

# Bnei David The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel



Taking  
Responsibility  
for the Future  
of Israel













# Blazing the trail of leadership & responsibility in the army in education in the civil service

Bnei David, the Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel, was founded in Eli in 1988 by Rabbi **Eliezer Sadan** and Rabbi **Yigal Levinstein**.

The purpose of **Bnei David** Institutions is to produce idealistic leaders and responsible citizens who participate meaningfully in the Israel Defense Forces and the public sector, to promote the integration of the National Religious community in Israeli society, and to build bridges between the secular and religious communities in Israel.

Our vision is to raise a generation of leaders and citizens who will take responsibility for the welfare of Israel and participate actively in its leading institutions – the IDF, government and public service, and the educational system. We seek to train men of faith in the world of action, exemplary Jews guided by Torah values, who will lead by example and inspire others to follow them in the project of nation building.

The State of Israel, Israeli society and Jewish communities in the Diaspora benefit greatly from the contributions of Bnei David's graduates. Bnei David has 3,000 graduates of whom more



than 1,500 serve as IDF commissioned officers or as officers in the reserves. Others have chosen careers in Israel's education system, domestic and foreign security services, government and the civil service.

Twenty-four of our graduates have fallen in action against enemy troops and terrorists.

Bnei David graduates:

Lt. Col. **Emanuel Moreno** z"l

and Maj. **Roi Klein** z"l who were

killed in the Second Lebanon War in 2006, are paradigms of Jewish military bravery.

Lt. Col. **Moreno** served in the elite General Staff Commando Unit. The IDF War College studies his command leadership as a model of military excellence.

Maj. **Klein** saved his soldiers by throwing himself on a Hizballah grenade. His last words were: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is one."

### *Bnei David in numbers*

**650** students

**3,000** graduates

**1,500** career and reserve officers

**20** graduates are IDF pilots

**45** religious and secular mechinit

throughout Israel that have been established following Bnei David's success.

**28** years of exemplary educational work for the betterment of the IDF and the State of Israel.

### *In each graduating Mechina class:*

**60%** serve in combat units

**30%** serve in elite units

**10%** in support units

**40%** attend officers courses

**10%** build careers in the IDF





# A New Home for Bnei David's Mechina Program

When the Bnei David pre-army yeshiva academy (Mechina program) opened in 1988, with 70 students, the Beit Midrash was a converted auto parts factory. The Mechina student population has grown to 250, but the former factory building is hopelessly overcrowded and no longer complies with current building code standards.

## *The Mechina needs a permanent home!*

Bnei David has embarked on an ambitious plan to build a new center for the Mechina program. The 2,000 square meter floor plan for the new building includes: a central study-hall, classrooms, library, auditorium, conference rooms, memorial room and computer rooms. The new Mechina center will be situated on Bnei David's main campus in Eli.

## *Development*

Over the past few years Bnei David Institutions have continued to grow. There are currently 650 students in all our programs, and more than twice that number of applicants.

The Israeli government passed a law last year to provide budgetary assistance to all the pre-army programs, but this law also requires all our buildings to meet the building codes and to obtain all the necessary permits and approvals.

We have drafted a master plan for the entire Bnei David campus and are progressing on the design and construction of the new buildings we will need to meet the continued growth of our student body.







