



A Salute to Them!

**Pride in the IsraElite Young Leadership Program (Mechina) in Migdal HaEmek.
Four of its graduates, all of Ethiopian descent, will be appointed as IDF Officers today.**

This is a translation of an article that first appeared in the Israeli newspaper, Yediot Aharonot, on January 11, 2018.

An exciting day awaits Esther Nagose (21) from Netanya, Abebetz Dessah (20) from Kiryat Malachi, Hadas Tafeta (20) from Rehovot and Blainesh Adema from Bat Yam. Nagose, Dessah and Tafeta will be appointed IDF Officers, while their friend Adema (photo below) completes her specialization at the Bahad 12 IDF Command School.

These four talented young ladies are all graduates of the IsraElite Mechina – a pre-military preparation program for women in Migdal HaEmek, founded by the non-profit, Village Way Educational Initiative. This year, from a cohort of 24 women, four have successfully completed Officer Training.

“I was a good student, I graduated from high school with full matriculation, but the Mechina gave me tools to boost my self-confidence, to forge my identity and to deal with the difficulties that I faced as an immigrant from Ethiopia”, shared Adema yesterday, who arrived in Israel when she was eight and a half. “Being an IDF officer was



Nagose, Dessah and Tafeta | Photo: IDF Spokesperson

a big goal for me. I’m the only officer in my family. The Mechina gave me the tools to break through the glass ceiling, the misconception that Ethiopians are quiet and don’t aspire to integrate in senior positions in society.”

Nagose, who was born in Israel and grew up with ten brothers and sisters, is the first girl in her family to recruit. “We started the track together, all four of us, and we were just like four sisters, always keeping close to one another during officer training,” She described. “Before my enlistment I really felt unripe for it, and the Mechina helped me fulfill my potential”. Before leaving for officer training, Nagose served as a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in charge of welfare, or personal affairs (“Tash”) in a Golani basic training unit, and now she will become a Tash NCO in the Military Police Corps.

Next page, please



Adema - photo courtesy of IDF Spokesperson



“I wanted to complete the Mechina so I could get a meaningful placement in the IDF”, said Dessah yesterday. Dessah, who before joining the officer training course served in the Directorate of Military Intelligence, has immigrated from Ethiopia at the age of four and a half. “Had anyone suggested a few years ago that I would become an officer, I would think they are just fantasizing. Now, I am about to serve as a personnel officer in the Intelligence Corps. My family is so proud of me.”

Tafeta, who was born in Israel, was raised alongside six brothers and sisters. Before officer training, she served as a “Tash” NCO in Havat HaShomer (an army base where basic training is held for soldiers from at-risk backgrounds). She will now be placed as a “Tash” Officer, overseeing six “Tash” NCO’s, on the military base where recruits are sorted into their respective corps or basic training bases. “It doesn’t matter where you came from, if you put in enough hard work you can get any (army) placement,” she said yesterday. “The Mechina and the Officer Training Course have instilled in me the understanding that I want to advance and influence the soldiers.”

“The preparatory program has started its fifth year and we already have graduates we can be proud of it,” said Anat Steiner, founder and head of the IsraElite Mechina. “Esther, Abebetz, Hadas and Blainesh, all graduates of our third co-hort, are making a clear statement to the young women now in training: we too can wear the platoon commander’s insignia and the officer’s rank, and our initial proficiency rating does not constitute a hindrance.”

Eli Barda, the mayor of Migdal HaEmek, stated proudly that “We are moved and thrilled by the path taken by these young women, who have come to the Mechina from all over the country, received education and training in Migdal HaEmek, and now we are all enjoying the fruits.”

