

Come to Israel and Volunteer !



Volunteer with Sar-El ...

Sar-El Canada (Sometimes known as Canadian Volunteers for Israel) is the representative, in Canada, of the Sar-El program in Israel. Sar-El, the National Project for Volunteers for Israel, founded in 1982, is represented in some 30 countries world-wide

To be eligible for the programme you must be:

- a supporter of Israel
- **at least 17 years old**; (16 with a parent or guardian - exceptions may be possible)
- medically fit, able to walk a mile or so, carry your luggage up a couple of flights of stairs, and stand at work

Sar-El Canada (Canadian Volunteers for Israel), and Sar-El, reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to accept or not to accept any applicant.

<http://www.sarelcanada.org/who-we-are>

We're In The Army Now ...



Gail & Bernie Estrin, Editors of the Canada Jewish Pipeline recently visited Israel and volunteered with Sar-El program. These are our adventures ...



The women and men have separate sleeping quarters and we were assigned to our rooms.

Gail had two roommates and Bernie had three.

The rooms were spartan, with four bunk beds, but very clean. Each bunk had two blankets, a sheet, pillow and a towel.

We were told this was a "luxurious" base as many didn't have pillows, sheets or towels.

We unpacked our belongings and stored them in a locker and hung our jackets on nails on the side.



We went for a long nap and had leisure time until dinner at 6:30 pm. Dinner was light - hard boiled eggs, salads, cheese, bread and yogurt.

The main meal of the day on the base is lunch.

1st Week in the IDF ...

HELLO SAR-EL!

W

e took a shuttle to Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv and met up with Sar-El group at 9:00 am

There were about 60 volunteers and we were sorted and sent to three different army bases in the South. We were assigned to the one in the middle south.



Every group was assigned to a "madricha".

Our madrichim were a cute French girl, Salome, all of 22, and her 19 year old assistant, Anna. Our group had thirteen volunteers: 5 women and 8 men.

We boarded a comfortable army bus and enjoyed the relaxing hour and a half ride to our base somewhere in the middle of the Negev Desert.



After dinner we had "an activity" at 7 pm in our "club-house". We each received a Sar-el t-shirt, hat, sleeping mask and earplugs. Then our "Madricha" explained the rules of the base and our work schedule. It was close to 9:00 by the time finished and fell into an exhausted sleep.

Volunteer Army Life ...



2nd Day - Monday:



Up at 7:00 am with breakfast at 8:00 am.

Flag raising is at 8:30 every morning in the parade square. We tucked in our army shirts, formed nice even rows, raised the flag, and sang "Hatikvah".

Today was very special ... we got our Sar-El "Israeli Army ribbons" put on our shoulder epaulets by our "madrichim".

Everyone clapped and cheered as each person was inducted.

Now on to work! We toured the facility by foot. We are stationed on a supply base. As we went by each "hangar" two of us were assigned a job and went in to work. Bernie and I were assigned to sorting tools, wrenches and ratchets. We had sort, clean and bag them.

This first day was to just sort about 30 different shapes and sizes from

a giant bin. We really needed our bifocals to make sure we didn't mess up!



We had a great coffee break and danced with some civilian women who were also working with us. They

had a radio that played Israeli music. What a great way to relax for few minutes!

We went back to the mess hall for a large pasta lunch, nap and back to work. We finished the day at 4:30 pm.



Then had a shower, dinner and an "activity" in our clubhouse.

We introduced ourselves to each other, and found out about the lives of our "madricha's". Next, we learned about the different colors of our berets of the Israeli army. Then off to bed!



3rd Day - Tuesday:

A repeat of yesterday ... but this time we "cleaned" our sorted tools with oil and a rag. Very time consuming, as we had to clean every crevice. Pretty rewarding after they are all sorted,

shiny & clean!

Activity tonight was a "bingo game" after we learned Hebrew numbers and some Hebrew. It was a lot fun! We also found out that the "girls" has arranged for us to go off-base for dinner & a movie at a near-by mall. Really looking forward to that!



4th Day - Wednesday:

Finally, we bagged and labelled our tools ... it took all day, but we are done!

We had bomb shelter drill today. The shelter was a round reinforced concrete "tube" behind the warehouse. We were there for 15 minutes until they sounded the "all clear".

After work we went off base, and enjoyed pizza and falafel for dinner. Six of us watched "Beauty & the Beast" ... in English with Hebrew subtitles.

Volunteer Army Life ...



4th Day - Wednesday:



Today, we finally, we bagged and labelled our tools ... it took all day, but we are done!

We also had a fire drill today and had to go to the bomb shelter, which was a round reinforced concrete "tube" behind the warehouse. We were there for 15 minutes until they sounded the "all clear".



We went off base, and enjoyed pizza and falafel for dinner. Six of us watched "Beauty & the Beast" ... in English with Hebrew subtitles.

A great evening! We get to go to Tel Aviv tomorrow morning for a long weekend tomorrow and return Sunday.

5th Day - Thursday ... Tel Aviv:

Bernie found us a B&B until Sunday am. We walked around King George Street, saw the shuks, shops, stopped for a falafel and saw the Dizengoff mall. We scouted out a kosher place to pick up dinner for Shabbat tomorrow. Then back to base on Sunday.



OUR 2nd WEEK IN THE ARMY ...

A New Job!

This week they had us working on a different job in the back of Warehouse 1, in the shade, good thing as it hit between 30 & 34 C this week.



We were unpacking and sorting various things like small tripods, old parts from tanks and other stuff, many for recycling.

This is where we meet every morning and then we have breakfast in the dining hall.



Every morning after breakfast, we have flag raising, salute the flag and sing "Hatikvah".

Bernie had a special honour to raise the flag ...



SAR-EL Army Life ... WEEK 2

On Tuesday, we had a special treat. Our madrikhas took us into the town of "Beer Sheba" for a tour and lunch!



We saw the Allenby Park and enjoyed a "shawarma" ... yummy!

Then we toured the shuk and back to work!

On Wednesday morning we had to clean, clean, clean our rooms for Pesach! This took all morning and we had an inspection. We all did a very good job!



After lunch, we had a special speech from the

base Commander, where we all "graduated" from the IDF. Each of us was presented with a special laminated "diploma"

with our group photo on it and a big "thank-you", along with a very cool keychain.

Short work weeks here on base., but so full of activities! We have a clubhouse where we meet every evening to discuss our work-day, have a little fun and learn some very important details about army life. Pictured below, we are learning Hebrew. We used Mike & Bernie to demonstrate parts of the body with "stickies".



SAR-EL Army Life ... WEEK 2

On Thursday morning we said "good-bye" to our base and drove to Tel Aviv.

Here Sar-El treated us to an incredible tour of the "Palmach Museum".



We said "good-bye" to our sweet "madrikha's" and headed to the Tel Aviv train station.

The five of us; Stewart, Howard, Sylvia and us, took the train to Jerusalem together. We saw a different, majestic view of the mountain range and valleys, as we twisted and snaked through tiny mountain passes on our way to Jerusalem.

Thank you SAR-EL for the wonderful opportunity!



If you get the chance to take the train between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem— the experience is unforgettable!

If you live in the Edmonton area and would like to volunteer with SAR-EL , feel free to contact Bernie & Gail Estrin, the reps for Edmonton.