# Building Dedication Opportunities

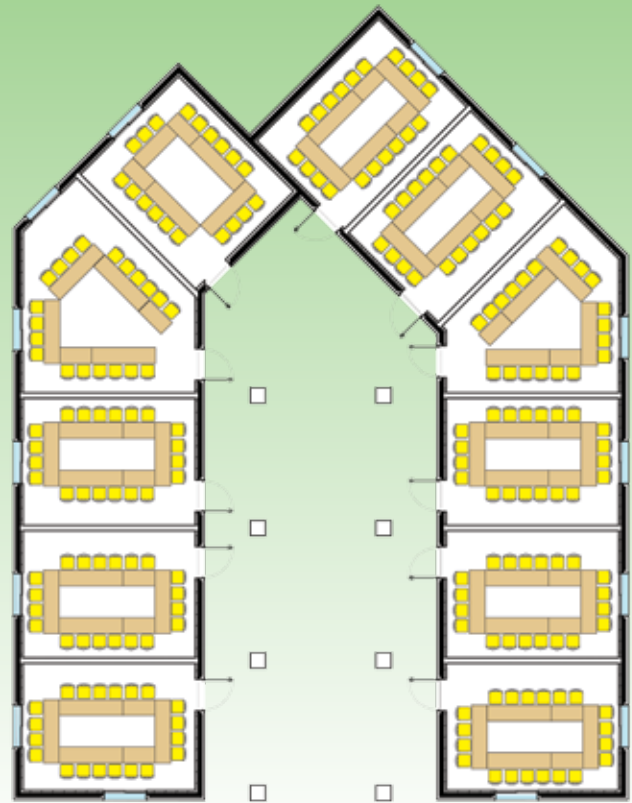


Bnei David Mechina Complex Name **\$2,000,000**

<b>1</b>	Main Entrance Foyer	<b>\$72,000</b>
	Main Entrance Mezuzah	<b>\$36,000</b>
<b>2</b>	Additional Entrance	<b>\$36,000</b>
	Additional Entrance Mezuzah	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>3</b>	Main Study Hall	<b>Dedicated</b>
<b>4</b>	Aron Hakodesh	<b>Dedicated</b>
<b>5</b>	Bima	<b>\$150,000</b>
	Ner Tamid	<b>\$36,000</b>
<b>6</b>	Hazzan's Podium - Amud	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>7</b>	"Ze Hashaar" Main Study Hall Entrance	<b>\$100,000</b>
	Main Study Hall Mezuzah	<b>\$36,000</b>
	Ruach Hakodesh – Main Study Hall Air Conditioning	<b>\$100,000</b>
	Ner Lamaor – Main Study Hall Lighting	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>8</b>	Bookcase (10)	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>9</b>	Otsar Hasfarim	<b>\$72,000</b>
	Otsar Hasfarim Bookcase (12)	<b>\$10,000</b>

	Otsar Hasfarim furnishing	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>10</b>	Beit Midrash	<b>\$260,000</b>
	Beit Midrash Mezuzah	<b>\$26,000</b>
<b>11</b>	Aron HaKodesh	<b>\$52,000</b>
<b>12</b>	Bima	<b>\$36,000</b>
<b>13</b>	Netsach Ysrael – Memorial Exhibition wall	<b>\$180,000</b>
<b>14</b>	Kohanim Nityilat Yadayim	<b>\$18,000</b>
	Beit Midrash Furnishings	<b>\$36,000</b>
	Beit Midrash Air Conditioning	<b>\$18,000</b>
	"Vayehi OR" Beit Midrash Lighting	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>15</b>	Rosh Yeshiva Study room	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>16</b>	Rabbi's Conference Room	<b>\$36,000</b>
<b>17</b>	Web Site Beit Midrash - Interactive Learning Room	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>18</b>	Melucha lecture Hall	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>19</b>	Memshala Lecture Hall	<b>\$150,000</b>
	<b>Mezuzah</b>	<b>\$3,600</b>





<b>Furnishings</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>Air Conditioning</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>
<b>20 Beit Midrash Plaza</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>21 Elevator Lobby</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

<b>22 Coffee Center</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>Kitchen Facilities</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>23 Terrace</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>
<b>Building for Advanced Studies Name</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>

## Building for Advanced Studies Name **\$1,000,000**

Emuna Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Bina Study Hall	<b>Dedicated</b>
Bracha Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Hod Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Hadar Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Chosen Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Netsach Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>

