

**The Friends of the Israel Defense Forces  
Maryland Chapter  
IMPACT Mission to Israel**

Depart from Baltimore Thursday morning, November 4, 2010  
Return to Baltimore Saturday morning, November 13, 2010

**Thursday, Nov 4**

Leave Baltimore Thursday morning and travel together to departure point for international flight (or you can arrange your own air to Israel and can meet us at Ben Gurion or the hotel in Jerusalem)

**Friday, Nov 5**

**WELCOME TO THE “CITY OF GOLD”**  
**Jerusalem – The Eternal Capital of the Jewish People**

Arrive in the morning at Ben Gurion Airport and meet our guide.

Israeli tour guides are phenomenal: highly capable with strong English skills. They are professionals. To be a tour guide requires years of study and licensure. It seems that they know just about everything. And if you can stump them then they will get the answer.

Take our bus for the one-hour ride to Jerusalem and drop off luggage at the hotel.

Rendezvous with our guide in the hotel lobby and walk to the Old City.

The Old City is the walled area within the modern city of Jerusalem. The Old City is divided into four uneven quarters: Jewish, Christian, Armenian and Muslim. The Old City was home to the Second Temple within its confines is the Kotel (Western Wall), the most holy place to Judaism. From the Crusades to the fall of the Ottomans, builders of the current walls, approximately 700 years, the Old City was in Muslim hands. The British relinquished control in 1948, the Old City fell under Jordanian occupation. In 1967, during the Six Day War, the Old City was finally brought under Jewish control. Since then there has been genuine religious tolerance.

Lunch at an Arab Restaurant in the Old City.

As an alternative, you are free to enjoy the afternoon separately or meet family and friends.

In the afternoon return to hotel to freshen up for the evening or stay in Old City to celebrate the coming of Shabbat in the plaza in front of the Kotel.

Evening Shabbat dinner with special guest.

## **Overnight in Jerusalem**

### **Saturday, Nov 6**

#### **SHABBAT ALTERNATIVES**

Breakfast at the hotel. (The universal Israeli hotel breakfast is a huge buffet spread of fresh foods: eggs, fish, fruits, vegetables, salads, breads, and drinks.)

Daytime options (visit one of the following):

1. Tour Masada and float in the Dead Sea.

Masada is the site of ancient palaces and fortifications built by Herod southeast of Jerusalem on the top of an isolated rock plateau on the eastern edge of the Judean desert overlooking the Dead Sea. Several years after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD Jewish zealots could no longer fight off the siege and ramp of the Roman Legions and choose mass suicide preferring death to surrender.

2. Hike Ein Gedi and float in the Dead Sea.

Ein Gedi is a national park with two spring-fed streams with flowing water year-round located north of Masada and west of the Dead Sea. The park is a natural sanctuary for many types of plant, bird and animal species. The juxtaposition between the waterfalls and vegetation surrounded by the stark Judean desert is startling. A local guide will take us on a 3-4 hour hike above the falls.

3. Tour Land of Milk and Honey wineries and cheese makers around Jerusalem

Evening dinner in Jerusalem

Enjoy the night light show spectacular at the Tower of David.

The show is a 45-minute light display using the walls of the Old City as a backdrop. Twenty projectors tell the tale of the history of Jerusalem from the time of King David, to the Romans, Muhammad, the Crusaders and Suleiman the Magnificent.

## **Overnight in Jerusalem**

### **Sunday, Nov 7**

## FROM SURVIVAL TO EXCELLENCE

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning options (visit one of the following):

1. Yad Vashem.

Israel's official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust established in 1953 by the Knesset, Israel's parliament. "Yad" means hand and "Shem" means name. Located in western Jerusalem, at the foot of Mount Herzl, the 45-acre complex contains the Holocaust History Museum, memorial sites, sculptures, archives and libraries. Non-Jews who saved Jews during the Holocaust, at great personal risk, are honored in the "Righteous Among the Nations" exhibit.

