The Art of War:

IDF Commanders Tell About Their Experiences in Israel's Wars

Israel's War Seminar

November, 2015

Compiled and Edited by BG (Ret.) Gideon Avidor

Language Editing by Ronna Englesberg

The Art of War – Israel's War Seminar – November 2015

Summary

For two weeks in November 2015, the Institute for Advanced Military Thinking (IAMT) hosted a group of Art of War students from Australia and the US. It was a unique opportunity for the students to visit such a complex region and have a firsthand glance at the IDF and learn of the experience it has gained on the battlefield.

Though not by choice, since the 1950s Israel has been the world's military laboratory – almost every new mode of war has been tested here first. We did not achieve the same degree of success in every one of them, but we learned valuable lessons and paid the price, as the world watched and sometimes learned from us.

During the seminar we presented those wars as experienced by active participants, who shared the lessons they had learned through hindsight. We discussed the Six Day War as an example of a war in which one side the (IDF) was ready and the other wasn't. We discussed the Yom Kippur war in the Golan Heights, where two doctrines collided and the better-trained and better-led side emerged victorious.

We discussed the First Lebanon War, also known at the time as Operation Peace for Galilee, which was a political gamble that failed, despite a military victory. We discussed the Second Lebanon War (2006) in which a sleepy regular military failed when confronted with a cadre of dedicated terrorists, despite a superior power ratio. We discussed those issues and also toured the battlefields. At the end of the seminar, the students stated that it had been once-in-a-lifetime experience.

This booklet presents the transcripts of the various presentations. It is also possible to view the presentations on video. I am sure you will discover many interesting issues in the presentations as well as in the discussions that followed.

BG (Ret.) Gideon Avidor

IAMT Chairman

The Program

Saturday, November 7th

Check-in at the Carlton Hotel, Tel-Aviv

Sunday, November 8th –

Free

Monday, November 9th

0815-0900 – Drive to Glilot – IDF's CGSC

0900-0945 – Opening session: Prof. Dan Marston, BG (Res.) Gideon Avidor

0945–1200 – The Six-Day War on the Golan Heights: Col. Pesach Maluvani (intelligence analyst),

1200-1300 – Lunch break

1300-1600- The Yom Kippur War on the Golan Heights: BG (Ret.) Avraham Bar David (Art.), Col (Ret.) Hagai Man (J2), BG (Ret.) Yair Nafshi (74th Btn.), Col (Ret.) Pesach Maluvani (intelligence analyst)

1600-1645 – Return to the hotel

1900-2100 – Dinner in a Tel-Aviv restaurant

Tuesday, November 10th

0815-0900 – Drive to Latrun

0900-1200 – Peace for Galilee (1982): MG (Ret.) Amos Yaron (96st Div.), MG (Ret.) Yoram Yair (35th Bde.)

1200-1300 – Lunch break

1300-1500 - Second Lebanon War (2006): BG Meir Finkel (91st Div.), Col (Res.) Boaz Cohen (Northern Command J3)

1500 -1600 – The First Missiles boats battle (1973) Cap. Navy (Ret.) Ehud Arel

1600-1645 – Return to the hotel

Wednesday – November 11th

0700-0830 – Drive to Rosh Hanikra

1000-1030 - Observation: The Border with Lebanon Western Sector

1030-1100- Drive to Har Adir

1100-1200 – Observation: The Central Sector

1200-1300 – Lunch at Horfesh

1300 – 1330 – Drive to Misgav Am and to Har Z'fiya - Metulla

1330 – 1500 – The Eastern Sector (2006)

1500 – 1530 - Drive to Hotel Hagoshrim

Thursday – November 12th

0700 – 0900 – Tel Faher: Golani Bde. in the 1967 War

0900 – 1030 – Valley of Tears – 74th Btn. – 1973

1030 – 1130 – Mt. Bental – Northern Sector OP

1130 – 1230 - Lunch

1230 – 1330 – Sindyana – Central Sector – 675th Bde. - 1973

1330 – 1430 – Tel Saki – Southern Sector – 1973

1430 - 1800 – Return to Tel-Aviv

Friday – November 13th

0815 – 0900 – Drive to Latrun

0900 – 1000 – The Battle over Latrun 1948 – BG (Ret.) Asher Levi – 32nd Btn. B Co.

1000 – 1200 Tour of Latrun – The Armored Corps Memorial Center

1200 – Return to Tel-Aviv

Saturday – November 14th

0700 – 1600 – Tour to the Dead Sea and Masada

1600 – Return to Tel-Aviv

Sunday – November 15th

0815-0900 – Drive to Ammunition Hill – Jerusalem

0900 - 1200 – Six-Day War, Jerusalem

1200-1300 – Lunch at Jerusalem

1300-1500 – Guest speaker – Yom Kippur War (1973): The Suez Canal Crossing

1500 - Return to Tel-Aviv

Monday – November 16th

0900 – 1700 –Tour of Jerusalem at War

1700 – Return to Tel-Aviv

Tuesday – November 17th

0815 – 1300 – Tour in Jerusalem

1300-1400 – Lunch in Jerusalem TBD

1400 – Return to Tel-Aviv

Wednesday – November 18th

0900-1100 – Summary discussion

1900 – 2100 – Farewell dinner TBD

Thursday November 19th

Departure

The speakers' CV

Col. Hagai Man

1964 G2 at the 16th (Jerusalem) Bde. - Reserve

1967 – G2 at the 10th (Harel) Bde. - Reserve

1971 – Co Intelligence Officers Course

1973 – J2 of the Northern Command

1980 – Defense Attaché, Singapore

MG Yoram Yair (Ya Ya)

1967 – Co Commander

1973 – Co 50th Para Btn. - Reserve

1981 – Co 35th Bde. (Paratroopers)

1985 – Co Div.

1988 – Co Northern Corps

1992 – IDF J1

1995 – Defense Attaché, USA

BG (Ret.) Avraham Bar David

1956 – Joined the IDF

1967 – DY Co 334th Btn. (160 mm Mortars)

1969 – Co 334th Btn. (Mortars)

1973 – Co Artillery of Northern Command

1974 – Co School of Artillery

1976 – Chief Artillery Officer

Col. Boaz Cohen

1970 – Join the IDF

2001 – Co 188th Bde. (Armored)

2006 – J3 Northern Command

BG (Ret.) Uzi Eilam

1954 – Joined the IDF - The Paratroopers

1956 – Company Commander – Paratroopers

1957 – Retired from the IDF; studied engineering and business management

1966 – Returned to the IDF at R&D and as Co 71st (55th Bde.)

1970 – Co Jordan Valley Bde.

1976 – Head of the National Nuclear Energy Committee

1986 – MOD Chief Scientist

Col. (Ret.) Yosi Languzki

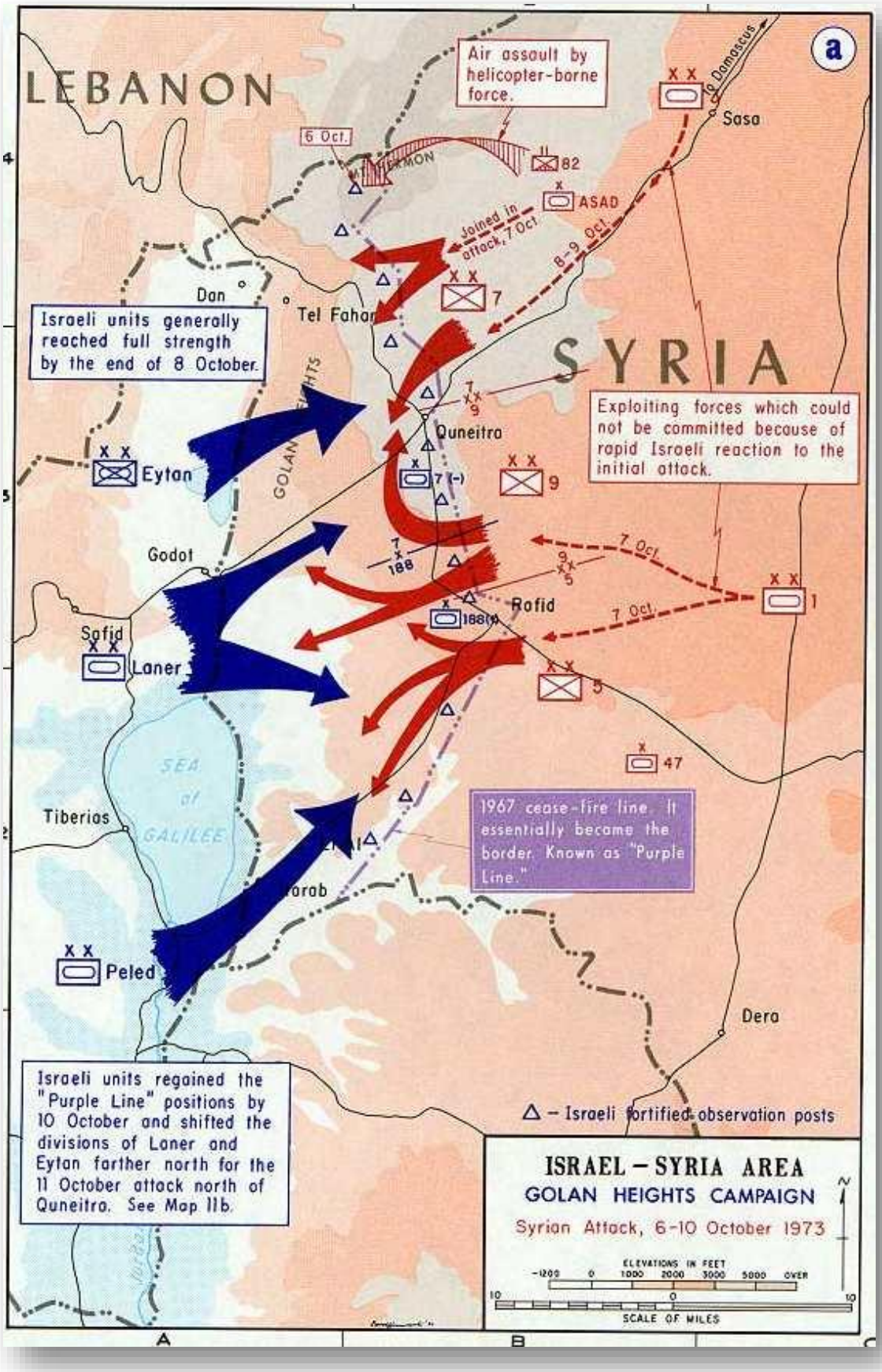
1951 – Joined the IDF

1967 – Co 16th Bde. (Jerusalem) Reconnaissance CO - Reserve

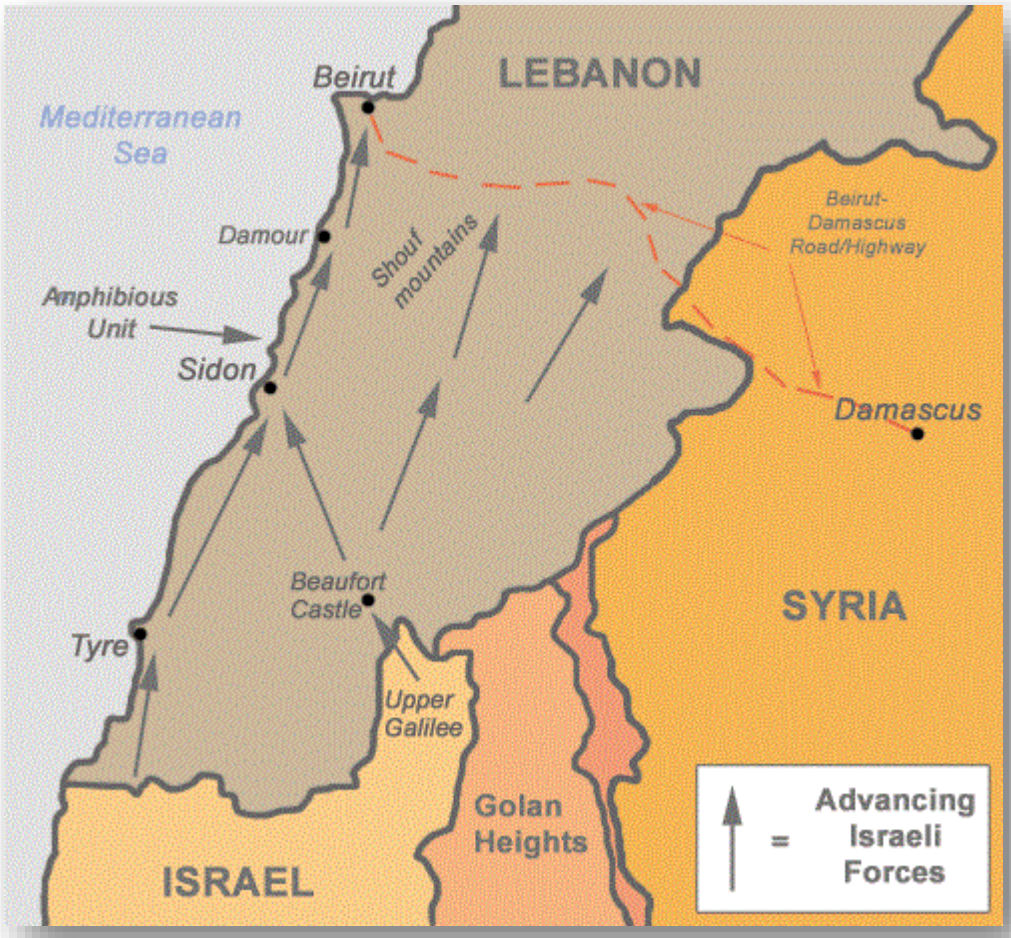
1969 – Co Special Operations department at the Intelligence Corps

1976 – Military Attaché (Land), USA

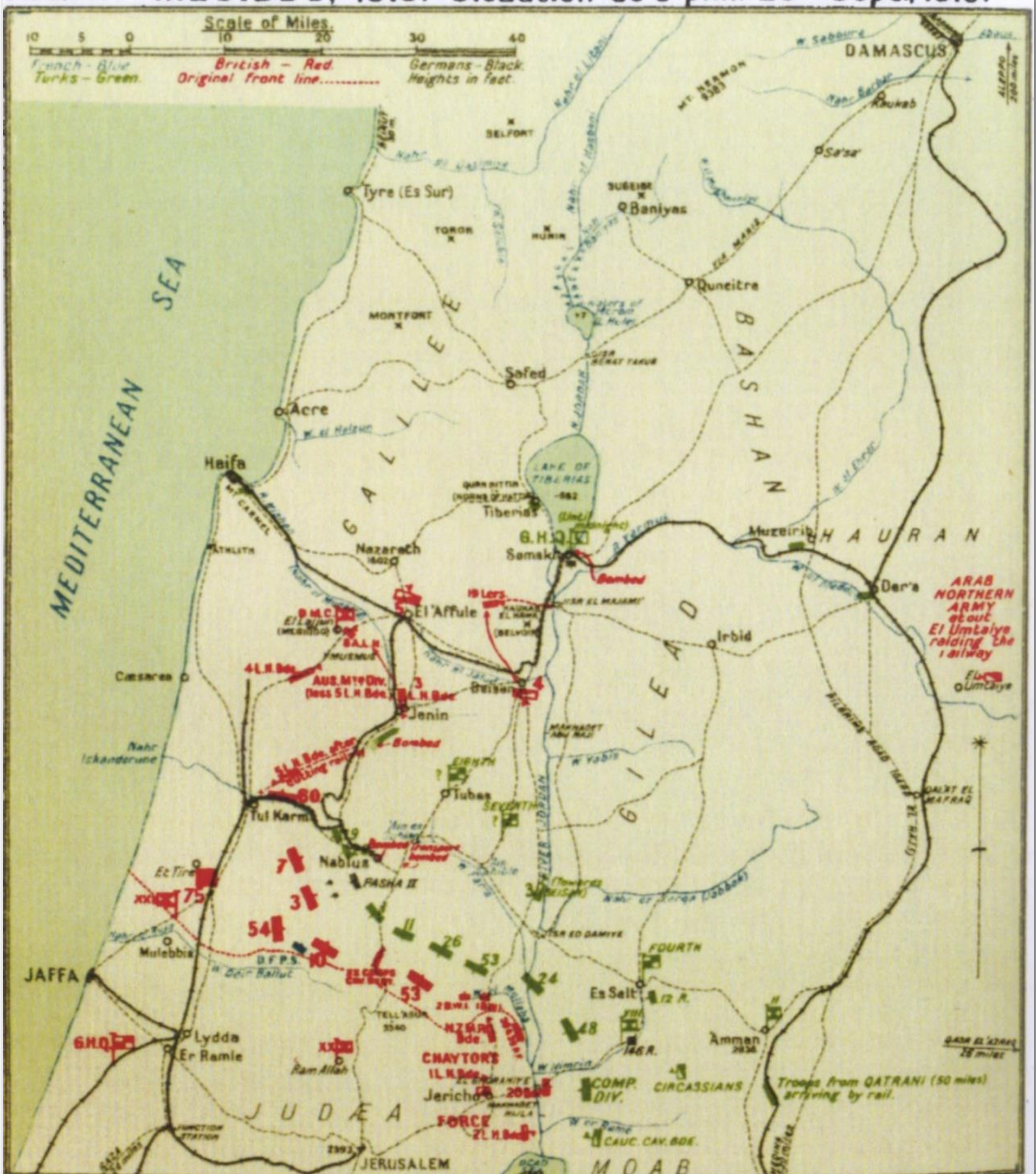

CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
LEBANON
SYRIA
ISRAEL
West Bank
Gaza Strip
JORDAN
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
BAYRŪT
DIMASHQ
Ḥimṣ
Tarābulus
Jerusalem
'AMMĀN
Tel Aviv-Yafo
Hefa
Irbid
Az Zarqā
Būr Sa'īd (Port Said)
El Suweis
Ismâ'ilîya
Limassol
Gaza
Be'er Sheva
Elat
Al 'Aqabah
HADAROM
Hanegev
Es Sînâ' (Sinai)
SHAMÂL SÎNÂ
JANÛB SÎNÎ
Gebel el Tîh
Gulf of Aqaba
1974 Cease Fire Lines
World-map1.org


LEBANON
SYRIA
a
Air assault by helicopter-borne force.
6 Oct.
MT. HERMON
82
ASAD
Joined in attack, 7 Oct
8-9 Oct.
To Damascus
Sasa
Dan
Tel Fahar
Israeli units generally reached full strength by the end of 8 October.
GOLAN HEIGHTS
Quneitra
Exploiting forces which could not be committed because of rapid Israeli reaction to the initial attack.
Eytan
7 (-)
9
7 Oct.
Godot
188
Rafid
1
Safid
Laner
5
47
SEA of GALILEE
Tiberias
1967 cease-fire line. It essentially became the border. Known as "Purple Line."
Peled
Dera
Israeli units regained the "Purple Line" positions by 10 October and shifted the divisions of Laner and Eytan farther north for the 11 October attack north of Quneitra. See Map 11b.
△ – Israeli fortified observation posts
ISRAEL – SYRIA AREA
GOLAN HEIGHTS CAMPAIGN
Syrian Attack, 6-10 October 1973
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
-1200 0 1000 2000 3000 5000 OVER
10 0 10
SCALE OF MILES
A
B


ISRAEL
THE SIX DAY WAR
The Jordan Salient, 5-7 June 1967
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
SCALE OF MILES
5-6 June
7 June
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
LEBANON
SYRIA
JORDAN
SINAI
43
XXXX SYRIAN ARMY
Dan
Tel Fahar
Quneitra
Sofid
Ratid
ACRE
HAIFA
XXX NORTHERN COMMAND ELAZAR
Tiberias
El Al
Horab
Nazareth
Afula
Dera
Jenin
Nablus
Kalkilia
XXXX ZAHAL RABIN
TEL AVIV
Domia
XXXX JORDANIAN ARMY HUSSEIN
Amman
XXX CENTRAL COMMAND NARKIS
Ben Ari
Jericho
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
Askolon
GAZA
Hebron
KHAN YUNIS
RAFAH
Beersheba
XXX SOUTHERN COMMAND GAVISH
EL ARISH
Korak
Safi
Bir Asluj
Aujo
SEE MAP 7: SITUATION ON THE SINAI FRONT ON 5 JUNE

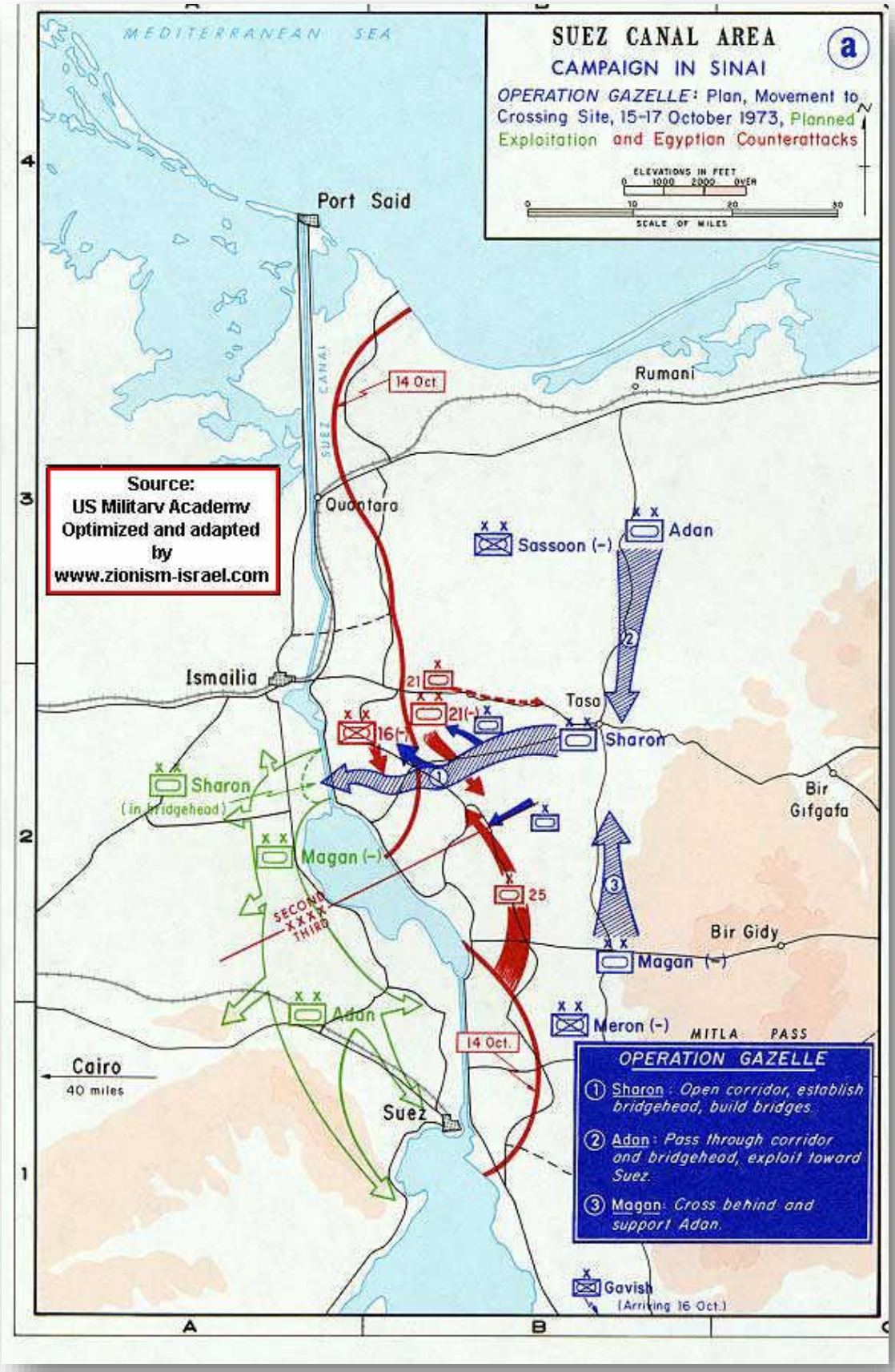

Beirut
LEBANON
Mediterranean Sea
Damour
Shouf mountains
Beirut-Damascus Road/Highway
Amphibious Unit
Sidon
Damascus
Beaufort Castle
SYRIA
Tyre
Upper Galilee
Golan Heights
ISRAEL
= Advancing Israeli Forces

Sketch 32. MEGIDDO, 1918. Situation at 9 p.m. 20th Sept., 1918.


Scale of Miles
French - Blue
Turks - Green
British - Red
Original Front line
Germans - Black
Heights in feet
DAMASCUS
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA
Tyre (Es Sur)
Baniyas
Quneitre
Safed
Acre
Haifa
G A L I L E E
B A S H A N
Tiberias
Samakh
G.H.Q.
Nazareth
El 'Affule
Der'a
H A U R A N
Muzeirib
ARAB NORTHERN ARMY about El Umtaiye raiding the railway
Irbid
G I L E A D
Caesarea
Beisan
Jenin
Tubas
Tul Karm
Nablus
Et Tire
JAFFA
Mulebbis
Es Salt
Amman
Lydda
Er Ramle
G.H.Q.
Ram Allah
Jericho
CHAYTOR'S FORCE
CIRCASSIANS
COMP. DIV.
CAUC. CAV. BDE.
J U D Æ A
JERUSALEM
M O A B

Compiled in Historical Section (Military Branch).
3000/30.

Ordnance Survey 1929.


SUEZ CANAL AREA
CAMPAIGN IN SINAI
a
OPERATION GAZELLE: Plan, Movement to Crossing Site, 15-17 October 1973, Planned Exploitation and Egyptian Counterattacks
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1000 2000 OVER
SCALE OF MILES
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Port Said
SUEZ CANAL
14 Oct
Rumani
Quantara
Source:
US Military Academy
Optimized and adapted
by
www.zionism-israel.com
Sassoon (-)
Adan
Ismailia
21
21(-)
16(-)
Taso
Sharon
Sharon
(in bridgehead)
Bir
Gifgafa
Magan (-)
25
SECOND
THIRD
Bir Gidy
Magan (-)
Adan
Meron (-)
MITLA PASS
14 Oct.
Cairo
40 miles
Suez
OPERATION GAZELLE
① Sharon: Open corridor, establish bridgehead, build bridges.
② Adan: Pass through corridor and bridgehead, exploit toward Suez.
③ Magan: Cross behind and support Adan.
Gavish
(Arriving 16 Oct.)
A
B
1
2
3
4

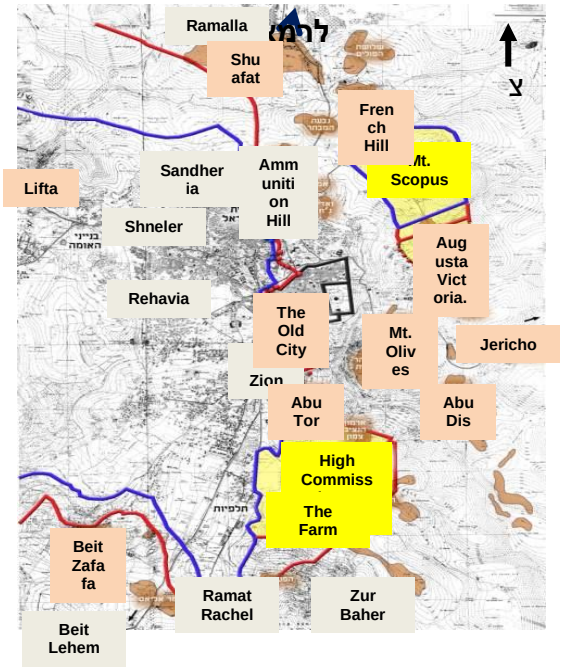
The Six-Day War

June, 1967

1. BG (Ret.) Uzi Eilam

2. Col. (Ret.) Yossi Langotsky

3. Col. (Ret.) Hagai Mann



The "Urban Line"
1948 – 1967

BG (Ret.) Uzi Eilam, Commander of the 71st Paratrooper's Battalion:

I will concentrate on the war that my brigade – the 55th Paratroopers' Brigade - and my battalion fought; I'm lucky to be here to tell you about it.
Who were the paratroopers that were sent to fight in Jerusalem? It was a reserve brigade with three battalions. One - the 28th Battalion - was made up of old-timers, officers and men who had taken part in many previous operations, even before 1967, especially the Sinai campaign. The 66th Battalion headed by Yossi Yaffe – a major at that time- was a bit younger; many of its officers, including all the company commanders, had some experience of previous wars, and the third battalion – the 71st - was commanded by me. Only its battalion commander and deputy battalion commander – Dan Ziv - had some experience of previous wars; all the others officers and soldiers were totally inexperienced.
Now, something that in my opinion is very important to emphasize is the way we prepared ourselves for future wars. Arik Sharon, the well-known general, commanded the first - and only - paratroopers' brigade when he was a major and a lieutenant colonel. He was the best tactician I ever encountered and he initiated many limited operations across the borders. So what we did have experience in was one-shot operations, once in Jordan, once in Syria, once in the Gaza strip, and so on. Thus those who had experience had participated in one-shot operations, not in total warfare. Secondly, most of our targets in the era between 1954 and 1967 were either police stations or limited strongholds, not heavily built-up areas like Jerusalem. A third point that I would like to underline is how I found myself in the paratroopers. I started out as a squadron commander and went on to serve as a platoon commander and a company commander. I was wounded a couple of times and Sharon ordered me to be his intelligence officer for a year until I was fit enough return to active service. That was a fascinating, eye-opening year during which we planned all the operations together. So during the period after the Sinai campaign and by 1967, I was ready to serve as a company commander. I spent two months in Jerusalem

along the border and learned in depth what was happening there.
Later on I benefited very much from that experience. Now we were all called upon to prepare ourselves for war, but it took almost three weeks before the war started and that gave us a chance to get to know each other better, get organized and train for the war that was anticipated. The paratrooper brigade was expected to make a parachute jump south of the city of El-Arish, and occupy that city, no more. So we prepared ourselves to fight in a city with spread out one-story buildings, as El Arish was, and we practiced night jumping and attacking that city. We were not prepared to fight in built-up areas like the city of Jerusalem. However, when the war started, things went quite smoothly; it was war but going quite smoothly. We were waiting not far from the airport, in the orchards of Kibbutz Givat Brenner, with all the equipment necessary to jump south of El Arish. Another battalion that was supposed to land near El Arish and bring us the heavy equipment that would allow us to fight like a brigade, because you jump only with your personal weapon. One point I should add about this battalion's training – I don't know why exactly; it was a hunch, it was a prophecy, it was something that could not be explained but I approached the director of Ben Shemen School, not far from Ben Gurion Airport. There was a group of old two-story buildings similar to what we would eventually find in Jerusalem, so I decided to train my companies one after the other in the village of Ben Shemen. The school principal refused to give us permission to do this. He said it would disrupt the children's education, but I persuaded him, saying, "Look we are going to war and I want to prepare my soldiers in a particular type of area." Finally he agreed and we went there, one company after the other, spending the whole day. Later on when we got to Jerusalem we benefited very much from this very unusual way of preparing ourselves. Originally we had only been ordered to jump and attack El Arish.
At noon on the first day of the war – it was a Monday - we got the order not to continue on to El Arish, but to go to Jerusalem instead. First the 66th Battalion and then the other two battalions, and we, the battalion commanders and our company commanders, were supposed to go and meet the brigade commander,

Motta Gur, in Jerusalem, at Camp Shneller, which used to be the headquarters of the 16th Jerusalem Brigade. We arrived there to find that it had been shelled and was deserted. The Jerusalem Brigade headquarters had moved out, as Motta had decided to transfer them to a more protected area. There he gave the general order that the brigade was to attack Jordanian-occupied Jerusalem in two locations. The first was Ammunition Hill, and the officers' school, a building that was a more menacing target than Ammunition Hill itself and the second was Sheikh Jarrah. The 66th Battalion was assigned to the school and Ammunition Hill and the 71st Battalion, my battalion, was assigned to the Sheikh Jarrah site. The old-timers' battalion - the 28th - commanded by Yossi Fradkin, was to remain as a reserve force, just behind my battalion, the 71st. I must tell you that out of the senior officers in my brigade, I'm the only survivor because the brigade commander – Motta Gur - died several years ago, his deputy, Stampel, was killed in the Jordan valley, Yossi Yaffe was killed going over a mine in the Sinai and Fradkin was killed later on, so the only survivor of that brigade command is myself and I feel very lucky that I can meet you and tell you about what my brigade did.

We were given a very short time to go and see the exact location where we would breach and what the general concept of waging war in our area was going to be. It was limited, but it was all we had. What was known to Central Command intelligence and what was known to us? There was a big difference, because the files relevant to Jerusalem were in the Central Command and we were moving so fast that we didn't have time to obtain the maps and files about what we were going to find, so the way we approached that operation was similar to the operations we had carried out with Arik Sharon, limited, one-shot operations and not ongoing forward-rolling battles. The only thing that helped us select the breaching point was that we went from one place to the other and detected points where the minefields were narrow and the fences were limited and we were able to observe where the Jordanians were located along the border. When I returned to Motta Gur, the brigade commander, and presented him with my plan, he said, "Okay, let's do it". We also knew that we didn't have

any artillery; the only artillery assigned to me was my mortar platoon and that of the 28th Battalion, which was supposed to enter after we breached the border. We went to look for our battalions, which were transported to Jerusalem by buses and were concentrated on the other side of Jerusalem. It was quite an experience to drive at night through the darkened city, whose crossroads were under Jordanian shelling; we found the battalion ready for action, but without any detailed battle plan. This took some time and I was able to enter one of the apartments whose owners were courageous enough not to be down the shelter and welcomed us into their home.

It was a very unique chapter in history. Without my knowing it, my support company commander, Yoram Zamosh, had found a small Israeli flag and took it with him. Later on he was able to fly that flag over the Wailing Wall when he entered the Old City with the first company, right behind Motta Gur. That was very memorable; it had nothing to do with the war, but it was a historical milestone.

At midnight between Monday and Tuesday we gathered at brigade headquarters, the three battalion commanders and the other units of the brigade, and Motta asked us one by one if we were ready to start out at night or if we preferred to wait for daylight. All of us chose night-time, since as paratroopers we were used to fighting at night and felt that the darkness would afford us protection that we wouldn't have in daytime. And as far as I can remember, during all the limited hours that we were at war it was dark and we didn't have any casualties, but only after it became light. After the war many questions remained: Should we have waited? Should we have called the air force? Should we have had more artillery? Should we have prepared better for the war? Naturally, different people have different answers to these questions.

Ammunition Hill was a total surprise to us; the 66th Battalion was supposed to take the school building and pass through Ammunition Hill on its way to Mt. Scopus, but we learned the hard way that it was much more difficult than we envisioned. It took the battalion commander, Yossi Yaffe, and his deputy time to realize that something was not going the way it should on Ammunition Hill.

Of course, now we know that we lost 28 soldiers and officers there and that the Jordanians had many more losses – 72 I think - so it was really a bitter battle. Should the 66th Battalion have left Ammunition Hill, bypassed the Jordanian positions, covered them by fire and not get involved there? That's a good question, but of course we cannot change history. Again, there are many different opinions. Some say we should have made a detour, but it's easy to be wise after the fact.

The 71st Battalion went through and the 28th Battalion was moving into the place where the 71th Battalion was waiting for the fences and the boundaries to be breached. The moment my battalion left the waiting area and the 28th entered, they were heavily bombarded by mortars. The deputy battalion commander was wounded, as well as some doctors and many others. My battalion's doctor was taking care of those who were wounded, but that did not delay the 28th Battalion from reorganizing and entering the city.

We found ourselves fighting in built-up areas, being confronted in some cases by Jordanian soldiers, who had changed their uniforms and looked like civilians for all practical purposes. It took us until noon to near the border and reach the Rockefeller Museum, which was the finish line of our first day. Incidentally, three had taken took part in the war in Jerusalem. By chance over lunch, I was talking to my neighbor, a Jordanian officer, and discovered that he had been a platoon commander fighting against us in Jerusalem. He told me that he was wounded and that we took him prisoner; he also informed me that the his company had lost 19 soldiers and officers, whereas my battalion had lost 12. The officer told me that he was imprisoned in Atlit, near Haifa and was released two months later. I was also surprised to learn that his father was also an officer in the Jordanian army and was killed in an operation in '56 in Husan. I told him that I had taken part in that operation; it was a very moving moment. He claimed that his father's death hadn't changed his resolve to be an army officer; so that was how the war in Jerusalem brought us together. Of course, he was promoted after that. It was a bitter war, not as difficult or demanding as Ammunition Hill, but still hard.

At the end of that day of fighting, Gur called us, but only two of our battalions – the 66th and 71st - since the 28th Battalion was delayed by enemy firing and couldn't reach the meeting point. The brigade commander informed us that we were again going in under cover of darkness, this time supported by another tank company.

The order was to prepare to occupy Augusta Victoria Hill and the Mount of Olives; since my battalion had suffered less losses than the others, the burden of the attack was primarily on me and other companies of my brigade. We were all set to go, but the tanks assigned to us from the Harel Brigade - the 10th Brigade - went ahead and missed the turning. They continued down and were fired upon from the wall. We tried to signal them to retrace their steps; Motta decided to dispatch a company platoon to help the tank people to change direction and there was a mix-up.

Then we received an intelligence briefing that the Jordanian 60th Tank Brigade was on its way to Jerusalem from the Jordan valley. We now know that our air force had been ordered to bomb them and did so, but we had to cancel the night operation and were occupied searching for the remaining Jordanian tanks that were supposed to confront us in Jerusalem; they did not arrive because the air force was quite efficient.

In a meeting near the Rockefeller Museum on Tuesday afternoon, the chief rabbi – Rabbi Goren - was there and he informed me that his mother was buried on the Mount of Olives. I promised him that after we occupied the Mount of Olives I would take him to look for her grave. Nobody mentioned the Old City or the possibility that we'd be given the order to conquer it, so we did not think about it, but there was one exception, my support company commander, Yoram Zamosh. Remember? The one with the flag. He said to me before I went to meet Gur: "Look, I don't

know if it's a crazy idea or not, but I think that it will be decided to enter the Old City and I want to be the first with my company". So when the briefing with Gur was ended, I turned to him and said: "Look there's one company in my battalion that requests to be the first to enter the Old City", and Motta Gur agreed. I don't know how he felt about it, but he said "Okay," The next morning we were about to attack Augusta Victoria Hill, which was just as daunting as Ammunition Hill, although later on we discovered that it was not so bad.

I asked a company commander to be in reserve, I handed over to him a halftrack I had acquired for wounded evacuation and told him to wait for my command.. Somewhere around 10:00 hours we finished taking Augusta Victoria; one of my companies was with Motta Gur on the Mount of Olives and he issued the order by radio to enter the Old City (it was of course a government decision); he ordered all the battalions to enter the Lions' Gate. My support company was quite close by and they were the first to enter after Motta Gur, who decided to be the first to go into the Old City, with us right behind him.

It took a while for my companies to enter the Old City and receive Gur's permission to head towards the Wailing Wall. We didn't know exactly where it was, but luckily I found a flight of stair that led to it and I was lucky to be among the first to arrive at the Wall with my men.

