



**THE ANNA SOBOL LEVY FELLOWSHIP
2005-2006**



*Left to Right: Bryceson Tenold, Lillian McTernan, Christopher Hallett, Minda Lee Arrow
Left to Right: Shira Kieval, Maya Kroitoru, Relly Davidovici, Amanda Staly*

The ASL Fellows



Bryceson Tenold lives in Spokane, Washington and graduated cum laude from Pepperdine University with a degree in International Business. He is an Eagle Scout, a National Ski Patroller, and a Fulbright finalist. While at Hebrew University this past year he studied Modern Hebrew, Archaeology, and Counterterrorism, and he interned at the laboratory of the Hebrew University Archaeology Department. He is a commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps and will begin active duty in August of 2006.



Christopher Hallett participated in the ASL program before continuing his officer training in the U.S. Army, military intelligence. He graduated from Davidson College, where he received a BA in political science and his lieutenant's commission. While in Israel, Hallett studied Middle Eastern politics, focusing especially on improving his Arabic in the classroom and in the old city, where he lived second semester. Hallett attended St. George's Anglican Cathedral. He traveled across Israel, parts of the West Bank, Jordan, and Egypt, also spending two days in Damascus, Syria in August 2005. After completing Rothberg's summer advanced Arabic course, he will return to his home in Carmel, IN before reporting to Fort Sill, OK. Hallett and his fiancée Lindley Swartz will be married next summer.



Minda Lee Arrow is finishing the first year of the master's program in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She holds a cum laude degree in Politics with a concentration in the Near East from Princeton University. After graduating from Princeton, Minda worked at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. She is looking forward to spending the summer of 2006 taking intensive Arabic at the University and working at Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Minda is from Brooklyn, New York.



Shira Kieval grew up in Seattle, Washington and graduated from Harvard University in 2004 with a combined degree in History & Literature and Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations. After graduation she worked in the Washington, DC office of Congressman John Tierney (MA-06) and volunteered at the Whiteman-Walker Clinic. Shira's coursework this year included the study of Bedouin customary law and the development and modern application of the Shari'a. Next year she will be an Alexander Hamilton Fellow at Columbia Law School, where she hopes to focus part of her studies on American Indian law and refugee law. Shira enjoys cooking and considers it her major accomplishment of the year to have provided hungry Americans with a Thanksgiving dinner replete with NFL football and a 7-kilo turkey.



Lillian McTernan, a 2003 honors graduate of Franklin and Marshall College (Lancaster, PA), came to Israel as part of her plans to pursue a career in Middle East security policy. Having worked in the Homeland Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., she was eager to combine her growing knowledge of security with a stronger foundation in Middle East regional politics. Knowing that she could hardly call herself an aspiring Middle East expert without spending time in the Middle East, she arrived in August 2005 and has since traveled to Jordan and Egypt in addition to exploring Israel. She will be earning her M.A. in international security at the University of Denver beginning in the fall of 2006, and has promised herself that she'll return to Israel as often as possible in the coming years.



Amanda D. Staly resides in Taylors, South Carolina and is a graduate of North Greenville University. Amanda graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in history and American studies. In 2005, Miss Staly began her M.A studies at the Hebrew University and is currently pursuing a degree in Israeli Society and Politics with an emphasis on Israeli military history. Miss Staly has sought to enhance her experience of living abroad by traveling and participating in volunteer work. Miss Staly is an avid martial artist and continues her training while in Israel by participating in Korean martial arts classes. After she finishes her M.A degree, Miss Staly plans to return to the United States and enter the United States Army and Officer Candidate School.



Maya Kroitoru received her B.A. magna cum laude in International Affairs and Economics from the University of Colorado at Boulder where she founded and led the pro-Israel student movement and served as Hillel's Grinspoon Intern. During college, she worked for the America Israel Political Affairs Committee's Foreign Policy Issues Department. After participating in a summer program in Middle Eastern History and Politics at Tel Aviv University, Maya completed MARVA, an IDF training course, and volunteered on Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael for five months. Under the auspices of the National Security Education Program, Maya studied Jewish History in Prague and spent the following semester in an intensive Arabic immersion program in Morocco. This past year, in a tutorial with Dr. Moshe Maoz, Maya has been researching the state of minorities in the Middle East and is focusing her work on Iraq. Maya Kroitoru is currently finishing an M.A. in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and works as a research assistant.

The ASL Coordinator



Relly A. Davidovici got released from the army in July 2005, after eight years of service in different commanding and instructing positions. She took part in the 2001 IDF military academy, there received her cum laude degree, in History and General Studies (management, law and security) from the Hebrew University. Captain in reserve, in charge of a knowledge and training center with a consulting firm, this is her first year as the ASL Coordinator. Relly is now pursuing her MBA at the business school of the Hebrew University, raising a husband (Amir), and trying to decide what she wishes to be when she grows up...

