

Behind the Uniform, a Human Heart

By Rifka Epstein, July 2026

I have always believed that behind every IDF uniform there is a human being.

A son or daughter. A father or mother. A brother or sister. Sometimes a grandfather. A person with memories, fears, dreams, and people they love—yet willing to risk everything for the country they call home.

During Shabbat 7/11/2026, I read Alan Rosenbaum's "A Hero's Reflection" in *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, published as we mark fifty years since the extraordinary rescue at Entebbe. The article, centered on Doron Almog, touched me deeply.

It traces Almog's extraordinary journey—from his military service and his role in the Entebbe rescue, through profound personal loss, to the influence of his son Eran on his understanding of human dignity. It also brings us to a deeply moving moment: Almog speaking with Jonathan Polin during the shiva for his son, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who was murdered in Hamas captivity.

As I read Doron Almog's story, I found myself thinking about what an Israeli soldier carries: courage, memory, loss, responsibility—and the extraordinary ability to turn pain into service to others.

The article also brought back so many memories.

Entebbe. 1976.

I remember following the extraordinary rescue of the hostages. I remember Yoni Netanyahu, the only Israeli soldier killed during the operation. I remember Dora Bloch, the elderly hostage who had been taken to a hospital in Kampala and was later murdered.

And now, fifty years later, through the pages of this article, I encountered another man who was there: Doron Almog.

Several photographs accompany the article. The soldier. The commander of the Southern Command. Almog speaking with Jonathan Polin during the shiva for Hersh.

But one photograph stopped me.

Doron Almog with his son, Eran.

Eran lived with severe disabilities and died at the age of 23. His life profoundly shaped his father's understanding of human dignity and inspired Doron and his wife, Didi, to create a place founded on the belief that children with severe disabilities deserve to live with dignity.

I do not want to write here about the center itself or describe everything it does.

What touched me was something else.

This, too, is the heart of an Israeli soldier.

We often speak about courage on the battlefield. About entering enemy territory. About rescuing hostages. About protecting a country.

But courage has another face.

The courage to carry loss and still choose life.

The courage to know pain and turn it into compassion.

The courage to take a wound in your own heart and use it to bring dignity, hope, and care to others who have known a similar pain.

Perhaps that is what touched me most about Doron Almog's story.

Out of loss, he chose to give.

Out of pain, he chose compassion.

Out of a deeply personal story, he helped create dignity for others.

And I found myself thinking again about the men and women who wear the uniform of the IDF.

Behind every uniform is a human story we may never fully know. A family. A memory. A fear. A dream. A loss.

Today, I want to express my profound pride and gratitude to every IDF soldier who has stood to protect Israel.

To those who fought and returned.

To those who still stand guard.

And to those who gave their lives so that we could live ours.

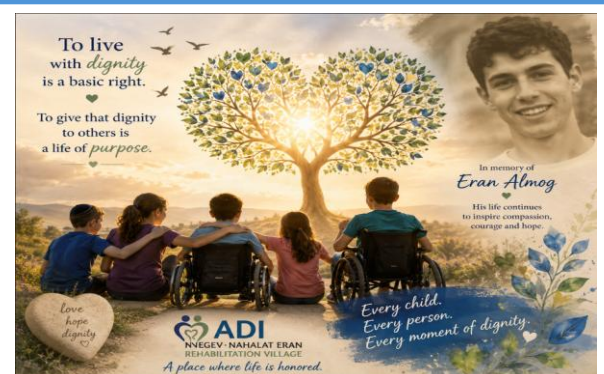
We see the uniform

May we never forget the human heart beneath it.

I remember. I honor you. And I thank you.



The People of Israel Live On עם ישראל חי



Symbolic illustration inspired by Eran Almog's legacy and created with AI.