

A CHELM-ON-THE-MED SPECIAL REPORT:

Operation "Cast Lead" (Oferet Yitzuka)

A MIXED BAG OF PIQUANT BACKPAGE NEWS FROM THE FRONT GLEANED FROM THE HEBREW MEDIA December 27, 2008 – Jan 18, 2009

Keep your Spirits Up and Your Head Down!

KING OF THE BEASTS?

When Israel troops pushed into Rafiah in the second week of the Cast Lead campaign, they expected to engage armed Palestinians but unexpectedly found themselves facing two thoroughly frightened and very famished lions – luckily still in their cages...

It seems goods smuggled into Gaza via tunnels under the Philadelphia Corridor that separates the Gaza Strip from Egypt came in all shapes and sizes*. There was not only a booming business moving GRAD missiles. Smugglers were perfectly game to arrange delivery of a pair of young lions which were trundled underground on carts from Sinai into the Gaza Strip, tranquilized and wrapped like mummies in gunnysacks. Bought in Egypt for \$3,000 a head, the two were part of an entire \$40,000 zoo 'imported' by a local Gaza entrepreneur named Shadi Fi'ez.

Feeling fate had cast him somewhere between a modern-day Daniel and the Lions Den and a makeshift Noah without an Ark, the brigade commander frantically sought a safe way to gingerly move the lions (and an ostrich and several other birds) out of the war zone...or truck in enough food to fill their tummies. Another option being weighed was to call-up the lion keeper at the Ramat Gan Safari – mobilize him and embed him with the unit for the duration**.

* It was reported the Gazans had even tried to smuggle-in a young giraffe, but it got stuck half way – blocking the tunnel.

** When the IDF left Gaza, the lions were alive and well, but one died several months later.

YIDDISHE CUP*

A Sderot resident was feeling like a million dollars - or to be exact 5,051518 million NIS, having won the football pools...but not for long.

Two weeks later, during the Cast Lead campaign he landed in the hospital, seriously injured by a Kassam rocket that almost landed in his lap while walking to synagogue. His lucky day? Another stroke of luck, in not losing his life? Not if you ask his neighbors, who've apparently never heard of a half full cup. Clucked their tongues, they claimed the still unidentified big winner had actually run out of luck.

* a "Jewish head"

THE MILKMAN COMMETH

General (res.) Moshe ('Bugi') Ayalon was not about to become but another talking head along side a string of former brass lining up to serve as commentators for the media.

Instead, he headed for the front to assist the war effort during Cast Lead tit-for-tat...or tit-by-tit, if you wish: Arming himself with an olive green water-proof apron and grabbing a pair of galoshes*, the former chief-of-staff and #9 on the Likud party list hunkered down to milk the cows at kibbutz Nachal Oz adjacent to Gaza in cognito, until news leaked out when a Scandinavian camera crew spied Ayalon down in the milking parlor and blew his cover.

* Clarification: With a small 'g', referring to a pair of rubber boots, NOT the Soviet Russian anti-ballistic missile, codename Galosh

[HOT]DOGS OF WAR

During the Cast Lead campaign, Islamic Jihad sought to erode Israeli morale with a photo of the organization's war booty after two weeks of fighting which they claimed had been kept under wraps "due to security considerations". What did this prize include? Not just a LAU missile tube, a walkie-talkie and a handful of rifle bullets. The terrorists proudly display a can of kosher hotdogs that had fallen into their hands.

UNKNOWN JEOPARDY

As if periodically [dodging Kassam and Grad rockets](#) is not precarious enough, inhabitants of the south suffer from an additional hazard: Giving birth to newborn infants with an inborn iron deficiency.

According to a study at the Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon women in early pregnancy who faced stress triggered by the 2008 Cast Lead campaign gave birth to babies that had a significantly lower iron count as fetuses*, than the babies of women in the control group who were expecting in more tranquil times

Iron levels impact on oxygen levels in the bloodstream, and physicians believe an iron deficiency during gestation might have irreversible effect on cognitive abilities and energy levels, for life.

Will iron supplements do the trick? Or is a foolproof Iron Dome the healthiest palliative for expectant women. (published June 2012)

* based on blood harvested from the umbilical cord just after birth

CAGEY ZOO KEEPER

As noted above during the January 2009 Cast Lead campaign, an IDF infantry unit in Rafiah found itself saddled with a pair of honest-to-goodness lions, abandoned in a Gaza zoo. In the aftermath, Machmud Bargouti struggled to replenish his stock of animals – most of whom had disappeared, but the zoo manager ran into a snag. Rafiah smugglers were demanding an arm and a leg - \$15,000 - to trundle a zebra across the border with Egypt through their tunnels. The zookeeper turned to a cheaper but priceless solution.

The zoo bought a pair of donkeys and hired a painter. Bargouti ordered the artisan [to spray-paint the black animals white](#). The donkeys were then

covered from head-to-tail in zebra-like strips of masking tape, re-dyed black and the tape peeled off.

While young visitors failed to notice the telltale long ears, when Ramat Gan mayor Tzvi Bar heard the story, he promised to donate a pair of real zebras from his city's Safari Park.