September 2005: The Security Fence

During the second *intifada*, Jerusalem was hit by a wave of suicide bombings, one of which occurred at Hebrew University. In its campaign against the suicide bombings – which were, on many occasions, almost weekly events – Israel began building a long, contiguous fence to separate itself from the Palestinian territories, and to reduce the number of suicide bombers coming into Israel.



The security fence between Beit-Lehem and Gilo



The Fellows with Rafi, IDF officer, at the edge of Gilo neighborhood

This, like all major policy decisions, was highly controversial. During our visit to the security fence, we were presented with two equally challenging and enlightening points of view: our morning started with a tour led by a representative from the Geneva Initiative,¹ an alliance of non-governmental organizations that "educate and campaign, both locally and internationally, that it is in the best interest of Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate directly in order to reach a realistic, dignified, and sustainable two-state solution on which both peoples can build a brighter future, as is embodied in the model Geneva Accord."

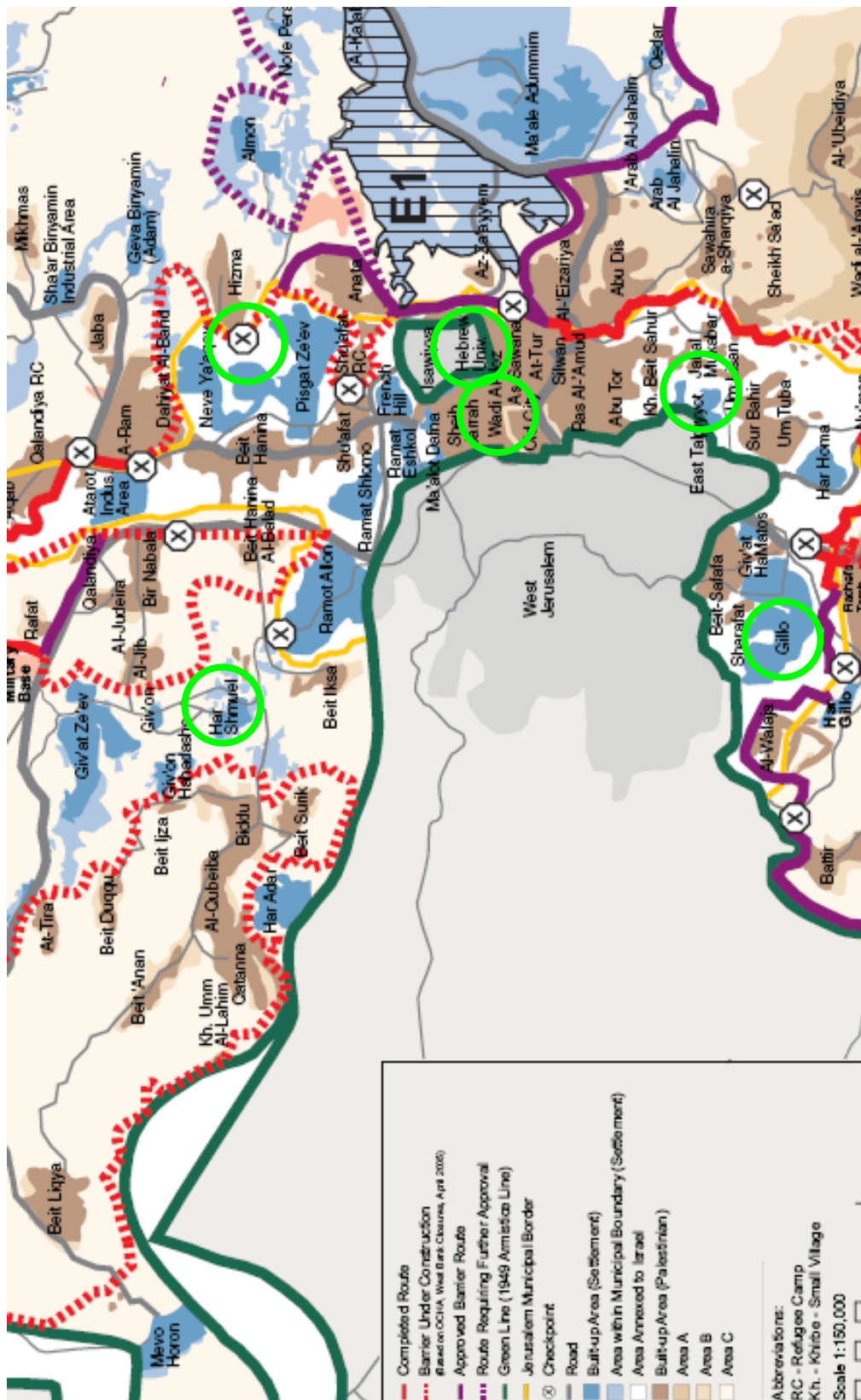
Our representative emphasized the humanitarian problems that the fence has caused, and made the case that the fence's construction will create more problems than it will solve.

