ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES SINCE 1973

SAM KATZ  RON VOLSTAD
The Yom Kippur War and its Aftermath

Following the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, where terrorists of ‘Black September’ (the most notorious of all Palestinian terror factions) murdered 11 Israeli athletes, the Israeli defense and intelligence apparatus became preoccupied with avenging this atrocity. Israel’s revenge, when it came, was spectacular.

At 1.30 am on 9 April 1973 six Zodiac rubber craft loaded with more than 30 Israeli reconnaissance paratroopers landed at Dove beach in Beirut. Waiting for them were the team of Israeli Naval Commandos who had secured the beach landing area, and a group of Mossad agents who were to transport the raiding party to their target—the homes of three high-ranking officers in ‘Black September’. All the Israeli agents and commandos, dressed in civilian clothing, were driven to their targets in cars rented by fellow Mossad agents. One group headed towards the luxury apartment complex where the three ‘Black September’ officials lived; quickly disposed of the PLO sentries; and proceeded to eliminate their three targets. At the same time, a second group of paratroops attacked the headquarters of the DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine), and a savage close-quarter fire-fight erupted. DFLP gunmen stupidly used the building’s elevator to reach ground level, only to be cut down by the waiting Israelis as the doors swung open. A third group of paratroopers proceeded to the ‘Black September’ bomb factory, which they demolished, killing scores of terrorists guarding the facility. Israeli Air Force helicopters hovered over the city to remove the wounded and lift to safety the numerous PLO files captured; the helicopters also dropped spikes on the possible routes of pursuit to be used by PLO vehicles. The Israeli commandos made their way back to the beach, where the inflatable craft returned them to three Israeli Navy Missile Boats waiting offshore.

This raid marked the culmination of an 18-month covert and overt campaign against ‘Black September’, which achieved that organisation’s destruction. But the 18-month effort had severely drained Israeli intelligence resources, distracting them from the assessment of the conventional military threat posed by the Arab states. Since the 1967 Six Day War, Israeli military intelligence had gravely underestimated their Arab adversaries. The Israelis had become over-confident; and they were about to pay dearly for their errors, on the holiest day in the Jewish year, ‘Yom Kippur’.
The Earthquake of October

At 2.00 pm on 6 October 1973 the Syrian army attacked the Golan Heights. They gained initial successes, and overwhelmed the Israeli observation and intelligence post on Mt. Hermon. The Egyptian army crossed the Suez Canal, overran the fortified Israeli ‘Bar-Lev Line’, and advanced into the Sinai peninsula. Israel was caught almost totally unprepared. Prime Minister Golda Meir was warned only hours before the impending attack, but voted against a pre-emptive strike so that Israel should not be labelled as the aggressor: she knew that Israel would need the fullest support from the world community, especially from her most powerful ally, the United States.

The situation in Israel was frantic, with reservists—making up 80 per cent of the total Israel Defense Forces strength—being literally pulled out of synagogue in order to rush them to the front. Israel was facing her darkest hour, and the first 48 hours went extremely badly for her. The Syrians almost overran the Golan Heights and came close to approaching Israeli centres of population. Over Sinai, Egyptian SAM (surface-to-air missile) batteries were taking a heavy toll of the once-invincible Israeli Air Force. For the first time in Israeli military history, IDF soldiers were being taken prisoner in large numbers. On the evening of 8 October the Officer Commanding IDF Northern Command, Maj.Gen. Yitzhak Hofi, informed Chief-of-Staff Lt.Gen. David ‘Dado’ Elazar that he was not sure if he could hold out much longer. When Defense Minister Moshe Dayan learned of this a measure of near-panic set in, and he asked the Prime Minister for permission to activate Israel’s nuclear force with the apocalyptic phrase ‘This is the end of the third temple!’ Dayan received the authorisation; but the tide was already turning again in Israel’s favour.

As Israeli reservists reached the fronts the Syrians were ousted from the Golan Heights and the strategic Mt. Hermon position, and pushed back
behind their own border to within 22 miles of Damascus. On the Southern Front an Egyptian offensive on 14 October had been turned into a rout, and a decisive Israeli victory in one of the largest tank battles in military history. The Israelis counterattacked; they crossed the Suez Canal, surrounded the Egyptian 3rd Army group, destroyed the SAM batteries, and pushed towards Cairo. Under intense superpower pressure (a nuclear alert was declared by both the USA and the USSR) a cease-fire was declared on 24 October; and the fifth Arab–Israeli war was over. Although in the end Israel was victorious, the war cost her 2,521 killed, tens of thousands wounded, and material and morale losses that would take a great deal of time and effort to make good.

The Agranat Commission

Why was Israel caught by surprise and unprepared for the Yom Kippur War? The events of October 1973 had traumatized Israel, and there was an angry public outcry over the government’s handling of the war. Outrage was not confined to the civil population: some high-ranking IDF generals indulged in a vicious series of arguments about the actions of their colleagues during the war—and what was worse, these were conducted along party political lines. There was great concern in Israel that Tzahal (Hebrew acronym for Tzava Haganah li-Yisrael; Israel Defense Force; hereafter, IDF for short), the cornerstone of Israeli physical survival and a major basis of Israeli social life, was being torn apart according to political affiliations. A general spirit of depression overtook a once highly spirited nation.

On 18 November 1973 Prime Minister Golda Meir appointed a board of inquiry headed by the Chief Justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, Dr. Shimon Agranat, to investigate Israel’s state of readiness up to the second day of the war. It was hoped that the findings of the commission would calm the public’s nerves; but when the preliminary findings were issued in April 1974, they caused numerous military resignations and a severe political crisis.

The report characterised Chief-of-Staff Elazar as being too overconfident, unprepared, and unresponsive to the tell-tale signs of the impending war. It also stated that as Chief-of-Staff, Lt.Gen. Elazar should have ordered a full-scale mobilisation of the reserves in order quantitatively to equal the Arab armies massed on Israel’s borders. Elazar resigned his post under protest. The head of Aman (Military Intelligence), Maj.Gen. Eliyahu Ze’ira, was blamed for being ignorant of the imminent Arab invasion, and for severely miscalculating the exact time war would break out, thus depriving the IDF forward defensive posts of the necessary time to prepare (although no amount of preparation would have allowed them to withstand an attack so massive without the mobilisation of the reserves). His deputy, the intelligence officer in charge of the Egypt desk at Aman headquarters, and the chief intelligence officer of the IDF Southern Command (who was stated to have failed to give proper weight to aerial reconnaissance photographs taken on 4 October) were also found negligent, and all four officers were forced to resign. Another senior officer to resign was Maj.Gen. Shmuel Gonen, OC of the IDF Southern Command, whom the commission accused of showing poor tactical control and faulty strategic judgement, which almost led to an Egyptian victory. Prime Minister Meir and Defense Minister Dayan were cleared by the commission, but both resigned in response to public feeling. The Agranat Commission also made enforceable sug-

\[\text{ Soldiers of the GOLANI Bde, photographed during the rescue operation at the terrorist-held schoolhouse at Ma’alot, 15 May 1974. Note ‘old-style’ webbing worn (with padding), and large medical/extra ammo pouch worn by the medic at the right. (IDF Spokesman) }\]
Not praying, but squinting through the key-hole of a building during an area search in central Israel following the terrorist attack which precipitated Operation 'Litani' in March 1978, this paratrooper shows off the pack for carrying anti-personnel rifle grenades. Note also 'assault sling' for M-16, and method of carrying helmet. (IDF Spokesman)

Reshaping the IDF

The Israelis learned invaluable, if costly, lessons from the 1973 War. Prior to this, the Israelis conducted military operations as they had done since the 1948 War of Independence; but the 1973 operations on the Golan Heights and in Sinai showed that IDF tactics had to change. Between the 1967 Six Day War and the 1973 conflict, the Israelis found themselves fighting a basically defensive war of attrition. This had caused the IDF to lose track of those technical and tactical developments that would be needed in the next war. The Israelis under-estimated the threat of surface-to-air missiles, and of improved infantry anti-tank capabilities. The IDF had always employed a 'pure tank', 'pure infantry' and 'aerial artillery' strategy that was to prove futile in 1973. Firstly, the Arab use of the 'Sagger' man-portable anti-tank missile and the RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade launcher had decimated Israeli armoured formations in the early days of the war. The infantryman was still the greatest threat to the tank. Secondly, when used without tank support, infantry effort was particularly costly in manpower—something the Israelis could not allow; and thirdly, the wide and highly successful Arab use of surface-to-air missiles had removed the Israeli Air Force's capability to act as aerial artillery. This caused the Israelis to rely on their own conventional artillery force, which was relatively antiquated, static in nature, and unable to support ground troops effectively.

The remedy was a structural and tactical change within the IDF's battle doctrine. Firstly, armoured forces would no longer operate in open areas independent of infantry formations. These infantry formations would now become highly mechanised and mobile, and would be used as a protective screen for tank formations so that they—and not the tanks—could engage enemy infantry anti-tank units. The most radical of changes was to be in the Israeli use of artillery. Israel procured large numbers of self-propelled artillery pieces (mainly the American M107, M109 and M110 self-propelled guns) and 'Lance' SSMs. The number of artillery pieces tripled in the years following the 1973 War; and artillery was no longer to be used in a static manner, but would accompany infantry and tank formations in a purely offensive role. The IDF adopted a 'combined arms' ('shiluv kohot')

*The Israeli internal intelligence and security agency.*
strategy which would undergo its first test in the next Arab–Israeli conflict, and with great success. The combined arms doctrine was accompanied by a massive expansion programme embracing manpower, offensive capability and technical capacity. Only a few years after the 1973 War, Israel had achieved its goal of being able—when mobilised—to fight a full scale war on three fronts for an extended period of time. The IDF had evolved into a truly modern fighting force, stronger and more complex than the army that fought in 1973, and much more effective.

The Post-War Period

Peace would not come to Israel following the 1973 War. Although disengagement talks with the Egyptians were bringing nearer the hope of peace on the Sinai front, and the Golan was quiet, Israel found herself once again at war with Palestinian terrorism on a major scale. In 1974 alone there were 12 acts of Palestinian terror inside Israel’s borders. One of the most brutal occurred on 15 May 1974. Three DFLP terrorists crossed the Israeli–Lebanese border and attacked a schoolhouse in the border town of Ma’alot, holding more than 90 pupils hostage. Troops of the GOLANI Brigade were called to the scene; and while Defense Minister Dayan and newly-appointed Chief-of-Staff Lt.Gen. Mordechai ‘Motta’ Gur stalled for time, the GOLANI reconnaissance unit prepared to storm the building. In the ensuing bloodbath, 25 pupils were killed and 70 more wounded—the terrorists had turned their weapons on the hostages during the assault. All three terrorists were killed in the battle. For the soldiers of the rescuing force it was a tragic and bitter victory, especially since many of the soldiers had family or friends in the building. For Israel as a nation, it was a harbinger of worse to follow. Palestinian terrorists were no longer ‘just’ planting the odd bomb: they were now attacking civilian targets in suicide squads.

On 5 March 1975, eight ‘Black September’ activists in two rubber dinghies landed on the beachfront of Tel Aviv. After killing an off-duty soldier, they opened fire on a crowded theatre before seizing the small seafront Savoy Hotel, and many hostages. A two-hour fire-fight erupted before negotiations began. The group (named the ‘Abu Yusef Commando’, after the ‘Black September’ leader killed in the April 1973 Israeli raid on Beirut) demanded that ten Palestinian terrorists held in Israeli jails be released. Just before dawn the next day, Israeli soldiers and Border Guard police units stormed the building. At that moment the terrorists blew themselves up, as well as most of the hotel. Eight hostages died, as did three Israeli soldiers.

In 1975, there were ten further terrorist attacks inside Israel. But the Lebanese Civil War had begun, and the Palestinians were now more concerned with dominating Lebanon than ‘liberating’ Palestine. Terrorist activity across the Lebanese–Israeli border now ceased; but where would the Palestinians strike next?
Operation 'Yonatan'—Entebbe 1976

It had long been suspected that Palestinian terrorists were planning to either shoot down or take over an El Al aircraft. On 18 January 1976, acting on a tip given to them by the Mossad, Kenyan security police arrested three PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) terrorists armed with a Soviet-made SAM-7 'Strella' as they were waiting for the chance to blow an El Al aircraft out of the sky. The arrest worried the Israelis, who now saw Palestinian terrorism opening up new territories of operation in Africa. At 8.59 am on 27 June 1976, Air France Flight 139 took off from Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport on a routine flight to Paris via Athens. There 58 additional passengers would board—including a German man and woman (both members of the Baader-Meinhof gang travelling on forged South American passports) and two Arabs. Security at Athens airport was lax, as usual: the metal detector was unmanned, and the security officer on duty paid little attention to the X-ray machine. Eight minutes after take-off from Athens the Air France A-300B Airbus, with 256 passengers on board, was hijacked by the 'Che Guevara Cell of the Haifa Unit' of the PFLP.

Moments after learning of the hijacking, the IDF Operations Branch (Agam) set in motion a pre-planned procedure for dealing with terrorist takeovers of airliners. The IDF Central Command mobilised the necessary units, and a command post was set up at Ben-Gurion Airport. It was feared that the hijackers were planning to land the plane in

---

After rescuing 103 hostages at Entebbe the commandos of Sayeret Matkal, back in Israel on 4 July 1976, unload 'I'di Amin's Mercedes' from a C-130 aircraft used in the mission. The Air Force crewman at left wears the Israeli copy of the K-2B flight suit with blue rank slides on the shoulder straps, here with the two white stencilled bars of Segen or first lieutenant. The commandos wear Syrian-style 'lizard pattern' camouflage fatigues—cf. Plate E1, and just visible is a prototype of the 'new-style' webbing load-bearing equipment, worn by the commando in olive fatigues at the right. Faces have been obscured, in this and some other photographs, for security reasons. (IDF Spokesman)

---

1 This had been routine since 8 May 1972, when 'Black September' hijacked a Sabena airliner and forced it to land in Israel. The plane was subsequently stormed by Israeli commandos dressed as mechanics.
Israel—or worse, to ‘kamikaze’ it into an Israeli city. But Israel was not to be the destination of Flight 139. After a four-hour flight the plane landed in Benghazi, Libya, refuelled, and proceeded to Uganda’s Entebbe Airport. In Entebbe, after spending the night on the plane, the hostages were taken by the terrorists (an additional ten PFLP gunmen had now joined the original four hijackers) and by Ugandan soldiers to the airport’s old terminal building. Ugandan President Idi Amin even made a personal appearance, giving a lengthy speech in support of the PFLP1.

