



## The Story of Sean Carmeli

Nissim Sean Carmeli, son of Dalia and Alon, was born on 21st Iyar 5753 (12.5.1993) in Texas, USA. He was the younger brother of Gal and Or.

Sean immigrated to Israel with his family in 2008, when he was 15. The family settled in Raanana and spent their time travelling between Raanana and Texas, with the majority of their time spent in Israel. During the spring and summer months the family flew to the USA to keep the family businesses going there.

Alon, Sean's father, relates, "Sean was a quiet, smiley child, a young man who knew how to enjoy every moment of daily life. He didn't worry about the future and what will be later on. Sean had many friends. He really liked sport and enjoyed all kinds of sports in Texas and Israel, especially soccer. He was connected to Judaism and received a Jewish education at home.

A few years after immigrating to Israel, Sean's parents returned to the USA. Sean decided to stay in Israel and lived in Raanana with his sisters, Gal and Or. He learned in a class of new immigrants in a Raanana high school, and successfully completed his studies.

At the end of twelfth grade, Sean completed a training program with the goal of realizing his dream of joining an elite combat unit. His mother Dalia says that each time she tried to persuade Sean to give up on his dream of combat service in the army, he would answer her, "If I won't serve in combat, I'm not joining the army. I need to do something meaningful." Sean's sisters relate, "We grew up in the USA with Israelis, we learned Judaism, but his focus was not about immigrating, but about joining the army. It was never a question for him." Before enlisting, Sean learned for four months in a Yeshiva in the Old City of Jerusalem.



On 19.2.2012, Sean enlisted in the IDF as a lone soldier. He realized his dream and served as a combat soldier in the 13th battalion of the Golani Brigade. Those close to him say that he loved serving in the army and the feeling of meaning and giving that it added to his life.

In June 2014, the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip to Israel intensified, and as a result, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge against Hamas in the Gaza region. The operation began on 8.7.2014 with air strikes, and after nine days, a ground operation in Gaza began, with the goal of destroying the tunnel network and rocket launch sites.

The Golani Brigade took part in Operation Protective Edge, and the 13th battalion, in which Sean served, was one of the battalions that took part in the ground maneuver in Gaza. Maya Kadosh, Deputy Consul General in South-West USA, shares that a few days before the beginning of the ground operation in the Gaza Strip, Sean sprained his ankle. The unit doctor asked him if he was interested in taking time to recuperate before returning to the military campaign but Sean refused. "He simply say no. He wanted to return to fight alongside his friends."

Sergeant Nissim Sean Carmeli fell in battle in Operation Protective Edge on 22nd Tammuz 5774 (20.7.2014) during an encounter with terrorists in Shejaiya, Gaza.

The headstone on Sean's grave displays the words of a song written about him after his death: "Twenty thousand people and you first/ Twenty thousand people after you Sean/Walking quietly with flowers/ Two sisters- twenty thousand brothers."

Tens of thousands of people took part in Sean's funeral, the majority of whom did not know Sean and came to honor him for the last time. The singer and songwriter Ariel Horowitz wrote the song "Twenty-thousand People" in Sean's memory, inspired by his huge funeral. "This song is the biggest gift we could have received" say Sean's sisters, "The song talks about how Sean changed the Jewish people ever so slightly, leading to greater unity- he touched people's hearts."

Rabbi Asher Hecht, the Chabad emissary in Texas, eulogized Sean, "When we visited Israel he was learning in a Yeshiva in the Old City of Jerusalem. He told us how happy he was to dedicate time to learning Torah, and to absorb Jewish values before starting his service. These values became a part of his life. When his unit entered Gaza, he received an exemption from entering due to a wounded foot but he insisted on entering. Sean was a hero for the entire Jewish people. Like Rabbi Akiva, and many before him, he sacrificed himself in sanctification of G-d's name.

We will never forget him."

Sean perfectly represents the symbolization of the fine line between Memorial Day and Independence Day. A deep love for the State of Israel, leading to being prepared to sacrifice oneself while protecting it. On Memorial Day, mere seconds before the celebrations of Independence Day, we stop and thank all the soldiers, like Sean, and remember that in their merit our country exists today.

(taken from the Yizkor site)

