

LONE  
SOLDIERS  
PROGRAM



INFORMATIONAL BOOKLET FOR  
**PARENTS OF**  
**LONE SOLDIERS**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	4
Introduction .....	6
Programs for Enlisting in the IDF .....	7

## BEING DRAFTED TO THE IDF

Tzav Rishon .....	8
Medical Profile .....	9
Filing an Appeal and Updating the Military System .....	10
Ra'ayon Tash.....	10

## PROCESS OF CLASSIFICATION

Process of Classification .....	11
Being an Only Child in the IDF.....	11
Recruitment Tracks Involving Academic Study .....	12
Determining Job Placement.....	12
Determination of the Draft Date .....	13
Just Before the Draft .....	14
New Soldiers Receive:.....	14
The "Stars Card" .....	15

## ARMY SERVICE

Draft Day.....	16
The Enlistment Process.....	16
Length of Service of New Olim in the IDF .....	18
Request to Extend Service .....	19
Types of Service in the IDF.....	20
Special Courses for Olim .....	20
IDF Array Structure.....	20

Types of Positions in the IDF .....	21
Main Events During .....	22
Military Service .....	22
Berets, Symbols of Units and Brigades, and Pins.....	24
Badges of Each Unit .....	25
Pins of Special Units .....	25

## MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Caring for the Medical and Mental Health of the Soldiers .....	26
Medical Clinic of the Unit.....	26
Bikur Rofeh Medical Clinics .....	26
Yom Gimel .....	26
Yom Bet .....	26
Extreme Situations .....	27
Moked Mi Kol ha-Lev -IDF Medical Service.....	27
Additional Situations When Soldiers Should Go to the Emergency Room.....	27
Payment for Emergency Room Treatment .....	28
What Happens If a Soldier Receives More Than 6 Days of “Yom Gimel”? .....	28
Psychological Care - The Kaban (Mental Health Officer).....	29
Military Terminology .....	30

## BENEFITS FOR LONE SOLDIERS

Benefits for Lone Soldiers During Military Service .....	32
Additional Benefits (Benefits That Are Not From the IDF) .....	34
Residential Options .....	35
Salaries for Soldiers .....	35

## BEING A PARENT OF A LONE SOLDIER

How Do You Deal with the Distance? .....	36
Important Phone Numbers .....	38
Ten Commandments for Parents of Lone Soldiers .....	39
Prior to Being Released .....	39

# PREFACE

## Dear Parents,

Being the parent of a soldier is a challenging experience; being the parent of a lone soldier who did not grow up in Israel is even more challenging because of differences in language and culture, the distance, and other factors.

As parents of lone soldiers, you are probably experiencing mixed feelings – feelings of both pride and concern – as your child embarks upon this incredible journey. These feelings become more pronounced because of the geographic distance.

This booklet was written for you, as parents of lone soldiers. It is designed to provide you with information that will help you gain a better understanding of what your children are going through, so that you can “be there” for them despite the geographic distance. We hope it will help you stay up to date and help you feel more connected throughout this period of military service.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, dear parents, for raising children who have strong values and believe in the importance of contributing to the land of Israel. We will do whatever we possibly can both for them and for you – and we are always at your service.

We hope that this booklet will be helpful to you. We are available at any time to provide assistance to you and to all of the lone soldiers!

In Israel: \*6563

Find us on Facebook at /LoneSoldiersProgram

Send us an email: [lonesoldierparents@nbn.org.il](mailto:lonesoldierparents@nbn.org.il)

Check us out on Instagram /nbn\_lonesoldiers

**The Lone Soldiers Program Team  
at Nefesh B’Nefesh**

*“Being the parent of an IDF  
soldier is an honor.  
Being the parent of a lone  
soldier is inspiring.”*

# PRAYER FOR THE WELFARE OF ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES SOLDIERS

---

May God, who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,  
bless the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces,  
who stand guard over our land and the cities of our God,  
from the border of Lebanon to the desert of Egypt,  
and from the Great Sea to the Aravah,  
on land, in the air, and on the sea.

May the Lord cause the enemies who rise up against us  
to be struck down before them.

May the blessed Holy One preserve and rescue our soldiers  
from every trouble and distress and from every plague and illness,  
and may God send blessing and success in their every endeavor.

May God cause our enemies to submit before our soldiers,  
and may God grant them salvation and crown them with victory.

And may there be fulfilled for them the verse:

“For it is the Lord your God,  
Who goes with you to battle your enemies for you  
to save you,” and let us say, Amen.

# INTRODUCTION

Nefesh B'Nefesh is a nonprofit organization that aims to strengthen Aliyah from North America and the UK. Since its establishment, Nefesh B'Nefesh has facilitated the Aliyah of tens of thousands of new Olim.

In partnership with the State of Israel and various organizations, Nefesh B'Nefesh works to eliminate the financial, professional, logistical, and social hurdles faced by Olim and assists the thousands of young men and women who join the IDF annually.



Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) is a non-political, non-military organization that provides for wellbeing of the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), veterans and family members. We are the single organization authorized to represent the IDF across the United States and Panama, as designated by Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, IDF Chief of the General Staff in March 2017 and by Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi, IDF Chief of the General Staff in February 2019.



The Israeli government is responsible for training IDF soldiers and providing them with the necessary tools for their service. FIDF is committed to providing these soldiers with love, support, and care to ease the burden they carry on behalf of the Jewish community worldwide.

Established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors under the leadership of John Klein z'l, FIDF is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation that operates 20 regional offices in the United States and Panama, with headquarters in New York City. For more information please check [www.fidf.org](http://www.fidf.org)

Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Lone Soldiers Program (LSP) run a wide range of activities in North America, answering any questions that arise prior to making Aliyah. These activities include an Aliyah Information Fair, one-on-one meetings, parents' evenings, and lectures on different topics.

**The International Lone Soldiers Program run by Nefesh B'Nefesh in partnership with the FIDF** serves as an address for all Olim who are lone soldiers – as well as Mahal soldiers (volunteers from overseas who have not made Aliyah). Our program provides all lone soldiers with support and gives them tools to help them during the draft process and throughout their military service while they are adjusting to life in Israel. The program's team is always available to offer assistance both while the soldiers are in the army and after their service is complete. The program offers support in four languages – English, Spanish, French, and Russian.

The following is a partial listing of the activities that we run:

## Prior to Joining the Army:

- Financial grant for anyone being drafted who meet the requirements and is recognized fully as a lone soldier, i.e., an individual who has two parents living overseas
- Advice for anyone considering enlistment in the IDF
- Assistance and support in interfacing with the IDF during the draft process
- Preparatory seminars prior to being drafted
- Hotline available 24/7 at: \*6563
- Social events for individuals who are being drafted

## During Military Service:

- Annual Errands Day, a day organized by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the IDF, during which dozens of organizations and government offices provide services to Olim serving as lone soldiers – all under one roof
- Social events for lone soldiers
- Emotional support and guidance throughout the soldiers' military service
- Participation of staff members in the soldiers' military ceremonies
- Host families for soldiers
- Information and support for parents of lone soldiers
- Assistance in situations of distress or crisis
- Assistance in moving to a new apartment



### After Military Service:

- Advice and guidance regarding employment and academic studies
- Social events for individuals who completed service

### In addition to our work on behalf of the lone soldiers, we also work to assist you, the parents.

We provide updates about what is happening in the world of the lone soldiers – in the IDF – and provide current and relevant information. Some of the services that we provide for parents include:

- Newsletter distribution
- Online seminars
- Organization of a Gadna (army introductory program) for parents of lone soldiers
- A number of flight subsidies in partnership with El Al, allowing participation in graduation ceremonies for soldiers
- Hotline available 24/7
- Email correspondence with parents

## PROGRAMS FOR ENLISTING IN THE IDF

Once a person decides to make Aliyah, he or she can choose to join the IDF independently or submit a request to join the Garin Tzabar program of the Tzofim movement. Garin Tzabar is a unique program that provides a supportive environment and guidance for young Jewish people from around the world who have chosen to make Aliyah and perform a complete, meaningful service in the IDF as lone soldiers. The program includes a preparatory process with educational seminars in their country of origin, an intensive period of absorption in Israel, and full service in the IDF. The period of absorption in Israel includes helping soldiers with their integration into and classification

within the IDF, Hebrew-language Ulpan studies for those who need to improve their Hebrew, helping the soldiers get to know and learn about Israel – all of which are designed to shrink the gap, as much as possible, between lone soldiers and soldiers who went through the Israeli educational system so that the lone soldiers can integrate more easily. It is important to know that throughout this entire process, the group receives ongoing guidance and emotional, social, and bureaucratic support.

Anyone who is still deliberating whether to make Aliyah but who has already decided to join the IDF can consider joining the Mahal program (for volunteers

from overseas). In this program, anyone who is eligible for Aliyah from around the world can volunteer to serve in the IDF without making Aliyah or obtaining Israeli citizenship. The registration process for Mahal tracks takes place through the Social-Defense Division of Israel's Ministry of Defense. Note that during their Mahal service, a soldier can make Aliyah after joining the IDF.

The following sections provide details about the kinds of assistance that the Nefesh B'Nefesh Lone Soldiers' Program offers from the moment an individual arrives in Israel and begins the draft process.

# TZAV RISHON

The Tzav Rishon is particularly important because it establishes the Kaba score (an overall number received by each soldier) and Dapar score (the result of a psychotechnical exam), Hebrew level, medical profile, and other details that have an impact on which positions a soldier is considered for and affect upward mobility in the army. It is very important to remember to bring either a Teudat Zehut (Israeli ID card) or Israeli passport to the Tzav Rishon!

The following is the process that candidates for the Sherut Bitachon (Defense Services) undergo at the Tzav Rishon:

## DATA VALIDATION

At this station, candidates undergo a psychotechnical evaluation. The goal of the evaluator is to determine that information about education, marital status, address, phone number, and other details that the army received are correct and up to date. After a short conversation with the evaluator, a test is given to check the candidate's level of Hebrew. It does not matter whether you were born in Israel or overseas – all candidates must take this test. The results of the test determine whether the candidate will be placed in a Hebrew-language course at Michve Alon (an educational basic training base).

## PERSONAL INTERVIEW

The personal interview allows the army to get to know new recruits as well as possible. It investigates how suited a person is to different kinds of service, and particularly checks suitability for combat service. During the interview, questions are asked about topics related to different areas of life. This interview is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers. It is important to be truthful and answer honestly. Not all Olim have an interview during the Tzav Rishon, but this will not hurt their chances of doing combat service.