In Jerusalem, IDF Chief-of-Staff Lt.Gen. Gur informed Defense Minister Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that there were military options open. Maj.Gen. Yekutiel ‘Kuti’ Adam, Head of the Operations Branch, briefed the Defense Minister on the three plans under consideration: a large-scale paratroop drop into Entebbe; an attack across Lake Victoria by rubber craft; or a quick assault and fast removal of the hostages by air. The latter plan was chosen. The overall commander of the operation would be Chief Paratrooper and Infantry Officer Brig.Gen. Dan Shomron, and the attack force would be commanded by Lt.Col. Yonatan ‘Yoni’ Netanyahu. The mission was codenamed Operation ‘Thunderbolt’.

On 30 June, as Chief-of-Staff Gur reviewed the military plan, ominous developments were taking place at Entebbe. The German terrorist Wilfried Boese read a list of all the Israeli hostages and those with ‘Jewish-sounding’ names; and ordered them into a small room in the terminal. All the other hostages would be released the next day2. This ‘Selektion’ had a horrific resonance in Israeli national memory, seeming to recall Dr. Mengele choosing

1Amin had once been friendly with Israel (he even wore the Israeli parachutist wings he received while training in Israel), but relations soured when Israel refused his request for a squadron of Phantom jets with which he could bomb Kenya and Tanzania.

2The captain of Flight 139 and his crew chose to remain with the Israeli captives.
who would live and who would die on the ramp at Auschwitz death camp. This heightened the sense of the urgency of a military rescue by the IDF; and also made it more feasible, since there would now be only 103 hostages to save. The Israeli government decided to negotiate with the terrorists as a means of extending the proposed deadline when they would begin to murder the hostages.

As the released hostages arrived in Paris, invaluable intelligence was gathered from them. It was also learned that the terminal building where the hostages were being held had been built by an Israeli firm, and the blueprints were immediately used to build a full-scale model of the terminal in which the rescue force could practice. The paratroopers selected for the mission went through an intensive day-and-night training programme. In the early morning of 2 July a ‘dry run’ of the assault was staged: time taken over the operation—55 minutes. Later that night a ‘live’ exercise, involving C-130 Hercules transports, was carried out under the eyes of the Chief-of-Staff. After talking to the troops and their commanders, Lt.Gen. Gur reported to the Defense Minister: ‘We’re ready’. Now all that was needed was the approval of the Israeli government.

All through the early hours of 3 July the C-130s were loaded and made ready for the long flight to Entebbe. The IDF Communication Corps prepared an Israeli Air Force Boeing 707 which would be used as an airborne communications and command centre; and the IDF Medical Corps readied another 707 as a flying hospital—a large number of casualties were expected. Yoni Netanyahu and his deputy, Maj. S, spent most of the morning reviewing all aspects of the raid. Solutions were devised for all foreseeable eventualities. Nothing was to be taken for granted on a mission of such peril and magnitude. Although there was still no government authorisation for the mission, the four IAF C-130 and two 707 aircraft took off from Ophira Air Force Base on their way to Entebbe at 4 pm on 3 July: the authorisation, or recall, would be received in flight. In the event, the order was ‘Go’.

The 3,800-kilometre flight to Entebbe took seven hours; and at 11.01 pm, only 30 seconds behind schedule, the lead C-130 carrying ‘Yoni’s’ men touched down. Some paratroopers were already leaping out the side doors to place emergency beacons next to the runway lights, and the lead vehicles rolled down the ramp and raced off towards the terminal buildings. These vehicles were a black Mercedes and two Landrovers, used to impersonate the entourage of President Amin; it was reasoned that this would cause the least suspicion among the Ugandan soldiers, and achieve maximum surprise. Two Ugandan soldiers, on duty at the checkpoint leading to the terminal, managed to fire warning shots before being cut down by Israelis using silenced weapons. The sound of gunfire woke up the hostages, who were asleep on the terminal floor, and alerted the terrorists; but by then it was too late. It took only 15 seconds from the time that the Ugandan sentries fired for the Israelis to attack the terminal building, identify the terrorists and eliminate them. Israeli commandos with bullhorns yelled to the hostages in English and in Hebrew: ‘This is the IDF! Stay down!’

Seven minutes later the second C-130, carrying Brig.Gen. Shomron’s command jeep and a second force of paratroops, landed safely. Yet a third followed, and quickly unloaded a mechanised force
of paratroops and of soldiers from SAYERET GOLANI (the recon unit of the GOLANI Infantry Brigade) with M113 APCs, whose task was to secure the rest of the airport and to destroy the Ugandan Air Force MiGs stationed there. A fourth C-130, converted into a flying medical unit, landed with its large crew of medical officers, and was immediately reloaded with the hostages and wounded. At 11:58 pm, just 57 minutes after the beginning of the operation, all the hostages were out of Entebbe; and 33 minutes later the last C-130 departed, with Brig.Gen. Shomron on board. It was reported that shots were still being fired in Entebbe hours later.

In the end, 13 terrorists and 35 Ugandan soldiers were killed, and 11 Ugandan MiG 17s and 21s destroyed (to ensure that there was no aerial pursuit of the vulnerable C-130s). Three hostages were also killed in the attack; as was the attack force commander, Lt.Col. Netanyahu, killed by a lone bullet fired by a Ugandan soldier#. On the morning of 4 July the hostages returned to Israel to a heroes’ welcome and a massive outpouring of national joy, pride and relief.

Entebbe was an important victory for Israel on three counts. Firstly, it made a recently-ignorant Western world aware of the dangers of international terrorism. Secondly, it inflicted on Palestinian terrorism—especially on the PFLP—a severe, humiliating and public defeat. Thirdly and most important, it was the sorely-needed boost for morale and national resolve that was so imperative to Israel as a nation following the 1973 War. It signalled the end of a period of defeatist sentiment in some quarters of the IDF: the ‘old Tzahal’, capable of anything, had returned. They knew that they were the best; and now the rest of the world knew it, too.

#In honour and memory of Lt.Col. Netanyahu, the raid on Entebbe was later renamed Operation ‘Yonatan’.
The IDF in Lebanon

The year 1977 was to be politically dramatic in Israel. The right-wing Likud party won the majority of seats in the Knesset—the Israeli parliament—and the hard-line, one-time Irgun leader Menachem Begin became Prime Minister. Ironically, it was Begin who invited Egyptian President Anwar El-Sadat to Israel in search of peace. Seven days later Sadat made his historic pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and the real prospect of peace with the strongest and most populous Arab country seemed to beckon. That it would fall far short of total peace for Israel was soon bloodily proved yet again. On 11 March 1978 seven terrorists of Al-Fatah, the military arm of the PLO, sailed from a base in southern Lebanon to land from inflatable boats on the beach at Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael. They killed a woman nature photographer; and then hijacked a bus loaded with travellers in the direction of Tel Aviv. At the Country Club Junction just north of the city the bus was stopped by security units; and in the ensuing gun battle 33 people were killed and 70 wounded. Five of the terrorists were killed, and the other two were captured later after a massive search by paratroops and Border Guard units. The wanton savagery of this attack prompted more than just the token air strike into Lebanon; clearly, the PLO threat had to be eradicated from that country by some major operation.

On 15 March 1978 under the command of Defense Minister Ezer Weizmann and Chief-of-Staff Lt. Gen. ‘Motta’ Gur, a 15,000-man IDF force rolled into southern Lebanon. The aim of Operation ‘Litani’ was to crush the extensive PLO military infrastructure in southern Lebanon. The Israelis had a tacit agreement with the Syrians that they would not advance beyond the Litani River, and as a result the operation was not as successful as hoped for. The PLO fighters simply retreated to beyond the proposed limit of Israeli advance, thereby avoiding the decisive battle which was crucial to Israel's objectives. In this attempt to destroy the PLO Israel was unsuccessful; yet Operation ‘Litani’ yielded some positive results.

Fine study of a recon paratrooper from Sayeret Tzahal in waiting fire orders during the battle for Aley, near Beirut, on 23 June 1982. His gali ARM is fitted with a special 12-round magazine for firing rifle grenades; he also has a 30-round magazine taped to the left side of the weapon. He wears the standard fatigues and the Israeli-made Kevlar flak vest; and note additional rucksack, with added ammo pouch, worn over the rifle grenade pack. (IMoD)
More than 250 PLO fighters were killed, large caches of arms were captured, bases were destroyed, and the large-scale Soviet investment and involvement in the PLO became clearly evident through the numerous documents captured. A pro-Israeli and largely Christian militia was set up in southern Lebanon under the command of renegade Lebanese Maj. Sa‘ad Haddad, and a United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) was sent in to police the border area. Operation ‘Litani’ was the first real test (although on a minor scale) of the new ‘combined arms’ military doctrine. IDF infantry, armour and artillery assets performed well and cohesively. The IDF also gained valuable experience in armoured infantry tactics, which would be put to use during the next episode in Lebanon’s long tragedy.

Although the UNIFIL presence in southern Lebanon was supposed to deter PLO infiltration across the Lebanese border, terrorist activities against Israel continued. On 6 April 1980 five Palestinian terrorists from the Iraqi-sponsored Arab Liberation Front crossed the Lebanese–Israeli border and attacked Kibbutz Misgav Am in upper Galilee. They rushed to the kibbutz nursery and took the sleeping children hostage. The GOLANI Brigade, responsible for security in that area, immediately sealed off the locality. Although an initial assault failed against the strongly positioned terrorists, who were armed with automatic weapons and RPGs, a second assault by units of SAYERET GOLANI succeeded. One two-year-old baby, an Israeli soldier and all the terrorists lay dead.

The PLO military infrastructure in southern Lebanon was not only rebuilt following Operation ‘Litani’, but substantially strengthened. The IDF adopted new tactics of launching pre-emptive naval commando and paratroop raids to destroy PLO capabilities for striking into Israel. The Israeli Navy also began ‘offensive patrols’ off the Lebanese coast to thwart seaward Palestinian raiders. But the PLO countered by bombarding the settlements of northern Israel with ‘Katyusha’ rockets. Citizens of northern Israel became, in effect, ‘hostages’ in their bomb shelters. Meanwhile, the IDF (now headed by Chief-of-Staff lt.Gen. Rafael ‘Rafael’ Eitan, a tough and experienced paratroop officer) had been planning an operation to deal with the PLO once and for all. All combat branches began urban warfare training, and the IDF massed large troop formations on the Lebanese–Israeli border. All that was needed now was the spark that would ignite the Middle East once again into full-scale warfare. On 3 June 1982 Israel’s ambassador to Great Britain was wounded in London by four Palestinian gunmen. Israel responded with massive aerial bombardments of PLO positions in Beirut. The PLO in turn shelled northern Israel for two days. On 6 June 1982 the IDF invaded Lebanon.

The original objective of Operation ‘Peace for Galilee’ was to secure a 40-km zone inside southern Lebanon so as to remove the threat of PLO artillery and rockets from upper Galilee. But, with the failures of Operation ‘Litani’ in mind, Defense Minister Ariel ‘Arik’ Sharon urged that the IDF

---

1Later to be known as the SLA, or South Lebanon Army.
A Golani first lieutenant (left) and his radioman, carrying an AN/PRC-25, photographed at Qana, southern Lebanon during Operation ‘Litani’, 17 March 1978. Both wear the Israeli-produced infantry ballistic helmet, winter parka, ‘new-style’ load-bearing equipment, and carry M-16s. A blinker light is attached to the officer’s hood. (IDF Spokesman)

should go as far as was necessary to completely destroy the PLO as a force in Lebanon. This involved the risk of yet another war with Syria (which had 30,000 soldiers in Lebanon); and would require the IDF to push towards Beirut, and probably to take the city. The Israelis had never before captured an Arab capital, although they had had the opportunity more than once; and this was a highly symbolic step, involving a change in the self-image of the IDF.

The campaign proved difficult, and Palestinian resistance was much heavier and more determined than had been expected. The Syrians in the Bekaa Valley also fought with great skill, but the new IDF battle doctrine of ‘combined arms’ ultimately proved successful.1 By the end of June Syrian resistance had ceased, and the Israelis had

1For further details of Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, see MAA 165 Armies in Lebanon 1962–84.
surrounded and laid siege to Beirut. The PLO, under intense military pressure, was forced to evacuate Beirut under the supervision of a Multi-National Force. Operation 'Peace for Galilee' had proved to be a military success for the IDF; but the Israeli government had now entered the chaotic arena of Lebanese internal politics. The cost of that involvement would prove high, and would eventually force Israel back inside her borders once more.

Although originally welcoming the IDF as their liberators from PLO excesses, the Shi'ite Muslim community of Lebanon (the largest religious group in the country) was disenchanted by Israel's support for the Christian Phalange and the present ruling government. Fuelled by the Islamic fundamentalist influence of Iran, the Shi'ites began sporadic but suicidally determined attacks against IDF and MNF forces. These attacks forced the MNF to withdraw from Lebanon; but with Syrian forces inside the country still numbering 30,000, and with a limited re-emergence of the PLO becoming evident, Israel could not leave precipitately.

