

H a p p y C h a n u k a h !



Friends of the Israel Defense Forces



National News

**Who can retell,
The things that befell us,
Who can count them?
In every age a hero or sage,
Came to our aid.**

(A traditional Chanukah song)

מי ימלא גבורות ישראל,
אותן מי ימנה?
הן בכל דור יקום הגיבור
גואל העם.

“...Two candles burn separately, but when overlapped create an even brighter light... Imagine if each of us bring just two more candles into the mix... and so on and so on!”

John Reznikoff, New York

Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yehiel Gozal



November, 2008

Dear Valued Supporters:

It has been five years since I took upon myself the mission of the FIDF National Director. During these five years I have had the privilege of getting to know the beautiful FIDF community and its wonderful members, who are true friends and like family. It has been five years of tremendous satisfaction.

Together, we have succeeded in building an important bridge over the Atlantic Ocean between America and Israel that connects all of us to the IDF soldiers.

Through your support, we were able to grant scholarships to thousands of veteran combat soldiers, we provided social aid to so many needy soldiers, and we embraced as our own family all the lone soldiers. When a soldier was injured or wounded, we were there for him or her. Your remarkable care also gave light and comfort to the lives of the families of fallen soldiers by hosting them in summer camps both in Israel and in the United States.

We can also witness the fruits of our labor all around Israel, where FIDF's presence is strongly evident through our construction projects. A wide range of IDF bases have new facilities that we built together so soldiers can relax in a club, work-out in a sport center, watch a movie in an auditorium, pray in a synagogue, or see a doctor in an infirmary that we provided.

This letter cannot possibly include the full list of our accomplishments, but each and every one of them is a result of your remarkable devotion to our cause, and your on-going involvement and generosity. Together, we have improved the lives and the future of the soldiers of Israel.

We are currently experiencing a harsh economic climate, which undoubtedly affects many. The IDF soldiers count on us through good times and bad, while they continue to carry on with the crucial mission of protecting Israel and the Jewish people around the world.

I am now handing the baton of the National Director's position to one of the best IDF combat commanders, my friend Major General (Res.) Yitzhak ("Jerry") Gershon. Gen. Gershon is a highly-respected officer, paratrooper and a patriot. I am certain that he will continue, with your help, the noble tradition of improving the well-being of our men and women in uniform. Together, we can achieve even greater results to benefit these brave and deserving heroes.

On behalf of Israel's soldiers and myself, I would like to thank you for a wonderfully successful five years.

May G-d bless you and the IDF soldiers. Happy Chanukah to you and yours.

Sincerely yours,

Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yehiel Gozal

Incoming FIDF National Director

Major General (Res.) Yitzhak Gershon has more than 32 years of distinguished military experience. General Gershon commanded top combat units in the IDF, with much of his service being on the front lines in Lebanon and Judea/Samaria. Gen. Gershon coordinated numerous special operations during the first Lebanon War and the "Defensive Shield" operation during the second Intifada, and led the Home Front Command in the second Lebanon war.

Gen. Gershon earned a BA and MA in Political Science (minor in Middle East studies) from Haifa University. He is a graduate of the British Royal College of Defense Studies in London.





Chalom and Anna Copelan/Bar-Eretz

promise, however, that even though we were leaving Israel, Israel would never leave us. That is why we instilled a strong Jewish identity in our children, Anna, Chalom, Arieh, and Lev-David.

In January 2007, after a life-changing trip to Israel, Anna joined the IDF and served as an IDF Spokeswoman. She was named outstanding soldier of her division, the IDF Public Affairs. Chalom joined the IDF in December 2006 and served in the prestigious Maglan Unit and, later, in the Haroov Division of the Kfir Brigade.

In August 2008, Chalom told us he will be coming home for the holidays in September and we were tremendously overjoyed. We missed him so much. But when he went to get his ticket and permission document, the army told him they ran out of funds to pay for his flight ticket. He hadn't been home in more than two and a half years. Corinne then called Friends of the IDF, and spoke to the California Chapter. The next day our son was told the money was there for his ticket! Now, as we are writing this letter, we have our son with us. We celebrated a wonderful Rosh Hashanah with him and spent Yom Kippur together.

Thank you for everything, Friends of the IDF, and may G-d bless all of you and the soldiers of Israel.

Corinne, Howard, Anna, Chalom, Arieh, and Lev-David
Copelan/Bar-Eretz

Thank you for bringing our son...

My wife, Corinne, and I came here from Israel in 1986 and settled in West Wendover, Nevada. I made an Aliya to Israel in July 1980, joined the IDF in 1982, and served in the 7th Armored Brigade - mostly during the first Lebanon War. Corinne made an Aliya from France in January 1981. Four years after getting married, we left Israel to help my parents' new business in America. We made a



Copelan/Bar-Eretz Family at their home in West Wendover



Flights for Lone Soldiers

They come from all over the world to join the IDF, become soldiers, and proudly defend their country...