I was informed by radio by my B Company that Rabbi Goren was with them. I sent one soldier up to lead Rabbi Goren to the Wailing Wall. He was brought down and attempted to blow the Shofar, but he didn't succeed because he was shaking with excitement. So I said to Rabbi Goren: "I play the trumpet; let me blow the Shofar". So he handed me the Shofar and I blew it; thus I was the battalion commander who blew the Shofar after the Wailing Wall fell into

our hands.

However, the war in Jerusalem was not over yet. After meeting at the Wailing Wall and singing "Jerusalem of Gold", Motta ordered each battalion to search one of the three quarters of the Old City. We arrived all the way at the other side of Jerusalem, but not without a battle; my final casualty in the war was a soldier who was killed by a very courageous, stubborn Jordanian platoon; my deputy was wounded as well. I took a few soldiers and ran to the place where that platoon was deployed and after a short battle, Jerusalem was ours from every point of view. We spent the night in Jerusalem, then we left.

Some questions remain unanswered. Earlier I raised the question of Ammunition Hill, of our lack of intelligence data and how we planned to fight in a built-up area. Furthermore, I raised questions regarding being prepared for a different kind of a war and whether day or night fighting was preferable. There was also the question of how efficient the air force could have been in a built-up area and how effective it was in supporting us while occupying the Augusta Victoria stronghold. An additional question that I think most of us can now answer is why after such a glorious war (which like any war was not without its failures) we did not conduct an in-depth, systematic analysis of what had occurred in its course. It took us another few years, and the very bitter Yom Kippur War, to realize even with such a great victory as the Six-Day War in Jerusalem, we should have invested much more time and attention to analyzing our victories and defeats. In actual fact, when confronted with the Battle of Jerusalem, we learned our lessons the hard way.

One last word I would like to add: When I was a battalion commander, I was in the regular army and also head of the research and development branch. I insisted on remaining a battalion commander and also leading the R&D department, and I can tell you that the combination of knowing what war is all about, in addition to being an engineer and a scientist involved in research and development, was a very successful combination and it took me all the way to being head of all R&D activities and chief scientist of the Ministry of Defense for 12 years, as well as a member of the IDF General Headquarters.

Fortunately, with my understanding of the battlefield. I was in a good position to contribute to what really mattered.

Speaker:

In our army we need to go through a complex bureaucratic process, a long planning cycle with a lot of written orders. I was wondering how you went about presenting your plan of attack to your brigade commander.

Uzi Eilam:

I think you haven't heard the whole story; I had two alternatives, a creative one that involved surprising the Jordanians and attacking the Mandelbaum Gate, which people passed through on their way from Israel to Jordan and back. I tried to persuade Gur that the surprise element would let us bypass the enemy's defenses, but he replied, "Well, it's a very interesting idea, but it's too risky, so let's go with another plan".

When I presented to him with the second plan, I did not yet have all the details because we didn't have time to finish planning it, so when I got back to Gur, it was already dark and he was quite worried about what had happened to me. The second opportunity I had to brief him was at midnight, when I could fill in the details about what I was planning, and then he approved the program.

Speaker:

Did you write it down or was it a verbal briefing?

Uzi Eilam:

No, there was no time for writing. Look, the brigade only had one good aerial photo of Jerusalem, so I used it but it was the only one. Luckily for me, since I had been Sharon's intelligence officer and had served on the executive commander of the commando unit headed by Meir Har Zion, I knew Jerusalem much better than anybody else.

Also, don't forget that I married my wife when we were both students here in Jerusalem, so we spent two years in Jerusalem before the war and every Saturday we took walks around the city, so I felt very lucky to have been familiar with the city, which gave me an advantage. Possibly the limited number of casualties in my battalion was due to that knowledge, because in the

entire 55th Brigade we had 96 killed and 400 wounded, and my share was only 12 killed and some 40 wounded. You could say that I was able, due to knowing the terrain, to decide more efficiently what we should do.

Speaker:

You mentioned earlier that your battalion and the others had some balance of initiative and patience. Did Motta Gur and the battalion commanders tend to assign mission to the units based on their spirit? Would a more energetic or patient unit be assigned a specific type of mission, or was it just whoever was closest? How did you assign objectives to your subordinate units? How were objectives assigned to the battalions?

Uzi Eilam:

We got our orders before it all started. I was in contact with the brigade commander, Motta Gur, throughout the war, but we did not receive any additional orders until Tuesday afternoon when things were relatively calm. We got the second round of orders only when we met up with him. There was no connection among the battalions; each one had its own area. Having said that, I will add that it was not exactly the truth; we had to fight from one building to the other. I got to cross the line where the 28th Battalion was fighting. I said hello to my friends there and got back to my battalion. But this kind of war in a built-up area, where you don't have a specific enemy position that you know and attack, is quite costly.

Speaker: As I understand it, the Jerusalem Brigade had some training with infantry, tanks and artillery. Did the paratroopers' brigade have any experience with tanks, artillery, engineers?

Uzi Eilam: While we were preparing for the war, I used my contacts at the Tel Hashomer base, and arranged a tour for all of our battalions of preparing to fight the Egyptian tanks. We dug holes and they drove over us, and after they went over us, we stood up and threw grenades.

The preparations were as follows: When arriving in Jerusalem, my battalion had two Sherman tanks to help us fire at the Jordanian positions before breaching. However, one of the tanks developed a problem with one of its guns.

I left the two tanks with my colleague, Yossi Fratkin, the 28th Battalion commander, and one of those tanks helped him get through "Death Alley," something very difficult that he encountered.

So we did have two tanks. There is an anecdote told by Shimon (Katcha) Kahaner, who fought on Ammunition Hill with the 28th Battalion; he told me that he was standing near the tank and they spotted what they thought were Jordanian soldiers positioned on top of a building above them. The tank was about to fire at those soldiers, but Katcha said, "I realized it was you" and managed to persuade the tank not to shoot.

Speaker: At that juncture of the 1967 conflict, the political level seems to have intervened quite directly in some of the operations that you were undertaking, holding you back, asking you to delay and ultimately affecting a ceasefire. Did that have a negative impact on what you were experiencing on the ground?

Uzi Eilam: Our battalion meets once a year here in Jerusalem in the Sheikh Jarrah area, where we have a memorial site, and for all these 48 years since the war, we know that we fought to save Israel. We were not involved in politics. When I arrived at the Wailing Wall, although I'm not religious, I was aware that it was a historical occasion and even today what we remember is those who were killed in war, without any connection with politics.

Speaker: You mentioned that later on in your career you worked as a researcher and I was wondering if you could elaborate about what you were able to implement or change in army procedures based on your combat experience. I don't expect you to reveal any secrets, but would you tell us about changes that have occurred based on your experiences.

Uzi Eilam: Look I have constantly complained that the IDF did not derive sufficient lessons from the war. I myself did my homework and analyzed where my men succeeded and where they failed. Due to that, after the war ended I ordered one deputy commander, a company commander and two commanding commanders to leave my battalion because I was aware that they had not passed the test of being at war.

When we reached the 1973 war, I was not the battalion commander. The man

who had been my deputy in Jerusalem was now the commander. His reserve battalion was selected to be the first to cross the Suez Canal to the other side. So I think one could say that it was the best battalion, having benefited from previous experience. I think soldiers know exactly who is worth following into battle and who isn't; you can't fool soldiers. I think that by performing some very painful procedures, I contributed to the battalion's high quality and that was my intention.

Col. (Ret.)Yossi Langotsky: I would like to add a few remarks. Remember that two brigades received the order to save Mt. Scopus, so what happened? I can tell you: I'm not going to speak about the armored brigade that arrived at noon. As for the paratroopers, they didn't fulfill their mission, period. They went towards Rockefeller in order to flank the old city and take the credit for liberating Jerusalem. Another remark (and it became a very sensitive issue) is who actually liberated Jerusalem? I'm sorry to talk about it; as you know, many people were killed in the three brigades and the myth is that the paratroopers liberated Jerusalem. I don't need to tell you the real story and it's very funny because it looks like a sports competition: "Who arrived at the Wailing Wall first? I'll tell you: tanks. A company of the 10th Brigade - the Jerusalem Company, a combined force – arrived at the Lions' Gate. Unfortunately, the tanks were unable to continue to the "photo finish," because they were too wide for the narrow streets. So although they arrived at the Old City first, nobody knew about it, and it's very sad.

Now the issue of the fight over Ammunition Hill – it is a very sensitive issue until today, almost 50 years since it took place and people are still arguing about it. Those who were really extremely influential in the Battle of Jerusalem and didn't receive any credit were the tanks. Thank God it wasn't the Jerusalem brigade! Jerusalem had one tank company and they were the ones who had more influence than anyone else. It seems so strange that you ask yourself why their contribution was not mentioned. What happened? Mota Gur himself, two weeks after the war, in a summary of what his brigade had done, gave much credit to the tanks. I'll tell you what I heard from Uri, the 10th Brigade commander: he

told me once that after the war there was a meeting in the Central Command. At that meeting, one by one, the brigade commanders described their battles, Laser – that's the nickname of the Jerusalem 16th Brigade commander - was given 5-10 minutes to describe to us the role of his brigade. Then he said to Uri the 10th brigade commander that he had 5-10 minutes. Then he said to Gur, the 55th brigade commander: "It's your turn" and Gur talked for an hour and a half. Uri later told me that he had said to Laser: "We've lost the war for sure."

You know it sounds like a joke, but for families whose loved ones lost their lives in the war, it wasn't a joke, and they were very upset. How come their children's contribution is not mentioned?

Now, before arriving at the summary, because of your good behavior, I was listening to some of your questions and I've decided to tell you what I tell company and battalion commanders at the end of my speech about the Battle of Jerusalem. These are my 10 Commandments. First of all, remember that war is total chaos; it's horrible. Nobody understands what's happening. It's not only smoke and fog, it's much more than that; whatever you didn't believe was going to happen – will happen.

Everyone knows about Murphy's Law? There's also Langotzky's Law and it states that Murphy was an optimist. Don't laugh; nobody will help you; you're on your own. Don't expect to consult with your commanding officer; wherever he is, remember that he's busy with his own problems and he doesn't know what's happening, either, so you need to solve your problems alone.

Don't complain, don't cry – you have to solve it by yourself. Mom and Dad are far away, so you can't ask them for advice. The situation is horrible; you feel as though the end of the world is at hand, and you might be right, but keep on believing that you can cope with it. The only one who has the chance to win is the one who in spite of what I just told will be smart enough and calm enough. Calmness is a very important virtue, Calmness and being smart enough to understand what you should do.

Be aggressive…be aggressive…be aggressive. Have respect for your enemy. Remember that he might be smarter than you are or at least as smart as you are.

Take him seriously.

Remember that you're not a manager - you're a commanding officer. More than that, you are expected to be a leader, and being a leader is the highest level a commanding officer can strive for. I have read so many times about the German army and to my understanding it was the best combat army in the world, so it's very interesting to discover that although the Germans were so strict, so disciplined, they gave absolute freedom to company commanders and they didn't give them a hard time.

Improvise. War is not mathematics. You're not building a bridge over a river where you need to have safety margins. You must take risks; after all, this is war. I will give you one example. In the Israeli Army, when Uzi Narkis was with the paratroopers and they were engaged in retaliation battles, they developed a method, a tactic for conquering a fortified position. But their approach was only suitable for night-time and all their movements were in accordance with that. The night before the war broke out, I trained my soldiers in that tactic at an Israeli fortified position, the Castel. A few hours later they employed that tactic, but the difference was that it was in daytime. Luckily, my men were smart enough to improvise a different approach, despite their previous training.

To sum up the battle of Jerusalem, here is an anecdote. The beginning was in the southern flank, with a counter-attack at Government House. By 800 hours the highway was cut off. At 1700 hours Hagai's brigade broke through the Northern Corridor at four points. At 0300 hours they arrived at the road between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Strategically speaking, those two actions marked the beginning of the end for the Jordanian army in that area. As for the paratroopers -, Uzi's battalion – I won't go into it. The number of soldiers that were killed: 48 from the Jerusalem Brigade, 35 from the armored brigade, 97 from the paratroopers and two pilots.

In conclusion, the liberation of Jerusalem was accomplished by three reserve brigades with the effective support of the Israeli Air Force, which did a great job. Unfortunately, nobody talks about it. They destroyed an entire armored

brigade on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem, so it was really fantastic. Furthermore, the Jerusalem campaign, in which 120 soldiers lost their lives, was not initiated by us. Out of the three brigades, two were informed a couple of hours earlier to do the job. They were mobilized without any preparation. To say the least, the objective of the campaign was not defined beforehand, but was only during the campaign itself.

Strategically the campaign was decided upon within 12 hours and was planned on the way, while the Jordanian troops in the Jerusalem area withdrew their flanks, both in the north and in the south. One should emphasize the special contribution of the tanks, both the Jerusalem tank company and the 10th Armored Brigade, whose role has not received sufficient credit; 91 tanks were involved in the Battle of Jerusalem.

I'll show you the order of battle:

The Jerusalem Brigade: four infantry battalions; one reconnaissance unit with eight tanks and seven halftracks (which were later transferred to the paratroopers); one tank company - 14,000 men altogether.

The 10th Armored Brigade: one tank battalion; one Centurion company from the Armor School, joined by two mechanized infantry battalions; one reconnaissance unit; one armored AML (a French armored car with a 75mm gun from the AMX13 tank) - 4,955 troops altogether.

The 55th Paratroopers' Brigade: three paratrooper battalions; one tank company (the Jerusalemite, that would join on later), a reconnaissance unit from another paratrooper brigade - 2,546 troops altogether.

The total forces that participated in the Battle of Jerusalem: 20,964 troops; 91 tanks; 199 halftracks.

Regarding Ammunition Hill, I would like to say that it's a debate that some consider legitimate. According to our plan, the tanks would break through the fortified stronghold of the northern boundary of Jerusalem. All in all, there would be two hours of air force support. Twice a month when the convoy traveled from the Mandelbaum Gate to Mt. Scopus we were prepared to assist them in case of problems. The pilots were familiar with Ammunition Hill and all the other locations. The safety distance in case of bombardment was well-known. All of a sudden, Uzi Narkis hesitated because of the distance. How come? For 19 years it was the same distance, and it's very sad because where was the General Headquarters when all this was happening?

I have tremendous respect for Uzi and his colleagues - they were top-notch fighters, no doubt about it - but a battalion commander is not the one who should make global decisions at the level of the Battle of Jerusalem. That was It's hard to believe that there was a special engineering company in Jerusalem at the time with special equipment; maybe Uzi was not aware of it. The soldiers were sleeping and didn't know that anybody needed them. They had special equipment to break through the barbed wire and the mines to the Police School. Those who were supposed to know about this didn’t do anything about it.

Col. (Ret.) Yosi Langozki, Commander of the 16th Jerusalem Brigade Reconnaissance Unit:

I'm sure you are aware that there is only one Jerusalem and only one Temple Mount, that's it. We're not going to begin with Josephus Flavius or with the Maccabees, but with the United Nations decision of November 29, 1947 to establish two independent states in Palestine: a Jewish one and an Arab one. As a matter of a fact, I must emphasize that Jerusalem was supposed to be an international zone, not Arab and not Jewish. The very next morning the Arabs started a war. I'm not going to speak about the War of Independence in general, but I'm going to make a few comments about the war in Jerusalem.

When the war ended in Jerusalem in November 1948, the border was the Green Line. Whatever was on the western side of the Green Line was Israeli territory and whatever was on the eastern side was not Palestinian, but Jordanian. The heaviest battles during the War of Independence were fought in Jerusalem. A third of the casualties in that war were in Jerusalem. The war in Jerusalem lasted 12 months, during three months of which the city was under siege. I'm a Jerusalemite; I was born in Jerusalem and I've been "in exile" in Ramat Hasharon for more than 30 years. During the War of Independence I was 13 or 14 years old and during the three months of the siege I acted as a runner (I don't know if that's the right expression).

Now, of the 2009 casualties in Jerusalem, 1,586 were soldiers and 483 were civilians. The Jewish Quarter - the closest area to the Western Wall and the Temple Mount - was conquered by the Jordanians, which was quite a shock for us. The battle for Jerusalem ended in a stalemate - nobody won. History can discuss King Abdallah's true intentions. Did he really plan to conquer Jerusalem or was he just playing with the Israelis? The bottom line is that it was a stalemate.

On November 28th, 1948, Lt. Col. Moshe Dayan (there were no colonels or brigadier generals at that period, only lieutenant colonels and the chief of the general staff) was heading towards the Jerusalem area to meet with Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah al-Tal, the Jordanian commander of the Jerusalem area. They took out a map and draw on it with a chino graph, each one marking the boundary of his forces. In some places the distance between the lines was a matter of meters and in some places it was practically nonexistent. We are now looking at the ceasefire line, what we call the city line. It is seven kilometers long from north to south, from Ammunition Hill where we are standing to Kibbutz Ramat Rachel. Jerusalem had two governmental territories: one of them was on Mt. Scopus and the second was in the vicinity of Government House. Both of them were declared demilitarized areas and were surrounded by Jordanian soldiers. The distance from Mt. Scopus to the city line was about 1,200 meters and Government House was connected with Israeli territory – so there was no problem there.

There was considerable asymmetry between the Jordanian and Israeli forces. The Jordanians were playing it more seriously, more professionally. They deployed more than a brigade, depending on the time period we are talking about, which was posted in 45 strongholds provided with mines, trenches, bunkers, etc. Some of them were isolated; some were manned by combined battalions.

How many of our soldiers were protecting Jerusalem? You won't believe it but only 60 - six-zero - manning ten observation points, that's all. A company, not even a special company for the Jerusalem area, was deployed each month on the Jerusalem city line. That's all. The only addition was 120 soldiers pretending to be policemen. Both sides knew that we were playing games. Communications between Mt. Scopus and the city consisted of a bi-monthly convoy that traveled every second Wednesday up the mountain and back.

However, we were not really that irresponsible. The idea was that emergency forces would be ready to enter into battle within a couple of hours, if anything developed in the Jerusalem area.

The Jerusalem Brigade was not really a brigade, but almost the size of a division. We were eight battalions, and there were always armored forces or paratroopers at the ready to move into the Jerusalem area in a couple of hours if necessary. So that was the situation.

Most of the commanding officers at General Headquarter during the Six-Day war had been in the "Palmach" during in the Battle for Jerusalem 19 years earlier. Their experience with the Jordanians was that they were very good, tough soldiers, so they knew it was not going to be easy.

Why was it that in the Six-Day War the outcome was totally different? One of the explanations was that some of the battalion and company commanders of the Arab Legion during the 1948 war were British – so it could be that that made a difference. The experience acquired by the Israelis during the War of Independence was also a very important factor. They said, "Let's not pick a fight with the Jordanians - it won't be easy." As for Jerusalem's security between 1948 and 1967, the city was divided into two parts and the demilitarized zones were the most strategically positioned in the Jerusalem area, as they rose above the Old City to a height of more than 100 meters.

You know, if I were to make a movie about the Six-Day War, its title would be Saving Mt. Scopus. The major question that everyone was asking at the beginning of the war was, "What's going to happen to Mt. Scopus?" The reason for this was that for the 19 years between the two wars, the Israeli Defense Forces were intensely involved in defending Mt. Scopus. You can't imagine how many tricks, techniques and bluffs were used to assure that if the Jordanians planned any surprises, it would be a very tough mission for them.

Israel and Jordan had a common interest, but each for a different reason – to maintain calm in the city, although there had been some unpleasant events. In order to avoid injury to the Jewish population, it was decided to take firm defensive steps. It was not Sinai, where you could withdraw. Here there was a fixed population, so you had to be very firm in your defense and immediately break through to Jordanian territory. That was the main doctrine.

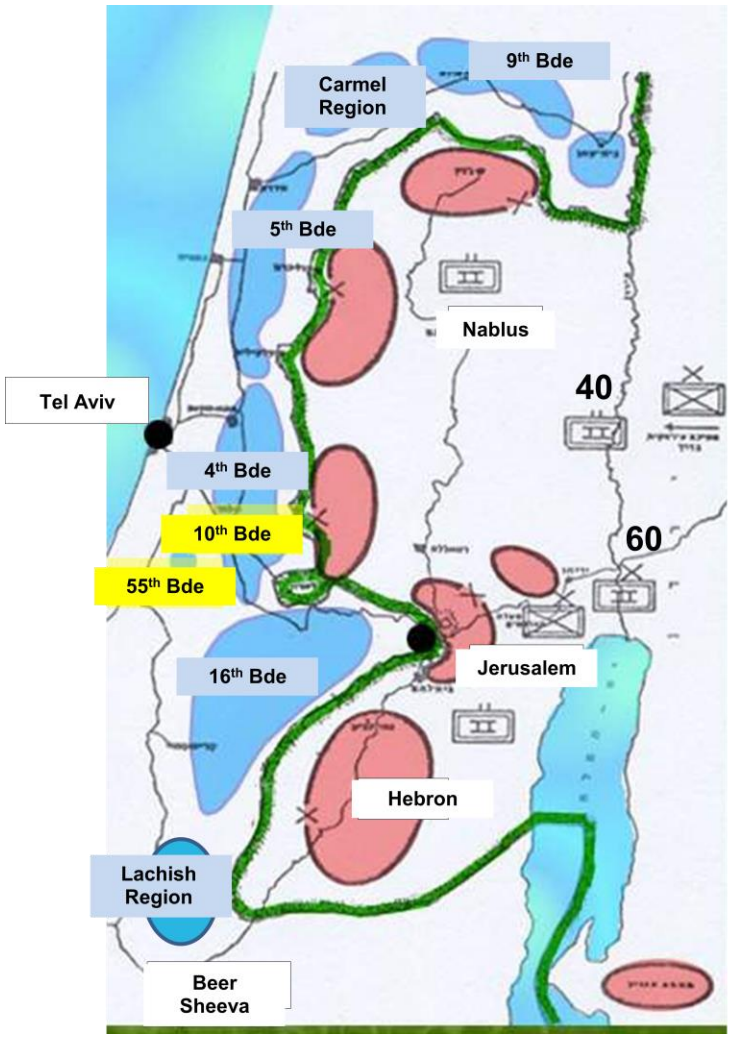
There were four major reasons for declaring war on Jordan. The first was that military treaties were being signed between the Jordanians and other hostile countries; this took place a week before the war began. The second was the movement of hostile troops into Jordanian territory, also a short period before the war began. The third was undermining the stability of the Jordanian royal family. I don't know if you are aware that King Abdallah the First was assassinated on the Temple Mount in 1951 and we almost invaded Jordan as a result. The fourth reason was Jordan's potential threat to the bi-monthly convoy to Mt. Scopus. This was a very dominant matter for the IDF, especially for the Jerusalem Brigade. Every two weeks careful preparations were made to protect against potential attacks on the part of the Jordanian army or civilian groups The new State of Israel had undergone a horrible, traumatic experience during the War of Independence, when a convoy of doctors and nurses that was traveling from Jerusalem to Mt. Scopus was attacked and 79 were murdered.

One of the main factors in planning the Six-Day War here in Jerusalem was protecting the convoy to Mt. Scopus. I don't know if you are aware of it, but the battle here on Ammunition hill is still a cause for national debate. Until today people disagree whether it should have been played out this way or that and they are still fighting about it.

It must be noted that every two weeks the Israeli Air Force was on five-minute standby to arrive and defend the convoy if something should happen to it on the way to Mt. Scopus. Ammunition Hill and other areas close by were considered to be legitimate targets.

It's very sad and hard to believe, but true, that there was never a real debriefing after the Six-Day War. The generals were all so proud that the Temple Mount was in our hands that they said "Let's continue!" A few years ago I was asked to design a model of the war, so I spent almost six months in the archives and read many official documents that gave me a different perspective on what had happened. So if you ask me now if the IDF really planned or took seriously the possibility of entering into what we call the West Bank, I would say that it didn't. The documents show that the only issue that was discussed and planned was the breakthrough to Mt. Scopus. There were some planning documents stating that in case war developed, maybe we'd conquer the entire area - but mainly they were restricted to the issue of Mt. Scopus. The name of one of the plans was "Pargol" ("whip") –– which was aimed at conquering northern and eastern Jerusalem in 12 hours and the entire West Bank in 72 hours.

We were very smart and we were sure that we were going to initiate the war with a combination of courses of action: a frontal course of action, enveloping a second course of action. The intention of the first course of action was to save Mt. Scopus; that was the whole idea.



Jordanian and IDF Order of Battle – Prior the War

Jordanian Army:
7 Infantry Bde
2 Armor Bde
2 Egyptian Commando Btn (attached)

The purpose of the second course of action was deception. The Jordanians wouldn't know where we were coming from; we would confuse and block the Jordanian forces in Hebron in the south from joining the Jordanians in Jerusalem. All the documents emphasize that at H-hour the air force would attack the fortified northern part of Jerusalem - Ammunition Hill - two hours before the ground forces moved into the eastern part of the city. In case of a dawn attack, it would be 0400; the air force would attack for two hours and the ground forces would enter at 1800; if the attack was in daylight, the air force would attack for two hours starting at 0500 and then the ground forces would move forward. This is still a very delicate issue in discussions regarding the war.

Before the war began, Jordan joined Syria and Egypt in a military pact and permission was granted to an Iraqi division to enter Jordan with the intention of attacking Israel; two Egyptian commando battalions also entered Jordan. By June 3rd and 4th, Iraqi forces crossed the border into Jordan and on that day the Israeli unified government said "Enough is enough - we are going ahead with the war."

The Jordanians' order of battle was seven brigades, one of them Palestinian. They were well-prepared for the war, with six infantry brigades and two armored brigades (the 40th and the 60th).

On the Israeli side were the 16th Brigade – the Jerusalemite Brigade, which was deployed in the Jerusalem Corridor - and two other brigades – the 10th armored brigade and the 55th Paratroopers Brigade. All of them were about an hour's or an hour-and-a-half's traveling distance from Jerusalem. Most of them were prepared and equipped for other totally different missions. The paratroopers were prepared to jump over Sinai and the 10th Brigade was also headed towards another mission; the only brigade that was really prepared to fight in the Jerusalem area, was the Jerusalemite Brigade itself.

On June 5th at 2000 hours (the evening before war broke out), MG Uzi Narkis, the commanding officer of the Central Command, stated at a meeting: "I'm worried about two issues: my main concerns are Mt. Scopus and Government House". Believe it or not, for 19 years I have been studying documents with plans for defending the "soft belly" of Government House; there were lots of plans, but none of them were carried out, When war broke out, it was totally exposed, with no protection whatsoever, and I wondered how the commanding officer of the Central Command had made such a statement a few hours before the war, but still nothing was done about this matter.

On this map you can see the situation at the opening of hostilities. Here you can see the city line; you can see the Jordanian 2nd Infantry Brigade, the 3rd Jordanian Brigade, the 29th Brigade and the 27th Brigade, the reserve for the Jerusalem front. Three Israeli brigades were deployed in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Corridor, with one as a reserve to support them.

All of our Jerusalem brigades were infantry and they had the plans, but the two units that really participated in the war were the armored company and my reconnaissance unit because we were on halftracks and jeeps.

At 0400 the darkness was with 97% intensity. This was very significant, mainly due to the difficulty of moving forward with the 10th Brigade's tanks since they didn't have any night vision equipment and it was almost completely dark. On the morning of the war, the eight battalions of the Jerusalemite Brigade were deployed in the city corridor. What was the nature of the Jerusalem Brigade? Four of them were true infantry battalions whose commanding officer was from the regular army, but all the others were reservists. Thus the brigade consisted of four true battalions and another four that could be called territorial battalions, with soldiers aged 30 and up.

The idea was that in case of war, four of the brigade's battalions would perform offensive missions, and the other four would defend the city. So those eight battalions were deployed in the corridor leading to the city.

Some claim that the Jordanians' greatest mistake was to announce on the radio at 0930 in the morning that war was declared. The Jordanians open fire 10 minutes later. The stand-by Jerusalem brigade was ordered to move into Jerusalem, which means the tank company comprised of 18 tanks and the reconnaissance company which had less than 25 soldiers, with 12 officers.

Cairo radio announced "The Jordanians have occupied Government House". At 1230 hours our 10th Armored Brigade was ordered to move forward to save Mt. Scopus. When Cairo radio announced "Jordanian forces occupy Government House and Mt. Scopus," nobody understood what had happened. In fact, a reinforced Jordanian infantry company had occupied Government House in United Nations territory.

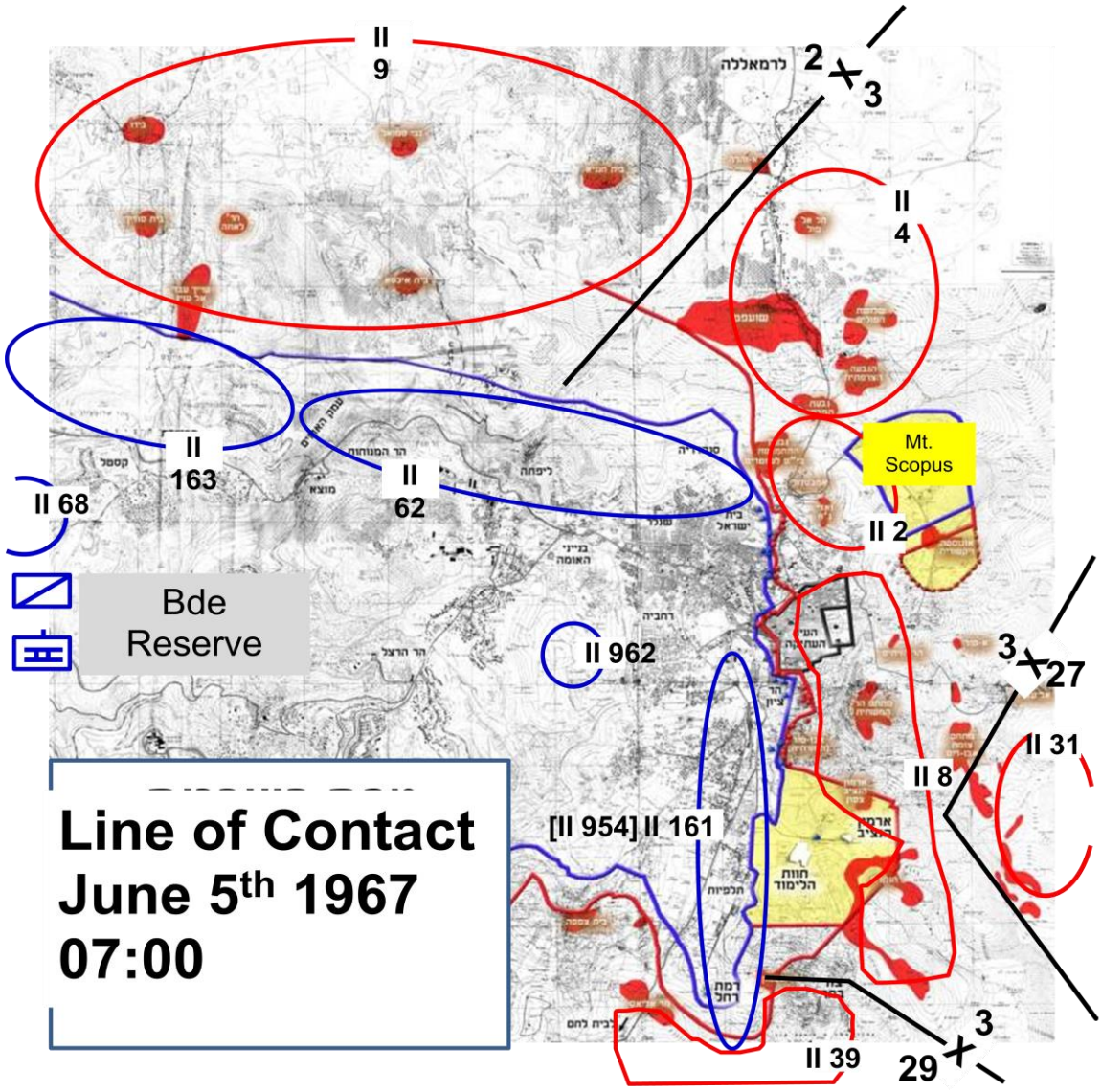
Practically speaking, that was the beginning of the Six-Day War with the Jordanians in general and in Jerusalem in particular. It was the first ground movement. An hour later a Jordanian platoon was seen cutting the fences of Government House and entering the agricultural school. At 1400-1500 the IDF Paratroopers Brigade was ordered to link up with Mt. Scopus, to save Mt. Scopus. This didn't take place, and at 1500 the combined forces of the Jerusalemite Brigade opened a counter-attack on Government House.

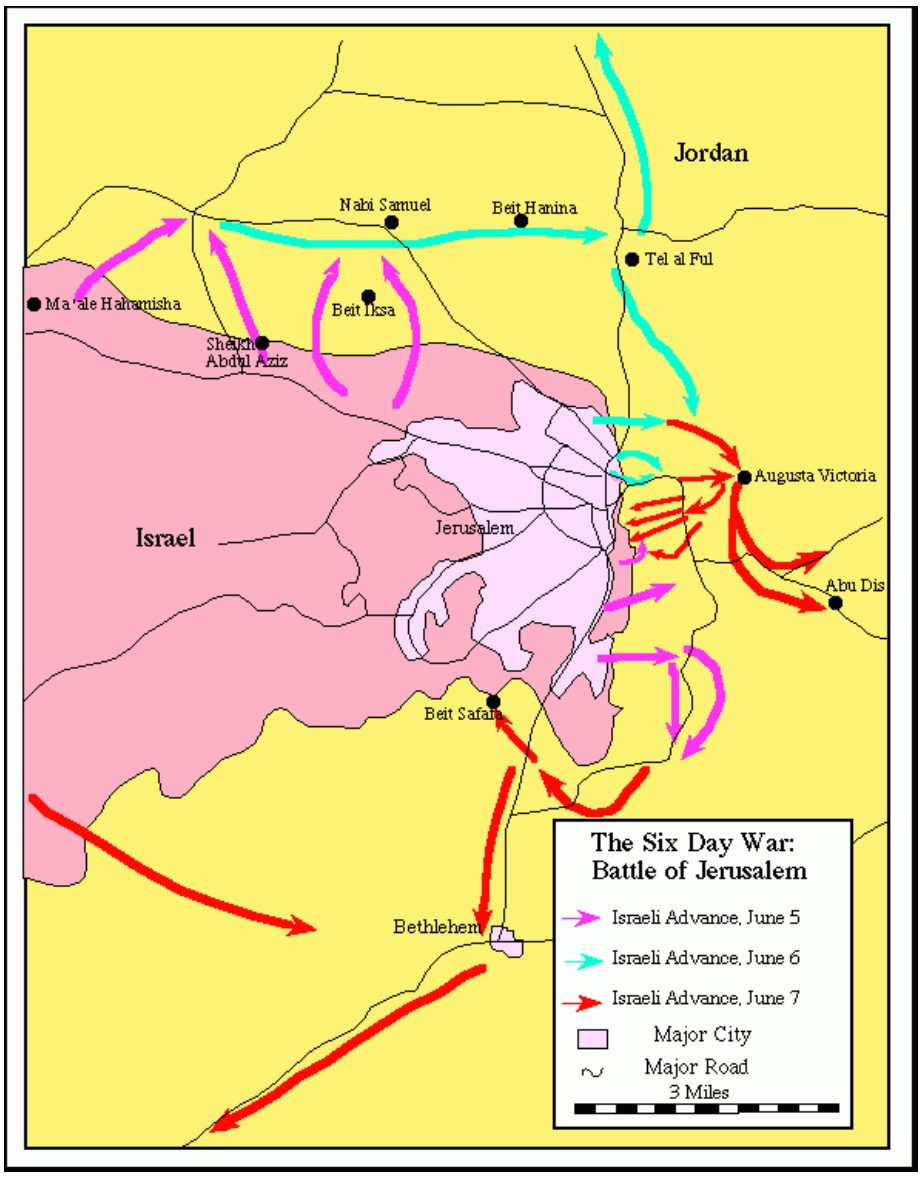
I want to emphasize two things – first of all, you cannot imagine what chaos there was when the armored brigade – which consisted of almost 300 halftracks and tanks - and the paratroopers, all moved towards Jerusalem simultaneously. In those days the highways were very narrow, not like today. Part of the route was observed by the Jordanians, so there was shelling and a lot of smoke and many civilian cars getting in the way, so it was really chaotic.

Another point I want to emphasize is that it took no more than an hour after the Jordanian were seen to enter into Israeli territory before we opened our counter-attack. None of us, none of those who took part in the counter-attack were aware that something like that could happen, so it involved a lot of improvisation.

The Jordanians had occupied Government House; at 1300 their reinforcement company arrived from Abu Dis: it was the 4th Brigade, not the one that was deployed on the border. We were in the corridor and moved to a place that was well-prepared ahead of time. Not only the reconnaissance unit, but also the tank company arrived at 14:00 at the Allenby Barracks waiting for the order to move towards Government House. I'm sure everyone is familiar with the example of

shooting a bullet into a wall and later drawing a circle around it to see how good your aim was. Many of the stories about that war are exactly like that. People will tell you that they planned it all, but it isn't so. For instance, we entered the war with only one map in our hands: a 1:100000 scale map. Later on during the debriefing, the commanding officer claimed that there had been plans, but what about maps?





Regarding ammunition, it was very limited; the reconnaissance unit - the elite unit of the Jerusalem brigade - could only allot one or two grenades per fighter. Believe it or not, some of my soldiers actually had to steal ammunition from another battalion.

The reconnaissance unit had seven halftracks and 11 reconnaissance vehicles, each of them with a light or heavy machine gun and a crew of three people on each of the Jeeps. We entered the city somewhere around 1030 in the morning,

having received the order on a piece of paper delivered by someone on a motorcycle that said: "Move to Allenby Barracks - the Jordanians are at Government House". That's all it said. A similar massage was sent to the commanding officer of the armor.

We entered Allenby Barracks at 1400; a 10th Brigade company was already there. The company's commanding officer was a major, as was I, so we had to decide which of us was going to take charge. We didn't know what were expected to do; all we knew was that there were Jordanian troops at Government House. Next, we were told to move to the entrance of the agricultural school and liaise with somebody there. There we met the commanding officer of 161st Battalion, who was in charge of the entire area; his soldiers were deployed along a six-kilometer line. He was alone with a company that was not composed of real fighters: we have a special track for academicians – doctors, mathematicians and so on - who are permitted by the Israeli government first to complete their studies and then to be recruited into the army – so a company of those nice guys who had no experience whatsoever was collected into a so-called fighting company.

Their commanding officer was very emotional, claiming that it was going to be a catastrophe. While we were standing around there, negotiations were continuing between Israel and Jordan in an attempt to avoid a second effort. So when the Jordanian opened fire, messages were transferred by Israel to King Hussein stating: "Stop firing! We have no intention of fighting against you." Our main concern was the Egyptians. We stood there being shelled for almost an hour and it was very unpleasant. Later we attacked Government House and finished the job. Only then was a message sent to the Jerusalem Brigade not to take Government House. It replied that it was too late: Government House was already in our hands.

