



ENGLISH תַּחֲלִיל



צבא העם ISRAEL'S ARMY

Educational Kit About the
IDF and National Service

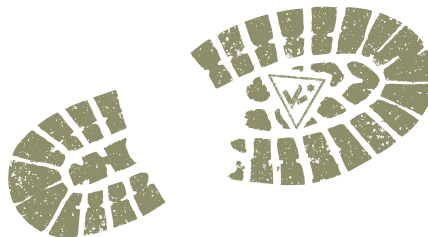
EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE
BOOKLET FOR INSTRUCTORS



The Department of Empowering Zionist Identity Overseas
Education and Community Division
KKL-JNF

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1. INTRODUCTION

a. Establishment of the IDF and its role in Israeli society

On May 23, 1948, just days after Israel's Declaration of Independence, the Israeli government passed the "Order for the Establishment of the Israel Defense Forces," the IDF. The order was designed to unite all armed forces operating in the land under one framework, state-controlled and organized, and to end the existence of independent military organizations that had operated until then. David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister and Defense Minister, emphasized that establishing the IDF was essential to ensure the State's complete control over military and security forces, as part of the process of building government institutions and ensuring civil security.

b. The IDF's role in Israeli society

The IDF was established first and foremost to defend the existence of the State of Israel, its independence, and the security of its citizens and residents. Over the years, the "people's army" model developed, whereby mandatory conscription applies to the entire population, with the aspiration to integrate all sectors of Israeli society into the army's ranks. Beyond its security mission, the IDF has social and educational roles: it serves as a central tool for nation-building, promoting social-cultural integration, and strengthening values of mutual responsibility and Israeli identity.

Among the social missions are integrating different populations, education (for example, through soldier-teachers), assistance in immigrant absorption, and providing opportunities for young people from challenging socio-economic backgrounds to integrate into Israeli society.

Service in the IDF, and its nature – both of individuals and population groups – is a crucial part in defining personal identity and shaping the face of Israeli society. This process largely stems from the people's army model.

2. GAME CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES

a. **Concept:**

The People's Army – The Journey to Meaningful Service! is an experiential and enriching game that invites diaspora youth to deeply understand the significance of the IDF and national civilian service for the State of Israel. During the activity, participants walk a path that simulates the service route – from the first draft order, through basic training and active service, continuing to officer training, reserve duty, national service, and even recruitment to the advocacy system as Israel's ambassadors worldwide.

During the game, they will be exposed to the IDF spirit and the variety of units within the IDF – intelligence units, medical corps, air force, air defense, humanitarian aid missions, and more. Participants will engage in diverse and challenging missions, including knowledge riddles, ethical dilemmas, information segments, and experiential challenges that provoke thought, encourage cooperation, and more, inviting them to feel, imagine, identify, and belong. During the journey, participants will collect puzzle pieces of unit symbols, learn about their roles and significance, and become familiar with values synonymous with the IDF spirit.

At the end of the activity, they will have the privilege of establishing the "Diaspora Foreign Unit" – a new unit comprised of our young ambassadors in Jewish

diaspora communities who help strengthen Jewish national resilience worldwide. At the end of the journey, participants will leave with a deep understanding of an army that protects a small country, builds a society, and influences an entire people for generations.

b. Objectives:

- To deepen familiarity with the IDF's central role as the army defending the State of Israel and the entire Jewish people, while understanding the concept of "People's Army" and recognizing the IDF as a diverse human mosaic where every talent – technological, medical, educational, or combat – is vital to its functioning and state security.
- To recognize the importance of the IDF in the eyes of diaspora Jewry, as an initiator, protector, and strengthener of security and belonging among Jews worldwide.
- Among diaspora youth, to arouse pride, honor, and identification with IDF combat soldiers and all those who serve in Israel.
- To create a values-based connection and introduce youth to the 10 IDF values and show how these values – such as comradeship, responsibility, personal example, discipline, the worth of human life, and meaningful service – are expressed in the field, in military operations, and in soldiers' daily lives.
- To encourage ethical and moral thinking through IDF-like dilemmas – past and present – that simulate real situations from service and require decision-making under pressure, moral deliberation, and weighing up the common good versus the individual's needs..

