



Bnei David during Operation Protective Edge

Hundreds of Bnei David graduates who are serving in the IDF land, navy and air forces are participating in Operation Protective Edge, which is still under way as these lines are being written. We have been in constant contact with our alumni since the beginning of this campaign.

Rav Sadan sent a personal letter of encouragement to the soldiers and we have included an abridged translation of this letter for you. On the home front, our students went to volunteer in Ashkelon, one of the cities with the highest number of rocket barrages. Our rabbis have been visiting the troops at the assembly points, offering words of encouragement before the soldiers enter combat, and during the fighting Rav Sadan visited

the command centers, speaking with the officers either in person or via field communicators. The rabbis and students have visited the wounded in the hospitals and have participated in the funerals of our fallen graduates (see the separate article). We are continuing to stay in touch with the bereaved families and to support them in any way possible. After the shiva week Rav Sadan and Rav Levinstein met with each family to offer support and encouragement.

Accounts of the heroism of our graduates have been published throughout this campaign, with the most widely publicized story being that of Lt. Eitan, who ran down a tunnel to try to rescue Lt. Hadar Goldin, HY"D, who had been kidnapped and dragged away. Eitan threw a grenade



Rav Eli Sadan writes to the Bnei David graduates fighting in the war in the Gaza Strip



*Warriors of Israel,
May Hashem be with you.*

The Jewish people have been forced to plow the fields with one hand and wield the sword with the other from the very day we set foot in our homeland.

The Jewish state is the only country in the world forced to fight for its very existence unceasingly since its inception, 66 years ago.

A cruel enemy has risen against us to annihilate us. We are confronting a rogue state, which uses its own women and children as human shields to further its persistent project of destruction. This is an enemy that values death as much as we cherish life. This existential attack prompts one to ask: What is the meaning of the establishment of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel?



Commander Col. Ofer Winter to his troops in advance of their deployment



An excerpt from a communiqué that Bnei David graduate Givati Brigade Commander Col. Ofer Winter sent to his troops in advance of their deployment in Operation Protective Edge.

Dear officers and soldiers,

History has chosen us to be the vanguard of the offensive against the brazen terrorist enemy who never ceases to insult, scorn and revile the G-d of the armies of Israel. We have prepared and readied ourselves for this moment, and we undertake this mission as emissaries, in complete humility, knowing that we are risking our lives in order to defend ourselves, our people and our homeland.

I trust each and every one of you to act in this spirit – the spirit of the warriors of Israel who lead their regiments into battle. I raise my eyes to the heavens and call out together with you:



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◀ into the tunnel, on orders from Givati Brigade Commander Col. Ofer Winter (a Bnei David graduate, Class of 1989), and heroically chased the terrorists for hundreds of yards inside the tunnel. Items that Eitan retrieved from the tunnel enabled the IDF Rabbinate to conclude that Hadar had been killed, and to make arrangements for a funeral.



Givati Brigade Commander Col. Winter fought with his soldiers in the Rafah region, in the southern Gaza Strip. Excerpts from the letter of encouragement he sent to his soldiers are included with this newsletter. Many of our graduates are among the reservists who were called up to help the standing army. On the

Saturday night after all the forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip, a special evening was held at Bnei David for all our alumni who were involved in the fighting. The soldiers-on-leave spoke with the rabbis about their combat experiences, the dilemmas and halachic questions that arose in the field and the many miracles they saw.

We would like to thank all the



rabbis and communities who sent us assistance and donations for the soldiers, and our friends who helped the Givati Brigade to hold a respite day full of fun for the wives and children of the officers.

We hope that this campaign will end soon and quiet will return to this region. ■



◀ Rav Eli Sadan

We, who follow the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu and live our lives by the Written and Oral Law, take it as axiomatic that the State of Israel is the first flowering of our redemption. We know also that the promised road to redemption is hard and winding. Our sages spoke in many places of wars and all manner of afflictions, physical and spiritual, that will befall us en route. These predictions are coming true before our very eyes.