Speaker: Was it open terrain or an urban area?

Yossi Langotzky: Let's put it this way: the reinforced company of the 10th Brigade entered into the compound, but what can a company do in an hour? Between 1500 and 2000 the combined force of the Jerusalem Brigade destroyed three Jordanian companies, and "destroyed" is a fair way of putting it. Here is the story: two tanks broke through the gate into Government House, I was in the first halftrack with my entire unit following behind. Unfortunately, as I had feared, after two minutes I found myself the only one standing facing the main building, as all the rest continued on to Antenna Hill.

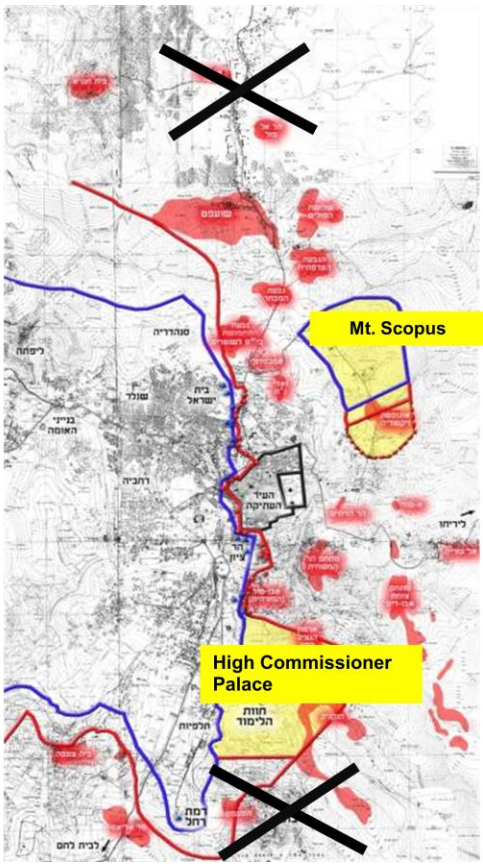
Two of our tanks were opposite me and after two minutes I asked them to stop firing towards the first floor of the building to give me the opportunity to break into the building, we were facing Government House, all the halftracks were not there, all the jeeps were firing on the "Sausage" and I was facing the main building.

The Northern Jerusalem Campaign

Tuesday June 6th 1967; 03:30

The Jerusalem – Ramallah Road – Disconnected

East Jerusalem Encircled from its North



My halftrack crew consisted of a driver, a signals operator, a soldier who was operating the heavy machine gun, altogether 5-6 soldiers. So we set out to take the house. I didn't call the whole unit and begin to explain and say "Let's do it this way or that way." We pulled across explosives –two pieces of wood at each end of which was a TNT brick. When we got to the main building we saw that the main entrance, which is a very impressive one, was closed. The Jordanian soldiers were piling up old furniture inside to prevent us from breaking through, but the explosives broke through the door and started a fire.

I was the first one to enter; the fire was still small, but after the fifth soldier and last soldier, the fire was already raging and nobody was able to join us. Once inside, it took us no more than 10 minutes to realize that most of the Jordanians had left the building and was in the back yard. From there my soldiers attacked the "Sausage," which was the size of a company.

We had the advantage because we arrived from above. The construction of the fortifications was unusual: most of the Jordanian firing points faced westwards and we arrived from the flank. This gave us the advantage and by 1730 hours we had finished them off. We counted about 25-30 dead Jordanian soldiers; none of our soldiers were killed and only one was injured.

With the tanks ahead and the halftracks at the rear we moved as a company into an Arab village, to the "Bell," a stronghold. While approaching the edge of that fortified area, two tanks joined my halftrack. All the others were spread out around the village, and again I don't know if I was really thinking, but I gave the order to attack. Two or three soldiers and another tank joined me – the whole battle there involved 15 of our soldiers and lasted about an hour; 25 Jordanian soldiers were killed and six of ours. By 2000 hours, the battle on Jerusalem's southern flank was over.

I would like to add a few remarks. The end of the story is that as a result of destroying three companies and holding the "Sausage" and the "Bell," the area south of Jerusalem - the Hebron and Bethlehem area - and the highway east of Jerusalem were cut off; that was the first strategic achievement. The second victory was achieved by the armored brigade by 0300 hours and was - strategically speaking –the beginning of the end.

I want make two more comments. Both we and the paratroopers were fighting against the whole Jordanian army. How did it happen that it was relatively easy? I can offer a logical explanation: first of all, we were fighting against three companies, each one belonging to another brigade. The "Sausage" was held by soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Brigade; the company that entered Government House belonged to the 27th Brigade and the company at the "Bell" belonged to the 29th Brigade. You cannot expect a better situation than taking

on companies that are unconnected and unable to assist each other. That was the first issue.

The second issue, and the more important one, was that we were fighting all along the route with the tanks close to us in a combined force. Basically, we were not trained to cooperate with tanks. A couple of years after the battle at Ammunition hill, a discussion had taken place with one of the Jordanian commanding officers. He was asked why he felt that there was no way to continue. He replied that the Jordanians were fighting very bravely and that 72 soldiers were killed, but then they saw the "Dababa," which in Arabic means "tanks".

Were there really tanks on Ammunition Hill? Yes, there were two tanks. The story goes that the Jerusalemite tanks were very close to Ammunition hill after the breakthrough, but they did not know what was going on around them and nobody had told them what to do.

The deputy commanding officer of the 66th Battalion approached the tank commander and asked if he could have two of them, so two tanks were given to him; he took the two tanks and went up on Ammunition Hill. Practically speaking, those tanks couldn't do anything except make noise, since they were unable to tilt down their guns, so the only thing they could do was shoot at the moon, that's it. Furthermore, if a tank is too close to soldiers fighting in trenches, he has to be careful not to shoot his own men, so the tanks were only important for their psychological effect. Why am I telling you this? Because when I entered the "Bell," the two tanks were really close to me, so although they were unable to shoot, their presence had a strong impact.

Any more questions?
Speaker: Sir, I have a question about where you placed yourself in the battle. From what we've understood from some of the history we've learned, even on

Masada, the Roman commander put himself in a position where he could command best. But then we heard a lot of tank commanders claiming that the best place to command was from the fighting front. In this environment, from where did you choose to command, and why?

Col. Langotsky: Dozens of times during the past 19 years while discussing this subject, I came up with a simple answer. When I participated in a squad commanders' course, one of the lessons we learned was that the commander of any unit in any kind of war or battle should locate himself in a position where he can influence the success of the mission. That is the answer and there is no other. Sometimes I wonder: I had 120 soldiers and 11 officers, so why didn't I call them over and explain to them what was happening? Because I felt it instinctively; it was not a matter of logical thinking not to attack the main building. That would have been a mistake, so I'm here to tell the tale. It was the same with the "Bell": most of my soldiers were spread out around the village. It took them half an hour to reorganize themselves and join me, so for a few moments I was all by myself. You must be aware that the war was conducted mainly by company and battalion commanders who were decisive, brave and focused on the mission. The war was not planned, but was based on improvisation. Regarding the role of the commanders at the company and battalion level, their behavior in various places and at various times was aggressive and that was the key of our success.

Speaker: Sir, to follow up on that, if I understood you correctly, the units involved in that operation were not aware of any plans ahead of time. They didn't have objectives that they were trained for, so what did you do during the war to maintain that spirit of initiative and aggressiveness? How did you remain on the offensive and avoid falling into a defensive mind set when you didn't know what you were supposed to do?

Col. Langotzky: I could answer your question in various ways, but the main answer is that it's a matter of character, the way you were educated from childhood. I think that it's in one's DNA, a combination of being aggressive and non-aggressive and proper training, of course. I can tell you from my research for the war model: I discovered that this was not only true of me, but of others as well - I was no exception.

Col. (Ret.) Hagay Mann, the 10th Armored Bde. intelligence officer (G2).

What is very important here is that there was an agreement between King Hussein of Jordan and Nasser, the Egyptian president. They signed an agreement on of May 1st, one week before the war. It stated that if the Israelis attacked the Egyptians, the Jordanian would come to their aid; at the same time they nominated Riad, the Egyptian general, to be the commander of the Eastern Front, meaning Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Several weeks before the war, the Egyptians sent two commando battalions to the West Bank. This was very significant. First of all, they nominated an Egyptian general to command the force, secondly, an agreement had been signed between Hussein and Nasser – but this was not taken very seriously by Israeli intelligence.

And as a matter of a fact, for certain reasons we didn't assess that the Jordanians would join the Egyptians and open a second front at the same time as we were taking on Egypt. We did, however, know that the entire Jordanian army was in a very high state of alert.

In the meantime, very close to the Jordanian-Iraqi border, there were Iraqi forces, about two brigades, in H5, exactly on the border between Iraq and Jordan. There was a high alert in the Syrian army as well.

The northern boundary of the Central Command was in an area opposite Netanya - Tul Karem- and stretched southwards to include Mt. Hebron and Jerusalem. The Jordanians were deployed in that area: five infantry brigades, supported by one tank brigade, in very fortified positions. On our side, nothing had been built to defend that area. The 10th Brigade consisted of one tank battalion, 60 Sherman tanks, old tanks and two battalions of mechanized infantry. The mission was to counter any attack by the Jordanian all along that border and to put up a defense against tanks that might come into the area. The assessment at that time was that the Jordanians were not going to attack us and would not open a second front while we were fighting against the Egyptians.

The brigade was mobilized on May 23rd and deployed in two areas – one in the Ben Shemen area, not far from Ben Gurion airport, and the other in Hulda

Forest, which is the same distance from the Jerusalem area .

Another mission that was given to the 10th Brigade was in case something happened and the situation would allow us to improve our positions in the Latrun area, as we were in an inferior position there. We were either to capture a better position or reinforce any sector in that area. What really happened on the 5th of June was that while we were planning to take the Latrun area, the Brigade Commander was called to Central Command headquarters and told: "Be prepared to possibly take part in a war". It was about 10:30 in the morning and we were planning some minor operation in the area. I must say that I was very familiar with the area where we later took part in the operation, because one year before the war I had left my position as the G2 of the 16th brigade where I had served for three years and had performed certain duties for Central Command intelligence. I knew the Jordanian army very well, as well as the terrain, so I was both familiar with the enemy and the position of any obstacles.

On June 5th at about 1230, my commander was again called to the Central Command and was given orders based on the fact that the Jordanians had opened fire at 0930 in the morning and had announced on the radio that they intended taking Mt. Scopus and Government House. Since the Jordanians had specifically mentioned those two places and since we were very sensitive to what would happen on Mt. Scopus, my commander was ordered to take over the area and move quickly to join the forces on Mt. Scopus.

The order was given at about 12:30 and the forces were deployed in the two places. We performed a very brief battle procedure and at 1700 hours had already penetrated the green line along the border and starting fighting against a very fortified position called Radar Hill, Sheik Abed El Aziz, the village of Beit Iksa and in between.

Two years before the war, the aerial photo interpreters of the Central Command had discovered that there was an area that was not fortified and not occupied by the Jordanians, so it was possible to enter there. We discovered on an aerial photo that we could pass between the fortifications, so the commander decided to penetrate at as many access points as possible and see if this could be done

quickly.

In the meantime, it was necessary to take Radar Hill and the Sheik Abed El Aziz position and raise our forces as quickly as possible to the dominant terrain in order to block the way from Ramallah, which was the main road to Jerusalem and was very important.

In any case, the whole time, starting from 9:30 in the morning, the Jordanians were shelling and bombing our area, the road to Jerusalem and of course the settlements that were along the border. At 1330 hours we received the order to move out. On the way we gave orders to the battalions about who was joining whom. For instance, the 4th battalion less one of their companies had tanks attached to them. The 6th Battalion had ten companies with it. The 95th Armored Battalion received an additional company of Centurion tanks. The reconnaissance unit took over the area of Beit Iksa, another village that was fortified, but not very well.

The main strong point - Radar Hill - consisted of three positions: Radar 1, Radar 2 – the main fortification - and Radar. Behind it was a village that was strongly fortified.

In the meantime, during those three hours I managed to obtain intelligence aids such as maps and air photos and to brief the brigade commander on the way. He contacted the entire battalion and issued brief orders about who was going where and which forces were joining which.

Since I had already gathered intelligence about the area, I had time to distribute the material to the battalions and brief them regarding what I knew about the area, what kind of fortifications were found in each place, where the minefields were and what obstacles could be expected on the roads.

In that area there was a 300 meter area of mines and trenches that the Jordanians had dug many years before, as well as an anti-tank ditch. In order to pass it, we needed to bring engineering equipment. The same was true of Sheik Abed El Aziz; there were about 300 meters of minefield in front of that position. Furthermore, as a precaution the night before the war, our side laid mines against Jordanian penetration, so to the 300 meters of the Jordanians'

protective minefield were added an additional 200 meters of our own, in other words, about 500 meters of minefield that the forces had to penetrate. Since there was shelling in the entire area, the brigade commander asked permission not to deploy before the attack, but to go as far as he could with tanks and armored cars and to attack on the move and not under artillery fire. Before the entry of the mechanized infantry, we deployed tanks that fired directly at the targets that were already discovered and could be seen before the mechanized infantry made its attack.

They occupied the area in less than one hour, including Radar Hill 1. Radar Hills 2 and 3 were later taken by the 16th Brigade - the Jerusalem brigade – which had been deployed the night before in that area.

Speaker:

Sir, can I ask you a question?

Hagay Mann:

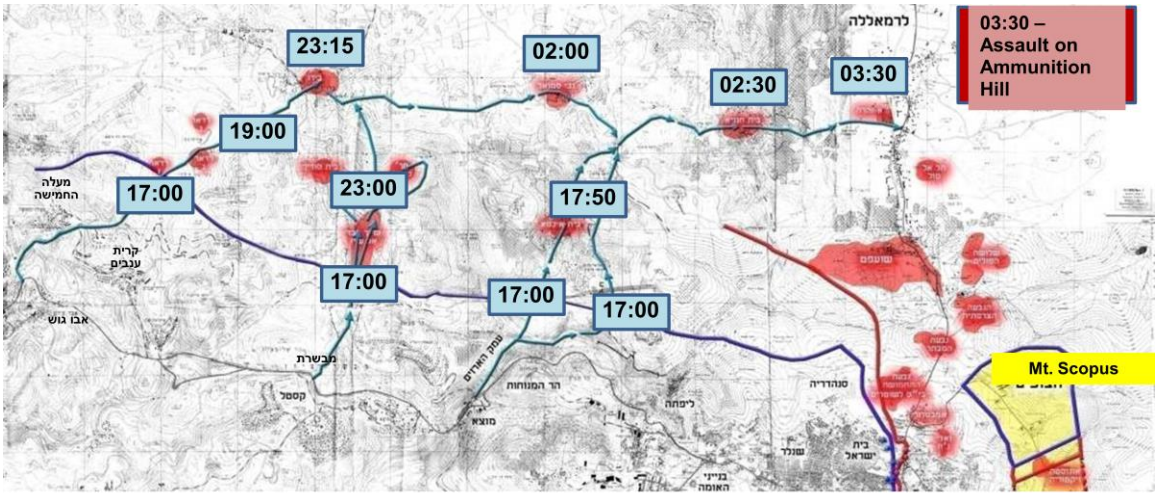
Sure.

Speaker:

Given your experience in the Golan Heights, comparing that experience with this experience and the different geography and enemy, in particular its urban nature, which was easier or harder? In which environment was it easier to identify the main enemy effort?

Hagay Mann:

Here we took the initiative and attacked. We didn't wait to find out the enemy's main effort. The entire line was fortified; the photo interpreters discovered where all the enemy positions were and how they were defended, where the minefields were, and so on. It's a big difference if you take the initiative, if you are attacking or defending. In this case we attacked and took them by surprise. The commander – Uri Ben Ari, who at that time was a colonel and was promoted to brigadier general in 1973 - had fought in 1948 in the same area and he hadn't succeeded in capturing all the positions that we took within a few hours. The first phase according to our orders was to block the road from Ramallah to Jerusalem, so the Jordanians wouldn't be able to reinforce one of the sectors or come from the east. My assessment was that they might bring their tanks through one of those areas instead of going directly to Jerusalem, and as a matter of a fact a battle took place there between Jordanian armor and our armor.



מקרא:
- 10th Bde
- Israeli Positions
- Jordanian Position
- Rural Line – Israeli Side
- Urban Line – Jordanian Side
- Jordanian Fortifications
- No-Man-Land

North Jerusalem Campaign
10th Bde Armor
Monday. June 5th 03:30 – 17:00
61 M4 Sherman Tanks
12 Centurion MK4
9 AML

In any case, after taking possession of Radar Hill, Sheik Abed El Aziz and the village of Beit Iksa - and in the depth of Bidu, Beit Surik, Beit Samuel and Beit Hanina – those are places along the road that we moved along, by June 6th at 0330, the 95th battalion and the reconnaissance unit reached it and blocked the possibility of enemy forces moving from one sector to the other hours. We succeeded in making all those moves and actually overcoming the Jordanians; the enemy's reserve unit was unable to do anything because the air force destroyed it before the attack; in daylight and towards evening, the air force attacked the first line of defense and made it easy for us. In addition, before we started the attack the tanks had shot down all the major heavy gun positions and that of course greatly helped us take all those fortified positions in quite a short time.

Yossi Langotzky:

I would like to add two points to Hagay's comments. One is the idea considered by many, not only Jordanians but many of the Israelis, knew that cross-country traffic was going to be very hard.. How many tanks do you think arrived at the

main road between Ramallah and Jerusalem? Hagay mentioned the 95th Battalion. Do you know how many tanks there were? Only four tanks of the reconnaissance company.

Hagay Mann:

It is very important to mention that on June 6th at daybreak we discovered that in front of us we had a range of about 300 – 400 meters with three or four Jordanian Patton tanks. Although the air force had attacked them on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem, about eight tanks had succeeded in moving into this area and were facing our tanks. We began firing at them and even hit them, but we couldn't penetrate their armor with our Sherman's rounds. Luckily the Jordanians hadn't removed the gasoline barrels from the tank when they maneuvered, so we hit them and the tanks caught fire and the tanks burned up. Now at this stage since the roads were not opened yet, the brigade commander and myself entered the area by helicopter and gave orders for the second phase, to secure the highest place in the area - Beit Hanina - and block any possibility of movement from the east to Hizma – Anata and later on to capture Shoeffat, French Hill and Fortress Hill – and join the paratroopers on Ammunition Hill. On the early morning of June 6th we took those positions and were ready to join the forces on Mt. Scopus.

The third phase opened on June 6th at 14:00 hours and involved reorganizing the entire force to secure Ramallah, which was one of the major cities in the area, in order to remove the threat along the green line from the northern sectors of Jerusalem and the road to Jericho. The next day the brigade moved to Jericho in two columns and reached it in the evening.

Speaker:

In the operation described today in all its three phases, the execution was very rapid. Did that change how you deployed your reconnaissance forces? Did they take a more offensive role? You described your reconnaissance elements having been assigned to objectives different from traditional reconnaissance missions. Was that based on the pace and the need to move quickly?

Hagay Mann:

The hasty procedure and the need to do what we had in mind - to reinforce Mt. Scopus - was the most important thing. In such difficult terrain, it was assumed, not only by the Jordanian, but by skeptics on our side too, that we might not succeed in doing that. We used as many possibilities as we could and this was why the reconnaissance unit was used as a fighting unit and took Beit Iksa without a battle, since they moved so quickly.

The terrain was so difficult that only 2-3 armored vehicles could enter that village and take it over (we saw a white flag immediately in that village) and they joined the 95th tank battalion which included eight tanks. They joined them and took over the dominant area that controlled the road from Jerusalem to Ramallah, exactly according to the mission.

Speaker:

It appears that the initial objective of the 10th, 16th and 55th Brigades was to secure Mt. Scopus and prevent a Jordanian counter-attack against it. When did that objective change to capturing the entire West Bank?

Hagay Mann:

I cannot give you an answer because I don't know, but as you mentioned, the main objective was to arrive at Mt. Scopus. There were 120 fighting men, soldiers, dressed like policemen, and we succeeded in smuggling in four Jeeps with recoilless guns and 20 mm anti-aircraft guns, not to mention that the entire area was covered with mines, so it was very well protected, but since there was the fear of the Jordanian 60th Armored Brigade, it was very important to reinforce the area.

I don't know when the order changed, but it went in stages because we knew that the Iraqis were already in H5 and part of them had moved into Jordan on the same day that we arrived. It was Wednesday evening when we arrived in Jericho and were given the order to blow up all the bridges over the Jordan River – four bridges along our sector - to prevent any opportunity of the Iraqis crossing to our side and mounting a counter-attack.

That same night we blew up only three, because the fourth bridge was a Bailey Bridge built by the Jordanian engineering force – they trained and exercised and on that day the bridge was assembled on the Jordanian side. One of our units searched for it that night but didn't find it, so we only blew up three.
We had to add special elements that were developed for protecting the road to Jerusalem, as the seven kilometers from Ammunition Hill to Ramat Rachel in the south were not fortified or sufficiently protected. In any case, there was an engineering unit that prepared special launchers called the "Laskov" that were directed at the Jordanian position and they were well in operation before was even entered the other side.

Col. (ret.) Yossi Langotsky:
I would like to add a few remarks. Nobody asked a question about who arrived on Mt. Scopus? Remember that two brigades received the order to save Mt. Scopus, so what happened? I can tell you: I'm not going to speak about the armored brigade that arrived at noon. As for the paratroopers, they didn't fulfill their mission, period. They went towards Rockefeller in order to flank the old city and take the glory for liberating Jerusalem. Another remark (and it became a very sensitive issue) is who actually liberated Jerusalem? I'm sorry to talk about it; as you know, many people were killed in the three brigades and the myth is that the paratroopers liberated Jerusalem. I don't need to tell you the real story and it's very funny because it looks like a sports competition: "Who arrived at the Wailing Wall first? I'll tell you: tanks. A company of the 10th brigade - the Jerusalem Company, a combined force – arrived at the Lions' Gate. Unfortunately, the tanks were unable to continue to the "photo finish," because they were too wide for the narrow streets. So although they arrived at the Old City first, nobody ever knew about it, and it's very sad.
Now the issue of the fight over Ammunition Hill – it is a very sensitive issue until today, almost 50 years since it took place and people are still arguing about it. Those who were really extremely influential in the Battle of Jerusalem and didn't receive any credit were the tanks. Thank God it wasn't the Jerusalem

brigade! Jerusalem brigade had one tank company and they were the ones who had more influence than anyone else. It seems so strange that you ask yourself why their contribution was not mentioned. What happened? Mota Gur himself, two weeks after the war, in a summary of what his brigade had done, gave lots of credit to the tanks. I'll tell you what I heard from Uri, the 10th Brigade commander: he told me once that after the war there was a meeting in the Central Command. At that meeting, one by one, the brigade commanders described their battles, Laser – that's the nickname of my Brigade Commander the Jerusalem 16th Brigade, will describe us what was the roll of his brigade you got 5 – 10 minutes,. Then he said to Uri the 10th brigade commander you got – 5-10 minutes. Then he said to Gur, the 55th brigade commander your turn and Gur was talking for an hour and a half, and then Uri have told me that he said to Laser – "Laser, for sure we have lost the war".

You know it sounds like a joke, but for families whose loved ones lost their lives in the war, it wasn't a joke, and they were very upset. How come their children's contribution is not mentioned?

Now, before arriving at the summary, because of your good behavior, I was listening to some of your questions and I've decided to tell you what I tell company and battalion commanders at the end of my speech about the Battle of Jerusalem. These are my 10 Commandments. First of all, remember that war is total chaos; it's horrible. Nobody understands what's happening. It's not only smoke and fog, it's much more than that; whatever you didn't believe was going to happen – will happen.

Everyone knows about Murphy's Law? There's also Langotzky's Law and it states that Murphy was an optimist.

Don't laugh; nobody will help you; you're on your own.

Don't expect to consult with your commanding officer, wherever he is, remember that he's busy with his own problems and he doesn't know what's happening, either, so you need to solve your problems alone.

Don't complain, don't cry – you have to solve it by yourself. Mom and Dad are far away, so you can't ask for their advice. The situation is horrible; you feel

the end of the world is at hand, and you might be right, but keep on believing that you can cope with it. The only one who has the chance to win is the one who in spite of what I told you right now will be smart enough and calm enough. Calm is a very important virtue. Calm and being smart enough to understand what you should do.

Be aggressive…be aggressive…be aggressive.

Have respect for your enemy. Remember that he might be smarter than you are or at least as smart as you are. Take this seriously.

Remember that you're not a manager - you're a commanding officer. More than that, you are expected to be a leader, and being a leader is the highest level of a commanding officer. I have read so many times about the German army and to my understanding it was the best combat army in the world, so it's very interesting to discover that the although the Germans were so strict, so disciplined, they gave absolute freedom to company commanders.. They didn't give them hard time.

Improvisation. War is not mathematics. You're not building a bridge over a river which needs to have safety margins. You must take risks; after all, this is war. I will give you one example. You know in the Israeli Army, when Uzi Narkis was with the paratroopers, when they were engaged in retaliation battles, they developed a method, a tactic for conquering a fortified position. But, that approach was only for night-time and all their movements were in accordance with that. The night before the war broke out, I trained my soldiers in that tactic at an Israeli fortified position, the Castel. A few hours later they employed that tactic, but the difference was that it was in daytime. Luckily, my men were smart enough to improvise a different approach despite their previous training.

To sum up the battle of Jerusalem, here is a story. The beginning was in the southern flank, with a counter-attack at Government House. By 800 hours the highway was cut off. At 1700 hours Hagay's brigade broke through the Northern Corridor at four points. At 0300 hours they arrived at the road

between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Strategically speaking, those two actions marked the beginning of the fall of the Jordanian army in that area. As for the paratroopers -, Uzi's battalion – I won't go into it.

The number of soldiers that were killed: 48 from the Jerusalem Brigade, 35 from the armored brigade, 97 from the paratroopers and two pilots.

In conclusion, the liberation of Jerusalem was accomplished by the three reserve brigades with the effective support of the Israeli Air Force, which did a great job. Unfortunately, nobody talks about it. They destroyed an entire armored brigade on the way from Jericho to Jerusalem, so it was really fantastic.

Furthermore, the Jerusalem campaign, in which 120 soldiers lost their lives, was not initiated by us. Out of the three brigades, two were informed in a couple of hours to do the job. The third reserve brigades were mobilized for this without any preparation. To say the least, the objective of the campaign was not defined beforehand, but was only during the campaign itself. They didn’t went to Mt. Scopus, where did they go?

Strategically the campaign was decided within 12 hours and was planned on the way, when the Jordanian troops in the Jerusalem area withdrew their flanks, both in the north and in the south.

One should emphasize the special contribution of the tanks, both the Jerusalem tank company and the 10th Armored Brigade, whose role has not received sufficient credit; 91 tanks were involved in the Battle of Jerusalem.

I'll show you the order of battle:

The Jerusalem Brigade: four infantry battalions; one reconnaissance unit with eight tanks and seven halftracks (which were later transferred to the paratroopers); one Tank Company - 14,000 men altogether.

The 10Th Armored Brigade: one tank battalion; one Centurion company from the Armor School, joined by two mechanized infantry battalions; one reconnaissance unit; one armored AML (a French armored car with a 75mm gun from the AMX13 tank) - 4,955 troops altogether.

The 55th Paratroopers' Brigade: three paratrooper battalions; one tank company (the Jerusalemite, that would join on later), a reconnaissance unit from another paratrooper brigade - 2,546 troops altogether.

The total forces that participated in the Battle of Jerusalem: 20,964 troops; 91 tanks; 199 halftracks.

Regarding Ammunition Hill, I would like to say that it's a debate that some consider legitimate. For 19 years, in all our plans the tanks would brake through the fortified stronghold of the northern boundary of Jerusalem –. In all of them there was two hours of air force support. Twice a month when the convoy went from the Mandelbaum Gate to Mt. Scopus we were prepared to assist them in case of problems. The pilots were familiar with Ammunition Hill and all the other locations. The safety distance in case of bombardment was well-known. All of a sudden, Uzi Narkis hesitated because of the distance. How come? For 19 years it was the same distance, and it's very sad because where was General Headquarters when all this was happening?

I have tremendous respect for Uzi and his colleagues - they were top-notch fighters, no doubt about it - but a battalion commander is not the one who should make global decisions at the level of the Battle of Jerusalem. That was the job of the commanding officer, and his name was Uzi Narkis.

It's hard to believe that there was a special engineering company in Jerusalem at the time with special equipment; maybe Uzi was not aware of it. The soldiers were sleeping and didn't know that anybody needed them. They had special equipment to break through the barbed wire and the mines to the Police School. Those who were supposed to know about this didn’t do anything about it.

The Yom Kippur War

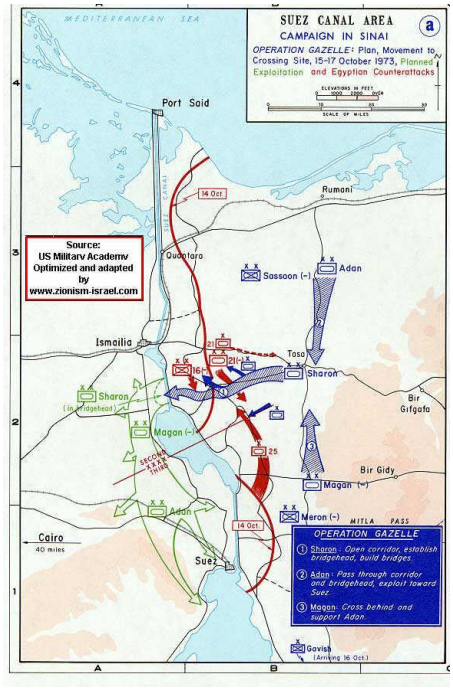
October, 1973

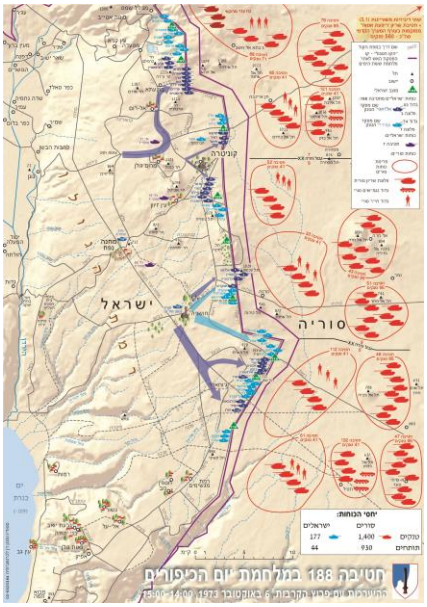
1. Col. (Ret.) Pesach Maluvani

2. Col. (Ret.) Hagai Mann

3. BG (Ret.) Abraham Bar David

4. MG (Ret.) Ya'akov (Jacky) Even





Col. (Ret.) Pesach Maluvani

I served in military intelligence for about 40 years, part of the time as a reserve officer. After I retired I decided to sit down and write the history of the enemy armies that we were fighting against. I started with the Iraqi army (that no longer exists) and published a book about it, which I believe will appear in English next year. The second book is about the Syrian army. You can see the sources on which I based my lecture today, the official history of the Syrian army, published in three volumes in 2004. The third volume is dedicated to the years 1970-2001 and covers the 73' war.

Another interesting book is a memoir by General Mustafa Tlas, who for 34 years was the Syrian defense minister (he is now living outside of Syria) and wrote five volumes, of which this is the third one. Each volume covers ten years, from 48'- 58', 58'- 68', etc.

The third source is a book by General Walid Hamdul, who during the '73 war was a commander of the 51st Armored Brigade and later deputy commander of the 3rd Armored Division in 76', when the Syrians invaded Lebanon. The Syrians actually conquered Lebanon in 76' and remained there until 2005, when the Lebanese prime minister was assassinated, apparently by Syrian intelligence.

I also based my research on a large number of Syrian military brochures; for example, this is a weekly named *The Army of the People*. In addition, there are several memoirs written by Syrian generals regarding our wars. Of course, they praise themselves and their capabilities, but also provide much inside information about what happened. Just a general remark: decision-makers from all the armies in the region are the current writers of its history.

They kept to this very strictly, maybe because it was the policy of the regime not to publish the country's military secrets, but fortunately after Walid Hamdul published his memoirs, he called upon all the others to also write and publish. He ended his career as the deputy prime minister of Syria and he's no longer alive. So these are generally my main sources.

I'm only going to discuss the first part of the '73 war - the Syrian attack- because during the counter-attack we entered their territory. There is a very important saying (I believe you know it and keep it in mind), "No military plan survives contact with the enemy".

That statement was totally relevant to what happened on the Golan Heights in the 73' war from a Syrian perspective.

After the 67' conflict, the Syrians' strategy was to continue the struggle by force against Israel, and this was verified in the eyes of the world at the Hartum Conference in what we call, the famous "Three Noes". "*No* peace with Israel, *no* recognition of Israel, and *no* negotiation with Israel". After that decision, the Syrians decided to call for the support of a superpower - the Soviet Union - and the purpose of all this was to reverse the results of the 67' Israeli invasion and liberate the occupied territories: in the Syrian case, the Golan Heights and in the Egyptian case, the Sinai.

We find that there were a few phases in this development, first and foremost to rehabilitate the Syrian Army and rebuild it from scratch because losing the Golan Heights in a day and a half in '67 illustrated how very weak and ineffectual it really was. The second phase included planning, and reviewing all preparations, then selecting a "D-day" and "H-hour" for starting the war.

The main purpose of rehabilitating the Syrian Army was to build up capabilities that could cope with two major threats: the Israeli Air Force and the Israeli armor. Secondly, they aimed at improving the troops' capabilities by means of very intensive training. This was actually carried out with the help of Russian advisors. The third objective was to exploit the element of surprise at all levels. The Syrians were aware that without the element of surprise, they had no way of coping with the Israeli Army.

First and foremost, the army required rehabilitation. After the resounding defeat of 67', morale in the Syrian army and the entire nation was at an all-time low and they had to put a lot of effort into hiding this in various ways. One of the contributions to raising morale, as they described it, was the aggrandizement of their achievements in the War of Attrition. You know that after the 67' war, Egypt and Syria began the War of Attrition during which they discovered that the Syrian Army had improved its performance and this gave them the confidence that they would be able to succeed in the future.

Secondly, in the field of organization, they decided to establish permanent Divisions . In 67', they had not yet had divisions, but rather headquarters called "brigade groups," which were not exactly divisions, as they didn't yet have Division units, but only headquarters.

One of the lessons they learned was the need to establish permanent Divisions, as well as some new forces to expand the older army formations. One of the things they emphasized was increasing forces and firepower in ground battles, artillery and anti-tank units. Furthermore, they improved their training system, so that it would provide better solutions for preparing the army.

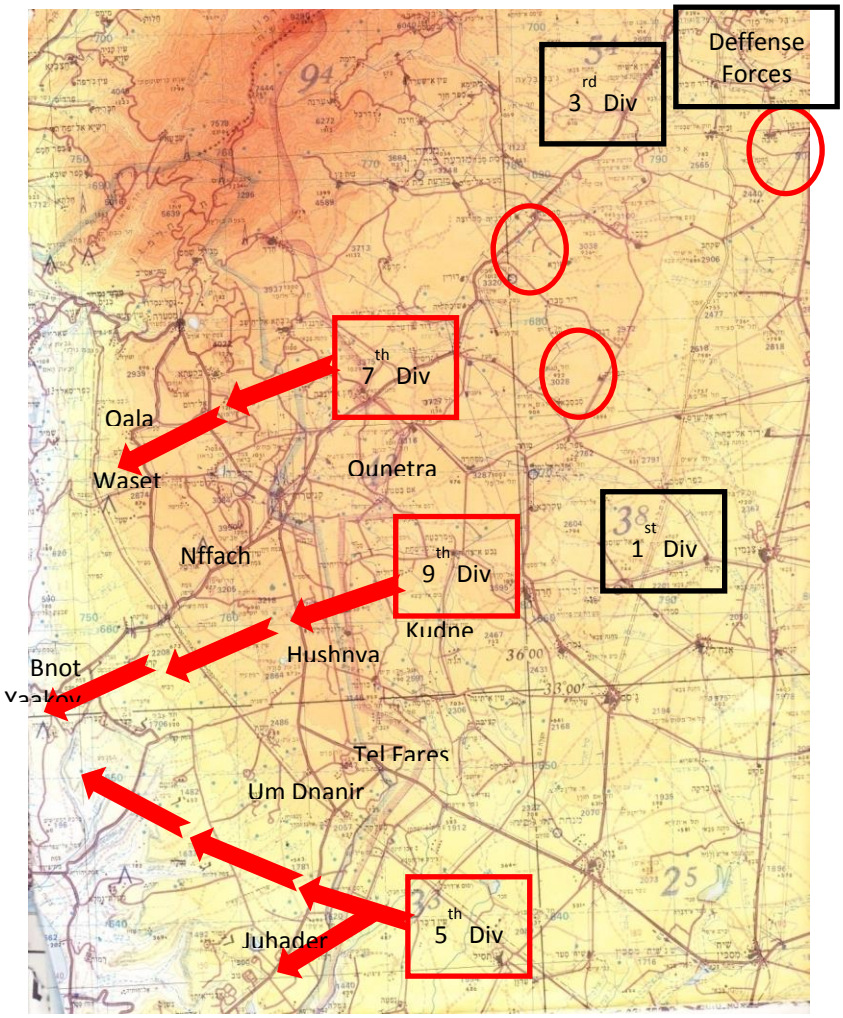
The role of the Soviets expressed itself in three phases, but first and foremost, in supplying weapons and military equipment. The Syrian Army outdated weapons and desperately needed new and more effective weapons than they had possessed in 67'. They acquire massive amounts of weapons and equipment for the ground forces and the air force. They also established an air defense arm that created a lot of problems for us in the 73' war. In 67' there had been no air defense missile units such as the SA2, 3 or 6. Secondly, the Russians assisted as advisors and experts. In every unit, from the battalion up to the GHQ level, there were Soviet advisors and experts assisting in every way possible. Regarding the air force and the air defense, the Syrians didn't make a single move before getting the "green light" from the advisors.

The third phase of Russian support involved the political sphere, especially vis-à-vis the United States.

The consequences were a considerable growth in numbers; regarding manpower, the army now numbered 170-180,000 men, as opposed to only 70-80,000 in 67'. Regarding weapons - they now held more than 1,000 tanks (a small number of them already new T62s, but mostly T54s and T55s), as compared with only about 500 tanks in 67'. They now had more than 700 APCs vs. 500 previously, in artillery 1,000 vs. 300 and in combat aircraft, 300 vs. 100. In addition, they had six new surface-to-air brigades vs. none in 67'. They built up five permanent Divisions instead of three non-Divisions in 67'. There were now ten armored brigades instead of two, four mechanized brigades instead of one. However, regarding infantry brigades, these decreased a bit from ten to eight. Altogether, they now had 22 brigades instead of 13.

