protected the rights of my workers, their employment equal terms and conditions which related to their salary, responsibilities within their authority and enforced the law against discrimination, harassment because of their race, color, creed, national origin, age and I opposed those violators with retaliation, prosecution and sentence.
18. I nominated Mickey to resume command of bunker in case anything should happen to myself and notified all concerned in writing. I also directed Mickey's undivided attention to follow the United Nations Resolution on Human Rights which I translated to him in French, as well as the Israeli civilian and military laws on Human Rights.
19. I clarified their mind of the Israeli and Egyptian current events since the Jewish State had won its independence following the Arab-Israeli

war of 1948 with neighboring Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the borders raids, the barring of Israeli ships to use the Suez Canal.

20. I lectured them on King Farouk, the last Pharaoh of Egypt who had ruled the Royal Kingdom of Egypt from 1936 through 1952 and who was the son of King Ahmed Fouad the First had been exiled following a revolution of Egyptian Army Officers. One of these officers was Gamal Abdel Nasser who was the head of the Egyptian government and was the Chief Commander of the Egyptian Army Forces.
21. Mickey and Dicky being unaware and unfamiliar of their geographical position in ARAVA, asked me to teach them more precisely where we were located and whereabouts of the Suez Canal. I dictated to them in French "Since 1882, the British stayed in Egypt and occupied the Egyptian territory by using every political device they could possibly command. One purpose the British had in mind: To secure the Suez Canal for England. Although the Suez Canal was open to the ships of every nation, it came to be virtually a British possession. The Jewish State of Israel was denied passage of all Israeli ships since its independence in 1948 and was deprived passage. The French may have run the Company, but the British had the Canal. British troops were still occupying a zone border which included the Suez Canal within the Egyptian territory."
22. I was then asked by Mickey who was Ferdinand De Lesseps? I replied: He was the Creator and Founder of the Suez Canal, De Lesseps dreams meant "To open a passage to the world of all people." His dreams became realistic as per his concept pledge of his French allegiance to the whole world of all people. We believed in our Arava days, that De Lesseps dreams will become true and a reality to mankind. We also regarded De Lesseps imagination and thinking of great importance and we thanked him for his achievements and good work with pride, honor and dignity. I urged Mickey and Dicky to understand and bear in mind how much of a hardship we would have had reaching the Far East by way of sea trade routes." Then Dicky interrupted me and asked: "Why the name of Farouk was given to a King?" I replied that: "The name of Farouk meant - One who knows Right from Wrong -" He was the hope of independent Egypt." He was an attractive goodlooking young man who, the "FELLAHIN" (Natives) believed, would lead them into a time of peace and prosperity.

During the long night I was thinking of what I had achieved and was wishing that both Mickey and Dicky remembered to use a distress call to all stations and alerting the army units that I was missing. That was textually what happened on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, when I did not show up in the Waadi. With G-d's Help, the result of orientation, training program shared with my fellow men and their action with authority, my life was saved. What happened was, since I was expected to return to bunker at 8:00 P.M. latest, and by 9:00 P.M. not having shown up, they sent first a MAYDAY to all units indicating that I was missing between army base and the Waadi. The distress signal was received by all units. They acknowledged content of text and conveyed this information to the Israeli Research and Rescue Mission who in turn instructed all ground forces to start searching areas C, D and E, a triangle of Arava desert inside Bir Menucha, Ein Hussub and Quseima. I was trapped nearby Avdat.

Search efforts started midnight Wednesdays, May 20, and continued. It was Friday, 00:30 A.M. in the morning, a bright moonlit blue sky, and was my second night in Arava. I had determined during the previous sunrise on Thursday, where East was and had plotted altitude with longitude position of bunker. I had figured a route and had pointed approximate true course and headed in that direction. I could not climb mountains and had circled around paths maintaining my course. I kept moving on and on, but was exposed to sun heat and lost my bearing. I looked for shade and could not find any in the rocky hills. I had slept 2 hours on Thursday morning and woke up around noon. I could feel my empty stomach, sending pain throughout my body. My lips were parched and I could not remember the last time I had any water. I prayed for rain, but no rain came. I was out of cigarettes, candy and no food was left.

All I had inside my knap-sack was a prayer book, a pad and pencil. I kept on writing in my diary and dropped pieces of paper, to guide any rescuers following me. I collected bushes, bundled them and affixed notes indicating numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. with signs pointing out the direction I was headed and displayed part of my T-shirt indicating southwest 245°. I had seen sunset and verified course after considering deviation, but could not find my way to the Waadi main entrance—East. Nightfall came, along with severe hunger and thirst. I searched for a safe place for the night. All I had was a rifle, one last round which I saved, and the suicide pill.

On top of a 7 foot hill, I found wet mud inside a large hole where I decided to lay down for the night. Under these circumstances, I emptied some mud from the hole and laid it aside. I relaxed, as much as possible, my feet extended high and tried to sleep facing heaven and stars.

Luckily, I observed two dark scorpions approaching me and killed them instantly. I was unaware that mud attracted scorpions, bees, mosquitoes and "je ne sais quoi" and thought that since I destroyed scorpions, that was it. I was wrong. The moment I laid down once more, a convoy of scorpions paratroopers headed towards me and I kept on smashing one by one. Accidently, I fell from the hill to the ground injuring my left kneecap. I screamed like hell and was in deep pain and bleeding. I took off my T-shirt, bandaged the injury and tried to stop the bleeding.

From a distance, I could hear wolves and kept crawling nearby on my right leg for about 70 feet and found a fallen tree branch. Now, I could stand with one leg, and limped slowly. I kept on moving from midnight until sunrise Friday, May 22nd.

To distract myself, I tried to sing the song of "David Melech Israel" (the song of David, King of Israel) and had kept repeating "Simmy Yadech Al Yaddi Ani Chelach Ve At Cheli" (meaning put your hand on mine I am yours and you are mine). All I could hear was an echo. My morale had reached bottom. All I could do was sing, question myself on the past and think of my friends and hope for survival.

I opened my prayer book and read my morning prayers and had rationalized, whatever will be will be. I counted on G-d and my watchmen, Mickey and Dicky hoping their efforts to pull me through would succeed and kept cool that if I was confident the army would rescue me. It was a question of time. It was 7:30 A.M. Friday, May 22nd 1953.

To pass the time, I started to think of the Arava wages; anything that came to my mind.

For a radio operator: The hourly pay was about \$2.68 straight time which was equivalent to about 6,000 Isr. pound or 6,000 brutot.