Later in the day, we met with a spokesman from the IDF, who made a convincing argument for the fence in the name of security: Israel cannot stop suicide attacks based solely on intelligence and the intuition of bystanders who notice someone suspicious, and the fence is, undoubtedly, serving its purpose.

The issue of the security fence is deeply complex and profoundly loaded. It forces one to think about the importance of both safety and humanity, and to ask how each can be maintained without undermining the other. Hopefully these questions will be answered someday, but the issues presented by the wall will likely be Israel's biggest challenge in the years to come.

¹ <http://www.geneva-accord.org/HomePage/Background.aspx?docID=327&FolderID=20&lang=en>

The Map of the First Tour - Security Fence, 16 Sept. 2005



October 2005: The Negev and the Bedouin Tribes

On October 10, we went on our first trip outside of Jerusalem. We began the day in the embroidery showroom of the Laqia Women's Association, located in one of the seven official Bedouin villages in the Negev Desert. Our second stop was at an army base in Beer Sheva, the biggest city in the Negev. After meeting with several officers in the IDF who work with the Negev Bedouin, we headed back to Jerusalem, to Givat HaTahmoshet (Ammunition Hill), where we watched the new Tzanhanim (Paratroopers) receive the red berets that they earned by completing a grueling 90 kilometer trek.

We spent the first half of the day learning about the Bedouin ("nomadic" Arabs) in Israel and their relationship to the state, the army, modernization and feminism. There are over 160,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Negev, almost all of whom are partly or fully sedentary. This number is growing at an astounding 8% per year. Approximately half of the Bedouin live in seven planned towns near Beer Sheva, including Laqia. The seven villages are located in what was a military enclosure from 1948 until 1966.

In Laqia, we met with one of the founders of the Women's Association, who described her attempts to empower the women in the rigidly patriarchal Bedouin society. The Association began when she and her girlfriends arranged to continue their education on their own when, at age 14 or 15, their parents would not allow them to leave the village for school. Then the group began offering daycare services and lessons to women who had moved from tents to modern houses about how to adjust their cooking and cleaning methods, including how to prepare many meals at once and refrigerate them for later. The group hopes that by teaching the women how to finish all of their housework and still have time left for their husbands, the husbands will not have an excuse to take additional wives, which, although illegal in Israel, still often happens. Ultimately, the Women's Association founded Desert Embroidery, a cottage industry of sorts that allows women in the village to earn money at home through traditional embroidery, with the requirement that they attend a Women's Association class each month before payday. Despite death threats from opponents of their agenda and arson in their showroom, the organization is still expanding, recently having opened the first Bedouin library in the Negev, a bookmobile that goes from village to village, catering especially to girls.

From Laqia, we traveled southwest to Beer Sheva, to learn about the different types of interactions between the IDF and the Bedouin. Although they are not drafted, several dozen Bedouin join the IDF each year, and they are known for their extraordinary tracking capabilities. Aside from recruiting, the officers we spoke to said that their most important job was keeping a fundamentalist Muslim group from having too much influence in the seven villages – often a losing battle. They also teach in the Bedouin schools, trying to show the Bedouin that the IDF is a friendly face there to work for them.

At our last stop of the day, we watched 18 year olds – who could barely stand after hiking for over 24 hours in full gear – receive the red berets that they are so well known for. The Tzanhanim, who were critical to Israel's capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, are an elite fighting unit that men must volunteer to fight in. The top recruits received the berets of their commanding officers, with their parents in the audience and cameras flashing.

November 2005: Tel HaShomer

On November 30, 2005 the ASL Fellows were introduced to the IDF system of military recruitment and induction while touring several military installations within the Tel Aviv area.

But before getting to the recruitment center we stopped at the Israel Defense Forces History Museum in Tel-Aviv. The museum is situated on the old railway station in Yaffo. With the help of films, maps, photos, historical documents and other exhibits it presents the history of Israel Army (IDF) from the first days of the state up to our days. The Fellows learned many details from the different wars Israel has been through, emphasizing the tactical points of view (arms & weapons) and enjoyed a magnificent tanks and armored vehicles exhibition.



