The Alumni Journal of The Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine
Founded by the Alpha Omega Fraternity

What's up?
הצרפים לצוות ה sonrası לבריחת
בארץ נשיאת החופשה...
Dear Reader,

I am honored to welcome all of you attending the Alpha Omega “Shalom Aleichem” Convention in Israel. In addition to all the planned events I am proud to note this is only the second time in AO’s 107-year history that an Israeli has been elected as International President. We all congratulate our dear friend Adam Stabholz and wish him every success in his new role.

This annual English issue of Ma Nishma is published so that our overseas friends and convention visitors can read about us and learn about the activities of our school and related topics.

Sadly, this year we said farewell to 92-year-old Prof Morton Amsterdam – “one in a generation.” He was a giant of a man who taught many of the former and current teachers in our school in Jerusalem. His old friend and colleague, Prof D. Walter Cohen, writes about him and his myriad contributions to dentistry in general and to our school in particular.

Another great leader we will be honoring at the convention – actually unveiling a memorial plaque – is Prof. Bernhard Gottlieb, about whose personality and vision you can read in the following pages.

As is our custom in the English issue, we include an article – penned by our most senior female teacher, Prof. Edith Kaye – about the early years of our school, this time relating the stories of some overseas guests who honored us with their presence and wisdom.

Plus our Orthodontics Specialization program, regular columns and more.

Enjoy!

Noah Stern,  
Editor
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The Dean's Column

Prof. Aaron Palmon

A year has passed since I became Dean of the Dental School in Jerusalem. Not an easy start against the backdrop of Hadassah's ongoing economic crisis. Nevertheless, the faculty management has acted very effectively – firstly by adapting activities to the changing situation (which included staff cutbacks) and secondly, maintaining the high level of teaching and research so we can continue to justify our raison d'être – training future generations of dentists in Israel as well as forwarding cutting-edge research in the biomedical and dental sciences.

We have lately bid farewell to department heads Prof. Rephael Zeltser (Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery), Prof. Eliezer Kaufman (Oral Medicine) and Prof. Yossi Shapira (Pediatric Dentistry). Prof. Ervin Weiss, Head of Oral Rehabilitation, was elected to direct the Dental School in Tel Aviv University and we wish him every success. We thank them all for their longstanding contributions to our school and wish success to new department heads – Prof. Nardi Caspi (Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery), Prof. Doron Aframian (Oral Medicine), Prof. Diana Ram (Pediatric Dentistry) and Prof. Joshua Moshonov (Endodontics). I also thank Prof. Tami Peretz, Hadassah CEO, who encouraged these initiatives.

In addition to teaching and absorbing new students – and with the aim of strengthening the connection between dentists and faculty – the Continuing Education Committee, led by Dr Rakefet Czerninski, organizes a series of study days at no cost to participants. Topics reflect clinical activities in the various specialties and lecturers are chosen accordingly.

The first gathering was on October 21 and focused on Periodontics as a Tool for High Level Dentistry. The second was in December and discussed Managing Dental Practices: Contemporary Approaches for the Doctor and for Managing Doctors. I thank the sponsoring organizations and companies who allow us to run these important events.

This year and in the future we will see an increase in student numbers. We are also working to upgrade facilities and equipment to provide the very highest standards. I hope we will be able to increase the number of clinical units and continue to enhance our teaching programs in line with international developments. Our Vice-Dean, Prof. Lior Shapira and Dr. Alon Livny, Head of the Clinics, are working hard in these areas, as are all department heads.

Recently, the Senate of the Hebrew University decided to confer an Honorary Doctorate upon Prof. Bruce Baum, NIH Scientist Emeritus in the NIDCR (National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research).

They acknowledge his groundbreaking contributions in the fields of salivary glands, gene therapy and therapeutics. The award ceremony will take place at the Annual Convocation on May 31, 2015 on Mount Scopus. The last time this honor was conferred upon a dental doctor was 37 years ago, when the recipient was D. Walter Cohen.

On a global level, the faculty has signed affiliation agreements with leading Asian schools – Yonsei University School of Dentistry, Seoul and the Peking University School of Stomatology.