As the Israeli occupation of Lebanon went into its second year, the Shi'ites' determination to rid themselves of the IDF became more determined and fanatical. Suicide truck bombers began to take a serious toll on Israeli lives, and by the end of 1984 almost as many Israeli soldiers had died at the hands of Shi'ite guerrillas as died during the June 1982 invasion. The IDF initiated the 'Iron Fist' policy, severely restricting the movement and freedom of the local inhabitants of southern Lebanon, who were predominantly Shi'ite. This policy called for large-scale IDF raids on Shi'ite villages, the seizing of suspects, the location of arms two thin bars, all in red. (See photograph on p. 57 for details of a selection of profession tags.) The M-1 helmet is painted white, with a red stripe and red Hebrew characters MEM and TZEDELI identifying the Military Police. The white belt is also standard for MPs. The female MP wears female olive Class 'A' uniform; a black female 'beret' with the red piping peculiar to MPs; a red brassard with blue characters; and the Central Command unit tab, a white lion on midnight blue. The black shoulder bag is compulsory for all female soldiers at all times. (IDF Spokesman)
high inflation caused partly by the Lebanese involvement, required strict budget cuts within the Ministry of Defense and the IDF. In terms of the prospects for lasting peace the outlook is grim for Israel, whose national security may be described as remaining precarious. The disintegration of Lebanon as an independent state has greatly increased Syrian influence and confidence in the region, offsetting the advantages for Israel of the PLO’s virtual destruction as a serious military threat. The Lebanon episode has also damaged Israel’s international prestige; and has revealed internal tensions which threaten the strong sense of national unity which has always been one of her great strengths.

But in the end, all Israelis know that their security and survival are in their own hands, and theirs alone. The IDF remains the most powerful and battle-ready force in the Middle East; and still stands at the ready, capable and determined, to ensure the survival of the Jewish state and its people.

Photographed during his commissioning ceremony, a new second lieutenant of Combat Engineers displays the branch’s light grey beret and branch badge, the officer’s qualification pin, the engineers’ breast pin, the Class ‘A’ ranking (one bronze bar on red backing), and the unit tag—cf. Plate K2. (IDF Spokesman)

Naval officers—note peaked cap with gold chin strap—march to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem to be officially commissioned. The white tape covering the gold second lieutenant’s bars on their shoulder strap slides will be removed during the ceremony. Note navy blue Navy waist belts. (IDF Spokesman)
The Israel Defense Forces

Israel’s embattled status has created a special need for the IDF to occupy a central rôle in every aspect of the nation’s political, cultural and social life. In effect it is almost impossible to separate Tzahal from Israel as a nation and a people in any context. All Israelis, male and female, serve in the IDF in one capacity or another, and almost one-fifth of the labour force is involved in defense-related industries. Military service is such a focal point in Israel that for one who does not perform well or honourably in the IDF it is almost impossible to succeed in the civilian sector. The IDF is the one ‘social’ foundation of which each Israeli has had intimate experience. The IDF is not only a military force whose task is to defend the boundaries of Israel; it also undertakes numerous activities and obligations unknown to the armed forces of any other country in the world.

Since the modern state of Israel is a nation of immigrants, with citizens drawn from over 60 different nations and cultures, the IDF serves as a mechanism for integrating them into the Israeli identity. Thus Israel’s national conscription is not only essential for ensuring her physical survival, but also works in the rôle of a nation-builder, giving everyone a common national experience and identity. The IDF is also perhaps Israel’s largest educational institution. Besides teaching Hebrew to all immigrants, and literacy to those soldiers who have minimal education, the IDF also teaches them a large number of technical skills which they are able to use in the civilian economy. The IDF also sends regular officers to study at university, and finances higher education for reserve officers.

The first contact that an Israeli has with the IDF is in the GADNA (Hebrew acronym for Youth Battalion) during secondary school. The GADNA offers paramilitary training for a short period, and introduces young Israelis to their future military responsibility. At the age of 17, Israelis receive notice to report to the LISHKAT GIYOUS (conscription centre) for a series of physical, intelligence and psychological examinations that will determine when the new recruit will be conscripted and in which units he will be able to serve. Those who score highly return to take a further set of more difficult examinations to see if they are qualified to volunteer for some of the more élite units within the IDF (i.e. pilot’s course, naval officer school, the naval commandos, and the various reconnaissance units). At the age of 18, all Israeli males are conscripted for 36 months of military service, with females serving 24 months.

All recruits are processed through BAKUM (the absorption and assignment base). Female recruits are sent directly to undergo a standard 3½-week basic training; male recruits remain in BAKUM, receiving a tour and explanation of all the combat units open to them, and being interviewed by officers who will decide their final unit assignment. The combat elements within the Air Force and Navy have the highest priority as far as manpower is concerned, and are allowed to hand-pick their recruits; but before being fully accepted into these respective branches, those chosen must undergo a GIBUSH (trial week) during which they are put through further testing to determine the limits of

1Females who are married or can prove religious observance are exempt from serving.
### Organisation of the Israel Defense Forces

**Chief of the General Staff**

- General Staff Branch
- Intelligence Branch
- Manpower Branch
- Logistics Branch
- Planning Branch
- HQ Air Force

**Training Department**

- Research and Development

**Operations Department**

- Chief Signal and Electronics Officer
- Chief of Ordnance
- Chief Medical Officer
- Chief Intelligence Officer
- OC Adjutancy Corps

**Provost Marshal Officer**

- Chief Rear Officer
- Chief Education Officer
- Chief Officer Women’s Corps
- Chief Military Chaplain
- Chief Logistics Officer

**Arms and Territorial Commands**

- Northern Command
- Central Command
- Southern Command
- Air Force
- Navy

**Functional Commands**

- Na’ha’l Command
- Gadna Command
their physical and mental abilities. The same holds true for the paratroops and all other elite volunteer units. After the recruit is finished in Bakum, he is sent to undergo basic training in his respective branch of service.

After basic training, little attention is paid to ceremonial or formal discipline. Discipline is restricted to basic and essential matters, and is not allowed to become an end in itself. This relates back to the IDF’s origins, when there was a rigorous emphasis on egalitarianism. It is important to note that all conscripts join the IDF on an equal footing. Rank in the IDF can be achieved by the display of leadership quality alone, and not from wealth or position in society. The IDF does not produce its officers through military academies—officers rise from within the ranks. A man must first distinguish himself as an outstanding soldier, then as an outstanding squad leader; and only then, if he qualifies, is he sent on officer’s course. Because all officers ‘start at the bottom’ as simple soldiers, a certain informality exists between officers and their men. Officers are often called by nicknames, and there is little segregation between the officer and his men, especially in combat units. It should also be noted that officers are rarely rotated from one branch to another. It is felt that if an officer is retained in one job throughout his entire military career, he is more likely to become an expert in his field and to promote innovation.

To accomplish its military tasks the IDF is made up of a ‘regular’ army and a larger reserve force. Reserve duty (milsim) consists of yearly periods of service ranging from 90 days for officers to 45 days for other ranks. The same men are called year after year for their annual stint in the same reserve unit; and, as a result, a relaxed esprit de corps exists. Yet reserve units are well equipped, well organised, and train in a highly realistic and professional manner. They are, in effect, the backbone of the IDF. Today the IDF has a standing strength of approximately 170,000 men and women, most of them conscripts. Mobilisation raises the IDF’s strength to 540,000, with 100,000 being able to deploy for active duty within 24 hours. Each major unit (commonly referred to as a ‘division’, but resembling a flexibly-composed task force group) in the IDF has a reserve brigade permanently attached to it; and it has been found that reserve units often perform better in combat than their active-duty counterparts.

The IDF is a truly integrated organisation. There is no separate army, air force and navy; rather, all are different branches within the IDF. Overall command lies with the Chief-of-Staff, and the routine operational command duties lie with the General Staff, in which the commands of the various services are represented. In this way, one man has the entire responsibility for planning and operations, with the General Staff serving as

---

Female soldiers in the snows of southern Lebanon, wearing the BEGED HOREF winter suit with Tzahal acronym. Although very few women actually served inside Lebanon, some were attached to administrative units in areas considered not unacceptably dangerous. Needless to add, their presence was a great boost to IDF morale! (IDF Spokesman)

---

1 Until 1983, the territorial commands were responsible for services now under the Ground Forces Command.

2 Nahal, (Noar Halutzei Loheim) or Fighting Pioneer Youth retains one combat brigade within the IDF, including the paratroop-trained 50th Battalion.

3 After completing the three years of national service, men must serve in the reserves until the age of 54, and single women until the age of 34. It is widely remarked in Israel that all men are full-time soldiers on leave ten months of the year.
advisory consultants (see chart). This ensures a minimum of the bureaucratic and political in-fighting evident in many Western armies, and allows for deployment to be co-ordinated and consistent, while remaining highly flexible. The combat services represented in the General Staff are the Air Force, the Navy, and the newly-formed Ground Forces Command. This latter consists of the Paratroop and Infantry Branch, Engineering Corps, Armoured Corps and Artillery Corps; the responsibility for these commands was previously divided between the three territorial commands.

The Paratroop and Infantry Branch

**HATZANHANIM—The Paratroops**

In the wake of new developments on the modern battlefield, it has been argued that the contribution and rôle of paratroops can only be marginal. Yet, even taking into consideration all the modern weapons systems standard in the IDF today, the paratrooper still remains the focus of attention. The paratrooper has the ability to reach destinations quickly and in force, by helicopter or APC as well as by the traditional but now-rare para-drop. He is trained to execute operations in difficult terrain, including mountains, forests or urban areas. Although the Israeli paratrooper almost never jumps in combat, a continuing tradition of hazardous and rigorous training serves to distinguish the Tzahal from other infantry formations.

Like every army at war, the IDF has spawned the proliferation of specialised elite units to deal with the military need present at the time. Originally, these sayaret or reconnaissance units were the outgrowth of regular paratroop units formed for border defense. They were sayaret Egoz (Northern Command), sayaret Haruv (Central Command) and sayaret Shaked (Southern Command). These men in these units were selected from the best officers, NCOs and enlisted men the regular paratroop units had to offer. Today the sayaret units are no longer divided between territorial commands, but rather according to their rôles in special operations under the command of the paratroop brigade. Sayaret Orev is the recon...
naissance anti-tank unit of the paratroops; \textit{sayeret tzanjanim} the para-recon unit employed as ‘shock troops’; and \textit{sayeret shaldag} the infiltration and demolition unit. In addition, there are numerous other paratroop-trained reconnaissance units which are not organically connected to the paratroop brigades. These include \textit{sayeret matkal}, the intelligence reconnaissance unit of the IDF General Staff; this most élite of all the recce and commando-type units within the IDF is given the most important, most highly classified and most difficult missions. They are directly under the command of the General Staff, and are often referred to as the ‘Chief-of-Staff’s boys’. There is also an élite Druze Muslim reconnaissance unit, \textit{sayeret hadruzim}, which is paratroop-trained and serves in sensitive border areas under the IDF Northern Command\(^2\). (The other combat branches each have their own reconnaissance units, which will be discussed under the relevant branch. 

Today the IDF maintains three regular paratroop battalions, the 202nd, 890th, and the Na’ha’l 50th; and three reservist brigades. Service in the paratroops is voluntary. All those volunteering must pass a short testing period (\textit{giboshon}) which lasts for just over a day. Here the recruit must prove his worth physically, intellectually and spiritually, and only those who prove themselves able to meet adversity with determination and spirit are selected. Once chosen, the recruit is sent to begin basic training in either one of the three paratroop battalions. (However, the recruit is now also eligible to volunteer for the various paratroop reconnaissance units, for which he must undergo a longer and more arduous \textit{gibush}. If found suitable, he is sent to the paratroop basic training base in the framework reconnaissance unit; those failing the \textit{gibush} are returned to their original paratroop unit.)

The six-month basic training for regular paratroopers and those in \textit{sayeret} units (which demand a higher standard) are similar, differing only in pace and intensity. The first phase of basic training (\textit{zironut}) is geared towards physical fitness and personal weapons proficiency. During this phase

\(^1\)These three recon units are no longer active.

\(^2\)Under the Military Service Law 1959, Israeli Druze Muslims are conscripted into the IDF, although many opt for service in the National Police Border Guard units.

the recruits are humiliated, punished, and taken to the brink of their mental and physical endurance. Already, much of the training takes place in the field, where the soldier is subjected almost daily to long, harsh, fast-paced marches. Of all the \textit{masaot} (marches), two are of particular difficulty and importance: one at the end of the first phase of basic training, when the recruit receives the unit tag; and the second at the conclusion of the training, when the recruit is issued with the coveted red beret\(^3\). Also in this phase, the recruit is expected to complete the ‘individual combat simulation course’ to a standard befitting the proud heritage of the \textit{tzanjanim}. Upon its successful completion, the cadet is registered as a ‘rifleman 3rd class’.

Before the second phase of basic training begins, any undesirables are transferred out; and those chosen to be medics are temporarily diverted for medical training before returning to their unit. The others are formally divided into a platoon command structure under the supervision of a second lieutenant and a staff sergeant. The three squads which make up the platoon are commanded

\(^3\)Until then, the khaki-green general service beret with infantry badge is worn.
Recon paratroopers from SAYERET TZANHANIM on a march in the Jordan Valley, 1981. All wear standard fatigues, web gear and equipment, and the left hand man wears the 'Kova Rafi' field hat. Weapons include the Galil, M-16, RPG-7, and FN MAG. Note that the radioman carries a Jerry can. (IGPO)

by sergeants. Soon afterwards the soldier is assigned his weapons rôle within the unit (i.e. FN MAG light machine gunner, ammunition carrier for FN MAG, RPG man, 52mm mortarman, mortar ammunition carrier, radioman, etc.). In the two months which follow, each soldier will become proficient in his weapons task and will learn to apply it effectively in squad-level combat simulation. At this stage, APC and helicopter training is introduced. Heavy emphasis is placed on night fighting and urban area combat. Upon successful completion of this part of the training the soldier is registered 'rifleman 5th class'.

During the last phase of the training the soldiers arrive at the Tel Nof Jump School for parachute training. Following five static line jumps the soldier is awarded the coveted wings (worn on a blue background) and is finally a full-fledged TZANHAN (paratrooper). With basic training over, the paratrooper enters the operational phase of his service. Advanced training is carried out with the unit, and command level manoeuvres involve training alongside tank units. At this stage the relationship between soldier and commanding officer relaxes, although the training remains rigorous. Next, all paratroopers are expected to complete KOURS MA'KIM (squad leader course); upon its successful completion, they either return to their units or become drill-instructors for the next wave of new recruits.

