



THE volunteer CONNECTION

Editor's Corner — *VFI Success*

Why I Volunteer?

About nine years ago, I “discovered” VFI and became involved. The highlight for me continues to be an annual winter deployment. The volunteers with whom I serve are a mosaic of age, race, ethnicity, religion, education, vocation, veteran, credentials. To me they are simply volunteers, connecting for a short period enduring personal sacrifice to serve a purpose.

I volunteer to help others.

I volunteer to find ways to give back.

I volunteer to help bring about positive change.

I volunteer to be with others of high spirit and purpose.

I volunteer to connect with brave patriotic people.

I volunteer to effectively channel my skills for the benefit of others.

I volunteer to help others enjoy the blessings I have received.

I volunteer because it is emotionally & physically fulfilling.

I volunteer because it is personally rewarding and I like it.



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The Situation Room — The WikiLeaks Cold War in the Middle East

The diplomatic cables recently unveiled by WikiLeaks confirm that Iran's rapid push for regional dominance is THE key strategic process taking place in the Mideast sandpit today. Little to do with Israel, peace initiatives, Gaza, etc.

The leaked cables show a broad Iranian involvement and interference in political matters across the entire region, their upcoming nuclear arsenal merely the most highlighted and worrisome element. Not a surprise in Israel, Mossad warned us of this long ago.

The cables also provide added shades and depth to an already acknowledged picture of a regional cold war where Iran is attempting a hostile takeover. Any way you cut it, in addition to the wave of global anti-Israeli sentiment, this has been another trying/challenging/chilling time for Israel.

This threat is also uppermost on the minds of the rulers of most Arab states, particularly the Saudis who begged the United States to take the lead and “cut off the snake's head,” and were rebuffed by an absence of U.S. urgency. The Saudis have deep fears and are among

those who are now expediting work to counter Iranian subversion, in addition to buying more than \$60 billion of new U.S. war hardware.

The familiar methods begin with creating local Islamist proxies, termed “mini-Hezbollah” by Saudi King Abdullah, and who sees themselves as guardians of the Sunni Moslem faith.

The cables illustrate where Teheran's fingerprints appear in the Middle East and they include Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, Syria. Then there is the involvement of Iran's Revolutionary Guards in shipping weapons to Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War by using the Iranian Red Crescent relief organization as cover.

Instead of stunning secrets, most of the messages show the limitations of U.S. policy as leaders confront messy and all too real 21st century geopolitical dilemmas.

The Iranians, cradle of the Shite Muslim sect, and their friends have ambitions that can't be accommodated. So in the long run, we are back to fight or flight. Unfortunately, a third way seems to elude us.



VFI National President's Message

Vade's View — Winter 2011

When you read this, we will be in the new year. I hope that 2010 with all its challenges was fruitful for you as you look forward to 2011.

Again, you have responded to the call to volunteer. For 2010, VFI has processed 661 volunteers. Thanks to those of you experienced volunteers who go as often as you can. Also, a special thanks to the over 300 who were first time volunteers during 2010.

Many of you have inquired about assignments related to cleaning and replanting trees burned from the terrible fire in late November and early December. We are informed by Sar-El that requests for

volunteers may come in the near future. In fact, by the time you receive this, we may be asking for volunteers to help in this effort. So stand prepared as there will be days and months of work to perform in order to repair The Land.

Always feel free to contact me either through my email, vadebolton@comcast.net, or my cell number which is 703-405-3164.

Vade Bolton
National President
Volunteers for Israel, 703-405-3164

Perhaps nowhere else on the globe does there exist a greater discrepancy between perception and reality than Israel.

VFI Officers and Board Members for 2011

We asked our Board the question: "What was your single most valuable personal VFI experience?" Below are their individual thoughts.

Officers

Vade Bolton, National President, VA,
703.405.3164, vadebolton@comcast.net
For me, it has been and continues to be a way for me to be connected to Israel and believe I am making a real contribution to this Land I love.