Finally, I call upon faculty alumni to devote some time or resources to training students and graduates in their alma mater. I am sure the dialogue between experienced tutors and students will be a very productive and enjoyable experience for all.
Morton Amsterdam, DDS, ScD, FACD, Professor Emeritus of Periodontics and Periodontal Prosthesis in Penn Dental Medicine’s Department of Periodontics and an internationally renowned dental educator and clinician, died June 27. He was 92.

Dr. Amsterdam, who was recognized by many as “the father of periodontal prosthesis,” had a far-reaching impact on the fields of periodontics and advanced restorative dentistry.

“Few individuals have so profoundly influenced the science and practice of dental medicine,” says Dr. Denis Kinane, Penn Dental Medicine’s Morton Amsterdam Dean. “Dr. Amsterdam was an exceptional innovator, clinician, and educator, who helped to establish a legacy of leadership for Penn periodontics and periodontal prosthesis and directly mentored many of today’s leaders in the field. He will be fondly remembered as an example of excellence in clinical dentistry.”

A 1945 graduate of Penn Dental Medicine and a 1943 alumnus of Penn’s College of Liberal Arts, Dr. Amsterdam first joined the Penn faculty in 1953, advancing through the ranks to Professor of Periodontics and Periodontal Prosthesis and serving in that position from 1967 through his retirement in 1992. Dr. Amsterdam served as Chairman of the Department of Prosthetic Dentistry within the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine from 1963 to 1967 and was Director of Penn Dental Medicine’s Graduate Periodontics and Periodontal Prosthesis from 1969 through 1973. Throughout his career, he also held academic appointments at Temple University, Boston University, Harvard University and The Medical College of Pennsylvania.

“Dr. Amsterdam’s energies as a clinician, teacher and leader have left an eternal mark on the profession,” wrote Dr. D. Walter Cohen, Professor Emeritus of Periodontics and a colleague of Dr. Amsterdam’s during his tenure at Penn Dental Medicine, in a 1977 tribute issue of The Alpha Omegan, the publication of the Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity, which honored Dr. Amsterdam with its Achievement Medal that same year.
Penn Dental Medicine paid tribute to Dr. Amsterdam’s innumerable contributions to the School and periodontics with the naming of the D. Walter Cohen and Morton Amsterdam Periodontal Clinic in his honor, dedicated in January 2008. And in 2004, the deanship of Penn Dental Medicine was designated the Morton Amsterdam Deanship, endowed through a gift given by the late Hon. Walter H. Annenberg in honor of Dr. Amsterdam, a longtime friend of the Annenbergs. In addition, an endowed Chair in Periodontal Prosthesis was established in Dr. Amsterdam’s honor at the Hebrew University School of Dental Medicine, Jerusalem, in 1973, where he also received the University’s Torch of Learning Award in 1973.

Among his many other awards, Dr. Amsterdam received an honorary Doctor of Science from Dickinson College in 1974, the Thomas Evans Achievement Award from the Penn Dental Medicine Alumni Society in 1980, the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching from the University of Pennsylvania in 1981, the Jerome and Dorothy Schweitzer Research Award from The Greater New York Academy of Prosthodontics in 1984, an honorary Doctor of Odontology from Goteborg University, Sweden, in 1988 and the Penn Alumni Award of Merit in 1997. He was also part of the International College of Dentists Major Contributions to Dentistry in the 20th Century Video Series for the Museum of Dental History in 1997 and was named Laureate for The William Thomas Green Morton National Award for the Advancement of General Dentistry in 2000 by the Maryland Academy of General Dentistry. In 2003, Dr. Amsterdam received the Master Clinician Award from the American Academy of Periodontics. And in September 2013, he was honored as a luminary by Penn Dental Medicine’s Department of Periodontics.

Dr. Amsterdam established a successful private practice in Center City Philadelphia in 1947 and continued to maintain that as well throughout his academic career.

