

A Report from Israel's Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Shimon Romach

Unsung Heroes of last War with Lebanon: The Firefighters of the North and Ziv Hospital

continued from last week's issue, 1017: "Jewish Federation and Israeli Community Special Reception" The report from Israel's fire and rescue commissioner Shimon Romach and Dr. Oscar M. Embon, director of Ziv hospital.

By Ari Bussel

The Firefighters of the North (foif.org)

The Kiryat Shmona Fire Station is headquarters for the Upper Galilee, an area of 733 square miles. 1,780 katyusha rockets hit Upper Galilee and 1,072 katyusha rockets hit Kiryat Shmona and surrounding area, in the second Lebanon war. As a result of these attacks, 2,500 acres of forest and 5,000 acres of fields and parkland were burned.

In a letter, Israel's Fire and Rescue Commissioner Shimon Romach, expressed his appreciation to the generous donation which will "significantly improve Israel's ability to respond promptly to any emergency situation, and will help the firefighters to continue to provide a vital service to all residents of the area."

Commissioner Romach stated:

"As you know, Kiryat Shmona was badly hit during the war last summer, when hundreds of katyusha rockets fired by Hiz-

bullah from Lebanon did terrible damage to the city and the surrounding area. The firefighters worked day and night under highly dangerous conditions to save and protect life and property during this very difficult time. It is one of our top priorities to upgrade the control room of Kiryat Shmona, in order to be prepared for all challenges and dangers.

On behalf of Friends of Israel Firefighters, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for putting Friends of Israel Firefighters on the agenda. It is quite an accomplishment to get such cooperation between all the Israeli groups and the Federation, and this in itself is important. The results were highly impressive and the funds raised will provide an important contribution to the Fire Station of Kiryat Shmona. Furthermore, putting us on the agenda of the Federation is highly significant and I hope this will lead to continued cooperation with LA and other Federations.

Kol Hakavod!"

Ziv Hospital (ziv.org.il)

Galia Dhari, who chaired the C.I.C. Fundraising Committee, accepted the check on behalf of Ziv Hospital. Galia read a letter from Dr. Oscar M. Embon, director of Ziv Hospital. In the letter, Dr. Embon gave some background how the donation toward equipment for the operating room plays a part in the hospital's defense plan. We bring the letter in its totality, as it sheds light on the work of what we call "unsung heroes."

The Hospital Under Attack: The War

With Hezbollah The first katyusha rocket fell on Zefat on Thursday, July 12, 2006. Between then and August 14, our emergency room and trauma center treated 687 civilian victims including children and 820 IDF soldiers. This total of 1,507 casualties treated in our Medical Center was more than that of any two hospitals in the north of Israel COMBINED.

Of the above, 413 were hospitalized. In addition, nearly 500 people presented with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and were treated by our staff of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers who, like the emergency and trauma personnel worked around the clock, 7 days a week.

In addition, Ziv Hospital suffered a direct hit, which damaged ventilation systems and blew out nearly all of the windows on the north side of the building. A rocket struck directly beneath the Pediatric Ward Dining Room. We are lucky that the hit occurred during the night, with a minimum of physical injury, although one unlucky child who could not sleep and who was watching television late at night suffered head wounds from flying glass.

Because Ziv Hospital employs so many local residents, the bizarre situation of medical, paramedical and housekeeping personnel receiving their own family members through the emergency room was repeated all too often. Several staff members who live in the community also ended up as patients.

During the Hezbollah war, the wounded were operated and followed up in rooms highly vulnerable to attack. For the sake of the patients and staff as well, we cannot permit this situation to continue. An area

within the hospital has been identified as suitable for renovation so that when we are attacked again, we will be able to treat the patients – mostly wounded IDF personnel – safely. Your kind donation will go a long way in providing the hospital with state-of-the-art surgical equipment, helping us to repair bodies close to the front lines, when every minute between injury and treatment is precious.

Because of its proximity to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, Ziv has always been on the front lines, militarily. Over the years, many hundreds of IDF soldiers, residents of south Lebanon, UN peacekeepers, and Israelis who live close to the borders have been treated for injuries sustained during military confrontations.

As a "peripheral" treatment facility, Ziv rarely receives media recognition of the work we do here. This makes your donation to the hospital particularly appreciated. Your recognition of our history of caring for soldiers dating back to the Yom Kippur War when the main building of the hospital was rushed into action is especially heart-warming. We may not make CNN, but you have not forgotten us!

A careful analysis of our strategic situation suggests that we will be expected to fill this important role again. We must prepare ourselves for the next attacks, which we expect to be even more severe. This is a decision not only of the administration of Ziv Medical Center, but as a directive of the Ministry of Health as well that we be prepared for any kind of contingency. Our chief priority is the construction of protected operating rooms and intensive care areas.

The Third Annual Scholarship Luncheon

On February fourth the "Chabad" Israeli Center hosted 200 women at our third annual Women's Scholarship Luncheon. This Luncheon benefits the children of Gan Chabad Preschool, Westside Hebrew School and Camp Gan Israel of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. The financial support received from the luncheon has made it possible for many needy children to participate in these programs.

Our most deserving Tom-

chei Chinuch awardees were Penina Kraiem and Dina Louria. Penina, Dina, and their families have been ardent supporters of the programs of Chabad Israeli Center for the past 25 years. Both women were chosen for their active roles and dedication to the Jewish community.

Nitza Ben Yehuda was the wonderful master of Ceremonies and the Gan Chabad Preschool kindergarten and Pre 1A children performed beautifully for all the attendees. Our special entertainer was the dynamic singer Michal Boneh. Michal had the women up and dancing in the spontaneous show of Jewish pride and joy. A special thanks to Pat's Catering for their elegant service. We are already looking forward to next years' event.



Rabbi's wife Fay Yemini handing out awards to Penina Kraiem and Dina Louria.



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