Dina Fisher, Vice President, CT
860.521.3246, dfisher@rc.com

Terri Seiler, Treasurer, MN,
218.729.1014, terri.seiler@gmail.com
Soldiers coming up to say "you are crazy to be doing this, but thanks" and even better, "thanks. I love you".

Ed Kohl, National Coordinator, MI
248.788.0551, michigan@vfi-usa.org
The joy, fulfillment and wish to return to Israel as soon as possible from the returning volunteers.

Jay Bernstein, Recording Secretary, NJ
201.447.2166, caribu@optonline.net
Worse moment: Seeing the real gruesome face of war (Gulf War scud missile attacks Jan. 1991). Best moment: Meeting my wife thru VFI! (3 kids and 19 years later!!).

Board Members

- **Renee Bassell**, CA
Attending flag-raising every morning always brought the tears falling down my cheeks. I do remember the times pre 5/14/1948.
- **Mila Bensonoff**, MA
- **Jonathan Brandow**, PA
The dose of reality from Israeli soldiers and workers on base.
- **Larry Feldman**, MD
Exchanges with IDF soliders—gaining a better understanding of their perspective of

American Jewry and U.S. support for Israel and sharing our perspective with them.

- **Anna Krasko**, MA
A combat soldier specially boarding our VFI group bus to say that our solidarity makes each of his days brighter.
- **Gail Mirrow**, OH
At Base Golani it was wonderful to meet parents of young soldiers who had worked so hard for their graduation.

- **Steve Plotkin**, DE
A confirmed sense that I am really making a noticeable difference.
- **Marian Sacks**, MD
- **Ken Schneider**, RI
Sitting at dinner with other volunteers and lots of soldiers. I noticed the soldiers had a puzzled look on their face. Who are these foreigners helping and eating with us? I moved over to them, told them who we are, what we do and why. The smiles and

appreciation was incredible!

- **Barry Stein**, PA
Carol & I were taken for Israeli workers by tourists photographing our archeology group digging at Bet Shean. Our grimy-appearing group was working in a square that we had excavated to a depth of more than seven feet.

- **Carol Stein**, PA
I learned how self-sufficient I am and how to weld a tailpipe under a bus.
- **Sharon Stein**, NY
- **Leonard Sydney**, NY
- **Kay Warren**, CA
- **Mark Werner**, NC
My most valuable personal VFI experience was the shared memories and father-son bonding derived from volunteering with my son David.

The Temple Mount Sifting Project

The Temple Mount Project, since 2005, has been dedicated to recovering archaeological artifacts from 300 illegal truckloads of soil removed from the Temple Mount by the Arab Authority during the construction of an underground mosque during 1996-99.

So what do participants actually do? They join in the wet sifting phase of the work, which involves a bucket of detritus material soaked in water, spilling it onto a screen, and spreading the mud out evenly. Then the treasure hunt begins. The finds actually include ancient coins, rings, shards, bones, parts of mosaics, etc. It is an absolutely authentic Indiana Jones breathtaking eye-opener for kids of all ages!



There is no age limit and participants should come with comfortable work clothes and shoes that they don't mind getting dirty, since the work is outdoors and involves both water and mud. The work is done under a shelter during summer and inside a greenhouse during the rainy season. For reservations, please call (972)-(2)-6268700 or *6033.

THE VFI PROGRAM

*Freedom, discovery, encounters,
Escape, mystery, exploration, service.
Have it all in one place – Israel.*

*Volunteers for Israel – specialists
in life-changing events.
And it's tax deductible.*

OUR FAVORITE THINGS AT NAHAL SOREQ

(Sung to the tune of My Favorite Things from The Sound of Music)

Corn and canned tuna, cucumbers, tomatoes,
Olives and pickles, humus, potatoes,
Showers that flood the floor, with doors that won't close,
Nahal Soreq we'll remember you most.

Yossi and Avraham, Vova and Moshe,
Breakfast and lunches and dinners cooked kosher,
Kitbags and duffle bags packed and repacked,
From warehouse to warehouse we dragged and restacked.