Every year, about 2,800 lone soldiers, united by their determination and deep love for Israel, leave the comfort and safety of their homes and families to travel to Israel and enlist

in the IDF. One of the most difficult obstacles lone soldiers have to face is being away from their families and friends. In order to help them deal with that situation, FIDF funds the airfare cost for lone soldiers, enabling them to reunite with their families overseas. Spending time with their loved-ones and sharing experiences from IDF and Israeli life help these committed soldiers in carrying out their mission.

***Cost per soldier: \$1200**

Did you know?

**Your donation can be doubled with a matching gift from your company.
Contact your Human Resources Department for more information!**

“Thank you for the opportunity you’re giving me to keep educating my soldiers for love of the land, devotion, self-sacrifice, and persistence.”

IDF Sergeant Netanel Atek



"When we [celebrate], we will be grateful for the many sacrifices that have been made by the sons and daughters of this sacred and beautiful land -- for Israel's sake, for the sake of all Jews everywhere, and to the great benefit of every Freedom-loving human being in the world."

Rabbi Isaac Jeret, California

New Faces

Friends of the IDF welcomes two new Directors.

Michael Morris joined FIDF as the Director of the **Greater Atlanta region**. Mr. Morris is the owner of a national travel magazine and has owned and operated an Investment Banking and Stock Brokerage firm in the past. He is a board member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, The Georgia Aquarium and the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact our Atlanta office at michael.m@israelsoldiers.org.



Michael Morris

Charlie Levine is the first ever FIDF Director in **Maryland**. He is a former businessman who changed his career path and moved to the non-profit world where he served as the Executive Director of the Baltimore Zionist District. Mr. Levine is also the past Chair of the Baltimore Maccabi Games. The Maryland Chapter will mark the launching of its activities in a concert featuring the IDF Musical Ensemble on December 18th at Beth Tfiloh Congregation. For more information on our Maryland activities, please call the Maryland office at 410-486-0004 or e-mail: charlie.levine@israelsoldiers.org.



Charlie Levin

Welcome to Aspen

FIDF held its first event ever in Aspen, Colorado. Five families joined forces and hosted approximately 70 members of the local Jewish community for a Shabbat dinner of Israeli delicacies. Israel's military attaché to the United States, Major General Benjamin Gantz, was the keynote speaker at the event. The event began at 7 o'clock and was scheduled to last only two hours but the guests enjoyed the evening so much that they remained until midnight. The organizers concluded that "Aspen is now on the map of FIDF activity" and declared that they will host another event next summer, and possibly a winter event as well. Stay tuned!



The women of Aspen. From L to R: Jean Colen, Katie Rodan, Ann Deshe, Lisa Wolfe, Sherry Felson

Upcoming Events

War hero and former minister Avigdor Kahalani will speak in
Houston on December 8th
Denver on December 10th

For more information on our programs or events around the country, e-mail Oren Rosenstein, Director of Development, at oren.r@israelsoldiers.org.



Five young wounded veterans of the IDF traveled to the U.S. this summer to participate in the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). They joined 20 American wounded veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to cycle around the NY Metropolitan Area. Sergeant Itamar Solomon, one of the soldiers, was the keynote speaker at several events in Oregon and Washington State. In Bellingham, WA, he shared the stage with former IDF Lone Soldier Jeff Jaffe, now a local resident. Solomon

described how his unit stopped a suicide bomber headed for Tel Aviv. During the firefight, two bombs exploded, killing Solomon's best friend, and leaving Solomon with an arm separated from his body, an exploded lung, and a leg rendered useless. It took a year of hospitalization and 36 operations to repair Solomon's injuries. Jaffe described his experiences at the IDF and showed the crowd a souvenir he still has from those days: a can of Louf – the Israeli version of meatloaf – which used to be the IDF most common food for combat soldiers in the field.

In Portland, Solomon was hosted by Eric Kornblit and Rabbi Arthur Zuckerman, both of them former IDF soldiers who now lead FIDF activity in Oregon.

Sharing the Joy, Sharing the Pain



The Jewish coming-of-age ceremony in which a child becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and enters the world of adulthood is usually celebrated by the child's family and friends, who offer guidance and support through that important transition. But for the LEGACY children, who have suffered the loss of family members killed while serving their country as IDF soldiers, this celebration is a bittersweet occasion, marked with the painful reminder of a constant void.

As part of the FIDF LEGACY children program, which was created to help these children

celebrate their Bar and Bat Mitzvah in a unique and unforgettable way, 53 boys and girls from all over Israel traveled to the United States to enjoy a few weeks of fun in California and the Tri-State area. Thanks to the generous contributions of FIDF supporters from different chapters, including many American Bar and Bat Mitzvah children who chose to donate their Mitzvah gift to the LEGACY program, this trip became possible. The LEGACY children experienced summer camp adventures, stayed with welcoming Jewish-American families, and formed friendships they will cherish forever.