The pay formula for three consecutive months (which were literally 24 hours a day) meant to the Arava worker, indicated below:

US \$2.68 s/t hour x 42 hours week x 13 weeks	US \$1,463.28
plus o/t 50% balance of weekly hours	
US 1.34 o/t x 102 hrs. week x 13 weeks	US \$1,776.84
plus Sabbath differential o/t at 100% for 13 sabbath	
US \$2.68 o/t x 2 d/t x 24 hrs. x 13 weeks	US \$1,672.32
Total gross earnings for three months (all inclusives)	\$4,912.44
Less all deductions of about 35%	US \$1,719.35
Net pay received	US \$3,193.09*

*(which were equivalent to approximately Isr. pounds 6,400.00)

In 1953 during the economy struggle in Israel, the average weekly income that an Israeli could possibly earn in performing his duties as an employee in a banking institution or just an office clerk, white or blue collar or even a postal worker as a radio operator performing same occupational duties were listed, as follows:

US \$.75 an hour x 42 hours a week	US \$ 31.50
Total earnings gross income per month	US \$ 136.50
Total gross income per year	US \$1638.00
Less deductions per year	US \$ <u>737.10</u>
Total net income per year approximately	US \$ 900.90

The rate of pay earned in Arava for three months could not be earned anywhere else in the city under normal circumstances, for less than three years of time performing same duties.

The purchase of a standard two room condominium apartment was approximately of US \$12,000.00. Since I did not spend any money being in the desert, my intentions were to invest my earnings, which exceeded US \$3,000.00 as down payment, then seek a mortgage for balance of US \$9,000.00. I could select to retire comfortably for at least two years with no work or start investing for a soda fountain store selling cigarettes and candy.

In those Arava days, the early Fifties, we had no discos, no pizza, no hot dogs, no cool refreshments, no coffee breaks, no speeding tickets, no traffic congestions, no plane or train to catch and no fantasy of any kind. All men were recruited to do a national security job. Complaints were totally ignored. The majority of us, including myself, were homeless, lonesome, unattached, but we had one ambition; to earn enough money, save it, and get settled somewhere in the Land of Israel. We stood up and we were regarded as "HALOUTZIM" (patriotic) to our national new Jewish State, "ATZMAIM" (independent), and "HOFSHIM" (free). Some of us were "TECHNAIM" (professional), some "AIMZSIM" (vigorous), some "HAZAKIM" (courageous), and some "RAIM" (vicious).

We could not all possibly be "MEFACDIM" (commanders). Some, had to lead, direct, guide and train. We looked forward to achieving one goal, which was being "ACHIR" (rich). Myself, among the majority, were regarded as "BENUNIM" (modest).

I was called by Arava leaders "Chief Bambi", the reason was that I was so small in size compared to them. I was five foot four inches and the average worker was six feet tall. I was trained and able to perform

special duties, other than Radio Coordination. I was plotting targets on maps, figuring distances, analyzing weather forecasts for the next 24 hours in full cooperation with other stations, read Arabic, French and English fluently, intercepted enemy transmissions, communicated with trapped Bedouins, coordinated with Waadi engineers in their research, executed the National Guard following their orders and instructions, and brought civilian and military personnel together. I was occasionally called “FOXY” by some characters who thought I was a member of the Israeli Intelligence Task Forces, which I denied.

Sitting there, between rocks, hills and flying bushes, I kept thinking of the past. The sun came up and I noted that my infected knee was becoming worse. I wished I had aspirin. The pain persisted, I was feverish and speechless. My eyesight was blurry. I could not read my notes, but kept on printing anyway. In my agony, I wrote to contact my buddy George, and since he was 3rd Assistant under-Secretary of the Vice Consul, he would be the most appropriate person to contact my mother in Egypt through his French Diplomatic channels. My note was, as follows.

Dear George: Hopefully if you receive this note, contact my mother and inform her of my ending. I had a good life as best as can be expected. Send her my love and thank her gratefully for helping me come to the “Holy Land”. Tell her that our Lord wanted my life to be as such and I was proud to serve Israel, so that one day the world will be a better place to live.

Please George, make sure that my Arava earnings be endorsed to her name and don’t forget to instruct Dalia to deduct ten percent of my net earnings to “Aliyah” Jewish Agency, amount of which I owe them for bringing me to this New Jewish State of Israel to be united among good Jewish people. I know if my request is humanly possible, you will fulfill it. Thank you George, Shalom, “Le-Hitraot” (Peace - See you).

I was out of paper and had no desire to write any longer. My swollen kneecap weakened me so that I was totally unfit to move my arms. By now I was morally grieved, mentally disturbed, but spiritually relieved from fear, trusting our Lord and believing in His Miracles, His protection and His Splendor.

I suffered extreme stomach pain and could not dispose of what was left over inside my belly. My urine was blocked. My lips were dry and burnt, my body was itching and I had a stiff neck. I could not stand on my feet, but crawled on my stomach reaching the mountain.

It was Friday afternoon, May 22, and Sabbath eve was approaching. Despaired and anguished, I had faith in G-d and believed His Commandments and was confident that whether I live or die that was G-d's Will and accepted it.

Crawling slowly, I reached the top-hill which was covered with dark fog and a rainbow down below on ground level. With bare hands and a six foot supporting tree cane I found, I picked a soft spot and started digging a bunker similar to the one of the Waadi. My intentions were to avoid vultures, wolves and wild animals which would devour my body. I also intended to cover my remains with sand, bushes, and small rocks. On top of my cane, I affixed my last remaining piece of underwear that I had left on me, wrote my initials "MDZ Chief Bambi," and included my notes to George.

Even with my diminished eyesight, sunset appeared bright and colorful. I couldn't control my emotions I knew I was crying and very frightened. I could not open my mouth or say one word, and I laid down, looked at the skies, thinking "please someone find me, help me George, I can't believe it, I can't believe it", continuously...

George, the only friend I had left, was not of Jewish faith, but I loved him like a brother. Our friendship lasted forever and "Abed," his Moslem friend from Jaffa, also became my friend.

My eyes were closing when suddenly I noticed a change in the atmosphere. At this time, I was determined to either use my last round or swallow the suicide pill. I selected to take the pill that Dalia had instructed me to use under such circumstances.

Miracles

My attention was diverted when I met transiting scorpions heading to my restful bunker. I smashed them with my cane and shotgun. I had no more strength and fell down to the ground. Sunset had disappeared and I was unconscious. Whether in my dreams or in reality, miraculously, water came down my cheeks and I could feel a few more drops around my lips. More and more drops hit my face, then I heard storm rumblings. Fog had disappeared and rainfall touched my naked body. I revived screaming, "Halleluyah, Halleluyah" Alright, alright George! I stood up as best I could, and took first shower of grace. I regained my sight and kept running, screaming "BARUCH HACHEM" Thank G-d. I raised my

hands, looked to the sky above praising "He Who is the Greatest, the King of Kings and our Eternal." I enjoyed a bath of heaven waters that I waited for almost three months. I took off my beret, filled it with rain water, and kept on drinking as much as I could. I opened my knap-sack wide and filled it to the rim. I cleaned my infected knee and washed myself. I was grateful, had first smile of life and felt strong and well.