Chorus:
*Cleaning toilets, scrubbing showers,
Wiping down the sinks,
With little detergent, no cleaning supplies,
The sherutim still stink.*

Three little puppies with no home or shelter,
Looking for handouts in heat that swelters,
F15s flying high both day and night,
IDF Air Force already to fight.

Beit Oded weekends, Tel Aviv and Yafo,
Schwarma and shishlik and tasty felafel,
Days at the beaches with oil on our skin,
These are a few of our favorite things.

Chorus

Tools wrapped in plastic and guns dipped in oil,
We volunteer because we are loyal,
To Israel, the country we deeply love,
If we don't do our work, we'll get a shove.

Chorus

Madricha Elin, Madricha Esti,
Look after us so well, though we can get testy,
Meetings in the shechem, and day trips by bus,
Soldiers with M16s protecting us.

Chorus

Allen E. Gold
Allen_Gold@ohnp.uscourts.gov

Donations Received by VFI (July 1 – December 12, 2010)

Donor

Sylvia Altman
Sol Bernstein
Morton Blager
Candace D'Ambrose
David Friel
Richard Gaines
Jeanette Gellman Guss
Kenneth Kabb
Maxine Karns
Maxine Karns
Maxine Karns
Jerry & Linda Koenig
Richard Lapin
Adrienne Mannis
Robert Marcus
Robert Marcus
Glaucio Romeo
Glaucio Romeo
Roberta Schaffer
Arthur Simon
Debra Skaroff
Monique Stampleman
Carol Weir
Henry Wisner

Charles Berkman
Dan & Janet Blyweiss
John Coyne
Joel Geliebter
Rita Frost
Rita Frost
Francine Koppel
Vivienne Koreto
Sam & Nancy Levine

In Honor of

Harry Altman
Benji Bernstein
Ed Kaplin
Malka
His 55th Wedding Anniversary
Brent Gaines
Her Family
Ethel Epstein
Larry Karns Family
Dan Karns Family
Zollar Family
Ted Dyer
Sarah Lapin
Kay Vlasak
Allie Freeman
Britt Freeman
Renee Bassell
Ceilia Menczel
Brenda Schaffer & Michael Rubin
Ed Kohl
Roni Saks
Carol & Ray Weir
Celebration of her wedding
Richard Bernstein

In Memory of

Minnie Berkman
Florence Rothstein
Tauba Salomon
Edyth Geliebter
Francis Caro
Varian Fry
Morton Koppel
Edyth Geliebter
Brett Fenster

Donor

David Lipman
Joseph Rine
Zachary Margolies
Patsy H Moore
Raymond Pierce
Jeanne Schachter
David Shulman
Larry Schlein
Janet Sheiner
Bernard & Leah Weinberger
Josephine Birnbaum
Jane C Bressler
Glenn Gerber
Sheryl & Jeff Goldman
Joan Goodman
Heather Maione
Ruth Olenick
Poses Family Foundation
Bill & Elaine Propp
Susie & Micheal Silverstein

Jewish National Fund Trees planted for the following:

Renee Bassell
Renee Bassell
Alex & Bruce
Alex & Bruce Stanley

Alan & Barbara Cornblatt
Alan & Barbara Cornblatt
Alan & Barbara Cornblatt
Alan & Barbara Cornblatt
Alan & Barbara Cornblatt
Alan & Barbara Cornblatt

In Memory of

Lillian Lipman
Shlomo Marmor's father
Risa Goldman
Dick & Shirley Ellis
Lucy Craft
Jeanne Schachter
Stanley & Zeldia Shulman
Samuel & Evelyn Schlein
Hy Sheiner
Max Weinberger
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings
Shirley Tydings

In Honor of

Alan B & Lucy Fein
Samantha Liberman & Joseph Spector
Stanley, Alan B & Lucy Fein
Samantha Liberman & Joseph Spector

In Memory of

Judy Alden
Jacob Hersh
Paul Carr
Eileen Zisk
Robert Sullivan
John Hoffman

Volunteer Program Schedule for 2011

Programs start only on the Sunday and/or Monday shown below. Volunteers can join for 1, 2, 3, or more weeks. Classes in Hebrew for beginners (the Ulpan option) are designated.