When asked about the highlight of the trip, they candidly responded in agreement that they enjoyed being able to talk about what they were going through, cry, and release some of their pain, because they were among friends who truly understand. "You know you are not alone. We are all in the same boat," said Gal, who lost his father in the Second Lebanon War. "This is the type of support no other person can give," Explained Rachel, the LEGACY project manager.



Mitzvah Project

Have you planned your Mitzvah Project yet?

FIDF has a great idea for you - share the excitement of your Mitzvah Project with the young men and women of the IDF! Organize a sports event, bake-sale, or fashion show, promote FIDF bracelets and pins, hold a gathering where your friends can meet an IDF soldier - whatever you choose to do, you can dedicate your own Mitzvah Project to the brave soldiers of the IDF.



FIDF Mitzvah Projects can be organized at anytime and by anyone. We will be there to help you with whatever you need and provide step by step guidance in planning your Mitzvah Project.

How can you dedicate your Mitzvah Project?

You can restrict your Mitzvah Project funds to any of our programs: from **\$60** for the DIGNITY program, **\$1,000** for helping a Young Soldier pay one-year tuition in an IDF-affiliated high-school, **\$3,600** for bringing a Legacy Bar/Bat Mitzvah child for a summer camp in the United States, and many other programs!



DIGNITY Program

When IDF soldiers put on their military uniform, socio-economic differences become invisible. However, there are approximately 18,000 soldiers struggling with financial difficulties and, when they go home to visit their families, must confront a very harsh reality. Battalion commanders and fellow-soldiers do their best to help their brothers in arms, but it is often not enough. Through the FIDF DIGNITY program, **you can help IDF soldiers live in DIGNITY.** Friends of the IDF offers special grants for soldiers in need and their families, as well as food allowances and holiday gift-vouchers. Over the years, the DIGNITY program has enabled thousands of young soldiers to pay their bills and keep their families afloat.



*The DIGNITY Program contributions are not specified, any amount for this program is appreciated.

Show your support for the IDF soldiers today! To make a donation, log onto www.israelsoldiers.org or call your local chapter.

BACKPACKS FOR SOLDIERS

Be with the Soldiers Wherever They Go...

Give an IDF soldier the helpful gift of a backpack. The FIDF backpack, given to all soldiers on their first day in the army, is great for carrying all their personal items while they are on the move from one military base to another.

*Cost for a FIDF Backpack per soldier: \$18





Lift their Spirits! And bring a Smile to their faces!

The political and military situation in Israel changes constantly and demands the unconditional dedication of IDF soldiers to always be on-guard and guarantee the security of their country. Their military activities leave them almost no time to relax and gather strength, which results in emotional and physical stress and a feeling of exhaustion. That's why taking a one-week break at one of FIDF Rest and Recreation centers, gives IDF soldiers the environment they need to recharge their batteries and boost morale. Each R&R center is equipped with lodging and dining facilities, swimming pools, fitness rooms, and entertainment areas where soldiers can enjoy concerts and other performances. In addition, FIDF also sponsors battalion activities such as fun and sports days, end-of-training ceremonies, and holiday celebrations.

***Cost per soldier for a SPiRiT week: \$120**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**FIDF Annual Gala
March 17, 2009
Waldorf=Astoria, NYC**



Spiritual Needs Program



Loyal to its Jewish tradition, the IDF maintains the historic spirit of the Jewish Nation by promoting a strong Jewish identity among its soldiers. It upholds Jewish religious laws, dietary practices, marriage and burial services, prayers, and the celebration of holidays. Friends of the IDF operates out of a moral obligation to fulfill the spiritual needs of IDF soldiers wherever they are by supporting these Jewish practices. Working closely with the IDF Rabbinate, which acts as the

exclusive military Halachic authority, FIDF provides the space and means for soldiers to pray and observe Jewish customs with their brothers in arms. The Spiritual Needs program provides prayer books, Torah scrolls, Tzitzits, Tefillin, and Tallits as well as holiday items such as Chanukah Menorahs, and Sukkahs.

By supporting the FIDF Spiritual Needs program, you can help preserve the Jewish tradition in the heart of every soldier.



*The Spiritual Needs Program contributions are not specified, any amount for this program is appreciated.

"It's incumbent upon every Jewish person to do something for the defense of the State of Israel."

Adam Tandlett, Vice President of Friends of the IDF

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Toll-Free: 1-888-318-3433

www.israelsoldiers.org



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GOOD NEWS! IRA CHARITABLE GIFTS RE-AUTHORIZED

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 has re-authorized the provision that allows you to make a tax-free gift from your IRA to Friends of the IDF. That means you have a new source of tax-advantaged funds to use to make a gift. If you're 70½ or older and don't want to pay taxes on your IRA, find out how your charitable giving just became easier!

For more information, contact us or log onto www.israelsoldiers.org

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