I was not hungry and appreciated the water from nature. My only concern was my kneecap which needed medical treatment. Infection was swollen and throbbing. I assembled all nearby bushes for later use and crawled to the top of the hill. My intentions were to wave to anybody confirming my safety. I was positive that the army paratroopers were looking for me and might pass by, and my presence standing on the hill waving would attract them. I took precautions that if Saturday nightful came by, I would put fire on the bushes signalling my safety. In fact, it didn't matter to me whether it would be an infiltrator, a Bedouin or just a passerby, but I wanted and preferred it to be Mickey or Dicky. I wanted to see somebody.

Sabbath afternoon, 2:15 P.M. May 23, 1953. I prayed "TEHILIM" (prayers in memory of the departed ones, and in particular in memory of Yossi and Dubbi, who departed on Sabbath). This time, my voice sounded loud and clear, thanking G-d for having given me that Good Friday, which was followed by Saturday night prayers. To me, that was an exceptional night that I will always remember. It was the beginning of the rest of my life.

In my restful sleep, I had beautiful dreams. I saw my parents, saying: "Maurice, when are you coming home? We love you and we miss you." I could see George, wandering all around and could hear him say: "Celia came by and is looking for you. Come on Moe, "allez, allez" (don't be a wise guy!) Come back home. Moe, you promised that we'll be together. The Best Years of Our Lives are yet to come. Forget Dalia, Moe, I'm sure you'll find a better job in Tel Aviv, and this time, you will stay with me and keep me company. Abed, too, asked of you and "Zeev" got married and wants to see you and don't forget to buy him a gift."

Years later, my mother mentioned to me that she heard unconfirmed reports that I was missing-in-action. "Was it true, you were wounded and missing?" I said Ma, it was not that true. It was not me. It was Chief Bambi. Chief who? she asked. I said just Bambi was missing, but not Maurice. She laughed.

I woke up suddenly, having heard some noise in the distance and thought some lizards were having a small battle. I resumed my dreams

after drinking some natural water which I saved inside my boots. I was satisfied, thanking the Lord having given me another day. I was cool and in good spirits. I enjoyed the Arava nature, the Saturday sunshine, and believe it or not, I had strong desire to continue my peaceful rest a few days longer. With careful rationing, my water supply could last another 3 days. The only thing I cared about was getting immediate treatment for my infected knee and could not stop worrying.

One hour before sunset, I heard a shouting "4" I knew that was it. I was saved, but could not reply to code as I did not know it after three days in wide Arava. He was an army paratrooper and he shouted once more "4". I stood, hands up and screamed "Cease Fire, Cease Fire, it's Chief Bambi." He threw down his rifle, jumped and hugged me with kisses saying "Yah Mamzer" (son of a gun). He praised me on the numbered paper notes that I left behind and directions I had affixed on white T-shirt. He offered me a cigarette, candy and soda. After not eating for 3 days, chewing and swallowing was painful. I could drink liquid and enjoyed the orange soda gratefully. He took off his underwear and put them on me and gave me his spare khaki trousers from his knap-sack. After we chatted for 10 minutes, we heard a rifle shot. He gave me the honor to respond to it with my last round. We jumped and danced the "Horrah" (collective Israeli dance) and sang "David Melech Israel." Minutes later, a helicopter approached, touched down, and their rescue mission was achieved with great success. I was immediately rushed to Dimona hospital for treatment and general check-up.

I was admitted for emergency care and was treated with "SIMCHA GEDOLA" (great joy). I had 3 penicillin shots at 2 hour intervals for my infection, and "BARUCH HACHEM" (thank G'd), my leg was saved. I had soft boiled eggs, chicken soup and was offered a gracious meal of beef which I could not chew. I was released the following morning, Sunday, May 24, 1953.

Waiting for transportation to the Waadi bunker, I met with my ex-commanding officer of the Haifa Academy. He had received word that I was rescued and he personally came to pay a visit, wishing me a "REPHUAH TOVA" (get well), "LEHITRAOT" (see you around) and Shalom.

I arrived at the Waadi bunker at noon and resumed normal duties. The same night, I was surprised with a party organized by Mickey and Dicky and the boys. We all danced "Horrah," and I thanked them graciously, I told them that I would always be proud of their efforts, efficiency

and diligence. They replied that their presence in Arava after what happened to me was most vital.

I had seven more days left until midnight, May 31, to be relieved from my Arava duties. Dalia had informed me that she was in the process of finding a replacement; however, there was no guarantee that a new radioman would be available by June 1st but that I would definitely be home in Tel Aviv by the end of the first week of June. I accepted provided that I won't stay in Arava beyond mid-June, as I had an El Al training program which I couldn't postpone.

Mickey and Dicky wanted me to stay with them another two months, but could not alter the air radio training program which I knew I could help better myself serving the airlines industry for 3 years and (until reaching 24 years of age). Then I could be normally settled down with a ground assignment, with sufficient savings and assets for a new apartment nearby Tel Aviv.

El Al Training Course

The El Al radio training class course was quite popular, it was joined by 42 trainees. We were all heading for the Post Master General which was equivalent to the F.C.C. Radio Telegraph First Class Operator Permit. It was a requirement for employment on board commercial airlines and was a restricted Radio Telephone and Radio Telegraph Certificate issued by the Israeli Department of Transportation. Upon satisfactory completion, the certificate was valid for 5 years.

I was admitted to the training course and progressed rapidly. The duration of the course was six months and before long only 13 remained and 29 had failed the Second Class Permit and were excused. I was among those 13 happy candidates, but never made it. The job opportunity called for only three Radio Operators who were selected, and I was not included for any assignment.

I filled out an application for work with the Israeli Police Department and was accepted overwhelmingly as Chief interpreter and translator of exchange wire telegrams in Jerusalem. I was mostly on night shift from midnight to 8:00 A.M., and being a healthy young man, I could not normally socialize by day and meet with companions.

Phosphate Compound Near Beer Sheva.

Dalia was still looking for me for an assignment in a Phosphates compound not far away from Beer Sheva and I accepted this position. This time, I made sure I had all necessary facilities, comfort, excellent delicious meals, and modern board. It looked like a "MAHANEH" (camp), but was not a military base. I enjoyed working in the Phosphates camp and looked forward to getting settled like the other married couples who seemed happy and content with life. The majority of married couples, both husbands and wives worked on different assignments, shared great happiness, some of them with children under five who needed only kindergarten attention while their parents were working, either in the field or in the general offices. I met a pretty girl of French background but things didn't work out between us and we remained only good friends.

I could not tolerate the condition of life, being in another part of the Negev desert nearby Arava, and needed social life. Rivkah, a lovely young woman I met, confided in me that she was previously married and had two children near Avignon, in France, and was a runaway. She didn't want her family to know of her whereabouts and had no intentions of going back to France. Although I was lonely, I didn't want to get involved with a married woman who was running away from her children. I realized my mistake, all workers were married couples, with no singles among them besides Rivkah, I was lonely.

Bambi

Since no contract was ever signed, Dalia accepted my resignation with very deep regrets.