He is predeceased by his wife, Fay Barbara and survived by his children, John, James, Joan and Jane. A scholarship fund named in his honor is being established at Penn Dental Medicine; contributions can be made to: The Morton Amsterdam Scholarship Fund, Penn Dental Medicine, Office of Development & Alumni Relations, 240 S. 40th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6030.
Noah Stern

In the final week of 2014, on the Jerusalem Day of AO’s International Convention in Tel Aviv, we will unveil the memorial plaque for Prof. Bernhard Gottlieb, the first visionary of our school in Jerusalem.

Bernhard Gottlieb was born in Austria in 1886.

After completing his medical studies in Vienna in 1912, he specialized in Dentistry at the University of Bonn before returning to Vienna to set up a lab with his friend and partner Balint Orban.

In 1926, the FDI Convention took place in Philadelphia. Hundreds of scientists from 36 countries attended yet the work of Gottlieb’s lab stood head and shoulders above the rest. Especially his own lecture on “Tissue Changes in Pyorrhea,” in which he used enlarged histo-pathological slides never seen before in the United States.

After a visit to Chicago, Gottlieb and Orban moved to America and forged the first connections with an American university. 12 years later, this was to serve as a safety net for many European Jewish scientists fleeing for their lives.

Meanwhile, 1931 saw the establishment of the Dentists Association of Palestine in Eretz Israel. Its first Chairperson, Dr. Shmuel Levin-Epstein, invited Prof. Gottlieb to be the guest of honor at its first convention. Gottlieb enthusiastically toured and lectured all over the country. He became a devoted Zionist and began to ignite the idea of a Jewish dental school on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, in which Hebrew would be the language of instruction.

From that one visit, the establishment of the school became his life’s mission.

In 1936, at the 9th FDI Convention in Vienna, Gottlieb gathered the other Jews and they founded the World Federation for the Establishment of a Dental School on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. He even drafted a first sketch of the building.

By the end of the war, after actually living in Eretz Israel for two years, he was back in the States, this time at Baylor University in Texas.

And in 1945, at the first post-war AO Convention in New York, Bernhard Gottlieb spoke passionately about the importance of establishing a dental school in Jerusalem, enlisting significant financial and other support.

Prof. Bernhard Gottlieb, the first visionary of our school, passed away in March 1950, at age 65. Only three years later, in September 1953, his dream came true.

The University of Vienna saw fit to name their dental school after this extraordinary individual. And now – 70 years after he appeared at the AO Convention in New York – we proudly unveil the plaque at the Dental School in Jerusalem, where Hebrew is the language of tuition, in loving memory of this giant of a man.
The Faculty of Dental Medicine is renewing its extracurricular activities for the Israeli dental public through the Center for Continuing Education. Over 200 people from all over the country filled the lecture hall at the dental faculty for the first seminar for this academic year. The seminar – arranged with the Ministry of Health and the EFI - L’Association des Dentistes Francophones en Israël (the French Dental Association in Israel) – was in honor of Prof. Henri Tenenbaum. Before his retirement, Prof. Tenenbaum was Head of the Periodontics Department at the University of Strasbourg, France. He has been a great friend of Israel – and of our faculty in particular – and forged strong ties between the Hebrew University and the University of Strasbourg. He made Aliyah with his family and today he is an Israeli citizen.

The day’s lectures were given by Prof. Lior Shapira, Head of the Periodontics Department, Prof. Moshe Goldstein and Dr. David Polak. The guest lecturer was Dr. Jean Marc Dersot, an expert in Periodontics and Chairperson of the French Society of Oral Implantology and Periodontology. He was invited by Dr. Asher Roos of EFI, an organization established in 1988 with a current membership of approximately 300 dentists.

The aim of the Center for Continuing Education is to keep local dentists abreast of the latest issues and developments in the field. The center runs events throughout the year and through attending these lectures participants can receive credits to qualify as an “Updated Doctor.”

The next seminar days are scheduled for December 10, 2014, February 19, 2015 (Orthodontics) April 28, 2015 (Oral Medicine) and June 25, 2015 (Pediatric Dentistry).