2011 SCHEDULE — 29th Anniversary Year

Jan. 16/17-Feb. 3, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Feb. 6/7-Feb. 24, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Feb. 27 – Mar. 3, Special 1-week program
Feb. 27/28 – Mar. 17, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Mar. 20/21 – Apr. 7, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Apr. 10 – Apr. 14, Special 1-week program
May 1-5, Special 1-week program
May 9 is Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day); May 10 is Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day). Spend this special week in Israel before or after a program and join in an IDF ceremony.
May 15/16-June 2, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
June 12/13-June 30, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
June 12-June 30, International Youth Program, Special 3-week program for volunteers ages 17-25 from around the world.
July 3/4-July 21, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
July 3-July 21, International Youth Program, Special 3-week program for volunteers ages 17-25 from around the world.

July 24/25-Aug. 11, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Aug. 14/15-Sept. 1, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Sept. 4/5-Sept. 22, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Oct. 2/3-Oct. 12, Special short program
Oct. 23/24-Nov. 10, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Oct. 23-Oct. 27, Special 1-week program
Nov. 13/14-Dec. 1, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Dec. 4/5-Dec. 22, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"
Dec. 25/26-Jan. 12, 2012, 2- or 3-week program, "Ulpan"

Ulpan Practical Hebrew Class

Classes are taught 2 nights a week by experienced professionals. The one-time fee of \$50 covers up to 3 weeks of classes. Sign up at the time of your volunteer registration. Minimum class size is 10.

Please visit our web site at www.vfi-usa.org for frequent special programs.

NEWSBYTE CORNER

2010 a Record Year for Tourism in Israel

2010 was an historic year for incoming tourism to Israel with over 3 million tourists. The milestone comes despite a worldwide economic crisis and ongoing threats to the nation's security. Evangelical Christians make up more than 60 percent of all tourists visiting Israel and tourism officials predict that 3.4 million pilgrims will travel to Israel in 2011.

Sale Price on VFI Travel Journal

The VFI Travel Journal is a 40-page spiral bound information book for travelers to Israel. It makes a great gift and is now sale priced at only \$10.00 per copy.

We Have Gone Social

Follow VFI on the Internet

Visit the VFI homepage: www.vfi-usa.org



Become a Fan of our page on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/VolunteersforIsrael

Follow VFI on Twitter: www.twitter.com/vfi_usa



See our Youtube Channel:

www.youtube.com/volunteersforisrael



VFI's re-engineered web site at www.vfi-usa.org every day receives about 100 visitors. The average visitor stays for over 4 minutes and visits 4.5 pages. The visitors are referred to the site by search engines 43 percent of the time, and 31 percent by various referring sites. The most popular web pages are the *Programs* followed by the *FAQs* and the *Schedule*.

Our YouTube channel has shown its videos over 3,200 times. It currently contains 16 short videos and growing.

New Weekend Touring for Volunteers

Oranim Educational Initiatives is offering special weekend tours for volunteers from Thursday afternoon to Sunday Morning. The next trip dates are February 10-13 and March 24-27 and headed toward the North where the lush Galilee and the mighty Golan Heights are calling us. Explore Tzfat, Center of Jewish Mysticism, cruise on the Sea of Galilee, etc.

Oranim picks up volunteers, provides lodging for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, provides most meals, provides all activities, transportation, top notch guide services, and entry fees, and access to the base on Sunday morning. The cost of each weekend tour is \$400, including taxes for twin/double room with a \$160 supplement for private rooms.

My Memoir As an Activist for Israel and Yemenite Jews

Sampson Giat is a Yemenite Jew born in the United States and a six-time VFI volunteer. He has published "My Memoir As an Activist for Israel and Yemenite Jews."