## PSYCHOTECHNICAL EXAMS

This station involves a series of computerized tests that determine one's Kaba and Dapar grades – which have an impact on the kinds of roles in the army that each candidate will be assigned. Guidance is provided before the tests start about how to fill in the answers. New Olim are entitled to use an adapted version of the tests in any one of the following languages: English, Russian, French, Spanish, Amharic, or Arabic. The language of the test is determined on the day of the Tzav Rishon by the psychotechnical evaluator. Note that any candidate who has had a didactic evaluation or has prescriptions for medication such as Ritalin or Concerta must bring a valid prescription, as well as a copy of the evaluation that was translated and approved by a notary. Because of the cost involved in using a notary, it is best to discuss this with the LSP advisors before the Tzav Rishon.

## MEDICAL CHECKS

This station involves a series of medical checks to determine one's military profile. The checks include: measuring height and weight, checking vision, doing a urine test, and more. The urine test can be done ahead of time at a local Kupat Cholim (healthcare center) and the results sent to

Meitav (military HR unit), as long as the test is still valid at the time of the Tzav Rishon. (This process can be done through Mitgaisim.) The checks are followed by an exam by a doctor who determines the candidate's medical profile. Regarding any medical history: It is best for the candidate to bring a medical questionnaire signed by a family doctor and medical information signed by the doctor who has been providing treatment overseas. It is important to inform the IDF about any past medical history, as it helps the doctor determine an appropriate profile and establish what military service is suitable.

# MEDICAL PROFILE

The medical profile is a numeric score reflecting the health of each Malshab (pre-army candidate). In the army, this is very important information – established during the Tzav Rishon. The medical profile has an impact on the nature of a soldier's military service.

Not every medical limitation leads to a lower profile. Some small problems may be considered minor impairments, while other problems make a soldier eligible for a Ptor – an exemption from some roles. The Ptor can be temporary or permanent. It allows a soldier to continue to function in a position in the IDF without damaging their health.

The medical profile ranges from 21 to 97. The numbers were determined randomly by the medical corps over the years, and aside from their purpose in determining a soldier's medical status, they have no meaning. The highest number indicates the greatest medical ability. The more severe the medical limitation, the lower the number.

## **PROFILE 97**

Perfectly healthy; fit to serve in field units and in all of the combat battalions, as well as in elite units. If there are mild medical problems, a note is added to the candidate's profile. This note does not lower the profile number, but may disqualify a candidate from specific roles, depending on the type and severity of the problem.

## **PROFILE 82**

Healthy, but with a slight medical impairment; fit to serve in field units and in the infantry, depending on the impairment.

## **PROFILE 72**

Moderate medical impairment, for example, mild asthma, knee and back problems, etc. The candidate is qualified for combat service in all units except for infantry units and Sayarot (elite units).

## **PROFILE 64**

Eligible for service in combat support units and certain combat roles (depending on the impairment) such as Magav (Border Police Fighter), Air Defense Fighter, Operational Security Profiling Agent in Border Crossing battalions, Home Front Command Fighter, and Squad Commander.

## **PROFILE 45**

A low profile; this means that military service will not include a combat or support role.

## **PROFILE 25**

Given to individuals with medical or mental health issues who want to volunteer to enlist in the IDF, despite having a profile that is too low for service. This is a profile that was updated from a 21 or a 24.

## **PROFILE 24**

Temporarily unfit for military service, for example, after surgery or injury. The profile will be updated after the candidate completes medical treatment or appeals a medical condition – after a time period determined by the medical physician at Lishkat Hagiyyus (Recruitment Office).

## **PROFILE 21**

Completely unfit for service due to physical or mental health. There is an option to apply to volunteer, in which case one's profile is raised to 25.



# FILING AN APPEAL AND UPDATING THE MILITARY SYSTEM

A candidate may appeal his or her profile for three reasons:

- The candidate believes that the assigned profile does not match their qualifications.
- Where a candidate was deemed unfit for military service or any security-related service and the candidate believes otherwise.
- The candidate's health situation changed and he or she must update the military system.

Submitting an appeal involves contacting the Meitav Service Center within a month from the time the profile is determined in the Tzav Rishon, or immediately after there is a change in health. The appeal will only be considered if up-to-date, relevant medical documents signed by a qualified physician are attached. The appeal should also include details of the reason why the candidate should be viewed as qualified or disqualified from service. The LSP team is happy to provide assistance in submitting the request to Meitav.

Note that a candidate who wants to serve in the infantry and whose medical profile is not high enough can submit a request to be considered as an exception. This request should be submitted with a medical specialist's recommendation – which should provide details about why the candidate can serve in a combat role despite having an existing medical issue. Medical documents from the candidate's doctor are taken into consideration but are considered just as an opinion or recommendation; the actual decision to approve or disqualify an exception to serve in an infantry unit is made by the army's medical staff.

## RA'AYON TASH

### INTERVIEW REGARDING THE SOLDIERS' CONDITIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE

Candidates who made Aliyah without their parents should meet with a Mashakit Tash (the equivalent of an army social worker) at Lishkat Hagiyus (recruitment office) to establish eligibility for leniencies in one's terms of military service, and receive recognition as a lone soldier – a status that has many privileges, described below.

At the end of the Tzav Rishon, a candidate's draft date and length of service are determined. Length of service is based on what's termed the Age of Arrival: the age at which a candidate arrived in Israel, i.e., when a candidate spent 4 consecutive months (with a possibility of short breaks during this period) or, alternatively, spent 120 days cumulatively in a 12-month period in Israel. For assistance in determining arrival age, check the Nefesh B'Nefesh website and be in touch with an LSP advisor.

In unusual circumstances – for example, due to medical problems – a decision may be made not to draft a candidate. In this case, the candidate receives a Ptor (exemption) from the Defense Services.

# PROCESS OF CLASSIFICATION

A candidate with sufficient Hebrew fluency – i.e., who is exempt from taking a Hebrew course in the IDF – can continue the acceptance process for various units:

## WOMEN - YOM HAME'AH

Yom Hame'ah is an acronym for Miyun (evaluation), Itur (location), and Hatama (adjustment). This is an additional opportunity to display one's personal talents and capabilities and demonstrate abilities that may not have been expressed during the Tzav Rishon. The results of the Yom Hameah are added to a candidate's personal information, Kaba score, and Dapar score, and can open up additional positions.

Throughout the day, the candidates take computerized tests and participate at an activity station that includes light physical exercises, a station for personal simulations, a lecturing station, a group discussion station, and more. The goal of these tests is to evaluate one's personality and the characteristics that come into play in different situations. Trained counselors provide guidance throughout the day, give instructions to the participants and help them complete each task optimally.

Please note that participation in this day is mandatory for anyone who received a Zimun (summons). Tests at Yom Hameah are conducted together with other women, and Hebrew fluency plays a significant role.

## MEN - YOM SADEH (YOM SAYAROT)

Anyone who is interested in joining special forces combat units must participate in evaluation days with physical tests that assess a candidate's physical and mental capabilities. Candidates who succeed in a Yom Sayarot will then continue to be assessed for special force combat positions.

Candidates are called to participate in a Yom Sayarot if they have the appropriate medical status and personal status, based on their draft dates. Anyone who was not called to participate in a Yom Sayarot due to a lack of compatibility can submit a special request, which will be considered. A candidate who completes a Yom Sayarot successfully is asked to join Gibushei Hemshech (continued evaluation for a particular unit that is appropriate for the candidate (Shaldag, 669, Sayeret Matkal, Shayetet 13, and others)

### Tip from the Lone Soldiers Program

Candidates should conduct Miyunim (evaluations) in a way that clearly reflects who they are so the IDF can determine what military service is most suitable. The Lone Soldiers Program team provides assistance at every stage. Do not hesitate to ask questions, we are here to help!

# BEING AN ONLY CHILD IN THE IDF

**An only child to one or both parents is defined by the IDF as a Ben Yachid.** The term applies to both men and women, despite the fact that the Hebrew term is in the masculine form. According to military regulations, an only child cannot serve in a combat position without the parents' consent. An only child who wants to serve in a combat unit must submit a request to be in the combat forces and obtain the signature of his or her parents and the signature of a lawyer. To submit this request, one must fill out a volunteer form, bring it to the recruitment center, and sign the declaration in front of the Director of Individual Welfare or the commander of the recruitment center. Alternatively, one can sign the declaration in front of a civilian lawyer and send it by email. If a candidate is not in touch with one of his or her parents, the declaration should be signed in front of one of the lawyers listed on Mitgaisim.

Note that there are combat positions in which one can serve (if the candidate has the appropriate profile) without obtaining this signature, including: Air Defense Command Fighters, Officers for Recruit Squads (Mak/Makit), and Operational Security Evaluator in Transfer Battalions.

**Parents of an only child who live overseas can make this declaration, in which they approve the service of their son or daughter in a combat unit, at the local Israeli Consulate or in front of a private lawyer.**

# RECRUITMENT TRACKS INVOLVING ACADEMIC STUDY

## ATUDAT OLIM

Olim who want to obtain a degree before serving in the army are entitled to submit a request to delay being drafted to complete academic studies. To be eligible, candidates need Israeli citizenship and must have completed high school overseas. They cannot be of an age at which they are exempt from IDF service. Candidates must begin studies not more than a year and a half after the date of arrival in Israel. (Date of arrival may differ from date of Aliyah. What is relevant here is the date of arrival.) Candidates who attended a preparatory course for Olim are eligible for a draft postponement of a year. Only those candidates who must do army service of more than half a year can request a postponement. The acceptance process to Atudat Olim involves submitting an initial request for approval of

studies and a form requesting postponement of the draft to Meitav by email, by August 1 of each year. Candidates must also submit an acceptance letter from the academic institution where they are registered. Students who end their studies for any reason must be drafted.

## ACADEMIZATION

This is designed for anyone who obtained an undergraduate degree in Israel, or who obtained a degree from overseas and has a Teudat Shkilut (Ministry of Education recognition of a degree obtained abroad). Those who meet the criteria are invited to an interview to assess suitability to serve as academic, professional officers (Kama) in the areas in which they studied. **The army is not required to place candidates in positions that are relevant to their fields of study.** To be in a position relevant to one's field, a candidate must

commit to serving for a 5-year period that includes mandatory service and Keva (extra time, during which candidates receive a higher salary). Candidates who are not in positions related to their fields do not need to do Keva; they only serve the length of time initially established. To be placed in the Academization track, contact Meitav through Mitgaisim.