Dr. Rakefet Czerninski
Director, Continuing Education Center
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IADR Prize

Dr. Omer Fleissig, from our Orthodontics Department and a doctoral student at the Institute of Dental Sciences, was awarded two prizes at the biennial European IADR-PER Conference held in September in Dubrovnik, Croatia. One award from the International College of Dentists (ICD), in conjunction with the Israeli branch of the IADR, for the best research and another prize for his success in the Hatton competition run by the Israeli branch during the conference.

Prof. Stella Chaushu and Prof. Ofer Mandelbaum supervise Dr. Fleissig’s work, which focuses on the role of immune system cells on orthodontic movement. Dr. Fleissig will be the Israeli representative at the international Hatton/Unilever competition in Boston, USA in March 2015.
The Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine recently signed two affiliation agreements with two leading Asian dental schools, the Peking University School of Stomatology in Peking, China and the Yonsei University College of Dentistry in Seoul, South Korea. Both schools maintain a high level of research and clinical treatment and are well-respected universities in their respective countries.

These agreements are designed to promote cooperation between the institutions in several areas, including joint conferences, lectures, exchange of researchers, undergraduate and graduate students and to encourage the exchange of information, collaborative research and publications.
The Peking University School of Stomatology was established in 1941. Today, it encompasses not only the School itself but one of China’s leading research institutes and the stomatological hospital which is currently the largest in the world. The Hospital of Stomatology is comprised of 15 clinical departments, 8 technical laboratories, and 5 subsidiary clinical-service departments. There are approximately 510 dental units for daily clinical service, and 157 ward beds. On average, the School sees about 5,000 in-hospital patients annually, while the outpatient and emergency departments serve at least an additional 1.17 million. Its degree programs also include an 8-year program: a combined D.M.D./Ph.D. program permitting them to complete both their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the School. To date, more than 700 students have been enrolled. The research institute of the School contains 13 research laboratories (clinical and basic), 11 interdisciplinary study centers, and 1 library.

The Yonsei Dental College is the most prestigious private school in Korea. Since its first 18 students graduated in 1974, it has produced almost 2,000 dentists. The hospital building, completed in 1978 consists of 9 clinical departments, an oral hygiene clinic and a student clinic – the first in Korea – designed for student practice. In 1995, they built a new 15,000m2 dental hospital and a 10,000m2 dental college now offering the best facilities in the nation.

We look forward to an educational and productive partnership with our Korean and Chinese colleagues.
"Shalom Aleichem"
AO International Convention

December 25-January 1, Tel-Aviv, Israel
In a few weeks we will gather at the David Intercontinental Hotel in Tel-Aviv to celebrate the 2014 AO International Convention.
This will be the fourth convention in Israel and the first since 2007. We have all been working on the events, doing our best to persuade people to register. After the events of recent months – Operation Protective Edge and the terror attacks in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv – some fraters cancelled while others – understandably – did not even register.
However, as in the words of our August letter to you:
“When the guns are not firing, it is time to continue building and developing our remarkable country, for us and for many generations to come. It is time to show ourselves and the world that our strength stems from our will to continue with our daily life. Otherwise, we let the terror win. It is time to come together – a time for solidarity, a time for fraternity and a time to acknowledge our shared destiny."
We promise an amazing convention to those who do come to Israel, including all our traditional events – the Welcome Reception, Honors Night, New Year’s Eve and the Foundation Event to be celebrated at the Peres Center for Peace.
We have put on a great program for the spouses and arranged special tours to the two dental schools, the Israeli parliament (the Knesset), the south of Israel (a tour arranged by JNF) and of course an outstanding continuing education program.
It is the time to STAND WITH ISRAEL.
We are waiting for you with open arms.
And look forward to having you with us.

Eldad Helft
Co-Marshals

Jonathan Mann
Treasurer

Yossi Kasirer
Co-Marshals

Vladi Dvoyris
Tel Aviv Chapter President
AO2014 Webmaster
Introducing the New International President of AO... Prof. Adam Stabholz!

Prof. Stabholz was born in Poland in 1948 and immigrated to Israel at the age of two. He completed his compulsory army service in 1968 as a captain in the Israel Air Force.

