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San Diego Jewish World

THERE IS A JEWISH STORY EVERYWHERE

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Group donates winter packages to Druze unit

Posted on 04 December 2014.



Members of 299th Brigade with warm winter packages

JERUSALEM (Press Release)–The nonprofit soldier support organization [Yashar LaChaval](#) (Straight to the Soldier) recently distributed 100 warm winter packages to new recruits of the 299th Battalion. This battalion is part of the IDF Minorities Unit, an [Arabic](#)-speaking unit of the [Israel Defense Forces](#) is made up of Druze soldiers.

Today, 85 percent of Israel's male Druze population chooses to join the Israeli military. Druze soldiers have been serving in the army since the 1950s. Rasan Alian, the Golani Brigade's first Druze commander, was seriously wounded during Operation Protective Edge in combat and returned to his soldiers after only a short recovery.

In an emotional ceremony on November 28, the soldiers each received a fleece jacket, thermal shirt, gloves, hat and neck warmer.

Leon Blankrot, Yashar LaChaval's Executive Director, said: "Yashar LaChaval has supported the 299th Battalion for over seven years, and feels very strongly about showing our gratitude for their dedication to the State of Israel". Recently their training base was relocated from the Nachal training base in the Negev to the Golani training base in the Galilee, making it easier for the Druze soldiers to get home in the north. Yashar LaChaval planned the ceremony at the new base to show appreciation to these brave soldiers for their service.


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The Master Sergeant of the Golani training base, who is also from the Druze community, said, "We very much appreciate what you have given to the IDF over the years, to the Golani Brigade in particular, and especially now to the Druze Battalion. Yashar LaChayal is well known to the IDF, and I can attest to the tremendous support we received from them for the past eight years."

Founded at the height of the Second Lebanon War, Yashar LaChayal was a small group of volunteers who collected and transported them directly to the soldiers on the front. When the war ended, the needs did not. Today Yashar LaChayal is an organization that provides support and assistance to combat soldiers throughout Israel. It offers support to injured soldiers, assisting lone soldiers and help them throughout their service and provide much needed supplies such as food, clothing, and more. Yashar LaChayal has provided tens of thousands of soldiers with goods, support and assistance since 2006.

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Preceding provided by Yashar LaChayal

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