I selected to ride the afternoon bus Friday, April 16, 1954 and was packing my belongings. The door of my cabin was half opened. The moment I carried my bundle from the bed and was leaving my cabin. I saw a small deer who looked so cute and innocent. I looked outside in the field and noticed no one around. It was daytime, and all were busy. I carried the deer around in my arms and called him "Baby Bambi" considering myself Chief Bambi. I fed Bambi with fresh milk and biscuits, washed him and loved his black and orange dots on his skin. I asked permission from the camp commander if I could keep Bambi as a pet and was granted permission to take him along with me to Tel Aviv with all best wishes. I planned to keep Baby Bambi as an Arava memory and had pledged to take care of him in Tel Aviv and was sure George would

have no objections since he had a cat and a dog and with Baby Bambi joining them, we would have a Disneyland in Tel Aviv.

The Northbound Egged bus from Eilat stopped at Phosphates station and I rode the bus with Bambi. It was great "SIMCHA" (joy) for all riders and it was like a festival. We were on our way to Beer Sheva. We had just left Phosphates 7 minutes before Sabbath was approaching, and a sudden sandstorm blew up from nowhere. The bus driver could not see his way on the main road and decided to stop the vehicle. Radio security called the bus asking why the driver had stopped. Bus reply was---sand storm--Over...Cannot understand. Bus 2 repeat Over...I repeat ---- sand storm ---- Over Bus 2, this is Unit 7, Roger. Cannot be--cannot be. Repeat once more reasons. Roger Unit 7, this is Bus 2 Roger--hurricane blowing 80 miles per hour Over and Out. Bus 2 this is Unit 7, Roger. Weather forecast here is clear 5/5 shiny and clear. Are away 2 kilometers from bus. Explain Bus 2 Over--Bus 2, calling Unit 7, Roger--Come and see for yourself Over. Unit 7 calling Bus 2 You "MECHOUGA" (crazy) Over.

Having stood by driver and hearing exchange of radio telephone comments, I was wondering if I could be of any assistance. I asked the driver to allow me to explain the situation. Unit 7, this is rider bus 2 "Chief Bambi" calling--Please clarify again weather forecast at your end. Over--Chief Bambi, this is Unit 7 Roger--Fine and Clear--What's going on? Are you all nuts? Over. Chief Bambi come in. Roger, Unit 7, Over--standby and out.

Driver got furious and could not come to his senses. In the meantime, rain, sandstorm and wild speedy winds, made it impossible for bus to move one inch. I took Bambi away from riders's arms, who was enjoying the entertainment and who ignored what was really going on. I sat in last bus row. Surprisingly, I saw a large deer standing outside the bus and looking for Baby Bambi. I screamed, asking driver to open door. I stepped toward Mother Bambi, kissed Baby goodbye, and returned Baby to Mother.

I finally realized complete truth of Arava when we all witnessed the sudden change of the nature. The moment I set Baby Bambi free, I felt that was a message from Heaven that animals have a certain right to be free. It was then, within minutes that the weather changed to a normal, sunny Friday afternoon, nice and clear with no disturbances.

I was relieved, returned to bus, took microphone and called Unit 7 confirming all was clear. Bus driver had a schedule to keep and was anxious to continue his run. However, he brought back the subject insisting that I explain what went on the moment I left the bus with Bambi. Well,

my friend, I said: "It was difficult for me to sacrifice a gift from nature. I saw Mother Deer painfully looking for her young Baby Deer. I couldn't possibly turn back and felt relief and joy seeing both Mother and Daughter flee together towards the Arava wilderness, back to the Jordanian mountains. They disappeared from my sight within minutes."

What is still unexplained is the sandstorm which came to a full stop the very minute Baby Bambi joined her mother and the dark skies that turned blue and sunshine brightening our desert road northbound. We were all stunned and kept silent noticing the change of nature from Hell to Paradise. We all overheard Army radio quoting to bus driver that distance from Army transmitting post to bus was only one and one half miles away, and their visibility was 5 to 5 to maximum and Sabbath was due in about 45 minutes. Two hours after sunset we arrived in Tel Aviv, and I arrived at George's apartment at 7:15 P.M. George, Abed and myself happily, were preparing for a Sunday departure to France two days later.

George was not feeling good and had an asthma attack. His physician had suggested that he relax and take it easy for a month and then proceed as planned. I was asked to look after him, and have the druggist fill all prescribed medications.

Two weeks later, a Help Wanted ad appeared in the classified section calling for "Experienced Radio Wireless Operator Needed immediately with fluent English and French, apply in person...Haifa office."

Trapped

Arrangements were made that Abed's wife take care of George while I was away for a day or two. I was interviewed and was flown to Marseilles, France with a letter of introduction and was on one month probation. From Marseilles, I was driven to Lyons, France and was met by two representatives who escorted me to a Radio Station. I was introduced to Station Officials and resumed Radio duties as a civilian. I was totally unaware of their intentions. I had noticed some discrepancies in telegraphic and telegram exchanges in French stating my transfer. I kept it to myself, since my previous agreements with employer were to perform my duties as an independent civilian Operator and that I could (if I desired), quit anytime I felt inconvenienced.

Things were different, and I was disappointed. Without knowing it, I was already involved and working with the French Foreign Legion, Communication Center of Joint Radio Operators for Algeria and Indo-China French National Security Radio Stations. I strongly objected and demanded to leave France and return to Israel.

My Israeli passport was in their possession. I was denied discussion with the Commander-in-Chief, and instead, I was flown to "SIDI-BEL-ABESSA," Algeria, during the night. I had no choice in the matter, my passport was being held. and if I deserted, I could be stateless and could have run into complications and difficulties, and then, face Military French Court Martial.

I kept cool for a while, enjoying the French military life, going to the Casinos every night, having entertainment, fantasy and fun with boys and girls of my age.

Happy, go-lucky me, I convinced one of the French Officers, in SIDI-BEL-ABESSA, after doing him a personal favor, to take me along to Paris Headquarters of the French Legion and meet with an official.

I protested of my involvements with the French, and reluctantly he drove me back to the Communication Center near Lyons, convinced Commander to return my Israeli Passport and let me go free.

I was delighted and thrilled. I hitch-hiked with the first car on main road, went to Marseilles, and boarded first available Israeli Cruise boat to Haifa. It was a seven days sea-crossing via Naples, Venice, Piraeus and Limassol, Cyprus. It was a delightful and comfortable sea trip that I couldn't forget.

Again, I kept the French Legion incident to myself. I didn't dare tell it to anyone, not even to my dear best friend George. By answering a newspaper ad, I became involved with fugitives. It was an embarrassment to my country and to myself and I could never reveal such an incident.

Vacation

Forty two days later, I met with George and re-programmed our long awaited trip. George was still suffering with asthma, and I had to look after him, taking over his kitchen activities and meeting with his American visitors. I was introduced to some of them from Brooklyn, New York; Miami, Florida; and Savannah, Georgia.