Even though they knew the difficulties that lay in store, untold generations of Jews have longed and prayed to live to see this day. Our generation has been given the privilege of being the ones to witness the beginning of our redemption. We are now active partners with G-d in bringing this process, the redemption of Israel, to its completion. We give thanks to Him for granting us this historic opportunity.

However, we do not stand alone. The miracle known as the State of Israel came into being and continues to flourish through the combined efforts of vast numbers of Jews who

arrived at these shores after the long and bitter exile. A mosaic of Jews of all persuasions, divided on essential and profound issues of cultural values, political ideals and national identity – yet jointly committed to the State of Israel.

Without question, times of trial and tribulation await us. We must prepare ourselves for crises and setbacks. Reality is complex, and the path to redemption strewn with instability. But one thing is clear beyond any doubt: the eternal people of Israel have reemerged in all their glory. We remain undeterred by the long road that lies ahead. We stride forward, proud of our mission, restoring the life of our nation!

May G-d give you, dear soldiers, the strength to carry through and prevail. Of Yosef it is written: “G-d gave him success in everything he did.” (Bereishit 39:3). May that blessing be yours! In the name of all Israel, I say to you: “Go in peace and return in peace.”

You are in my thoughts constantly. I pray for all of you.

*Love,
Eli Sadan*



◀ Col. Ofer Winter

“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is one.” Hashem, the G-d of Israel: Please grant our efforts success. We are going out to battle for the sake of your people Israel against an enemy who reviles your Name. On behalf of all the troops of the IDF, and the commanders

and soldiers of our unit, I ask that what is written in the Torah come true for us: “For it is Hashem your God who is going with you; He will fight for you against your enemies and He will deliver you.” (Devarim 20:4) Amen!

*United – the victory is ours.
Col. Ofer Winter
Commander, Givati Brigade*

Lighter than eagles and stronger than lions **Bnei David graduates who fell in Operation Protective Edge**



Captain Zvi Kaplan, z" data-bbox="340 150 465 221"/>

Captain Zvika Kaplan was born and raised in the Neve Sha'an

neighborhood of Haifa and attended Bnei David following high school. Zvi joined the IDF's Golani elite reconnaissance forces and served in a number of command positions, the last of which was company commander in charge of operations. He was killed during Operation Protective Edge, on 22 Tamuz, 5774 (20 July, 2014) in a fierce battle in the Sajaiya neighborhood of Gaza City.

About a year ago Zvi completed his B.A. at Bar Ilan University, with excellence, in a program that combined his officer training and IDF service with academic studies. He was married and had two sons.

His friend and classmate Naftali wrote the following after Zvi's funeral: "Zvika my beloved friend, it is difficult for me to summarize who you were in a few words. Today at your funeral many people spoke about you, and each mentioned what you were to each of them – son, father, husband, commander, friend. All of these joined together in one so-special person, a person with a winning smile, genuine sincerity, belief in the path you had chosen, and perhaps above all, aspirations for good and wholeness. In each and every moment of your life you gave your all to whatever you were doing, and never gave in. The rabbis tell us that when the righteous die, they are called 'living' because we continue our lives along the path they showed us, a path that does not end, but rather grows stronger."

Adi, Zvi's wife, eulogized him: "Zvika, my dear husband, my wonderful home is you. In this house we grew and raised an amazing family – Elkana and Nadav, your wonderful sons whom you loved so much. There was nothing in the world more important to you than them. You gave them such a good education. People would say to me, 'You are raising the children alone.' And I would reply, 'What are you talking about?' Your presence in our home was so profound, even when you weren't there. Your faith was so deep and your motivation so strong to return honor to the Jewish People. And your way, of standing strong every step of the journey, of uncompromising success, was passed on to your soldiers. Your soldiers admired you so much, and I love them all. My dear Zvika, you were a man of truth, humility and faith. A tremendous tzaddik. I will continue to follow in your footsteps, because this is the right way. My beloved, you will be an advocate in heaven for the whole Jewish People. All the angels are waiting for you with open arms. Rest in peace and serenity, and we will be fine." ■



Lt. Hadar Goldin, z" data-bbox="687 140 913 175"/>

Hadar Goldin and his twin brother attended Bnei David for two years. Prior to his studies here he was a Bnei Akiva youth movement counselor and in the IDF he completed an officer training course at the top of his class.