HATIVAT GOLANI—The Golani Brigade
The GOLANI Brigade is the regular combat infantry brigade in the IDF. It is a truly organic fighting unit, not attached to any paratroop or armoured formation. It is a unique unit, with a long and proud history, and is today probably the most 'operational' unit within the IDF. The GOLANI Brigade is not a volunteer unit; although many choose and request to serve in it, most of its soldiers

22
are conscripts. As a result, the brigade has become a sort of melting pot where Israelis from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures meet, including new immigrants, and socio-economically depressed youth. This aspect once gave the unit a bad name; but its battle performance since the 1967 Six Day War has given the lie to this negative image.

Basic training for the GOLANI Bde. lasts four and a half months, and is almost identical to that of the paratroops, although slightly less intense and more structured to infantry warfare. Discipline is very demanding, in order to maintain the high standards for which the unit is known. The first phase of the basic training lasts two months and stresses the importance of individual infantry combat. The second phase is devoted to field training, mainly involving deployment with M113 APCs (the GOLANI Bde. is a highly mechanised unit), and long fast-paced marches over rough terrain. Basic training concludes with a 100-km march along the trail of historic GOLANI battlefields, from the Golani Junction via Tel Fahar up to Mt. Hermon. There, in an impressive and highly emotional ceremony, the soldier receives the GOLANI tunic pin (comparable to, though less prestigious, than paratroop wings) and the brigade’s brown beret. The soldier is now registered as a ‘rifleman 5th class’, and enters the brigade as a full combatant. During the subsequent operational portion of their service some soldiers are sent on profession courses—intelligence, medical, communication, vehicle, etc. Others are sent to learn combat engineering skills, and are then assigned to the small GOLANI sapper unit; while the best are sent on the squad leaders course.

Following six months of service in the brigade, the very best are offered the opportunity to undergo a GITBUSH for the reconnaissance unit, SAYERET GOLANI. The testing is long and difficult, and confronts the

---

\[1\] Mt. Hermon was recaptured from Syrian commandos on 22 October 1973 by the GOLANI Bde. after bitter fighting.
soldier with adverse conditions to prove his psychological endurance. All those who fail are returned to the brigade for active duty. Those who pass are now given the option of officially ‘volunteering’ for the reconnaissance unit, and must undergo a further series of physical and psychological tests to determine if they are SAYERET material. As a result of such extreme qualification demands, SAYERET GOLANI has developed into probably the finest reconnaissance unit in the IDF. Parachute-qualified, SAYERET GOLANI acts as the lead element in all operations conducted by the brigade (e.g. at Beaufort Castle in 1982). Since the 1973 War the unit has also specialised in anti-terrorist operations, and has taken part in missions ranging from cross-border raids into Lebanon against PLO targets, to the rescue of hostages held in Ma’alot, Entebbe and Kibbutz Misgav Am.

**HATIVAT GIVA’ATI—The GIVA’ATI Brigade**

The GIVA’ATI Bde. was the infantry brigade of IDF Southern Command from the 1948–49 War of Independence to the 1956 War. In spring 1983, it was re-activated to replace the then recently disbanded SAYERET SHAKED (the paratroop reconnaissance unit of Southern Command). The success of the Israeli Navy amphibious landings at Sidon during Operation ‘Peace for Galilee’ led to a serious review of IDF amphibious capabilities, which at the time were almost non-existent. As a result it was decided that the newly formed GIVA’ATI Bde. would fulfill the requirement for a Marine-type amphibious force. Basic training is identical to that of the GOLANI Bde.; but, following the individual infantry combat training, the recruit is sent to the Naval Training Base for amphibious training and manoeuvres with Navy landing craft. Following this, they are sent for advanced infantry training at the battalion level, and begin the operational phase of their service. In the last year the GIVA’ATI Bde. underwent parachute-qualification training as a means of boosting the unit’s image and morale. The brigade also saw operational duty during the final year of Israel’s presence in Lebanon, and served with distinction. A reconnaissance unit, SHEUELEI SHIMSHON¹, also exists within the brigade.

**The Engineering Corps**

**HANASAH KRAVIT—Combat Engineers**

The Combat Engineers are probably the least heralded, yet one of the most important combat units within the IDF. Soldiers of HANASAH KRAVIT are usually the first to reach a given objective, to fight for control of and fortify the area, and are usually the last to leave the operation zone. The Combat Engineers proved their worth during the 1973 War when, under heavy fire, they constructed bridges that would allow IDF paratroop and armoured units to cross the Suez Canal into Egypt. During Operation ‘Ramon’, the Israeli evacuation of the Sinai peninsula, the Combat Engineers bore much of the huge logistical burden of transferring an entire army. During the war in Lebanon the Combat Engineers fought according to a new battle doctrine, in which combat ‘storm groups’ would overcome initial enemy resistance and then clear the area of mine fields, mine cluster ditches and anti-tank obstacles for the oncoming main IDF advance. The Combat Engineers were also instrumental in the advance of Israeli tank units by clearing passages through the many ‘impassable’ wadis found throughout Lebanon.

The military roles of the Combat Engineers in the IDF are: demolition and mining of enemy positions; armoured engineering; fording and bridge-laying; bomb disposal; construction, fortifying and the building of roads; camouflage and engineering deception; defense against nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons (NBC).

The Combat Engineers is not a voluntary branch of service. The recruit undergoes a basic training shorter than that of the GOLANI but similar in intensity and pace, and with an emphasis on infantry proficiency. Upon completion of the TIRONUT the soldier is registered as a ‘rifleman 3rd class’, and is presented with the Combat Engineer’s¹

¹Named for the mobile shock troops of the Southern Command in the 1948 war.

---

*A squad of reservist paratroopers search a weapons cache in the Shi’ite village of Kfar Huna in southern Lebanon, March 1983. They wear a wide assortment of fatigue and equipment, typical of reservist units. Note soldier at right carrying rifle grenades in an Israeli copy of the British 1937 pack, and cf. Plate A1. (IDF Spokesman)*

*Combat-weary paratroopers after returning from a long patrol against Shi’ite guerrillas in southern Lebanon. They wear a mixture of winter parkas, rain smocks and winter suits; all carry the GLION SAR. (IDF Spokesman)*
tunic pin and the light grey beret. Next, he is sent on the various ‘speciality’ courses within the Corps and later re-assigned according to his profession to one of the many units of the Combat Engineers. There is an elitist reconnaissance unit called Sayeret Yael, whose members are parachute-qualified and trained as frogmen, and specialise in the demolition of enemy shore installations. Under the direction of former Chief-of-Staff ‘Raful’ Eitan the Combat Engineers formed a special unit to absorb troubled youths who otherwise would not find their place within the IDF—as mentioned already, an important stage in training for Israeli citizenship. Here, these raw and sometimes delinquent recruits are given training in the operation of heavy equipment; and, through education and the feeling of being a part of something important, are turned into top class soldiers. This unit, Yaddei Raful (‘Raful’s children’) served during the Lebanon war, and fought as well as other IDF units.

The Armoured Corps

Despite considerable changes on the modern battlefield, the armoured formations of the Hevy Shiryon remain the backbone and mainstay of the IDF ground forces. In the IDF of today, under the ‘combined arms’ battle doctrine, an armoured formation consists of large tank forces in addition to mechanised infantry, artillery and engineering units operating co-operatively. Support from infantry and other units has enabled the tank formations to develop maximum momentum and mobility, and the success of this doctrine was clearly seen in the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Although Israeli tankers normally employ mobile tactics, the battles in Lebanon obliged the Armoured Corps to adapt to fighting in built-up areas. This has led the Armoured Corps to continually up-date, revise and develop its battle doctrine, which is a digest of lessons drawn from previous wars, and in particular from Operation ‘Peace for Galilee’. The constant development taking place in the IDF and its Armoured Corps can be seen in more than just
development of doctrines, training and exercises. Another aspect is the quest for modern equipment in accordance with the doctrine. Originally, Israel relied on American, British and French equipment; but the potential unreliability of procurement by import, coupled with the preference for a Main Battle Tank (MBT) designed to meet the IDF's own specific needs, caused Israel to become as independent and innovative as possible. Israel’s battlefield experience paid off in the development of the MERKAVA MBT, believed by some to be the world’s most superior multi-mission MBT. With the engine placed in front, the MERKAVA affords maximum protection to its crews, enhancing the tank’s survivability and crew confidence. (The MERKAVA’s reputation for crew safety has in some cases had an adverse effect on the morale of other tank crews.) Although the MERKAVA is being produced as rapidly as possible, as yet it forms only a small percentage of the IDF’s armoured strength (approximately 450 in service). The bulk of the Armoured Corps consists of over 3,000 modified Centurion (SHOT), Patton M48 and M60 (MAGACH), and captured and upgraded T-54/55/62 (TIRANIM) tanks; much has been done to modernise this arsenal progressively, e.g. by replacement of armament, fire control systems and powerplants, to meet the IDF's needs until the 21st century.

The Armoured Corps is not a volunteer service, yet many do volunteer as their preference. Basic training lasts two months, during which rigorous physical training and the use of infantry weapons and their application in limited combat situations is stressed. At the conclusion of basic training those deemed psychologically or physically unsuitable are assigned to administrative jobs within the Corps. Those chosen to be medics are diverted for medical training, and return later as certified combat medics specially trained to administer first aid for tank-related injuries. Others are chosen for mechanised infantry, and proceed for further training.

A recon paratrooper from SAYERET Tzanhanim hands in to Ordnance weapons captured in a raid on a Shi’ite village. He wears standard fatigues, winter parka, and Kevlar flak jacket with built-in pouches—note the rear pouch, seen here in profile, and his CAR-15/M203 grenade launcher combination. (IDF Spokesman)
The bulk of those who have completed basic training are sent to the IDF’s armour school, where they learn the skills of the tank driver, gunner, and signaller/loader. Each skill is taught separately, and the tankist is taught only one individual profession at this point in his service. This stage lasts for a month. After the conclusion of armour school the crews are despatched to the various tank brigades. There they undergo training at crew, platoon and command levels. Towards the end of this phase the soldier is awarded the Armoured Corps tunic pin as a qualified tankist. At the end of this phase, a small percentage of competent soldiers are sent to tank commander course (Kours Matakim). Finally, tank commanders (sergeants) may opt to become platoon commanders if they are selected for tank officer school.

Yet another important component of the Armoured Corps are the ordnance personnel (Huliyat Tehonit) from the IDF Ordnance Corps. They are assigned to the Armoured Corps on a permanent basis, and service the tanks day and night, assuring the tanks’ constant mechanical and electrical state of readiness. In the event of war, they are relied upon to work close to, or even in, the front line. The ability of the ordnance personnel to rapidly return damaged tanks and vehicles to combat status adds yet another dimension to the strengths of the IDF Armoured Corps.
The Artillery Corps

Within the framework of the IDF, the Artillery Corps—Hevyl Tothanim—is deployed alongside infantry and armoured units in integrated formations. Hence the distinction between combat and support units in such a context cannot be clearly made. Indeed, artillery spotters (Sayeret Tothanim, the reconnaissance unit of the Artillery Corps) are in effect the eyes of the Corps and are constantly up with the IDF’s most forward units in combat. The functions of the Artillery Corps are as follows: providing ground, sea and air forces with uninterrupted fire support throughout combat; isolating the field of battle and preventing unfavourable changes in enemy deployment during combat; targeting and destroying enemy artillery and missile batteries; supporting the Air Force in neutralising and paralysing enemy air defenses.

The Artillery Corps is composed of units organically integrated into the IDF ground forces structure at all levels, to ensure that artillery support will be tightly co-ordinated. In order to effectively carry out this task, the Artillery Corps despatches a representative from its communications network to every command in the paratroop, infantry, armoured and engineer units from platoon level upwards. The effectiveness of this system was demonstrated during the war in Lebanon, when artillery batteries successfully destroyed Syrian and PLO artillery assets before they could be used against IDF forces. The highly mobile self-propelled IDF artillery units were instrumental in supporting the quick advance of armour and infantry formations and in providing them with massive firepower, especially during the battle and siege of Beirut.

Basic training for a recruit in the Artillery Corps is identical to that of the Armoured Corps. Following basic training the soldier is sent to the Artillery Training Base to learn the skills of gunner, driver, communication expert, and fire-controller. Each skill is taught separately and an artillerist man is only taught a single profession at this point in his service. With the completion of this phase, the

A paratrooper of the 890th Parachute Bn. during battalion training exercises. He wears a packboard supporting two rucksacks, extra ammunition pouches, and a stretcher. (IDF Spokesman)
soldier is placed in a unit, and if found qualified (after a certain operational period) will be sent on the artillery team commander’s course. There he learns the basics of command and leadership at team commander’s level, and also methods for operating sophisticated artillery weapon systems, more complex than those of a tank. Finally, for the outstanding soldiers, there is officers’ course, which falls into two parts: firstly, the operations officers’ course in the framework of the IDF’s officer school (officers in all branches of service must complete this phase); secondly, and more important, the Artillery Corps specialisation course, which concentrates on the operation of the artillery, the technical problems encountered with extremely complex weapon systems, and the intellectual challenge of fire-range computation. This is the longest and most difficult of all the IDF officer specialisation field courses.

The Air Force

The quality of the Heyl Havir, its pilots and its command and control structure have become legendary not only in the Middle East, but throughout the entire world. Israel’s victories over her Arab neighbours were due in large part to the men, material and spirit of the Israeli Air Force. The 7 June 1981 IAF raid on the Osirak nuclear reactor in Baghdad, Iraq, was not only a perfect example of Israel’s resolve never to allow her national security to be so threatened; it also displayed the great skill and precision that has become the norm of the IAF Tayas (pilot). In effect, the success of the IDF in combat has been inseparable from the strength and readiness of the Air Force. Today, the IAF numbers some 555 combat aircraft, including the F-4E Phantom, F-15 Falcon, F-16 Eagle and Kfir C-2 and C-7. A further 80-odd attack helicopters are also maintained. But the Israeli Air Force also includes two ‘ground’ formations, the Air Defense Units and the Aeromedical Evacuation Unit (‘Unit 669’) which,
although they receive little attention, are crucial elements in the IDF combat strength.