Yemen, being very much in the news today, does not reveal

the curious plight of the Jews. After reading this book you will have a better understanding of the nature of the Yemenite's redemption and return to Zion. The book can be ordered through XLIBRIS.COM for \$19.95

Contact Sampson Giat at shimgiat@verizon.net.

Sar-El to Raise Funds for Sar-El Ambulance

Sar-El and the American Friends of Magen David Adom (AFMDA) have launched a joint fundraising effort to purchase and dedicate a new ambulance in honor of Sar-El.

Since 2008, hundreds of Sar-El participants have visited MDA facilities. AFMDA raises money to provide ambulances and equipment, training, and new EMS stations through which it carries out critical life saving work.

Please join us in this unique collective effort to bring safety and security to Israel and tangibly save lives. All donations payable to "AFMDA" for this campaign should be earmarked "Sar-El Ambulance" in the memo of your check and are fully tax deductible.

Please mail your donation to AFMDA Sar-El Ambulance, 352 Seventh Ave., Suite 400, New York, NY 10101. You may also donate via the internet at www.afmda.org.

At the Donate tab note earmark your donation for the Sar-El Ambulance. You can also make your donation when you are in Israel by asking your Program Coordinator Pamela Lazarus for details.



Purchase Tribute Cards for All Occasions and Support VFI

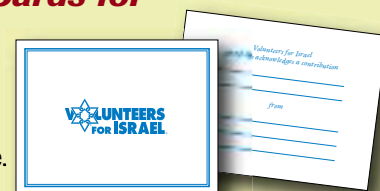
Our attractive Tribute Cards are now available to everyone.

They are a thoughtful way to pay tribute in memory of a loved one, send congratulations, and for many other occasions. They can also be sent as note cards, and they are a terrific fundraiser at Jewish events and fairs.

The cards cost less than most greeting cards while they also support your organization — a win/win for everyone. Please tell your friends so they can order some, too.

VFI cards are 4½" by 5½". You can order them in sets of 5 (the minimum order) for \$12.50 each set, including postage.

To order, mail a check for \$12.50 per set, payable to Volunteers for Israel, to VFI New York, 330 West 42nd St., Suite 1618, New York, NY 10036, Attention: Jessica Bernstein.



VFI HAPPENINGS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Atlanta/South Region — Our VFI October group was a huge success and the imbedded reporter has published several of his articles (see page 6). Another Southeastern (8 states) Regional trip is scheduled from Feb. 6 to Feb. 24. All are invited to join in. Interested in learning more? Visit www.vfi-usa.org and then call Tim at 770.887.1336, or Steve at 678.566.0674. Contact Leon Rechtman at 770.328.4573 or atlanta@vfi-usa.org, or Alan Mintz at agmintz@mindspring.com.

Boston Region — VFI had a literature table at the national CAMERA conference in Boston attended by over 800 people. Contact Howard Passman at 617-571-7373 or hupassmanvfi@ix.netcom.com.

Chicago Midwest Region — We have experienced a steady flow of Volunteers to Israel! If you have ideas to promote VFI, contact Charlotte at 888.246.3037 or chicago@vfi-usa.org.

Dallas Region — Contact Valerie Carlone at valcarlone@gmail.com.

Great Lakes Region (IN, MI, OH, WI) — Contact Ed Kohl at 248.420.3729 or michigan@vfi-usa.org.

Las Vegas Region — Contact Fran & Jerry Gardberg at 702.914.6863.

Long Island Region — We have been working hard to send more groups on the VFI program. Following our group of 10 this past Fall, we are looking to send more this Spring. We have informational meetings in the following synagogues: Midway Jewish Center, Woodbury Jewish Center, North Shore Jewish Center, and in the future Jericho Jewish Center. See our

web site at www.vfi-li.org. Please contact Eric Steinberg, LI Regional Coordinator, for dates and times, at 631.816.3530, or LongIsland@vfi-usa.org, or ESteinb173@aol.com.

Los Angeles Region — We are seeking to publicize VFI at upcoming events. Please let me know when you hear of an event being planned. We are also seeking past volunteers in the LA area to locally promote VFI. This is a great and very rewarding way to get the word out about VFI! Contact Renee G. Bassell, LA & SoCal Coordinator at cell: 510.508.0861 or rbassell@sbcglobal.net.

