

Houston native ready to defend Israel as a Lone Soldier

By MATT SAMUELS | JHV

Jacob Plumb has never been one to back away from a good challenge.

In high school, Plumb earned Eagle Scout, and later graduated with honors from Robert M. Beren Academy.

After graduation, Plumb stepped out of his comfort zone by entering a yeshiva, making aliyah and moving 7,000 miles away from the only home he ever knew.

His latest test, however, will be his toughest yet: joining the Israel Defense Forces as a Lone Soldier.

“I know it will be physically demanding, mentally demanding and probably emotionally demanding, but I look forward to embracing the challenge,” Plumb, speaking from Israel, told the JHV.

“To live in the first independent Jewish sovereign state and to serve in the first Jewish army in thousands of years is a historic opportunity that I just can’t miss out on.”

A Lone Soldier is a soldier in the IDF with no immediate family in Israel to support them.

Plumb, who officially will begin his service in August, has felt a strong bond with Israel since he was young.

His mother, Tammy, was born in Israel, and his grandmother, Lucy Borosh, was a child survivor of the Holocaust. His father, Steven, has been a staunch supporter of Israel throughout the years.

“Jacob feels very connected and committed to Israel and, as a grandchild of a survivor, he feels he has the responsibility to our people to give back and support Israel,” Tammy told the JHV.

“He didn’t grow up in Israel, but he feels like he has an opportunity to do his part and he takes a lot of pride in that.”

Jacob’s parents – along with older brother, Nathan, and younger sister, Sarah – have supported his decision to become a Lone Soldier, with their emotions ranging from pride to some nervousness.



Former Beren Academy student Jacob Plumb has been living in Israel the past two years. He will start his service as a Lone Soldier in the IDF this summer.

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– Jacob Plumb

“I’m sure we will be a little anxious and worried, just like every other parent,” Tammy said. “I think when I see him in uniform, it will be more emotional.”

“We could not be more proud to see him actualizing his dream.”

Steven shares that same pride and knows it will be the toughest challenge his son has ever faced.

“It’s going to be emotionally tough on him, but I’m proud of him for taking on the

challenge and working to defend the Jewish people,” Steven told the JHV.

“This is a big commitment. It’s not easy to be a Lone Soldier in Israel. It is emotionally harder than what the regular soldiers go through because you don’t have that family support system or a home to go to.”

Jacob will receive help along the way from various Lone Soldier programs, like Friends of the IDF, Nefesh B’Nefesh and the Lone Soldier Center.

According to FIDF, there currently are about 800 Lone Soldiers from across the U.S. serving in the IDF.

FIDF’s support includes Lone Soldier housing, mentoring, a 24-hour call center, financial grants, flights to visit their families abroad, Shabbat meals, holiday gift packages, social gatherings and much more.

“Lone Soldiers may be far away from the warmth of home, but they know that the FIDF family is by their side every day,” Steven Weil, FIDF CEO said.

For Jacob, the adjustment will be aided by his willingness and determination to assimilate with the Israeli population.

Jacob is enrolled at Yeshivat Har Etzion – also known as Gush – and has made it a priority to learn Israeli culture, politics and perfect Hebrew in less than two years in the country.

“When I got to Yeshiva, I started to really learn more about Israeli society,” he said. “I am meeting Israelis that are my age and we talk about issues, history and modern politics.”

“I try the best I can to talk in Hebrew at every opportunity.”

Jacob credits his knowledge and passion to his upbringing through United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston, Robert M. Beren Academy and the Bnei Akiva program.

“My community has always been very warm and nurturing, which helped me make this decision,” he said.

See Lone Soldier on 5B

ISRAEL AT 75: CELEBRATING THE HOPE IN HARMONY



APRIL 25, 2023

7:00 PM

CELEBRATE ISRAEL’S 75TH BIRTHDAY WITH A VERY SPECIAL MUSICAL EVENT



Cantor Rollin Simmons, along with some of the best cantors in the country — Cantor David Berger, Cantor Galit Dadoun-Cohen and Cantor Leigh Korn — will take you on a musical journey through many facets of Israel’s complicated and fascinating story, spanning both time and genre. Our visiting cantors come with a wide range of knowledge and talent to sing and teach from their own experiences of American and Israeli culture.

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CONCERT

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Celebrate Israel with over 21ers

The Israeli-American Council and Jewish Federation of Greater Houston's Young Adult Division (YAD) is hosting a Yom Ha'Atzmaut Party for those 21 and older.

