



Educator's Guide

Lone Soldiers of the IDF

The lone soldier, or *chayal boded* in Hebrew, is unique to the IDF and to Israel. What motivates young men and women from all over the world to volunteer for military service so far from their homes? And why are some local Israeli recruits also Lone Soldiers? Explore the connection that draws young Jews from around the world to Israel every year to voluntarily join the IDF and find out how Israelis have been supporting these soldiers dating back to Israel's War of Independence in 1948. After watching the video, use the prompts below to learn more and get your students thinking.

[Link to video](#)

Further Learning

1. [Garin Tzabar](#)
2. Unpacked, ["IDF's Top 10 Units"](#)
3. Unpacked, ["Women in the IDF"](#)
4. Lone Soldier Center, ["Who are Lone Soldiers?"](#)
5. The Forward, ["Lone Soldier"](#)
6. Haaretz, ["After Haaretz Investigation Into Lone Soldier Suicides, Israeli Army Opens New Support Center"](#)

Review Questions

1. How do you say lone soldiers in Hebrew?
 - a. Chayalim Bashetach
 - b. Jobnik
 - c. **Chayalim Bodedim**
 - d. Kravi
2. Around what percentage of active IDF soldiers are lone soldiers?
 - a. 1%
 - b. **4%**
 - c. 20%
 - d. 50%
3. True or false? The IDF is the military with the highest percentage of lone soldiers.



- a. True
 - b. False
4. In Israel's War of Independence, how many different countries did the over 3000 volunteers come from to serve in the IDF?
- a. 10
 - b. 56
 - c. 25
 - d. 40
5. Which three countries do the majority of lone soldiers come from?
- a. **USA, Canada, Russia**
 - b. USA, Russia, Argentina
 - c. Russia, South Africa, England
 - d. Russia, France, Australia

Discussion Questions

1. For what reasons do you think young Jews volunteer as lone soldiers in the IDF? Do you identify with any of these reasons?
2. Are you surprised that the IDF has more lone soldiers (per capita) serving in its ranks than any other country? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think some lone soldiers face more mental health challenges than non-lone soldiers in the IDF?
4. Lone soldiers are assigned host families who serve as their Israeli family during their service and afterwards as well. Why do you think thousands of Israeli families open their homes and hearts to young Jews they have never met before?

Learning Activities

1. Watch one of our other videos about the IDF and utilize the accompanying educational resources:
 - o [Beneath the Helmet](#) (80 min)
 - o [Top 10 Units of the IDF](#)
 - o [Women in the IDF](#)
2. Launched in 1991, [Garin Tzabar](#) is a program that supports young Jews (aged 18-24) from around the world who make aliyah and serve as lone soldiers in the IDF. Over 5000 young Jews have participated in the program and have served in



over 40 different units in the military. Along with supporting lone soldiers before and during their service, Garin Tzabar aims to provide structure and support for the absorption of lone soldiers within Israeli society. Read this [article](#) by Julia Spiegel, a participant in the program. After reading the article, what is your impression of IDF service as a lone soldier?

3. [Max Steinberg](#), a young Jew from Los Angeles served as a lone soldier in the IDF and was killed in battle during Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014. Max's parents were shocked at his [funeral](#) when 30,000 Israelis (who didn't personally know him) showed up to pay their respects. Watch this [video](#) tribute to Max Steinberg and discuss the following questions:
 - What do you make of Max's parents' reaction to the large crowd at the funeral?
 - Why do you think 30,000 Israelis showed up to Max's funeral even though they didn't personally know him? What does this teach us about Israeli society?
4. Give your students our [Kahoot](#) on Lone Soldiers of the IDF!