Metro New York — Please contact rbernstein@vfi-usa.org. Contact 212.643.4848 or e-mail new-york@vfi-usa.org.

Mid-Atlantic Region — We are seeking local organizers willing to organize meetings in their communities. Contact Marian Sacks at mbsacks31@hotmail.com or Vade Bolton at vadebolton@comcast.net.

Pacific Northwest Region — The Pacific Northwest Region (OR, WA, ID, MT, AK, HI) is handled by the San Francisco Region. Contact Kay Warren at 510.339.0183 or vfi5000@hotmail.com.

Philadelphia Region — At our October meeting, Raslan Abu Rukun, Deputy Consul General at the Consulate General of Israel, spoke on current challenges to Israel. Our December



Lori Marcus



Raslan Rukun, Deputy Consul General

meeting featured Lori Lowenthal Marcus, a lawyer and co-founder of Z (Zionist) Street. She discussed the political climate and future possibilities. Our next meeting is March 16. Meetings are held at the Klein Branch JCC, Red Lion Rd. and Jamison Ave., Phila., starting promptly at 7:00 p.m. Contact Bev Cohen or Carol Stein at 888.473.6527.

San Francisco Region — VFI will again have a table at the Sonoma County JCC festival celebrating all things Jewish. We hope to see you there. Also at Simcha Sunday & Taste of Yiddish Culture on Feb. 27, 2011, from Noon-4:30 p.m. at the Santa Rosa Memorial Veterans Building, Santa Rosa. If you can help set up or staff our table, or for more information, please contact Kay Warren at 510.339.0183 or e-mail vfi5000@hotmail.com.

Ruth Rennie Christian Group — Under Suzy Douma's leadership and in conjunction with VFI, they focus on Christian interests in addition to organizing volunteer programs. Contact Suzy Douma at 909.558.8179 or SDouma@llu.edu.

You Want the World to See Israel

You want the world to see Israel beyond the usual headlines, beyond the conflicts.

You want the world to know that Israel is a global partner and a global leader.

You want the world to know of the many accomplishments that are relevant and vital to millions of lives.

You want others to be proud of Israel, just like you are.

If this is not Heaven... It must be Base Bislach 17

Crystal clear skies, stunning sunrises and sunsets, cool crisp evenings, surrounded by desert, stars, and mountains. Close your eyes and you can imagine you are in Scottsdale... NOT EXACTLY. Welcome to the Negev Desert and Golani Bislach 17.

Imagine that daily spa treatments are replaced by physical labor. Imagine packing field kits, sorting and bundling backpacks, field tents, cleaning field shovels, folding camouflage, and cleaning machine guns. Then imagine loading all that into field-bound transport trucks. The aches and pains at the end of the day remind us that too much of a good thing has its consequences.

Dining in Bislach 17 did not disappoint. In addition to wonderful breakfasts and dinners consisting of tomatoes, cucumbers, lebaneh, cottage cheese, bread and hard boiled eggs, we had corn flakes and the ubiquitous chocolate milk. Dining with soldiers of the Golani Regiment, we were made to feel right at home. Lunch was paradise, be it schnitzel, hot dogs, babaganoush, tehina, bread, potatoes and veggies, veggies, veggies; we did not lack for anything.

Surrounded by the soldiers who defend their homeland, how could we ever show our love, caring, devotion, and oneness with them? By engaging each and every soldier with greetings, kindness, pictures, and thanking them for all they do, and letting them know that WE and the rest of the world really care. The soldiers' smiles and kindness was payback to each of us 100 times over.

Venturing into the desert you first notice the scenery then the solitude. However, since this is an infantry training base it is constantly alive with infantry and tank maneuvers accompanied by sights and sounds of artillery fire, mortars and rockets — an incredible sound and light show.