## ATUDA AKADEMIT

Through this track, candidates postpone regular military service in order to study in an academic institution in Israel. This track is for candidates who have the appropriate profile. Candidates can obtain a B.A. or B.Sc. prior to being drafted. The elite tracks of Atuda Akademit include: Tzameret (medical studies), Pesagot (Electrical and Physics Engineering), Barakim (mechanical or material engineering) and Silon (aeronautical engineering).

## DETERMINING JOB PLACEMENT

### THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS IN WHICH CANDIDATES RECEIVE THEIR PLACEMENTS:

- If a candidate's Hebrew level has been determined to be low, he or she will be sent to the Hebrew-language course at Michve Alon. (See explanation, below.)
- If the individual's Hebrew level is high enough, an interview determines whether he or she is sent to

Moledet, a course in which Olim receive preparation for service. If the candidate needs Moledet, the draft date is finalized based on when the course begins.

- A candidate who does not need to take a Hebrew-language course or Moledet fills out a questionnaire on the Mitgaisim website. The questionnaire lists the positions that each

candidate is being offered and allows him or her to rate the positions according to personal preference. About a month and a half before the draft date, each candidate receives an SMS message with the position he or she received. It's not until after basic training, that the decision is made regarding where each soldier is based.

# DETERMINATION OF THE DRAFT DATE

The draft is scheduled to take place a year after an Oleh's arrival in Israel. This year is referred to as Shnat Histaglut, and it gives Olim time to adapt and become familiar with Israel and the Hebrew language. The determination of the draft date also takes into consideration a person's family status. However, Olim who do not want to delay the draft date can submit a request to shorten the Shnat Histaglut.

The IDF has three main draft periods. Each period continues for approximately two months: July–August, November–December, and March–April. The principle that guides the IDF in determining draft dates is that whoever was born earlier should be drafted earlier – although the draft dates primarily are determined based on the army's needs. For IDF candidates from abroad, the system is slightly different, and

the draft date is primarily based on where candidates are placed and the draft times established for that year.

The draft date is established after completion of the Tzav Rishon. However, the date provided is an initial date and it may change multiple times to meet the army's needs or sometimes due to changes in the candidate's capabilities. Each time the date is changed, an updated Tzav Giyus – a letter that provides information about the candidate's draft day – is sent by mail to the candidate's address. If several Tzav Giyus letters are received, the one with the latest date is the one that is relevant. The final, most updated draft date is generally determined about 45 days before the draft, depending on the candidate's placement.

A draft date can be moved (earlier or later) for a variety of reasons, such as: family events (for close

family members); medical issues requiring attention; academic studies; vacations; or other important personal reasons that prevent a candidate from being drafted on the determined date. Any Oleh who needs to postpone the date of draft day can ask the LSP team for help in submitting this request to Meitav.

## IMPORTANT!

The IDF allows travel abroad as long as enlistees return to Israel at least three days before the draft date. **Travel is only allowed if there are no mandatory evaluations or other mandatory activities during the time a candidate is meant to be abroad.** Candidates who meet this requirement can travel at any time without obtaining special authorization from Lishkat Hagiyus (IDF recruitment center).



# JUST BEFORE THE DRAFT

- PREPARATORY SEMINAR – BEFORE BEING DRAFTED**  
 The LSP team runs preparatory seminars each year in several languages – English, Russian, French, and Spanish – that provide information about the draft, the Hebrew-language course, rights of lone soldiers, and more.
- RECRUITMENT PARTY**  
 Just before a group draft date, the LSP team organizes a quick get-together for the Olim who are being drafted. They provide additional information about the draft process and distribute

financial grants.

- FINANCIAL GRANTS FOR EACH NEW RECRUIT**  
 The Nefesh B'Nefesh Lone Soldiers Program, run in cooperation with the FIDF, is the only program offering pre-draft financial grants to all Olim who enlist in the army and meet the criteria (recognition as a new Oleh or Olah who is classified as a lone soldier; and a required IDF service of at least 18 months). Note that we have an emergency fund, as well, that provides assistance to soldiers who find themselves in difficult circumstances

during their military service.

All recruits receive a Kochavim card from the IDF that allows them to purchase whatever equipment they need for the army before being drafted. On their first day in the IDF, the soldiers receive the rest of their equipment.

What equipment do new soldiers receive on their draft day during the enlistment process – and what do they need to buy ahead of time using the Kochavim card? A list (in Hebrew) of what to purchase with the Kokhavim card is available here.

## NEW SOLDIERS RECEIVE:

On their draft day during the enlistment process, new soldiers receive the following:

- Kit bag
- Coat
- Shoes (infantry/field units/ women's shoes)
- Uniform pants (2 pairs for a soldier in combat/combat support units; 3 pairs for other soldiers)
- Uniform shirt (2 for a soldier in combat/combat support units; 3 for other soldiers)
- Belt
- Beret
- Soldiers' kit (and an additional kit for soldiers in field units only)
- Pepper spray
- Lock
- Fleece gloves
- Scarf
- Rubber bands for shoes (not received by women not in combat/combat support units)

For additional information, see Draft Day on the LSP website.



# THE “STARS CARD”

Candidates that will be recruited to the Security Service, from July 2017 onwards, will be able to use the IDF's "Stars Card" to purchase personal equipment according to their preferences with a budget that have been adjusted by the existing needs.

The launching of the "Stars" card is a big step in the IDF equipment revolution, as part of a complete trend to improve the conditions of service of IDF soldiers.

The digital card will accompany the recruit from the pre-recruitment stage and during the first year of the IDF, through which he will be able to purchase equipment in civilian networks from a variety of quality items at their best price.

## PROCESSING OF THE CARD:

About 14 days before the date of recruitment, the recruiter will receive a message to their mobile phone regarding the entitlement to the "stars card", the recruiter will enter the link attached in the message and approve the regulations. Afterwards, the recruiter will receive an additional message in which a link to the digital card containing the "stars" budget will be used. In this way, the recruiter will be able to reach the marketing networks to which the card is intended, display the digital card with an identification card, and purchase the various types of equipment through the "stars" budget.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE CARD?

The eligibility of the card will be handed out to every soldier and will be determined by his needs, occasionally, gender and job title will be taking in consideration. A soldier who is entitled to additional stars will receive a message with details of the

## QUANTITY OF STARS AND ELIGIBILITY DATES:

	Kravi (Combat)	Combat Support	Home Front
Before recruitment	215	215	215
After One Month	815	335	-
After One Year	485	145	-
Stars	1,515 stars	695 stars	215 stars
Shekel Equivalent	2,020 Shekels	927 Shekels	287 Shekels

Eligibility can be exercised until the day of discharge from the IDF.

additional "stars" and their specific type.

In the event that a recruiter does not actually enlist and have used the "stars," in part or in all, the IDF may demand the cost of the "stars" back.

## WHAT "STARS" EXIST AND WHAT IS THE ANNUAL ENTITLEMENT?

1. "Personal Stars" are designed to enable the purchase of underwear (underwear, tank tops, socks, etc.) and winter items.
2. "Stars Sport" - designed to enable the purchase of equipment, clothing and sports shoes for maintaining physical fitness and health (starting March 2018).
3. Points of money (private money) - allows you to receive discounts for purchases from your own money in the terms of the policy.

## PURCHASES BEFORE RECRUITMENT:

(Items that the IDF recommends purchasing in the framework of the "Stars" will not be given at the Bakum:)

- White/Green T-shirts- 4 units (recommended at least one green)
- 5 units of socks (recommended 3 anti- bacterial)
- Towel
- Underwear

## AFTER RECRUITMENT (FOR KRAVI (COMBAT) AND COMBAT SUPPORT ONLY):

- Sports Shoes
- Anti- bacterial socks
- T-shirts (green)
- Thermal set (shirt and pants)- Kravi- 3 sets, Combat Support- 2 sets
- Towel
- Underwear

The purchase of shoes for Combat soldiers by the stars will be available from March 2018.

Today, it is possible to purchase sports shoes with a military voucher

# DRAFT DAY

The Tsav Giyus (notification of the draft date) is received in the mail. The notification states where to go, and at what time. There are 5 draft locations in Israel: Tiberias, Haifa, Tel Hashomer, Jerusalem, and Be'er Sheva. Time at Lishkat Hagiyus (IDF recruitment office) is an opportunity for the new soldiers to give some attention to any family members or friends who may have come with them to Lishkat Hagiyus, to take a deep breath – and then, off they go. Next, the recruits are taken on buses and they are generally a little disoriented and nervous at this point. This is not a cause for concern; everyone is in the same situation. The buses take them to an absorption area at the Tel Hashomer base where they start the enlistment process.

## THE ENLISTMENT PROCESS

During the course of the enlistment process, the soldiers go through ten stations.

1. X-rays of the mouth and teeth: This is done for the purpose of providing identification in emergency situations. This is a simple process and it does not hurt.
2. Immunizations: The soldiers receive three immunizations for hepatitis, tetanus, and meningitis.
3. DNA samples: Each soldier has blood taken in order to provide DNA samples.
4. Photograph face and profile: The picture that's taken is used for several purposes including the Teudat Choger (soldier's ID). Note that you are allowed to have your photograph taken just once.
5. Fingerprinting: A special machine is used to scan the fingerprints of each soldier. Fingerprinting is important in order to provide definitive identification where necessary.
6. Bone marrow donation: Soldiers are asked if they are interested in donating bone marrow when necessary. Those who choose to donate their bone marrow simply fill out a short medical questionnaire and provide a saliva sample. Donation is not compulsory, but it is highly appreciated.
7. Validating data: Soldiers fill

out their personal details: full name, telephone, address, marital status, and more. They must provide bank account details for their IDF salaries to be transferred on an ongoing basis. They are also asked to sign four forms.

**Important Note:** The bank account must be an Israeli account. It is highly recommended to open an Israeli account before being drafted.

8. Receiving Diskit (dog tag) and Choger (soldier's ID): Each soldier receives a Teudat Choger which has a photograph, personal number, recruitment date, Israeli identity number, and more. Each soldier also receives a diskit, which must be worn whenever in uniform.
9. Placement officer: The soldiers meet with a placement officer who determines the job placement of any soldier who has not been assigned a placement. Soldiers can tell the placement officer their opinions about whatever placements have already been determined. A soldier who is not happy with a placement should inform the officer – though there is no guarantee that the placement will be changed. Keep in mind that the army is a large

organization and while it tries to take into account the wishes of soldiers to the extent possible, the needs of the army always come first.