2. Mount Herzl.

The hilltop and national cemetery in western Jerusalem named for Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism. Herzl's tomb lies on the top of the hill. Major Israeli political leaders are buried there including Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and Levi Eshkol. Some of Israel's war dead are also buried here. An interactive museum about Herzl is located on the grounds.

3. Ammunition Hill.

The hill was a military post in Jordanian controlled East Jerusalem and the site of one of the fiercest battles of the Six Day War in 1967. The goal of the battle was nothing less than the re-taking of the Old City, a 2,000 year-old Jewish dream. The crossover point from Jewish West Jerusalem was Ammunition Hill where the Paratroopers encountered fierce resistance from the Arab Legion, including hand-to-hand combat, in a network of bunkers and trenches.

During the day we travel on the bus the Galilee (in the north).

In the afternoon we will probably visit an Air Force Base, Ramat David. We will meet pilots and take a look at their planes and facilities.

The Israel Air Force (IAF) rules the skies of the Middle East. This domination became apparent during the Six Day War in 1967 when the IAF destroyed the majority of the air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on the ground. Since then the IAF has completed other famous missions including the destruction of nuclear reactors in Iraq and Syria. In dogfights, the IAF's kill ratio is better than twenty

to one. During Operation Cast Lead in 2009 the IAF used pinpoint targeting to minimize civilian losses.

Depart to the hotel.

Evening dinner with a special guest.

**Overnight in Kibbutz hotel in the north.**

**Monday, Nov 8**

**The Northern Frontier**  
**Protecting with Dignity**

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning visit the IDF base known as Shraga on the border with Lebanon to meet the Golani Brigade soldiers facing down Hezbollah. Instructors will give us a presentation on the Brigade including force protection and weapons systems. Later participate in the inauguration ceremony of the Shraga Sport Hall. Lunch to follow.

Formed in 1948, the Golani Brigade is a famed infantry unit. It consists of three battalions and two commando units. The brigade specializes in combat in armored vehicles. Golani secures Israel's northern border with Lebanon and carries out security missions across Israel. Golani troops wear brown berets; this affirms their bond with the land. The first Golani soldiers came from agricultural settlements in the Galilee.

In the afternoon, if time allows, we will visit the old city of Acco.

Acco is an ancient seaport in the north of Israel across the bay from Haifa, Israel's modern port. In its day, the Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, and Napoleon have ruled Acco. The city features seawalls, a famous mosque, and a citadel that served as a prison and execution chamber for Jewish prisoners held by the British.

Evening dinner with Lone Soldiers.

A lone soldier in the IDF (or Chayal Boded) is a soldier who does not have immediate family in Israel. They often are Jewish men from 18-24 years of age who have a passion about Israel and want to contribute by serving in the Army. They number in the thousands and come from almost every country including the former Soviet republics, Argentina, Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States. In gratitude of their sacrifice, Lone Soldiers often receive special dispensation.

**Overnight in Kibbutz hotel in the north.**

## **Tuesday, Nov 9**

### **Man and Machine** **The technological and human capabilities of the IDF**

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning drive up the Golan Heights to the observation post overlooking Syria on Mt. Bental (bring your binoculars). Later in the day visit the soldiers and inspect the tanks of the 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade. Officers will provide an overview of the brigade's mission and we will lunch with the soldiers.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade is the IDF's mainstay battle tank unit. Given the necessity of tanks in the modern battlefield and to avoid dependency on foreign suppliers Israel has developed its own tank, the Merkava (in Hebrew, Chariot), now proven to be among the most advanced tanks in the world. The 7<sup>th</sup> was the first armored brigade established in 1948 and stopped a Syrian armored onslaught in the October War, 1973.

After lunch drive west to the coast, south of Haifa, to Atlit, the base of Shayetet 13 and meet the commandos of Israel's Navy Seals.

This elite force conducts special operations, covert operations across enemy lines, and counter-terror operations. New recruits undergo lengthy training of some 20 months. The unit combines naval and infantry skills, advanced warfare capabilities on land, sea and from the air, guerilla and counter-terror warfare, parachuting, and combat raid capability.