**Air Defense Units**
The primary role of the Air Defense Units is the defense of vulnerable population centres, strategic positions, and airfields—both civilian and military—from enemy air attack. They are also responsible for the anti-aircraft protection of ground forces in times of war. As a result, these units have developed a high degree of flexibility and mobility. In the early days, these AA units were considered rear support units, and consequently manpower was drawn from over-age recruits who for family or physical reasons were unfit for combat duty. At that time the Air Defense Units were under the command of the Artillery Corps. However, the 1968–70 War of Attrition underlined the need for a more intense IDF anti-aircraft effort. The Air Defense Units were transferred to Air Force command; they received mobile weapon systems, and combat-fit manpower. The results were highly impressive. During the first days of the 1973 War, while the IAF airpower was preoccupied, the Air Defense Units downed one-third of all enemy planes shot down. In the wake of the Yom Kippur War new and advanced weaponry was added to the Air Defense Units’ inventory, including ‘Chaparral’ SAMs (for use against low-flying aircraft), mechani-
ised Vulcan cannon, and improved Hawk missiles (which were responsible for the downing of a Syrian MiG-25). During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon the Vulcan AA units not only brought down 11 Syrian Gazelle anti-tank helicopters, but were used to great effect against fortified PLO and Syrian positions. Service in the Air Defense Units is voluntary (as in all Air Force combat units), and the conscript must be selected by the Air Force before being eligible to volunteer. Basic training is identical to that given to soldiers in the Armoured Corps; and the officer’s course is similar to that of the Artillery Corps, due mainly to the technical features involved. It is interesting to note that as a result of battle experiences in Lebanon, a greater emphasis has been placed on infantry combat training for Air Defense personnel.

**Aeromedical Evacuation Unit—Unit 669**

The primary role of the Israeli Air Force Aeromedical Evacuation Unit is the rescuing of downed IAF pilots. They are also responsible for the administration of urgent medical care to wounded soldiers in the field (and behind enemy lines), and their successful evacuation to a military hospital in Israel as soon as possible. Israeli civilian authorities also call on this unit in the event of civilian tragedies involving casualties in need of urgent medical care. Service in this elite unit is voluntary, and prior to acceptance the soldier must pass a series of physical and psychological examinations even more challenging than those faced by recce-paratrooper applicants. Basic training is among the most arduous in the IDF. It commences with the six-month paratroop basic training (all members of ‘Unit 669’ are parachute-qualified); and continues with specialised training in amphibious operations, mountain climbing, survival techniques, infiltration and even skiing. Following this phase the ‘combat rescuer’ is given advanced medical training, and is certified as a master combat medic.

Medics of the IAF’s elite Aeromedical Evacuation Unit tend a casualty aboard a Bell 212 helicopter using the AMLSU—Air Mobile Life Support Unit. The officer at left wears the K-2B flight suit, inverted blue rank slides, and HGU-26 helmet. The medic at right wears the American SPH-4C single-visor helmet—cf. Plate E3. (IDF Spokesman)
1: Recon-para, SAYERET OREV; Lebanon, June 1982
2: Paratrooper, Tel Nof Jump School, 1983
3: Recon-para, SAYERET SHALDAG; Lebanon, 1984
1: Radioman, GOLANI Bde.; Ma'alot, May 1974
2: Infantryman, GOLANI Bde.; Sidon, Jan. 1985
3: Capt., BARAK Bn., GOLANI Bde.; Sidon, 1985
1: Staff Sgt., SAYERET SHAKE, 1983
2: Sgt. candidate, GOLANI Bdc.; 1983
3: 2nd Lt., Paratroops, 1984
1: Commando, Sayeret Mat’kal; Entebbe, July 1976
2: Commando, Sayeret Golani; Misgav Am, Apr. 1980
3: Helicopter pilot, Unit 669, 1984
1: Merkava MBT crewman, 1985
2: 1st Lt., Vulcan A/A unit; Lebanon, 1985
3: Missile boat crewman, INS SOFAH, 1985
1: Lt. Col., Air Force, 1985
3: Major, Naval Commandos, 1984
1: Submarine petty officer, 1984
2: Missile boat crewman, 1985
3: Staff Sgt., Navy, 1983
1: Air Force pilot cadet, 1984
2: Colonel, Intelligence Corps, 1978
3: Senior Mst. Sgt., Military Police, 1983
1: Combat engineer, Sidon, July 1982
2: Mst. Sgt., Combat Engineers, 1985
3: Combat engineer, NBC kit, 1984
1: Bedouin tracker, Jordan Valley, 1980
2: Sgt., Border Guards, 1977
3: Border Guard, Hebron 1980
Many in this unit decide to sign on as NCOs or officers, giving the unit a highly professional stature. An Aeromedical Evacuation Team consists of two helicopter pilots (only the very best are chosen), a flight surgeon, a medic, and two to three combat rescuers. Their main transport is the Bell-212 helicopter, specially equipped with AMLSU (Air Mobile Life Support Unit) apparatus. The unit’s actions are legendary, and their results impressive. During the invasion of Lebanon, 85 per cent of IDF casualties were evacuated by air from the front to Israeli hospitals in under 45 minutes, from a total of 2,518 casualties.

Excellent study of a paratroop ‘MAGist’ in action. In addition to his web gear, he has fixed a grenade pouch to his canteen, and has added three extra ammo pouches. The asymmetrical arrangement of the web gear allows maximum comfort when in firing position. Note hessian wrapped around the FN MAG’s bipod legs, for a more comfortable grip in winter; and shell-collector/belt holder bags, fitted and lying handy. (IDF Spokesman)

terrorist activities. To accomplish this task, Israeli naval strategy is based on the use of highly manoeuvrable craft capable of delivering heavy firepower in enemy home waters. To this end, the Navy comprises deterrent and offensive forces (missile boats, submarines, and gunboats); support forces to aid other IDF forces; and routine defense craft for patrol duties.

The largest ‘fleet’ formation within the Navy is that of the missile boats, comprising 26 ships (12 Saar 2 and 3s, 12 Saar 4s and two Flagstaff hydrofoils) armed with a variety of 20mm, 40mm and 76mm cannon, 20mm Phalanx Mk.15 CIWS, and Gabriel and Harpoon surface-to-surface missiles. At the outbreak of the 1973 War the Israeli Navy was the only truly combat-ready service, and succeeded in sinking 13 Syrian and Egyptian missile boats (for no Israeli losses) in the first major clash in the history of naval warfare in which both sides

The Navy

Israel’s geopolitical situation has made her access to the open seas of special importance to her security and economy. The objectives of the Israeli Navy—HLYHM—HLM—HLM—are as follows: to secure the sea lanes to and from Israel’s ports on the Mediterranean and the Red Sea; to deny the enemy any chance to turn Israel’s vulnerable coastline into a battleground in the event of war; to safeguard Israel’s shores against

45
were armed with surface-to-surface missiles. During the years prior to Operation ‘Peace for Galilee’ the missile boats played a vital rôle in securing the Israeli coastline against PLO seaborne raiders; and during the war in Lebanon the Navy gave significant and crucial support to IDF ground units by shelling the Lebanese coast and West Beirut. In a recent development, on 20 April 1983, a Navy SAAR 3 missile boat intercepted a PLO vessel 100 miles off Tel Aviv. On board were 28 terrorists whose mission was to attack the IDF General Staff Headquarters, the Ministry of Defense, and numerous civilian targets. The successful interception of such a threat to Israel only emphasises the crucial rôle that the Israeli Navy plays in the nation’s defense.

Service in the missile boat fleet is voluntary, and only those showing the necessary intellectual and physical abilities are allowed to partake in the week-long GIBUSH which is a preliminary to acceptance for service in SATULIM (missile boats). A six-week period of infantry basic training is undertaken by all naval personnel before they are sent to the Naval Training Base for specialisation courses. Courses can last up to eight months, and during this period arduous amphibious training is introduced, making the Israeli sailor one of the most specialised and combat-ready men in the IDF.

In addition to the missile boat fleet there is also a small submarine force consisting of three obsolete British models; and a larger gunboat patrol force consisting of 46 DABOUR Class craft. This force conducts coastal patrols; and the fact that in the past eight years the PLO has launched ten seaborne terrorist operations, all of which have been foiled, attests to the skill and effectiveness of the DABOUR crews.

The Navy also maintains one of the most elite units in the IDF: the Naval Commandos. Acceptance by the Naval Commandos is even more hard-won than in the case of paratroop reconnaissance units; and following basic training to a

---

Naval officer cadets parade for inspection. They wear white Navy dress uniform, the navy blue shoulder boards bearing two white stripes indicating the level achieved in the course. The round white backing to the cap badge also indicates that they are on the officer’s course. The master sergeant—in Israeli terms, an NCO like those of the other services—wears the Navy NCO’s peaked cap with its large Navy badge. Compare this photo with Plates H1—Navy khaki Class ‘A’ uniform; and G3—Navy officer’s white Class ‘A’ uniform. Note the G3 rifles specially set up for parade use, with the bipod removed and the M-16 bayonet fitted. (IDF Spokesman)
more intense level than that given to paratroopers, the Naval Commandos begin a 12-month training period. During specialist training SCUBA diving, infiltration, demolitions, sabotage, intelligence gathering, parachuting and HALO techniques, medical techniques and automobile driving skills are taught at an intense and gruelling pace. Following the highly pressurised special training period, during which he may be rejected at any point, the soldier is officially awarded the KNAFEH ATALEF (Naval Commando wings), and enters the operational period of his service as a combatant in the IDF’s most élite unit1.

Note: The Rôle of Women in the IDF
A widespread misconception exists regarding the rôle of women soldiers in the IDF. Contrary to popular belief, females never engage in combat. A majority of female soldiers serve their two years of military service as secretaries and administrative personnel; yet their rôle in the IDF is crucial. IDF studies have shown that the quality of female inductees is often higher than that of their male counterparts, and the IDF uses this potential properly. In the Air Force more than 85 per cent of all jobs are open to women, including radar operators, flight controllers, and even Hawk SAM battery commanders; and the same holds true for the Navy and the Intelligence Corps. Women serve as instructors in the Armoured and Artillery Corps, and recently have even become squad leaders instructing male soldiers at infantry training bases. The idea of allowing women to serve in such a diverse range of military tasks not only reflects Israel’s traditional egalitarianism, but also serves the practical purpose of freeing more male soldiers for combat duty.

A line-up of female NCOs during a ceremony in June 1985. All wear Class ‘A’ uniforms; the front five can be identified as follows (left to right): Air Force sergeant, in khakis and blue-grey beret with silver badge; Communications Corps corporal, in green with a black beret bearing the scarlet-backed bronze corps badge; corporal in a parachute unit, with red beret bearing the scarlet-backed infantry badge, the unit tag showing the combined paratroop/infantry branch motif, and a green lanyard; GOLANI Bde. sergeant in brown beret with scarlet-backed infantry badge, the brigade’s green and brown tree motif on the yellow unit tag, and the operational service pin—a flaming sword, in natural colours—on the left breast pocket; and a Communications Corps sergeant wearing an unbacked beret badge. See Plates D, H and I for more detail of female uniforms. (IMoD)

1Because of the long training period, Naval Commandos must sign on for an additional 18 months of service; this is the case with all soldiers whose courses are lengthy and highly technical.
The Plates

A1: Reconnaissance paratrooper, Sayeret Tzahalim; Suez City, October 1973

The 1973 Yom Kippur War saw some of the fiercest fighting in the IDF’s history. Some of the toughest battles took place on the West Bank of the Suez Canal, following the brilliant counter-crossing by paratroops led by Maj.Gen.(Res.) Ariel ‘Arik’ Sharon which took the IDF into battle against Egyptian forces on mainland Egypt—‘in Africa’.

The Tzahalim (paratroops) were used in this campaign as mobile shock troops against the Egyptian SAM sites, and as path-clearers for the main armoured thrust to follow. Egyptian para-troops, Special Forces, and Commandos defended this territory bravely and effectively.

This recon paratrooper fighting in the ap-proaches to Suez City is wearing the IDF issue olive fatigue shirt (with Tzahal acronym, hidden here, in yellow on the left breast), and trousers with one right and one left side cargo pocket and a smaller left side pocket. He wears the ‘old-style’ web gear phased out of service in the late 1970s (although some reserve and support units may still be wearing it as late as 1985). This equipment can incorporate a wide variety of different pouches, making it an economical and durable system. In this case, four pouches hold FN FAL 7.62mm ammunition; there are two canteens and one medical pouch, worn at the back. An Israeli copy of the British 1937 Pattern ‘small pack’ holds up to 15 anti-tank grenades. The dark metal diskeet (ID tag) is worn around the neck on a ball chain. The helmet is an Israeli copy of the American M-1 fitted with tan netting, white signal tape down the middle, and black rubber retaining band. The FN FAL rifle (modified and produced under licence in Israel) was the mainstay of the IDF’s inventory long before the M-16 and Galil series came into service. A captured Egyptian ‘Port Said’ copy of the Swedish Carl Gustav 9mm sub-machine gun is carried; note the magazine carried tucked into the pistol belt. In fact, many Israelis
preferred captured AK-47s and RPG-7s to their own weapons. The brown leather boots are traditional to Israeli paratroopers.