10. Logistics center: Soldiers receive their equipment for the next two or three years – from their uniforms (pants and shirts) to their shoes and beret. A full list is provided above. All soldiers are required to wear the items provided by the army and nothing else. It is absolutely forbidden to purchase items of clothing (uniform, sweater, coat, etc.) in civilian stores. It is important to purchase all of the additional equipment that's necessary before being drafted, using the Kochavim card.

At the end of the draft process, the soldiers are taken by bus to their training base. They have finished being enlisted in the IDF!

**Note:** We recommend that soldiers do not bring anything of value with them, on the day that they are drafted. This includes laptops, significant amounts of cash, etc. We also recommend that they bring locks for their personal bags, and phone chargers.


  
**LONE SOLDIERS PROGRAM**
  



  
**תוכנית לחיילים בודדים**


  
 24/7 תמיכה  
 IL: 1-8000-7  
 US: 1-551-8  
 NBN.ORG.IL  
 ARMY@NBN.ORG.IL

 **NBN\_LONESOLDIERS**
  
 **LONESOLDIERSPROGRAM**  
 תוכנית חיילים בודדים





# LENGTH OF SERVICE OF NEW OLIM IN THE IDF

The length of service is determined by each Oleh's age of arrival. The age of arrival is not necessarily the age when a person made Aliyah. It is the age at which he or she began a significant, long-term stay in Israel. Age of arrival is determined based on an Oleh's entries and exits to Israel, as well as on the length of stay of each visit.

Length of service is also affected by a person's family status at the time of recruitment.

The following tables provide details about the length of regular service for Olim based on age of arrival:

## REGULAR SERVICE FOR MEN (EXCEPT FOR DOCTORS AND DENTISTS) WHO ARRIVED IN ISRAEL UNTIL MAY 2015, AND FOR BNEI MEHAGRIM.

Bnei Mehagrim (children of emigrants) is a term that refers to someone who was born in Israel and left with his or her parents before reaching 16 years of age, or someone born abroad to a parent (or parents) with Israeli citizenship. Recognition as Bnei Mehagrim is done via the consulate in one's country of residence or by submitting a request to Meitav.

Age of Arrival in Israel	Family Status	Medical Profile	Length of Service
18-19	Single	45-97	30 months of service
18-19	Married	45-97	18 months of service
20-21	Single	45-97	24 months of service
20-21	Married	72-97	6 months of service
20-21	Married	45-64	Reserves
22-25	Single	72-97	6 months of service
22-25	Married	72-97	6 months of service
22-25	Single	45-64	Reserves
22-25	Married	45-64	Reserves
26-29	Single	45-97	Reserves
26-29	Married	45-97	Reserves

### NOTES:

Married men with one or more children are exempt from service.

Men age 30 and above are exempt from service.

The term "Reserves" indicates that the Oleh is not drafted but potentially could be drafted during an emergency.

## REGULAR SERVICE FOR WOMEN WHO ARRIVED IN ISRAEL UNTIL MAY 2015:

Age of Arrival in Israel	Family Status	Length of Service
Up to age 20	Single	24 months of service

### NOTES:

Married women are exempt from service.

## REGULAR SERVICE FOR MEN (EXCEPT FOR DOCTORS AND DENTISTS) WHO ARRIVED IN ISRAEL AFTER MAY 2015:

Age of Arrival in Israel	Family Status	Length of Service
18-19	Single	32 months of service
18-19	Married	24 months of service
20-21	Single	24 months of service
20-21	Married	18 months of service
22-27	Single	Volunteer service for 18 months
22-27	Married	Volunteer service for minimum 18 months

### NOTES:

Married men who have one or more children are exempt from service.

Men who are 28 and older cannot submit a request to do the volunteer work.

## LENGTH OF REGULAR SERVICE FOR WOMEN WHO ARRIVED IN ISRAEL AFTER MAY 2015

Age of Arrival in Israel	Family Status	Length of Service
18-19	Single	24 months of service
20	Single	12 months of service
21-27	Single	Volunteer service for minimum 12 months

### NOTES:

Married women are exempt from service.

Women who have one child or more are exempt from service.

Women who are 28 and older cannot submit a request to do volunteer work.

## REQUEST TO EXTEND SERVICE

New Olim who have been drafted to combat units, and new Olim who have been drafted to fields included in Regulations Section 16A, are required to extend their service to 24 months. This extra time is referred to as Shasan (Sherut Sadir Nosaf) – additional regular service – and is a condition for assignment to these positions. Olim asked to join elite units and those joining Gadsar and Palsar also require an extension of service and are required to do Shasan.

For information about the length of service of doctors and dentists, see the Physicians page on the Nefesh B'Nefesh website.

Additional information about length of service is available through:

- Mitgaisim
- Nefesh B'Nefesh

# TYPES OF SERVICE IN THE IDF

There are different categories of service in the IDF:

- **COMPULSORY (OR REGULAR) SERVICE** – IDF service as mandated by the Israel Defense Service Law.
- **PERMANENT SERVICE** – Service in the IDF in cases where, upon completion of mandatory service, there is a contractual agreement between the person serving and the IDF. In service of this kind, the soldier serves an additional time period, as described in the contract, and is defined as a soldier in permanent service. Soldiers in permanent service receive a higher salary than those in regular service.
- **RESERVE SERVICE** – After completing regular service, some soldiers are assigned a position in the reserve forces. The IDF calls up civilians for active duty based on need – for training, ongoing defense activities, and enlarging the available forces during wartime.

## SPECIAL COURSES FOR OLIM

Olim may be required to take the following courses:

- **HEBREW COURSE AT MICHVE ALON** – This course is designed for Olim whose Hebrew is at a low to medium level. The course lasts two or three months, during which time the soldiers do basic training and learn – in addition to Hebrew language skills – topics including Zionism, safety, and more. During the course, the soldiers meet with a placement officer who determines their placements in the IDF. Placements reflect the individual capabilities of each Oleh, the abilities they demonstrate during the course, and their Hebrew level.
- **MOLEDET (HERITAGE COURSE)** – Soldiers in Moledet study topics related to Israeli heritage. The goal of the course is to strengthen the soldiers' feelings of belonging and increase their sense of connection to the land of Israel in order to ease their integration into the army system and into Israeli society. The course lasts five weeks and it is mandatory for anyone who the IDF determines should take it, a decision made during a Zika interview at Lishkat Hagiyyus (IDF Recruitment Center) which explores the connection each soldier feels to the land of Israel and IDF service. During the course, the soldiers meet with a placement officer who determines their placements in the IDF. Each soldier's placement reflects his or her individual IDF profile.

## IDF ARRAY STRUCTURE

### COMBAT FORCES

- **LOHEM CHOD (SOLDIER IN THE ADVANCED FORCES):** These soldiers are trained to handle military operations in which the enemy is attacked using special maneuvers, at risk to the soldiers' lives.
- **LOHEM (COMBAT SOLDIER):** These soldiers are trained to handle military operations – in which the enemy is attacked directly or as part of a collective effort in missions involving the use of weapons, and at risk to the soldiers' lives.
- **TOMCHEI LEHIMA (COMBAT SUPPORT):** These soldiers are trained to handle military operations at risk to their lives in positions that involve providing support to command & control systems, intelligence, and administration.

### HOME FRONT COMMAND

- **TOMCHEI LEHIMA (COMBAT SUPPORT):** Soldiers who serve at the front, but whose main function is not combat.
- **PIKUD HA'OREF (HOME FRONT COMMAND):** Soldiers belonging to units whose main function is on the Home Front; these include: Logistics, Armament, Computer and Cyber-Related Positions, and Research & Development. Occasionally, for defined periods of time, these soldiers are required to be part of military operations, at risk to their lives.

Please note that most soldiers serve in positions that do not involve combat operations – yet, the majority do participate in combat training (at some level) in the course of their military service.



# TYPES OF POSITIONS IN THE IDF

## COMBAT POSITIONS

The IDF assigns combat positions to any men who are deemed fit for combat and to any women who are interested and are deemed fit for combat. The following is a description of the process for combat soldiers:

- **TIRONUT (BASIC TRAINING):** The initial time period for all IDF soldiers is a training process that aims to prepare each soldier for military service. Basic training begins on draft day after the completion of the enlistment process. During basic training, new soldiers must adapt to military life and to a military approach according to which every action must be done in coordination with officers and with their approval. Soldiers must follow military law and obey their officers and the military command chain.
- **GIBUSHIM (TRYOUTS):** During basic training, soldiers can opt to do tryouts for one of the elite units in the battalion. A soldier who succeeds in a tryout is placed in a separate unit together with other soldiers who also succeeded in the tryout. This unit continues separately from the rest of the battalion, receiving more intense and advanced training. Tryouts are not relevant for those soldiers who have already been placed in pre-military tryouts.

The IDF has levels of combat riflery from 03 to 12, where each number (from lowest to highest) represents an increasingly difficult level of skill. Starting at level 05, the combat soldiers receive more advanced training after their initial training period. To reach levels 07, 08, 10, or 12, soldiers must first complete training for 03 or 05. For the higher levels of riflery skill, soldiers must receive authorization for active combat warfare – something that involves difficult training exercises including night navigation, completing lengthy marches in the field, learning survival skills in the field, and practicing combat in developed areas.

- **IMUN MITKADEM (ADVANCED TRAINING):** An additional step in the training process of combat soldiers that begins after the completion of basic training. At this stage, soldiers receive between 12 and 16 weeks of advanced training, designed to prepare them for riflery level 07. In advanced training, soldiers undergo even longer marches, weeks of advanced firing practice, Lashab (practicing combat in developed areas) weeks, and many weeks of exercises in the field. The goal of advanced training is to improve physical fitness, develop a sense of teamwork within the unit and the company, gain practice in handling longer marches, and gain experience with different discipline and training exercises. Advanced training ends with the Masa Kumta march, at the end of which soldiers receive their corps beret.

## COMBAT SUPPORT

The IDF assigns Home Front Command positions to men who have the appropriate profile and are deemed suitable for the placement, and to women who have not been assigned combat positions. The process for soldiers in the Home Front Command involves:

- **TIRONUT (BASIC TRAINING):** Basic training is the initial time period in the IDF – a process that aims to prepare each soldier for his or her military service. Soldiers in the Home Front Command are required to do basic training, after which there is a swearing-in ceremony in which the soldiers swear allegiance to the IDF (details below).
- **HAKHSHARA MIKTSO'IT (PROFESSIONAL TRAINING):** After basic training, soldiers participate in a basic course that prepares them for the roles they were assigned. The length of the training depends on the position. It is important to note that not all soldiers receive professional training in a course. Some are taught their job responsibilities by more experienced soldiers in the unit in which they are placed.