A unit from the U.S. 82nd Airborne was visiting to see the Israeli way — another photo op and chance to make new friends. Our spa suites consisted of bunk beds with three and four to a room. My fantastic field mattress on almost new springs, was decorated in the latest Army sheik couture. Bathrooms and showers, just a short hike away from our rooms, even had hot and cold running water (except in the mornings).

There was a lot packed into this incredible 1-week program. This is my 8th tour and I handed out crochet winter hats for those cold nights in the desert or up north. These were created by Jewish ladies as a shul mitzvah project. I also schlepped tools from home and presented them to the command.

My incredible roommates, our special Madricha, Shany, who cared for us well, volunteers from the U.S., U.K., and Holland all made the trip fun and the program meaningful and smooth running. Bislach 17 was not designed to be heaven (especially for the Golani soldiers on the obstacle course or in training exercises), but for mind, body, and my Jewish soul, it comes pretty close.

Harvey E. Rand
Harvey.Rand@o3tsi.com

THE SOUTHERN REGION GROUP PROGRAM WITH AN IMBEDDED REPORTER

Our experience was exceptional from every angle. We were assigned to a large supply base that handles replacement parts of all types (vehicle and tank, communication equipment, uniforms) for the bases in the North. Our group was highly cohesive and helpful to each other.

A young staff writer from *The Atlanta Jewish Times* (www.atjewishtimes.com) was embedded with our group. It was his first foreign trip and he worked alongside the others and made notes, which he wrote up into several published articles.

A prior young group of volunteers preferred to party rather than work, so the base officers were pleasantly impressed by our group's work dedication. At our departing ceremony, they turned up in force to express their appreciation.

Our two madrichot were awesome — unlimited energy, entertaining evening programs, good language — they had it

all. They certainly impressed the volunteers, when compared with typical 19-year-olds at home. We had sufficient work on the base, and near the end, with the warehouse work finished, the group was ready for some time off.

For our first weekend, we visited the excellent Palmach History Museum. Our second weekend toured the north and included the Hula Lake migratory bird reserve and the Valley of Tears Memorial and we stayed at a nice kibbutz hostel on Lake Kinneret. We also visited the Naval Museum in Haifa, the Golani Junction Memorial, and the Dona Grazia Hotel in Tiberius.



John McCurdy AJT staff writer

Leon Rechtman
leon2579@mindspring.com

Happy 235th Birthday, Marines

Welcome to Israel, more specifically to an IDF base in central Israel where several former U.S. marines found themselves on November 10, 2010, the Marines 235th Birthday.

We marines were volunteers in the central medical supply section along with volunteers from six other countries and repackaging medical supplies for pre-positioning. True to Marine tradition, we celebrated the 235th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

SSgt Muller recited the founding of the Marine Corps, the significance of the birthday celebration, and I read the Commandant's Message. As I concluded, one of the volunteers spontaneously began singing the Marine Corps Hymn and everyone joined in.

The first slice of cake was presented to the senior volunteer present, 87-year-old Jacob "Jack" Amir from New Jersey who fought as a conscript with the British military during WWII and later with the Israelis during their War of Independence. The

second piece of cake was given to one of the madrichots, 18-year-old Galit Lukin who was born in Argentina.

Our madrichot met everyone upon arrival and took care of all our logistical needs for 3 weeks, including issuance of IDF fatigues for work clothes, housing, chow, work details, and evening educational activities. During the second week they hosted a one-half day "tacky tourist" trip up the coast to the ruins of Caesarea, the ancient port city built by Herod when he was King of Judea. Another full day trip during the third week brought us to Jerusalem where the volunteers toured the Manachem Begin Heritage Center and visited the Knesset.

Everyone enjoyed the evening festivities. SSgt Muller and I were thanked by all for including them. Even without the formal meal, guest speaker, and ballroom dancing, a good time was had by all.

CWO-5 Melvin A. "Ash" Myers USMCR (Ret)
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—Barbara Abbott, Copy Editor

—Regina Stinger, Graphic Designer

THE **volunteer** CONNECTION

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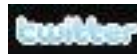
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