In 1974 he graduated from the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine and completed the graduate program in Endodontics at the University of Pennsylvania in 1978.

Appointed Head of the Department of Endodontics at Hadassah in 1988, he was elected Dean of the Dental School in 1993 and re-elected in 1996.

He has been chairman of the organising committees for several international congresses held in Israel, including the First International Endodontics Conference (1981), the Second World Dental Conference (1988), the International I.B. Bender Conference of Endodontics (1996), the Fourth Endodontic World Congress of IFEA (1998) and the 50th Anniversary Celebrations and Scientific Congress of the School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem (2003).

Prof. Stabholz has held several positions in the Alpha Omega Fraternity too. In 1984, he was elected President of the Jerusalem Chapter. In 1989, he was Marshal of the International Alpha Omega Convention in Jerusalem and in the following 13 years he served Alpha Omega as a Regent, an International Trustee and an International Director. He also received the Achievement Medal Award in 2012.

He is also past President of IFEA, the International Federation of Endodontic Associations, an umbrella organization of endodontic societies from 28 countries.

Prof. Stabholz was awarded honorary degrees from the University of Bucharest, the University of Buenos Aires and the Certificate of Merit of the Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity. He has also received the Yakir Harash Award from the Israel Dental Association, the highest award for outstanding contribution to the dental profession in Israel.

In May 2005, Prof. Stabholz was elected Dean and again re-elected in May 2009 for his fourth term of office.

Prof. Stabholz has published extensively, authored several chapters in endodontic textbooks and lectured at many international dental meetings. His current research is focused on the application of lasers in dentistry.

He is married to Ayala, a Clinical Associate Professor in Periodontics and they have three children- Karin (36), Yariv (32) and Yoav (26) and three grandchildren- Ido, Ma’ayan and Ro’i.
The International Orthodontic Program at the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem: A Multi-Cultural Practice of Interdisciplinary Excellence

Prof. Stella Chaushu, Department Chair
The Postgraduate Orthodontic Program was launched in 1977 by its first Chair, Prof. Edith Kaye. In 2011, the 13th class of the program was upgraded to the International Postgraduate Orthodontic Program (IPOP) by Prof. Stella Chaushu, the 5th Chair of the Department of Orthodontics. The program, directed by Dr. Miri Haisraeli-Shalish, is the first international orthodontic program at the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem. Every 2.5 years, selected dentists are accepted to this three-year program after a rigorous admission process.

Launching such a program requires a huge investment in terms of advertising, recruiting, switching the curriculum into English, taking care of the international students and more.

The first IPOP program included seven Israelis and four Europeans from Greece, Poland and Bulgaria. In October 2014, the second class (IPOP 2) was launched with seven Israelis and two foreign students, from Thailand and Australia.

The program is currently considered one of the most prestigious orthodontic programs in the world due to the wide variety of educational and developmental opportunities offered to postgraduate students. It has at least four considerable strengths in comparison to other programs worldwide: an internationally renowned Faculty, high level subspecialty clinics, its interdisciplinary approach and Jerusalem as its home.

As an international program in Israel, requiring its residents to live in Jerusalem for three years, the international course ensures that visiting students see the country and learn something of its history and culture. The students have become a close-knit group, with the Israelis inviting their peers to their homes and engaging them in other social activities.

Research is one of the program’s most distinctive features. MSc studies are mandatory for all Israeli students, in parallel to their postgraduate studies. In 2012, the School launched its new International MSc Program, directed by Prof. Doron Steinberg. As a result, the Orthodontic Department was able to offer the European students a unique and challenging opportunity to undertake MSc studies concurrently with clinical orthodontic studies, similar to the Israeli students.