Oz Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Anava Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Tsedek Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
Tehila Study Hall	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Mezuza</b>	<b>\$3,600</b>
<b>Furnishings</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>
<b>Air Conditioning</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>

For more information please contact Lior Shtul  
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 Thank you for your consideration





**JG**

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**Givati Brigade commander  
Colonel Ofer Winter leads  
his troops in prayer —  
and then to battle**

# **Clouds of Glory over Gaza Sky**

BY *Aharon Granot and Eliezer Shulman, the Gaza border*  
PHOTOS *Yoav Dudkevitz, Lior Shtul*





Colonel Ofer Winter – the IDF Givati Brigade commander who has generated both praise and condemnation over the last few weeks since writing a religiously laced letter of encouragement to his soldiers – was together with his troops near the opening of a concrete-reinforced terror tunnel last Friday during what was supposed to be a humanitarian ceasefire. That didn’t stop Hamas terrorists – led by a suicide bomber who blew himself up in front of the soldiers – from opening fire. Major Benaya Sarel, his radioman Liel Gidoni, and squad leader Hadar Goldin were killed in the ensuing battle, and Colonel Winter himself was injured.

But injury and death notwithstanding, the dedicated brigade commander was back at the Givati command post at the beginning of the week, where he says he and his troops continue to see miracles and feel enveloped by Divine energy.

Ofer Winter, 43, married and a father of eight, is part of the more than one-third of the IDF officers corps who are Orthodox. He’s not the first officer to wear a *kippah*, but he’s set a precedent in going public with Biblical references of inspiration and in encouraging Torah study as being critical to the war effort.

Last year when he was appointed commander of Givati, Winter transformed the military ceremony into a veritable *hachnassas sefer Torah* for the brigade’s synagogue. As he was being honored for the coveted military appointment, he announced that he wanted to enter the position together with a *sefer Torah*, as did the Biblical Jewish leaders of old. He then proceeded to recite the *chazzan’s* pre-Mussaf Yamim Noraim prayer, begging for Divine accompaniment in leading his troops.

**Letter of Hope** Born and raised in the Haifa suburb of Kiryat Ata, he graduated from the Torani military academy affiliated with Yeshivat Ohr Etzion, and then continued to learn at Yeshivas Bnei David in Eli before military enlistment and officer training. He’s participated in the major battles of the last two decades, and is considered the IDF’s expert on strategy in Gaza.

On the eve of Operation Protective Edge, after he was selected to lead the combat forces in the current operation, Winter gained fame in religious circles, and notoriety in some secular ones, when he wrote a letter of encouragement to the soldiers under his command who were about to be deployed in Gaza’s ground invasion, saying that “history has chosen us to spearhead the fight against the terrorist enemy in Gaza, which curses, blasphemes, and reviles the G-d of Israel and His defense forces.” He encouraged his troops to accept the mission with



humility and beseeched the Heavens, writing, “I raise my eyes Heavenward and call together with you, *Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*. G-d of Israel, make our path on which we go successful, as we are poised to fight for Your people Israel against an enemy that abuses Your Name. In the name of the fighters of the IDF and in particular the brigade and the commanders, may the verse be fulfilled for us that ‘the L-rd your G-d goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you...’ Let us say Amen, in the Name of Hashem, and we will succeed.”

**No Atheists in Foxholes** While some secularist groups condemned Winter’s letter, warning of “a growing phenomenon of religious terminology entering the military... an extremely dangerous trend,” the executive director of an Israeli organization promoting religious freedom went further, labeling the letter “outrageous” and accusing Colonel Winter of turning the IDF into a “religious militia.” Winter returned the fire at his critics when he spoke to us on our visit to the Gaza front — the first and only interview on the subject.

“Whoever attacked me for that letter apparently has only seen a weapon in pictures, was never in combat, and doesn’t know what battle spirit is,” Winter told *Mishpacha*, and said that before going into combat, his custom is to read the blessing that the Kohein Gadol gave the army before it went out to war.

