

Wednesday, September 10th, 2025

Speech of the Chief of the General Staff, LTG Eyal Zamir

Members of the General Staff Forum,
Commander of the Israeli Navy, VADM David Salama, the command staff,
guests and family members,
and most important of all, the dear graduates of Course 151.

"Resolute was the will, great was the readiness to sacrifice, and strong was the spirit that filled the hearts of the pioneers of the corps," - this is how the late MG (res.) Shmuel Tankus, one of the pioneers and founders of Hebrew seamanship and the fifth commander of the Israeli Navy, described the atmosphere among the first soldiers as they laid the foundations for establishing a naval defense force in the Land of Israel. "Yet," he added, "the path was not easy." Over the years and to this very day, the Navy has remained a central pillar in the security of the State of Israel.

Its servicemen and women prove time and again that it is not advanced technology or modern vessels that will determine the outcome of war, but rather the professional and dedicated people on deck. The naval officers are the spearhead of the corps - a model of leadership. In its name, and thanks to it, they act and achieve great accomplishments.

This evening, in the midst of a complex, prolonged, and multi-front war, you, thirty-five graduates of the course, receive your officer ranks, are awarded the naval officer's pin, and join the naval command echelon of the Israel Defense Forces.

In recent days, we have struck in several arenas simultaneously. In the Gaza Strip we will continue to act with force until we bring back our brothers, both the hostages and the fallen. We will spare no effort, this is our moral duty and our ethical mission. We are reshaping the security reality and delivering massive blows to Hamas in order to defeat it and dismantle its regime.

Soon we will mark two years since the IDF rose to its feet, proving every day its determination and strength. Our message is clear: the long arm of the IDF will reach every arena and cut off the hands of all our enemies in the Middle East.

In the current campaign, the Israeli Navy continues to demonstrate its capabilities. The force-building processes - the new submarines, advanced surface vessels, and precise defensive and offensive systems - are all developed with a long-term strategic vision, strengthening our readiness for future challenges and ensuring our operational superiority in the evolving and dynamic naval battlefield.

In Operation "Rising Lion", the Israeli Navy's unique strength came to the forefront: missile boats and patrol boats expanded their activity on an unprecedented scale, naval defense systems operated relentlessly, and Iran's missiles were intercepted one after another. These achievements reflect the constant strengthening of the Israeli naval branch - a fighting, initiative-driven, and decisive branch.

On October 7th, we all failed as an army - every branch and every unit of the IDF is engaged in self-reflection. We are conducting inquiries, learning, and implementing lessons, and so too has the Israeli Navy, from then until today.

We are fighting our just war for our home. In this war, in Gaza and its maritime arena, in Lebanon, and along sea routes, the Israeli Navy has made a decisive contribution to our achievements, the fruit of persistence, prolonged training, and close coordination among all the corps. Thanks to these, a new standard has been set — one we must preserve and improve for the security of the state and for future generations.

Alongside our successes in the war, we do not forget the heavy price we are paying. Just a few days ago, a brutal attack took place in Jerusalem, claiming the lives of six of our people. In addition, we mourn the loss of our finest sons - four soldiers who gave their lives in defense of the homeland.

We will continue to embrace all the bereaved families, to stand by those wounded, in body and in spirit, and to do whatever is required to be worthy of the price they have paid. Their pain is the pain of the entire nation.

Graduates of the course, the naval officer's pin you are receiving tells the story of the long journey you have undergone over the past thirty months - a journey carried out mostly under the shadow of an unprecedented war in our history.

Within this reality, you actively took part in a series of operational activities, including Operation "Rising Lion", and time and again you proved your commitment and your fighting spirit.

Now your time has come; the challenges of the hour, the complexity of naval combat, and the difficult decisions that lie ahead will require you to put into practice the knowledge, tools, and skills you have acquired - to face the challenges of the sea and to lead with courage and determination. Be professional and human, set high standards for yourselves and for your subordinates, and take care of them.

Dear commanders, you have accompanied the course's cadets through long and challenging months. You led them responsibly, with dedication; you set a personal example, and trained the future generation of naval officers of the Israel Defense Forces, at a time when they are needed more than ever. For this, you deserve thanks and appreciation.

Commander O., this is your last graduating class as commander of the school. You have been a model and an inspiration for generations of skilled and determined naval officers. Your

significant contribution to the Israel Defense Forces will be remembered for generations and will continue to leave its mark for many years to come.

Dear families, I see you sitting in the audience, emotional and proud. From here I wish to thank you for the values you have instilled in your loved ones; the values of love of country, of giving, and camaraderie, which led them to this moment and will continue to guide them on their military path.

We are now in the midst of the days of Elul - a time of introspection and renewal; a period in which we draw lessons from the past and grow from them. The officers joining our ranks this evening are living proof of the human ability to grow, to renew, and to once again choose the path of responsibility and service each and every day.

Distinguished guests, with your entry into this role, you bear a responsibility that is historic, biblical, and eternal: "Who makes a way through the sea for the redeemed to pass over; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing." With these words, the prophet Isaiah describes the redemption of the people of Israel after days of destruction and exile.

Throughout history, the Jewish soldier has proven his ability to overcome every challenge - to rise from the depths, to pave the way, and to forge a path of redemption. So it was in the past, and so we act today.

Dear naval officers, the path has not been easy, and now you stand as another link in the chain of generations of brave naval officers. Thanks to whom, and thanks to you, we will secure our safety here in the State of Israel and defeat our enemies.

The people of Israel place their hopes in you and put their trust in you. Fulfill your missions and return home safely.

Go forth and succeed!