

Army Fatigues: Joining Israel's Army of International Volunteers

Mark Werner

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Mark Werner : Army Fatigues: Joining Israel's Army of International Volunteers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Army Fatigues: Joining Israel's Army of International Volunteers:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good memoir and overview of Sar-ElBy A. Gift For YouOur daughter just got back from her first Sar-El trip in July 2009, with the International Youth Group Program of Sar-El. She had travelled to Israel the year before with us on a tour of the Holy Land, and we were fortunate to be able to let

her go this past summer. The descriptions in the book of the groups' work and the interaction with the young soldiers are very reminiscent of our daughter's description of her 3-week tour. She was able to spend one weekend with her Sar-El friends in Tel Aviv, and was blessed to be invited by the family of one of the IDF soldiers to spend Shabbat weekend. This is a must-read book for all of those persons who are considering making a trip to Israel for Sar-El, or even if you just want to know how people are helping Israeli's protect their right to live in their historical (and present day) homeland. 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A volunteer for Israel By Shalom Freedman I was initially skeptical. Having lived in Israel for over thirty years I had the sense that a book about volunteers often in the age of pension who come to volunteer for stints of a few weeks, could not be something very serious. I was wrong. Mark Werner in telling of four stints of volunteering he did at Army bases, and in one case at a naval base revealed to me yet another surprising and encouraging chapter in the saga of contemporary Israel. Werner begins by tracing his family background focusing on his father, who fought as a partisan against the Nazis. Werner tells of his unusual childhood growing up in an agricultural community in New Jersey most of the members of which were Jewish Holocaust survivors. He speaks of the Zionist education he received, and this certainly is central to the decision he made as a lawyer working in Raleigh, Virginia to volunteer for pro bono work in Israel. The program he is a part of is called Sar-El. It involves people from all over the world coming to work at Army bases, doing repair and maintenance work which frees up soldiers for other duties. Werner says in the concluding section of the book that a major reason for 'volunteering' is to show the people of Israel that they are not alone, not abandoned, even when the world's media is distorting their story, turning moral reality upside down, and making them the 'villains' of the Middle East conflict. Werner also gives other reasons for the volunteering including the widening of his own personal world, the meeting many new acquaintances. There is too the realization of a long-time dream of giving something to Israel. The book itself is a delight to read. Werner's descriptions of the many different volunteers he meets, of the young Israeli soldiers who are often his guides are clear and interesting. The book is a kind of journal and includes also a picture of what is going on in the overall life of Israel at the time. It illustrates extraordinarily well the constant security challenges Israel faces. Werner himself appears as a very good and conscientious volunteer, a hard and proud worker. He also in the course of his volunteering uses time-off to meet relatives he has in Israel, and tells their stories. Werner is an optimist, but at the same time a strong realist. If he sees sordid realities he frankly depicts them, and makes no effort at whitewashing them. Werner's strong and positive character shines through this work. His writing of this book is as I understand it a continuation of his volunteering and contributing to Israel. Those of us who have lived in Israel for many years owe Werner and dedicated volunteers like him our gratitude. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An inside view, at ground level. By Customer We are given a view of Israel from the inside, and at ground level. The book isn't dramatic in content, but it can be in impact - if you are interested in this inside view. I particularly enjoyed it when Mark describes or discusses some place in Israel where I have been, or mentions the impact of some event (unfortunately, often bad) which I remember from the news. I feel much better informed about life in Israel, about the impact of events on the population, and on many of the controversies affecting the people and the country. Well, I also was quite interested in the material about how the armed forces operate, again from the inside. The time Mark spent off-base with friends and relatives further added to this inside view. So I've very pleased I've read this book, and I'm rating it based on its doing for me what it's intended to do.

Why do thousands of people from around the world volunteer to work on Israeli Military bases in the Sar-el "Volunteers for Israel program"? The author focuses on the everyday lives of Israeli soldiers and civilians, offering an insider's view of Israel's armed forces.

From Publishers Weekly In his first book, attorney Werner chronicles life in the Volunteers for Israel, or Sar-el, an organization in which people (typically Jews) from around the world volunteer to work on Israeli military bases, performing day-to-day tasks so that Israeli military personnel are free for combat missions. Werner gives readers an excellent on-the-ground, day-to-day view of life in Israel under the threat of terrorism, taking a dim view of Palestinians' moral authority. Though eye-opening in details large and small (Israeli soldiers can serve jail time if they lose their rifle), the reading gets vacation slide-show tedious whenever Werner spends time with Israeli relatives. Sure to appeal to ardent defenders of Israel (and just as sure to put off Palestinian sympathizers), Werner's account will also prove helpful for anyone considering a working vacation in the holy land. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Mark Werner is an attorney in Raleigh, NC where he lives with his wife, a graduate of Haverford College and the University of Pennsylvania Law, he is active in the United Jewish Communities and American Israel Public Affairs. He continues to volunteer with Sar-el.