Throughout military service, soldiers spend some of their weekends on the base. If you want to send them food or equipment, you can do so through Kaveret, the delivery service of a convenience store chain called Yachad Lemaan Hachayal.

# MAIN EVENTS DURING MILITARY SERVICE

## TEKES HASHBA'AH

The first ceremony is usually the Tekes Hashba'ah, the swearing-in ceremony. In the IDF, each soldier must swear allegiance to the country, a practice that is common in armies around the world. The Tekes Hashba'ah is a celebratory ceremony that usually takes place after soldiers complete a short period of basic training, a period of learning about and acclimating to life in the army. In combat units, the soldiers receive their personal weapons during the ceremony.

The following is the wording of the oath that the soldiers say:

*"I swear and commit to maintain allegiance to the State of Israel, its laws, and its authorities, to accept upon myself unconditionally the discipline of the Israel Defense Forces, to obey all the orders and instructions given by authorized commanders, and to devote all my energies, and even sacrifice my life, for the protection of the homeland and the liberty of Israel."*

## TEKES KUMTA

An additional ceremony is the Tekes Kumta, or "Ceremony of the Beret." This ceremony, which follows the Masa Kumta ("March of the Beret"), is when combat soldiers receive their corps berets. It may take place at the end of basic training or the end of advanced training. Each soldier receives a beret in the specific color of the corps or brigade in which he or she is serving. The custom is for officers to give their own berets to the most exceptional soldiers.

Each corps or unit has a set location in which it conducts the Tekes Kumta. For example, the Kfir Brigade has the ceremony at the Kfir Brigade Memorial in Afula and the Paratroopers Brigade has the ceremony at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem.

## TEKES SIYUM MASLUL/SIYUM HAKHSHARA

For all IDF training tracks, at the completion of the training process there is an official graduation ceremony – Tekes Siyum Maslul/Siyum Hakhshara – generally with the participation of the soldiers' families.

### TIP FROM THE LSP TEAM:

It is helpful to know what to expect and to understand the Israeli experience at these ceremonies. They are official military ceremonies, but soldiers' families and friends come with congratulatory signs and food for the soldiers and their friends, favorites foods, tee-shirts with congratulatory messages, etc. In some ceremonies, officers conduct a toast for the lone soldiers, which takes place separately without the other soldiers in the unit. Nefesh B'Nefesh, in cooperation with El Al, subsidizes a number of flights to the Tekes Kumta for parents of soldiers who meet the defined criteria. For information, be in touch with us at: [lonesoldierparents@nbn.org](mailto:lonesoldierparents@nbn.org)







## BERETS, SYMBOLS OF UNITS AND BRIGADES, AND PINS

The color of the beret is one of the most noticeable indications of an IDF corps or unit. The beret is a source of pride, and combat soldiers in different tracks will march dozens of kilometers in order to earn the right to wear it. A beret indicates that a soldier belongs to specific corps or sections of the IDF, and it is part of the soldier's uniform. Customarily, soldiers first don the beret at special ceremonies and events. These can include: at the end of basic training, at the end of a course, on Memorial Day, and other times. A pin adorns the beret and indicates the corps or brigade of each soldier.

On Draft Day, all new recruits receive an olive-green beret (except for soldiers in the Air Force and Navy). At the end of training, each soldier receives the beret belonging to his or her unit.

- Olive: Soldiers in training and the general corps
- Dark blue: Navy Corps
- Dark green: Intelligence Corps and Border Police
- Black: Armor Corps
- Dark gray: Air Force
- Light gray: Engineering Corps
- Light yellow: Field Intelligence Corps
- Blue: Military Police
- Turquoise: Artillery Corps
- Orange: Home Front Command
- Dark turquoise: Communications Division and Cyber Staff
- Brown: Golani Brigade
- Purple: Givati and Desert Gadsar (Desert Patrol) Brigades
- Red: Paratroopers Brigade, Commando Brigade and Sayeret Matkal
- Leopard: Kfir Brigade

# BADGES OF EACH UNIT



Kfir

זרם כפיר



Givati

זרם גבעתי



Golani

זרם גולני



Nahal

זרם נהל



Arayot Hayarden

זרם אריות הירדן



Bardelas

זרם ברדלס



Karakal

זרם קרקל



Chilutz Vehatzala

זרם חילוצ



Shiryon



Totchanim



Handasa Kravit



Tzanchanim



Hagana Avirit

הגנה אבירית



Snapear/Chovlim

סנאפאר/חבלימ



Mishmar Hagvul

זרם מ"ג



Isuf Kravi

זרם איסוף קרבי



Chinuch

חינוך



Shalishut

שלישית



Matpash

מת"ש



Kishrey Chutz

קשרי חוץ



Mishtara Tzvait

מיסטרות צבאית



Army Rabbinate

הרבנות הצבאית



Modiin

מודיעין



Dover Tzahal

דובר צה"ל



Logistics

לוגיסטיקה



Chimush

חישוף



Tikshuv

תיקשוב



Chovesh

חושב

# PINS OF SPECIAL UNITS



Shayetet 13

שייטת 13



Maglan

מגלן



Yahalom

יהלום



669

Elite Search and Rescue



Shaldag

שולדג



Rimon

רימון



Egoz

עוז



Palsar 7

פאלסר 7



Gadsar Nahal

גדסר נהל



Gadsar Tzanchanim

גדסר תזנחנים



Gadsar Givati

גדסר גבעתי



Gadsar Golani

גדסר גולני



Meitar

מיתר



Oketz

וקצ



Duvdevan

דובדבן



Matkal

מטקל

# CARING FOR THE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF THE SOLDIERS

Beginning on Draft Day and ending when a soldier is released from the IDF, all medical care a soldier might need is handled by the IDF Medical Corps. The soldier's association with a civilian healthcare program is suspended. Medical service is provided free of charge and includes the basket of medications that has been approved by the Israeli Ministry of Health. Note that any soldier who approaches a civilian medical professional without a referral from an IDF doctor will be charged for the service.

## MEDICAL CLINIC OF THE UNIT

A soldier who feels unwell can go to a clinic on the base where he or she serves or is stationed. There, the soldier is checked by a medic who can provide a referral to the relevant doctor if necessary. Only a senior medical authority is authorized to grant a soldier sick leave. A soldier has the right to see a doctor within 24 hours of submitting a request. However, a doctor may postpone the appointment due to other, more urgent cases or other constraints.

## BIKUR ROFEH MEDICAL CLINICS

A soldier who is not on his or her base can go to one of the Bikur Rofeh clinics to receive medical care beginning in the evening hours. The clinics are located throughout Israel. For opening hours and the street address of each clinic, see: [www.bikurofe.co.il/soldiers](http://www.bikurofe.co.il/soldiers)

Bikur Rofeh clinics are the only civilian medical resource authorized to provide medical care for IDF soldiers. They can grant sick days or rest days and provide prescriptions for medication.

## YOM GIMEL

According to the definition provided by the General Staff, a Yom Gimel is a day during which a soldier is entitled to stay home due to an illness or a medical condition that prevents the performance of one's military duties. Soldiers are allowed to go home if they receive a Yom Gimel while on base. A Yom Gimel continues until 8:00 am the next morning; for example, soldiers who receive two days of Yom Gimel starting on Sunday

at 10:00 am must return to the base by Tuesday at 8:00 am. If the soldier is not feeling better, he or she can physically return to the Bikur Rofeh clinic or to the unit's doctor and must give the forms received from the doctor to his or her officer – i.e. forms regarding Yom Gimel days and doctor's recommendations. According to the regulations, on the day a soldier receives a Yom Gimel, the officer must respect whatever is determined at the clinic and

not demand that the soldier return to the base. However, there are situations in which a Yom Gimel applies to the unit and the soldier is not allowed to return home because of his or her health status. Yom Gimel days do not count as vacation days. These are considered days of military service and do not postpone the soldier's release date. In certain situations, a medical authority may send a soldier back for additional tests.

## YOM BET

Yom Bet days are a different kind of rest that a doctor is entitled to recommend. A Yom Bet authorizes the soldier to rest on the base in which he or she serves, and it provides exemption from various activities. Yom Bet days are given for light medical situations that need rest in order to recover but that don't require sending the soldier home.

# EXTREME SITUATIONS

In extreme situations such as a car accident or a serious deterioration in a soldier's medical situation – i.e. situations in which the soldier cannot travel to a Bikur Rofeh clinic because of its limited hours or because no clinic is near his or her home – the soldier is entitled to go to the emergency room in a hospital without a referral.

In these situations, and after receiving approval from the medical professionals in the unit, the IDF will fund the soldier's hospitalization and the care received at the hospital.

Soldiers who are not sure if a situation requires going to the emergency room can consult with the hotline of the Medical Corps, Mekol Halev, by dialing

03-948-9999 or \*6690. The hotline operates throughout the year at all hours of the day. In the unusual situation in which a soldier goes to the emergency room without a referral and it turns out that the visit to the emergency room was not justified, the soldier is required to pay for the hospital fees using his or her personal money (830 NIS).

## MOKED MI KOL HA-LEV -IDF MEDICAL SERVICE (מקול הלב)

An appointment can be made via your personal account on a military computer or using the Medical Corps' Mikol HaLev call center \*6690

After enlisting in the IDF, soldiers are moved from your civilian health care system into the Military Medical System. The IDF Medical Corps offers various medical services in addition to treating urgent cases such as illness or injury.

English Website: [www.mitgaisim.idf.il/כתבות/english/rights-and-obligations/general-medical-services](http://www.mitgaisim.idf.il/כתבות/english/rights-and-obligations/general-medical-services)

## ADDITIONAL SITUATIONS WHEN SOLDIERS SHOULD GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM

1. If a doctor checked a soldier in a military clinic or Bikur Rofeh clinic and decided to send the soldier to the emergency room for medical reasons such as a suspected illness, a particular check, or an emergency situation.
  2. If the unit's clinic and the local Bikur Rofeh branch are closed, and the Mekol Halev hotline (\*6690) provides authorization by phone to go to the emergency room.
  3. By law, soldiers who suffer from one of the following problems should go to the emergency room (without receiving prior approval):
    - Any new fracture
    - Acute dislocation of joints established by means of a physical examination or using images and showing characteristic symptoms
    - A wound requiring stitches or another method of connection or fusion
    - Where a foreign object has been inhaled into the respiratory system
    - Where a foreign object penetrates the eye
    - Angina pectoris
    - Loss of consciousness established by means of a physical examination, a lab test or using images, and showing characteristic symptoms.
    - A seizure, showing characteristic symptoms, and identified through anamnesis, a physical examination, or associated examinations, and documented in the emergency room or by MADA (the Israeli Red Cross) in cases where a soldier was sent to the emergency room by ambulance
- Treatment for oncology patients in the emergency room
  - Acute asthma attack; established by means of a physical examination or associated examinations, and showing characteristic symptoms
  - Treatment for any soldier injured in a military car crash

# PAYMENT FOR EMERGENCY ROOM TREATMENT

The cost of treatment in the emergency room is 830 NIS per visit, at present. If a soldier is treated in the emergency room after being referred by a doctor, the soldier arrives with an Asmachta Taktzivit (budgetary authorization) that covers the cost of treatment. This documentation should be presented by the soldier at the emergency room.