At the strategic level, the main idea was a simultaneous attack with the Egyptian front, which meant crossing the Golan Heights in the former case and the Suez Canal in the latter one. The main problem was how to achieve total surprise, not only against Israel but also against the United States. They were afraid that the C.I.A. would discover by

satellite or by other means that they were preparing for war and the surprise element would disappear. After the war they took pride in the fact that that they had succeeded in totally catching the United States and many other intelligence organizations unawares. The operational coordination between Syria and Egypt existed until the first round was fired at the beginning of the war. They met and decided everything together, but after the war began, each army fought independently.



When the Egyptians crossed the canal, but didn't continue to advance into the depths of Sinai through the mountain passes, the Syrians didn't understand why, since that had been decided beforehand; nevertheless, Sa'adat decided that he would do what was best for him and didn't consider the Syrian army. This resulted in a breach which later widened when Sa'adat sought to make peace with us.

They tried to involve King Hussein of Jordan in the war, but failed. They decided to

perform a preliminary air and artillery strike both on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts from the beginning of the war, then conduct a ground battle in order to achieve a quick victory. Sa'adat informed the Soviet ambassador in Syria that the Syrian army was not capable of fighting for more than three to four days; from this stemmed the Soviet Union's role in achieving an immediate ceasefire in order to ensure that the Syrians remained on the Golan Heights before any discussions were held on the matter.

They were very good at secrecy. As they knew everything there was to know about our deployment on the Golan and analyzed what the phases of our organization would be towards the war, they decided first of all to destroy the regular forces that were deployed on the Golan, not a big force, and afterwards the reserve force that would come to their aid.

Dealing with the Israeli Air Force was the primary mission of the Syrian air defense, as they didn't trust their pilots very much. They mainly assigned their air force missions to support the ground forces and secure their airbases; dealing with the Israeli Air Force was primary done by their air defense and, at least for the first two days, this was a difficult situation for us.

They fought with the Israeli armed forces by armor as well as by anti-tank units, having different-sized units from the level of the infantry battalion up the GHQ level. They concluded that they should deploy three Divisions in the first echelon vs. four Israeli brigades only. This would enable them to penetrate the first echelon, overcome it and finish the job quickly. They obviously had an overwhelming numerical advantage.

They aimed at achieving their daily mission, according to Soviet doctrine, which was between 20 and 25 kilometers, that is, more or less the distance between the border and the Jordan River.

They had to cover that 20-25 km before the arrival of the Israeli reserve forces, which they estimated would take at least 24 hours. This was one of their biggest mistakes. In order to deal with the Israeli reserve forces, they planned to land special force from the Golan Heights on the bridges over the Jordan River by means of artillery and anti-tank weapons.

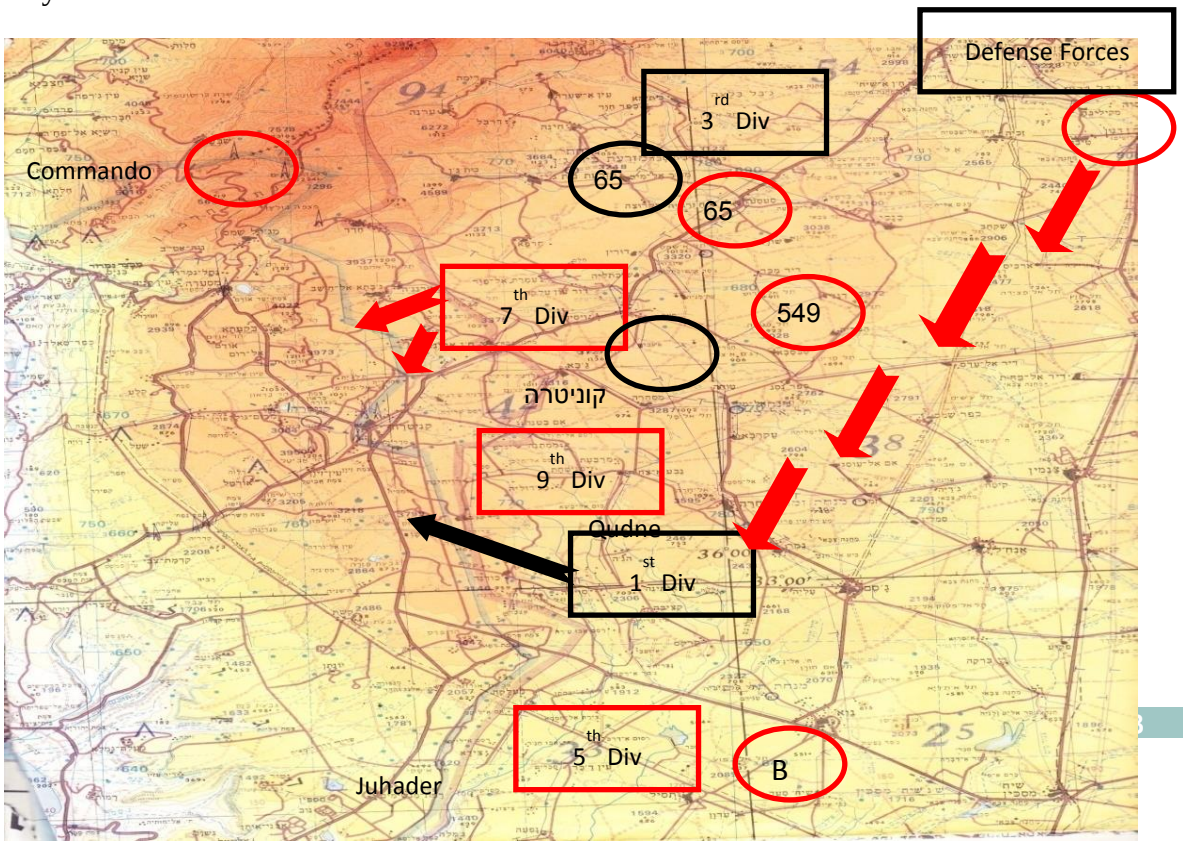
In fact there was no landing of forces and I don’t know exactly why. Something changed and they didn’t perform it. They dealt with Israeli obstacles by means of bridging, mine

clearing, etc. They' studied the obstacles very well; they could not be compared to the Suez Canal, but for them it was like crossing the Suez Canal to complete that phase successfully.

This is how they viewed our deployment: an armored brigade in the northern sector; and the 188th Brigade in the southern sector; the 36th Division and 82nd brigade headquarters; the 820th Golan Heights Regional Brigade; and of course, the Golani Brigade.

These were the obstacles as they perceived them and they built a similar model in Syria for training units. You can see the barbed wire fences, the minefields and the anti-tank ditch that they trained their troops to bridge. In every Division, in the frontal infantry brigade, they organized special assault teams whose mission it was to deal with these obstacles at the first phase of the attack. In the first operation, "Ale Shalom," they divided their forces, the 3rd and 4th Infantry Division, supported by artillery, anti-tanks, etc. The Syrian Division was based on Soviet doctrine, with three brigades in each. It was an infantry Division, with two infantry brigades and a tank brigade for support, but they built an additional fourth brigade which was a mechanized infantry brigade. Since they didn't manage to finish building the mechanized brigade, they attached units to all the three Divisions: the 9th Division in the center and the 5th Division to the south, which were part of the GHQ forces, and the Moroccan brigade, which was attached to the 7th Division in the northern sector.

They estimated their balance of forces at about 800 tanks vs. 272 Israeli tanks. The



number on the Israeli side was actually higher by about 100. In artillery, they estimated their barrels to be 1000 vs. 337 on the Israeli side. The operating reserve included an armored Division and an armored brigade that was attached to the 5th Division.

One of them was deployed in the north in the Latakiya-Tartus area. Altogether, they had five Divisions, ten armored brigades, four mechanized and eight infantry brigades, seven artillery regiments, two General Headquarters reserves and two anti-tank regiments as a General Headquarter reserve. They estimated that in the second and third echelons, the balance of forces was in Israel's favor because they estimated that we had many more forces than we actually had, in addition to the Israeli Air Force.

The Syrians decided to mount the major attack in the central sector, on the line between Kudne, Hushnia, and B'not Yaakov Bridge, since it was the shortest route to the Jordan River. The second effort would be in the Quneitra sector. This was the exact opposite of our assumptions; we assumed that the main effort would be in the Quneitra sector and that the secondary effort would be further south. The Syrians' idea was to split the defending force and destroy it. The mission of the first operation - "Ale Shalom" - was to liberate the Golan by reaching the Jordan River within 24 hours. The first tactical echelon mission, which included the infantry brigades in each of the Divisions , was to cross the obstacle and arrive at HQ in the rear, as the forces' direct mission.

The second tactical echelon - performed by the mechanized and armor brigades - was to fight the enemies' armor starting from the eve of October 6th and assemble the Division al force necessary to arrive at the Jordan River. The second operational echelon would enter the Golan Heights on October 7th and deploy a reserve force in order to exploit the success of the first echelon and prepare for a possible penetration into Israel itself. They had it in mind to invade Israeli territory after taking the Golan, all this supported by the artillery, the air force and other forces. The Syrians and the Russian advisors believed that this was a good plan that they would able to perform it successfully.

Regarding selecting D-day and H-hour, the reason for choosing that day and hour, as they saw it was first of all, that the Israelis were busy electing a new government in October 28th. October is the most important month on the Jewish calendar, so the Jews were busy preparing for the holidays. They had to find the appropriate choice for both fronts,

especially in the Golan Heights, where difficult winter conditions began in November. October was also the preferred month of the year in Egypt regarding conditions in the Suez Canal and the fact that the month of Ramadan fell that year in October. Even in later years, Hamas started wars during Ramadan, last year, for example.

Here is an Arab map showing the directions of the attack, the first one by the 9th, 7th and 3rd Divisions and the 1st Division , which moved forward from their bases south of Damascus to the front line. On the map we can see here that the second Division marched down to the Jordan River from north to south along the axes from Kudne to Hushniye and the B'not Yaakov Bridge. In this, the central sector, the 5th Division had two missions. The main mission was to get to the Jordan River and the second was to push down to the Sea of Galilee. In the rear were the 1st and 3rd Divisions, two anti-tank regiments, an independent infantry Division and some defense companies commanded by Rifat Assad, Hafez Assad's brother, whose mission was to defend the regime in the Damascus area.

The Syrian Army's activities were similar to those of any army preparing for war: building defenses, digging trenches, preparing positions for tanks, artillery, surface to air launchers, headquarters sites, roads, etc., building warehouses, bunkers, training facilities, etc. All these stemmed from the decision to go to war after the 67' debacle. They made preparations all over the country, protecting vital production installations and supply systems for the civilian population, activating civil defense, preparing hospitals, and so on.

They pushed forces and equipment forward from the rear to the front; for example, their bombers were deployed at the T4 Airfield, which was deep in the Syrian Desert. In order to overcome the distance, they transferred the planes closer to the Damascus area; from our point of view, one of the major indications that war was approaching was the advancement of GHQ units, such as the bridging battalion, artillery regiments, anti-tank units, ammunition etc. Furthermore, they activated a deception plan.

On October 6th at 1100 hours, the Syrian commander-in-chief of the operational center gave the order. By 1300 hours the air force and artillery regiments headquarters were ordered to start operations. By 1350 hours, about 80 aircraft took off on their missions - preliminary bombing; at 1400 the planes crossed the border and 900 artillery pieces opened fire. The first echelon's Divisions started moving towards the border and the

obstacles; the war has started.

The element of surprise was achieved, especially due to the simultaneous attack on two fronts. Almost until the last moment, our general staff's assessment was that there would not be a war, but suddenly we had a war on two fronts.

Of course opening the attack at 1400 hours was a total tactical surprise for us. As for the fighting on October 6th in the northern sector, the attack was mounted by the 5th Division, which consisted of five brigades. The main effort was in the southern sector of the Division by two infantry brigades; the second effort was in the northern sector, with the special mission of attacking Mt. Hermon by means of commando forces.

Out of the two brigades - the 85th, succeeded, while the 68th, which was operating to the north of it, failed. The Moroccan brigade, which was operating to the north of the 68th, succeeded as well, but didn't advance much; they were stopped not far from the border. This forced the Division to launch the second echelon, which included the 131st Mechanized Brigade in the 85th Brigade's sector because the 68th was blocked. The Division reported heavy enemy fire from tanks, anti-tank units, artillery and the air force. All of the above blocked the Syrian effort to advance more deeply. In their memoirs, the Syrian commanders describe the problem of fighting against Israeli tanks, weapons and missiles, which became legend, and they used this as one of the main excuses for their armor's failure. In order to deepen penetration, the Syrian Division commander decided to launch the 78th Armored Brigade. It was already getting dark and the battle was conducted at night at close range and in very poor conditions for the brigade, as they described it. They suffered heavy casualties at the bridges regarding both tanks and manpower, especially in the command echelon. This caused grave problems for them, forcing them to retreat and reorganize. That was the situation in the northern sector.

Regarding Mt. Hermon, the Syrian commandoes moved forward the night before the attack on the roads in order to prevent the intervention of enemy forces. They planned the attack quite well and this might be considered their most successful achievement. The Syrian forces overwhelmed the Israelis, a platoon of Golani Brigade infantry soldiers. The Israeli stronghold was taken after a fight and the Syrians took 31 soldiers captive; 13 others were killed and 10 managed to escape.

The 9th Division was deployed in the central sector, with only four brigades, one less than

usual. The main effort was mounted in the Division 's southern sector by an infantry brigade and an armored brigade; the second effort was in the north, in the Quneitra area, by an infantry brigade. The 2nd, 33rd and 52nd Infantry Brigades succeeded in crossing the obstacle and advancing to the objectives, while the two armored brigades, the 51st and the 43rd, suffered heavy casualties. The first one to cross was the 51st, and only later, at about 2300, the 43rd. The Division took Hushniye and its forces organized to defend the sector west of Hushniye. After the 43rd crossed, their orders were to send a tank battalion to assist with the 52nd Brigade's attack. In the south, the 5th Division was organized into two efforts, one to the west of the Jordan River, the second towards El Tustraus.

The Syrian soldiers fighting on the first day saw great successes; most of their forces succeeded in crossing the obstacle, penetrating into the Golan and establishing a foothold. They managed to reach Mount Hermon. The next day, there were no major changes in the northern sector; the 85th Infantry Brigade was in a very difficult situation and two of its battalions were forced to retreat. In the central sector, the 52nd brigade was attached to the 7th Division and was ordered to conduct a double attack by the 131st and 52nd on Quneitra, but they failed.

Since they were blocked (and the blocking of the 3rd Division in the northern sector was the most important factor in that war), they decided to change the overall mission of the 1st Armored Division . Its goal was now to penetrate into the center of the Golan Heights and move northwards in order to encircle our 7th Armored Brigade and destroy it in order to help the Syrian 7th Division penetrate to the Golan. A battle took place in the area of Naffah in which only one Syrian armored brigade (the 91st equipped with T62s), manage to arrive at that area and conduct a very hard battle against our armor, while meeting the Israeli reserve forces that had arrived on the Golan. As for the others, the 51st advanced but was blocked by our forces and went back to a defense position in the Hushniya area. Regarding the 43rd, one battalion was lost crossing the anti-tank ditch, the second rushed to help the 52nd and fell into an ambush and most of its tanks were destroyed. The third battalion's mission was to get to Dabburah, in the western part of the Golan Heights. Although the commander reported that he was at Dabburah fighting our forces, he was actually fighting somewhere before Dabburah and almost his entire battalion was destroyed and its men killed. Nobody knows what happened to that battalion. As for the

Syrian 5th Division, their two first infantry brigades managed to get inside. We had fewer forces in that sector, so the Syrians were much more successful in penetrating to the depths. The 12th Armored Brigade, went west in order to reach the Jordan, and was stopped by us and one of its battalions was hit very badly in the battle. The 132nd Brigade went south, and was mostly destroyed by air attacks, so it decided to call on the support of the 47th Armored Brigade, which was quite a new brigade and didn't know the area. It arrived from the north and its commander lost his way. Part of the force moved southwards and suffered heavy casualties by our air force and later due to reserve units arriving in the area.

The turn of the tide for the Syrians involved the 7th Armored Brigade due to the arrival of our reserve forces and attacks by the Israeli Air Force, bringing to that brigade's defeat. The Syrian 9th Division lost its offensive capabilities, but the 3rd Division 's attack was the major failure

At that stage, the Syrians renewed their efforts in the northern sector, especially on Oct 9th, when they launched an attack by the 81st Armored Brigade, a 3rd Division brigade equipped with T62s, whose objective was to smash the opposing forces and reach the Jordan, but that brigade encountered heavy resistance in the "Valley of Tears" and was forced to retreat with its few remaining tanks.

This succession of failures forced the Syrians to decide to withdraw to their former positions east of the border and this brought their attack effort to an end.

We also know that on the afternoon of Oct 7th, Assad and his generals understood that the attack had failed and they sent urgent demands to the Soviets to achieve a ceasefire in the United Nations Security Council and to the Iraqis to send their expeditionary forces immediately in order to save the Syrians from disaster and to prevent Damascus from being occupied by us.

To sum up, the failure of the 1st Division attack decided the outcome of the war in the Golan. Although the Syrians had a significant numerical advantage over the Israeli forces in the Golan, and their forces, especially their tank crews, fought bravely, vigorously and with great determination, they weren’t able to carry out their battle plan and achieve their goal.

The war started and moved forward rapidly. It was primarily a tank battle, with each side

operating about 1,000 tanks during those four days. That battle decided the war and the Syrians were forced to retreat.

Question: One question, sir. For the Syrian army, what was the role of the Soviet advisors during the actual tactical execution?

Pesach Maluvani: There were advisors from the battalion level up to the General HQ. They were everywhere helping them to plan. They didn't know exactly when D-Day and H-hour would be and were surprised when the Syrians and the Egyptians informed them on October 4th that they were going to start the war on the 6th and that's why they evacuated their families. But they were involved and helped them solve many problems, as well as providing them with the necessary weapons. The Syrians attempted to manufacture bridging equipment in their own military industries in order to cope with the obstacle, but when the Soviets understood that they needed it, they supplied them with bridging tanks.

In the period between the wars, the Syrians sent thousands of soldiers to the Soviet Union for training. We don't know if there were Soviets on the front lines; there definitely weren't any units. It was different in Lebanon in 82', when there was a Soviet presence in Lebanon. Here this was not the case, but they were advising them what to do. I understood from Soviet sources in Moscow that the highest echelons there were advising the Egyptians and the Syrians about how to behave and how to make this move or that move strategically. They were also prepared to send forces to Syria to retake the Golan Heights, which the Syrians failed to do, but finally that suggestion fell for political reasons.

Question: If they had occupied Golan and defeated the IDF on the Golan Heights, how would they have ended the war politically? Would they have arrived in the Jordan Valley and sought a ceasefire?

Pesach Maluvani: As I mentioned, they were prepared to enter Israel, maybe to get more political clout for future negotiations; we don't know the answer to that because it didn't happen. Like the Egyptians, they wanted to make a military move first and worry about the political side later, but the Syrians wanted to take the Golan in one piece and they also planned to liberate the West Bank and give the Palestinians the right to establish a Palestinian state, but that didn't occur because they failed.

Question: Sir, after the war, to what did the Syrians attribute their failure? Did they analyze the war or examine why they were defeated? Did they come up with any conclusions?

Pesach Maluvani: They put the blame on several factors. First of all, our Western weapon systems; the American systems were superior to the Russian ones, especially regarding the air force; the Israeli Phantoms were better than the Mig 23. The Syrians assumed that our air force would mainly be occupied on the Egyptian front, but in actual fact for the first few days, it was mainly active on the Syrian front. They also miscalculated how long it would take the reserves to arrive. Both the Syrians and the Russians mistakenly assumed that it would take at least 24 hours until the response to their attack on the Golan and that all five Syrian Divisions would penetrate 20-25 kilometers into the Golan, but they failed to accomplish this. Their planning for that war was very good compared to '67, but what really infuriated the Syrians was that the cooperation with Egypt didn't work out. They expected the Egyptians to bomb the Israeli rear, which would have put much more pressure on Israel to move forces from the Golan to the Sinai; that would have made it much easier for them to perform their mission

Question: Did the Syrians see themselves as effectively employing Soviet military doctrine? Were they able to fight as the Soviets would, say, on the Golan Heights?

Pesach Maluvani: The Soviets taught them carefully and they didn't knew anything else, especially the forces at that time. They changed their doctrine in the 50s, when they started their "love affair" with the Soviet Union and moved away from Western, mostly French, doctrine. Throughout the years they trained and exercised at all levels, from the company and battalion level up to the General Staff. That was all they knew; they thought that their performance was good enough and that they were ready to go to war. It is important to note that they intended to declare war earlier, but the Germans approached Assad and warned him that they were not ready yet.

Question: You spoke a lot at the beginning about the importance placed by the Syrians on surprise. How much importance did they place on concentration?

Pesach Maluvani: They observed that there were only four Israeli brigades in the Golan Heights as opposed to their five Divisions, which was almost three or four times as many troops, so they were convinced that this balance of forces was definitely in their favor.

Surprise was necessary for them and for the Egyptians to prevent Israel from recruiting its reserve forces, which was the Israeli army's most powerful force and still is until the present day. They needed to bring their forces into combat in the Golan or the Sinai before they were prevented from even penetrating the Golan Heights. Imagine that instead of two armored brigades, there had been six or seven; the situation would have been very different.

Question: You emphasized that the 9th and the 1st fell apart when they failed to breach the obstacle. What is your stand on the controversy whether this was prevented by the strong Israeli defense or by Syrian incompetence?

Pesach Maluvani: It was a bad time for the Syrians. As I mentioned, only one brigade from the 1st Division managed to perform quite well, but the 91st and the two others were blocked. The mechanized brigade was mainly blocked by our air force's bombardment and as for the 76th, even the Syrians didn't know what happened to it. It got lost because its commander didn't know the area and got involved with Israeli forces firing at a distance.

The 1st Division's battle plan was problematic, as well as its performance. Unfortunately for them, when they entered the area our forces had already arrived and they met up with strong resistance, which actually brought their mission to a halt and forced them to retreat. They suffered considerable losses, I didn't mention it before, but the 9th Division lost more than fifty percent of its tanks.






Question: When we examine the Egyptian plan in the south, we see that they had reshaped their army to become extremely proficient in warfare in order to achieve their

objectives and they did this very successfully. Why do you think the Syrians didn't achieve the same level of rehabilitation and familiarity with combined tactics in what seems to be a pretty similar operation in its execution?

Pesach Maluvani: I can tell you that President Assad was much more careful then President Sa'adat in using his armed forces; if he hadn't been sure he would succeed, he wouldn't have gone to war. The Syrian leadership, as well as the Soviets, believed that their fighters were capable of doing it. They had all the weapons that they needed and the order and we'll go inside. Who will stop us? Nobody." But as I mentioned, he was careful to warn the Soviet ambassador that his armor was capable of fighting for two to four days, no more. Thus the Soviet Union had to achieve a very quick ceasefire, otherwise Damascus might have collapsed.

Gideon Avidor: Now let's look at the Israeli side of things. First of all, I want to explain briefly how the IDF was structured after 67'. It was decided that the land forces would be formed into permanent Divisions. Beforehand we had mission-oriented task forces. But after 67', there were permanent Divisions, as still exist today, although they are very different. They were basically armored Divisions because one of the lessons learned by the IDF after 67' was that wars would be decided by tanks and aircraft.

After the victory of 67' we learned that the air force was capable of providing support for the ground forces. We invested less in artillery because we were confident that the air force would show up.

The permanent Division was an armored Division that consisted of two or three tank brigades and various other Division al units: combat engineers, a reconnaissance battalion, an artillery regiment consisting of five battalions (60 guns) and a logistics regiment. Some Divisions included two tank brigades, some three.

The tank brigade was built along the same lines:. Three tank battalions, with an armored infantry company within the battalion. That's how it was. The basic concept was deep penetration, fast movement, transferring the war to enemy territory and an air force that would arrive and solve the problem. That was how the IDF was constructed between 67' and 73'.

The 36th Armored Division was deployed on the Golan Heights with one regular armored brigade, the 188th Brigade, and two infantry battalions not concentrated but deployed at

strong points along the border; in addition, there were 44 artillery pieces. Hagai will tell you later how the Northern Command "woke up to the alarm" at the end of September and approached the GHQ, which withdrew the 7th Brigade from the Sinai and deployed it on the Golan Heights.

Col. (Ret.) Hagay Mann, the Northern Command intelligence officer (G2).

We were responsible for providing all the information and making the intelligence assessments for the commander of the Northern Command, the staff officers and the other units. They needed intelligence; we needed access to the information necessary for developing intelligence, which we derived from their updates and exercises in preparation for the war. Our organization was divided into sections: the Syrian, Jordanian and Lebanese section and a special section for terrorist activities

Other elements were a photo lab, storage labs, air photos, interpreters and a teleprompter. In those days there were no computers, no GPS, and so on. The only electronic device we had was a teleprompter, a very old fashioned machine by which we could pass on secure information in an efficient manner. Other communications were performed by phone and radio, the phone being the only means of transferring information in real time, as computers had not yet been introduced.

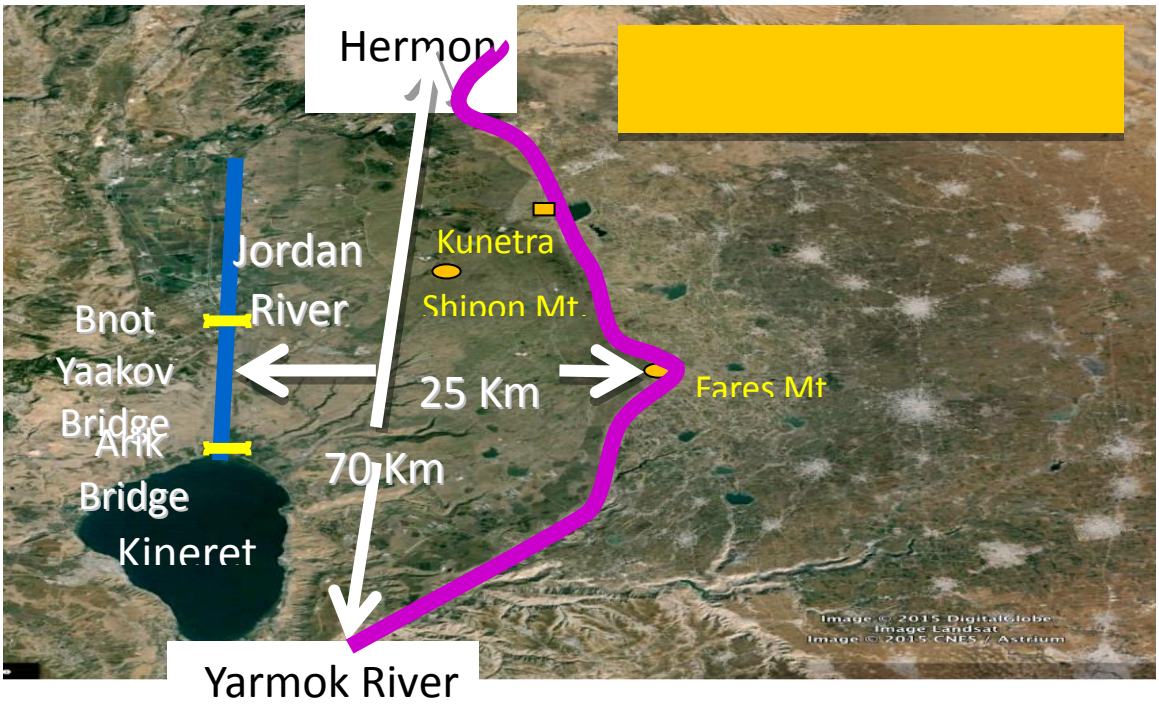
It must be taken into consideration that we were up against three different countries with different regimes and military doctrines, both Eastern and Western, and various weapon systems. The section dealing with terror encompassed the other three sections and covered all of their territories. It was very difficult to deal with all of this by means of a mere 55 COs and NCOs. In times of emergency we called up reserves for reinforcing observation posts (I will relate to that in a moment) and the units.

The relevant sectors were Lebanon, the Syrian border and part of Jordanian territory. In 1973 in Lebanon there were extensive terrorist operations. Earlier they had originated from Syria, then from Jordan.

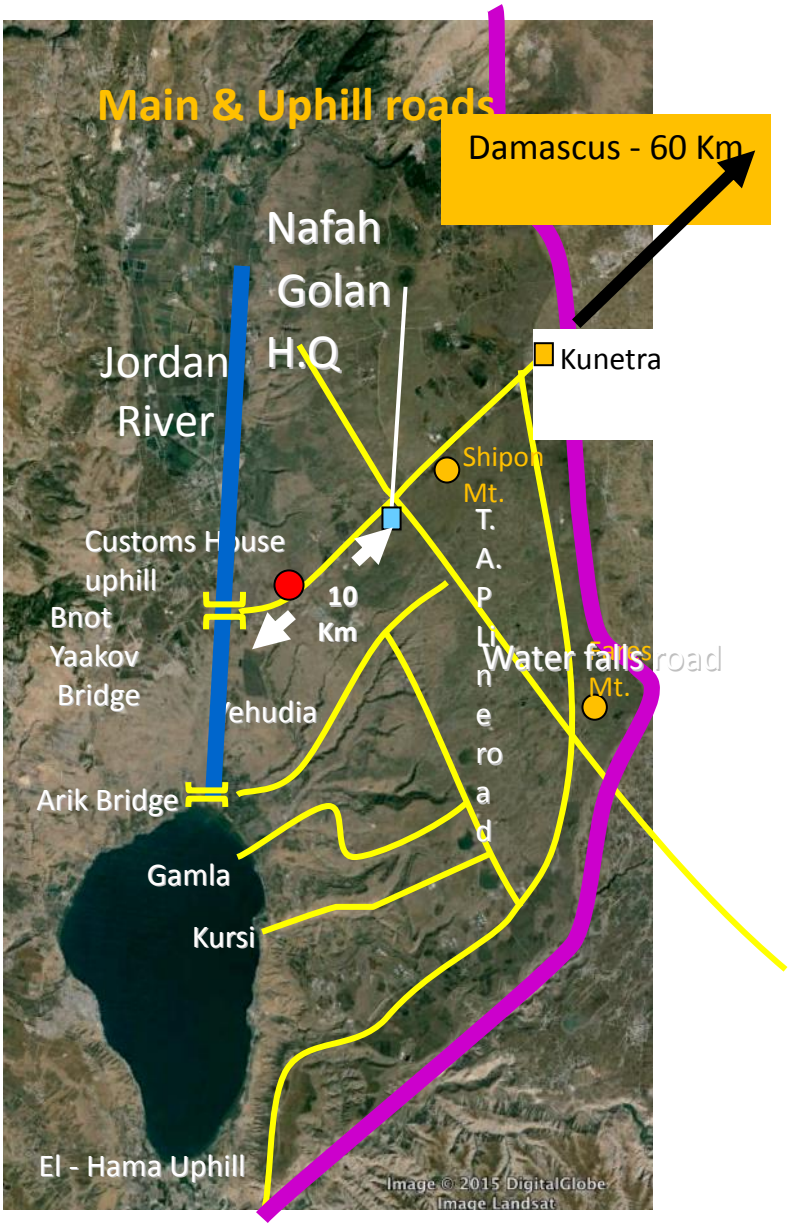
The forward observation points were a very efficient connection asset for my headquarters and I could communicate with any position along the border.

This was very important because I could obtain information immediately in real time. Since they were forward positions, we had the possibility of observation, for instance, from Mount Hermon. It was already mentioned this morning, that these positions could cover a large area and provides information about what the Syrians were doing on the front line. The other resource was the second listening, or monitoring unit, which was deployed in the Northern Command. From it I obtained all the information for my sector, so I could analyze and assess data; this was also a very efficient source. During the war, or between operations, there was a mobile technical platoon attached to Division G2. We knew which units were attached to which; at that period we only had one Division headquarters, the 36th Division, and we had a special platoon that could provide technical monitoring information directly to the G2.

In any event, the unit operating agents on the other side obtained information and transferred anything relevant to the Northern Command directly to me, parallel to the



unit's headquarters, so I could receive the same information as the ISL in real time.
In addition, there was light aircraft reconnaissance coordinated with the nearby Ramat David air force base, I could order my air reconnaissance scout to fly over the area and collect information by observation or by oblique photographs. There were processers built into my unit for decoding and interpretation, so that was another good information source. The last element was the decoded film that arrived from the air force parallel to what was sent to the GHQ.
Those were the means at my disposal that could be manipulated according to my needs. From J2 headquarters in Amman, I also received reports and messages, but I cannot say that I received all the information that they distributed; part of it, even if it was very important, wasn't transferred to me. Other open sources of information were newspapers and radio and TV broadcasts, which were a very good source for what was going on the other side, not only opinions, but also articles and photos of new roads and bridges or other valuable pieces of information. These could be compared to the aerial photos I received from headquarters regarding the same developments. On several occasions it turned out that my unit's photo interpreters' decoding was much more accurate and specific than the information that we obtained from the other side.



Now it's not a secret that intelligence work is a closed circle, starting with collection, going on to assessment and - most importantly - ending in distribution. No less important is summarizing your course of action any time you hand a report to anybody. It is essential that you provide the means or the tools that he can assess later on or present to his commander, in order to evaluate what's happening. All the information that was collected and assessed in the Northern Command was sent to J2 GHQ and the various branches, the fifth branch that dealt with Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, the second branch that had people in Jordan and the first branch. Our subordinate units were the 820th Brigade that was responsible for the Golan Heights, where they had an armored brigade, the 1st

Golani Infantry Brigade, the 612th Brigade on the Jordanian border and the Lebanese sector. In addition the 36th Division commander, and the 210th Division, which was established in June '73, received all the information as well.

The commander of the reserve brigade not only received information, but also intelligence aids, such as maps, Photostats and other aids to help him in his preparations, whether for routine security on the borders, limited operations or war. The collection units in the area received information, assessments, briefings and requests from me according to their needs.

Earlier I discussed what the Syrians thought we knew or didn't know; in any event, from April '73 onwards, we started seeing early warning signs indicating that the Syrians were preparing for war. First of all, there was a change in front line rotation. Starting from 1967 we were familiar with the system the Syrians units followed along the border and we knew that before the winter they would withdraw their major forces from the front lines for training and re-organization in their bases near Damascus. We knew that this generally began in September or October before winter set in. In 1973 the opposite was true. In April, May, June and July they withdrew their armored forces from the front line and began reinforcing it around August or September as the outbreak of war drew near.

We learned another thing from the Russian doctrine adopted by the Syrians, namely, that artillery positions must be prepared long before planning to launch an attack.

We discovered from our air force and other sources that they were cleaning out their older artillery positions and preparing new ones for 240mm mortars and other guns. Thus this was yet another aspect enabling us to assess that they were preparing for war.

Another important indication was the Syrians' deployment of S2, S3 S6 and SA6 missiles; they had prepared 25 new missile launching sites by August '73. In addition, we discovered from aerial photos and other sources that they were transporting special engineering equipment for bridging and other equipment that was only used for attack operations. Furthermore, there was some deployment of anti-air missiles along the border. We found out that Damascus, the Syrian capital, was less strongly defended than the rest of the area and that the range covered by their anti-aircraft missiles was not only on the Syrian side, but also on our side of the border up to the Jordan Valley. An air force expert informed us that this was a trap being set for our air force, so that it would

not be able to support our forces in case we needed it.

On September 13th there was an air battle between our air force and the Syrian air force and J2 began claiming that from that date onwards, all the reinforcements and other preparations were due to the Syrians defending themselves against possible attack by Israel. They had forgotten that those reinforcements had begun a long time before September 13th. As I mentioned before, the withdrawing of the units started in August or even in July and the deployment of the air defense began in July as well. As J2, my assessment was that the Syrians were preparing for attack.

Furthermore, we had intelligence stating that the Syrians were advancing their air force and other war materials to the front lines; we assessed this as preparations for attack. Simultaneously, the GHQ was claiming that according to their assessment, the Syrians hadn't reached their emergency deployment position, thus the second defense line up to Damascus was left partially empty. We discovered that it was not occupied before, during or after the war, so my assessment correctly indicated that the Syrians were preparing for war.

Why did the J2 GHQ claim that the Syrians feared an attack by us? As I mentioned before, the 820th Regional Brigade was deployed on the Golan Heights, with two infantry battalions, two tank battalions from the 188th Brigade, an armored brigade, five artillery batteries and one ADA battery. Altogether on the 20th of September there were 77 Israeli tanks and 40 artillery. On the other side, about two weeks before war broke out, we could see on the first defense line (as I said, the second one was not occupied), three mechanized Divisions including 16 infantry brigades, two mechanized brigades, three tank brigades and one Moroccan brigade, altogether 607 tanks, 700 – 800 artillery tubes and 25 anti aircraft sites. That, then, was the deployment on our side and on the Syrian side. Can one definitely say that the Syrians felt threatened? I'm not sure.

Here you can see the Syrians' deployment: the 3rd Division, the 7th Division , the 9th Division and the 5th Division , which was reinforced. The 9th Division was also reinforced by a tank brigade on October 1st, a few days before the war broke out. The 5th Division was also reinforced by a tank brigades that moved from Homes in the far north, to the area. There is a very good story about that brigade, the 47th Brigade. It was established by Hafez Assad, the president's father, to keep the peace in the Homes area.

A year before the war began, we captured five very high-ranking Syrian Army officers on the Lebanese border and from their interrogation we discovered that the 47th Brigade had been established and one day we would find it on the Golan Heights preparing to conquer Israel. According to our information, that brigade started moving south and arrived on the Golan on October 1st. They were already located somewhere near the Sheikh Maskin area, under the command of the 5th Division. How did we find out? The monitoring unit intercepted a message from the 47th Brigade stating: "Don't send the bread to Homes ; send it to this other place. From the aerial photos we discovered that the there were a hundred tanks in that place, so we assumed that the message had come from the 47th. We knew about the existence of the 47th Brigade a year earlier; what we didn't know was that this move was a sign that the Syrians are going to attack, since the piece of information that was gathered more than year earlier wasn't transferred to me as the new J2 in the area.

Earlier Pesach told you that the Syrians wanted to surprise us. According to the information that was gathered and assessed in the Northern Command, it wasn't a surprise, although in the higher echelons they might have wanted to claim that it was. In any case, we can see that on September 25th, King Hussein arrived in Israel for talks with Prime Minister Golda Meir and claimed that the Syrians were preparing to attack Israel. That was on September 25th, but the message was not transmitted to me.

Nevertheless, the Golan Heights were reinforced according to the request of the Northern Command commander, General Hoffi, so at the end of the Jewish New Year, on September 26th, we were reinforced by the 77th Tank Brigade and a tank battalion, so instead of 77 tanks, we now had 110-112. At the same time on the other side, they already had close to 2000 tanks. On September 29th, the Israeli J2 received a warning from the CIA stating that the Syrians were going to attack. This was not transferred to me, either. On October 1st, at 4:30 in the morning, I received an urgent phone message, from the J2 of the fifth branch claiming that the Egyptians were going to attack on that day, October 1st, and that they would immediately be joined by the Syrians at first light on October 1st. Of course, the commander was informed immediately and we did all that was necessary in the area and there was a big panic, but as you know, it didn't start on October 1st.