Their main intentions were to meet with an Israeli of their choice and get married. During those years, Jewish visitors preferred to meet with Israelis, knowing that in Israel we were 3 boys to 1 girl. Our special involvement with Israeli girls was catastrophic, meaning that because of the weak economy of the country, girls, in general, were attracted to established boys who would protect their welfare regardless of true love and affection.

Their largest competitors were the American Jewish young women who were seeking anyone they could find interested in marrying them. They offered the prospective husband an opportunity to come to the States and secure better job prospects. Under no circumstance, did I desire just to be married and be secured. I selected to be married and be wanted with love and obsession. To be settled and to have a family of my own.

My impression of the four girls that I met from USA and Europe, was a business relationship with intention of marriage of convenience. I felt I was being interviewed for their business back home. Although they were of perfect Jewish culture, modest and well established, we Israelis felt like second-class citizens, and I refused to go on the rest of my life, feeling so.

Myself, as an Israeli, didn't much care that they considered Israel, a poor state, a nation always in need of assistance or help. We opposed pity or mercy of any kind. I opposed this doctrine of being induced to join anyone just to better myself. Israelis are a proud and dignified people.

My determination was to keep moving and live the way I intended to live, searching for adventure with or without hazard or risk. We had to have trust and faith that we were needed, whether in Arava or in any Israeli city limits, frontiers or borders protecting our Jewish State, that we are and will always be ready to protect with our lives.

George, Abed and myself flew to Nice, France. My intentions were for a short sojourn not exceeding three weeks. Abed had left his wife behind as she could not take off three weeks from her job. George intended to stay at least two months. We were all in wonderful spirits and stopped in Paris for the night. We went to Follies Bergeres, and we trio, had so much fun that we didn't sleep the whole night. We went to Moulin Rouge, saw Paris by night from the top of the Eiffel Tower, and walked in Pigales and Champs Elysees of Paris.

We flew over to Nice the next day, and upon our arrival George's mother greeted us. She had a big surprise. Later on we found out that at last she had found a young girl she approved of for George. For George? I couldn't believe it, Auntie are you sure? Does George know about it?

No Moe, keep your mouth shut, don't tell him a thing about it. OK, Aunt, I won't say a word. One half hour later, George opened his door and found Mireille and went to his mother, and said, "You know, Mother, I have a surprise for Maurice, but please don't say a word. Promise mother?" But who is she George? Can't you tell me please. No, Mother, it's a surprise. Abed, locked in his villa, was ambushed with two pretty girls and immediately went to George's mother telling her that he had a wonderful surprise for both George and Maurice, and not to say a single word. Promise Aunt? What's going on you guys, are you all insane? You are all full of surprises, just leave me out of this.

That same evening when we all sat for dinner, all four girls showed up. George's mother greeted only her guest and disregarded the other three beauties saying to them, "You all belong to that Chief Bambi, just take Maurice and get out of here. George, you sit here and you young lady sit there and start talking. Maurice, please don't go away, just get rid of those girls. Trust me. Oh George, please make me happy. I don't know who is who and by the way where is Abed?" Abed came down in good spirit, took George and both fled from the rear door, leaving me with the four girls, and Aunt. "Oohlala," she said to me. "You little one, can you handle all four?" I said four were better than three that you wanted me to handle. I could manage, I said. Since we had all the drinks we needed, a spacious lounge, I united all four beauties and started my adventure stories.

I could read from their powdered faces that they wanted to have fun. Aunt retired to bed early, and I found myself defenseless and since I had said that I would entertain them, it was too late for me to back out and so I started my Arava story. They found it boring at the beginning, but showed interest when I reached the Arava scorpion descent, when Dalia had decided to jump out of car with no parachute and Mireille laughingly asked me whether or not Dalia had a bra on her. I was so hysterical that I fell over the couch and the girls panicked. I was hugged by all four and was showered with kisses. I was flustered and tried to change subject. "Oh non, Monsieur Maurice, continuez s'il vous plait," they said. "Well, guys," I said. Are you ready for this, just for the fun of it, "mais Oui, mais Oui, Maurice, allez-y c'est interessant." Although I felt it inappropriate, but they insisted that I carry on with my story which lasted almost five hours from 11:00 P.M. to 4:00 A.M. in the morning, the Arava events that you have just read in this book.

Their attention was undivided, and they kept on drinking wine and spirits to their rim but were not sleepy or even thought of leaving. I was

tired and had not slept for two nights and tried to excuse myself. No way could I be allowed to and was forced to stay with them till breakfast. George and Abed returned complaining of their dull evening and wished they had joined me. "Well guys," I confided to them, "They are all yours. Bonsoir," see you in the afternoon. I went to sleep and woke up at 9:00 P.M. I was so exhausted that night or day sleep did not matter to me those beautiful days on the French Riviera. I was relaxed, but becoming spoiled.

Return To Reality

After a week vacation, I was homesick and wanted to go back to Israel. George was upset and wouldn't let me go. Abed was uncomfortable, having left his wife behind, that he finally said, "Moe, I'll fly with you. That's it George. You either come with us or join us later." George screamed, "Are you two insane?" Leaving this spot of France so quick? Control yourselves and reconsider." We, trio returned to Israel early May 1954 and the moment we touched down at Tel Aviv, Lydda airport, I took my small valise, jumped in a taxi and asked to be dropped by Dalia. "ADONI," (Sir,) he said. Who is Dalia? I don't know. "Take me to Dalia", I repeated. "Adoni", "BEBAKACHA," (please), he replied, "suppose you show me the way to your Dalia, and I'll take you there." He dropped me by the "KIRYAH" (government) of Tel Aviv and I went running to Dalia's administrative office. It was 1:00 P.M. in the afternoon.

Dalia was in conference. I intruded, although the sign indicated "Do not disturb, conference in progress" stating "Dalia, I must talk to you now." Leaving the conference room and on our way to her office, she objected to my intrusion and warned me that I better have a solid reason for my intrusion. Dalia, I said, "I want to go back to Arava now. Please Dalia, help me and ship me right now." Madness, madness, she replied. "After all that happened with you, Bambi. You must be crazy, lunatic, truly mentally disturbed." "Dalia, please send me back," I said. "OK, OK, shut up and sit down," she said. "Let's talk now. Dalia, how about dinner tonight?" She replied: "How about lunch now?" "Dalia," I said, "I love you." She replied, "I love you too, Chief Bambi."

After we had lunch, Dalia had re-instated my position with priority as standby Radio Operator. I was to meet her for dinner the same evening at the "Dan Hotel lounge" in Tel Aviv, and she didn't show up. That was

the last time I ever saw Dalia, since May 21, 1954. I was on the job for two years and was coordinating with Zicky, who was an executive Traffic Manager, unaware of Radio regulations and his obligations to his employer was recruiting men, and myself, being on standby basis, my responsibilities were to train and direct new Radiomen for the job. I missed Dalia so much, and as much as I sought her whereabouts, nobody had information or had a lead as to where she could be located.

Under normal conditions, I was relieving Operators across the country and felt most needed. I was productive helping and assisting all those who needed orientation and training.

