



A Passion for Israel

Adventures of a Sar-El Volunteer

By Mark Werner

What would motivate a successful corporate lawyer to trade in his comfortable life in America for three weeks every year to volunteer for manual labor on Israeli military bases? Mark Werner, son of a Holocaust survivor, is an ardent Zionist seeking a personal way to show support for Israel. Sar-el is an organization that enables thousands of volunteers from all over the world to work in a civilian capacity on Israeli military bases, freeing up IDF soldiers for more serious duties. This book is based on journals the author kept during 14 Sar-el stints from 2006 to 2019.

Werner describes working through a desert sandstorm, dealing with a scorpion in his bunk, taking refuge in a bomb shelter during a Palestinian missile attack, and more. Through simple activities—from packing kitbags and medical supplies for the soldiers to filling sandbags and assembling tank antennas—the volunteers work hard to make their contributions to the defense of Israel. The camaraderie that develops between volunteers and soldiers as they work side by side is their greatest reward.

“Mark Werner is a born storyteller, and *A Passion for Israel* is a continually insightful and compelling tale of a man who set out to do good and succeeded. A poignant memoir, *A Passion for Israel* is a sort of ‘City Slickers’ with a Jewish twist that will tug at the heart of any committed Jew.”

—Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, author of *Jewish Literacy* and *A Code of Jewish Ethics*

“Those who think that American Jews have lost their commitment to Israel and dedication to its defense must read *A Passion for Israel*. Mark Werner has shown how every Jew has a meaningful role to play in strengthening the Jewish state. An uplifting book for Americans and Israelis alike.”

--Michael Oren, former ambassador to the United States and Member of Knesset

About the Author

Mark Werner has volunteered on Israeli military bases for each of the past 18 years with no plans to stop. He is the author of a previous book describing his first four volunteer experiences, *Army Fatigues: Joining Israel's Army of International Volunteers* (Devora Publishing). He also edited his father's wartime memoir, *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II* by Harold Werner (Columbia University Press). Mark is currently the President of Volunteers for Israel, the organization that enables him and other Americans to serve as civilian volunteers on Israeli military bases.

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