The celebration will be held Saturday, April 29, 8:30 p.m. to midnight, at Hotel Derek. Join your friends for live music in celebration of Israel's diamond anniversary. First drink is included with admission.

Register at IAC360.org/iac-events/celebhou.



Baker Institute at Rice holding 'Israel at 75' conference

The year 2022 marked 75 years since the passage of United Nations Resolution 181, which called for the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. At midnight on May 14, 1948, the provisional government approved a proclamation establishing the new State of Israel – making May 14, 2023, the diamond anniversary of Israel's founding. Yet, as Israel celebrates, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians endures.

Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy is presenting "Israel at 75" – assembling diplomats, subject-matter experts, policymakers and stakeholders to analyze the binational relationship between the United States and Israel, address the role of the United States in Middle East foreign policy, explore the challenges and opportunities Israel faces internally and abroad and examine the issues confronting the American Jewish community.

The Director's Lecture Series Conference will be held Thursday, April 27, beginning with a breakfast reception at 9:30 a.m.

Opening remarks will be delivered in a prerecording by the president of Israel, Isaac Herzog, and by Amb. David M. Satterfield, director and Janice and Robert McNair chair in Public Policy, Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

An Armchair Discussion, "Reflections on American Diplomacy and Israel," follows with James A. Baker III, honorary chair, Baker Institute for Public Policy, former U.S. Secretary of State to President George H.W. Bush, former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and former White House Chief of Staff to President Ronald Reagan.

The Hon. Satterfield also is former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, former U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, former acting assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, former chargé d'affaires to Egypt, former special advisor to the Secretary of State for Libya and former senior advisor on Iraq for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

There will be two panel discussions, as well. "Israel and the U.S.-Israel Relationship: A Retrospective and the Road Ahead" will

be moderated by Aaron Miller Sr., fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Panelists include Thomas Nides, U.S. ambassador to Israel; Martin Indyk, former U.S. ambassador to Israel, distinguished fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, former U.S. special envoy, Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations; Dan Kurtzer, former U.S. ambassador to Israel, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt; and Dan Shapiro, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel.

A lunch presentation, "The Contemporary American Jewish Identity," will be led by Robert H. Mnookin, Samuel Williston professor of law at Harvard Law School and author of "The Jewish Paradox."

The second panel, "Two States for Two People? Are there still viable solutions for Israel and Palestine?" will be moderated by Amb. Satterfield. The panelists include Salam Faayad, former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority; Michael Herzog, Israel ambassador to the United States, retired brigadier general, Israel Defense Forces, former fellow, The Washington Institute; Barbara Leaf, U.S. assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs; and Gilead Sher, former Chief of Staff and Policy coordinator to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and senior peace negotiator, Brochstein fellow in Middle East Peace and Security in Honor of Yitzhak Rabin, Baker Institute.

Ehud Barak, former prime minister of Israel will speak on "Israel's Government and the Political Direction of Israel."

"The U.S.-Israel Relationship" will be the subject of closing remarks, beginning at 4:45, by Walter Russell Mead, Ravenel B. Curry III distinguished fellow in Strategy and Statesmanship at Hudson Institute, the Global View columnist at The Wall Street Journal and the James Clarke Chace professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College in New York, author of "Arc of a Covenant."

The community can purchase tickets before April 26 by visiting bakerinstitute.org/event/conference-israel-75 and clicking on "Register Now." For assistance, contact the Baker Institute at 713-348-2183 or bipprsvp@rice.edu.



The Plumb family: Sarah, Steven, Tammy, Nathan and Jacob.

Lone Soldier

From 4B

As Jacob prepares to embark on his latest journey, his support system – and those who know him best – believe he will embrace the challenge and succeed.

"Jacob is a mensch, always wanting to help," Tammy said. "He wants to go above and beyond and push the limits."

"I think he will gain confidence and be able to support his country. It will be fulfilling for him as a Jew and will propel him to

whatever path he chooses later in life."

For Jacob, it comes down to overcoming challenges.

"I'm excited about this move, and it is important to do things you are excited about and believe in," Jacob said.

"Ultimately, when I reflect on everything and think about how I want my life to be remembered, I want to feel like I'm making a difference. I don't want to be the one sitting on the sidelines. I'm going to step up and not back down from this challenge."

ISRAEL AT 75

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Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

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