- To cultivate cooperation and leadership – through group missions, physical and cognitive challenges, that simulate basic training, bonding, and active service in the IDF.
- To drive motivation and desire to reinforce the IDF's strong and positive reputation in the diaspora.

3. KKL-JNF AND THE IDF

The Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) is a Zionist organization founded in 1901 for land development, forestation, environmental protection, and strengthening settlement in the Land of Israel. Over the years, KKL-JNF and the IDF have been collaborating in various ways, especially in educational activities, heritage site preservation, forest cultivation, memorial sites, and emergency assistance.

Among the main collaborations:

- KKL-JNF assists the IDF in preparing training areas, planting forests around bases, and establishing memorial sites for IDF fallen soldiers.
- IDF soldiers participate in KKL-JNF's community volunteer activities, such as plantings, area rehabilitation after fires, and educational guidance.
- KKL-JNF works to instill values of environmental protection, love of the land, and strengthening national resilience among IDF soldiers as well.

This cooperation emphasizes the connection between protecting state security and preserving Israel's landscapes, values, and heritage, and constitutes an integral part of values education in the IDF and Israeli society.

4. IDF SPIRIT

"IDF Spirit" is a values charter that defines the principles of behavior and responsibility of every soldier in the IDF. This is a unique document that combines Jewish, humanistic, and Zionist values, and constitutes the moral foundation for the actions of commanders and soldiers, not only on the battlefield but in daily life too.

This is a way of life and organizational culture that defines how to properly use force, what the meaning of mission is, how to combine compassion and fairness within a complex reality, and what is expected from those who serve in the name of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

How were the basic values determined?

- IDF tradition and its combat heritage as a defense army – values of responsibility, dedication, and personal example.
- The democratic tradition of the State of Israel – principles of freedom, justice, equality, and human rights.
- Jewish tradition throughout generations – ideas like "love your neighbor as yourself," kindness, and community responsibility.
- Universal moral values based on human value and dignity – preserving human life, striving for peace and justice even during combat.

The connection between these four sources creates a unique moral framework – military, Jewish, human – that directs IDF soldiers to act out of a sense of mission, responsibility, and with an identity rooted in strong, clear values.

Basic Values:

1. **Defense of the country, its citizens and residents** – The IDF's purpose is to defend the existence of the State of Israel, its independence, and the security of its citizens and residents.
2. **Love of homeland and loyalty to the country** – a Jewish democratic state that constitutes a national home for the Jewish people, for its citizens and residents.
3. **Human dignity** – The IDF and its soldiers are committed to preserving human dignity regardless of religion, nationality, race, gender, status and role.
4. **Statehood** – The IDF is the people's army, subject to the law and government. IDF soldiers will act in service of state security and will do so with integrity, objectivity, and a sense of representation.

IDF Spirit Values:

1. **Devotion to mission and striving for victory.** Soldiers will fight and act courageously facing all dangers and obstacles before them, and will stick to their mission with determination and wisdom, even at risk of life.
2. **Responsibility.** Soldiers will see themselves as active partners in defending state security, its citizens and residents. Soldiers will act while constantly showing involvement, initiative and diligence, with discretion and within their authority, and ready to bear responsibility for results of their actions.
3. **Reliability.** Soldiers will present things as they are, completely and accurately, in planning, execution and reporting, and will act so their comrades and commanders can rely on them in mission execution.

4. **Personal example.** Soldiers will behave according to what's required of them and do what they demand from others, from a recognition of their own ability and responsibility, in the army and outside it, to serve as worthy examples.
5. **Human life.** Soldiers will behave sensibly and safely in all their actions, from a recognition of the supreme importance of human life. During combat, they will endanger themselves and their comrades to the extent required for mission execution.
6. **Purity of arms.** Soldiers will use their weapons and force only for mission execution, only to the extent required for this, and will preserve human dignity even in combat. Soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm people who aren't combatants and prisoners, and will do everything possible to prevent harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.
7. **Professionalism.** Soldiers will strive to acquire the professional knowledge and skills required for performing their role, and will implement them while striving for constant improvement of personal and unit achievements.
8. **Discipline.** Soldiers will act to the best of their ability for full and successful execution of what's required from them, according to orders and in the spirit of those orders. Soldiers will be careful to give only legal orders, and will not obey clearly illegal orders.
9. **Comradeship.** Soldiers will act out of camaraderie and devotion to their fellow soldiers, and will always come to their aid when they need them or depend on them, despite all danger and difficulty, even at risk of life.
10. **Mission.** Soldiers will see their military service as a mission, will be ready to contribute everything possible to defend the state, its citizens and residents. This while being an IDF representative acting by virtue of and within a framework of authorization given to them according to army orders.