Earlier I mentioned the arrival of the 47th brigade on the Golan Heights. The Syrian Divisions ' equipment was located on the Golan Heights and that was a very significant sign that they were planning to attack; we also observed them mounting patrols along our minefields to discern where and how they could penetrate them. Because of the panic created in the commands on October 1st, I was called to the J2 research department. The head of the fifth branch was there and I informed him of all the indications that the Syrians were about to attack.

At the end of the research session, the brigade general stated that they had different signs and the J2 fifth branch remained silent. I was very frustrated, since according to my information, it was clear that they were going to attack. Anyway, when I returned to base that day, I was informed by my photo interpreters that two Syrian armored Divisions had moved out of their permanent bases. They were located quite close to Damascus and according to the photo interpreters of GHQ intelligence, they had moved to the second defending area for the purpose of defending Damascus. According to my photo interpreters, that area was empty; it was not captured by them. My assessment was that they were concentrating behind the first line to be the second echelon, according to Soviet doctrine. This was accepted by my area commander and of course the entire staff was informed. We were given a specific warning that those two armored Divisions, about 400 tanks, had moved, but they were not on the second line of defense, meaning that they were poised for attack.

Their higher-quality aircraft had also moved from T4, a distant base, to the fourth airport nearby. On October 4th we received a further warning: the Russian advisers' families had evacuated, a very extreme procedure, both from Syria and from Egypt, so I approached my commander and stated once more that this was a very clear sign that war was rapidly approaching.

On the same day an agent sent a report saying that from October 5th onwards, the military had issued an order that civilians were not allowed to approach the border. This information arrived from an agent in the 5th Division's area i.e., the southern area. I informed my commander that we already had a date and from October 5th we had to be ready for war, although I didn’t know exactly when D-Day and H-Hour would be.

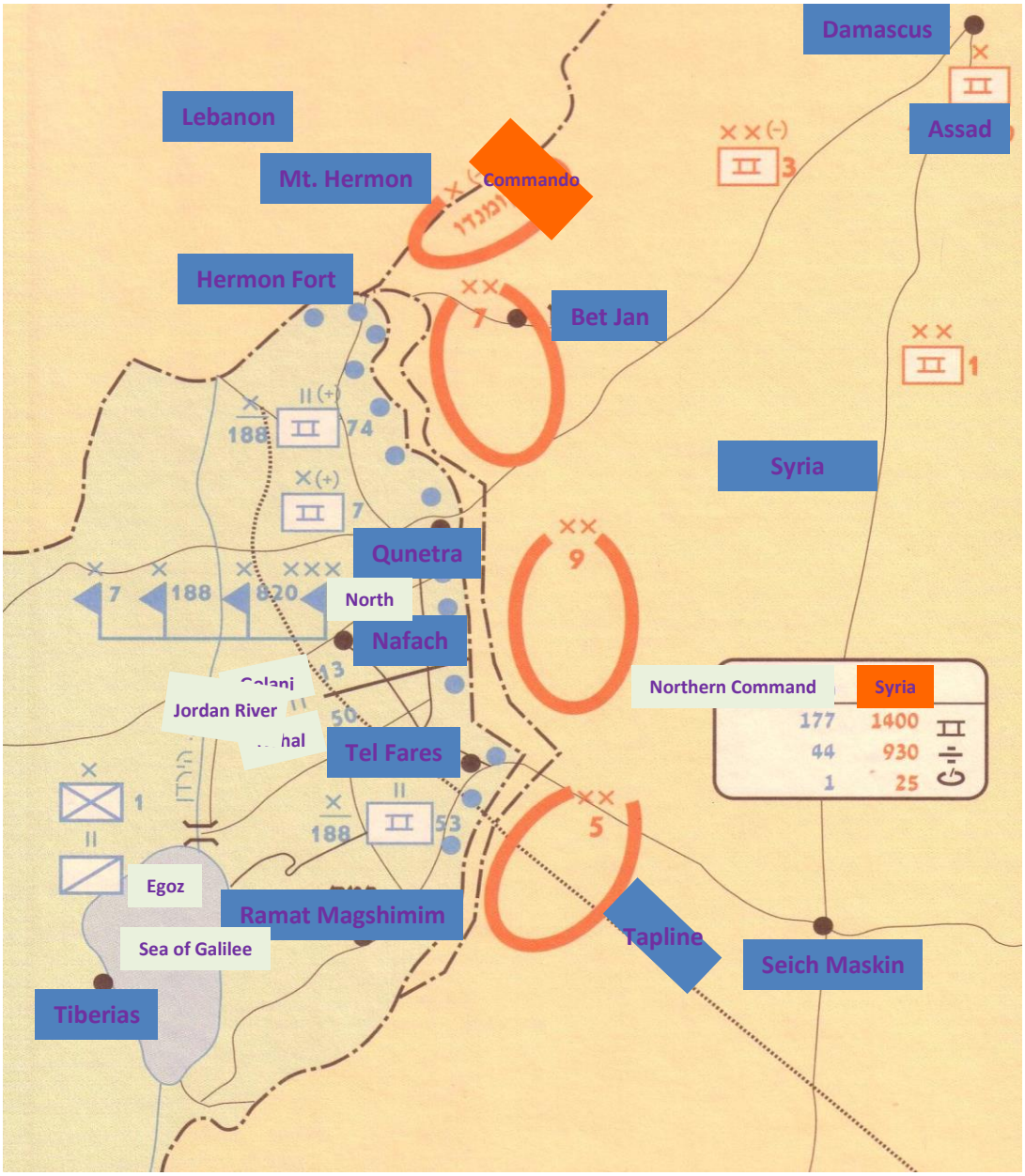
In any case, although J2 headquarters kept insisting that nothing was going to happen, but

we had so many signs by October 5th that war was imminent that the commander of the command, the J3, the artillery officer and the communications officer, moved to the tactical forward headquarters.

On the afternoon of October 5th, Pesach intercepted a message from the Iraqi ambassador in Moscow stating that the advisers' families were being evacuated because war was about to break out. On October 6th at 0530, my commander received the message that a very well-known Egyptian agent was claiming that today (meaning October 6th), the Egyptians and the Syrians were going to attack Israel.

On October 6th, at 1000, an order was issued by the commander of the command, stating that the war would begin that day. At 1330 I received messages from all the observation points that the Syrians were removing the nets from their tanks and guns and about 20-25 minutes later, an entourage of about 1000 tanks, 1000 artillery tubes and strikes by the Syrian Air Force initiated the war on the Golan Heights. This actually occurred four hours earlier than expected, as the Egyptian agent had claimed that the war would break out at 1800 hours, but it actually began at 1400 hours.

I have given a very short description of what happened during the less than two months that I was in command. However, the signs that the Syrians were preparing to attack Israel had appeared much earlier, as I said before, in April or in May. The surprise stemmed from the fact that the higher IDF echelons refused to accept our assessments and rejected all reports clearly stating that the Syrians were preparing for war. Anything we sent them was rejected and we were forced to accept their claims that nothing would occur. Thank you.



Question: Considering all the facts that you reported and your assessment, what did you expect to happen in terms of responding to the warning signs from Syria and Egypt?

Hagai Mann: From the operational point of view, in light of all the warning signs, there should at least have been reinforcements in the form of one or two brigades along the border in the Golan Heights in the opening phases, as the forces' ratio for tanks was 1 to 10 and the same for guns. At the last moment, the 7th Brigade moved to the Northern Command and the number of tanks by

1400 on the 6th of October was 177 tanks on our side versus 1000 tanks on the other side.

Question: I would like to ask a follow-up question. What influence do you think the complacency after the decisive victory of '67 had on the decision-making in October '73.

Hagai: During the '67 war I was an intelligence officer in a mechanical brigade. I do think that the successes of the Six-Day War affected the incentive to listen to other opinions. Yes, I think it had a profound influence on what happened.

Abraham Bar David: To answer your question, in Israel the main issue was mobilizing reserves. The regular army was very small, so the decision to mobilize the reserves was made by the politicians and they avoided doing so until October 6th.

Question: Why was that?

Abraham Bar David: It was because of America. We didn't want to indicate that we were mounting a pre-emptive strike. After the 1967 war, Golda Meir promised the American president that we would not start the war so the preemptive attack was cancelled on the morning of the 6th.

Question: After 1973, did the IDF get more backing for its ground forces by the artillery?

Abraham Bar David: After the '73 war, the army underwent extensive modifications. First of all, we were able to obtain additional guns from the United States. We got 175mm guns to equip four battalions and we modified the M109 with a longer 39 caliber barrel. Since we are short of artillery troops, most of them were transferred from 120 millimeter mortars units. Furthermore, we discovered after the '73 war that much of the infantry was useless, since they had to move on foot and fight without any protection. As a result, after they had served in the war for a few months, many infantry officers had to be retrained; the result was that I had to train quite a lot of infantry officers as artillery officers. At the end of the day, most of them ended up as artillery Division commanders.

Abraham Bar David: I would like to add a few words about something that emerged from your question. The difference between what we learned from '67' and '73 was that although the lessons learned from '67 were not all wrong, they required certain conditions in order to succeed because they were based on the concept of an operation that didn't happen in '73. Thus we had the correct doctrine and good forces, but another type of war. Furthermore, the lessons learned from 67' prepared us for attack, but did not provide a true defense doctrine. Even the deployment on the Golan Heights and in the Sinai were very sparse routine defenses without a strong defense line, fortifications, things like that. The defense was based on tanks; we developed all types of doctrines of how to defend with tanks; in our literature you can find lots of material on that. The end result was that the doctrine developed in '67 did win the war in '73, but first we paid a high price, until we created the conditions allowing us to use tanks and aircraft to counter-attack. The lessons learned from '73 were a totally different story.

Question: I have a question about the Egyptian and Syrian Armies. Did they undergo a similar rehabilitation process after '73 or was that their high point?

Hagai Mann: They underwent a very great change. First of all, they obtained new weapon systems in '73 and attempted through training and exercises to perform much better than before. The Egyptians made the changeover from Soviet to Western, American weapon systems, and more.

Abraham Bar David: The Egyptians totally went over to Western-type systems, including the air force and whatever else was needed.

Hagai Mann: The Syrian army was weakened, but today of course it is a stronger army. In the Lebanon Wars we encountered B72s and MIG 23s and they had much more developed weapon systems than they had possessed in '73. In addition, they had built their strategic arm with surface-to-surface missiles; in '73, they had only Frog rockets, not missiles. After '73 they acquired Scud missiles with a range of 300 km.

BG (Ret.) Abraham Bar David:

My name is Abraham. I will tell you how things really were on our side. After hearing what the Syrians thought and what they prepared, I think it was much easier to fight the Syrians than to fight our politicians' decisions. That's one of the things I think we should remember when trying to understand wars and the decision process involved and to realize what the end results were afterwards.

I will talk about the Northern Command, since I was deputy artillery battalion commander in 67', artillery battalion commander during the War of Attrition between 67' and 73' and artillery commander of the Northern Command during the 73' war. I returned from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where I had participated in an advanced artillery course, about three weeks before the war started. I was familiar with every aspect of the Northern Command. I was assigned to be the Northern Command artillery commander. I tried to avoid this due to personal reasons, but I didn't have any choice; the commander said, "Stop talking nonsense! We'll meet tomorrow morning at 1000 o'clock."

I arrived three days before the New Year and about ten days before the war started. I knew all the plans and that everything was okay, then the commander said to me "You are a newcomer and the holidays are upon us, so you're staying in charge as commander." That was the first thing that he said to me, but it didn't matter.

In the Northern Command before the Yom Kippur War, we deployed four batteries only along the entire front from north to south, which apart from Mount Hermon was about 65 kilometers in length. Their main mission was to support the strongholds along the border. Before the New Year, they decided that one of them was a reserve battery, so they sent it home and we remained with three batteries altogether.

Those remaining included two 155mm batteries with modified towed guns, French guns dating back to 1950 mounted on a Sherman Tank hull that was even older. At that time we were unable to obtain self-propelled guns, so whatever we had was developed or modified according to our needs. One of the batteries was equipped with 160mm mortars, which again were self-propelled, made in Israel and mounted on a Sherman Tank hull; they had a range of 9.6 kilometers. That was the entire deployment with which we started

the New Year. We were very surprised to observe that the Syrians were moving all their units closer to the front. Normally what happened over the years was that when autumn came they moved back to their bases near Damascus, leaving minimal forces at the front, as the weather on the Golan Heights was severe with a lot of rain and snow; now it was just the opposite.

Thus we were surprised when they started moving forces into new locations where they had not been before. We requested that headquarters send us more forces, more infantry, armor, artillery. We were unable to get everything we requested. Finally, before the war started on October 6th, instead of three batteries we had eleven batteries. Altogether we had 44 guns or mortars, and in front of us we could see that they had about 1,000 guns. One of the things that we realized was that the Syrian army had two battalions of heavy 240mm mortars, whose round was about 100 kg. and it was designed for attacking fortresses and protected locations.

They positioned one of these opposite Mount Hermon and the other opposite Tel Fares. We understood that they were either preparing for war or for a big engagement, but something was definitely happening. Our commander went to the Army GHQ on a daily basis to demand more and more forces. On the last day before war broke out, the decision was taken to bring the 7th Armored Brigade from the south to the north; since there was not enough time and we didn't have enough tank transporters, they put the brigade on tanks belonging to the Northern Command reserve brigade that was concentrated about 25 kilometers from the Golan Heights at Rosh Pinna. The decision was made not to wait for the tank transporters (since it would have taken about a week to move 80 or 90 tanks), but to move the brigade on tracks and go straight forward regardless of road damage. We were very lucky that the 7th Brigade was in place in real time when war broke out; otherwise it would have been very difficult.

I remember that on October 5th the Northern Commander went with me to review the artillery units and asked me how many we had. I replied, "Look, we have 11 batteries with 44 guns. The Syrians have 157 batteries. Assuming that our ranks are very brave, and each gun manages to stop a specific battery from firing, that will still leave them 100 batteries free to do whatever they want and I won't be able to do anything against them." He said, "Don't worry - we are in this together and that's what we have, so we'll try to do

the best we can."

One of the many problems facing artillery is how many rounds you prepare for a firing engagement. We prepared about 200 rounds per gun in every battery. Apart from that, we allocated 7,000 rounds for various types of weapons on the Golan Heights. We had 175mm, 155mm, 160mm and 120mm guns, with about 200 additional rounds per gun located in the Golan Heights, so if additional ammunition was needed, it would take us a very short time to supply it to the units.

The war began with a tremendous blast of artillery fire; they fired more than 30,000 rounds in the first half hour. There was not a single area on the Golan Heights that was not hit. The Golan Heights were at that time commanded by a regional brigade, the 820nd Brigade, located in Naffach, while the commander of the 188th Armor Brigade, which was normally deployed there, was at the 820nd Brigade's command post. The armored brigade was not deployed as we customarily deployed armor. Instead of concentrating a massive battalion or higher, it was organized in a different way, with two tanks supporting one area and two tanks another; therefore, they were spread all along the front when the war broke out. The Northern Command decided that the 7th Brigade would be concentrated in the center in case of the need for a counter-attack.

By 1400 hours when the war started we received permission to mobilize the reserve units. Now remember that I'm talking from an artillery perspective; we began collecting men and bringing them to where the tanks were located. Some of the tanks were no longer there because they had been taken by the 7th Brigade. Most of the artillery concentrated in the Northern Command was located very close to Haifa, about 100 kilometers away. It was again decided to move it on tracks. Some of the artillery units were based on old-fashioned artillery. Anybody from the United States Army is familiar with the “Priest”, the M7, a 105mm mounted on a Sherman Tank hull and left over from the Second World War; two of the battalions were like that. I asked how we could fuel up with petrol on the way and was told that it was no problem. I just needed to enter any fuel station, say that Abraham would pay at the end of the war and that was it.

I want to mention three things from an artillery perspective. First of all, we understood that the Syrians on the Golan Heights were covered by SA6 and SA9 anti-air missiles, so our air force would not be able to perform its regular missions.

In the Air Force at that time we had a lot of Skyhawks - an old airplane model - and they said that they were going to use that plane in a very specific way. They intended marking certain points on the Golan Heights where they knew the location. Don't forget that we were in the pre-GPS era, so we marked those locations for which they knew the accurate coordinates. They planned to arrive at those places, climb to 45 degrees or something like that and drop their bombs onto the ground as a substitute for artillery weapons. The targets were marked, but were never used, but that's a different story. Secondly, we understood that there was regular infantry in the strongholds, generally commanded by a sergeant or a second lieutenant. Therefore, at the strongpoint surrounding we marked barrels ahead of time at areas that were endangering the place, so they didn't have to tell us where the enemy was. All we needed was to state A, B or C.

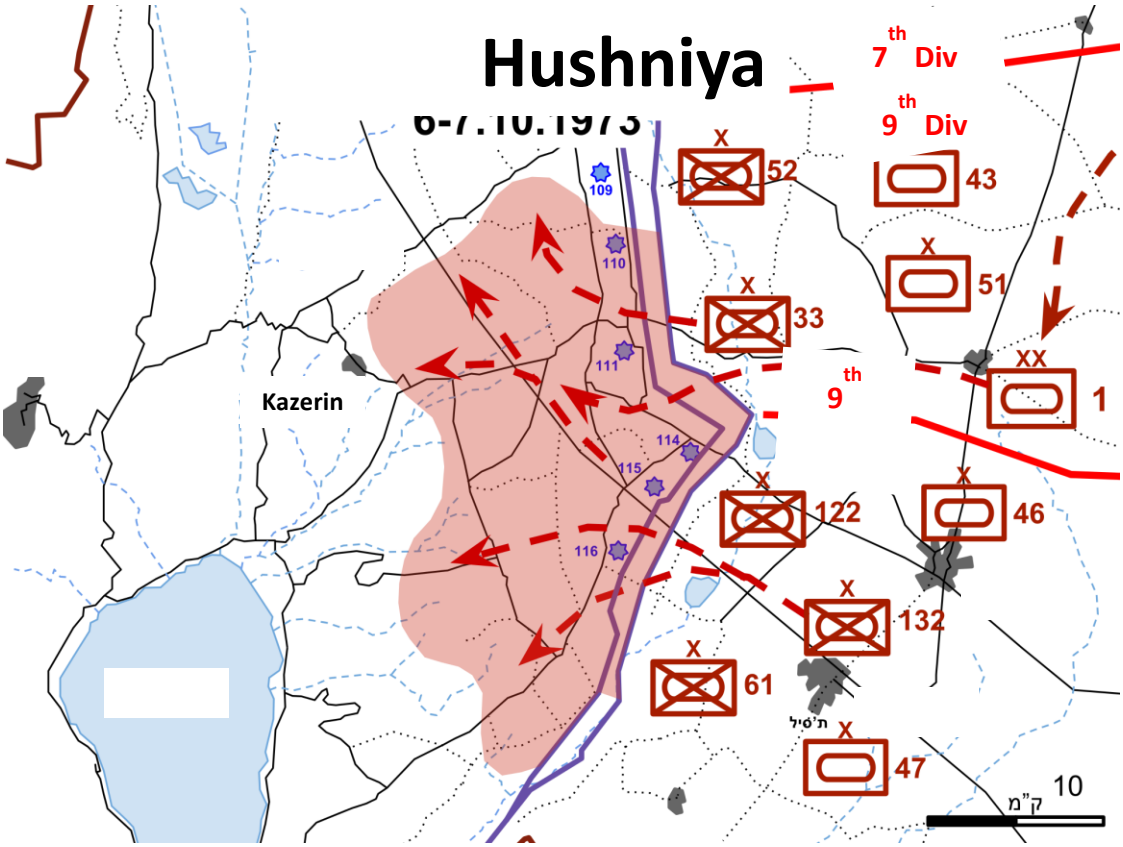
Thirdly, we had radio communication with each battery that was supporting the strongholds. It was a direct communication system, so you didn't have to call headquarters to get permission, but could open fire whenever necessary. When the war started that was the first thing the artillery did; at the beginning we tried to suppress the enemy's artillery. When this didn't work, we immediately started firing on the "close danger" points.

What stopped the Syrians? Tanks were firing in the southern area. However, when they finished their ammunition, they were unable to get more, so at a certain point two or three tanks together decided to leave the place and move to a nearby stronghold.

The strongholds were one of the major sources of information that I had, because they knew exactly where the enemy was located and which ones had penetrated and I had direct communication with the commanders in each of the strongholds. During the first 12 hours of fighting, we lost two out of our eleven batteries. This happened in the southern sector, south of Tel Fares.

One of the batteries was located just behind Tel Fares and by 0100 hours it decided to withdraw and locate itself further to the west. While moving along the road, they saw some tanks standing by and assumed that they were friendly. They couldn't imagine that Syrian tanks had already arrived there, so they continued along the road. The first Syrian tank realized that it was an Israeli unit and open fire from somewhere between 20 and 100 meters, taking the battery apart.

Just a few months before the war, the Americans agreed to sell us two 175mm batteries and two short-barreled M109 batteries. One of them was a regular battalion, and included in the original eleven batteries; the second battery was also one of the new batteries. The gun commander saw tanks coming towards him and was afraid that they would destroy the communication lines between the battery's center of fire and the gun itself. He went over and started talking to the tank commander and was answered in Arabic, so he understood his mistake, went back and opened the door of the APC. When he opened the door, people inside were studying a map and there was a light on. That was the end of that battery. Thus by 0100, instead of having eleven batteries I had only nine. That was the point at which the 36th Division's headquarters reached the Golan Heights. The 36th Division had not been there at the beginning. Its commander was Raful, who was later to be chief of the general staff. He arrived with his headquarters and communication system only and we of the territorial command went back to Nazareth, where we were supposed to be located during the war.



Yet again our headquarters was not ready, so we took over a huge space that was used as a cinema; we removed all the seats and built a command post. Each cell was separated from the others and equipped with two maps to let you know how thing were going in the war, because whatever your plans were, they were not going to happen. I dropped the wall between me and the other cell, where they were listening to Syrian radio. I asked if they knew where the Syrians were located and they said that they did. I asked them to give me their location because I thought I could do something. It was the first time I realized that this guy was using a secret system; I didn't knew that such a unit existed in the IDF until I saw it with my own eyes. That was the main source of intelligence information that we had. We didn't have UAVs and stuff like that at the period that we
The system in the air force was that when an airplane was taking off, its commander became the chief of the air force. He could give the order to fly south, north or wherever. He was the absolute commander. When the war broke out, the ex-air force commander, who had already retired, arrived to advise the northern command. He stood nearby and after about ten minutes he said that he understood that only the artillery knew exactly where our forces were located because of the forward observers and the strongholds, which were sending reports. He was a two-star general and was accompanied by a lieutenant colonel. He said that he was prepared to do whatever we asked, but demanded that an operations officer be with him in his shelter and connected by wire, because that's the way we operated when at war.

Later on he said: Why the hell should we take airplanes which are taking off from the southern airfield to the north? It will take too much time." He convinced the air force commander that that all the air force support to the Northern Command would be provided from the northern air force base, s that it could be done in a very short time. Thus the air force changed its manner of operation. During the war we also changed some of the techniques that were very well-defined in the artillery process.

Within 36 hours I had 27 battalions. Some of them arrived by road, some on tracks and some were towed. We received battalions that had never before been deployed in the northern area.

We were chronically short of artillery between 67' and 73'. We absorbed large amounts of captured artillery and ammunition from the Syrians and the Egyptians. One of them

was a 130mm gun, which had a long range of about 27 kilometers, but was a towed gun. We also captured ammunition for it and developed ammunition here in Israel between 67' and 73'. Now, moving from Western to Eastern-type artillery was not easy. For example, in the Western system the number of minutes in a cycle was 6200, but in the Russian system they were only 6000. So how do you manage to fire accordingly and hit the target rather than something else? That was one of the problems facing those two battalions arriving at the Northern Command.

To understand how the war developed, they arrived and we deployed them, they started using our ammunition and finished it off. After we were able to penetrate the northern Syrian area, we discovered a location stocked with ammunition and guns, so we started using their ammunition for our guns and firing brigade. Later on we decided it was preferable to take our guns, put them in position and continue from there because we had the ability to modify our guns to perform better than the others; we made them easier to operate, put on regular sights and used all the available means to make the guns more suitable to our reserve battalions.

In the 67' war we also captured 240mm rocket launchers from which we build one battalion, 12 launchers and ammunition that we had captured, as well as additional ammunition that we produced here in the country. When I received the 27 battalions, that was one of them. After four days we had pushed the Syrians back to the border. We had three Divisions : the 36th Division , including the 7th Brigade which was not organic to it; the second was a Division that was not yet built up and didn't yet have any artillery, with no more than one brigade; the third one arrived from the south near Jerusalem along the Jordanian border road along the Jordan River.

Those were the three major Divisions at our disposal. One of the major problems that we had during the war was how to make sure that we had sufficient tanks for the following morning. We had two types of tanks at that time, both of them Centurion tanks, but one of them had a diesel engine modified here and the other had a petrol engine. Therefore whenever any tanks were damaged, we took parts from one and attached it to another, so that the next morning we would have the maximum number of tanks available. I think the maximum number of tanks that were available on any particular day was never more than 200. That was the major effort made by the Northern Command to

achieve the maximum number of tanks because we understood that we were facing somewhere between 500 and 1000 Syrian tanks altogether.

I would like to mention two more things: First of all, after a few days we entered Syrian territory and were ordered to release one of the Divisions to return to the south. I tried to convince the general headquarters to keep the artillery battalions, but it didn't work; they were sent away. By the way, the first artillery unit that crossed the Suez Canal was one that had fought in our area, namely, the 1st Artillery Brigade.

Secondly, suddenly I realized regarding the decision-making process that the artillery had an additional role that I wasn't previously aware of. Two days before the war ended, the commander of the Northern Command asked me if we could reach Damascus and fire on it. I said that it was definitely impossible, since my 175mm guns had a range of 32 kilometers and the distance to Damascus was about 37 Km. He asked if I could still make a plan to do so, as it was very important for the Syrians to think that we could reach Damascus with our artillery. I agreed that I could penetrate from our side into Syria and fire from there, so we took two guns and planned to do it.

The idea behind this was that the Israeli leadership had informed the Americans that Damascus was within artillery range after their ambassador said that this was nonsense, so they wanted to show that it was true. It was the first time artillery had ever received support from our Special Forces, which protected our route and location, because when you are firing, you might be near an enemy unit without knowing it. Normally when artillery pieces are being fired, those operating them see nothing due to the massive amount of fire. So we entered Syria under the Special Forces' protection. We were aware that the Syrians had all our maps, knew locations, codes, etc., so we had to use a different code, different maps, and so on. When we were about to start firing, our defense minister called me and asked what was happening. I said we were going to start firing any minute, and he asked what the range was. I replied that it was about 35 kilometers. He asked what was the range of our guns was and I replied 32 km. He asked if I could promise the government to hit the target. In the midst of our conversation, he received an intelligence report that the Syrians were claiming that there were a lot of impact rounds hitting the airport and as they didn't see any planes in the air, they assumed that it was artillery fire.

He said that he now had a better understanding of artillery and thanked me and that was it. Thus we achieved quite a lot at the end of the war by demonstrating that we could reach Damascus with our artillery fire, although it was basically untrue - we didn't have the range for that.

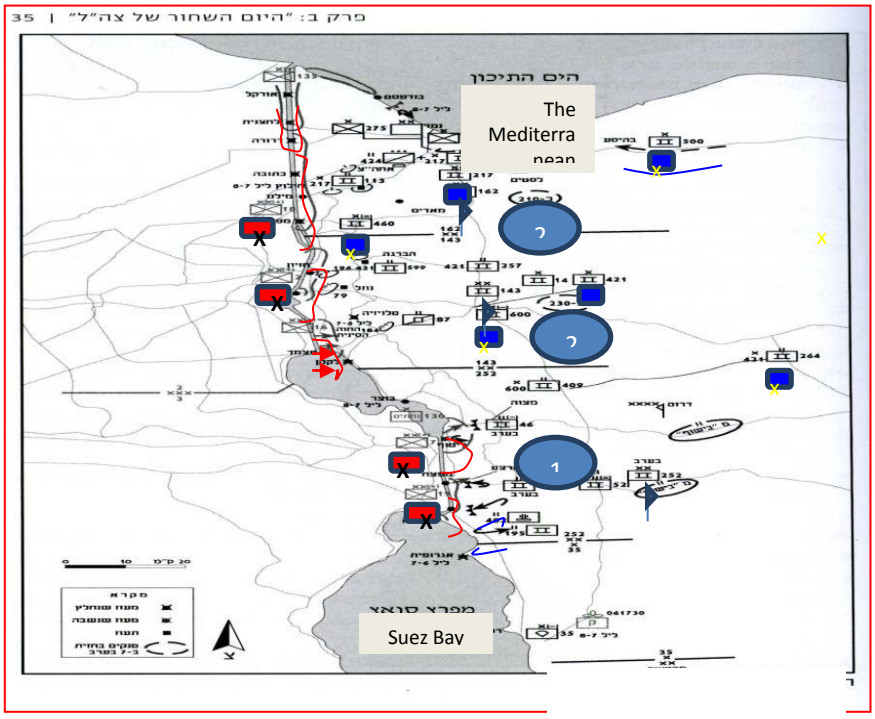
Regarding Mount Hermon, it was initially captured by the Syrians in the first few hours of the war. The first decision taken at the Northern command was to leave it till the end of the war. From an artillery perspective, when it was decided that the 7th Brigade would penetrate into Syria, we were able to concentrate 14 artillery battalions for a barrage of fire moving 200-300 meters ahead of the tanks. Thus they managed to penetrate the area. They suffered casualties, as they rode over mines, but the artillery wasn't able to solve that problem.

MG (Ret.) Ya'akov (Jacky) Even

I'm glad to see staff and command colleagues from Australia here. I had the experience in World War II of Australian troops in Palestine, which we greatly admired. I also remember that I read that in the First World War Australian troops did an outstanding job with the British army in Palestine in 1917; you have many military graves here.

I would like to share my experiences of the wars that extended for almost 25 years: the War of Independence, the '56 Sinai Campaign, the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition and the Yom Kippur War. There are many lessons to be learned from them, but actually after the 1973 war, we finally succeeded in removing first Egypt (with the mightiest army of all the Arab countries) and then Jordan from the circle of war.

IDF FAST ORGANIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT AT THE FRONT WAS OPERATIONAL SURPRISE FOR BOTH SIDES



So, what's the idea of preparing of war? You should understand that ground forces are the most important factor in any war, because they are the ones that get the job done and determine the outcome. Building ground forces is not an easy job, since you need to build them for the future, not for the past. Even though we had a resounding victory in the Six-Day war, we understood that it was not the last one and many questions could be asked about our situation on the eve of the Yom Kippur War. So, when building ground forces you must first understand the interests, goals and objectives of the coming war, from your side and from the other side. Big mistakes might be made if we don't understand the other side, but the Israeli army was never caught unawares, not understanding what they needed to do.

From the Six-Day War to the Yom Kippur War, a period of around six years, we built outstanding, experienced ground forces with excellent commanders and units with three times as much experience as we had in the Six-Day War, so we were well prepared for the coming war. We carried out extensive exercises and training and we had the equipment and manpower to do whatever the army needed for the ground forces. We were also fully aware of where the next war would take place - in Egypt - and we were correct.

Now, after outlining what we did to prepare our ground forces for war, we must consider the following strategic elements: intelligence and deterrence; this means that if you have a strong army, you should be able to deter attack by the enemy.
However, once deterrence fails, you must win, because war is not something that you should compromise about. If you don't win, if you are not victorious, you will lose everything. In those days Israeli society understood very well that the nation was the army and the army was the nation. Nobody questions that it was our reserve forces that ultimately won the war.

Today I'm going to tell you about the most important or crucial battle that took place in Egypt in the '73 war and the crossing operation, during which I had the

privilege to be second-in-command to General Sharon and responsible for the crossing itself.

The war took place from October 6th to 23rd, 1973 and can be Divided into three phases; the first phase when we were caught unawares; the second recovery phase; and the third victory phase. At the start of a war there were two phases: defense and offence. I won't elaborate on the defense phase, because the Israeli army understood very well that we couldn't afford to be in a defense situation for very long. So, the major philosophy and strategy of ground forces at war is what the Germans called Blitzkrieg, meaning to win a war as quickly as possible, which demanded a high level of both organization and troops in order to succeed.

The Israeli Army is mainly based on tanks and infantry, mobile infantry, air force and special units, the air force mainly because its fire could stop any surprise attack and the ground forces and armor in order to win the war. That was the idea, but once you need to challenge an offensive operation, you must define where it will take place.

The IDF's rapid organization and development at the front was an operational surprise for both sides. What does this mean? Everyone in Israel was surprised that the Egyptians crossed the canal with two armies. They went into a panic and weren't sure what would happen. According to what I said before, mobilizing the Israeli reserve forces required 48 hours. The Egyptian headquarters understood that and hoped to cross the canal within that time span. They were well-prepared and their doctrine was based on a simple Soviet principle. They were aware that they couldn't challenge the Israeli army in tank vs. tank battles and they couldn’t challenge the Israeli Air Force, so they built two formidable armies, which were actually anti-tank armies. With such an effective doctrine and organization and by training the troops and having a different leadership, it was a completely different army that totally caught us by surprise, since we thought that with our strength, nobody would consider challenging us in such a way.

However, the biggest surprise was not the crossing operation on October 6th,

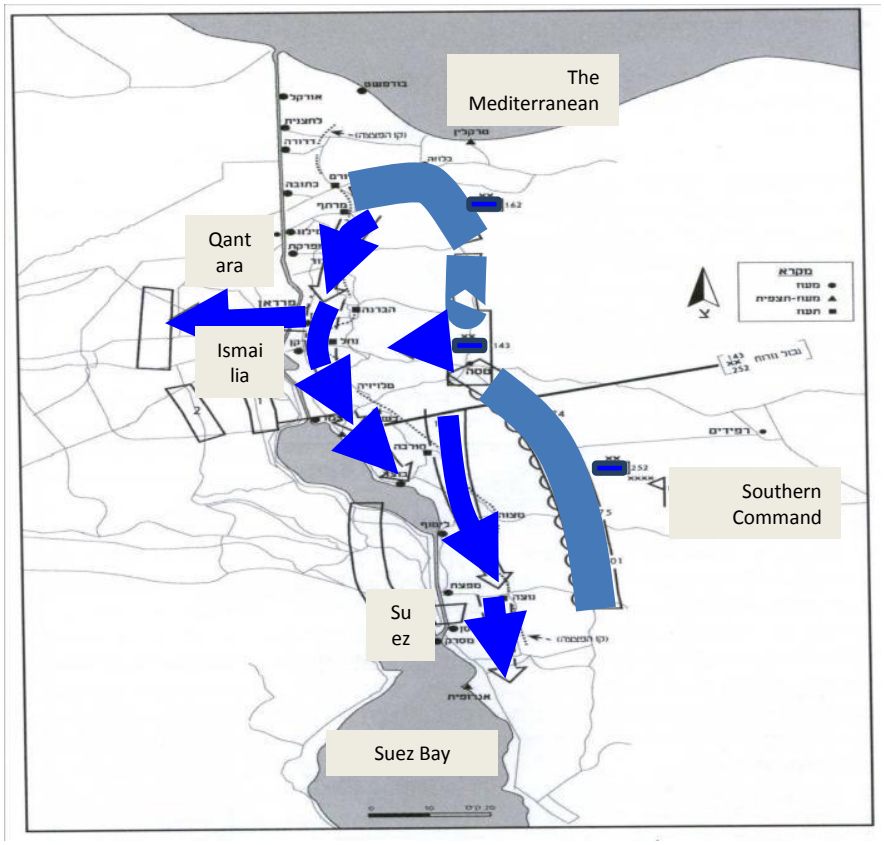
but that the IDF managed to mobilize its reserve force in 24 hours, and on Yom Kippur. The Egyptians assumed that it being Yom Kippur would work against us because all the civilians were praying in the synagogues and the civilians are the Israeli army, but it actually worked in our favor and 24 hours later we stood opposite the two armies with at least 500 tanks.

We had outstanding troops, but at the higher echelons self-confidence was too high. The chief of the general staff came to visit and he was convinced that he would wipe out the two Egyptian armies by giving the order for 500 already mobilized tanks to mount an attack from north to south, hoping we would wipe them out and cross the canal.

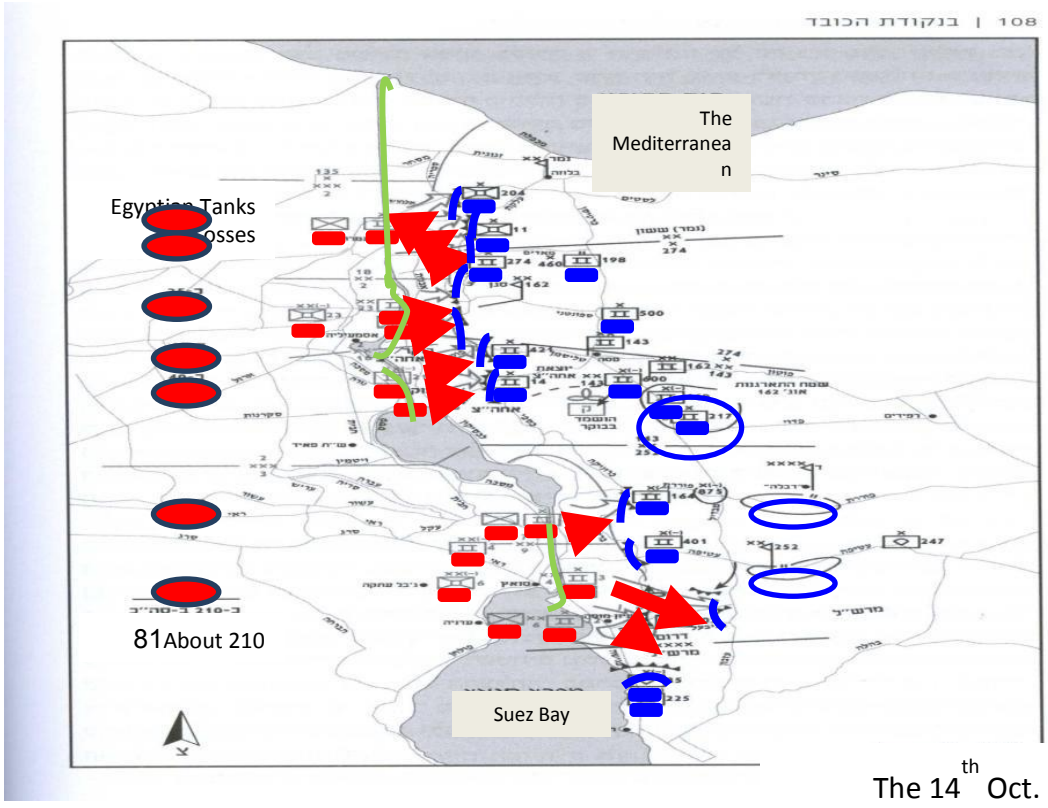
The idea of crossing the canal was a crucial element in our battle doctrine. We understood that we had to fight, not here, but in Egypt. That was the plan anyway. The chief of the general staff's mistake was that he was not physically present to command that kind of operation. He thought that he could leave it to the Southern Command commander, Gonen, who was not properly trained for such an operation, consequently we almost met with defeat. What happened was that the IDF's operational rationale had been correctly assessed by the enemy, meaning that we acted exactly according to the Egyptians' predictions and found ourselves on the battlefield facing anti-tank weapons and covered by surface-to-air missiles. This was actually a failure that could have been foreseen and was apparently the outcome of operational shock. The surprise was that we almost lost much high ground in Sinai, not due to problems of mobilization, but due to misunderstanding Egyptian doctrine, which was based on operating two anti-tank armies and surface-to-air missiles, which played the most important role. Why was this so? Because they eliminated the Israeli Air Force and unfortunately on October 8th we were witness to our best pilots being shot down and exploding in mid-air, which was a horrible, shocking experience.