Amanda, Lillian, Minda, Shira, Chris and Relly inside an armored vehicle that was used on the road to Jerusalem before the Independence War



Amanda, Lillian and Chris enjoying the Tanks (especially Lillian)

Tel Ha-Shomer – the center of recruitment: The process of recruitment and induction provides the core developmental tools necessary to make the complicated Israeli concept of a "people's army" actually work at appropriate levels of both recruit satisfaction and bureaucratic productivity.

The Fellows were excited to trace the path of every qualified Israeli high school graduate by touring the IDF recruitment exhibition. The exhibition allows young Israelis to get a taste of those military categories that might best suite their own interests and talents. The exhibition concept is somewhat new to the Israeli system of recruitment and is based on the ideal goal of creating a positive military experience for young Israelis who will in turn pass on these affirmative attitudes and experiences to future generations.

As part of the exhibition tour, the Fellows viewed promotional videos for the various branches of military service and listened to various presentations given by IDF recruiters. The exhibition displays 18 different service paths, but time would allow the Fellows to visit only the following recruitment displays: the Border Police, the Paratrooper Corps, the Navy, the Communication Corps, and the Weapons Corps. These recruitment presentations provided semi-comprehensive but fascinating information on various facets within the IDF and showed the directional diversity available to new recruits.



Chris, Lillian, Minda, Amanda and Bryceson in front of a D-9, at the Combat Engineering Booth



Chris, Bryceson, Minda, Lillian and Shira in the Military Police Booth

The Fellows then followed the path of the new recruit to the next major stage of military orientation. The Tel ha-Shomer military base is the location of the IDF's induction center where Israelis begin the transformation process from citizen to soldier at the most standard levels prior to the boot camp experience. The Fellows toured each station within this process including various departments such as dental records, finger printing, DNA sampling, dog tag and ID card distribution, along with some of the more personal aspects such as the military "hair cut" for men and the distribution of basic military gear, clothing, and supplies. Thanks to Relly, our team leader and IDF liaison, the Fellows were delighted to receive their own set of authentic IDF dog tags personalized with each of their names spelled in Hebrew. For a few, this was definitely the highlight of the year!!

After eating a nice lunch in the IDF officer's mess hall, the Fellows concluded their tour that evening by viewing the newly released film *Paradise Now* at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque. This 2005 film, a creation of Warner Independent Pictures and directed by Hany Abu-Assad, deals with the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the perspective of two childhood friends from the West Bank city of Nablus. This film deals with issues of poverty, suicide bombing, and the conflicting "solutions" that currently exist regarding this conflict. The film not only provided thought provoking analysis but served as highly relevant to the issues that are often discussed and explored as part of the ASL program.

This field trip provided the ASL Fellows with a wealth of experiences and information and proved both entertaining and educational. If one conclusion may be made regarding the IDF recruitment and enlistment centers it is that the Israeli military has made tremendous organizational strides in the past few years. The IDF is incredibly unique to the rest of the world in its deeply seated societal roles and its incorporation of men, women, immigrants, natives, the educated, the non-educated, etc. The recruitment and induction centers were an excellent means by which to see the initial elements of this complex system actually demonstrated.

December 2005 : Nativ, Latrun and Abu-Gosh



Bryceson trying his best with a Shabbat Song, with two Nativ soldiers

In December, ASL visited a program unique to the Israel Defense Force, at its headquarters on a Jewish Agency campus in Jerusalem. This program, called Nativ, allows IDF soldiers to convert to Judaism under the auspices of the IDF rabbinate. Founded after a healthy number of Russian immigrants requested to take their oath of allegiance to the IDF on a New Testament, the program brings together both immigrants and native Israelis who do not qualify as Jewish under the traditional definition of being a child of a Jewish mother. After learning about the program from one of its instructors, the

ASL Fellows joined a group of soldiers in order to study Jewish texts about the upcoming holiday of Chanukah. This gave us an opportunity to meet the soldier/students most of whom were just a year or two younger than us and to hear their stories about why they had chosen to participate in the program and in several cases, to hear their stories of immigrating to Israel.

Following the activity with the Nativ soldiers we left Jerusalem and traveled to Latrun, the site of the memorial to soldiers of the tank corp. There a soldier on active duty took us on a tour of the tanks that the IDF has used throughout its history and then brought us inside the ancient fortress to view the memorial to the members of the tank brigade who have fallen. One especially impressive part of the tour was an interactive computer program in which you could learn about the life story and see pictures of every soldier.



We next took advantage of Latrun's proximity to the Arab village of Abu Ghosh to travel there for a late lunch. Filling ourselves up on pita, hummus, falafel, and all varieties of salads, we practiced our Arabic and discussed our reaction to the day's activities.