A2: Paratrooper, Operation ‘Litani’; Southern Lebanon, March 1978

This paratrooper in search of PLO terrorists in southern Lebanon is wearing the olive fatigue shirt with the American OG-107 fatigue trousers, which for some reason are the most sought after article of clothing in the IDF’s inventory. (These American pants came into IDF service following the US military airlifts of equipment to Israel during the dark days of the 1973 War: the Americans generously threw any handy piece of equipment aboard the transport planes, even odds and ends of clothing.) The ‘new-style’ load bearing webbing equipment, first tested during the Entebbe raid and general issue since 1977, is worn over an American M-1952 flak vest. This ephod (web gear) can hold up to 12 M-16, galil or AK series magazines, along with additional pouches for grenades and medical equipment, and attachments for packs. The olive fatigue cap has the soldier’s blood type written on it—because the IDF identification tags only include the soldier’s name and serial number. The weapon is the FN MAG 7.62mm light machine gun, the main infantry support weapon in IDF service for more than 20 years.

A3: Paratrooper, 820th Battalion; Southern Lebanon, 1980

The numerous retaliatory raids against PLO targets in southern Lebanon prior to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon were carried out by highly mobile heliborne and seaborne forces, mainly naval commandos, Golani infantry and paratroops. This paratrooper on such a raid wears the very comfortable, waterproof (and blessedly warm!) olive green army parka or dubon. This coat has two features to note: an inner pistol pocket, and
slots in the hood for use with communication gear. The helmet is the Orlite-manufactured infantry ballistic helmet, which replaced the Israeli copy of the American M-1 in the late 1970s. The helmet is covered with tan netting, which the soldier has camouflaged black and brown with shoe polish and dirt—a standard practice—and which is held by a retaining band of black rubber inner tubing. The load-bearing ephod is worn with a stretcher attached by khaki canvas straps. The fatigue trousers and brown leather paratroop boots are standard, as are the goggles. Blinker lights (for night-time visual communication) are attached to the helmet and to the web gear. The weapon is the M203 rifle/grenade launcher, which combines a 40mm pump-action grenade launcher with the M-16 5.56mm assault rifle. The black turtle-neck sweater and green cloth gloves (with finger sections removed) are non-issue, but Israeli soldiers, especially those in combat units in the field, are allowed to make certain variations in their combat dress.

Bi: Reconnaissance paratrooper, sayeret orev; Bekaa's Valley, Lebanon, June 1982
Sayervet orev (the anti-tank reconnaissance unit of the paratroopers) waged a highly successful campaign against Syrian tank formations during the 1982 war in Lebanon. Riding in jeeps fitted with TOW anti-tank missiles, these heavily armed and highly trained troops destroyed almost as many Syrian tanks and vehicles as did Israeli tank units—a remarkable feat. This recon paratrooper is wearing the infantry ballistic helmet with tan
netting and issue tan rubber retaining band. The fatigue shirt has been removed for combat, and the Kevlar flak jacket is worn beneath the load-bearing equipment. The specially designed khaki knapsack holds the anti-tank rifle grenades for the GALIL ARM. The American OG-107 fatigue trousers are worn with khaki knee pads, although many soldiers found these to be a nuisance and immediately discarded them. Note issue green nylon watch cover.

B2: Paratrooper, Tel Nof Jump School, 1983
This paratrooper about to undergo a training jump is wearing the issue olive fatigue shirt and trousers, brown leather combat boots, and infantry ballistic helmet with tan netting and issue tan rubber retaining band. The main parachute, worn on the back, is the automatically operated EFA 672-12 (IS) type. It features ‘lines first’ canopy deployment, thus greatly reducing the initial ‘snatch load’ (which would be severe with a ‘canopy first’ deployment parachute at speeds in excess of 80 knots). This pack has also been particularly designed and fitted to keep the canopy clear of the aircraft tail during deployment. His reserve parachute is the T-10-R (IS), which is manually operated (note ripcord handle). His personal equipment, including web gear and GHILON 5.56mm SAR, is all stored in the khaki canvas jump bag; note TZAHAL stencil.

B3: Reconnaissance paratrooper, Sayeret Shaldag, Jebel Barouk, January 1984
The main tasks of Sayeret Shaldag, the reconnaissance and infiltration unit of the Tzahal, are reconnaissance deep into enemy territory, and the raiding and sabotage of vital enemy installations. Like the US Army LRRPs (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols) they are infiltrated in teams of four or five, and carry enough firepower to hold off far stronger enemy opposition until extracted. The harsh Lebanese winters caused many problems for

Paratroop reservists on a patrol in southern Lebanon, May 1985: their unmilitary haircuts and relaxed appearance are typical of IDF reservists, but are by no means indicative of their combat potential, as they have proved in many battles. All three are armed with CAR-15s, and the radioman carries an AN/PRC-77. (IDF Spokesman)
Photographed while escorting Prime Minister Peres on a tour of southern Lebanon in spring 1985, this soldier wears the developed Israeli-made Kevlar armour vest with six built-in pouches and one rear canteen pouch, over Nomex OG-106 shirt and trousers. He carries the latest version of the GALIL to enter service, the GALIL AR, to which he has added a forward pistol grip. (IDF Spokesman)

SAYERET SHALDAG; they had to operate not only in hostile territory, but also under climatic conditions to which Israeli forces were unaccustomed. As a result, special protective clothing and equipment was issued. This recon paratrooper wears the specially designed two-piece white coveralls, insulated for warmth, worn over his regular uniform. Large quantities of food, water and ammunition are carried in the large white-covered rucksack, as might be, e.g. an M-72 66mm LAW rocket (all infantry and paratroop forces have a dual and sometimes triple weapons rôle). The standard loadbearing equipment is worn over the white coveralls, and for some reason has not been camouflaged white. The fur-lined HERMONIOT snow boots are typical among Israeli soldiers who served in Lebanon. The individual weapon is the M-21 (accursed M-14) 7.62mm sniper rifle, which is now the standard IDF sniper’s weapon. Note the large wooden pick attached to the rucksack, essential for the deep snows encountered in the mountains of eastern Lebanon.

Ci: Radioman, GOLANI Brigade; Ma'alot, May 1974
Assisting in the assault on the terrorist-held school in northern Israel, this radioman of the GOLANI Bde. carries an American AN/PRC-25 field radio in a khaki canvas knapsack. He wears the standard olive fatigue shirt and trousers, and ELBA black leather combat boots (these boots are issued only to the GOLANI Bde.; they are lighter than the standard combat boot, but have reinforced soles and are generally sturdier). He is wearing the ‘old-style’ web gear, this time with six ammunition pouches, a large medical pouch (holding medical gear as well as extra ammunition), worn on the side, one ammunition and two canteen pouches on the back. A folded rope is also carried attached to the rear webbing straps. Many soldiers found the canvas material of the pouches and the load they carried to be very uncomfortable, and so wore padding
C2: Infantryman, GOLANI Brigade; Sidon, January 1985

Israeli forces serving in Lebanon found themselves in need of a comfortable and practical means of carrying their personal equipment and body armour during patrols and sentry duty. Consequently, Rabintex Ltd. developed a flak vest made of Kevlar with six built-in pouches. Prior to this, Israeli soldiers would remove pouches from their web gear and add them to their flak vests. This ingenious and comfortable system includes six ammunition pouches, one medical pouch and one canteen pouch located on the back. This GOLANI infantryman on patrol in southern Lebanon wears such a vest, along with an ex-PLO British style ‘woolly pully’ sweater, olive fatigue uniform and HERMONIOT snowboots, which many soldiers found so comfortable that they were worn even in non-snowy conditions. The field hat is the ‘Kova Raful’, named after the very popular Chief-of-Staff Lt.Gen. Rafael ‘Raful’ Eitan, and now the standard field hat in the IDF. Of note is the Gilon SAR fitted with an M203 40mm grenade launcher attachment. With the M-16 being phased out of service, the grenade launcher has been fitted to the current generation of infantry weapons, namely the Galil series and the CAR-15 5.56mm assault rifle.

C3: Captain, Barak Battalion, GOLANI Brigade; Sidon, January 1985

Because the GOLANI Bde. is highly mechanised, operating out of M113 APCs, many of its soldiers are issued with Nomex protective clothing. This
SEREN (captain) wears the American OG-106 Nomex trousers and the olive fatigue shirt with Tzahal acronym (although the OG-106 shirt might also be worn). The rank of SEREN is indicated by light khaki slip-on rank tabs with three bright green stencilled bars. The standard load-bearing web gear is worn (with map tucked in), and a khaki canvas pistol belt with holster for the officer's personal sidearm. The ID tag (covered in black tape, and with its chain covered by a black shoe lace) is worn around the neck, as are the field glasses. The Galil AR (the latest in the Galil series to enter service, resembling the Galil ARM except that it has no built-in bipod and has a fixture for a bayonet) has an added forward pistol grip. The Kevlar Shaphats (flak vest) is carried for possible wear, and the ELBA black combat boots are worn. Note the helmet cover made from captured PLO ‘lizard’ pattern camouflage cloth—a practice observed since 1984.

D1: Staff sergeant, Sayaret Shaked, 1983

As they were the paratroop reconnaissance unit of the IDF's Southern Command, this soldier of the now-disbanded Sayaret Shaked wears the paratroop pattern Class 'A' uniform. This consists of the four-pocket Varkit blouse and the Class 'A' version of the three-pocket fatigue trousers, which are worn baggy and made of a finer material. Although all paratroop personnel normally wear the traditional red beret, Sayaret Shaked wore black berets to mark their special identity and status. The small Knafei Sayaret (recon wings) are worn with the larger Knafei Tznicha (parachutist wings) over the left breast pocket on a bright green background indicating ‘recon’ status. (Parachute instructors wear white backgrounds to their jump wings; regular paratroopers, bright blue; and those with a combat jump—in practice, so far at least, only those who jumped at the Mitla Pass in 1956—wear red.) The Lebanon campaign ribbon is worn below the wings: Sayaret Shaked distinguished itself during the 1982 invasion, particularly in the battle for the terrorist stronghold at the Ein el Hilweh refugee camp near Sidon (see MAA 165, Armies in Lebanon 1982–85). On the right breast pocket note the Otssherut Mivtzaim (operational service pin). The rank of staff sergeant, Samal Rishon, is marked by a brass leaf with a red background pinned directly to the three sergeant's stripes. The crossed rifles in the upper circle of the profession tag on the right shoulder indicate 'rifleman', and the unit tag with a red-winged white fox refers to the IDF Southern Command symbol. The Gilion SAR (this soldier's personal weapon, and by 1983 the main infantry weapon throughout front line units) is supported by a black canvas sling.

D2: Officer candidate, Golani Brigade, 1983

The Golani Bde. uses a unique combination for its Class 'A' uniform, consisting of the general service
Class ‘A’ olive shirt and paratroop Class ‘A’ trousers. This uniform is worn when off base, during ceremonies and on duty at certain command bases. This sergeant candidate wears the brown beret worn only by GOLANI personnel (female soldiers in the GOLANI Bde. also wear a brown version of the female beret). The round white background for the infantry beret badge and the white tape loops on the shoulderstraps are the insignia identifying those undergoing KOURS KITZINIM or officer’s course. The GOLANI tunic pin (a tree superimposed on a horizontal knife) is worn on the red background marking combat status on the left breast pocket flap, below the Lebanon campaign ribbon. He wears the ELBA boots, and carries a GALIL ARM.

D3: 2nd Lieutenant of Paratroops, 1984
All female soldiers in TZAHAL wore a khaki Class ‘A’ blouse and skirt or slacks combination (and all female fatigue uniforms were also khaki) until 1982, when khaki was replaced by the olive green version worn by this SAGAM (second lieutenant). The red female ‘beret’ (the Hebrew words for male ‘beret’ and female ‘hat’ are identical) with the infantry beret badge indicates service in the paratroops. The unit tag attached to the left shoulder strap is that of a paratroop support unit. The rank is displayed on olive green shoulder strap slides—here, one bronze metal bar with a red background. Note the officer’s qualification pin worn on her left collar point. The Class ‘A’ blouse has two lower pockets, and one flap for decoration on the left breast. The blouse comes only in a short-sleeved version, and has brass buttons with a sword-and-leaf motif. IDF dress regulations state that all female soldiers must wear black footwear; but although both shoes and sandals are issued, many HAYELOT (female soldiers) improvise with more fashionable items. The black leather purse is issue and must be carried at all times. It comes with white reflector tape for road safety, but many are also decorated with the soldier’s serial number, names of boyfriends and colourful decals.

E1: Commando, SAYERET MAT’KAL; Entebbe, Uganda,
3 July 1976
Probably the most difficult problem facing the Israeli commandos attempting to free the 103 Jewish and Israeli hostages held by PFLP terrorists at Entebbe airport was the element of surprise. Not only did the rescue force have to reach Entebbe from Israel undetected; but, once on the ground, they had to get past Ugandan soldiers guarding the airport in order to surprise the terrorists holding the hostages at the terminal. The Israelis solved this problem by using as their lead vehicle a black Mercedes Benz identical to the one used by Ugandan President Idi Amin. In addition to this, the lead troops were dressed in camouflage fatigues; it was rumoured that Amin used Palestinian gunmen as personal bodyguards, and the Israelis wore ex-Syrian pattern PLO uniforms in order to impersonate them. This commando from SAYERET MAT’KAL (the intelligence recon unit answerable directly to the IDF General Staff) is wearing diagonally streaked Syrian ‘lizard’ pattern camouflage shirt and trousers. The ‘old-style’ web gear is worn, with four ammunition and two canteen pouches, blackened with shoe polish for night camouflage. This commando has retained his brown leather paratroop boots; and is armed with the Soviet AK-47 with two magazines taped together. To this day, the AK series remains the main weapon issued to elite units within TZAHAL.

E2: Anti-terrorist commando, SAYERET GOLANI; Kibbutz Misgav Am, April 1980
This member of the rescue force which ‘liberated’ Kibbutz Misgav Am from ALF terrorists wears a
medical kit and a holster for a 9mm Beretta M1951 pistol (although many helicopter pilots prefer more exotic privately-purchased sidearms). A commercial survival knife is attached to the vest. Israeli-made black pilot's boots are also worn. The pilot is armed with a glilon SAR for all eventualities—he often operates behind enemy lines.