Regarding the battlefield, as I mentioned earlier I was second-in-command to General Sharon and he put me in charge of the crossing operation. We prepared for it with a rolling bridge in two places – Hamadia and Kishuf – that were on the dominant terrain along the Tirtur and Akavish axes, the main axes for bridging the canal. Our Divisions made the crossing operation here, in Dwar Suar. The Bitter Lake was to the south and well-protected. Incidentally, Allenby crossed the same area with Australian troops in 1917.

On the High Command level, when deciding where to launch a full-scale operation, one of the most important factors understands that you can penetrate the area if there is a gap. In fact, there was a gap between the two Egyptian armies in that area, since they believed it to be non-maneuverable terrain.



Now we are coming to the most important juncture between October 8th and October 14th. October 12th was a very crucial day, as the chief of the general staff hadn't recovered from the shock. He was a very nice person and a well-trained commander, but something had happened to him and he asked Prime Minister Golda Meir to investigate the possibility of a ceasefire. We were totally unaware of this; it was not in the spirit of the troops, even though we had suffered setbacks on October 6th and 8th. On October 12th the Americans received a message from Golda Meir to find out if Sa'adat was willing to declare a ceasefire. Of course Sa'adat was very proud of his army, so when he heard that the Israeli Army was requesting a ceasefire, he fully intended to exploit the situation and finish us off in a glorious victory. Sa'adat assumed that our troops were not strong enough to withstand his armies, which was untrue. His chief of the general staff warned against an all-out attack, but Sa'adat was very decisive.



The 14th Oct.

The Israeli armor was so well-trained in that kind of operation that by the end of the tank battle that ensued on October 8th, we had succeeded in destroying 250 Egyptian tanks. Our recovery phase had begun. Everyone from the chief of the general staff to the commanders in the theater of war were given a tremendous boost of confidence. We were thrilled to have succeeded in knocking out 250 Egyptian tanks. In fact, we did exactly what we had always trained to do and morale was very high.

On October 14th the army leadership and the troops were in high spirits. We understood that we had come to the point in the war when we must exploit our strong position. It was time to open an offensive operation and deal the enemy a decisive blow.

The chief of the general staff approached the government and the minister of defense, Moshe Dayan, and stated simply, and I quote: "At this time the chief of the general staff presents the government with a recommendation, whose main element is crossing the canal…that is the only operation that will afford us the opportunity to achieve a decisive victory."

The Egyptian Army was based on a very solid doctrine - anti-tank on the ground and surface-to-air missiles. On October 14th we succeeded in defeating the Egyptian army, which had 1,000 tanks, 250 of which we destroyed.

At that point, my suggestion was not to be overly optimistic. One had to understand what was really happening and the capabilities of the troops, the equipment, the timetable and all the full-scale operations necessary to end the war. Incidentally, no terrain was captured at that time, which was very wise because it would have caused us losses.

Our next mission was based on the report by the chief of the general staff to the Cabinet. The Southern Command received the order to "attack the Egyptian front, cross the canal and destroy the Egyptian army on both sides of the Suez Canal, commencing on October 15th."

The Southern Command's goals were to cross the canal in the Dwair Suar area, secure the terrain east of the Suez Canal and in the agriculture corridor west of the canal towards the north, destroy the enemy forces in that area, occupy Suez City and be prepared to threaten Cairo. It was an operation demanding much imagination, based on building bridges for the crossing of three armored Divisions , which would defeat the Egyptian Army on its own territory.

If you want to see how it looks on the map, this is the area of Dwar Suar, here we would build the bridges, after pushing back the two strong Egyptian Divisions, the 16th and the 21st. We would cross through this area and continue as far as we could 30 kilometers to the west, then turn south to reach Suez City and create a decisive situation. This would be done by two armored Divisions : the 143rd would make the crossing operation and move towards Ismailia and the 162nd that would cross and encircle the Egyptian Army. The 252nd Division and another Division -level task force would block the eastern side. The plan was actually based on what we had practiced before the war.

The generals made the mistake of being overly optimistic about the crossing operation. They assumed that it would be very easy to challenge the Egyptians and build the bridges. Their timetable was 10 hours to build the bridges, another 24 hours for the fighting here, another 24 hours to seize Suez City, and in 48 hours the war would have ended. They determined this without analyzing what it meant to mount such a large-scale operation with three armored Division along an axis on which they all needed to pass at the same time. I'm focusing on these points in order to stress the importance of preparing such a large-scale operation which had never been done before. The operation was called "Abirey Halev" ("Stouthearted Men"; code-name "Operation Gazelle") and was based on the concept of destroying the Egyptian Army and removing it from the war cycle, which was the idea in the first place. However, the chief of the general staff and the higher echelons entered it without fully understanding the army's capabilities and what was necessary for launching such a huge undertaking.

Now let's return to the theater of war. We see here on the map the two Egyptian

Divisions – the 16th Infantry Division and the 21st Armored Division - and the gap between them and the Tirtur and Akavish axes. the location of the rolling bridge and the high terrain of Hamadia and Kishuf, and this small area, which is 12 kilometers deep and 6 kilometers wide, where we had to concentrate a huge army to carry out the crossing and "Abirey Halev" operation.

General Sharon was the type of commander who concentrated on one thing only: achieving what he wanted by going on the offensive. That was his mindset and he understood that only an offensive operation could succeed in doing the job, so he created a very simple plan. His understanding was to exploit the gap and ensure that we would break through, construct the bridges and cross with the armored brigades to the other side to ensure that in one night we would create a bridgehead. As a Division commander, he understood the principle of operating one brigade as a deception. He concentrated two brigades - the 14th Armored Brigade with 100 tanks and the 247th Paratroopers' Brigade - to penetrate the armies, not to fight, just to create a corridor. In fact, this was not according to orders, but General Sharon understood that he was on the spot and being a commander means being in the field; otherwise you don't fully understand your enemy's capabilities. General Sharon understood this very well, and he was very aggressive and understood that if he did not immediately create something dramatic, we would be at a stand-still. In his words: "Our mission as I define it is to break through to the Suez Canal 12 kilometers away, drive the Egyptians to the crossing zone, open Akavish and Tirtur, the two axes from west to east towards the rolling bridge, move the Paratroopers' Brigade along the Akavish axis with rubber boats west to the Suez Canal, cross the canal and establish bridges, transport the rolling bridge, deliver a tank brigade to the other side of the canal and move west at first light to destroy the surface-to-air sites, which is very important, since without doing that the air force will be excluded till the end of the war and we will lose it. We will conduct a deception attack by a brigade. All in a single night under enemy fire."

What is stated above was different from the order he received from the theater commander, General Bar Lev, the High Command and the chief of the general

staff and he expressed it in simple words, indicating that he fully understood his mission. It involved building bridges for the large operation without challenging the Egyptian Army on either the eastern or the western side.

Not too many people understood what he had said. He gave the mission to the 14th Brigade to break through at the Lexicon axis along the Suez Canal, open up the Akavish axis for the 247th Paratroopers' Brigade to cross and for the 421st Brigade to cross at Mat med and secure the western bridgehead. The 421st would tow the bridging equipment and cross the canal after the 247th Brigade destroyed the missile sites on the west bank. That was the most important mission at that phase of the war. The 600th Brigade would conduct a deception from Hamadia to secure the eastern side.

As second-in-command of the 143rd Division , the crossing operation was under my command. I controlled all the crossing regiment, brigades, battalions, air defense battalions and security forces paratroopers necessary to establish the bridge area and drive the Southern Command forces westwards into Egypt.

In this photo we see General Sharon, with me as his second-in-command (I was later promoted to Brigadier General). But who really did the job? Tank crews, paratroopers, artillery, engineers, logistics, and medical corps: they all understood the mission and didn't need any explanations about how to do it. It may be said that they were highly intelligent, even intellectual, and they understood that we had no alternative, only victory. Each of them did the job they were trained to do. Even if you have equipment and organization, without men with training, experience and a fundamental understand of how vital the operation is, you will never win.

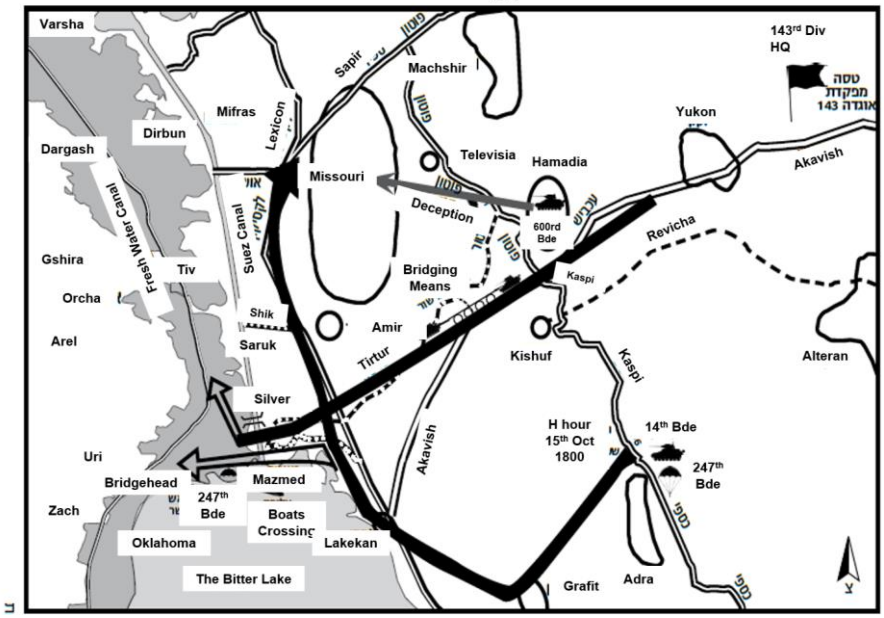
It's important to remember that what really happened on October 15th was that the high command and the theater commanders sent orders, but they didn't do what they were supposed to do, namely, send reinforcements, paratroopers, control access, and understand the timetable. Unfortunately, in those days, once you had a Division commander, you let him do whatever he wanted. That was a big mistake. Actually, on October 15th we only had two means of crossing, first the rolling bridge and second the rafts, which we called mobile rafts that could cross dunes, and so forth. However, some of them did not arrive due to access being blocked. I won't go into details, but I'm trying to stress to you that it's not sufficient to issue orders; you must be in the area in order to

understand what's going on, the forces' capabilities and your responsibility for activities from the Division level up.|

On October 15th the theater commander, Bar-Lev, asked Sharon's opinion about the crossing. Sharon asked me what our possibilities were and I said that one possibility was the rolling bridge, but we weren't sure how we would operate it, since the 7th Armored Brigade that had practiced constructing the rolling bridge were still to the north. Most of our Division was based on reserves, well-trained troops, but reserves all the same. (Incidentally, in those days there were many cases of fathers and sons fighting side by side on the battlefield.) At the beginning of such an operation, the chief of staff, or at least the theater commander, should take command, but Bar-Lev put Sharon in charge and asked him what he suggested.

Now, General Sharon was a very experienced commander. He was one of very few who understood how to carry out an operation on the Division level, as he had much experience from the Six-Day War and understood timetables; he never forgot that war was a two-sided operation, in which you must be well acquainted with the enemy's capabilities. So he made a crucial decision, which we were all not so thrilled about, but we agreed to carry it out that very night. Believe me; it was not so easy to digest something like that under such circumstances.

143rd crossing plan



Sharon personally briefed the commander of the 14th Armored Brigade, Colonel Reshef, on how to carry out such an operation. Now please remember that we didn't have any solid information on October 15th. We mistakenly thought that the Tirtur and Akavish axes were clear; the armored brigade was not just armor, but was also accompanied by paratroopers. They would go along what we called the Lexicon axis to block the Egyptian 16th Division, clear the whole area, transport the rolling bridge, bring the rafts and create a bridgehead in an area called Mat med. However, now we had no bridges, so we would need to cross the canal on mobile rafts. We didn't expect any anti-tank deployment along the Tirtur access.

The 14th Tank Brigade was reinforced by top infantry battalions. Because of misunderstanding the timetable, the 247th Paratroopers' Brigade couldn't join them, so I was asked to take command along that axis with all the rafts and the 421st Brigade. However, there was a big mess in that area, as something went wrong with the plan. Something unbelievable happened in the area you can see here on the map: a fierce tank battle throughout the night. I was present at the battle, as was General Sharon and Danny Mat , the paratroopers' commander. General Sharon was only waiting for the report of what was happening along the two axes, Tirtur and Akavish, because he understood that his mission was to reach the other side. He received a report from Amnon Reshef that one tank company on the Akavish was safe. At that moment Sharon called me - and here we can see the importance of understanding the battlefield and making brilliant decisions under dire circumstances - and gave the order that I should instruct the 247th Paratroopers Brigade under Colonel Danny Mat to cross the canal.

Believe me, to give such an order to Danny Mat, who was a close friend of mine, was a very hard thing to do. My heart was pounding in my chest: we didn't yet know the outcome of the battle, but we were there, so we knew exactly what was happening. Danny Mat understood it as well. He was one of the most outstanding paratrooper commanders in the IDF. The most amazing thing happened: he exactly followed the plan he had made before the war to go straight through the area without fighting, and that's

what happened. It's an exciting story of how they made it, carrying the boats, but I won't expand on it now. The main thing is that they crossed the canal and at 100 hours he sent the signal - "Acapulco" - and everybody heard it and understood what it meant. But that was only the beginning; his brigade engaged the Egyptian Army on the other side of the canal and it was a bitter battle.

What can we learn from this photo? It stresses the importance of dealing with the High Command. Moshe Dayan was minister of defense; despite all the mistakes he made, he was a true leader, a real commander, who understood the situation very well, and at eye level. He knew that if you want to be a commander, be present on the battlefield and view with your own eyes what is really happening, then analyze what order to give and what actions must be taken. Dayan arrived and I was given command. Sharon told me that from that point onwards I was taking command of the bridgehead. The bridge was not yet in place and Sharon asked me if I thought we would have a bridge. I replied that we would have a bridge by 1600 hours. We had rafts, bridges, medical stations, prisoners of war. We had all the units we needed to control the bridgehead from the other side. I had Danny Mat and the Paratroopers' Brigade and on the other side I had Tuvia and the 600th Brigade. This is the area where the three Divisions would cross the canal under fire. The bridge was ready and waiting for the 162nd Division. Again it was a matter of understanding the battlefield.

What happened on October 17th? The Egyptians were given sufficient time to realize what was happening due to several mistakes. The first one was made by Prime Minister Golda Meir, who announced to the whole world on the radio that we had crossed the canal. This was a political move, to boast that with our small army we had managed such an amazing feat. The point was that she released information to the Egyptian Army, which now understood that they must immediately close the bridgehead with strong units, a well-trained brigade with the best tanks in their possession - T72s - and missiles from the north side. The responsibility for that area was in the hands of our 162nd Armored Division commanded by the late Natke Nir, one of our heroes, who did a magnificent job. I won't go into detail about what occurred that morning, but again we gained the advantage. The High Command was thrilled by our successes, but wasted precious time

by not using the reserve brigade to cross the canal, although the bridge had already been in place for 16 hours.

So, after wasting at least 10 hours of precious time, the 162nd Division began crossing over, and it was a disaster. Why? The Egyptians had taken the opportunity to concentrate units. They realized that they needed to concentrate heavy fire in a 500-meter-wide area, and that's what they did. Thus all of a sudden I lost almost all my battalions, all the engineers and many of the troops and I was in a tough spot. It was my responsibility to decide whether to order them to cross that night under such heavy fire or not to cross and lose the war. It was a terrible night, but in the morning I told my friend, Simcha Maoz - who wrote a book together with me called *We Won the War* - that it was a decisive point and that I was proud of it. The entire area was under heavy fire from the 17th to the 23rd, and everyone who was there - tank drivers, tank commanders, paratroopers, simple soldiers who drove the trucks carrying ammunition, fuel and food, engineers and medical staff - understood that it was the only way to win the war, and that's why we did it.

On October 18th we crossed with one division and then the second division began crossing, but the area was so narrow that we had to expand the bridgehead. The rolling bridge was already in place and I was in charge of that operation, which was a huge undertaking in itself, but we succeeded in finishing it. Incidentally, beforehand on October 16th General Sharon had ordered me to transport a task force by rafts, which is a story in itself, since he understood the importance of the mission, not only to reach the other side, but to destroy the surface-to-air defense missiles. If we had not done so, we would have lost the enormous power of our air force. Haim Erez of the 41st Brigade did the job, completely cleansing the area.

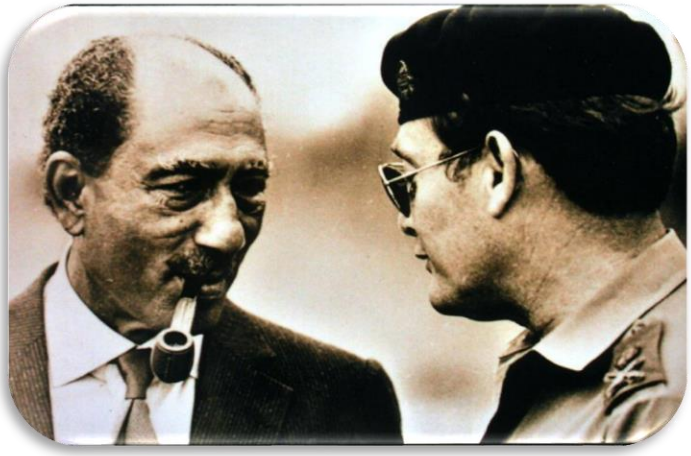
Now back to October 18th: We now had the air force and the axis to Tirtur was empty due to a huge battle against the Egyptians, who attempted to withdraw. Then I received an order from General Sharon to expand the bridgehead. This involved the huge operation of the rolling bridge, to transport it to the area covered by the air force. Yehuda Geller, the battalion leader, was in charge of the bridging. The 14th Armored Brigade crossed the canal that night and we expanded the bridgehead, which again involved a

battle. The Division commander was in charge not far from here along the Akavish axis and a complicated logistic operation was necessary in order to equip and maintain the armored Divisions as they crossed in this area here. It was a huge operation, not just because of the need to supply fuel and ammunition, but also due to the effort to save lives by the battalion doctors and paramedics, who did their job superbly under fire, heroically treating almost 3,000 casualties and saving many lives.

Again I won't go into detail, but the High Command was responsible for another serious setback. They were not present on the battlefield and didn't really understand what was going on there, so we were involved yet again in an unnecessary battle, which lost us the advantage of having crossed the canal. After the battle was over, General Sharon, Tuvia and I were walking along the bridge discussing the upcoming situation. In an operational summary of the Suez Canal bridging operation that took place between October 16th and 23rd, more than 100 soldiers were killed and hundreds wounded in the bridging area alone. Without the determination and courage of the IDF, we would not have succeeded in crossing the canal to decide the outcome of the battle against the Egyptian Army west of the canal by the 143rd, 162nd and 252nd Armored Divisions . During the operation, names were given to the bridges. The first was named "Baruch" to commemorate the Division engineer who was killed on the bridgehead on October 18th. The second bridge, at Kilometer 95.5 was named in memory of Lieutenant Aaron "Johnny" Tenne, who was killed by an Egyptian commando on October 18, while navigating the bridge. The third bridge was named after Major Yehuda Hudeda, who was killed in a very heavy barrage on October 23rd, the night before the ceasefire. I gave the bridges those names to honor them and I mention it because most of the engineers were injured and suffered heavy casualties and their battalion leaders were killed in that operation.

To summarize the war, the ground forces were what it was all about. Winning the battles was the outcome of the armored Divisions ' ability to maneuver, without which the war would not have been decided. Armored Divisions have the capability of standing up under heavy fire. Crossing the canal without armor would have been impossible, as I understood when I gave the orders. The volume of a mobile armored force is a pre-

condition for achieving a decisive victory and the 14th Brigade's determination in close combat caused the enemy to lose its advantage.



Generalship requires a very sharp mind and judgment ability, a wide spectrum and learning to deal with new strategic ideas. It involves learning about the uncertainty of war, it calls for people with analytical capabilities, visual judgment ability, initiative, courage and the willingness to accept responsibility. If you don't have those talents, you won't succeed in winning wars. Fortunately for us, we have that kind of talent in the IDF.

A few years later I participated in a very significant meeting with President Sa'adat. I was sent to Egypt together with Ariel Sharon, who was then a minister in the government. Prime Minister Begin decided that I would accompany the late President Navon, who died this year, on an official visit to Egypt. I was surprised to receive that invitation, as I had no connections with President Navon. I was still serving in the regular army and was told that I would wear a formal uniform. I was received with great hospitality and before we left, President Sa'adat invited us to his residence, together with President Navon. You must understand that according to protocol, nobody was allowed to approach Anwar Sa'adat directly, but suddenly he motioned to me to come closer. Everyone was surprised, including President Navon. All the reporters started filming; they didn't know what was happening either. Sa'adat asked me if I had enjoyed my visit and then he asked me: "How did you cross the canal under such a barrage?" and I replied, "We simply crossed under fire."

Well, it was war, and in war you must pay the price. Unfortunately, during that bitter campaign our Division lost 500 warriors and 1,500 were wounded. Without that sacrifice, however, the war would not have ended with a victory for our side.

Speaker: Thank you, sir. At the beginning you claimed that Israeli society is the army and the army is society. Was that true after 1973 and is it still true today?

Jacky Even: Yes, Actually the most respected sector in Israeli society is the Army, because it is a clean society, a devoted society, a society that understands that it has a mission to do. In democratic countries they do all kind of surveys about who is the cleanest: judges, police or politicians. In Israel the army is rated the highest and the politicians the lowest.

Gideon Avidor: And the journalists.

Jacky Even: Yes, and the journalists.

Gideon Avidor: I will add to what he says. One of the advantages of the Israel Defense Force is that it's a mixture of everybody - rich, poor, educated, uneducated. Whatever their origin, everybody serves. This is really a big advantage; everyone takes part and that's what makes the difference.

Speaker: Sir, I have a question about the IDF's culture and approach to armor. You claimed that you adopted the German Blitzkrieg style; I don't understand why that was so popular when Germany had just lost two wars? Why did you look towards Blitzkrieg?

Jacky Even: Actually, we weren't the only ones who adopted it. General Patton adopted it in World War II and that was the reason he lost. The Soviets did, too, with big armies, big tanks, but it actually helped them win the war. So the idea of using armor for Blitzkrieg was not exclusive to Germany. They were the first to create and use it unexpectedly at the beginning of World War II, but actually De Gaulle in France understood it, as did the British. I mentioned it because they started it and it worked - that's all.

Speaker: One quick question. Did you observe the location and deployment of the operational reserves on the Egyptian side? Did their crossing the canal have any influence on your crossing operation?

Jacky Even: Yes, let me explain it to you. As I said, in the IDF before the war we understood that we were going to conduct a huge battle against the Egyptians. We didn't take into consideration that the two armies would cross the canal. Our main concept was to fight on Egyptian soil. I would like to give you a strategic pointer: it's not how many soldiers you kill or how much terrain you seize. The objective is to arrive at the point

where you threaten the regime, where you exploit your capabilities to prove that you can deter the enemy. Once Sa'adat understood that we had advanced a distance of only 100 kilometers from Cairo, that's what ended the war, not the number of casualties or destroyed tanks.

Even on the ground the Egyptians' armies did not have the capabilities to win the war. They had reserves and surrounding Cairo there were 400 tanks. I didn't expand on specific battles today because that's a different lecture, but we faced the 162nd Division, the 252nd Division and the 14th Division; but nevertheless they understood that the war was over.

Speaker: Sir, given that the Egyptians had already performed a deliberate and well-planned crossing, did apply anything from it in planning and commanding the Israeli crossing?

Jacky Even: No, we couldn't adopt the Egyptian doctrine because of the basic IDF principle of few against many. Since we were very few, we adopted the idea of armored units - tanks with fire power. We were unable to build an army that exploited human beings the way the Egyptians did. The Egyptians did exactly what they needed to do. They understood the battlefield and the importance of the army's capabilities and the need to protect it, but that kind of lesson had no relevance for our doctrine. We had to be on a level that exploited the intellectual capabilities of our troops to the full; that's a totally different doctrine.

Speaker: I have a question regarding reconnaissance, I understand that because of the geo-political situation in Israel you don't have any strategic depth, which means that when it's time to go to war you must do so immediately and quickly. In addition, there are external forces that will determine when it's time to stop fighting, so you need to achieve your objectives quickly. But from the '48 war to the '73 war, there seems to have been an opportunity to understand more about the enemy through reconnaissance, to learn that maybe you didn't have the capabilities or the time to combat your enemies. Nevertheless, it appears that the Israeli forces are always caught unawares when they first encounter what they're up against. Could you relate to your reconnaissance capabilities in that context?

Jacky Even: Yes, I'll explain that. We were surprised for one very simple reason: we were over-confident. We were well aware of the situation, but we thought that we were again going to fight a war lasting six days and that was our mistake. It was not because we didn't see or hear or because our intelligence ignored the information, but because the chief of intelligence believed that it couldn't and wouldn't happen. Unfortunately, the responsibility for everything was on the shoulders of the chief of the general staff. It's like I said before about generalship. We had all the information, but we didn't analyze it correctly.

Speaker: You mentioned at the beginning of your lecture that by '73, the armies to Sinai were preparing for war. We heard earlier this morning and have read in various places that not a lot of lessons were learned from the '67 war, especially the issue of combined forces.

Jacky Even: No, I don't buy that.

Speaker: You might not buy it, but what about the issue of the Chinese Farm in Suez, where there combined ops?

Jacky Even: I'll explain: it was not a major issue, but we made it one.

Speaker: Who did?

Jacky Even: We made it a major issue, since it was a terrible mistake at the level of the Division commander. On October 16th, after General Sharon and our Division had already completed their operation, General Bar-Lev held a discussion with General Sharon about how to proceed. Sharon suggested going ahead and exploiting our advantage. General Bar-Lev was well aware of his responsibilities as theater commander. General Sharon understood the situation and warned the brigade commander not to fight in places where it was unnecessary to fight. There could have been a narrow breakthrough, but unfortunately the 14th Brigade didn't succeed in opening the Tirtur axis because they didn't realize the capabilities of the Egyptian anti-tank deployment. Getting involved in the Chinese farm was a complete mistake, which was made on October 16th by sending in 82nd Battalion troops. It was a massacre and a dreadful mistake, even though they fought bravely and did an outstanding job as a battalion. The leadership was

excellent, but a terrible mistake was made in analyzing the situation in that region.

Gideon Avidor: The major issue that had a great impact on the 1973 war was the element of surprise. Fortunately, we have with us today someone who was a member of the body that was supposed to issue the early warning and he wants to tell us what happened.

Yossi Langotsky: Okay, I'll be brief. One of the fundamentals of Israeli strategy was that the IDF would receive an early warning of at least 48 hours - keeping in mind that most of the 1:38:56 were reserves - and this didn't happen. Why not? This is of course a very big issue here in Israel.

After the Six-Day War I was asked to join the IDF and for ten years I served as the head of the special intelligence operations, which included the 1:39:17 General Headquarters, which was the IDF elite unit. I'm not revealing any secrets here. One of the missions I was involved in was to ensure the functioning of our strategic early warning device. Unfortunately, the head of Israeli intelligence was so arrogant and sure of him that he didn't use it at that time. Of course nobody could be sure if he would exploit that system. If he had, we would have had an early warning, but we know for a fact that he didn't. I was personally involved in all this and still feel uncomfortable about it.

Another comment. With respect to Jacky, I remember him well. We were together at officer's school and he was the handsomest guy there – blond, tall, you can't imagine.

Anyhow, the bottom line is that we lost the Yom Kippur War because the name of the game is not to be braver or more intelligent, or whatever. The name of the game is to achieve a certain target, a certain goal. The Egyptians were smart enough to do something limited, they intended to do something with and Sinai was now in their hands. There was no other way that we would withdraw from Sinai. So unfortunately, in spite of almost 3,000 boys with amazing courage and in spite of whatever Jacky just told you about, we lost the war. The lesson to be learned here is that people have to be smart enough to understand that force is not enough. Thank you very much.

Gideon Avidor: We might have lost the war, but we won peace, and that's also something.

The First Lebanon War

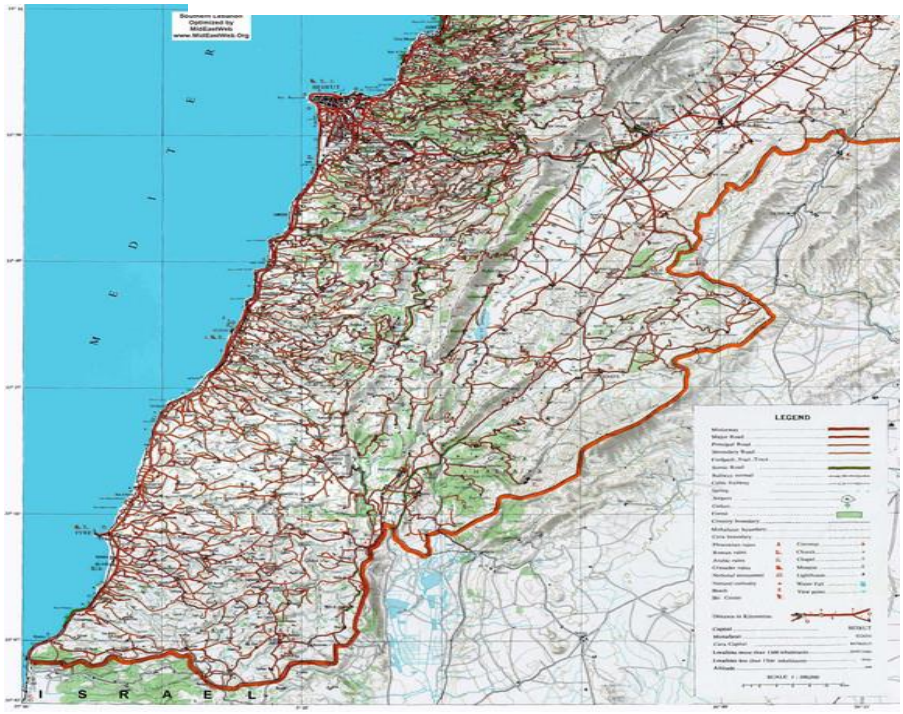
1982-1985

1. MG Amos Yaron

2. MG Yoram Yair

3. Col. (Ret.) Boaz Cohen

4. Capt.(Navy (Ret.) Ehud Erell



***MG Amos Yaron*:**

Regarding the political level and the high military level, the main difference between the First Lebanon War and the Second Lebanon War was that if in the second we had a completely inexperienced leadership, in the first, we had too much experienced leadership. I think this really reflects one of the main differences and one that caused a lot of problems. I'll give you one example of inexperienced leadership. It's quite difficult for inexperienced leadership to be given the order to "hold your horses" and consider what you are going to do later on. You need to be strong and confident to make that statement after the Hezbollah has staged an ambush and kidnapped and killed two or three people and we begin exchanging fire, then came the time to say "Stop".
This was because at that time we were in a situation where we didn't need to act immediately. We were strong enough to hold our horses, think, take our time, train the forces, check if we had enough equipment, check the plans, give soldiers time to train themselves, etc. If we are talking about the 1982 Lebanon war, we prepared ourselves for that war for years. One of the advantages that I had as a Division commander in 1982 war was that before I was appointed to that post, I was the head of the General Staff's Operations Division. I was on the third GHQ level, with the Chief of Staff, on the second level and myself on the third level - regarding how the Israeli Defense Forces and the Ministry of Defense worked. It was a functional progression, from the territorial command in the field to the general headquarters. In the general headquarters, if you plan operations across the border, then they go to the Operations Department (that I was in charge of at that time), from me to the second level, then to the chief of staff, and from him to the political level, the minister of defense and occasionally to the prime minister. I mention this because when you serve in that capacity, you begin to understand how the chief of staff thinks, how the minister of defense thinks, what's going on in their minds because you see them at very close quarters. They begin to feel free to talk with you because the distance is minimized when you are in a small meeting. I will explain to you

what my mission was in the beginning and what was in my mind about how to prepare myself for the future, what I was going to do in actual missions. In order to prepare yourself for the future and consider all possibilities, you should think about the worst case scenario, about the basic situation, turning it over in your mind, processing it, so that when it comes to making a decision, it's not new to you; you've thought about it.

I can tell you a good joke about this. A ship's captain was in his cabin when called him from the bridge to please come immediately to the bridge because there were two enemy ships about to attack. So the captain ran from his cabin to the bridge and started giving all the guns orders to fire, move all engines forward, etc.. After a couple of hours, the two enemy ships were destroyed and sunk, so everybody was happy. At the end, someone asked the captain, "I saw that during the battle you called your steward and asked him to go to the cabin and bring you a red vest and you put it on. Why did you do that? I don't understand." The captain replied, "Listen, during the battle I could have been wounded, blood could have flown. The red vest was to absorb the blood and keep the crew happy; they would not see that their commander was wounded and disaster had struck on the ship.

After a couple of days the ship continued on its way and the captain was again in his cabin when another alert arrived from the bridge: "Captain, ten enemy ships are attacking us!" The captain rushed to the bridge and started giving orders. Then he shouted: "Where is my steward? Tell him to go to my cabin and bring me my brown trousers." You have to prepare yourself for the worst case scenario.

I don't know how familiar you are with Lebanon, but as you can see on the map, this red line is the border between Israel and Lebanon, more or less. Until 1982 there were many clashes between Israel and the PLO, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, headed by Arafat that step by step during the years took control of Lebanon. They controlled the southern part of Lebanon and most of Beirut, which at that time was Div.ided; one part was controlled by the Palestinians led by Arafat and the by the Phalanges, the Christian minority in Lebanon. The whole of South Lebanon was full of Palestinian units, ranging between, small terrorist groups and semi-military units. Many refugee camps were located on the southern side, which were generally well-equipped with Kalashnikovs or RPGs. When I say "well-equipped," I mean that there was no question of moving forward and conquering them without any problem since they would have caused us a lot of problems.

The general idea of going to war was because at that time they had shot our Ambassador in London and periodically fired on settlements located on Israel's northern border. The government was interested in putting an end to that continual firing, most of which was from a range of 40 kilometers, so the objective was to conquer a 40-kilometer strip over the Lebanese border. However, we were well aware that all the orders to fire came from the Beirut area. Thus, to put an end to Palestinian control of Lebanon, you had to consider who was controlling Beirut.

Nevertheless, from a political point of view, the government was only concerned with the first 40 kilometers. If you examine its 1982 decisions, they are all limited to those 40 kilometers. Obviously, in the minds of then defense minister, Ariel Sharon, and the chief of staff, Rafael Eitan, that 40-kilometer

strip was not sufficient, as it would only resolve part of the problem.
As head of the Operations Division, I visited Beirut many times. We had a really good relationship with the Christian Phalanges. We used to fly by helicopter and land in Jounieh, a small city north of Beirut.
When we started planning the "Peace of Galilee" operation, the mission given me as Division commander by the general staff headquarters was to "shake up the area". How do you accomplish that? You arrive from a surprising direction. The PLO was expecting the IDF to move from south to north, head on. I don't need to explain to you that it's preferable to enter from two or three directions rather than from one. That was what actually happened in the Second Lebanon War. The Hezbollah was well-prepared for how the IDF would behave.
In the first war, my mission was to land a little bit north of Saida, about halfway to Beirut. From Saida to Beirut it was maybe 60, 70 kilometers. So you take your Division - less than a Division - the 35th Paratroopers Brigade, one armored battalion, a 155 battery, some engineers, you land north of Saida, and prepare to move south to help the Divisions entering from the south - or you go north.
I thought it preferable to move north rather than south, as there were large forces in the southern part, but nobody in the north. In any case, after successes in the south, the political leadership would probably decide to go northwards.What did it mean to go northwards? The area is mountainous and very problematic to negotiate. The distance between the coastline and the mountains is sometimes less than a hundred meters. Any small unit was capable of blocking you on the road. Thus, you had to find an alternative route to the Beirut area.
The plan was that half the Division would move along the coastal road and the other half would go over the mountains, both in the direction of Beirut. We set out at the night in order to control the landing beach, the most sensitive phase when you're planning a landing operation, to make sure that it is secure enough, because you are really in a very sensitive situation. You don't have enough fire power, as you are only beginning to build up your force. So you

have to accomplish this very quickly, and we did so. First, some scuba Div.ers arrived from the submarines, went onto the beach, found it empty, and checked that regarding the water level and the terrain it was suitable for the landing craft to proceed. We had known this beforehand, but we still checked again. They called on two companies that landed by helicopter near the landing beach and secured it; then the landing craft began moving onto the beach. There were a couple of shots from a long distance away, but nothing special, and during the night we completed the first landing phase, which went quite quickly, without any major problems.

During the night, I didn't receive the order to move either southwards or northwards. We organized our forces without any major problems, In the morning or towards noon, we got the order that the south was under control and that we were to start moving a little bit north, so we did so. After 20 kilometers we reached a place called Damour, and there I split my Division . One brigade went through the mountains and the rest along the coastline. We advanced step by step, with the infantry first, not the armor, because the mountainous area tended to be full of RPG units. When we reached the Beirut area, we began meeting up with Syrian forces, which were a much more serious threat than the Palestinians. We suffered some casualties, but without any major problems arrived in the Beirut area and waited for further decisions about what we were supposed to do.

We surrounded the entire Beirut area where the Christian Phalanges were located and held the area together with them. At the center of Beirut was a refugee camp controlled by the Palestinians. The main problem was how we were going to force the Palestinians to surrender and evacuate Beirut.

We exerted a lot of pressure, both political and military. We entered the built-up area of Beirut and finally the Americans and the United Nations intervened. The result was that the Palestinians would leave Beirut and be transferred to Tunisia. That marked the end of the war.

Our major error was that instead of withdrawing our forces after the Palestinians left Beirut and retreating more or less back to the international

border, we remained in Lebanon for another 18 years. We didn't gain anything during those years, as only became evident at the end of that period. Retreating from Lebanon was a very, very a brave decision on the part of Prime Minister Barak in 2000.