Evening dinner in Tel Aviv.

Overnight in Tel Aviv.

## **Wednesday, Nov 10**

### **ISRAEL'S COURAGEOUS SOUTHERN DEFENSE** **DEFENDING ISRAEL FROM TERROR BASED IN THE GAZA STRIP**

Breakfast at the hotel: the usually great Israeli buffet but this time overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

In the morning drive south to the border with Gaza

1. Visit Re'im, the new HQ of the Southern Command. Receive a briefing by intelligence and operations officers on the current threats from Hamas, just a couple miles to the west.

2. Drive closer to the border and meet with infantry soldiers at an outpost at the fence with Gaza. Peer into Gaza to see first-hand the IDF's challenges in protecting Israeli civilians in the southern part of the country.
3. Lunch with soldiers and officers at their base.
4. Take a short drive to the IDF's Ashkelon Rest and Recreation Center that hosts combat soldiers for Spirit Week, weeklong R&R. (Spirit Week adopted by the FIDF's Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Florida and Maryland chapters.)

Evening Dinner in Tel Aviv with Special Guest

## **Overnight in Tel Aviv**

### **Thursday, Nov 11**

#### **FIDF IMPACT for the Soldiers**

Breakfast at the Hotel

The daytime options:

1. Visit Beith Lid, HQ for the Paratroopers Brigade including the inauguration ceremony of the new Sports Center.

The paratroopers have continuously been a major combat force in the IDF and they play a central role in Israel's security and battle against terror. Formed in 1948 as a strike force, today's paratroopers proudly carry on the legendary bravery and daring of the paratroopers of old. The brigade consists of three battalions and an elite force, comprising a commando, demolition, anti-tank unit, and communications units. The paratroopers wear maroon berets and boots.

2. Visit the new automobile showroom of Better Place, the home of the transportation system of the future.

Shai Agassi, a successful Israeli entrepreneur, founded Better Place ("Make the World a Better Place," to be the world's leading electric vehicle (EV) services provider, catalyzing the transition to sustainable transportation by delivering services to enable confident adoption and use of EVs. Better Place will build and operate the infrastructure for battery operated EV transportation systems. Pilot projects are planned for Israel and a number of other places.

Dinner with IMPACT students.

After dinner we go to the City Hall Auditorium in Tel Aviv for the Ninth Annual IMPACT! Ceremony. Along with other dignitaries including the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff, the guests enjoy an ever-changing lively show.

The IMPACT Scholarship Program was created in order to grant full, four-year academic scholarships to deserving soldiers who have served in combat units and come from low social-economic backgrounds. Since the program was established in 2002, over 1,400 IMPACT scholarship recipients have graduated from more than 80 colleges, universities, and other academic institutions in Israel. Unlike the US where college can cost \$50,000, tuition in Israel is a mere \$4,000 per year. There are currently over 3,400 students and graduates in Israel who are members of the IMPACT family.

## **Overnight in Tel-Aviv**

### **Friday, Nov 12**

### **A NATION REBORN**

Breakfast at the hotel.

The morning options are:

1. Visit the Palmach Museum.

The Palmach (or “Strike Force”) was a military unit formed to protect Jewish settlements before the creation of the State. The interactive museum, opened in 2000, is dedicated to the Plamach. It is an underground in a series of multi-media experiences starting with the memorial for a fallen soldier.

2. Take a city tour of Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv has developed an interesting skyline with lots of exciting architecture. We will take a look at the Azrieli Center, matching skyscrapers designed in the shape of a rectangle, circle and triangle with a mall at the base, the Diamond District, the Hotel District, the Kiriya (Israel’s version of the Pentagon), and Rothchild Boulevard and Dizengoff Street, two of Tel Aviv’s top retail areas.

The afternoon is free to explore Tel Aviv or catch a few rays on the beach.

Early evening special Shabbat farewell dinner.

Notes:

1. If you would like to extend your stay, let us know.
2. The itinerary is subject to change based on IDF activities and availability of locations and presenters/hosts.