5. IDF SYMBOL

The IDF symbol is one of the most recognizable state symbols, accompanying the IDF since its establishment. The symbol consists of a Star of David with a **sword in its center and an olive branch beside it. Each component symbolizes a central value in the IDF's identity and purpose:**

- **Star of David:** Symbolizes the connection to the Jewish people and Israeli heritage.
- **The sword:** Symbolizes the IDF's power, its readiness to defend the state, and its ability to fight when necessary.
- **Olive branch:** Symbolizes the aspiration for peace, the desire to act with restraint, and commitment to moral values even during combat.

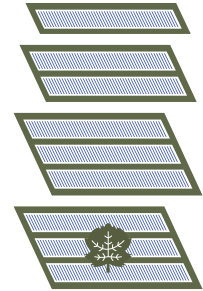
This symbol appears on IDF uniforms, unit flags, official documents, certificates, military vehicles, and more. It expresses the combination of military force with values of peace, morality, and Jewish-Israeli identity.



6. COMMAND RANKS

Every recruit begins military service at the rank of Private (Turai), whose symbol is one stripe. The meaning of the name comes from the word "tur" (line), because that's exactly where the soldier is, at the beginning of the path, in the long line of IDF soldiers.

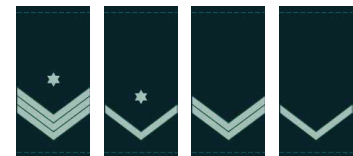
After several months, depending on the nature of service, the soldier is awarded the rank of Corporal (Rav-Turai), whose symbol is two stripes. In combat units, this happens after about seven months, in combat support after about eight months, and in general service usually after about 10 months.



After about 12-18 months, according to track, soldiers receive the rank of Sergeant (Samal) – three straight stripes. This is already a first command rank, and whoever attains it has usually taken a significant part in the unit framework or passed a command course.

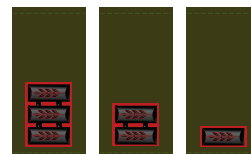
Later, they advance to the rank of Staff Sergeant (Samal Rishon) – three stripes with an olive leaf in the center. A rank that symbolizes experience, responsibility, and command maturity, usually awarded to those who chose to take another step forward, whether in combat service or as part of career service.

Those choosing career service in **the NCO track** are career personnel entrusted with professional areas in the army. The first rank in this track is Master Sergeant (Rav Samal, RASAL), marked by one chevron (also called "Citroen"). This is an opening rank for career service members, symbolizing extensive professional experience and knowledge.



After several more years of seniority, the service member advances to the rank of First Master Sergeant (Rav Samal Rishon, RASAR) – two chevrons, then Advanced Master Sergeant (Rav Samal Mitkadem, RASAM) – one chevron with a star, and after that Senior Master Sergeant (Rav Samal Bachir, RASAB) – two chevrons and a star. Up to the highest rank in the NCO track is Senior Warrant Officer (Rav Nagad Bachir, RANAG) – three chevrons and a star. This rank is considered a special honor from the most senior commanders.

Another promotion track is **the officer track**. It begins with an officers' course (whose length varies from unit to unit), including the basics and training. The lowest officer rank is Second Lieutenant (SAGAM) – rectangle with olive leaf. From there, they continue to Lieutenant (SEGEN – two rectangles), Captain (SEREN – three rectangles), and over the years reach the rank of Major (RASAN), where the first "falafel" awaits, the golden symbol of senior officers.