When a soldier is treated at the emergency room for one of the reasons covered by law (listed above), he or she must submit the forms from the emergency room (which are received at the end of treatment) to the clinic for his or her unit within 48 hours – both to ensure continued care and to receive budgetary authorization.

**IMPORTANT:**  
Soldiers are responsible for taking

care of any hospital paperwork regarding the cost of emergency room care. The IDF does not take care of this for the soldiers. Budgetary authorization provided by the unit doctor should be sent by fax or email, or it can be personally delivered to the hospital. It is important to confirm that the document was received at the hospital.

# WHAT HAPPENS IF A SOLDIER RECEIVES MORE THAN 6 DAYS OF “YOM GIMEL”?

Yom Gimel days granted by doctors at the hospital are fully accepted by the IDF. A soldier who receives 6 or more Yom Gimel days, should go – at the

end of the hospitalization period – to Ram 2, which is open 24 hours a day at any large hospital. A soldier who receives a significant number of sick days might be

placed at Ram 2 for continued care and follow-up, in order to ensure the continuity of medical care.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE – THE KABAN (MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER)

Military service can cause psychological stress, which must be treated like any other medical issue. Be aware that throughout military service, soldiers may not give a referral for psychological care to a civilian professional. An appointment with a Kaban (a psychologist or a social worker) is one of the basic rights of IDF soldiers, and the person who provides care is required to maintain absolute confidentiality. The receipt of professional psychological care from Mental Health Services is need-based, and referrals are provided after an initial conversation with an authorized professional. Any soldier who would like to begin a process of individual

psychological consultation at the designated Mental Health Services clinic of the Medical Corps should not hesitate to contact the staff from Mental Health Services in his or her unit. This can be done through a soldier's personal officers or by means of a referral from the unit's clinic.

## TIPS FROM THE LSP TEAM:

- Medical care in the IDF is different from what soldiers may be familiar with based on their previous experiences. Sometimes the process proceeds very slowly and requires tremendous patience. It may take a long time for a soldier to
- have the opportunity to meet with the unit doctor and receive a referral to a specialist. The determining factor in receiving care and establishing the level of urgency is the soldier's medical situation, though at the same time, soldiers have rights and it is important that they demand their medical rights when necessary.
- If a soldier has a private medical consultation or consults with a doctor overseas, the results of such a consultation are not binding in the IDF. Medical care is given only by means of the doctors in the IDF.

The LSP team and the FIDF wish every soldier the best of health! Staff members are in touch each week with the lone soldiers assigned to Ram 2 by phone and, since 2019, they receive care packages.



# MILITARY TERMINOLOGY

Your son or daughter donned a military uniform and has been exposed to a world that's completely different from anything he or she had known before. The clothing is different. The schedule is defined, and there's military discipline. Likewise, the language is different – and in addition to learning Hebrew, the soldiers need to learn military terminology.

Before we provide you with a vocabulary list that includes military slang, we'd like to introduce some of the people and processes that are likely to be occupying your sons and daughters in the coming time period:

- Mefakdim (Officers):** The various officers who are responsible for a soldier – from the soldier's immediate officer, to the officer of the unit. This includes: The Mak (squad commander), Mem Mem (platoon commander), Mem Peh (company commander), Magad (battalion commander), and others. When soldiers talk about "Hamefaked" – literally "The Officer" – they are usually referring to their immediate officer. It's not acceptable to use an officer's first name. The officers are addressed using the term "Hamefaked."
- Mashakit Tash (the equivalent of an army social worker):** A soldier who is in your son's or daughter's unit. The Mashakit Tash makes sure each soldier in the unit receives his or her full rights.
- Sha'at Tash (the hour before sleep):** The limited free time received by soldiers prior to going to bed at night. This is their time to take a shower, talk on the phone, etc.
- Shavua Shetach (field week):** As part of the training process for combat soldiers, they are in the field for a week during which time they are not able to contact their families or friends – not by phone, nor in any other way. They generally eat combat rations, sleep in the field, and have no access to showers.
- Shavua Milhama (war week):** This final exercise of the training process combines everything the soldiers have learned and allows them to practice their skills by simulating wartime. Throughout this week, the soldiers gain experience with challenging warfare situations.
- Tofsim Kav:** This means that soldiers are in a particular military zone where they are doing guard duty and other routine security-related activities for the area.
- Lisgor Shabbat ("in for the weekend"):** The soldier is remaining on the base for the weekend and is not going home.

In Hebrew	In English	Explanation
פז"ם	PAZAM	A minimal period of time; how soldiers refer to the amount of time that passed since they were drafted
אפטר	AFTER	A short vacation of several hours
אבט"ש	AVTASH	An acronym meaning securing an area or a community
הגנ"ש	HAGNASH	An acronym meaning defending an area or a community
אג"ם	AGAM	Operations division
בט"ר	BATAR	Base for basic training
דיסטנס	DISTANCE	The sense of distance that is established between officers in the army and their soldiers; at the end of basic training or service, there is something called "breaking the distance"
וואסאך	WASACH	Making a good impression without having earned it
טירון	TIRON	A soldier who is in basic training, or who is about to start basic training
לְדַרְבֵּק	LEDARBEEK	To make coffee
מיוחדת	MEYUHEDET	A vacation given to soldiers in special circumstances – such as a lone soldier who is being visited by his or her parents, a vacation granted for financial reasons, etc.
מש"ק	MASHAK	A commander who is not an officer

In Hebrew	In English	Explanation
מ"ב	MAK	Squad commander
מ"מ	MEM-MEM	Platoon commander
מ"פ	MEM-PEI	Company commander
סמ"פ	SMECH-MEM-PEI	Deputy company commander
סמג"ד	SAMGAD	Deputy battalion commander
מג"ד	MAGAD	Battalion commander
מח"ט	MAHAT	Brigade commander
סמח"ט	SAMHAT	Deputy brigade commander
קל"ב	KALAB	Close to home
ש"ג	SHIN-GIMEL	Battalion guard – meaning a soldier who stands guard at the entrance to the camp
שעת ט"ש	SHAAT TASH	Free time granted to soldiers before they go to bed, during which they can shower, talk on the phone, etc.
שפצו"ר	SHIPTZUR	Form Improvement- Generally to work on your equipment
שק"ש	SAKASH	Sleeping bag
ת"ש	TASH	Terms of service
קד"צ	KADATZ	Pre-army preparatory program
צעיר	TZAIR	A low-ranking soldier whose release date from the IDF is far off
מקוצרת	MEKUTZERET	Leaving for the weekend but returning on Saturday night
מדוגם/דיגום	MEDUGAM/ DIGUM	Following military guidelines in dress and presentation
פריסה	PRISA	Military meal
מצב שתיים	MATZAV 2	Leaning with the weight of the body on the hands (generally given as a punishment), a position known as “lying like a blanket”
להתעפ"ץ	LEHITAFETZ	Snoozing during the day (when you are meant to be awake)
ראש קטן	ROSH KATAN	Doing exactly what you've been asked to do without taking any initiative beyond that
שביזות	SHVIZUT	Feeling exceptionally tired and frustrated – generally used for a soldier who is absolutely exhausted, disappointed, or just tired of it all
לנצנץ	LENATZNETZ	Not working when other people around you are working
בלת"ם	BALTAM	Unplanned
חזל"ש	HAZLASH	Back to routine
לסגור שבת	LISGOR SHABAT	Remaining on the base for Shabbat instead of having the weekend off
גלח"צ	GALHATZ	Shaving your face, and polishing your shoes
חמשוש	HAMSHUSH	A weekend that begins early, on Thursday; you can also say Rav'ush – referring to a weekend that starts on Wednesday (and you won't usually have one that starts before Tuesday)
אפטר	AFTER	A short vacation of several hours, for example, if you leave in the afternoon and return early the next day
סריקה	SRIKA	A careful search of each and every part
הקפצה	HAKPATZA	Being called to a task at short notice
שנ"צ	SHNATZ	Nap in the afternoon
ביתים	BETIM	Complete exemption from all activity in the unit, i.e., absolutely rest in the area of the base
גימלים	GIMELIM	When a doctor or other authorized individual approves that a soldier must spend the day resting completely, must not do any military activity, and should therefore go home
יום ד	DALET YOM	A day off from home due to a medical issue, and granted by the officer

# BENEFITS FOR LONE SOLDIERS DURING MILITARY SERVICE

Lone soldiers in the IDF receive certain benefits to help make their service easier. (Mahal soldiers do not receive all of the benefits.) A soldier must be defined as a lone soldier for at least 3 months in order to become eligible for these benefits.

Who is considered to be an Oleh lone soldier? This category includes soldiers who meet the following criteria:

- Soldiers who made Aliyah by themselves whose parents permanently reside outside of Israel
- Soldiers whose parents moved away from Israel
- Soldiers whose parents are on Shlichut (literally, a mission – i.e. they were sent by an Israeli government agency or other organization to do work abroad) for a period of 6 months or more

To be defined as a lone soldier, soldiers must submit a request to the regional Lishkat Hagiyyus (recruitment center) for those who have not been drafted yet or to the Mashakit Tash (the equivalent of an army social worker) in the soldier's unit, for those who have already been drafted.

A lone soldier whose parents make Aliyah during the last year of his or her service keeps the lone soldier status until the end of service. Note that in this case, the soldier does not receive a free plane ticket, as these tickets are only for soldiers who are flying home to see their parents and families.

A lone soldier who serves for 12 months and whose parents make Aliyah during that year must speak to the Mashakit Tash. Such cases are handled on an

individual basis.

A lone soldier whose parents decide to reside in Israel for an extended period (without making Aliyah) must inform his or her Mashakit Tash. A soldier who does not report this may lose lone soldier status (which may have financial implications).