The Army Can Make You Jewish, If You Will It

by Amiram Bareket

HAARETZ, 23 Nov. 2005

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=648758>

A.G. came to Israel from the Ukraine five years ago and served in the Israel Defense Forces as an infantry instructor. She decided to convert to Judaism during her military service because she says she understood her future was in Israel. "I had considered it in school but the little I heard about it was all negative. They said it takes three years, and they terrorize you and look to see what food you have in the fridge."

A.G., who heard about the IDF conversion program from another soldier who had been through it, called the course "a very positive experience."



One of the participants in the army conversion course. (Tomer Applebaum / BauBau)

G.D., a friend of A.G. who also took the course, was given time off from her job as a radar operator on the Philadelphia route at the height of the disengagement to attend classes. "My sister went through conversion outside the army and it was a lot harder," G.D. says. "In the army you can study, and you don't have to worry all the time about making a living. It makes it possible to study and understand much better."

The extent of conversions among immigrant soldiers is dozens of times greater than the rate of "state" conversions among all immigrants.

The army says the secret of its success is its friendly approach to conversion and that, as opposed to civilian courses, it does not require the family of the convert to change its life-style and become Orthodox.

The state conversion system counters that its process is a much deeper one, and the conversion rate in the IDF is due to elements that have nothing to do with the conversion itself.

Some 5,000 non-Jewish soldiers are currently serving in the IDF. Almost half are taking part in courses in Judaism and Zionism. The head of the IDF Manpower branch, Major General Elazar Stern, says that beginning next year, 20 percent of all immigrant soldiers will convert every year. In comparison, outside the army only about half a percent of immigrants convert each year.

Stern, who is regarded as the "father" of the immigrant-soldier conversion project, says he decided on this goal after a conversation he had with an education officer at one of the large basic training bases, who told him that she had ordered 600 New Testaments for non-Jewish soldiers who had asked to swear allegiance on them at their graduation ceremony instead of the Hebrew Bible.

Stern says he has two reasons for involving the army in conversions. "On the personal level, if there are soldiers who want to be Jewish, I must make it possible for them to do so. On the national level, conversion is a social problem, and the IDF can help solve it. If regret anything, it's that I didn't think of this sooner."

The program was received coolly by the General Staff during its first year, according to Stern. But he said the attitude changed when the generals visited a conversion course where "they were moved to tears." Stern says the chief military chaplain's suspicions were allayed after an arrangement was reached by which soldiers converted before a rabbinic court "lent" to the army for this purpose.

Conversion in the IDF now begins before induction, when the army approaches non-Jewish future soldiers and informs them of the possibility of conversion during their service. The preliminary course, in Judaism and Zionism, which is held in the framework of the Jewish Studies Institute, established by the state to prepare candidates for conversion, lasts seven weeks; about one-fifth of its participants are Jewish immigrant soldiers. At the next stage, interested soldiers are offered two intensive two-week seminars, at the end of which candidates appear before a rabbinic court for conversion. The entire process, with one-month breaks, takes six months, the minimum amount of time a civilian conversion takes.

The army, however, says the main difference between the two processes is the army's attitude to the conversion candidate. Nowhere is it written that conversion must apply to a convert's family, Stern says. "Our process is friendly, especially since from our point of view candidates have already passed the main test by the very fact that they enlisted and are willing to give their life for the Jewish people."

Galila Yakobs, coordinator of soldiers' conversion seminars in the Jewish Studies Institute, says the program involves experiential learning, including trips to significant places like Masada and Yad Vashem. Yakobs says there's nothing

wrong with the fact that many soldiers sign up for the course because it is considered fun. "The 50 percent of soldiers who decide to convert at the end of the process wouldn't be here to start with if the courses were not interesting. In addition, the fact that our instructors are soldiers reassures participants that they won't have to become ultra-Orthodox."

However, Rabbi Moshe Klein, head of the conversion process in the Prime Minister's Office, says the success of the IDF conversion process has nothing to do with the difference between the two processes. "First of all, we are full partners in the military conversions and welcome their success. But the main reason is that the military system has major objective advantages. There is a synagogue and a kosher kitchen at hand. There is a supportive framework and an environment that encourages conversion at the expense of military service. On the other hand, the lengthier civilian process allows the candidate to internalize the process better."

Klein says the conversion system had tried to organize conversion classes in workplaces on the IDF model, but had encountered opposition on the part of the workers. "The problem was they were afraid those around them would discover they were not Jewish."

A.G. said only those closest to her know she is converting. "In the army nobody knows I'm not Jewish. When people ask me why I eat kosher and don't go out on Friday night, I tell them I decided to become newly religious."