**F1: MERKAVA MBT CREWMAN, 1985**

Because of Israeli sensitivity about casualties, crew survivability has always been of the utmost concern in the Armoured Corps. The MERKAVA was designed not only to give maximum crew protection, but also a higher than usual degree of crew comfort, so that crews can operate for long hours to maximum potential. During the war in Lebanon it was found that the standard load-bearing equipment was very cumbersome for armoured crews, so a special set was developed. This combined the standard issue item with four 'ChiCom-type' chest pouches, two regular pouches worn at the sides, and special larger, flatter, rectangular canteens. This samal (sergeant) wears the new tanker's web gear over the Kevlar flak vest and Nomex tanker's coversalls; his sergeant's stripes have been crudely attached to the sleeves. The 'new' Type 602 tanker's helmet is worn with a white stencilled stripe down the middle—this practice began in Lebanon, and is usually seen on vehicle commanders. Standard black combat boots are worn with added zippers instead of lacing: although a common practice, it is not mentioned in IDF uniform regulations. The ID tag is worn around the neck, covered by tape and a black shoe lace to counter reflections. A smaller ID tag is also worn in each boot (a mandatory regulation for all IDF male soldiers). The glilon is the standard personal weapon. Note GSFRP-1 Nomex gloves, issued to all IDF tankers.

**F2: 1ST LIEUTENANT, VULCAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT UNIT; Beka'ah Valley, Lebanon, February 1985**

Known as the 'tank corps of the Air Force', the units equipped with the M163 VADS (M113 APC with 20mm Vulcan autocannon and ranging radar) serve a crucial and diverse operational rôle. Because they are basically mechanised troops, these Air Force soldiers take on a rather 'armoured' appearance. This segen (first lieutenant) commanding a Vulcan battery wears the Israeli Type 601
tanker’s helmet made of ballistic nylon; although being replaced by the newer Type 602 Kevlar helmet, the Type 601 is still retained in large numbers. The load-bearing web gear, fatigue trousers and black combat boots are also worn. The royal blue Air Force rank slides with two white stencilled bars (all field slides have stencilled insignia) and the blue Air Force Dubon winter parka are the only articles identifying this officer as serving in the Air Force. The CAR-15 with an added forward pistol grip is interesting: Israeli Military Industries and the IDF Ordnance Corps have always modified infantry weapons in service, particularly those relatively older weapons still needed for use with combat units.

F3: Missile boat crewman, INS Soufani, 1985
All crewmen on Israeli Navy missile boats receive extensive training in anti-aircraft and chemical warfare. Every crewman undergoes NBC training every six months; and all are practised in the use of the light anti-aircraft weapons on board (7.62mm FN MAG light machine guns, .30cal and .50cal machine guns, 20mm Oerlikon cannons and American ‘Redeye’ hand-held anti-aircraft missiles). This crewman wears a ‘German’ life vest over the Navy Class ‘A’ navy blue sweater, olive fatigue trousers and black combat boots with added zippers. The infantry ballistic helmet has been painted blue-grey and has the ship’s name stencilled in red Hebrew lettering—a common though unofficial practice. Attached to the left leg is the IDF khaki canvas NBC pouch, which is supposed to be worn at all times by crewmen during ‘battle stations’. This contains protective clothing, mask, medical equipment and chemical sensors. The ‘Redeye’ missile has a green-khaki canvas sling.

G1: Lieutenant-colonel, Air Force, 1985
This squadron-colonel wears the Air Force Class ‘A’ khaki uniform, and the blue-grey officer’s peaked cap with black peak and strap and silver metal badge. His rank of Sgan Aluf (lieutenant-colonel) is represented by two silver metal ‘Falafels’ (leaves) worn on blue-grey Class ‘A’ shoulder strap slides. The coveted pilot’s wings—knafei tisa—are in smooth silver thread on a dark blue backing with the Star of David in the centre; they are worn above the left breast pocket. Below them the 1973 and Lebanon campaign ribbons can be seen. Above the right breast pocket, master parachutist wings are worn on a blue background. The operational service pin is worn on the right breast pocket flap, and the officer’s qualification pin on the left collar. Note unit tag worn from left shoulder strap.

The eleventh Ramatkal (Chief-of-Staff) Ruv Aluf (Lt.Gen.) Eitan was without doubt among the most popular and respected men to fill this post. He fought in all five of Israel’s wars; received a decoration for valour in 1956; commanded the retaliatory raid on Beirut International airport in 1968, destroying 13 MEA airliners—and calmly walking into the airport bar and ordering drinks for his men; and later as Chief-of-Staff, planned and commanded the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. In the middle of his army career he volunteered for and passed the difficult and selective pilot’s course, a remarkable achievement. Although a disciplinary he cared a great deal for the problems of all soldiers, and would go out of his way to try to assist in each case personally (on many occasions he would even invite soldiers to his home on the Sabbath to discuss what troubled them). Most Chiefs-of-Staff remain in the post a maximum of four years; ‘Raful’ served for five and a half years. Lt.Gen. Eitan wears the red paratroop Kmntah (beret) with the GHQ beret badge, and the GHQ
While its most immediate impact may be to prove that in the IDF, even among senior officers, there is not even a ‘uniform’ method of saluting, this photograph is also interesting for other reasons! It shows the handing over of command of the Israeli Navy on 3 January 1985 from Maj.Gen. Zeev Almog (right) to Maj.Gen. Ben-Shoshan (left), the ceremony presided over by the Chief-of-Staff, Lt.Gen. Moshe Levy (centre). Shoshan wears on the left breast his submariner’s ‘wings’ on a red background, above the 1967, 1973 and Lebanon campaign ribbons; below these is the missile boat badge on a blue background. On his right breast are blue-backed parachute wings. On the left breast of Almog’s white dress shirt—note blue slides with gold ranking on the shoulder straps—are the master naval commando wings on red; and the 1956, 1967, 1973 and Lebanon ribbons. On his right breast are green-backed master parachutist’s wings. (IDF Spokesman)

The rank of RAV ALUF is indicated by a crossed sword and laurel branch and leaves, worn with red backgrounds (only army Class ‘A’ rank slides have the red background to insignia). The three campaign ribbons worn closest to the left breast pocket are the 1948 (Menorah clasp indicates a Battle for Jerusalem veteran), 1956 and 1967 ribbons. Above them are the red RAV HA’AVOT (Israel’s second highest medal for valour), the 1973 and Lebanon campaign ribbons. The master parachutist wings are worn with a red background, signifying the 1956 combat jump into the Mitla Pass. Above the right breast pocket are pilot wings. He wears the olive Class ‘A’ shirt (with sleeves shortened) and trousers and the olive officer’s waist belt. Black leather dress shoes complete the uniform.

\[G3: \text{Major, Naval Commandos, 1984}\]
The white dress uniform, an exact copy of the regular Class ‘A’ uniform, is worn by all naval personnel on ceremonial occasions, such as Memorial and Independence days, and during course graduations or change-in-command commencements. This RAV SEREN in the elite KOMANDO YAMI (Naval Commandos) wears the navy blue rank slides with a gold metal leaf rank insignia. The white officer’s peaked cap displays a gold strap beneath the large gold naval cap badge. The Naval Commando ‘bat’ wings, KNAFL ALTALEIF, are worn with a red background indicating a combat dive. Below the wings are the 1973 and Lebanon campaign ribbons; and the yellow RAV HAGVURAH, Israel’s highest decoration for valor, very rarely awarded and usually posthumously. Above the right breast pocket the master parachutist wings are worn with a green background above the operational service pin. The pin on the left collar is the RAV MEMEM (officer’s qualification), this example being the gold naval version with anchor. The navy blue waist belt and black leather dress shoes are all standard items.

\[H1: \text{Submarine master sergeant; Haifa, 1984}\]
All those serving aboard the Israeli Navy submarine fleet finish their three-and-a-half years’ service with the rank of RAV SAML (US Navy equivalent, chief petty officer). Service is extended by six months due to the length of the eight-month basic submariner course. Those choosing to remain in active service reach the rank of RASAR (chief senior petty officer), as in the case with this instructor at the naval training centre. The khaki Class ‘A’ uniform (worn only by Air Force and Navy personnel) is worn with black leather dress shoes. The Navy NCO’s peaked cap has a large gold metal naval cap badge and a black peak, but lacks the gold false ‘chinstrap’ of the officer’s cap. The rank of RASAR is indicated by a gold rank insignia worn on a black leather ‘watchband’ on the right wrist. The submarine badge, OT TZE’OLELON, is worn above the left breast pocket with a blue background, above the 1973 and Lebanon campaign ribbons. Above the right breast pocket the naval frogman wings OT TAMMOUN are worn with the red background indicating a combat dive: many naval frogmen transfer to the submarine service later in their careers. The profession tag, worn on the upper right arm, is issued to all those who have passed a profession course within their branch of service; in this case it indicates electronics specialist. The unit
tag is that of the naval training school, and the red lanyard indicates instructor status. The navy blue waist belt is standard for Navy troops in Class ‘A’ as well as fatigue uniforms.

**H2: Missile boat crewman; Haifa, 1985**

Following a port-of-call visit to Haifa by the US Sixth Fleet in 1978, the Israeli Navy replaced their enlisted man’s dark blue beret with the white ‘Popeye’ hat. In order to avoid a totally American look, a gold metal naval badge was added. Although the target of jokes by the other branches of the IDF, the sailors wearing the ‘Popeye’ hat feel a sense of pride in their unique appearance. This missile boat crewman, unlucky enough to pull base guard duty, wears the ‘old style’ khaki canvas pistol belt with one ammunition pouch and a canteen pouch. The M-1 helmet is painted over in royal blue with a white stripe and the Hebrew letters SHIN and GIMEL for soldiers guarding the base’s main gate. The rank of rabat (corporal) is identified by two gold cloth stripes on a black cloth base (all services in the IDF use the same ranking system). The ot satlan Missile Boat badge is worn with a close-cut navy blue background on the left breast. The profession tag indicates fire-control officer skill level 7. The M-16 is the standard weapon among shore-based naval troops, but an UZI 9mm submachine gun might also be carried.

**H3: Staff sergeant, Navy, 1983**

This instructor at the Naval Training Base, BAHAD HEYEL HAYAM, wears the white dress version of the female Class ‘A’ uniform, with navy blue Class ‘A’ sweater. The black female beret has white piping and is worn with the naval beret badge. The rank of samelet rishon (female staff sergeant) is indicated by the three gold cloth stripes with a gold leaf in the centre. Note the way the red lanyard is worn connected to a small missile boat badge. Many of the instructors in the Navy, as well as in other branches in TZAHAL, are women, thereby freeing more men for combat assignments.

**I1: Master sergeant, Air Force, January 1985**

This female NCO wears the khaki Class ‘A’ blouse and slacks; the Navy and Air Force retained the khakis for their female personnel when the army adopted green, and in 1985 the khaki Class ‘A’ uniform was being reintroduced to all services. The black shoes are called naalei golda, a reference to Prime Minister Golda Meir, as a comment on the shoe’s lack of feminine appeal. The blue female parka differs from the male variant in that it has no slots in the hood for headphones, and has outer plastic closures. The white Air Force cloth rank insignia for rasal (master sergeant) is worn on both sleeves. The blue-grey female Air Force beret is worn with the silver Air Force beret badge.

**I2: Sergeant, Air Force, 1985**

This samal (sergeant) in a nun mem (anti-aircraft) unit wears the khaki Class ‘A’ uniform with Class ‘A’ navy blue sweater, common to both services. His blue-grey beret is worn with a red background (indicating combat status) for the silver metal Air Force beret badge. The unit tag is that of the Air Defense Command, and encompasses all anti-aircraft units from ‘Hawk’ SAM batteries to Vulcan units. The white cloth sergeant’s stripes have a dark blue cloth base. The blue-grey waistbelt and black combat boots are all standard items. The gilion SAR has an added forward pistol grip.

**I3: Navigator, Air Force, 1983**

The kours tayis (pilot course) is the most selective course for which an IDF man may hope to be accepted; it is also the most difficult to pass. The course lasts two years, and pilot candidates have been known to be disqualified only hours before the ‘wings’ passing-out ceremony. Those deemed unacceptable as pilots but who have gone through most of the course and are still determined to be ‘Air Force material’ usually become navigators. This navigator at his ‘wings’ ceremony wears the dress uniform only worn by Air Force officers and NCOs. This consists of a light blue shirt and blue-grey trousers, identical in style to the Class ‘A’ uniform. All those graduating as pilots or navigators are commissioned with the rank of second lieutenant—sagam—and as a result the Air Force officer’s peaked cap is worn, as well as the blue-grey shoulder strap rank slides with one silver metal bar. The silver thread navigator’s wings are worn above the left breast pocket, and below them, the Lebanon campaign ribbon: a soldier does not have to take part in the actual fighting to be allowed by regulations to wear a campaign ribbon, but must be
in service at least two months prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Above the right breast pocket, parachutist wings are worn with a blue background.

**J2: Colonel, Intelligence Corps, 1983**

This aluf mishne (colonel) in the hyle mokeyin (Intelligence Corps) wears the olive Class ‘A’ uniform; the green-khaki general service beret worn by all non-combat support units bears the Intelligence beret badge worn without a red background. The rank of colonel is indicated by the three leaves worn with red backgrounds on a green slide. The officer’s qualification pin is worn on the left collar. Paratroop wings with a blue background (most senior officers in the IDF are parachutist-qualified) are worn here, as are the 1956, 1967, 1973 and Lebanon ribbons. The Armoured Corps badge is worn on the left breast pocket (many senior officers take command courses in different branches), and the Field Security Intelligence badge is worn on the right pocket. A Beretta 9mm automatic is worn tucked into the back of the olive officer’s waistbelt. An issue black attaché case is carried, as are large field maps.

