



Sarah Drill



SPEAKER'S BIO

Sarah Drill was born and raised in West Caldwell, New Jersey. Sarah's Zionist identity comes from strong ties to Israel both at school and at home. Sarah attended Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union where she learned Hebrew and studied the history and culture of the State of Israel. She grew up in an actively Jewish household with a mother who works as a Conservative Rabbi at the Orangetown Jewish Center in Rockland County, New York.

It was after spending three months in Israel with her 12th grade class from Solomon Schechter that Sarah knew she would one day make Aliyah. Still, before moving to Israel she completed her Bachelor's degree in English Literature with minors in Jewish Studies and Photography at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. During her four years of studies she continued to make annual trips to Israel which included multiple JNF Alternative Break volunteer trips as well as a Semester of Study Abroad at the University of Haifa.

Finally, in 2012, as graduation from Muhlenberg neared and her classmates began applying for jobs, Sarah began filling out her application to make Aliyah. In August, 2012 Sarah made Aliyah with Garin Tzabar and moved to Kibbutz Urim in the Negev. Just two months later, in October, Sarah enlisted in the IDF and was certified to be a sniper instructor.

Sarah spent two years in the IDF, serving as a sniper instructor on the Tzeilim army base. There she trained hundreds of snipers from various infantry units in the IDF. Throughout her service, Sarah experienced the hardships of serving as a lone immigrant soldier. There were the emotional hardships such as not having her parents visit her on base over the weekend when all other families came to visit as well as the more practical hardships such as dealing alone with issues at the bank and government offices.

Towards the end of her service Sarah spent a few months on the Mitkan Adam army base where she instructed and certified 12 new sniper instructors. Sarah was active during operation Protective Edge where she trained all snipers prior to their entrance into Gaza. She still serves as a sniper instructor in reserve duty.

While serving as a lone soldier was challenging, it was as Sarah neared her release from the army that she felt the biggest challenge was ahead. She feared what her future as an Israeli citizen would hold. Questions such as how will I make it financially, how can I write a resume in Hebrew that is fit for the Israeli workforce, and what are my rights as a newly discharged lone soldier are just a few examples of the many questions pressing lone soldiers as they near release from the IDF. This is when the Wings program steps in. With the help of Wings, Sarah was released from the army with a ready Hebrew resume and the confidence to begin her life in Israel.

Since November 2015, Sarah has been working for the Wings program, a joint project of the Jewish Agency for Israel and Merage Foundation. Having been on the receiving end of the critical help provided to lone soldiers by the Wings program, Sarah knows just how important the vitality of this program is. Her youngest brother, Josh Drill has recently made Aliyah and is currently serving as a lone soldier in an elite combat unit. Sarah feels passionately about her work so that Josh, and all lone soldiers like him, will receive the same support from Wings that she received.



ABOUT THE WINGS PROGRAM



The Wings program, run by the Jewish Agency for Israel and Merage Foundation, has been active for over ten years. Wings guides young immigrants from the time they first arrive in Israel, during their service in the IDF, and until around 2 years after their release. The program serves approximately 750 lone soldiers each year and overall has provided aid to over 5000 young immigrants.

Having given up the comforts of life in their home countries, lone soldiers are faced with many challenges. One of the most complicated challenges is the transition into civilian, Israeli life. The services provided by the Wings program give lone soldiers a true chance to remain in Israel permanently by giving them the tools to build successful lives here.

Services include five day workshops for lone soldiers prior to release from the IDF, personal advisors who provide professional career guidance, academic aptitude testing, one-on-one financial coaching, and much more.