The idea of the tour was based on the article, and it also represents most of the things we heard at Nativ, from the company commander that welcomed us there. –Relly

January 2006: Daliat El-Carmel & Havat HaShomer

Heading north at the beginning of January, the ASL Fellows visited the Druze village of Daliyat el-Carmel and the IDF training facility of Havat haShomer. Both sites represent less-visible variations on common themes in Israeli society – the local Arab population and the IDF. In Daliyat el-Carmel, a local author explained the situation of the Druze in Israel today. Religiously, they belong to a sect of Ismaili Shi'a Islam whose exact beliefs are hidden even from much of their own population. Politically, they remain patriotic citizens of the state of Israel, having served in many of its wars with distinction. Socially the Druze live in relative isolation, generally marrying only within their villages on Mount Carmel near Haifa. Druze in the Golan Heights are more ambiguous about their attitudes toward Israel, in keeping with the ambiguous international status of the territory on which they live. The ASL Fellows talked with local residents, visited the town's military museum, and walked along the popular main souq street.

From Daliyat el-Carmel the group moved to Havat haShomer. Here the IDF operates an extended basic training course for conscripts with mental or emotional problems. The initial appearance of capricious disorder across the base belied a systematic and steadfast commitment of the staff to improve the prospects of their soldiers, many of whom came to Havat haShomer from broken families or criminal backgrounds. The ASL group dined in the mess hall, attended a presentation from a current officer at the base, and sat down to a conversation with two trainees who had just completed the course. The Americans learned of the life-long benefits Havat haShomer provides to citizens who otherwise would have very limited chances. Coming from a country with a professional army, the IDF's maintenance of a such a base – which by the admission of its own personnel gives no direct military benefit to the IDF – reminded the group of the uniquely tight relationship between Army and society in Israel.



The ASL group in a military dining hall



The gorgeous 2005-2006 ASL group, at the gate of Havat HaShomer

January 2006 (#2): Neve Shalom and the Western Wall Tunnels

On January 26 the ASL Fellows traveled to Neve Shalom, a Jewish-Arab village between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that attempts to create a peaceful environment for these two groups to cohabitate and work together. The name of the village means "Oasis of Peace" and is the only place in Israel that has fostered such an environment successfully. Children are educated together in Hebrew and Arabic, and the village is run by a democratically elected government of residents. The Fellows met with the current mayor of the town (the position changes annually) who explained the concept of the town and discussed many of his experiences for several hours. He covered a variety of subjects, from the history of the town, to the governing structure, to problems within the town, and spoke quite highly of the founder of the camp.

Following this the Fellows toured the village and were able to observe a kindergarten classroom. Arab and Jewish children worked together, speaking Hebrew and Arabic like their teachers. The tour also led them to beautiful hilltops and to the recently opened house prayer where anyone of any faith could to talk their god.

The second part of the day's tour took place at the Western Wall Tunnels. This tour took the group along the center section of the Temple Mount platform until the path ran into bedrock. The group had a chance to understand some of the Jewish history as well as witness men praying at the small synagogue in the middle of the tour. The tour guide renewed the Fellows' knowledge of Solomon's Temple and Herrod's Temple, not to mention the history of Jerusalem and Jewish history.



The Fellows waiting for Neve-Shalom mayor



The Fellows inside the tunnels



March 2006: Neot Kdumim

Neot Kedumim — the Biblical Landscape Reserve in Israel, halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, is a unique endeavor to re-create the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail. Far more than a "garden" showing various biblical plants, Neot Kedumim embodies the panorama and power of the landscapes that helped shape the values of the Bible and provided a rich vocabulary for expressing them. In the past years, Neot Kdumim built a program of out-doors training, some leadership activities to improve those skills for both individuals and groups.

We started the day with a nice breakfast and than some exercises with the hoops. We all held hands in a circle, and Chris and Amanda were holding the hoop. Without letting go of the hands, we all had to go through the hoop...definitely acrobatic skills were shown there, some high legs flexibility, and of course we proved ourselves over and over again that with right planning, we can do it a little faster each time...

While taking a walk in the reserve, we heard from Doron, our guide for the day, about the initiative and the history of the reserve, and how they won the Israel prize in 1994.

And now got to our first serious mission, the cistern – four people with their eyes covered are holding four tips of ropes tied to a hook. They have four guides that are supposed to tell them to lift or to let go of the rope. There is a leader to the mission, he's supposed to open with the hook the cistern, then to take the bucket and let it down the cistern, and bringing it up with water, only he can't touch the rope or speak... so Lillian showed us all how to communicate with the four guides through other means of communication... and in this case a picture is worth 1000 words:



Then we went shepherding and learned why all the leaders in the bible had to learn their leading skills while herding goats and sheep – the group had to bring a bunch of stubborn goats and sheep to the starting point, and then lead them from one target point to another. We must say that the principle of leading the goats first (and than the sheep will follow) was learned very quickly, and also the job division was very clear – while Bryceson, Chris and Minda were leading, Maya, Lillian and

Amanda were dealing with those behind, getting out some of the strangest noises we got to hear...