In an interview to Arutz 7 newspaper at the end of the officers course, Hadar said that he viewed his IDF service as paramount in his life. "Everyone should realize the importance of dedication and giving. Not specifically in combat service, but more as a state of mind, carrying a stretcher together, devotion to others, love for one's people – with tremendous love, a tremendous sense of mission and tremendous self-sacrifice.

Lt. Hadar Goldin, commander of a Givati reconnaissance team, was killed on 1 August, 2014, during combat in Rafah during Operation Protective Edge. On that Friday morning, shortly after the announcement of a humanitarian ceasefire, a hail of bullets assaulted a group of soldiers searching for tunnels. A terrorist carrying a bomb exploded himself near the soldiers. Major Benaya Sarel, commander of the Givati reconnaissance company and First Lt. Liel Gidoni were killed on the spot, and when the smoke cleared, Hadar Goldin was missing. Initially there were fears he had been taken captive, but after about a day and a half, based on items retrieved from the combat area by Lt. Eitan (a Bnei David graduate, Class of 2009), and in consultation with rabbis and medical personnel, the IDF announced Hadar had been killed in action.

Hadar's father eulogized his son: "Quite simply, Hadar was full of happiness and joy. He found the way to see the bright side of every situation. He smiled at everyone he met. That's why it's so hard to cry for him, to cry over him. Through our tears, we will all always remember his bright smile, which is the most important first step in communication. This is what Hadar taught others, and there is nothing better than for us to continue in his footsteps."

Rabbi Pinhas Etzion, one of Hadar's teachers at Bnei David, also eulogized him: "Hadar! I swear to you – your soul will yet have a great impact on others. Your noble soul will continue to appear in thousands of Hadars, in millions of souls that are waiting to hear your voice – tens of thousands of homes will yet be built like yours, and the life forces of Hadars will rise up and appear..."

Our dear Hadar, you know what you were fighting for. Not for quiet for the southern towns, not for an iron dome/yarmulke or some arrangement or another. You were fighting the battle for the dome/yarmulke of faith, the dome/yarmulke of heaven. The forces of purity against the forces of burrow dwellers and cave diggers – who do not know sunlight – "Those who dwell in darkness will be silenced, and considered as nothingness."

Hadar is survived by his parents, an older sister and brother, his twin brother and his fiancée. Hadar was killed less than two months before his wedding day. ■

More power for Bnei David students



With the help of friends of Bnei David, we have begun distributing mobile phone travel chargers to Bnei David alumni serving in the IDF. Rabbi Yoel Rechel visits our soldiers in all the IDF units throughout the year, bringing them words of encouragement and a small gift of appreciation that will help them keep their phones charged and keep in touch. ■



Mishna study cycle completed during the fighting

A Bnei David alumnus who was called up on reserve duty for Operation Protective Edge came to Bnei David during a break in the fighting in order to hold a siyum celebration on his completion of studying the entire Mishna (Shas), which he has been reviewing for the past year. Learning Mishnayot on a regular basis is an important part of the studies at Bnei David. At the beginning of each year the mechina students receive Seder Moed, a main section of the Mishna, as a gift from one of our friends, in memory of his father, z"l, in the hope that they will all complete a review of all six sections (63 tractates) of the Shas by their induction date. Over the past year 30 mechina students completed a cycle of study. ■