Before the election, he promised the Israeli public that he was going to take the IDF out of Lebanon. For the entire 18 years, we were "sitting ducks" in Lebanon. In addition, we created a situation in which the Lebanese started to build up the Hezbollah. The Christian Phalanges fled. Most of the Palestinians also fled to Tunis. Who remained? The Palestinians in the refugee camps, some Shia Muslims and the Druze. So basically, the Shia people organized themselves into what today we call the Hezbollah with a strong leader, and they gradually became more and more effective against our forces. We sat in Lebanon for 18 years and finally moved our forces back to the international border.

What I can tell you from a Division commander's point of view is the following: When you're talking about mountainous or built-up areas, it is essential not to try and control the entire area. Try and make sure that you deploy your forces at two, three or four strong points and don't try to cover the entire area. Don't try to conquer an entire city, but rather analyze where the most important places in that city are and try to control them. If you succeed in that, you will gain control of the city. In many cases it will be a junction with some tall buildings.

If you start thinking that every place is equally important, instead of being in a strong position, you place your forces at a disadvantage in weak points that are extremely difficult to control; it is the strong points that dominate the area. Make sure that you have aerial and artillery support. This is what happened to me. The only support I got was fire support; originally I had only one 155

battery and I needed much more artillery support. Base your movement forward on artillery support, and if artillery is out of range, use air support.

That was what happened in 1982 when I moved forward to northern Lebanon. I started the war with one full brigade, the paratroop brigade and some armored battalions, you could say one brigade plus. At the end, I had eight brigades. Why? Because the area was so problematic that nobody could support me. I'm in the front, you want to give more power, you want to give me more missions; I need more power, so send more power. Nobody will come to replace me at the front. So that was the situation. I finished with seven or eight brigades and lots of artillery, when I actually entered the main built-up part of Beirut.

Speaker: Sir, my name is Mike Stewart, I'm the American here. You said that when you came into the fight, as you attacked Beirut, you had a very prepared force, very well-led. Was there anything along the way that surprised you or what surprised you the most in conducting the operation with the forces you had?

Amos Yaron: To tell you the truth, basically nothing. I was prepared for everything. Maybe one point was that when you fight against semi-military forces, as was the case here, when you move forward, you assume that you've cleansed the area. Forget it: someone is still always behind you. At the beginning he just removes his uniform and at the end he starts causing you a lot of problems. I'll tell you a story. Not far from Beirut, maybe ten kilometers south, I took over a large building at the top of a hill, transferred my command post and started to control the battle from there. We arrived at the building in the late afternoon. I sent some people to check the house, to see if everything was okay. They did so and afterwards I entered. It was a very big house, but what we didn't know was that there was also a very big basement. In the late morning a general from the IDF headquarters came to visit me. We talked, sitting on the balcony, from where we had a good view to the north. We exchanged some ideas and he prepared to leave, but first he was very curious to have a look in the basement. He went down and discovered 20-25 PLO fighters, who immediately killed him and another colonel. We immediately evacuated

the building and it took me and my unit another couple of hours to kill all those PLO. So it's an illusion to assume that everything is cleansed behind you. Sometimes when you look back, don't assume that it's all clean; it might just be a new front.

Speaker: Sir, I'm from the Australian Navy. You mentioned that as you were going into Beirut, you had to contend with Americans, U.N. forces and other pretty serious players in the area. Can you relate to that? Did that make it much more difficult for you to achieve your objectives? And how did you manage it? Was there an increased level of American interference?

Amos Yaron: No, not at all. At the beginning we moved in and conquered the Beirut area. Afterwards the Americans and the U.N. started seeking a solution. The Americans sent a unit to Beirut; the plan was that we Div.ide the area. We didn't mix with the Americans or with other foreign units. They remained in Beirut and we left Beirut for the south.

Speaker: I'm from the U.S. Air Force. You mentioned the refugee camps, Sabra and Shatila, which obviously became big political events. If you had to do it over again, would you change the way you approached that and would you have removed the Palestinians from Beirut yourselves?

Amos Yaron: No, Sabra and Shatila is an incident that was really blown out of proportion; the Palestinians used it to their political advantage and tried to put the blame totally on us. Actually, I cannot say that we made a mistake, because

what happened in Sabra and Shatila was that after we fought alongside them for almost three months, we appealed to the Phalanges: "Listen, it's your place, you have to do something." They took our suggestions too far by entering the camp and starting to murder the refugees. That was those people's mentality. The lesson we learned from that situation is that when you fight close to local people, you cannot give them too much freedom or count on them to follow your orders. Their mentality will dictate to them what to do, how to act. This is something that I myself and the IDF learned. When you are dealing with other people, it's a big, big mistake to assume that you fully understand them and that they are working with you and thinking like you. This could happen anywhere, for example, to the United States forces in Iraq, Afghanistan or anywhere else. When you are controlling an area and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the local people, you mustn't forget that they are not Israelis, Americans or Australians. They have a different mentality, different ideas, different rules, different morals... You cannot assume that if you tell them to do something, they will do it the way you think it should be done. Anyway, there was an extensive investigation in Israel. I was one of those who paid the price, but I think we went too far. Until today we put too many limitations and restrictions on ourselves.

Speaker: Good morning, Sir. My name is Mitch. There was urban fighting in Beirut, there were air battles with the Syrians. You talked about the guerillas in southern Lebanon. Do you think the IDF was prepared to fight against the full spectrum in the war?

Amos Yaron: Yeah. As I told you, we prepared ourselves for years with a lot of discussions and reconnaissance in the area. We were prepared for that war. If you ask me if something surprised me in that war, there were no surprises.

Speaker: Good morning, Sir. My name is Candice and I'm from Australia. I just wanted to ask, knowing your long history in the IDF, what were the main changes that you saw in the force, either in essence or in culture between '73, the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, to '82, the battle in Lebanon? How did the forces change during that period?

Amos Yaron: From ’73 to ’82, there were no major changes, but what I can tell you about ’82 compared to today is that today the IDF is much more professional. The equipment is much better, but taking responsibility and not asking questions are on the decline. Going back in time, in 1982 I had unlimited freedom as a Division commander. I didn’t ask anybody. I didn’t ask my superiors if I could do this, that or the other. It was my area to control and I would do whatever was necessary to accomplish this. If I needed anything from above, it was more artillery, more air support, things like that. Regarding how to go about it, I didn't need advice from anybody. If you ask me what the big difference is today, IDF soldiers are much more professional, but a bit too "square".

Speaker: Sir, I have another question regarding the amphibious component, since the Australian Navy and Defense Force are currently developing or redeveloping their amphibious capability. As you infiltrated and moved up the coast, did you have naval fire support available to you? Did you choose to bombard the coast for fire support, or was it a case of being inserted into the area and being on your own?

Amos Yaron: We used naval support, as well as air support. We were not like the Americans; our naval gunfire was 76 millimeters, not massive support. The

greatest support was from the air. The first landing was carried out during the night, but the ships returned to Haifa and came back the next afternoon. Our second landing was during the day and we used air support to make sure that nothing happened to the landing craft.

Speaker: At the beginning, you said that many commanders had too much experience in ’82 versus a lack of experience in ’06. What did you mean by that? Were there issues within the command in terms of the fact that everybody knew what they were doing. What did you mean by stating they had too much experience?

Amos Yaron: In ’86 the major force was the prime minister. In '06 there was a new prime minister who had no military experience. Furthermore, the minister of defense was a labor union leader, without a clue about how to deal with defense issues. I’m not saying that if you’re the defense minister, you must know how to lead a platoon, but you do need to have some kind of understanding of what’s going on.

The defense minister was nominated for political reasons. The prime minister was new and had no military background. The chief of staff was an air force pilot. I have nothing against air force pilots; they are really amazing people. But how much experience does an air force pilot have in operating ground forces? Talking about self-confidence, one general says this, while another general says that. From my experience, who should I listen to, this one or that one? Now, when all three are without experience, it becomes a problem. On the other hand, in ’82 the defense minister, Ariel Sharon, was a very, very powerful man, as was the chief of staff. They both were convinced that we could conquer the entire Middle East without any difficulty, if necessary.

MG (Ret.) Yoram Yair (35th Bde.) – Peace for Galilee (1982) – Beirut

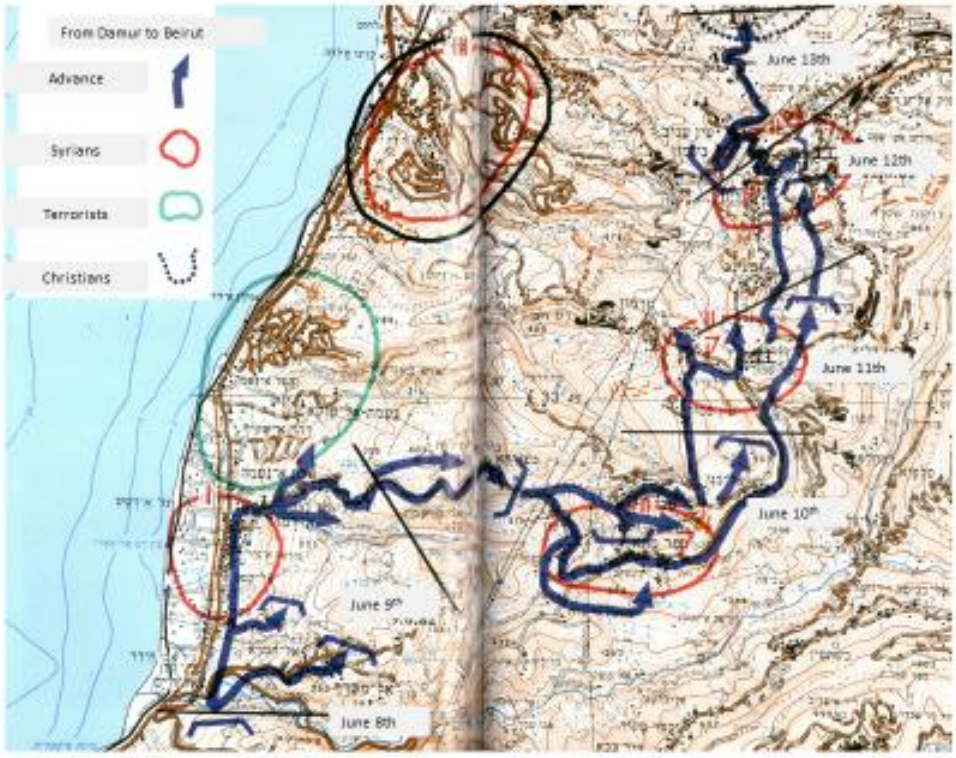
Yoram Yair:

I'm the luckiest commander in IDF history. I was a company commander, commanding the spearhead company that made the breakthrough into Sinai in ’67, leading the whole brigade and the Division behind it. I was very severely wounded (I’m not so pretty under my shirt), but I survived. I was a battalion commander with the paratroopers during the Yom Kippur War. I was the commander of a battalion that held a strong position along the southern part of the Golan Heights, where the main Syrian attack took place. After a few hours I found myself alone there with my troops, without even one tank left, facing an entire Syrian Division . Later on, I moved on to Sinai and crossed over the Suez Canal. Mine was the only paratroopers' battalion in our most famous armored brigade, and I led that brigade in overcoming anti-tank Sagger missiles, as they were the main threat against our attacks. I went ahead with my troops to clear the area so that the armor would be able to move forward. I make fun of all the my good friends from armor, but that was a fact. I ended up 101 kilometers from Cairo, having gone a distance of 120 kilometers. The armored brigade changed and I was the only one who led them. I was a brigade commander during the First Lebanon War. I'm the only officer in the IDF who took part in the wars as a company commander, a battalion commander and a brigade commander. That means that I’m not smart enough to step aside when a war is on the way, but what can I do? Besides that, I think that I participated in about 200 special operational raids beyond our borders that I planned, participated in and commanded in Egypt, Syria, Jordan and definitely in Lebanon, where I was a commander for two years, and there alone we mounted some 80 operations of various types. So you can see that I have some combat experience, but I don’t want to talk about that, since our topic today is the First Lebanon War of ’82, I would like to start from a different angle, if that's okay. I want to present my perception of the duty of a high officer or commander at the brigade level. I started out as a battalion commander in wartime and beforehand, while planning operations you must be very involved in order to ensure that your unit is mobilized and prepared to operate in the most effective way. Since those who usually do the planning see the overall strategic plan, but they don’t always

have time to pay attention to details. Furthermore, not all of them are experts in a particular field or on the professional side of things like you are, with knowledge of your unit and its distinctive features. It's your duty to ensure that things will go smoothly; you can't just rely on the higher echelons and claim that you were told to do something, so you simply did it.

I want to tell you about the First Lebanon War. Something happened in '82 that is not characteristic of war in general. We knew that sooner or later we would have to go into Lebanon to get rid of the unbearable threat of the PLO and the Syrians in southern Lebanon. In July '81 I was commanding a special raid about 45 kilometers deep inside Lebanese territory against one of the bases of the PLO or a more extreme Palestinian terrorist group. From the moment they heard our helicopters until the moment we landed, they opened fire from everywhere, from every building and every village; bullets were flying all over the place. We didn't pay attention, we went stealthily through the valley towards our object. From the moment we attacked the base, they opened fire on us. They hit a few of my people: my signals officer and all the guys around me. One of my operations officers was also killed and we had to evacuate about eight severely wounded soldiers, never mind the details. We went back and succeeded in landing the C53, which is a big helicopter. While in flight we were hit by about 18 bullets, but succeeded in crossing the border and landing immediately. The head of the General Staff and the Northern Command commander were waiting for us when we landed, and in the first briefing, I said: "Listen, I think that the strategic method of launching raids into Lebanon is finished." They asked me why and I replied that when we initiated them about ten years earlier, there was a base here, a small group there, and you could identify and launch a raid on them because they were sporadic. The situation now was completely the opposite, because the terrorists were in every village, on every hill, in every little clump of trees and every cave; they were everywhere. The moment you landed, you were surrounded by hundreds and thousands of them. So that was the last raid into Lebanon for a whole year and it was clear that in order to purify the area and not to be under the threat of

Katyushas and mortars, of which they had thousands, we would sooner or later need to invade. Thus the Northern Command started developing a plan of how to cleanse a strip of 30, 40 or 50 kilometers inside southern Lebanon. in order to push the enemy out and destroy its bases, capture all its artillery, capabilities and equipment. Since I was part of a separate paratrooper's brigade, the only special brigade in the IDF at the time, I was present when the Northern Command gave the order to all the Divisions, in order to hear what my mission was. The idea was that three Divisions would enter at the first phase and then another one in a different sector, in order to clean up the area and push out thousands of PLO fighters; if the Syrians that were spread around southern Lebanon interfered, we would push them out as well



.

This was our border, one Division would come from here, a second Division from there and a third one would move along the coast. The paratroopers would

land in a very high region relative to our area, of very steep mountains, about 1,800 to 2,000 meters high, in order to block the Syrians if they tried to come down or if someone tried to escape from there. I took on that mission and returned to my headquarters. For a day or two we studied it and after two or three days had to present our plans to the Northern Command. I presented my plan, how I would cover the whole area and block it, everything. But when I finished presenting it before all the Division commanders and the staff of the Northern Command, I asked the Northern Command commander, who was a very tough general, if at the end I could speak with him privately in his office since I didn't want to embarrass him in front of everyone. He approved of my plan and when we finished we went to his office and he asked me, "Yaya, what do you want?" I said, "Listen, you gave me a mission. It's okay, I have no problem with it. The mountains are very high, the landscape is beautiful and the air is wonderful there, I'm not worried about anything, but if you try to reach me with your armored Division the roads there are very narrow, and if one tank rolls off its carrier, the whole Division will be stuck. It's like Switzerland, very steep terrain and you can get dizzy just looking down. I'm not sure that your people looking down a stereoscope can get a clear three-dimensional view. I have another idea…" It was a lesson we had learned during a huge operation that we had participated in four years earlier, the Litany Operation, whose objective was to cleanse the PLO zone. What happened there was that we probably killed about 200 of them, but thousands of others escaped to the north and when we evacuated the area, they returned, so nothing was accomplished. So I said to the commander, "I suggest that instead of positioning me in an area where I have no actual influence put me somewhere else. All the roads here travel from east to west; the only road which goes from north to south is along the coast and it's the main road. If I make an amphibious landing there, I'll block the road so no one can run away and escape from the south and the Syrian Division deployed there won't be able to come down. Okay?" And he accepted it.

We played a major role in the 1982 Lebanon War and that's what really caused the PLO to break down; we cut them off and the Syrians couldn't get down. How did I come up with that idea? When I got my assignment as brigade commander in January '81, I planned a special training session for all my battalions. We spent four months on security missions along the border and then three or four months training, and so on. When I started training them, I decided that I wanted to carry out an amphibious landing exercise for each battalion. My operations officer said "Yaya, you might not know it, but the navy is taking all the landing craft out of service because they're old and they don't have the budget to renew them." I approached the navy commander and said: "Listen, you can't do that. My job is to use any means - jumping out of planes, riding helicopters or landing from the sea - in order to reach the enemy's rear zone. It's like the air force claiming that they don't want or need any paratroopers. No way, you must hold onto this capability and this equipment. There aren't so many, only two or three." I also appealed to the head of the General Staff and the decision was made to retain that capability. We trained ourselves during that period, with each battalion carrying out an amphibious exercise. Thus eight months later, I could inform the Northern Command that I had a better idea of how to use the brigade, since when you land with helicopters, you land with your rifle only, but when you make an amphibious landing, you can take along a few tanks, one or two artillery guns and some engineering equipment. You can feel much more confident; have more effective fire power, etc... That's how the idea came about long before anyone even thought about the war. As the commander of a special or professional unit or special sector within a different branch, you have to ensure that all your operational and combat capabilities are available, because you can't tell when you will need what. You don't want to close any doors, since the more doors that are open to you, the more options you have when you planning an operational combat plan.

You would have a much tougher job today than what we experienced 30, 40 or 50 years ago. Why? Because we had to confront an enemy army that that was

educated and trained by the British, the Americans or the Soviet Union; we spoke and thought in similar terms. Today you won't have the opportunity of seeing a battle between armies, corps, Divisions, thousands of tanks. All the exercises in Europe involved Russia or the Warsaw Pack attacking West Germany and American and British Divisions attempting to block them. That's all over. The military schools might not have changed, but it's over. I already claimed that twenty years ago. The challenge you have to face today is something that is not constructed; there are different organizations with different tactics. It's not even like the American fighting in Vietnam against the guerillas of the Viet Cong, which was a well-organized guerilla or semi-military organization. Today you can never be sure. Although the military still more or less retains its traditional structure, within that structure you must be very flexible and open-minded and think "outside the box" in order to face new challenges. But I would like to illustrate to you that this was even true 32 years ago. Even in the Yom Kippur War, we had to find ways of overcoming unexpected challenges.

But back to the First Lebanon War: This is how the amphibious operation was planned and executed. I landed with my brigade and with some tanks in the first wave; the second wave would follow later. We landed north of Saida, about 70 kilometers north of our border. I won't go into the details of when our Divisions were supposed to arrive. One Division commander said 24 hours, the other 36 hours. I said to Amos, the Division commander who actually only had me under him, which was good for me as I had spent time with the Northern Command. During the discussion in the Northern Command to approve the plan, I wrote him a note saying: "They won't even reach us in 48 hours" When I stood up to leave, I said: "I'll be very glad if you reach us as soon as possible." But to my troops I gave the order to be prepared for them not to arrive for 72 hours; we would have to spread out and withstand the pressure, so I didn't want to hear any complaining. I was wrong - it took 56 hours. But that was preferable to saying that it would be only 36 or 40 hours, so you would be prepared for the worst. Otherwise after a few hours everyone thinks that

something is going completely wrong and people become nervous and pressured.

I planned to land and immediately move forward, spreading the troops out so nobody would be able to shoot at us or have direct eye contact with the landing zone. Then we started moving north, mainly in order not to close ourselves off and allow them to surround us. We immediately moved out and covered about 15 kilometers. When you control such an area, you are in better shape. I couldn't spread out much more, as I didn't have the second wave yet. Then another battalion landed with a few more tanks and I made the next move. When we had controlled the entire area, we waited for our armored Division to reach us. By the time we reached that point, we already knew that we were going to move northwards and capture Beirut.

The outskirts of Beirut and the airport were about 12 kilometers away and I was sure that the order would be given to continue on from our present location, Damur. It was a small town from which about 5,000 civilians had been evacuated or had run away, not because of us. It was a Christian town and 5,000 men were killed, shot down, and the survivors had escaped to an area north of Beirut. In any case, I knew that the PLO had many strong positions here and the Syrian army has its first battalion here and another one nearby. I didn't like the idea of covering those 12 kilometers on the narrow strip of main road to Beirut, which at some places is about half a mile, a quarter of a mile, maybe a mile from the shore; the ridge overlooking the strip that we controlled was like a bottleneck. The problem in a bottleneck is that it doesn't matter how many forces you have on your tail; you can operate very few tanks at the front and very few troops. So during the night, while I was waiting for the armored Division to arrive, I studied the map for three or four hours, attempting to find a way to avoid going into this narrow bottleneck in order to exploit my capabilities as special infantry. We were a crack paratrooper's brigade, and this was not a place where I could use all my advantages; quite the contrary. I was sitting by myself with the map, trying to figure it out. Then I found a small, very narrow road climbing up, which could be reached by a circuitous route.

This was my plan. Here you can see it better on the map. This is Damur, this is the suburb, this is Beirut airport, but I didn't plan it like that, I understood that maybe I could reach it along the coastal road, but it would be very easy to block me and block the Division . So by 0300 I had finished planning it in my head, I woke up everyone at headquarters and instructed them to shower and shave. Then I presented them with the plan. I requested that every battalion come up with its own plan, go into details and come back to me if they met up with any problems. At 0900 (the Division had arrived at 0600), the battalion commanders submitted their plans; then at 0900 or 1000 I met with the two Division commanders, my commander, Amos, and the Northern Command commander. Everyone was confident that the tanks would reach Beirut by nightfall. I stood up and asked the Northern Command Commander for permission to execute my plan. I asked him "Why would you put all your eggs in one basket? You have forces with overwhelming power. You have one Golani infantry brigade here and another brigade there, and you have so many tanks and artillery. What do you care if I sneak in there, if you let me. Then he said that I would have to make a detour of 70 kilometers and that it would take a while, but finally he agreed to allow me to execute my plan. I had to pay the price of leaving one of my battalions with one of the armored brigades. That battalion commander was furious with me, but I had no choice. We Divided up at the base, climbed up, fought against one Syrian battalion, then another and then a third one. The fact was that we were the first to reach Beirut, after only three days. On Sunday morning (I think it was at noon) I reached Beirut and made contact with the Christian Phalanges in east Beirut.

What happened to the troops moving along the seashore? Exactly what I had predicted. They were blocked and had to evacuate. It was only two or three weeks later, when we controlled the whole area, that the road was opened. Speaker: My name is Mike Stewart. Earlier we talked a bit with Amos, who told us that we needed to develop leaders that could take risks. You obviously were able to convince both him and the commander-in-chief to allow you to do

that. Do you think the IDF has the leadership to allow such an operation, if it were to be suggested today?

Yoram Yair: Yes. I believe it does. I'll tell you something. My real expertise is not in fighting; that was my hobby. My real expertise is leadership. I am now the head of the leadership program in the IDC, the Inter-Disciplinary Center in Herzliya, which is the largest college in Israel and a very modern one, because there is cooperation among all the faculties within it. I always say that if you perceive yourself as open-minded and if you accept that the officer under you can also come up with new and creative ideas, you will develop open-minded officers under your command. Conversely, you will block this process if you don't encourage those officers who are very creative, open-minded and not following conventional lines of thought. Creative thinking is needed today much more than in the past.

I remember when I was a student at CGSC nearly 40 years ago, in '76-'77. I remember that no matter what the problem was, the first thing they did was to draw boundary lines. it doesn't matter if it was a problem with a Division , a battalion or a company, one decision was always selected as the best one. I asked why that was - I couldn't understand it. I said: "Listen, if I have a problem, I look for the best way to reach the target, to flank. It doesn't matter if it's in Vietnam, the Middle East or Germany." I said, "What does this give you? If you are defending, okay, I can understand it somehow. But if it's your initiative, the first thing you have to do is see an avenue of approach, where you want to put your main effort." But they made it very schematic. When I visited there 30 years later, nothing had changed. Honestly, I'm not criticizing, but I believe that if you feel confident in yourself, you will allow the people under your command to express themselves. If you are not confident, you won't want anyone to contradict you or shake your authority. It's very important for you to place yourself willingly under criticism. Don't even call it criticism, but being vetted by your subordinate officers. When you are commanding a tank with three other crew members, the probability that you are the most intelligent guy in the crew is 25%. When you're the leader of a ten-man squad, it's 10%

and if you are a company commander, it's 1%, and so on. If you are a Division commander, it's as likely as winning the lottery. So remember one thing, in all probability, the higher you go, the more people under your command will be more intelligent than you are. I'm not sure about those above you, but you have four battalion commanders, one brigade commander. So chances are that they are smarter than you by 20%. Don't confuse authority or rank with intelligence. You have to take into consideration that you will hear some very smart ideas and criticism from people under you, but only if you encourage it. If you block it, if you cannot stand it, you are missing out on a lot. The important thing about Amos and me was that we came from the same brigade, the same background. He had commanded the same battalion that I was commanding in the same brigade before he became Division commander. Today we call it a common organizational culture, common organizational habits. I didn't hesitate to tell him what was on my mind. Sometimes we argued for hours. When we arrived that night, there was a crisis. Why? Because the armored brigade had lost some tanks and men were stuck there, I suddenly got the order to group ourselves together and come down. Finally, we reached a compromise. One battalion was still in this area here and I was here; it looks close. This was the compromise that I reached with him at 0200 that this battalion would stay down. Instead of doing it with a whole brigade, I did it with one battalion and my reconnaissance company and that's it. Two Divisions succeeded in moving here, and with one battalion, and three companies I went the whole way, fighting against more troops than they met, and simply exploiting the element of surprise. How did we overcome this battalion here? They knew that the Israelis would pass along the road with their tanks, so they constructed a battalion ambush, about 20-30-50 meters above this strip of road. But they didn't meet the right division, the right brigade or the right battalion, and my order was to go up onto this ridge, at a very steep end of the road, in case someone got stuck there. So we avoided it and came down; they were sitting ready and heard our tanks. I even sent one tank and one APC so that they would see them advancing. They were waiting anxiously and suddenly some infantry

swooped down and killed about 70 of them, while the rest ran away down to the ravines. I don't know what happened and I don't care, because I could move my APCs and tanks forward.

Speaker: Sir, I'm from the Australian Navy. Regarding your operational planning, you had your active career at a very dynamic period for Israel. To what extent did you use military history to develop your professional judgment, or was your planning based on experience?

Yoram Yair: I have no doubt that if you have personal experience from previous wars or fighting or battles or whatever, it's the most dominant influence over your decisions. No matter how much military history you read, it is less important. I wrote a book after completing my assignment as a brigade commander. I approached the chief of staff and informed him that I was 38 years old and due to retire the following year. I could stay with the brigade for another year because I thought it was the last thing that I would do in the Army, but they didn't allow me to do that. So then I decided to write a book about the '82 war. The main reason was that there was widespread criticism about the whole war from a political point of view. In Israel everything is mixed up together - army and politics - and I wrote it for the sake of my troops that had fought such a glorious war. It might not be correct to call a war "glorious," but they were so professional, committed and creative that they overcame every minor difficulty and every major challenge. There were events that I learned about only later on because I always told them to try and solve problems before you ask advice from above, because those above you don't know as much about that specific problem as you do.

So I decided to write a book describing the war. It was never translated, as I didn't have the time for that. However, it is a very famous book in Israel. It was published in 1990 and sold many thousands of copies. Since I thought I was going to retire from the military, through the story of the war I presented all my beliefs about leadership, about how to behave and how to act as a commander. There is a short paragraph that exactly answers your question. I state there that no matter what they teach you in commanders' courses at

military schools - and no matter what is written in books - the moment you are under pressure to decide whether to fight at night or in daytime, if you have previously succeeded in night battles because it gave you an advantage over the enemy, you will always choose to fight at night. Furthermore, if you have had good experiences of daytime fighting, you will always prefer to fight during the day. Why? Because when you're at war, in a battle, you are under such pressure and the lives of so many people depend on your decision, you tend to revert to where you succeeded and avoid where you failed. There's no doubt that my previous experiences in the Yom Kippur War influenced my planning and my decisions, and that's all there is to it. But I also had another big advantage. You remember the '78 Litani Operation that I spoke about earlier. I was then a reserve brigade commander and head of the infantry and paratroopers' corps. I was responsible for doctrine and later conducted an investigation of the Litany operation. I derived and published all the lessons we learned about how to fight in Lebanon in a built-up area, on steep terrain with very narrow roads, and so on. I attempted to pass all of this on to the commanders under me. During the training and preparations for the First Lebanon War, we drew on those lessons and they proved themselves invaluable.

Speaker: One other question. In the U.S. military there is a chasm between special operations and conventional forces, maybe yes, maybe no, but I think special operations forces think more like what you're advocating, that is, "outside of the box" and they try to find solutions, whereas most of the force is made up of three conventional Divisions . Do you have that same chasm in Israel, between the IDF and special operations?

Yoram Yair: I'd say so. After the Six-Day War, the armored guys were so overwhelmingly enthusiastic about how the armored Division had gone down into Sinai and had conquered it in four days that they claimed "We don't need infantry - we can do it alone." Then the Yom Kippur War came along and I told you what happened when Bren, who was the head of the Armor Corps, yelled into his radio, "I don't want tanks, I want the red berets of the paratroopers". And I was the first, advancing 120 kilometers and fighting all the way to clear

the area. I think we learned then that you must have combined forces. One of the most important things I did before the Lebanese operation was to train my troops to work with tanks and artillery. We didn't have a lot of artillery because we were out of range, but we took two 20mm Vulcan guns with us and we knew how to use them for direct firing, not because we thought our air force would allow the Syrian planes to attack us, but in order to use them for ground targets, against which they were very effective. Of course engineering also played a part. My slogan is that in war you don't have to be fair. You come with a rifle; I'll come with a tank. You come with a tank; I'll come with a missile. You come with a missile, I'll come with artillery. I don't want to be fair. In every case I want an overwhelming advantage over you.

We won't enjoy any more traditional warfare; we won't see it. I said that in '95, but no one believed me. There was a big convention of 300 journalists at Tel Aviv University and I said, "I'm very sad to tell you this, but they destroyed our game. We won't see any more armor vs. armor, navy vs. navy, air force; we won't see it." The topic of the convention was how the IDF would look in 20, 25 years. I informed the whole audience, many of whom were my former commanders, that we were no longer relevant. For all of those who were educated according to Montgomery, it was over. I claimed that the Yom Kippur War was the last we would see of conventional warfare, but I said not to worry; we would still have jobs because all the advisors to presidents and prime ministers around the world are generals who were educated in the traditional way. So they won't tell the president not to consult with them, but with a company commander who has just returned from Iraq or Afghanistan, although he knows better than they do what he is talking about. So they will continue to develop the F35, but some bastards will still decide to crash their planes into the World Trade Center.

In ’96 I was a defense attaché in Washington; Ehud Barak, who was then defense minister, came for a visit and we predicted what would happen. We didn’t talk about the World Trade Center, but about the Empire State Building. That’s what we were saying. But all the advisors keep saying, "More tanks - more F35s, F42s; develop the military industries!" Israel is no longer threatened by the Syrian or Iraqi military and the Egyptians are leaving us alone. Then why do we need the same army that we built 30 or 40 years ago? We're gradually changing our perspective, but it takes time. The new challenges are much more difficult to face than the former ones. If you have to fight ISIS, they are crazy people, so you must be crazy. Craziness and the military don't go together. They have destroyed our game. Try to imagine that tomorrow morning some doctor or medical research institute announces that they have invented a pill that when you take it, it solves all your heart problems and cures diabetes

and cancer. You just need to take it once a month and that's it. What will the doctors say, what will the hospitals say? "No, you cannot rely on that; it's too dangerous." That's what I've been hearing for the past 20 years: no, it's too dangerous. We did finally get rid of a few thousand tanks, but it took much too long; we could have saved billions and billions of dollars. So try and imagine that one day someone will invent some medicine that you need to take once a month or once a year. So you close all the hospitals and fire all the doctors. What will Jewish mothers want their sons to be then?

Col. (Ret.)Boaz Cohen:

Today I'm head of the land Division of Elbit Systems. Prior to that, I grew up in the IDF as a company commander and a battalion commander of two different battalions. In Division G3, I commanded three different brigades, two armored brigades and one territorial brigade in the Gaza Strip. Then I was sent to attend an advanced armor course at Fort Knox, U.S.A. That was the only course I participated in during my service.

At the end of the war, the chief of the general staff requested that I perform some kind of investigative debriefing for the Northern Command. From a personal standpoint, that debriefing brought me to the decision to leave the organization. I brought up various issues at the end of the process and presented them to the General Staff; at the time they were a little bit too extreme for them to digest, but since then people have changed their attitude. I basically presented the results of the investigation or debriefing that I had performed at every commander's courses, from the staff college up to the Division level. Thus most of the things I'll be discussing here are taken from the process that I've been undergoing with the Division commanders and the brigade commanders, and it has nothing to do with maneuvering schemes. That was not an issue in that confrontational war. Furthermore, as far as I see it, it has not been an issue with the following confrontations in the Gaza Strip. I think the main issue was, first of all, the values and principles of war. And that is the direction that I came from in my debriefing and investigation. I consider that the biggest problem that we faced in the different types of activities that we performed over the years understood the nature of the situation we were in. Once you understand that you're at war, you're supposed to act as if you're at war, deploy your forces like you're at war, use your fire power like you're at war, and act with a specific set of values that are relevant for war, not for peace-keeping operations or for limited operations or special forces operations or raid operations.

I think the basic problem of the IDF's organization at that point was that we (and I of course was a part of the senior leadership at that point) did not decide that we were at war. The issue of not understanding that you're at war was responsible for our best officers behaving in a specific way. I'll give you some examples. Until the last day of the war, attack helicopters did not cross the borders. Soldiers were maneuvering 15-20 kilometers inside, but attack helicopters did not cross the border, because the controller didn't allow them to do so. On the other hand, Blackhawks, for example, did cross the border in order to evacuate soldiers who were wounded or even worse. But you can see that there was some kind of a misunderstanding of the situation we were in. On the one hand, it was not considered worthwhile endangering our attack helicopter pilots in order to attack more rocket launchers, for example, or more Hezbollah forces. On the other hand, it was considered legitimate to risk our pilots' lives in order to rescue soldiers. The pilots were shouting that they wanted to go in; they saw their friends with the Blackhawks going in and they couldn't go in with their Apaches. This was completely unreasonable. These were our best people sitting at critical junctures, but not being allowed to act as they thought they were supposed to act. A very talented brigade commander, maybe our best brigade commander, declared after the war in an interview as part of my investigation that once he had wounded soldiers in his brigade, his primary mission was to evacuate them and ensure that they were cared for. According to our basic values, that can never be your primary mission, the one you receive from headquarters or the upper echelons. And I think that's universal, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't take care of the wounded, but that can't become your primary goal.

Speaker: One thing we've discussed did not know a great deal about the war. What was the political objective given to the IDF for the use of force?

Boaz Cohen: I don't think there was a problem there; I was present at meetings with the prime minister and the minister of defense and I don't think there was any problem over that.

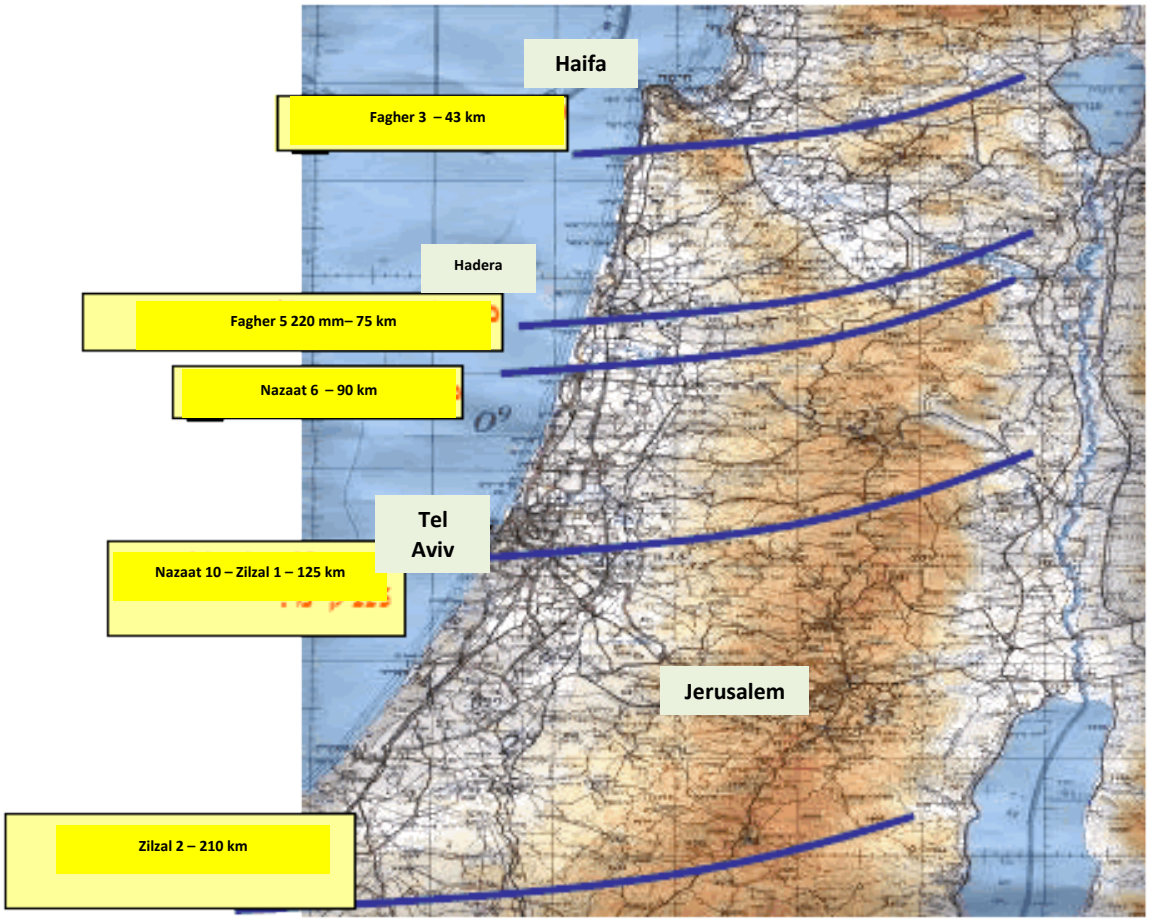
We knew that we had to stop the firing of rockets on the civilian population; we

needed no explanations about that. The question was what you were willing to do in order to stop it, and what price the Israeli population was willing to pay in order to stop it. Since you brought up the question, I'll relate to it: I think that Israeli society has a problem with paying the price, which I can understand; I have a son in the army and it's not easy. But you can't decide that you want to stop rocket launchers and destroy them without being willing to pay the price. You can't do it from the air. I must mention that we performed an exercise about a month before the war. The air force declared that they were unable to deal with mid- and short-range launchers. It was impossible because the signature was not there for them to find and hit. You needed to maneuver; there was no way around it.