My friend George was offered employment with Air France as Sales Manager promoting company services in Tel Aviv, and after three years of service, left Israel permanently and joined his mother in Antibes, France. She had been very ill and wished to be with George. Abed, a seeker, feeder, finder and a wheeler dealer was doing salvage work with a steel company, and as far as I know, he is doing well. On November 20th, 1983, I heard that Dalia was somewhere in the States on the West Coast, and is a wife, mother and grandmother of six grandchildren. I tried to locate her but was unsuccessful having a different last name Dalia is among thousands of residents in San Francisco and Los Angeles only, and she could have been living somewhere else in the suburbs of California. Hopefully, I expect a telephone call from her soon. Sam, my school-mate from Cairo, Egypt is still missing and I am also hopeful that he reads my book and gives me a call.

Celia, my kibbutz sweetheart is presently an assistant to a Brigadier General in an Army unit somewhere in Israel. She remained unattached and independent enjoying life and its splendors.

And so life went on from May of 1954 until the end of October 1956 where our State of Israel was alerted for a second war against neighboring Egypt. We were all trained and ready for combat.

Today, Monday, November 11, 1985 is Veteran's Day for all of us. My Arava diary comes to an end which is followed by the 1956 Israeli-Franco-British War of the Suez Canal. I do stand up and salute both Israel and American flags honoring those who have accomplished their duties to their country, and those who vanished for the cause of Freedom, Liberty and Peace.

The Author
Captain Maurice D. Zeitouni

Sam

1949-1985

Sam: Do you read me? Almost 36 years now and I haven't heard from you. I presume you are somewhere in Italy nearby Milan and that you changed your name as I was informed by someone very dear to us both. He refused his name to be mentioned in my ARAVA book. Some of his reports indicated that you are married with two children and had decided to live quietly and peacefully. It's all right, I understand, but my dear friend what I am asking from you is only one telephone call, confirming that you are well and in good health. There is no reason to hide anymore, on the contrary, we should be proud and thankful. Do you remember our 1946 escape from Egypt, the way we were at 14 years old? It's all over now. We are free, over half a century of age and must look forward to a better life coordinating with one another and see to it that our children are protected. Forgive me for leaving you behind in Cairo back in 1949, but I had no choice and had to escape by myself and go somewhere for survival. I knew you were beaten up and molested by terrorists. I could not retaliate for their mindless violence, as I was in Alexandria and had boarded the "Esperia" Italian passenger boat. Besides, I was given an Egyptian exit visa with no return and was forced to leave.

Sam: I would like to hear news of your parents and brothers as well and beg you to give me just a call. I visited Egypt in 1982 and 1984 and met with our school teachers in Cairo. They received me overwhelmingly and asked about you and wished that we go back to Egypt and live with them. They are not convinced of our happiness where we are and insisted that the past is forgotten, and since we are Egyptian-born, we should feel free to return to the Mother Land. Time has changed. We were born stateless yesterday, and today, we belong to three Powerful Nations: The United States of America, the State of Israel, and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

My visit to Egypt on May 22nd 1982 at 10:00 P.M. when we touched down Cairo International Airport, we were greeted by the Egyptian authorities. We saw affixed on each side of the wall two original paintings symbolizing the word of "Peace" to all visitors, from all Nations including the State of Israel, meaning: Friendship, Brotherhood, Love and Understanding. They also signified "Justice and peace for All." We were invited to have a drink of Spattis soda as a friendly gesture. I was personally relieved from fear and anguish, having been expelled from that country about 40 years before. Of all the 450 passengers arriving with the Lufthansa Flight from Frankfurt Non-Stop to Cairo, we were all received with full

courtesy and were asked to please extend our stay in Egypt for as long as we wished. We were also given free transportation connecting the pullman Luxor train with sleepers and complimentary bus tickets to Alexandria.

I have taken several photographs that I want to show to you in person. I am sure you remember our great Cairo Synagogue which was called "ISMALIAH Grand Shul" which is named "ADLY STREET JEWISH SYNAGOGUE." It is still the largest structural edifice and can accommodate up to 900 male and female worshippers. It's one of the Archives National Heritage of Egypt and has great historical events since its foundation which we both remember since we were 6 years old, two years before WW2. I am sure you recall its location at the heart of the city of Cairo, nearby almost all well-known department stores, Bureau of Tourism, the Opera Square, Fouad 1st Street known today as the "26th of July Street" and the famous Statue of "ADLY PACHA" where "GROPPI" and "AIR FRANCE" are situated.

I must insist to tell you, Sam, and with no reservation, that since my previous visit of May 1982 and until the most recent one of March 1984, I observed few renovations in the structure of the building itself. For example: The preservation of various religious ornaments, the restoration of the religious closed compartments and mostly, the maintenance of the two huge wooden doors entrances to Synagogue from Adly Street and the long white marble steps leading to entrance.

Although heavily guarded and protected by the National Egyptian Guard, Cairo has unfortunately less than 100 members of the Jewish faith, that is of the 200 Jewish Egyptians who remain in Egypt, most of them are senior citizens, sick, or over-aged people who can't be relocated. "Aller-Aller" Sam! Good Old Times have truly changed, but we could still go to Groppi and have an ice cream cone, a coke or a "7 UP" it's available for all visitors and the climate is warm almost all year round.

The "Soliman Pacha Square" has not changed too much but the square is known today as "TALAAT-EL-HARB" meaning "Preparation to War".

I must remember to tell you about the only Synagogue which was standing in Port-Said Free Zone which I visited. It was once known as "OHHEL MOSHE OF PORT SAID" and was set on fire in 1973, but its structure (outside original stones) still stands. My strong desire Sam, is to go together to Port Said and see to it that this synagogue is renovated. With the help of A-mighty we can do it working together and arrange for daily prayers to be performed among the 15 Jewish merchants who still remain in Port Said.

By the way Sam, I visited your apartment in Cairo where I used to pick you up on my way to school every morning and where we both studied together after school hours. I knocked at the door, introduced myself, and a young charming couple from Jordan let me in. I sat on your front terrace, the way we did when we were studying facing the main street and thought of you and the good time we had with those two adorable sweet sixteen year old girls who came by and introduced themselves.

There are more than fifty other subject matters that I would like to discuss with you. Just think of the telephone who always brings friends back together.

Sam, please, I beg you. Call me and let me know where you are. I have a strong desire to see you, to travel with you and reminisce our childhood. My sincere and best regards with love and affection at all times wherever you are. Your best loving friend, Moe.

Dalia

1954-1985

Dalia, dear: Do you read me? Where are you? It's a long time since I had that last lunch with you. Where on earth in the West Coast U.S.A. are you? I was informed you are a Grandma. So what Dalia? I am a Grandpa, too. That doesn't mean that we can ignore the past. Please call me and let me know of yourself.

Aren't you aware that we still have obligations to Israel? Don't you think we should go to ARAVA today, and find out how the boys are doing? Our experience should be passed on and shared.