**J3: Senior master sergeant, Military Police, 1983**

The rank of rasar (master sergeant) is described by many in the IDF as ‘the maximum task for minimum minds’. Master sergeants do not lead men in combat, except in the Naval Commandos, Frogmen and Aeromedical Evacuation Unit; and do not conduct training, except for those in technical capacities where the highest attainable rank within one’s field is master sergeant. In most cases, they supervise work at a level considered below that requiring the attention of an officer. Most rasars are career soldiers, remaining in military service for many years, basically as an escape from the economic pressures of civilian life. Many are Israelis from the Arab diaspora, who see a career in the army as their only possible route to success. Those remaining in service as NCOs for many years receive the rank of rasar, the highest NCO rank in IDF service. This senior master
The Mishtera Tzva'i (Military Police) wears the olive Class ‘A’ uniform and ‘old style’ officer’s peaked cap with Military Police cap badge: this peaked cap is now peculiar to NCOs and officers in the Military Police. The profession tag, white lanyard, and blue brassard with white Hebrew lettering are all typical of military policemen. The rank of Rasab is indicated by a brass badge and laurel spray on a red background worn on a brown leather watchband. The white waist belt and Webley revolver holster are worn only by MPs.

K1: Combat engineer; Sidon, July 1982
This bomb disposal expert wears the infantry ballistic helmet with tan rubber retaining band and tan netting. The flak vest (heavily personalised by the soldier’s graffiti) is the standard body armour worn by all IDF forces. It is made of Kevlar, as are the protective shoulder, waist, groin and leg pads. This protective outfit, adopted in the early 1980s, is worn by all combat engineer and Israeli Police bomb disposal units. Protective goggles are also worn, as is the standard fatigue uniform underneath the armour. The Gilion SAR (with two magazines taped together) is supported by a khaki canvas sling. Note the mine detector carried on a collar harness.

K2: Master sergeant, Combat Engineers, 1985
Until the late 1970s the Combat Engineers wore the green-khaki general service beret; light grey was then adopted to mark this branch’s well-deserved status as an elite combat organisation. This NCO wears the Combat Engineers’ badge with a red background. The sweater is an ex-PLO ‘Pakistani’-type ‘woolly pully’, worn with the Combat Engineers’ unit tag on the left shoulder, and the cloth ranking of master sergeant on each sleeve. Each star underneath the rank insignia itself indicates five years’ service in one’s NCO rank. The black and yellow lanyard is worn only by the Rasab Mishmat (US equivalent, provost marshal)—the NCO responsible for base discipline and the soldiers’ proper military appearance.

K3: Combat engineer, 1984
This member of an Awach (NBC warfare) squad wears the special NBC protective smock: made of a light rubberised compound, this is highly resistant to chemical agent penetration. The protective pants (a copy of the three-pocket fatigue trousers) are also made of this material. The gas mask is the Israel-manufactured Type 15A1 with Type 80 filter, produced by Shalon Chemical Industries. The hands are protected by dark green rubber gloves, and the boots by dark green covers. A Galil Arm is carried, as is (hidden here) an M-72 LAW 66mm anti-tank rocket, both on khaki canvas slings.

L1: Bedouin tracker; Jordan Valley, 1980
Although the Bedouin Arabs living in Israel are full Israeli citizens, they are not required by the national service laws to serve in the IDF. Many Bedouins choose to volunteer for service in Tzahal, however, many become scouts and trackers. Because of their tracking skills, these gashashim or tracker units have achieved elite status within the IDF. These units patrol the borders of Israel—mainly the Lebanese and Jordanian borders, the most vulnerable to terrorist infiltration. Most of the Palestinian terrorists caught crossing the border have been apprehended by this type of troops; PLO
terrorists prefer being caught by Jewish IDF soldiers, as their Arab ‘brethren’ tend to treat them more harshly—the desert Bedouin nurture a longstanding contempt for the urban Palestinians. This Bedouin...wears the Kova raful field hat, and a kefiyah worn as a scarf. The webbing equipment is worn over an ex-American M-65 field jacket with black Tsahal stencil over the left breast pocket. The khaki canvas Na'alei Kommando are worn here, but black combat boots are also typical. The M-16, favourite weapon of the Ghashashim, has been fitted with an American-made AN/PVS-2 starlight ‘scope for night vision.

L2: Sergeant, Border Guards, 1983
Although a section of the Israeli National Police, the Mishmar Hagvul (Border Guard) serves in an active and aggressive security rôle with the IDF. They are responsible for securing all ports of entry into Israel, Israel’s international borders, territories under military command and occupation (such as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), and civilian areas in Israel sensitive to terrorist attack. They are also responsible for the security of some government offices. Service in the Border Guard is considered as
fulfillment of the national service requirement; and most recruits are drawn from Druze Arabs—who are full Israeli citizens—and from Israelis from the Arab diaspora who are fluent in Arabic. Their Class ‘A’ uniform is a variant of the khaki Air Force and Navy Class ‘A’ dress. A dark green beret is worn, with the silver Israeli National Police badge. The British-style chevrons are peculiar to the Police, in white on black (NB Errata—chevrons should be shown on right arm only). A green lanyard is worn by all Border Guard personnel with their Class ‘A’ uniform, as is the Border Guard unit shoulder tag. Note the Lebanon campaign ribbon, indicating service at the time of that conflict. The weapon is the CAR-15; this and M-16 are the main weapons issued to Border Guards. Note Israeli-produced 30-round black plastic magazine.

L3: Border Guard; Hebron, 1980
This Border Guard on riot duty in the West Bank city of Hebron carries a plexi-glass riot shield and a rubber club painted white. His uniform is the standard winter field dress, consisting of fatigue shirt and trousers, field sweater and winter parka. The helmet is the Israeli copy of the M-1, with tan netting and black rubber retaining band. Of note is the Romanian AKM whose tell-tale wooden forward pistol grip is obscured here; many of these rifles were captured from PLO terrorists over the years, and many are re-issued to Border Guard units.

Notes sur les planches en couleur
B1 Casque de fabrication israélienne et gilet pare-balles Kevlar, hevresac à grenades, fusil GALIL ARM, genouillères; pantalons américains. B2 Uniforme et casque ordinaire; parachute principal automatique EFA 672-12 (IS); parachute manuel de secours T-16-5 (IS) sur la poitrine, tout le petit équipement et mitrailleuse GALIL SAR, portés dans le sac d'ordonnance. B3 Tenue blanche de deux pièces isolé porté sur l'uniforme et bottes de neige HERMONOT. Lourd chargement de munitions, de munitions et lance-roquettes LAW 66mm dans sac d'ordonnance à revêtement blanc; fusil de tirailleuse M-21.
C1 Cartouchière et casque ancien modèle; notez les bottes de combat noires renforcées ELBA de cette unité et sa radio préférée AK-47 d'origine yougoslave. Radio AN/PRC-25 dans sac à dos. C2 Gilet pare-balles Kevlar avec poches incorporées, de fabrication israélienne; pull-over en laine pris sur les stocks de l'OLP; bottes de neige; casquette de campagne nouveau modèle, surnommée "ROVARAFU"; Fusil GALIL SAR et lance-grenades M203 combinés. C3 Cette unité se bat souvent dans des véhicules blindés—Notez les pantalons immuables. Notez sur la tenue de combat, le grade est marqué au poignet sur les épaulettes. Le fusil GALIL AR possède un poignard de pistolet ajoutés à l'avant. Notez le revêtement de casque en tissu de l'OLP.

Farbtafeln

Border Guard policemen photographed during an inspection in August 1986. They wear the khaki Class 'A' uniform, dark green beret with silver National Police badge, and Border Guard unit tag fitted—as are all IDF tags—to the end of the left shoulder strap. The khaki web pistol belt supports the scabbard for the M-16 bayonet, hidden at this angle. Cf. Plate Lz for further colour details. (IGPO)
D1 Grande tenue spéciale de parachutiste avec chemise à quatre poches, béret noir particulier de cette unité (maintenant débâché). Insignes "ailes" de parachutiste fond noir, la tête de requin dans le coin supérieur droit de la poche.  

D2 Cette combinaison de chemise et de pantalon est particulière à cette unité, ainsi que le béret brun; cet éléve d'un cours de formation porte aussi un ecusson sur fond bleu et des passants d'épaulières bleues. 

D3 Insigne pour l'unité d'un unité de soutien de parachutistes sur l'épaule gauche.

E1 Tenue camouflée de style palestinien était portée pour imiter les gardes du corps de l'Idd Amine à Ennab. Les fusils AK-47 étaient très utilisés par les troupes de cette unité.

F1 Salopette non inflammable Armor; nouvelle cartouchière de port confortable à l'intérieur des chars; gilet pare-balles Kevlar; casque dernier modèle; fusil GILION; notes les gaz et les sifflets de l'application sur la salopette. 

F2 Casque de type fédéral des États-Unis; mousqueton et équipement de précaution; une bandole de ses poches est un chariot à roulettes de l'épaulière de la parka bleue permet de reconnaître un officier de l'armée de l'air.

F3 Gilet de sauvetage "allemand", chantal blanc, marine, pantalonkab bequims, chaussettes noires et un casque. 

G1 Uniforme kaki de classe 'A' de l'armée de l'air, casquette d'officier, galons de grade de lieutenant-colonel, 'ailes' de pilote, 'ailes' de parachutiste et rubans des campagnes de 1939 et 1942; broche de service opérationnel de la poche droite, broche de qualification d'officier sur le col gauche, ecusson de l'armée de l'air sur l'épaule gauche.

G2 Béret de parachutiste avec insignes de Quartier Général. Uniforme de classe 'A' et galons de grade; 'ailes' de parachutiste sur fond rouge indiquant expériences de combat. (pour aut & défilé de Mita, 1948; "ailes" de pilote de chars sur fond de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G3 Grande tenue blanche de la marine, casquette d'officier, galons de grade de chef d'escadre, 'ailes' de commando de la marine sur fond rouge de combat; rubans de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G4 Galons de grade sur-sous-blau; 'ailes' de commando de la marine sur fond rouge de combat; rubans de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G5 Uniforme kaki de classe 'A' de l'armée de l'air, casquette d'officier, galons de grade de second lieutenant sur les épaulières.

G6 L'insigne sur fond blanc et les aiguillettes d'épaule permettent de reconnaître un officier d'aviation. 

G7 Béret vert introduit pour les ingénieurs de combat à la fin des années 1970. Chaque équipe située sous les galons de grade indiquent cinq ans de service dans les forces de 1975. Ecusson de grade de nombreux officiers supérieur. Rubans des cours de d'autres armes de service; la broche du service des renseignements est sur la poche droite. 

J1 Grade le plus élevé des sous-officiers indiqué par le galon de poignet; ce style moins modeste, artillerie des forces de la police militaire, comme les paires de uniforme blanc, aiguillettes, ceinturon, etc.


K3 Costume de combat nucléaire, biologique et chimique de fabrication israélienne.

La Trumpeter bédouin volontaire portant un petit équipement mélangeant les vieux modèles américains et les nouveaux modèles israéliens, avec M-16 muni de vuevis. C'est une poignée de plastique noir avec des anses de cuir sur les coins de l'épaule de l'air et de la marine, avec béret vert spécial, insignie de la police; ecusson d'épaule et aiguillettes vertes, galons de rang de style britannique, également réservé à ce service. Notes CAR-15 avec magasin en plastique noir de fabrication française. AKM roumaines pris à l'OLP.

D1 Spéciale Fallschirmjäger-Ausgeschütz mit Hend mit vier Tassen; da schwarzte Barrett war ein Kennzeichen dieser inzwischen aufgelösten Einheit. Da in der Flugelabzeichen der ausgebildeten Fallschirmjäger und Aufklärungskompagnien durcheinander, um die Aufklärungseinheit, Einsatzdienstabzeichen auf der Tasche. Abzeichen des Souther Command auf der linken Schulter; Abzeichen für die Flugelabzeichen auf der rechten Schulter; Rangabzeichen auf beiden Ärmeln. 

E1 Tenue camouflée de style palestinien était portée pour imiter les gardes du corps de l'Idd Amine à Ennab. Les fusils AK-47 étaient très utilisés par les troupes de cette unité. 

E2 Tenue de vol K-28 de style américain et casque SPH-43 avec notes galons de grade inverses sur les épaulières, pour sécurité sur le terrain. 

E3 Arme comprend le pistolet Beretta, couteau de survie et GILION S&AR. 

F1 Feuilleste Nouvelle Uniforme; neuf Gurkha pour bequime situer. 

F2 Casque de type fédéral des États-Unis; mousqueton et équipement de précaution; une bandole de ses poches est un chariot à roulettes de l'épaulière de la parka bleue permet de reconnaître un officier de l'armée de l'air.

F3 Gilet de sauvetage "allemand", chantal blanc, marine, pantalonkab bequims, chaussettes noires et un casque. 

G1 Uniforme kaki de classe 'A' de l'armée de l'air, casquette d'officier, galons de grade de lieutenant-colonel, 'ailes' de pilote, 'ailes' de parachutiste et rubans des campagnes de 1939 et 1942; broche de service opérationnel sur la poche droite, broche de qualification d'officier sur le col gauche, ecusson de l'armée de l'air sur l'épaule gauche. 

G2 Béret de parachutiste avec insignes de Quartier Général. Uniforme de classe 'A' et galons de grade; 'ailes' de parachutiste sur fond rouge indiquant expériences de combat. (pour aut & défilé de Mita, 1948; "ailes" de pilote de chars sur fond de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G3 Grande tenue blanche de la marine, casquette d'officier, galons de grade or-sur-sous-blau; 'ailes' de commando de la marine sur fond rouge de combat; rubans de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G4 Galons de grade sur-sous-blau; 'ailes' de commando de la marine sur fond rouge de combat; rubans de mérite d'ÉTABLISSEMENTS de 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944 et 1945.

G5 Uniforme kaki de classe 'A' de l'armée de l'air, casquette d'officier, galons de grade de second lieutenant sur les épaulières.

J1 L'insigne sur fond blanc et les aiguillettes d'épaule permettent de reconnaître un officier d'aviation. 


J3 Grade le plus élevé des sous-officiers indiqué par le galon de poignet; ce style moins modeste, artillerie des forces de la police militaire, comme les paires de uniforme blanc, aiguillettes, ceinturon, etc.