The best proof of the program’s excellence can be seen in recent achievements in the international arena. Dr Georgia Kotantoula (IPOP 1) won the best poster award at the European Orthodontic Society (EOS) Annual Meeting in June 2013 and at Kings College London Orthodontic Society International Day in September 2013 for her research into anti-biofilm activity of novel ph-sensitive sustained release varnish on orthodontic appliances. Dr. Karolina Kaczor-Urbanowicz (IPOP 1) won the best table clinic and Joseph E. Johnson Clinical Award at the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Annual Meeting in April 2014. She also received the award for the best scientific oral presentation given during the 90th Congress of EOS in June 2014 and the Best Oral Presentation Award at the 45th SIDO International Congress in Adult Orthodontics for her research on salivary biomarkers for orthodontically induced root resorption.

Dr Omer Fleissig (IPOP 2) won two awards for his research on the role of immune system cells in orthodontic tooth movement: The International College of Dentists award for the best presented research paper and the Israeli Hatton award, granting him participation in the next international Hatton/Unilever competition in Boston in March 2015.

We anticipate that our international alumni will become leaders in academic and clinical orthodontics – and become our ambassadors all over the world.
Visitors at the School in its Early Years

Prof. Edith Kaye

Throughout the early years of the Dental School [1957-1964] there was a constant flow of visitors from Europe and the USA. Most of them came for short visits for a week or two, giving lectures or courses while some came to help build the teaching curriculum.

The first to spend a sabbatical with us was Prof. Maury Massler from Chicago. He stayed with us from November 1959 through July 1960. He gave us lectures on how to teach, something in which we had little previous experience. One of the things he said about teaching remained with me all my life: “We are not here to teach, we are here to help the students to learn.”

Another visitor was Dr. Cliff Ballard, Head of Orthodontics in the Eastman Institute in London, who was very prominent in the field at the time. He was very keen on bird watching.

One day he had an appointment with Ino Sciaky. His office was in the Bible Society, adjacent to the Medical School, where the City Hall Compound is today. It was on the border of “No Man’s Land.” Dr. Sciaky was busy and we waited in an adjacent room, whose windows looked out towards the Old City, at that time under Jordanian rule. Shots were often fired from that direction. The windows were open and Dr. Ballard leaned out and looked down. Suddenly he became very excited and said he was going down there. He had seen an owl’s nest with chicks in it and he had to take a picture of it. “You cannot go down there, it’s dangerous, and I am responsible for you,” I said. “Tomorrow we’ll come back and I’ll have a device for you to take the picture from this window.” So I built a device for taking pictures of models – front, lateral right and lateral left in one shot with two mounted mirrors at right angles. I went to the chemistry lab, asked for two test tube holders, mounted the whole thing and on the following day, attached the test tube holders on the outside of the window frame at an angle so the nest was reflected in the mirrors. Our guest was able to take his pictures!
In mid-October 1959, the unforgettable Dr. Harry Sicher from Chicago came for a month to give a series of lectures in Anatomy. To make a point he would take a piece of chalk in each hand and draw anatomical drawings on the blackboard with both hands! When the Nazis took over Austria before WWII, he had been rescued from the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna. He was a delightful individual with memorable Viennese humor.

Sicher too had a hobby – butterflies. The weather was still warm and balmy. One early afternoon he wanted me to take him out to catch butterflies for his collection and he needed a butterfly net. As I could not find one, I had to make one. I found a broomstick, made a big wire loop to which I attached some plastic netting, attached this to the upper end of the broomstick and out we went to catch butterflies. He caught a number of them and took them back to Chicago.

In 1961 three American dental school Deans (Lester Burkett, Harry Lyons and Isaac Shour) came to evaluate our various courses in comparison to American standards.

For this purpose, each of us had to prepare a detailed syllabus of his course, which we then discussed with the visiting trio. After my meeting, they suggested I submit my program to the "Journal of Dental Education." The program was accepted for publication in 1963 and I later received a prize from the Society of Deans of American Dental Schools.

Another visitor – for a semester in 1962 – was Prof. Kroup Poulsen from Denmark. He taught us that before considering prosthetic treatment for our patients, we should get to know them both physically and emotionally. He shook hands with his patients and used a strong or weak handshake as an indication of muscle function during mastication. He also advised us to find out patients’ treatment expectations, discuss them together and help them understand what is realistic and what is not. Then we should explain every step and support our patients throughout the treatment process.
Deep in Gaza, with the Anti-Terror Unit

Captain Matan Shotig  
(Year 1 dental student)

I served my official military service as an officer with a sniper team in the Duvdevan unit and in the reserves I'm part of the Central Command's anti-terror combat unit.