## LONE SOLDIERS ARE ENTITLED TO THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- **An extra 150 NIS to purchase food** – Each month, the soldier's Choger receives 150 NIS, which may be used in various supermarkets. The money does not carry over, i.e., you must use it within two months. The money cannot be used to buy alcohol or tobacco products (such as cigarettes).
- **Financial aid for sick days** – Lone soldiers who have 3 or more sick days (Yom Gimel) are entitled to financial aid starting on the first sick day. The money is transferred retroactively. To receive this benefit, a soldier must submit a sick notice to the Machleket Shalishut (Department of Human Resources) in the unit.
- **Yom Siddurim (errands day)** – Lone soldiers are entitled to an "errands day" to take care of personal needs: once a month during basic training or a military course, and once every two months during the rest of the service. Every year, Nefesh B'Nefesh, together with the Human Resources Division of the IDF, runs a centralized Yom Siddurim in which they offer many services in one place. Participants in Yom Siddurim include representatives from different government offices, the Israeli Electric Corporation, Bituach Leumi (social security), and more.
- **Leaving early** – On Fridays and Erev Chag (holiday eve), lone soldiers are allowed to leave earlier from the base so that they can arrive home by 12:00 pm during the summer, and by 11:00 am in the winter.
- **Holiday gift card** – Twice a year, lone soldiers receive a gift card that can be used to buy food and other items at different stores.
- **Moving to a new apartment** – A lone soldier planning to move to a new apartment can receive moving assistance from the soldier's unit. This is a tradition – but it is not a requirement of the unit.
- **Working permit** – Lone soldiers can receive working permits during their service when necessary.
- **Emergency flights** – In case of the death of a relative in a soldier's immediate family (where the family lives outside of Israel), the soldier is entitled to a free ticket and a special 30-day vacation.
- **Vacation for family visiting Israel** – Lone soldiers are allowed up to 8 vacation days a year when the soldier's family visits Israel. The length of the vacation is determined by the soldier's commanding officer. Fridays, Saturdays, and holidays are included in these vacation days.
- **Special vacation outside of Israel** – Lone soldiers are entitled to a 30-day vacation once a year in order to visit their families.
- **One free flight during army service** – This is given to combat soldiers who finished their advanced training, to soldiers in combat support



positions after the first year and to other soldiers after they finish half of their army service. It is recommended to submit a request about 3 months prior to the trip.

- **Course: Preparing for civilian life** – The purpose of this course is to prepare lone soldiers for life as Israeli citizens – to provide an overview of soldiers’ rights and benefits after service, to help soldiers find jobs and succeed in job interviews, and to share information about university options.
- **Special vacation** – Lone soldiers are allowed a special vacation of up to 30 days per year. This time can be used to study for the psychometric exam, handle urgent financial problems or deal with personal issues.

- **Financial grant** – This grant is dependent on the soldier’s financial state. To receive this grant, a soldier must submit documents indicating financial difficulties to the Mashakit Tash.
- **MAGAD coupons** – These are given to lone soldiers suffering from financial difficulties. The soldiers are not required to submit documents from the bank proving their financial situation. MAGAD coupons are only given to lone soldiers who are in combat units.
- **Loan** – Lone soldiers with financial difficulties are entitled to receive a loan. The soldiers are not required to submit documents from the bank proving their financial situation. The loan is given only to lone soldiers who are

in combat units.

- **Quick “Bazak” Grant**– This grant is given when a soldier needs urgent financial help and it is supposed to provide immediate relief. The amount of the grant is based on the level of activity. The grant should arrive in the soldier’s bank account up to 48 hours after it is approved. While this grant is for individuals suffering from financial difficulties, soldiers are not required to submit documents from the bank proving their financial situation in order to obtain it.
- **Assistance with furniture** – Lone soldiers are allowed to ask for electrical appliances and furniture, depending on their financial situations.

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS (BENEFITS THAT ARE NOT FROM THE IDF)

- **Grant from Nefesh B'Nefesh and the FIDF** – Nefesh B'Nefesh helps lone soldiers, providing a grant of 2,500 NIS to every Oleh who is drafted as a lone soldier and who expects to serve for a minimum of 18 months.
- **Subsidized flights for parents flying to Israel for graduation ceremonies** – Nefesh B'Nefesh together with El Al subsidizes tickets for parents coming to attend the Tekes Kumta ceremony. This is for individuals who meet the defined criteria. For details, email us at: [lonesoldierparents@nbn.org.il](mailto:lonesoldierparents@nbn.org.il)
- **Substantial discount in Arnona (property tax) or complete refund** – If a soldier lives with roommates, the discount is based only on the soldier's portion of the apartment. The discount is given for up to 70 square meters of an apartment.

To receive this benefit, a soldier must submit the following documents to the Municipality: original rental contract, authorization of regular army service from the IDF, Teudat Zehut (Israeli ID card), Teudat Choger (soldier's ID) and lone soldier certificate.

- **Monthly allowance of 540 NIS from the Ministry of Absorption** – To receive this allowance, the soldier must call: 03-973-3333. If the soldier is based at Michve Alon, a representative will come and give them this benefit. The following individuals are entitled to this benefit: An Oleh, a returning minor, and an Ezrach Oleh (an Israeli citizen born abroad to at least one parent who held Israeli citizenship at the time of his or her birth).
- **50% discount on electricity bills** – Soldiers who are renting an apartment are

given 50% off on their electricity bills. To be eligible, the rental contract and electricity bill must be under the soldier's name. To receive this benefit, soldiers should first contact the lone soldier hotline at 03-737-5200 and check that his or her name is on their list, and then call the Israel Electric Corporation (103). During the call, the soldier must have access to his or her Choger (soldier ID), credit card, the information on the electricity meter, and the number of the person paying or of the customer that appears on the bill.

### A TIP FROM THE LSP TEAM:

Our experience has shown that due to cultural differences, lone soldiers often do not ask to receive all of their benefits. We recommend that you teach your children to ask for the benefits they deserve as lone soldiers!



# RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS

- **Kibbutz Hospitality** – The army pays rent directly to the relevant kibbutz and the soldier receives meals (vary according to the Kibbutz). Each soldier receives his or her own room, but this is not guaranteed and there is a chance that soldiers will have to share the room with roommates.
- **Beit Hachayal** – A hostel that belongs to the IDF and is open to all types of soldiers, including lone soldiers. Every room has 3–4 soldiers. Availability depends on how many soldiers there are and whether rooms are free. You must sign up in advance.
- **Alach apartments** – Furnished apartments that are available to lone soldiers. There are 6 soldiers in every apartment – 2 soldiers per room. The rent, bills, cleaning supplies, and maintenance and fixing costs are provided by the FIDF. Soldiers living in these apartments are entitled to 400 NIS per month for buying food.
- **Renting an apartment** – Every soldier is entitled to rent an apartment and the IDF will contribute 1,300 NIS per month toward the cost of rent. This money is also meant to provide assistance with the cost of other services or equipment that are needed.
- **Beit Halochem** – Homes for lone combat soldiers such as Habayit Shel Benji, Habayit Shel Kobi, and Lone Soldiers Center (run by the Jerusalem Municipality). The rent is free and there are free meals, a joint living space, and separate bedrooms.
- **Adopted families** – Nefesh B’Nefesh offers lone soldiers the option of having an adopted family throughout their service. Usually, the soldier receives a private bedroom, and the family cares for all of the soldiers’ needs including providing personal guidance support.
- **HaBayit Shel Benji** - HaBayit Shel Benji located in Ra’anana and is a place for lone combat soldiers to call home for the duration of their army service, and should be able to stay in Israel and prosper thereafter.

# SALARIES FOR SOLDIERS

	Soldiers serving close to home	Combat Support	Combat
Basic salary	810 NIS	1,176 NIS	1,616 NIS
Bonus for lone soldiers	540 NIS	540 NIS	540 NIS
Demei Sikun	X	211 NIS	422 NIS
(Risk Payment)	X	211 NIS	422 NIS
Food Payment	150 NIS	150 NIS	150 NIS
Ministry of Absorption Grant	540 NIS	540 NIS	540 NIS
Grant from Ministry of Construction & Housing*	402 NIS	402 NIS	402 NIS
Total	2,442 NIS	3,013 NIS	3,670 NIS
Total with the financial grant for apartment rental (1,300 NIS)	3,742 NIS	4,319 NIS	4,970 NIS

\* Generally 13 months after the Aliyah date, but soldiers can receive this from their 8th month after Aliyah.

\*\*Between month 9 and month 12, a soldier receives just 233 NIS.

## HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE DISTANCE?

What does a soldier go through during IDF service? What difficulties come up? What are the possible solutions?

Heli Barak, a senior educational psychologist, approaches this topic in an article written especially for you in order to offer assistance, provide a clearer picture, help you gain the skills you need for better communication, and give you greater confidence.

### **“CONTINUING TO BE CLOSE, AS PARENTS – FOR SOLDIERS WHO ARE FAR AWAY IN ISRAEL...”**

In the following article, I provide suggestions for maintaining meaningful communication with children who are being drafted as lone soldiers.

In the United States children also “leave the nest,” going off to college or developing their own, independent lives away from home. Parents may be emotional and proud of their adult children, but at the same time, they worry about them: Will they be successful? They better not do anything stupid...!

Every parent knows his or her child’s weaknesses better than anyone else. We’ve raised our children from the time they were helpless babies and only recently saw them reach the end of the dependence of the teen years. Sometimes, it can actually be hard for parents to understand their children’s strengths and rely on them because for a parent, a child always remains a child.

When children join the army in Israel there are other emotions to deal with. The children truly are far away, and the Atlantic Ocean lies between you and them.

There is also a time difference and there is the issue of having a different mentality in Israel that, as parents, you may not be familiar with. You cannot provide help with problems that come up on a daily basis – both because the children are not nearby, and because you are not familiar with the system. And there is the fear of alienation.

Moreover, the children are not just moving to Israel – they are joining the army. The world of military experiences – the slang, like Achi (“my brother”), Dootz

(“friendly fire”), Avtash (“securing communities”) – remains foreign and strange to parents, while it becomes part of the children’s world.

Fear for the welfare of your children is in the forefront of every parent’s mind. The worry that, God forbid, the child could be injured in the army. It is hard to forget that they volunteered for this service; they were not required to do it.

The experience of being a parent of a soldier is difficult. The children are drafted, and the parents are left ‘on the other side of the fence’ – in this case, on another continent. But for each parent, ‘the child’s heart continues to beat within them,’ to adopt an expression by the poet Yehuda Amichai. Parents go through the experience together with their children. They get excited, they get worried, they get stressed, they get angry – all from far away and under circumstances that are not simple. Many times, the communication between parents and their children continue using a different paradigm than what had existed previously.

