

IDF Stages First Desert Race

A new tradition began last week in the Sagi Regional Brigade—the Israel Defense Forces' inaugural Desert Race—in which 400 of the brigade's soldiers participated. The race took place in two 5-kilometer stages—an open stage for soldiers from all units and a competitive stage for 10 select runners.

The elite Rimon unit of the Givati Brigade won first place, while second place was taken by the Caracal Battalion. The Sopha Battalion of the Armored Corps came in third.

"The race took place in the sector that the soldiers guard because of the symbolism that a race along the borders presents," Brigade Operations Officer Lt. Col Kobi Barak said. "It is important for us to combine the operational sector and protecting the borders with maintaining physical fitness."

The organizers of the race worked hard to bring as many soldiers to the race as possible.

"It was important for us that all the fighters take part," Lt. Col. Barak said. "Despite the constant security missions and the many challenges that the fighters face, it is important for us to convey the message that it is our duty to maintain physical fitness. The better our physical fitness, the better we will be able to deal with the range of challenges."

The desert race's winners received trophies, certificates, and various prizes including bags and training shirts.

"We have many ideas for the future, and this race has raised spirits and brought a lot of satisfaction and fun to the fighters," Lt. Col. Barak said. "We will continue activities like these and we will work in order to have periodic races and turn it into a tradition. I must emphasize that it is not just a race; it's the development of a culture of physical fitness."

The race joined the framework of many projects developed by the IDF, with the goal of encouraging commanders and soldiers in the IDF to preserve their physical health. Other such projects include the preparation of healthier food in mess halls, jogging groups, Health and Fitness Month, and sporting competitions.