We should give at least two weeks of our time and go by El Al Non Stop to Tel Aviv. Roundtrip fare in winter season is only \$599.00 per person and can be accommodated for 13 nights with 8 days sightseeing including breakfast for only \$950.00 complete. We don't have to ask for Kosher, it's all included. Of course, Dalia, your dear husband can join us with great pleasure, and I'll see to it that my dear wife come along with me on this leisure trip and that we all go and visit ARAVA and MASADA, passing Jerusalem and proceeding with Egged to Eilat. Dalia: I'll take you also to Egypt to see the pyramids. How about that? But, please Dalia, call me first. I must have reservations made far in advance and believe me Dalia, you won't regret it. All what you have to do is just give me a call, and don't forget Dalia to have your passport ready for the

greatest trip of your life. Do you copy me Dalia? I hope you do.

You know, Dalia, time has changed, but our purpose in life is unchanged. Do you remember our training basics "Ask not what the future generation will do for us, but what we can do helping them fulfilling their duties?" You should be proud of your accomplishments, achievements and wonderful behavior to your country. Your children and grandchildren should be proud of you as well. Some day, I am sure they will have a desire to go to ARAVA and visit the Waadi and see for themselves our accomplishments, where we went to, the way we lived, the conditions of the life itself, the job opportunity we were offered for survival first and securing the Jewish State of Israel.

I must tell you Dalia, a lot more about flying to Israel with El Al. It's a non-stop flight New York to Tel Aviv that you won't even feel it. It's so smooth and fast and takes no more than twelve hours. On your way back from Tel Aviv to New York, you gain your day. You depart say on Monday at 1:00 A.M. you arrive New York same day at 6:00 A.M. With good connection from New York to Los Angeles, a five hour flight, deducting three hours differential you may reach your place of business round 9:00 A.M. That is possible only with El Al.

Don't forget Dalia, the Tel Aviv to Cairo trip with "Egged." It's fabulous! It's enjoyable! The "Egged" Tel Aviv—Cairo—Tel Aviv crossing is called "The Peace Route." "Egged" connects two big cities, Tel Aviv and Cairo, which, as you know, are two different countries, Israel and Egypt, and they require a number of pre-arrangements. Sunday through Friday the "Egged" luxurious Mercedes air conditioned spacious bus leaves Tel Aviv Bus Terminal "TAHANA MERKAZIT" ticket office at 7:30 A.M. Passengers must report at 6:00-6:30 A.M. for verification of documents (passports, visas, and roundtrip tickets), with seat selections. It's only US \$32.00 roundtrip fare. We were requested to show "Egged Driver" our valid passport and our Egyptian visa which must be valid for at least one week.

"Egged" Takes full responsibility of you for a safe arrival and departure from Cairo. Incidentally, the same time that "Egged" bus leaves Tel Aviv, another "Egged" bus leaves Cairo. The two buses are to meet at noon time at "RAFFIAH" border which means "Israeli-Egyptian-Rendez-Vous" border for the safety and protection of "Egged" passengers. For example: A passenger traveling to Cairo and for certain reasons the Egyptian Immigration authorities refuse him or her entry to Egypt, the westbound "Egged" bus from Cairo will grant safe passage to the refused passenger back to Tel Aviv. The eastbound "Egged" bus from Tel Aviv will do the

same returning refused passenger back to Cairo. During my last two trips to Egypt of 1982 and 1984, all what we saw and witnessed at the Egyptian-Israeli borders full cooperation with no incidents or difficulties whatsoever. We were in good hands with "Egged", like we are here with "Greyhound."

Dalia, if you should decide to go by yourself, remember to take along snacks for both ways. Preferably the hot delicious "BORECK" with spinach and cheese, or "FALAFEL" with the various assortments of pickles which comes with it. Well, Dalia, I would like to tell you more and more about it, but only if you call me, please do.

The bus leaves Tel Aviv on a sunny beautiful morning almost the same way we traveled in 1953 from Tel Aviv south, but through new highway passing the Mediterranean seashores of Rishon-Le-Zion, Rehovot, then the Negev passing by Gaza City (but skipping ARAVA) facing from both sides the "MOCHAVIM" (Corporate farms) and the "KIBBUTZIM" (Collective farms). All along, we were attracted by the "DRUZ-ZIM" (natives), and then as you know Dalia, the Negev Desert. It took 7 hours in complete comfort and relaxation, with music and songs, local news every 30 minutes in four languages: Hebrew, French, English and Arabic. Bus was equipped with modern push-button reclining seats, an ultra-modern comfort room with lavatory, a soda fountain, and hot coffee at all times. At noon time we reached and stopped at "RAFFIAH" for Israeli clearance, and were assisted by the "Egged driver" dispatching Israeli-Egyptian customs and at all times we were protected and guided until we boarded the same bus and were on our way to Cairo. Exit fee is about US \$8.00 as you will be leaving Israel by land, and exit fee of \$10.00 by air. Also, upon entering Egypt, you must pay a fee of US \$2.50 and again the same fee upon leaving Egypt. Also Dalia, you will be required to exchange US \$180.00 into Egyptian pounds and you will be approached by Egyptian customs officials asking you to declare how much money you actually have, so that upon leaving Egypt you won't have any difficulty. "Egged" bus does not leave borders unless all passengers are cleared from both authorities. They have strict instructions, exercising maximum means of protection to their riders, we all witnessed their efforts from the moment we boarded bus until we reached Cairo and returned to Tel Aviv. In case you forgot Dalia, the distance from Tel Aviv to Cairo is about 318 miles (512 kilometers).

There is a new desert highway route leading to the "Suez Canal," and there is a ferry crossing of 10 minutes. Upon entering Egypt next to the Suez Canal from the other side, we were escorted by an Egyptian Police patrol car all the way to Cairo, and two Egyptian patrol guards remained in the bus all the way until we reached the city limits. We passed

through "EL KANTARA," "ISMALIAH" and we arrived "CAIRO EL-ABBASSIAH" bus terminal station at 3:00 P.M. and same was our return from Cairo to Tel Aviv.

We experienced the "Peace Route to Egypt from Israel" with "Egged" by land and with "El Al" by air. It took us seven and one half hours relaxation by land with comfort and entertainments from station to station. Although the flight time from Tel Aviv to Cairo was only 45 minutes, it took us 11 hours by air. By the time we left the Nile Hilton Hotel in Cairo at 8:00 A.M. and waited for a taxi cab which took us to the Cairo International airport, following traffic congestion we reached the air terminal at 10:15 A.M. and we had just missed "El Al" air flight to Tel Aviv. We had to wait for "NEFERTITI" Air Bus Shuttle 707 which was due to depart Cairo at 2:45 P.M. By the time we cleared Immigration and Customs and picked up our baggages it was almost 5:00 P.M. and by the time we reached our final destination it was almost 7:00 P.M. So much more to tell you Dalia, give me a call, let me know you are alright, and I know we will have plenty of things to talk about. Shalom.