The continued path includes Lieutenant Colonel (Sgan Aluf – two falafels), Colonel (Aluf Mishne – three), and general ranks – Brigadier General (Tat Aluf) with sword and olive leaf, Major General (Aluf), one of the most senior



ranks in the IDF, given to sector and corps commanders. At the head of the entire IDF system is the Chief of Staff, commander of the entire army, holding the rank of Lieutenant General (Rav Aluf), the highest rank in the IDF.

Thus, the story of every IDF soldier is built – stages that symbolize not only seniority or position, but also direction, responsibility, sense of mission, and the opportunity to influence.

7. THE STORY BEHIND THE UNIFORMS, BERET, AND BADGE

a. IDF Uniforms

IDF uniforms are standard clothing that accompany every soldier throughout service, but they are much more than that. They are a symbol of military identity, equality, discipline, values, belonging, and honor. Every clothing item creates pride in the soldier for the unit, role, heritage, spirit, and belonging to the people's army.

Types of uniforms:

- **Class A uniforms** – The IDF's dress uniforms. Worn at ceremonies, official events, and going home from base. Uniform color varies by corps: olive green in the ground forces, light khaki in the Air Force, and white in the Navy. On the uniforms are unit badges, ranks, pins, beret (in the epaulette), and sometimes also a cord.
- **Class B uniforms** – These are daily work uniforms. Used for base routine, training, and physical work. Uniform olive-green color for all soldiers, with ranks, beret, and sometimes also a lanyard.

b. The Beret and Badge:

In the IDF, the beret and badge are much more than clothing items. They are symbols of identity, belonging, and mission. Every beret color and every unit badge mark the path soldiers have taken, the field in which they serve,



and their place. The beret color indicates which corps soldiers belongs to (for example: green for Golani, red for Paratroopers, gray for Armored Corps). But beyond color, the beret symbolizes the path you've taken: basic training, journey, challenges, tests, brotherhood.



Behind every badge stands great creative thought: what characterizes the unit? What is its historical story? What values guide it? The designing teams draw inspiration from IDF heritage, Jewish culture, Israeli nature, and the world of military imagery. Often, the soldiers themselves are partners in design, suggesting ideas, symbols, and phrases that represent their sense of belonging and mission. Thus, a symbol is created that connects past, present, and future... and that every soldier wears proudly on his or her shoulder.

8. ISRAEL'S WARS AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS, 1948–2025

Since its establishment, the IDF has participated in numerous wars and operations that have influenced the shaping of the country and its security. Here is a brief overview of the main wars and central operations:



1948-1949	War of Independence The war of revival for establishing the State of Israel, confronting Arab armies and conquering territories.
1956	Operation Kadesh Military action against Egypt following the blockade of the Straits of Tiran and raids by the "Fedayeen" terror organization.
1967	Six-Day War Six-day war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Conquest of the Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria, and East Jerusalem.
1967-1970	War of Attrition Ongoing confrontation, mainly against Egypt along the Suez Canal.
1973	Yom Kippur War Coordinated attack by Egypt and Syria on Yom Kippur, difficult battles and defense of state borders.
1978	Operation Litani Action in southern Lebanon against terrorists.
1982	First Lebanon War Penetration into Lebanon aimed at distancing the PLO from the northern border.
2006	Second Lebanon War Extensive confrontation against Hezbollah in the north.
1987-1993	First Intifada
2000-2005	Second Intifada Waves of terror and Palestinian uprising in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.
2023 to present	Swords of Iron War

Operations in Gaza and Iran:

2004	—	Rainbow
2004	—	Days of Repentance
2006	—	Summer Rains
2008-2009	—	Cast Lead
2012	—	Pillar of Defense
2014	—	Protective Edge
2021	—	Guardian of the Walls
2022	—	Breaking Dawn
2023	—	Shield and Arrow
2025	—	Rising Lion



Swords of Iron War is a prolonged and multi-front war that broke out on October 7, 2023, following a severe surprise attack by Hamas and other terror organizations from the Gaza Strip on Gaza envelope communities. It included massacres, kidnappings, and unprecedented attacks, leading to the death of 1,182 people and the kidnapping of 251 soldiers and civilians to the Strip, the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.