During the Protective Edge mission, our task was to identify the sniper who had shot Armored Corps officer Captain Natan Cohen. We received our assignment while studying the Hamas video of the incident and other pictures from our Intelligence Corps, from which we were able to discern the type of rifle and ammunition used by the sniper.

After two days of intensive training and shooting practice, we found ourselves – a group of six snipers – joining the regular battalions on the battlefield in Beit Hanun.

This was not the first time I had been in combat in the Gaza Strip but I do not remember such quantities of fire and destruction as there were this time.

As we entered one of the Palestinian houses in Beit Hanun, we split into four and two, with me and a colleague as the pair and the other four moving to another house to increase our effectiveness.

We felt a sense of purpose, Zionism and determination to protect our home. Motivation was high and we were all ready for any assignment. We were constantly surrounded by our Air Force and tanks bombing targets and tunnel shafts hidden at almost every turn.

We were hearing reports of more casualties but ironically the more we were involved in the fighting the more we were detached from that reality. We were brought sharply back though when we found a transistor radio in one of the houses and managed to tune in to an Israeli radio station, from which we heard all about our successes, losses and eventually the ceasefire.

In hope of calmer times...
Treating the Wounded near a Terrorist Tunnel

Asaf Zagron
(Year 6 dental student)

No time is good for an emergency army call-up. Protective Edge caught me right at exam time and this was the third time in five years of study I had received such a call. On the long voyage to a dental degree I served in the reserves during Operations Cast Iron, Pillar of Cloud and now Protective Edge.

This pulls you out of normal life and throws you into a different world altogether, a world of Red Alert.

One day, six of us went out with a special unit from the Engineering Corps to blow up a tunnel shaft discovered on the border. After a short briefing we set out on the mission escorted by tanks and an unmanned aerial observer plane. I had a lot of responsibility as a combat medic.

We surrounded the shaft to prevent any terrorists emerging while other soldiers poured tons of liquid explosives into the hole. I suddenly heard someone calling my name and I rushed to the shaft where I saw a young soldier lying on the ground.

“What happened?” I asked. The commanding officer explained that some of the poisonous explosive had splashed into the 18-year-old’s left eye. I immediately saw a burn developing. In these kind of situations you operate on intuition. We forcefully opened the eye and rinsed it with a special liquid for about five minutes until support came to take him to hospital.

What I remember though from those minutes – which seemed like eternity – was the soldier’s reaction. He didn’t scream, he didn’t cry or even curse. He simply said, “I’m going to be okay. Carry on with the job. Don’t stop for me.”

After 30 days I returned to my life but the soldier’s words still echo in my ears. We’re only here in the merit of those boys. I sincerely hope that peace and quiet will soon return to our borders.
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Anyone who works in an institution usually retires at an age or a time determined by the rules and regulations of the particular place of employment. This is true in the dental world as well. The date is known in advance and the employee can often plan his or her professional development accordingly.

However, if the dentist has chosen to work in private practice, he himself can determine when he hangs up his white coat for the last time.

I recently met a colleague who told me he had closed his practice and retired. He is younger than me, had a fine professional reputation and ran a very successful office. Rather surprised, I asked him why, to which he gave me a very frank answer, “I just felt I wasn’t as good as I used to be.”

Wow! I was stunned by his integrity. It takes a lot of courage to reach that understanding and make such a big decision. Especially as he is so well known and respected in the field. And so his response drove me to think about my situation too.

Am I also ready to shut up shop? Am I still “as good as I used to be”? I still enjoy my work, love the profession as I always have, appreciate my team, relish the interaction with my patients and of course acknowledge the financial compensation.

But is it time?
I’ll have to make that decision soon. But what do you think? Should there be a defined time to retire from private practice? And if so, when?

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