Sometimes, whatever issues already existed become more prominent. Sometimes, there is actually an improvement due to the distance. It's important to remember that the communication, the relationship, did not start on the day the children leave for Israel. There may be scars – there is a baseline against which everything should be evaluated.

So how does one maintain close, warm communication?

### 1. Each parent needs to do his or her own, work, internally:

*It is important to accept this shift in your role as a parent.*

You have become a long-distance parent. Your child is in Israel in the army. Those are the facts. There are things that you will not be able to do, but there are many things that you will be able to do. To the extent that you accept the reality and don't fight it, you will free up energies to enjoy the relationship and get the maximum out of it.

It is important to take responsibility for subjective, negative interpretations of our reality. For example:

- My child **must** call me on a regular schedule. It's not okay that he hasn't – he doesn't care!
- We don't understand what's happening there in the army, so we aren't capable of helping...
- My daughter is having a hard time in the army and it's a catastrophe, what will we do?!
- The situation is unbearable (the distance, the worry, the difficulty). I can't deal with it any longer.

These kinds of irrational thoughts, though they are very human, actually represent a source of difficulty in and of themselves. They cause strong feelings of anger, insult, fear, and tension. It is highly recommended to identify these kinds of interpretations –

which are purely subjective – so that one's view of the situation can change for the better. When you change your interpretation of a situation, your feelings and ability to function also undergo a shift.

In relation to the examples above, here are some examples of more rational thoughts: A child does not have to phone on a regular schedule, despite the fact that we may want them to. Perhaps it's not feasible; certainly, there's no reason to feel that the child does not care. The fact that we do not understand what is happening in the army does not mean that we are unable to be of assistance. The fact that it is hard for our kids and that sometimes I may find it unbearable for a few moments does not mean that this is the end of the world – it just means it's hard. And there are definitely things that we can do to help.

### 2. Maintaining communication with children:

When you communicate with kids in the army:

- **Listen to them:** To be caring, you don't need to have expertise or to have the solution at hand. What children need is for their parents to be good listeners – expressing empathy and warmth. Be truly interested in what they are experiencing.
- **Share what's going on at home:** The kids are interested in hearing about what's been happening in the familiar environment at home and with other family members.
- **Talk about what you have in common:** Every family has certain positive aspects of communication and these need to be preserved – whether this means talking about a television series you all love, trips taken together, or other family anecdotes. Don't forget about these shared aspects because of the distance. Talk about them, as

these are the kinds of things that highlight what you share and what unite you as a family, even from a distance.

- **Use a variety of communication methods:** Luckily, there are a variety of types of communication today, and you can benefit from the advantages of each one. Use email, WhatsApp, Instagram, Skype, and the telephone. Send short or funny messages and pictures that provide a small "caress." Any communication that reaches a child's limbic brain – the emotional part of the brain – is good.
- **Initiate communication and don't keep score:** Kids are very sensitive to their parents' criticism and absorb when their parents are hurt or disappointed in them, even when it's not stated explicitly. This leads to a feeling of distance. Therefore, it is important to really accept a child's pattern of communication and not to fight it. Transmit to the children that you are happy with them and they definitely will want to communicate with you more!
- **Take the calls at any hour:** Because of the time difference, sometimes your son or daughter will call at inconvenient hours. Take the calls, because this is the time when your child needs you.
- **Help them deal with the stress:** Sometimes the conversations will not be pleasant. Nevertheless, try to listen and to be supportive. In most cases, kids need their parents just to listen and to validate their feelings. They want recognition that the feelings are real and rational, and that their parents care about their distress. Never argue with feelings, complaints, or bad moods. When people are in

the middle of an emotional storm, no degree of logic will overcome their emotions, so there is no reason to tell them that they are exaggerating. The result of doing so is that the person not only feels awful, but also feels rejected and not understood. When your son or daughter calms down – and neurologically, this generally happens after 15–20 minutes – you can start to talk more logically.

- **Strengthen your children’s abilities:** Emphasize to them that they are capable of solving problems, that the distress is temporary, that you can fix mistakes, that they have the capabilities, that they are strong, that you trust them. These are positive beliefs that start the most important process of all – the process of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Above all, kids need their parents’ faith in them – at any age! This kind of encouragement when children are in the army – experiencing a flooding of emotions, or during times of crisis – will help them return

to more effective modes of thinking, where they can function better. In this way, as parents, you are helping them in the best way possible. Note that helping your children by having faith in their abilities does not require having expertise about the army or about Israel. You just need to know your child – and this is an area in which you have years of experience.

- **Remember that the content of the conversation is not important; but the tone is very important:** It does not matter what you say. What’s important is the feeling you’re left with after the conversation is over. Therefore, focus more on your intention to listen and provide support. Focus less on the content, on what you’re saying, on being right, on giving guidance, on correcting errors – because this is how you can mess up conversations, create tension, and generate a feeling a distance.

In summary: **Keep your focus on what is possible in long-**

**distance communication, and less on what you are not able to do.** Instead of the type of communication that you used to have with your children, replace it with types of communication that are possible, and that are good for you – now that your child is in the army in Israel. Listen well – to yourselves, and to them. Find ways of communication that work well for you. Be patient and flexible, and it will work. It can be helpful to speak with parents who are in a similar situation – to share, to hear new ideas, to know that your experiences are normal, to get through the period in the army and then continue to be parents in the period that follows – the period that’s known as “After the Army.”

Wishing you the best of luck and much joy from your children,

**Heli Barak Stein**

Senior Educational Psychologist  
 Author of the books *At Eye Level*, *Listen to Me for a Second*, and *When Kids Leave the House*  
[www.hebpsy.net/barak](http://www.hebpsy.net/barak)

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Resource	Details	Email/Phone
Questions about Salaries	Questions about salary level, salary delays, trouble with deposits, etc.	<a href="mailto:hova_mil@mail.idf.il">hova_mil@mail.idf.il</a> or you can send a message to 03-734-9999
Lone Soldiers Hotline		
Merkaz Bodedim	Available 24 hours a day to answer soldiers’ questions or address problems	*1111 extension 2
Meitav Unit Service Center	Information Center about the recruitment centers (Tel Hashomer, Haifa, Beer Sheva, Jerusalem, and Tiberias)	<a href="mailto:meitav@idf.gov.il">meitav@idf.gov.il</a>
Mekol Halev Hotline	Setting up medical appointments or receiving information from the Medical Corps	<a href="mailto:moked6690@idf.gov.il">moked6690@idf.gov.il</a> 03-9489999
Merkaz Mahut	Support center providing mental health services for soldiers and offering assistance for any questions related to sexual abuse, family violence, or unplanned pregnancy – during military service or prior to being drafted. Note: Every unit has a representative who is responsible for handling these kinds of issues in a discrete manner.	03-948-2600 Open 24 hours a day
Military Rabbinate	Questions about religion and religious rights in the IDF	052-941-4414
The Division and Foundation for Released Soldiers	Guidance for soldiers in advance of their release; answers questions and provides advice on issues related to completing IDF service and preparing for civilian life	03-777-6770

Additional important phone numbers in the IDF (Hebrew link)

# TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS OF LONE SOLDIERS

1. Information is Power – Educate yourself about your child IDF service.
2. “Expectations and Reality” - Help your child set up realistic expectations about their future IDF service
3. Be involved and supportive, yet also grant them freedom and space .
4. Keep ongoing communication with your children in every way possible.
5. Create for yourselves a source of support with other parents of Lone Soldiers (Mothers of Lone Soldier Facebook group, Families of Lone Soldiers – FLS, etc)
6. Convey messages that provide strength, and continue to transmit and express that you believe and trust them!
7. Express to your children the tremendous pride you have in their decision and your support of it. This, in turn, prompts them to take pride in you, as parents of a lone soldier
8. Use Emotional language and acknowledge the variety of feelings you might feel during this journey (moments of joy and moments of endless worries).
9. Teach them to actively pursue their rights and benefits as ne Soldiers
10. Come visit them as much as possible – especially for the course ceremonies.

## PRIOR TO BEING RELEASED

### **Mazal Tov! Release Day is approaching. Your child completed his or her military service!**

Before planning for the future, it is important to check that your child has taken the necessary steps for living life in Israel. Here are 5 steps that it is important to take after being released:

1. Bituach Leumi (social security): At the end of service, a released soldier is entitled to a two-month period of acclimation. During this time, he or she does not need to pay social security. After this, social security payments are automatically deducted from an individual's monthly salary. If your child is not working (i.e., is unemployed), the payment due is 170 NIS per month. For students, there is a deduction of 45 NIS; the amount due is 125 NIS per month.
2. Kupat Holim (healthcare fund): For a year after completing service, released soldiers have an exemption from healthcare fund payments. But they must choose which healthcare fund they want to join – even though there is no need, at this point, to pay for it. If your child belonged to a healthcare fund prior to being drafted, he or she can renew membership in the same fund or can opt to join a different fund.
3. Arnona (property tax): The right to exemption from property tax continues for 4 months after the soldier's release date. After this time, they are charged Arnona.
4. Misrad Haklita (Ministry of Absorption): Some of the rights and privileges received by new Olim are frozen during military service. Now is the time to renew them and update the expiration date for the soldier's Aliyah rights. It is important to bring the Teudat Shichror (release document) and Teudat Oleh (Oleh document) to Misrad Haklita.
5. Driver's license: Olim can convert a foreign driver's license to an Israeli license within 3 years from their Aliyah date. The conversion process generally involves taking driving lessons and passing a test – but if your son or daughter has had a license for more than 5 years prior to the date of Aliyah, it can be converted without a test and without driving lessons. Additional information about driver's licenses is online at: [www.nbn.org.il/driving](http://www.nbn.org.il/driving)

For additional information, see the Nefesh B'Nefesh Lone Soldiers Program website



Nefesh  
ב'Nefesh

FIDF  
FRIENDS OF THE IDF

# LONE SOLDIERS PROGRAM

 24/7 HOTLINE: \*6563

 [LSP.NBN.ORG.IL](http://LSP.NBN.ORG.IL)

 [LSPEN@NBN.ORG.IL](mailto:LSPEN@NBN.ORG.IL)

 [LONESOLDIERSPROGRAM](https://www.facebook.com/LONESOLDIERSPROGRAM)

 [LONESOLDIERSPROGRAM](https://www.instagram.com/LONESOLDIERSPROGRAM)