Celia

1978-1985

Celia? Do you copy me? Since I last saw you somewhere nearby Haifa round mid-June of 1979 and you promised that you will drop me a few lines once a year, well, it's almost 6 years with no news. Are you alright? Where are you? Everytime I hear that commercial "I can't live without you" of the Telephone Company I think of you, but I can't do a thing about it. I hope that someday, I would have some good news of yourself and who knows maybe we will have a chance to set up a "Rendez-Vous" at the Kibbutz Givaat Brenner, the place where we first met, the way we were. Celia, please be in touch.

George

1959-1985

George? Where are you? How are you making out? I just came back from Nice, Antibes, Juan-Les-Pins, Cannes, the French Riviera and looked all over for you. I passed by your Villas and Studio apartments looking

for you. I spoke with local authorities who informed me that you left for Paris and are presently working with the French Government somewhere in the administrative section. What's that George? Paris is a great big city you know, and it was not that easy to just ask for George. You promised me in your last letter dated April 18, 1977 that you will pay me a visit in New York, and since then, I haven't heard one single word from you. Our friend came from the West Coast USA and informed me that you could be somewhere either in Avignon, Lyon or Toulouse, France. Swell! What a lead!! Each of these cities George, has a two minute stopover with the TGV, SNCF Railroad Express. Enough time for conductor to say: "Mesdammes, Mesdemoiselles et Messieurs, 2 minutes d'arret."

Even the waitress pushing her cart and saying softly: "Coffee s'il vous plait." "Oh oui," I said: "Fresh milk, too, my Cherie. I asked her if she knew you. She said: "George, mais oui, monsieur, who on earth doesn't know George? He is everywhere." In the same train car where I was sitting six Georgies answered but you were not one of them. Can it be that you are with the French Government Affairs in France and are unable to even place a call to your old friend Bambi? Well George, I guess I have to be very patient until maybe you will happen to read ARAVA book. We are not through yet George.

We must go through the "Lasting Empire"—"the Magic Carpet," as you once called it. You spoke so much about it that I couldn't sleep months on end and you insisted long before the "Peace Treaty" that we ought to go together and visit the DAMANHUR City of the Historical and Eternal "TOMB" of "RABBI YAACOB ELBAZ ABU-HASSIRA." I waited for you to come with me on that expedition to Egypt, but I determined and went by myself in March 1984. We had some difficulties from the local Chief Commanders and the Town Mayor, but finally and thanks to some senior Egyptian Officers, we secured entrance to the tomb. As leader of that expedition, I was escorted by two Israeli volunteers and following one hour and fifty minutes of interrogation, we got inside the tomb. It was more educational than historical and my prayers were answered. A week before I left New York, my father-in-law was not feeling well, and my trip was almost cancelled due to back pains from previous surgery. The result of that trip was rewarding. Two weeks later, upon my return to New York, I realized answers to my prayers. Everybody was well and dandy. Nobody knew of my secret visit, but I insisted that we fortunately have a "Graveyard" left in Egypt, and that the tomb of Our Dear Rabbi ABU-HASSIRA, still exists. It is one of the Holiest tombs to visit every time we fly El Al to Tel Aviv, see our "Lasting Empire" and the Pyramids.

To sum it up:

"Hazard et Necessite,

On a beaucoup dit - Nous Venons Trop Tard,

On a rien dit - Nous Venons trop tôt."

"No Rewards without Risk,

We are late when we hear so much

and come soon when we say nothing."

The Author

Le-Hitraot, George....

A message to Celia, Dalia, Sam and George from Moe (Bambi)

"Wherever you are, happiness, joy or progress come only when we help one another, united together, all for one and one for all. Everything can be fulfilled only when we want to do it and work for it with courage decency, dignity with pride and respect." Our pasts are intermingled, and I hope that our futures will also be.

Biography of Captain Maurice D. Zeitouni

Born in Cairo, Egypt - July 20th, 1932 - of Jewish faith.

Attended grammar and high school studies (1936-1949) in Cairo, Egypt.
Awarded Matriculation Diploma in General Education in 1949 with the
British Institute of Engineering & Technology of London.
Emigrated to the State of Israel transiting Italy and France in 1949.

Admitted into the Israeli Air Force Military Academy in April 1950 and
awarded Post Master General Radiotelephone and Radiotelegraph certi-
ficate permit to operate a radio station.

1950-1952-Occupation:	Radio Officer Coordinator - Military duties with Israeli Defense Forces.
1952-1955-Occupation:	Chief Radio Coordinator - various commercial and military duties, educator.
1955-1960-Occupation:	Operation and Traffic Manager with the British European Airways (Peltours as Gen'l Agents).
May 15, 1960	Emigrated into USA for permanent residence.
1960-1963-Occupation:	Airline Traffic and Documentation Manager with Sabena Belgian Airlines and Varig of Brazil.
July 14, 1964	Naturalized and acquired U.S. citizenship, Notary Public - State of New York.
1964-1965-Occupation:	Senior Traffic Rep. with Pan American, TransCaribbean Airways and Irish Int'l Airlines.
1965-1972-Occupation:	Senior Rate Analyst with Prudential Steamship and Holland America Lines Cargo Services.
1972-1974-Occupation:	United States Navigation Agencies. Representing Scindia Line of Bombay, India.
1974-1980-Occupation:	Senior Rate Analyst for Scol Lines, Torm Lines Spanish Lines, Mexican Lines and Jeco Lines.
1980-1985-Occupation:	Line Manager for Pakistan Steamship Line, the United States Navigation Agencies. Representing the National Shipping Company Saudi Arabia as Chief Coordinator and Documentation Manager.
Fluent languages:	English, French, Arabic and Hebrew. Translator and Interpreter.

The Arava book that you read has been written, produced, directed and edited by the author Captain Maurice D. Zeitouni, who is presently a retired expert in the transportation industry and is holding a triple citizenship: a dual citizenship by naturalization of USA and Israel, and an Egyptian nationality by birth.

Arava, to be continued...book 2 will reveal the untold story of his involvement in an Israeli military courtmartial somewhere in Israel at the time when the author was a reservist in 1956. Arava book 2 will be soon published upon completion.

Arava book 3 will detail the ongoing resolution of Capt. Zeitouni's dual citizenship complications. His most current true events are far apart concerning internal Israeli laws. During the summer of 1986, Capt. Zeitouni had flown to Israel on an emergency mission to assist his family for burial arrangement and formalities where he experienced a nightmare in Paradise.

Discrepancies on verification, clarification and justification on the author's true status, are under studies between the United States and the State of Israel.

With G-d's protection, our leader's great influence, the support of all people, with peace, justice and understanding, Capt. Zeitouni is confident that the dual citizenship problems will be shortly resolved on behalf of all American, Israeli and Egyptian travelers.

Capt. Zeitouni's major civic duties and obligations are to protect the safety and welfare of our beloved children, their children and grandchildren.

We do hope and pray A-Mighty that all his efforts will come to a successful solution enabling our American dream to come true.

Dorothy and Jack Rosenberg