“There is not a single soldier — even the most secular — who does not recite this *tefillah* fervently before we engage in battle,” Winter continued. “With our soldiers risking that which is most dear to them — their very lives — that’s when he connects with his deepest inner truths, and when that happens, even the biggest atheist meets Hashem.”

He said soldiers have been engulfed in so many miracles that “it’s hard not to believe in G-d.”

Inside a cluster of gray tents, which looks like it just dropped down onto a huge swath of green, pastoral fields, sits the team whose epaulets indicate their senior rankings. Some are career officers while others are reserve officers who have left work and routine to fight.

We’re sitting in the command tent, the “war room,” the nerve center that manages the fighting in Gaza. Inside are huge computer screens displaying the war zone on maps and grids. Commanders lean over tables, studying pictures transmitted by those computers, following every move, every tunnel that is discovered and every suspect that is arrested.

“This is a strip of land that is flooded with terror from top to bottom. There isn’t a house there that does not have weapons, or tunnels, or bombs in the yard. There isn’t a family that doesn’t have someone who is a member of one of the terror organiza-



**There is not a single soldier – even the most secular – who does not recite this tefillah fervently before we engage in battle**

**—Col. Ofer Winter**



(L): Col. Winter enters his new post with a hachnasas sefer Torah ceremony. Below: With Mishpacha's Eliezer Shulman and Aharon Granot at the command center near Gaza



tions that manage the Strip. Still, we made sure not to target the population classified as innocent — we warned them, and they evacuated their homes. But when they come back to see the destruction, they will surely regret their close ties with terror and will understand the futility of their alliances. I want to reach a situation where our enemies will no longer have the wherewithal or the motivation to fight us. I believe that the ‘new’ Gaza, after our treatment, won’t be the same Gaza.

“Gaza is a hornet’s nest, but what guide me in my command in general, and in this operation in particular, are two principles: we don’t retreat without accomplishing, and we do everything we can to come back safely.”

The media might be giving an impression of tired, despondent soldiers who are getting trounced by terrorists with nothing more to lose, but Winter says that’s not the case at all.

“Despite the losses, motivation is tremendous, morale is high,” Winter said. “In fact, we’ve achieved our objectives more easily than we expected. We feel the Hand of Hashem in everything.”

Are those objectives being conclusively completed, or is there restraint on the political level? “I’m ready, the troops are ready... but it doesn’t just depend on us. We get the green light from the

political echelon.”

**An Extra Mitzvah** Winter remains in close contact with the *gedolim* of Bnei Brak and Jerusalem. He readily admits that he is constantly updating them on the situation on the battlefield.

“Before we went in, I was in touch with *roshei yeshivah* and *mekubalim*, including [a famous Jerusalem-based *mekuba*],” Winter relates. “I pleaded with them to daven for the success of the operation and of our soldiers in battle, and was told to undertake something extra upon myself, another mitzvah, another *hiddur*. So I pledged to daven Shacharis with extra *kavanah*. But in this war, the battle is 24/7, nights without sleep, and sometimes, I daven Shacharis having not slept the night. So the davening is a challenge, but I know that it is for my soldiers and I try to keep that in front of everything, to daven a bit longer and with more *kavanah*.”

Winter is sure that his prayers help, but even more than *kavanah* in a battlefield *tefillah*, the Givati colonel says the best weapon is the *beis medrash*. “Especially in time of war, when there is a strong desire to join the fighting forces, we have to emphasize again that what is most important for Am Yisrael is for *bnai Torah* to sit and learn with redoubled efforts. Learning Torah protects Am Yisrael more than everything else, and whoever can sit and learn is obligated to do that for the nation.”