And, before finishing with a great lunch, we did our last mission, "the seesaw," that lead to a very interesting discussion about balance in our life, between the different missions we have or choose to do. But nothing was as nice as hearing from Doron that we were the best group he guided, that with a little planning and while holding hands, managed to do the mission the fastest he ever saw.



The Fellows doing a great job on the seesaw

April 2006: Begin Center and Our Relationship with the Bessermans

Throughout the year, Judy and Lawrence (Larry) Besserman have had the Fellows over to their house on the French Hill (near the University). Larry and Captain Levy developed the ASL program together, and Larry still likes to keep an eye on us, to see how we are doing, and to help the program grow. This April, after hosting a Shabbat dinner, a meal in their sukkah, and lunch at the faculty club, the Bessermans planned a small trip for us, to the Menahem Begin Center, one of many "interactive" museums of Israeli history, followed by a barbeque lunch.

The Begin Center is located between the German Colony and the Old City in Jerusalem, and the museum there is a testimony to the life and career of Menahem Begin. A Revisionist from Eastern Europe, Begin was a member of the Irgun Tzevai Leumi, the National Military Organization, known in English as the Irgun and in Hebrew by the acronym Etzel. The museum leads you from Begin's involvement in the 1946 blowing-up of the King David Hotel, the seat of British rule in Palestine, to a showdown with the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, on the arms-ship the *Altalena*, in 1948. You walk through his leadership of the opposition for several decades until 1977, when he rallied enough right wing and Sepharadi support to become Prime Minister. And you learn about his loss of control during the Lebanon War (1982) that eventually led him to retire from politics and go into seclusion for the rest of his life.



Dinner at the Bassermans, Shira is missing but we have Amir, the subject of so many discussions about married life, "how to get along with your mother in law," the life of a combat officer, etc...

May 2006: Hertzl Museum, Military Cemetery, BBC and the City of David

On May 15 the ASL Fellows began their tour of Jerusalem sites with the Herzl Museum. This museum presented the life of Zionism's modern political founder using a creative blend of video and artifacts to connect the modern Israeli with this important leader. Following this, the Fellows visited Hertzl's grave and discussed present-day views of Zionism within the Jewish community, most notably whether it is possible to live a meaningful Jewish life outside of Israel.

Before leaving Mount Herzl, the Fellows walked through Har haMenuchot, one of the military cemeteries in Israel, and visited the graves of Golda Meir, Yitzak Rabin, and others.



One of the many similar gravestones in the military cemetery, with all the characteristics discussed in the tour



With Jo Floto at the BBC headquarters

The tour continued to the BBC bureau in Jerusalem where the Fellows learned about BBC's view of Israel, the Middle East, and reporting styles, among other things. They asked many challenging questions and were able to visit the filming room.

Lastly, the group went to the City of David to see the oldest ruins of Jerusalem. This was the highlight of the day for at least one of the Fellows, and it was even better since the recent discovery of a structure matching the description of King David's palace was on proper display for the public. The City of David was the core of Jerusalem for over a thousand years before the Roman destruction in 135CE, and remains dating from 4000CE have also been found, all of which make this place very important to Israel and to world historians. Most people come to the City of David to walk through Hezekiah's Tunnel, a 533.10 meter tunnel that meanders through solid rock to transport water from the Spring of Gihon to a pool which formerly lay inside the walls of Jerusalem. King Hezekiah built this structure to protect the city from the imminent Assyrian invasion, and because of it Jerusalem was able to withstand the 18 month siege of Sennacherib. The Fellows ventured through the tunnel without flashlights and had a delightful time wading through knee-deep water.

All in all it was a well-spent day examining Jerusalem's history, modern leaders, and current struggles.

Inside the Tunnel:



May 2006 (#2): Palmach Museum, Neveh Sha'anani & Jaffa

May 26 dawned sunny and gorgeous, as it often does here, and the ASL Fellows were off for a tour around Tel Aviv. We started out at the Palmach Museum, where we learned about Israel's first elite striking force, as well as the brave young soldiers whose hard work and sacrifices led to the formation of the IDF (Amanda and Lillian were particularly happy to see that women had active roles in the Palmach, and occasionally even saw combat). We were impressed by the innovative presentation and creativity that clearly went into designing the museum, which engages the visitor in the story of six Palmach fighters as they begin their journey, and follows them through the War of Independence.

