Israeli Warrior
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Maj. Gen. Moshe Dayan

THE professional soldier who commands the Israeli Army in the action against Egypt could hardly be more typical of the country's defense forces.

Maj. Gen. Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff, is a young, tough, native Palestinian, used to pioneer living all his life. He has been fighting the Arabs since he was 12 years old.

Man in the News

The general was born in 1915 in a kibbutz, or farm settlement, at Dagania, in a hot valley south of the Sea of Galilee. His parents also were sabras, or "prickly pears," as children born in such settlements are called.

When Moshe (the Hebrew spelling of Moses) was 6, the family moved with other volunteers to establish a swampy outpost called Nahalal, even more primitive than Dagania.

There the boy grew up, learning to shoot as well as plow. He stood sentry duty against marauding Bedouins at the age of 12, was trained at 14 in Haganah, the Jewish militia before the state of Israel was created, and engaged in fire fights with Arabs at 18.

When he was 22, he became second in command to Capt. Orde C. Wingate, British officer who was organizing Jewish commandos for the British Army in 1937. A little later, the British War Office, fearing that Palestinian Jews would employ their commando training against Britain, recalled Captain Wingate.

London was quite right. The future Israeli Chief of Staff formed a commando unit within Haganah, teaching his comrades all he had learned under Captain Wingate, whom he admired.

Britain, which then ruled Palestine under a League of Nations mandate, declared Haganah illegal. General Dayan was captured in 1939 and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

A Cloak-and-Dagger Man

In 1941, however, Britain required Palestinian scouts to help against the Vichy French and then Arab allies in Syria during World War II. For this purpose, General Dayan was released. He was among fifty cloak-and-dagger men who, disguised as Arabs, reconnoitered Syria for weeks.

He speaks Arabic fluently and is sunburned dark enough to pass. Besides, his close friends say, he can think like an Arab when it suits him. The scouts brought back the required information and then led the British advance into Syria.

It was during a battle in Lebanon that a telescope General Dayan was using was struck by a bullet, which cost him his left eye. Since then, he has worn a black patch.

After World War II, he continued in Haganah with the rank of colonel in command of a brigade. He took a leading part in the war with the Arabs in 1948-49 that resulted in establishment of Israel. It was he, also, who led a round-up of hundreds of Sternists, terroristic nationalists who had assassinated Count Folke Bernadotte, United Nations mediator in the Israeli-Arab war.

During that war, General



Can think like an Arab

Dayan led a group of jeeps armed with machine guns that cleared the Negev, and also captured the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramle. As chief military delegate for Israel, he signed the armistice with Jordan that ended that fighting.

In 1952, he attended the senior staff officers' school in England. He had not had much previous education, having advanced no further than agricultural high school at Nahalal. He has been Chief of Staff since December, 1953.

Broke a Leg as Paratrooper

Since 1953, General Dayan has insisted that every officer be trained either as a commando or paratrooper. He himself chose the airborne branch and broke a leg in a jump in 1955. As a junior officer, he led every attack of his unit, but as commander, he leaves that to the present junior officers.

At 41, he is of average size, trained hard and fine, with a square face and light hair rapidly receding. He drives himself furiously all the time, overworks his subordinates, never smokes or drinks or shows the slightest fear of anything.

He lives in a six-room house in a cluster of officers' dwellings near Tel Aviv, when he is not in the field. Since archaeology is his hobby, the house and garden are a museum of artifacts. Recently he has been taking night courses in economics and law in Jerusalem.

His wife, Ruth, daughter of a Jerusalem lawyer, heads the Maskit, an organization promoting handicrafts among Israeli housewives. They have a daughter, 17; another, 14, and a son, 9.

General Dayan has visited the United States three times. In 1948 he flew here with the body of Col. David Marcus, former Commissioner of Correction in New York, who had been killed as a volunteer with the Israeli forces against the Arabs.

The general later attended a United Nations session as an adviser to the Israeli delegation. His last visit was in July, 1954, when he toured United States military installations as the guest of the Government.

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