In response, the IDF mobilized over 360,000 reserve soldiers and opened an extensive military operation in the Gaza Strip, characterized by intense fighting, ground maneuvering, and destruction of terror infrastructure. The war also spread to the northern front against Hezbollah, to Judea and Samaria, Yemen, and Iran, becoming the widest regional confrontation since the state's establishment.

Israel set goals for the war: eliminating Hamas and removing it from government, returning the hostages, striking additional terror capabilities, and restoring quiet to northern and southern residents. The fighting caused severe damage to the Israeli home front, evacuation of many communities to alternative housing, deep change in Israeli society, and extensive international implications, including waves of antisemitism, international accusations against Israel, and direct American involvement in the fighting.

Operation Rising Lion (known worldwide as the "Israel-Iran War") was a direct military confrontation between Israel and Iran, which occurred in June 2025 and lasted about 12 days. The operation began with an extensive Israeli surprise attack on nuclear facilities, missile sites, and military targets in Iran, and included targeted eliminations of Revolutionary Guard officials and nuclear scientists. In addition to air strikes, cyberattacks were carried out that disrupted Iranian defense and control systems. In response, Iran launched hundreds of missiles and drones toward Israel, causing casualties and extensive damage. In the

second stage, the United States joined the attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, and following this, a ceasefire was achieved through American mediation. The operation significantly delayed the Iranian nuclear program. The operation's name was chosen as a symbol of Israeli steadfastness and determination against an existential threat.

Over the years, the IDF has also carried out special operations such as Operation Entebbe (1976), bombing the reactor in Iraq (1981), eliminating officials, rescue operations, alongside ongoing activity to thwart terror and defend state borders. IDF participation in wars and operations shaped its character, contributed to its technological and ethical development, and deepened its status as an integral part of Israeli society.

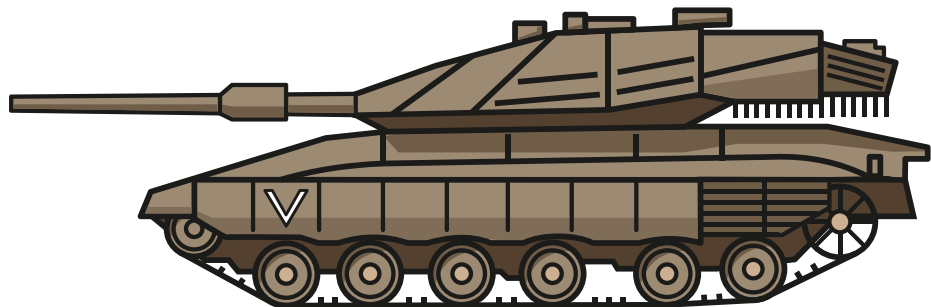
9. ISRAELI DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SECURITY FIELD

Israel is considered a world leader in developing combat resources and advanced security technologies, many of which were developed by the IDF and Israeli defense industries:

- **Iron Dome:** Short-range rocket interception system that entered operational service in 2011. The system detects, tracks, and intercepts rockets and mortars threatening populated areas, becoming a symbol of Israeli innovation in air defense.
- **Arrow Missile:** Defense system against ballistic missiles, developed in cooperation with the US. "Arrow 2" and "Arrow 3" can intercept missiles outside the atmosphere and constitute a central layer in Israel's strategic defense.

- **Merkava Tank:** Israel's main battle tank developed in Israel, considered one of the world's most advanced. Its development emphasized crew protection, high mobility, and impressive firepower. Advanced models (Merkava Mark 4) include active protection systems.
- **Wind Coat:** Active protection system for armored fighting vehicles, detecting and destroying threats like anti-tank missiles and shells before they hit the tank. The system has proven its effectiveness on the battlefield.
- **UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles):** Israel is a world pioneer in developing and using UAVs for intelligence, surveillance, and attack. Israeli models are operated in the IDF and foreign armies.
- **Cyber and Control Systems:** Israel developed advanced cyber systems for defense, intelligence gathering, and electronic warfare, constituting an integral part of the IDF's technological superiority.