Even in the two following confrontations in the Gaza Strip, we still had the same problem, of Hamas, in that case, firing on our civilian population for 50 days without our being willing to pay the price and maneuver to stop it.

We knew how to do it; it's not that we were unprofessional. We didn't train enough before the Second Lebanon War, but that's not the issue. Any way you look at it, we were still much better than the other side, both technologically and morally. We should have brought better results, but not by the way we acted during that confrontation. And I think that the two had some similarities; it was much easier because the area was much smaller and we could apply much more force, UAVs and other things on a much smaller area, but the outcomes were pretty much the same.

There was a large gap between understanding what we had to achieve and the different ways we tried to achieve it; there was no correlation. If you didn't maneuver, there was no way of hitting those launchers. We have investigated it, and I'll go into some of the restrictions that we as the Northern Command placed on the forces, but in every instance when we maneuvered, the amount of rocket fire was decreased by almost 90%.



I can give you additional examples of our not grasping the situation. On the first day of the war, there were some areas that were defined as nature reserves and those were the areas from which Hezbollah shot most of their rockets, being deployed and well dug into those nature reserves. We couldn't observe most of them from Israel, as all the entrances faced northwards and at that time we had a very small amount of UAV assets in the Northern Command. In addition, the small amount we had was made even less effective by the weather, thus we didn't have good intelligence. On the first day of the war, one of the special units went into the first nature reserve and two soldiers were killed, which was of course unfortunate, but again, we were at war.

From that point onwards, the Northern Command general decided and ordered that no one was to enter the nature reserves. How can you deal with the rocket launchers if don't go into the nature reserves, when more than 70% of the rockets were launched from there. This was based on the fact that he was not

willing to suffer additional casualties, but it doesn't work that way. I'll give you another example. The chief of staff flew every day from the Northern Command to his office in Tel Aviv and approved specific activities on a day-to-day basis. Every week he was routinely presented with detailed plans for special operations and he either approved or rejected them. By that time we had accumulated a large amount of experience on the western side of our sector, with a team that hit many rocket launchers with special missiles and decreased the firing from that area by tens of percents. On one occasion I attempted to convince the northern commander to insert another such team in the central area, the same type of unit, weapon system and method, but in a different area. He rejected the idea, claiming:" If six soldiers were to get killed there, what would the public think?" Now, you can't run a war that way. Firstly, it's in the command's area of responsibility; you can't run a war from Tel Aviv in bits and pieces and try to maneuver the forces, including the special forces; it simply doesn't work that way.

You must accept that you will unfortunately suffer some casualties. If you are not willing to do that, then stay outside of Lebanon and try to do everything from the air, with whatever is possible.

I'll give you another example. After every such meeting there was a written agenda and a summary at the end with suggestions for activities, which was sent to most of the Division commanders. It stated that if the forces were not 100% ready for their mission, then the mission should not be carried out. Now, you're never 100% ready; I've never seen anyone who was 100% ready. But since it was written in black and white, there was no questioning it. If you read an order like that and you're not 100% ready, you'll always find excuses: you need more time, more equipment, etc. etc., and that was how things looked. When you're trying to arrest a Hamas guy, in Nablus, say, and he's not a ticking bomb, it's okay to delay his arrest for a day or two. But behavior that is correct for limited operations is totally inappropriate when you're involved in a full-scale war.

From my point of view, a little bit of initiative is one of the most important values and principles of war. On the one hand, a military organization must be very disciplined; it has to be. On the other hand, if you don't have commanders from the lowest level up to the highest level that don't do exactly what they are told to do, there is no way you are going to succeed.

General Sharon is a prime example. I don't know if you've heard that in the Yom Kippur War he did exactly the opposite of what he was told to do. I can give you many further examples. In the First Lebanon War, and unfortunately, I don't think we have changed much since then, commanders and men were trying too hard to obey exactly what they were ordered to do, and this replaced initiative.

I'll give you another example, again from one of our best brigade commanders. He had the opportunity to cross the Saluki River by Bint J'beil with no one on the other side. I think as a brigade commander, I would never ask, I would just do it and if you want to stop me, stop me. But he asked for permission. The Division commander said that he had to think about it and he asked the general of the Northern Command for approval. About two hours beforehand, there had been a discussion with the U.S. government in which Condoleezza Rice had drawn a red line through the Saluki River and stated that we could not cross it at that time.

However, the line was very wide and could be filled by a whole brigade. So you cross over and explain later. What happened? About five or six days later, we crossed and paid dearly with the lives of more than 20 soldiers. We were facing the problem of understanding that at war you have to act differently; it's not a peace-keeping operation and it's not some kind of limited confrontation; it's war. When at war you have to make decisions and there are some consequences. But if you're not willing to take them, you can't be a commander. And from my point of view, I think we failed in that respect.

I'd like to discuss another topic: C4I systems and again, I led the digital army program in Elbit a few years ago. It is a very successful program, but you have to understand a few things. Firstly, at least from headquarters, C4I systems give you the illusion that you can control the squad or team from headquarters. That's a mistake: it doesn't allow you to control anything; it just gives you a better picture and that's it. But it doesn't replace the fact that a commander has to be at the front and make decisions from the best standpoint over his area of responsibility. Nothing has changed due to C4I systems. It took time for people to understand that; although they have the ability to see the front tank or the front squad, the sniper, the tip of the arrow, they have to be at the front and they have to command; nothing has changed on the soldier's level, even after you install a C4I system. It doesn't change the most important basic principle: the commander has to be at the front.

Speaker: One of the things that we've been discussing quite a lot throughout the course is a military organization's strategic culture. It certainly appears that

the IDF's military culture changed between 1973 and 2006. Why do you think that happened?

Boaz Cohen: I think it was mainly because of the nature of the operations. I think that today less army personnel are experienced in full-scale war, They are more proficient in low-intensity conflict than in peace-keeping operations. Moving from that kind of operation to full-scale war that involves maneuvering is something that some of the commanders met up with for the first time.

I think that less and less people are experienced in full-scale war and I think that the decision-making process and the independence and maybe the loneliness of the commander in a full-scale operation are completely different from a low-intensity conflict. In a low-intensity conflict, you have the whole system supporting and supervising you and approving everything, every step of the way. In a full-scale or high-intensity conflict, you are alone; you have to make your own decisions and take the initiative. If you ask too many questions, you'll get answers. They'll tell you stop, wait, and let them check. If you don't want to hear the answers, don't ask the questions. I think that in previous generations they asked a little bit less.

Speaker: Good morning, sir. I'm from the Australian Army. The political objective was talked about briefly at the start. I was just wondering if there was any attempt to stop the cross-border attacks and the rocket fire at the political and senior leadership level. Was there a clear plan of how they imagined things were going to develop? It seems as though they had a list of targets for the air force to hit and that was the end of it.

Boaz Cohen: The political side wasn't expected to come up with a plan; rather, the IDF was supposed to do so, but it did not have a complete plan, although the Northern Command did have a plan for a full-scale operation. It was approved and delayed many times along the way. I think the problem was not at the political, but at the military level, where no one was looking seven steps ahead; that was the problem. There was a plan that was approved, but not executed.

Speaker: Good morning. My name is Candice and I'm from Australia. Following on from what you were saying about there being a clear plan and about the restrictions placed on the force to actually find the rockets, was there a clear end-point or end-state identified when the decision was made to use force? Was it clear to the military what they were supposed to achieve, and was that actually achieved? Was it a political objective or an actual military victory? And how did it end?

Boaz Cohen: The objectives were clear, as were the ways of achieving them, but they were only approved in pieces. For example, for a whole week we had only two brigades - that's it - because no one was willing to transfer forces from the Southern Command and recruit reserves. In the final days, we had three Divisions , a big difference. The problem was that it was a rolling operation with no clear path from the first, second or fourth day up till the end. Things were rolling ahead and decisions were being made day by day. That's not how a general staff or a territorial command should work. A commander has to have an approved plan, resources and time schedule. He has to function for a few days and obtain results. If objectives are not being achieved, you can either replace the commander or take some other kind of action. However, if you're giving the command orders three times and the same thing is happening in the Divisions and the brigades, there's no way you can function, as you're totally occupied with changing orders and objectives and rolling on from one mission to the other.

Speaker: So the ultimate decision to end the operations, how was it arrived at?

Boaz Cohen: The decision was made at the political level between Israel and the U.N. or the U.S. It was not decided by the military to stop the operation, but that was how it worked.

Speaker: Good morning, sir. There seems to have been a sort of failure on both sides, the political and the military senior leadership that were interfering a couple of times a day, while the military was providing advice that wasn't perhaps totally honest about the forces required to achieve the objectives and end the rocket fire. Although the IDF had the means, the actual ways of

achieving those two things were missing. Do you think that there was a failure on the political and/or the military side?

Boaz Cohen: No. I don't think there was a failure on the political side. In fact, everything that the IDF requested was approved on the political level.

Speaker: What was the source of the aversion to casualties? Was it on the political or on the military side?

Boaz Cohen: Both of those, in addition to Israeli society in general. Sometimes it seemed as if society was defending the IDF more than the IDF was defending it. Sometimes it appears that it's worse if a soldier gets killed than if a civilian getting killed. And unfortunately, it's clear that the soldier's role is to get killed in order to protect civilians from getting killed.

Speaker: Unfortunately, the issues that you raised are not unique to the IDF. I'm curious as to what your recommendations were to the General Staff.

Boaz Cohen: I thought that we were educating our people incorrectly, teaching them to obey rather than take the initiative. I think something is lost if people are not willing to take the initiative, and of course take responsibility and accept the consequences. If all I have in an operation is a sergeant who listens to what the General Staff says and transfers it to the Divisions and the brigades, then I might as well use a tape recorder. A commander must be willing to take the initiative; there will be consequences, you don't always succeed, there could be casualties, you could be called upon for explanations. Less and less commanders are willing to do that. And if you're not willing to do that on a day-to-day basis, if you "kill" every commander for any mistakes he makes, that's how your commanders will look. On the other hand, if you cut them some slack, they will be able to mature and grow and will be willing to take on more responsibility. But again, it's the same in our entire society; when it was young, it was a lot less bureaucratic than it is now. When you mature, you become more bureaucratic and this affects everything, including the military.

Speaker: What does the term "limited war" mean to an IDF officer?

Boaz Cohen: I am not acquainted with such a term. For the company commander or the battalion commander, what he faces is war. He has to kill the enemy opposite him without question, while achieving the goals and objectives given him by the higher echelons, and that's it. Nothing is "limited" for him.
Speaker: Do you think the politicians could have done a better job of winning over public opinion by briefing the public not only via news broadcasts?

Boaz Cohen: Again, as I'm trying to convey here, from my perspective, and I was present at all the meetings with the politicians, I don't think that the problem lay with them. If the IDF is successful, the public will support it. If we start seeing more casualties and 200 rockets fall on the civilian population every day, they will start asking questions, which is totally legitimate. They might rightly ask, "You're both killing soldiers and not protecting us, so what exactly are you doing?" Our most recent confrontation with rocket fire lasted for 50 days, but we had Iron Dome, which was fantastic and became another factor in the decision makers' minds when they had to decide whether or not to maneuver, whether to send in soldiers or not. It didn't limit confrontation time, but rather extended it; it's a fantastic system.
Speaker: Sir, my name is Mike Gunther and I'm one of the Americans. Two of the points raised by the Winograd Report were that the IDF didn't do a good job of proposing alternate courses of action to the political leaders, once they realized that the goals they set might have been a little too ambitious. Furthermore, the lack of military experience of both the prime minister and the minister of defense might have compounded the problem. Can you comment on that?
Boaz Cohen: I think that the first claim is correct. I don'\t think that the IDF presented alternatives, apart from one incident when General Yaron did so. I'm not sure that in other cases the IDF did present a whole array of possibilities as they should have, neither all the options nor all the consequences. The second remark is also correct regarding the lack of experience of both the prime minister and the defense minister However, that was not a major issue, since they both had common sense, which was very important, not everything, but

very important. Again, I think the basic problem lay with the IDF itself in that instance.

Speaker: Sir, how well do you think the IDF was set up in 2006 for conducting a more conventional campaign when they actually launched the troops into Southern Lebanon?

Boaz Cohen: Of course we lacked some training, but that was definitely not the main issue. Even though we were lacking in equipment, we were considered to be superior to Hezbollah. I think that the problem was that specific parts of the operation were not conducted well on the level of the Division that was responsible for them.

Speaker: In your comments earlier, you indicated that a lot of the problems that you identified in 2006 were still present in more recent operations, in Gaza, etc. In our opinion, has anything changed, or are the same mistakes being repeated?

Boaz Cohen: No, of course, there has been an improvement in many things. However, the issue of values, of growing up in a generation that is willing to take the initiative while nothing has changed in society is very hard. It's a long process and I'm not sure it's even possible, because people grow up in a specific atmosphere. But if they don't grow up in an atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes and not get their head chopped off every time they do so, they won't make mistakes; in fact, they won't do anything at all. They'll try to limit their opportunities for making mistakes.

But if you grow up in an atmosphere that allows you to initiate things and make mistakes, and of course, from my perspective, that is how I try to raise my men, that if you have made a mistake that is a result of negligence, you truly need your head chopped off. But in any other case, if you took the wrong decision because you didn't see the complete picture, it's to be expected. Nowadays everything is open to the public; anyone who makes a mistake is brought to public trial. Again, I'm exaggerating, but basically that's the situation. In such an atmosphere, you have to explain to the public that it's hard to bring up a generation of officers that are willing to take action. And we have excellent ones. The question is how you educate them and what they are willing to take

on and what sacrifices they are willing to make. In that war we had excellent people in every position, but we still made mistakes.

Speaker: I'm also from the U.S. Air Force. When you related to limited war, you said that it doesn't exist. That reminded me of the Weinberger Doctrine that came out in the United States, actually out of our experience in Lebanon as well. You know, it's been a debate within the United States. Do you think is what you're advocating is along those lines?

Boaz Cohen: No. At the political level, and I'm not there, there can be such a thing as limited war. For us, at the tactical level or army level, there is no such thing. You can't put a company commander in a situation where he is facing the enemy and wonders if he's limited or not limited. At that point, he only has to do one thing and hopefully he will do it quickly enough. I can't relate to the political level, as I think it's not relevant. I try to avoid it because it's not relevant to us. At our level, I think things are very simple. We might try to complicate them, but they are very simple. When you're in a low-intensity operation, in, say, Ramallah, things might get complicated, but when you go to war, it's less complicated, almost black and white.

Captain (Navy) (Ret.) Ehud Erell on the First Missile Boat Battle: The Israeli Navy vs. the Syrian Navy, 1973

Ehud Erell:

My name is Udi Erell, I'm an ex-captain in the Israeli Navy, having served for 23 years. I've been asked to speak about the naval battle that I participated in more than 40 years ago, the Battle of Latakia. It was unique because it was the first battle fought on both sides with missiles. Until that time, it was mainly guns; there were some cases where the other side had some form of cruise missile that did work; unfortunately, that also happened to us. But this was the first time in naval history that a battle was fought with missiles on both sides, and you might say that it was a completely different board game. I'll give you some background on how we got to that point. The Israeli navy is the best, but it's not the senior service in our armed forces. Obviously we were a landlocked country with only one open border, the sea. At that time, we didn't have peace with any of our neighbors, like we have now. So there was Egypt to the south, Jordan and Syria to the east and Lebanon to the north. The only way out was by sea, but there are only about 180 kilometers of coastline. Still, the two major ports and most of our exports and imports are by sea; very little is transported by plane. Of course, tourists and businessmen arrive by plane, as you did, but the economy of the country relies on open sea lines of communication. But try and convince the army generals of that; they don't know anything about it. Thus the navy had a tough time in the early years because we had to make do with WWII surplus that we got from the British, the Italians, etc. We had WWII destroyers, submarines, and torpedo boats, and we also had commando units, but again, their tactics were learned from the Italians after WWII. On the other hand, the Egyptians and the Syrians were being armed by the Soviet Union at that time. As I started to say, this small point on earth was one of the focal points between east and west during the Cold War, and the Soviets were arming Syria and Egypt, mainly Egypt. On the naval side, which was very tough for us, they were arming them with post-World War II destroyers. At that time they

were called "Skoryy" destroyers, and they were our major threat. I'm talking about the 1960s. So, the Eastern Mediterranean - just 180 kilometers of coastline - had Egypt on one side and Jordan, Syria and Lebanon all around. Most of the population was living near the coast, and that's why I mentioned that the destroyers were a threat because they could easily arrive and bombard the coast and all the infrastructures there. Except for Jerusalem, all the major cities were on the coast. Exports came and went by sea, and we were operating WWII-type combat boats. The Skoryy was a naval threat and we didn't have anything to combat it. What we tried to do was develop something that could reach further than their guns. Their gun range was something like 14-16 kilometers, but I don't know if they were very accurate, In any case, we didn't have anything with which to withstand those destroyers. So the navy did an experiment that was performed by one of the defense industries. Actually they were trying to develop a guided rocket (as the word "missile" wasn't well-known at that time) for the artillery. They didn't like it. They said it didn't have enough explosives in it, only something like 150 kilos. So the navy said, "Let us try and develop it". And the development went on. Don't forget that there was no such thing as anti-ship missiles at that time. There was the "Styx," a Russian cruise missile used by the Soviets as an extension of shore gunners, because they were afraid of invasion, rightfully so, as that's what happened. If you know your history, even during the 1917 revolution, the Americans who sided with the anti-communists were trying to organize an invasion of Russia. The Israeli Navy's idea was to use half a ton of explosives with a range of 50 kilometers, but it wasn't really an anti-ship cruise missile. So the Gabriel, as we called the missile that was developed, required something that could carry it. What the Russians did was take a torpedo boat and mount two Styx missiles on it, and nothing else. I mean, there was radar, which was also used by torpedo boats, but I'm not even sure if they could detect any targets at the missile's maximum range. But as I said, it was as an extension of the coastal defense on the shore, so maybe they'd get some information from outside and shoot the missile, which they actually did, as we painfully learned right after the Six-Day

War. We were patrolling with our WWII destroyer, and there was a ceasefire, but they couldn't resist the temptation, and an enemy vessel shot four missiles at the destroyer, which sank, killing 39. That was a very painful lesson for us, but not the cause of what we were developing, the idea for which had its origins back in the '60s, long before the '67 war. Actually the '67 war between Israel and all the neighboring countries began almost by accident, I would say. This is my interpretation: Nasser, who was at that time president of Egypt, and in a way a leader of the Arab world at that time, at least against Israel, demanded on one of his tours that the U.N. withdraw their peacekeeping mission, which to his surprise they did. What happened was that we suddenly had the Egyptians on our borders without the U.N. and three weeks began of waiting and considering what to do. That period ended with the decision to attack before the Arabs did, and that developed into the Six-Day War. It was totally unexpected but positive on our side, of course. We suddenly found ourselves with much longer borders.

The idea here is to try and compare the way the Russians developed their missile boats and our concept. As I said before, the Russians simply converted a torpedo boat, took out the torpedoes and loaded missiles onto it. It became an overloaded vessel, not very good for anything except leaving the shore and launching missiles. In our case, we are talking about vessels that were adapted; we didn't develop those vessels, "Saar"-type missile boats that were based on a German navy boat that was actually a gunboat. I think it also had some torpedoes on it, but it was basically a gunboat. It was built of wood because it was supposed to sail the Baltic, which was mined. We approached the Germans and said that we would like some of those vessels, because they were excellent, very fast, seaworthy and still relatively small, 240 tons fully loaded. Major naval combatants come in sizes of thousands of tons. We asked them to make it out of steel, as that would have made for a lighter vessel than the wooden one. We didn't have a problem with mines, at least at that time. It's not that shallow here and it gave us much more volume for what we wanted to carry on it. The idea was to equip it with Gabriel missiles, remote-controlled in this case, 40-

millimeter short-range anti-aircraft guns effective range something like 4,000 meters against surface targets. They were called "Saar 2" (Saar in Hebrew means "tempest"). They were of superior speed, they could do up to 40 knots; that particular model could do something like 30 knots. They had a very good range. It could remain at 30 knots for 30 hours; in other words, it could travel up to 900 miles. The ranges to our enemy ports are anything up to 250 miles, so 900 miles meant that we could reach Italy. They had very good sea keeping and excellent power. The main thing to be emphasized was their state-of-the-art surveillance system, electronic counter-measures; everything that the best minds could develop was put into those vessels. It was a completely different concept. At the time the Gabriel was developed, its main target was the destroyer. Then on one of the firings tests we were using it to shoot at one of our old destroyers that were earmarked for sinking. The wind changed the aspect of the target (of course nobody was on the ship) and the forward part was very narrow and had a flare. There was a debate whether to launch the missile because it wasn't intended for such a narrow target. It was decided to launch anyway and the missile hit right where the anchor comes out. The engineers began checking if this was a freak occurrence, and it turned out that the seeker worked best if the target was smaller, so there was no problem: trying to decide where to hit, here it was very clear. So we understood that we had an effective weapon against small boats. We checked it on an old torpedo boat that was being operated at that time by a crewman who put it forward to 30 knots, jumped overboard and ran, and when he was clear the missile was fired and only some pieces of wood on the surface remained.

So we knew that we had a very good weapon, but as I said, with a range of 20 kilometers only. The Russians then went a little further; they took another torpedo boat, but a better one, almost the size of our vessel, but it could carry four "Styx" missiles. They also had a remote-controlled 30-millimeter gun and fire control radar. This was starting to be serious. So the focus little by little became that this was our target, not the destroyer.

Speaker: Was it sold to Egypt, or did just the Russians have it?

Ehud Erell: I'll come to the numbers in a minute. You'll be astounded by the numbers, but it was sold to Egypt and…

Speaker: The Iraqis had it.

Ehud Erell: What happened was that next we placed an order for twelve of those Saar boats, of two types actually, the Saar 2 and the Saar 3. The name "Saar 2" appeared because after we made the order (they were built in Cherbourg because the Germans didn't want to be the ones building war materials for Israel) so the Cherbourg shipyard, which was almost bankrupt and that was very good business for them, got the license to build the boats. And I'm talking just about the heart, because everything else was made here in Israel. What happened was that after the navy made the order, there were budget cuts, like always happens when there is a government changeover, and they announced that they were cutting down on three of our missile boats. The navy replied that it would decide what to do with the money. What happened was that the navy simply starved itself, put everything on hold just before the 1967 war, because nobody expected it and decided that the first three boats would not be armed, I mean not with missiles and all that, just with guns with men in the turrets, gunboats. The idea was (and it worked) that eventually we would get more money and finish equipping the missile boats. In parenthesis I'll say that what happened was that in '67 we had nothing to give us an edge against the other navies, and luckily for us, the air force and the armed forces did a fantastic job. Except for a submarine that tried to penetrate our waters, nothing really happened on the naval side. So we were quite lucky, but again there were those four missile boats. By the way, they were very modular. We could have missiles here, another set of missiles there or a gun here or there and so forth. That also had some bearing on what happened in '73, which I'm coming to. That was the Saar 3. We ended up with two types of boats: the Saar 2 and the Saar 3. The Saar 1 was a fluke. The Saar 2 was equipped with 40-millimeter guns and missiles. It had sonar and even anti-submarine torpedoes. The Saar 3 was the main surface vessel. It contains six of those missiles and a quite good 76-millimeter remote-control gun with a range of 16 kilometers; 76-

millimeter is not much, but it was very accurate. It was also anti-aircraft, depending on what shells you were using. This is a point that I want to illustrate here, because I'll get back to it later. Over here what you see is a 20-millimeter WWII gun. The reason it's there was that the main problem we had in those years was not really with regular navies, but with terrorists trying to infiltrate Israel and sometimes succeeding to arrive from the sea. Those boats were also used for patrols against missile boats; one of them got into a skirmish with a small rubber dinghy that originated from Lebanon and tried to penetrate our territorial waters. The terrorists in the dinghy were running circles around our boat and even managed to fire an RPG, which luckily missed its target. So it was decided to remove one of the missile turrets from the patrol boats and install something that you could fire right next to the boat. And that's the point to which we had arrived at the day before the '73 war broke out. Next there was the sinking of the "Eilat," a WWII British-made destroyer that was quickly put back into shape for the Six-Day War and was the only one we had in '67. Three weeks after the war began, it was sunk near Port Said, with 39 men on board, all of whom were lost.

We weren't surprised by this, as they shouldn't have been there, but it did drive home how fatal it can be if you're not prepared, especially against missiles. I'm mentioning this not to show how megalomaniac we were, but to explain that all of a sudden after the Six-Day War, we controlled all of Sinai and the coastline had suddenly became three times or four times longer. We also had interests in the Red Sea, since at that time we were on very good terms with Iran, and all of our oil was coming from Iran through a pipeline that bypassed the Suez Canal and brought Iranian oil by tankers to Eilat on the Red Sea, and from there by pipeline to Mediterranean ports. So it was also very important economically,

not just for security purposes. The Suez Canal was not far away after the Six-Day War. In Israeli shipyards we were building a vessel for that kind of sea, because the only way to get vessels there was to sail 12,000 miles around Africa and up to the southern tip of Sinai, to Sharm al-Sheikh, where we had a naval base. Here is an anecdote. We went back to the German designer and explained to him what we wanted, a boat that did everything that the smaller 250-ton "Saar" boat did, but had to be able to sail around Africa, meaning through the Indian Ocean, which was prone to hurricanes, etc. The story told in the Navy was that he replied: "Do you want a grand piano, too?" Nevertheless, he came up with a design that was actually an enlargement of the original boats, which were 44 meters long and weighed 240 tons. This one was 62 meters long and weighed 400 tons. The main thing was that it could travel very long distances. In order for the engineers to be able to work on a model of the boat, we didn't change the four MTU high-speed engines, but as the boat was bigger, this meant that it was a little slower, 34 knots instead of 40, but it was still a good decision. Furthermore, they were built in Israel. Just to give you an idea of how far they could travel: in 1976 the Americans had their bicentennial celebrations and they invited navies from all over the world; we sent two of those missile boats and they crossed the Atlantic on their own without re-fueling. They remained there, went down along the entire East Coast, and then down to South America because the industry here in Israel wanted to try and sell them over there, then returned to Israel. The "Saar 4" was an excellent, beautiful boat, the best I ever commanded. It had 76-millimeter guns fore and aft and it could carry eight of those missiles. It was a very strong vessel that could sail the Red Sea at 30 knots (a distance of 1,000 miles), remain there and then return. Around the Red Sea at that time we had Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan; nobody was friendly there and there was no air cover, nothing. I'm talking post-'73; we performed a lot of patrols in that area where today they have pirates, and the boat performed beautifully. There was a crew of 44. We always used to take some extra crew because there was always someone who

wanted to come, but the crew could fight with less. We could supply our own water, food, everything. It was a great boat.

Another anecdote: on one of the trips the boats sailed in pairs around the African Cape. I liaised with the South African Navy and we met. At that time it was greater South Africa and they called it South-West Africa; today it's Namibia. I suggested to the officer from the South Africa Navy that was with me to take a trip from there to Cape Town, which was about 700 miles. And he agreed and I said "Okay, see you tomorrow." He said "What do you mean, 'tomorrow'"? You mean in three days." I said, No, no, tomorrow." And he didn't believe me but it took them 24 hours and they were there. Fantastic boat.

As for the operational concept, the Styx has a range of 50 kilometers and the Gabriel a range of only 20 kilometers. We had to do something about that. The idea was to use our superiority in detection, to be able to detect them without their detecting us by using our radar detection systems, which were very good, very sophisticated and very accurate. We could triangulate, know where they were, call the air force to help us cross the gap and come in. If the Air Force did their job, great; if not, we'd finish them off. That was the basic idea. The idea was early detection, an air strike and tactical chaff, I'm not sure if it was the first time it was used, but we used it heavily. At least at the beginning when you fire it, tactical chaff looks like a strong target on the screen. Our idea was that they would see the chaff before they saw us. And it worked beautifully.

It was carried on the wind and spread around. But we had rockets that could travel something like 12 kilometers very far from us. The idea was to use tactical chaff to make them expend their missiles. We did everything we could to develop that capability and a lot of training. We knew that our lives depended on it, The generator was on board, a very dangerous idea. We knew that the Styx flew and searched for its target from infinity towards itself. So the idea was to shoot it very close to the vessel, so if it was already locked on us, we would rush towards the enemy missile at 40 knots and the chaff would stay behind, so the missile would remain with that. But that was very dangerous because we might not decide to use it, and we were actually making our target much bigger. We tried this in different ways; we didn't have a Styx missile, but we used, for instance, Air Force Phantoms, so they would lock on us and we'd tell the pilot to go after his lock, 300 feet above the sea. And it worked, except when you didn't fire it in the right direction with the wind; you had to know where the wind was coming from, because if it was coming from there and you were firing on this side, it would land here, as indeed happened during the war. This demanded tight control; from all our simulations and hours of training, we understood that it was going to be very difficult to understand what was what. So we performed lots of drills on a special simulator that was specially built for this purpose. I'm not talking about that specific battle, but a battle that we had three days later with the Egyptians; I remember one of the commanders exclaiming on the wireless: "Wow, it's just like on the simulator" and that's about the best thing you can say about a simulator.

What was the order of battle? The Egyptians had five destroyers, The Syrians had none and we had none. The Egyptians had 19 missile boats and the Syrians

had 9, so there were 28 against us. In addition, there were torpedo boats, gun boats, and so forth. They had 42, We had two, those "Saar 1"s that I mentioned earlier. We had no submarines; they had 12. This meant that we had to leave some submarine-chasing missile boats near our coast.

The war broke on October 6, 1973. It was a Saturday and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is the holiest day of the year on the Jewish calendar. You're in Israel now and you've seen that not everybody is religious. Nevertheless, the country closes down. Nobody's outside; they're either at the synagogue or at home, nothing moves on that particular day. Cleverly enough, they chose to attack on that day and it came as a complete surprise. At 1400 in the afternoon, both the Syrians and the Egyptians mounted a major attack on the borders. It was a surprise attack; everyone was surprised, apart from the navy. What happened was that for seven weeks the chief naval intelligence officer kept saying: "Listen, there's going to be a war; they're preparing for war." He had his own signs. For instance, the Russians had left Port Said. The Russians were deployed in the Egyptian port, but had left. He said that this was a sure sign of war. He observed other signs, but couldn't convince the rest of the intelligence community.

He approached the commander-in-chief of the navy, who went with him to the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and demanded that he listen to him. However, the C-in-C didn't accept his word either because he had his own intelligence officers.

Finally, the C-in-C of the armed forces told the naval commander in chief, "If you think there's going to be war, prepare for it." Just like that. I mention this because two days earlier we had performed a major drill, nothing to do with the war, and two of the boats, Saar 4s that were meant to go around Africa, were on a training voyage in the Mediterranean and on the way back they played the role of enemy destroyers attacking Israel, and the whole navy was out. This took place on Thursday night and we were out all night. On Friday morning (and don't forget that the war broke out the next day), we were all at a debriefing and the commander of the flotilla came in at 0700 Friday morning

(about 24 hours before the war started) and said that we were not going to have a debriefing. We were to go to our boats and prepare them for war. By this he meant that there was a lot of logistic preparation, as we had to exchange 20mm guns for missiles. When you install missiles you have to check them and it's a long process. We never went out with a full load of fuel or ammunition because it just made the boats heavier. At about midnight between Friday and Saturday we were ready. At that time I was the flotilla's operations officer. I went to sleep at about midnight. At 0400 in the morning I was woken up (I was a mere lieutenant at the time) and told to return to base, so I did so. I arrived at the base quickly (I lived nearby), and the word was that today, Saturday, at 1800 in the evening there was going to be a war.

From what I learned much later, at that time the head of the Mossad made a trip to London to meet with the top spy that we had at that time, and he told him about the intended attack at 1800. To this day, there's a controversy whether he was a double agent, and that he said 0800 on purpose because they were sure that we already understood that there was going to be a war, but they just wanted to throw us off by a few hours. We'll never resolve that controversy because he met with sudden death, that guy. Anyway, now we know that the head of the Mossad called Golda Meir from London and informed her of that, and this happened at around 0300 in the morning. I was a mere lieutenant and I got word at 0400. That's fantastic because unfortunately the guys who really got the brunt of the attack on the borders never knew what hit them when the war started. What we decided to do was send out the boats, some of them towards the Egyptian side, some of them towards Syria, because we didn't know exactly what was going to happen; we didn't even know for sure if there was going to be a war. This was strictly a navy decision, having nothing to do with headquarters. Of course some boats were left behind to guard against submarines, and the flotilla commander didn't want to decide which way he was going, so he ordered that one boat be left in port. I remember that at around half past one in the afternoon, I was walking on the pier and it was deserted; there was only one boat waiting for us. I told the captain, "Listen, if we don't

leave now, we'll miss the war. So we left and he was trying to decide which way to go; should it be Egypt? I mean, nobody could have known that there was going to be such a long war, so he couldn't decide.

The squadron leader was on that boat because there was more room since there were no armaments. That was a big mistake, no missiles, nothing. There were actually three missile boats out there waiting for orders. He decided to join them. By this time it was half past five.

When we left the port, the sirens sounded and we understood that we were at war. After a short while it was announced from headquarters that there had been an invasion and we were involved in a total war. On the spot the squadron leader decided that we were not staying there, but were going north. That was not the original plan, which was to wait somewhere on the Lebanese coast. Lebanon didn't have a navy to speak of, so we could do what we liked there. But going up as far as Syria meant that we would be out of the range of air cover. But the squadron leader was very aggressive; it was 19:00 hours and already very dark; we were something like 40 miles offshore. Immediately, according to protocol, we called up the air force, and of course they didn't come and I couldn't blame them: they had a lot on their hands.

I think the fantastic thing was that the squadron commander, the flotilla commander realized that, and after about five minutes he said "I'm not going to wait for them," and in spite of all the rules of engagement and everything, we decided to attack. We started rushing in, and with the tactical chaff, at a distance where we should have seen them on the screens; we opened our radar, but saw nothing. We lost heart a little and stopped the attack, regrouped; then it was decided to turn the other way and try to surprise them by arriving from the Turkish side, not from the south, from Israel. At around 2230 we didn't see the target at first, but only got a radar signal of a very small torpedo boat that we knew was a Soviet K-123 boat, as we knew that the Syrians had it. It was a very small vessel, about 16 meters long traveling at a high speed of 50 knots with a small crew. We didn't understand what it was doing there, such a small vessel and so far out, so it was very easy. We fired a warning shot, and the guy made

the big mistake of firing. He got every kind of bullet that we could put into him and stopped in his tracks. We still didn't know what was going to happen, but the squadron, flotilla commander said "I'm not leaving this guy afloat." Again, it was made of wood, so it didn't sink easily, so one of the boats was dispatched to finish it off by machine gun. Not the man, but the vessel itself. This was the decision because they didn't have the time to be able to search for them from something like 2,000 meters and shoot at them. So that was the reason this one was picked, and the rest of us started going a little to the north-west, because we supposed that they had warned off the Syrians, which they had. So now we were down to three missile boats and a gunboat. Again that was a mistake, because they should have left the gunboat, as it was something they could easily do without. Next there was a new target, immediately identified as a T40, a mine-laying vessel, maybe also a minesweeper, and worth firing a missile at. Incidentally, since we weren't yet sure how the missiles would perform, we didn't shoot that many during training. The normal procedure was to shoot one and shoot a second one a minute later, even before the first one hit its target. In this case, because we knew it wasn't a missile boat, we decided to waste only one missile on it. It hit, dead in the water, but it didn't sink. Later, the fleet's sweeper arrived and finished it off. What happened was, in my opinion, that those guys down there were just leaving port; maybe our triangulation wasn't very accurate and they went out on patrol. They didn't know anything about us until they heard from the torpedo boat. When we started going towards the minesweeper, we put out tactical chaff. They saw that and shot against it, from a range of 40 kilometers or something like that. All of a sudden we were really inside a battle, a missile battle, like we had trained for. You have to understand that those missiles were huge, like big balls of fire on the horizon coming at you; it looks low on the horizon but it isn't that low and it's coming towards you. We all turned against it, performing all the anti-missile tactics we had practiced, including informing headquarters. It was my job to tell headquarters that we'd been fired on and I can imagine how they felt, because it suddenly went quiet, since it takes something like two and a half

minutes before the missile arrives. In addition, we were not yet in range for our missiles. But it worked. I mean, their missiles missed, some of them were quite close, some of them were shot down, but they all missed. I don't think it was by chance. They missed because our tactics worked. We got into range. We even had enough time to say "You take this one, you take that one" and so forth. By that time, we were already in range, and there's even a fantastic photograph (that I couldn't lay my hands on for the presentation here), where you see two "Styx" missiles, balls of fire coming towards us, and underneath them you see two little "Gabriels" hitting them. I remember one case where the second missile we fired didn't find its target, but apparently it hit a missile that was still on deck and the vessel exploded. One of our vessels decided on a different tactic and went straight for the shore. They went aground and the flotilla commander, said "I'm not leaving you here." The vessel that we were onto came as close as it could, as it was very shallow, and from there it was possible to fire the guns. He went to make sure, and it was burning from stem to stern. From navy headquarters they said "Okay, enough is enough, it's almost midnight" so we left. I called it a clean sweep, building the force for the next war. It sounds obvious, but most of us made the mistake of preparing for the war that had just ended. We developed a detailed operational concept of operation and continued training at all levels. For instance, we did a training exercise two days before, including the commander of the navy; he was at navy headquarters and played his part in deciding to do this, that or the other. We had excellent intelligence beforehand, I mean, in our preparations, and also in some cases during the skirmishes we had very good intelligence. It was extremely important that we had a very short chain of command. I mean, the flotilla commander spoke directly with the commander of the navy, with no go-betweens. Sometimes, when the flotilla commander was occupied with dealing with attack, I spoke with the commander of the navy. He said later that he had even recognized my voice. He introduced a lot of submarine tactics and submarine thinking into our flotilla, especially the fact that everybody who is involved with submarines is very meticulous about details, rightfully so, since

otherwise they wouldn't survive. A lot of credit goes to him and he got a medal after the war. He had a very aggressive attitude.

At the same time, the other part of the flotilla was involved in something similar, not like with the Egyptians, and nothing came out of it, I mean, only one missile boat, the rest fled, because they waited for the Air Force.

Just a few words about the aftermath. Two nights later, we had another clean sweep, this time against the Egyptian navy; it was named "the Battle of Baltim". It also took place very far from our shores, that are the battle I was talking about that was exactly like the simulator; it was unbelievable how exact it was. Until the end of the war, if the Egyptian and Syrian navies left port, it was to shoot missiles at us from the entrance and go back; this meant that we could do whatever we wanted. It even came to the point, when I became commander of a vessel during the war, that I was sent as a lone vessel to the same place in Syria just to bombard their fueling facilities. The idea was to try and take the pressure off the Golan Heights. In any case, I got into a duel with tanks on the shore, which meant that they weren’t on the Golan Heights.