There is no lack of miracles in this war, but Winter says in his military career he’s never seen anything like what happened last week during the fighting in the village of Hirbat Hizza. “We had planned a predawn raid in order to avoid detection, but the operation was delayed, and the sun was about to rise. We didn’t know what to do because dawn was breaking, and glimmers of light had begun to expose the soldiers. On the other hand, we had to attack — there was no turning back. And then suddenly, it was like the Ananei Hakavod were protecting us. A heavy fog enveloped the whole force, and remained there throughout the attack. No one saw us. Only when we finished the operation did the fog suddenly dissipate. It was literally Clouds of Glory protecting us, in fulfillment of the *pasuk*, ‘Because Hashem your G-d goes with you to give you victory.’

“If I were to hold a *seudas hoda’ah* for every miracle I have seen, the people who daven in our shul in Mitzpeh Netofah, where I live, would have to go on a serious diet. *B’ezeras Hashem*, after the operation is over, I will hold a massive *seudah* for all the miracles Hashem has performed for us during this operation.”







# **Bnei David Graduate Explains “Mixed Feelings” Upon Receiving IDF Medal**

*At a unique awards ceremony on Monday, Feb. 2, 54 IDF officers and soldiers were presented with military awards in recognition of their brave actions during last summer’s combat with Hamas in Gaza ★ The highest award, the Medal of Distinguished Service, was awarded to Lt. Eitan Fund, of the Givati Brigade’s reconnaissance battalion, for his famously heroic actions in searching for killed-and-abducted soldier Lt. Hadar Goldin.*

The incident occurred while a ceasefire was supposedly in effect in the campaign known as Operation Protective Edge. Hamas terrorists, eager to fight even during the agreed-upon lull, jumped up out of a tunnel within meters of several IDF soldiers and killed at least two of them. They then snatched **Hadar Goldin** and led him back through the tunnel towards Gaza.

**Lt. Fund**, a graduate of the **Bnei David** pre-military yeshiva academy



*First-Lt. Eitan Fund speaking at the ceremony*

in Eli, Shomron, didn’t think for long. He called three other soldiers – who also received citations for their actions – and led them quickly into the tunnel. His goal: To search for his comrade, dead or alive, despite the dangers. Unfortunately, he returned some long minutes later with very sad tidings.

“Lt. Fund went into the terror tunnel equipped only with a pistol and with no other protective gear,” according to the official letter explaining



Photos courtesy of IDF Spokesman's Office

Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Benny Ganz pinning the medal on First-Lt. Eitan Fund

the reason for his award. "He thus obtained evidence that assisted in establishing [Goldin's] death.

Representing the decorated soldiers, Eitan addressed the audience and explained the "complex" situation in which the award placed him. "For five months I have been troubled regarding this ceremony," he said, "wondering whether I would be able to accept this honor whole-heartedly. Now that I am here, I understand that I will never be ready."

"This occasion is a very complex one for me," continued Lt. Fund. "It combines mixed and opposing emotions, on both a personal and national level. Among them are sadness and joy; pride and confusion, and of course, life and death. Just like we, as a society, chose to combine Memorial Day [for Fallen Soldiers] and Independence Day, one after the other. This combination expresses

the nation's resilience, and the source of its strength."

Among the 11 soldiers who received citations from the Gaza Division commander was **Maj. Efraim Tehilah**, for whom this was his second such award; he also received a citation of merit for his conduct during Operation Cast Lead, in early 2009. Maj. Tehila – like Lt. Fund, a graduate

of the Bnei David pre-military academy – was awarded for having taken command of an encounter with terrorists when his commander was wounded.

Notably, two other graduates of Bnei David received awards, and the **Givati Brigade** commanded by Bnei David graduate **Col. Ofer Winter** received no fewer than 12 citations.







The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel  
מכינה ישיבתית לצה"ל  
Yeshiva for Discharged Soldiers  
ישיבה לכוגרי צבא  
Advanced Yeshiva  
ישיבה גבוהה  
Jordan Valley Branch  
שלוחת הבקעה  
Midreshet Danieli for Young Women  
מדרשה לבנות דניאלי

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