These developments emphasize the combination of security need, technological creativity, and local production capability, constituting a central factor in Israel's military superiority and its contribution to the global defense industry.



10. THE IDF AROUND THE WORLD

The IDF operates not only on the battlefield but also in the international humanitarian arena, assisting many countries affected by natural disasters, wars, and humanitarian crises. The IDF's humanitarian activity is carried out mainly through the Home Front Command and dedicated medical and rescue units.

Examples of prominent humanitarian activity:

- **Haiti Earthquake (2010):** IDF delegation established a field hospital and treated thousands of wounded, receiving global appreciation for response speed and professionalism.
- **Earthquakes in Turkey (1999, 2023):** IDF rescue and medical delegations worked to locate survivors, treat wounded, and provide logistical assistance.
- **Tsunami Disaster in Thailand (2004):** IDF medical and rescue teams assisted in victim identification, psychological treatment, and care for the wounded.
- **Aid to Syrian Refugees:** Over the years, the IDF provided medical treatment to wounded Syrians at the northern border, within the framework of "good neighborliness."
- **Additional Aid Missions:** The IDF sent humanitarian missions to disaster victims in Albania, Nepal, Mexico, Philippines, Ukraine, and more.

The aid includes establishing field hospitals, rescuing trapped people, medical treatment, supplying vital equipment, instruction and training. This activity expresses IDF values: preserving human life, mutual responsibility, international solidarity, and the aspiration to be a "light unto the nations" even in times of crisis.

"Flight Shield Over the Skies of Auschwitz" was a symbolic and moving operation of the Israeli Air Force, during which three F-15 fighter jets flew in formation over the Auschwitz extermination camp in Poland. The flyover was conducted in 2003, at a memorial ceremony marking 60 years since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and is a powerful expression of the connection between the Holocaust and rebirth. The flyover's significance is to show the world that the Jewish people now have a state, a protective shield, and an army that commits to the saying, **Never again.**



11. 'THE FIGHTING SPIRIT' – THE STICKERS OF OUR BOYS

In the past year, memorial stickers for fallen fighters have become a moving cultural-national symbol found in almost every corner of the country. On streets, bus stops, house walls, road signs, cars, and more. Each sticker bears the name of a soldier, alongside one of his inspiring phrases or mottos. This phenomenon has become a living memorial, allowing each of us to connect to the fallen soldier's story, know him, and remember him.

Behind every sticker lies a life – choice, dedication, and soul. But beyond personal commemoration, a deep social phenomenon was created: private memory became the memory of an entire people. Inspiring phrases, written in the language of the fallen or about them, became a new language of connection. Simple but touching words that created a sense of unity, shared destiny, and shared responsibility within the complex Israeli reality. The stickers succeeded in reminding us all that we are one people, connected not only by history and geography but also by memory and values.



12. IDF SLANG DICTIONARY OF SPOKEN MILITARY LANGUAGE

- **"Ken HaMefaked!"** Yes Commander! A phrase soldiers say to demonstrate discipline, respect, and authority.
- **"30 shniyot, zuz!"** 30 seconds, move! Short and sharp command meaning: you have 30 seconds to get organized.
- **"Zubor"** – Light initiation ceremony, conducted by veteran soldiers.
- **"Nohal Efes"** – State of nothing happening.
- **"Lidfok nifkadut"** AWOL (forbidden by law).
- **"Shvizut Yom Rishon"** – Sunday blues. A feeling of depression about returning to base after Shabbat.
- **"KALAB"** – abbreviation of "Service close to home."
- **"Yomiot"** – Service at an open base where you go home every day.
- **"Gimelim"** – Approved sick days.
- **"Tzahov"** – Yellow. A new and over-enthusiastic recruit/soldier.
- **"Pazamnik"** – Veteran soldier in long-term service.
- **"Chamshush"** – Abbreviation of Chamishi Shishi Shabbat, ie., going home Thursday and returning Monday.
- **"Regila"** – Leave of about a week.
- **"Mooral"** – literally 'poisoned.' Soldier full of motivation, unit pride, and seriousness toward service.