We then went to Neveh Sha'anani, a section of Tel Aviv known for being home to thousands of migrant workers from the Philippines, Thailand, and other parts of Asia. Immigration and migrant workers have become major issues in Israeli politics and society during the last decade; after having heard people talk about this issue (and knowing that our own country is enmeshed in a debate about immigration), seeing the area in which the migrant workers live and work gave us a new level of understanding.

After Neveh Sha'anani, we visited Jaffa and went on a walking tour narrated by Remy as she read from a book by Shifra Horen, a famous Israeli author who writes short stories set in notable places around Israel. We enjoyed beautiful views of Tel Aviv, and soon found ourselves in the idyllic streets of old Jaffa. After a beautiful walk, it was time for a crucial Israeli experience: Dr. Shakshuka. Shakshuka, a traditional Middle Eastern food made from sunny-side up eggs, tomato puree, and spices, is a favorite dish in Israel. However, nobody makes it better than Dr. Shakshuka. We stuffed ourselves, and happily piled back into the van for the drive home. With all of us slipping into food comas, it might be the quietest our normally boisterous group has ever been.



June 2006: Ramat HaGolan (two-day trip)

For the final trip of the year, the Anna Sobol Levy Fellows embarked on a two-day northern adventure filled with both intensive historical and physical exercises. The tour began with a visit to Zikhron Yakov a beautiful town nestled between the Mediterranean Sea and striking Carmel Mountains located just between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Zikhron Yakov is one of the five settlements established in the First *Aliyah* in 1881. Baron Rothschild, the most significant supporter of the Zionist movement and Jewish settlement in Israel during the 19th century, soon became the patron of this new settlement and helped inspire its winery, the first in Israel. Our first stop in Zikhron Yakov was the Museum of the First *Aliyah*. This museum documents the plight of the first pioneers in Israel, highlighting the number of ideological, religious and practical issues they battled. What made one of the greatest impressions on the Fellows was the semi-feudalistic land tenure system that plagued the first pioneers and inhibited them from fully completing their ideological and economic goals. The Fellows could also not help but be a bit annoyed by the overtly cheesy Zionist movie clips that brought to life the story of the Biluim, the first settlers that came from Russia following a set of pogroms. Following the tour of the museum, the Fellows had the opportunity to explore the old section of Zikhron Yakov on their own and make their own discoveries about the city by following its architecture, synagogues and of course - ice cream parlors.

Our next stop – Moshav Nahalal, a small agricultural co-op community established in 1921 in the western Jezreel valley by veteran pioneers of the Second *Aliyah* and designed by a German architect trained in the Bauhaus technique. This moshav was famous not only for its circular shape, but also for housing an illegal weapons cache (*sleek*) during the British Mandate period. Through this tour we learned about the risk, hardship and ingenuity involved in designing and maintaining the storage facility. We also received a more personal perspective on the families and the people of the moshav and their contributions to the Zionist movement and to the State of Israel. One of the more enchanting and rather unexpected stories we learned about was how Israeli farms obtained a special type of date tree found in Iraq that could best survive in the Israeli climate.



Having completely saturated the cow scent and personal tales of Moshav Nahalal, the ASL Fellows traveled all the way north to the Golan Heights. There they were accompanied by a reserve soldier from the IDF Spokesperson Office, who provided us with a powerful 1967 and 1973 war tour. What was most impressive was the perspective garnered on the geo-strategic value of the region and water issues involved in the maneuverings. From a personal perspective, it was hard to imagine the how the residents of the kibbutzim on the pre-1967 borders with Syria could stand to live indoors and in bomb shelters most of the time in order to avoid the constant attacks by the Syrian army posted just above their heads.



Just before going up to the Rama, with Captain Ron



Standing in front of Har Bental, where the heroic battle commanded by Kahalani took place, at the beginning of '73 war



Bravely bearing the Golan winds



Night discussions at Field School Hermon, where we spent the night

The following day the Fellows had the opportunity to exercise their physical capacities during a beautiful land and water hike through Nahal Yehudiyah in the Golan Heights. This hike taught the Fellows not only how to water seal their lunches and digital cameras, but also what it means to work as a team and survive in the hot climate just as the early pioneers did. Hiking in Israel is a tradition laced by the symbolic connection of Jews to *Eretz Israel*, the land of Israel. It is meant to establish an active connection between the people and the land and to provide a greater appreciation for the diverse landscapes found in such a small area. The Fellows certainly obtained this type of appreciation and were able to return to Jerusalem fully satisfied, having obtained a fuller perspective on the experience of first settlers.



Bryceson, Minda, Lillian and Chris at one of the waterfalls



Chris and Lillian climbing down some rocks