Mechina students thirst for Torah



The Mechina program's class of 2014 enjoyed their studies here so much that over 100 have chosen to defer their induction into the IDF and spend another year learning Torah in the Beit Midrash. The Mechina students celebrated the completion of the school year by crossing Lake Kinneret on hand-made kayaks. They dedicated their efforts to the memory of Eyal Yifrach H"YD. ■

Visitors at Bnei David



The Chief Rabbi of Israel

Bnei David hosted **Chief Rabbi David Lau shlit"א** at the end of May, shortly before Shavuot. Rabbi Lau delivered a shiur on to Bnei David's entire student body, on the importance of constant Torah study. ■



Minister Naftali Bennett

Minister of Economy **Naftali Bennett**, who heads the Jewish Home party, visited Bnei David in June, during the 18-day intensive search for the three Yeshiva students kidnapped (and subsequently murdered) by terrorists. Eyal Yifrach H"YD, one of the three, had been a student in Bnei David's mechina program. Minister Bennett offered his support and encouragement to the mechina students and staff. He spoke movingly of his close friend Lt. Col. Emanuel Moreno H"YD, an elite Matkal Commando and Bnei David graduate. Humble and modest, Lt. Col. Moreno was a giant of a man. The IDF Officers

Training Institute studies his leadership as a model of military excellence to this day. ■



Bnei David's oldest benefactor



Bnei David is blessed with a wide circle of friends and supporters across the globe. Our oldest friend, **Yitzhak Arbel**, recently celebrated his 100th birthday with a visit to Bnei David, the place that embodies his ideals, and in which he has invested so much. We wish him many more years of health and happiness. ■

The Chief Rabbi of Britain

U.K. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis led a delegation of 50 British rabbis on a recent visit to Bnei David. After enjoying the atmosphere in the Batei Midrash, the delegation met with Rav Sadan, who expounded the Bnei David philosophy of faith in the practical world. Rav Sadan presented each of the rabbis with his booklet "Pathways for National Zionism," and his books, "VaYehi Yadav Emunah" (His Hands Remained Steadfast), a compilation of his shiurim on current affairs over the years, and "Doleh Umashkeh," (Teaching what one has Learned) in-depth analysis of issues discussed in the Talmud. ■





Jerusalem Day flag procession

Our students spent Jerusalem Day, which marks the reunification of the city during the Six Day War, in the Holy City. Their day began with a tour of historic battle sites in Israel's wars. In the afternoon they joined the traditional flag procession from the city center to the Western Wall. Rav Sadan marched at the head of the Bnei David delegation. ■



The Nehama family visits in Baltimore

The Jewish community of Baltimore, Maryland is home to many of Bnei David's supporters. Bnei David graduate Lt. Col. Hezi Nehama spent the past academic year studying at the U.S. Army War College in Pennsylvania. The Baltimore community invited Chezi, his wife and seven children for a Shabbat before their return to Israel. The Nehama family captivated their hosts with their accounts of the challenges faced by families of high ranking IDF officers. Hezi is continuing his career in the IDF as Givati Brigade Deputy Commander. Another Bnei David graduate, Col. Avi Bluth, will be on academic leave at the U.S. Army War College in the coming year. We wish both families much success. ■

The Mechina Program launches 5775 school year in new dining hall



Bnei David Institutions continues to grow by leaps and bounds. The old Mechina Beit Midrash – the study hall for over 3000 Bnei David graduates, can no longer accommodate the Mechina program. The Mechina students will hold classes in the north wing of the dining hall building, while the Advanced Yeshiva classes, which had been using the dining hall, will move to the vacated old Mechina Beit Midrash until Chanukah, when the construction of their new Beit Midrash is due to be completed. We recently finished the landscaping



for the dining hall complex, including a new access road and parking lot. The fundraising drive for the expansion and renovation of the Advanced Yeshiva Beit Midrash is in full swing. ■



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