



## Yemin Orde Graduate Fulfills Dream of Becoming an IDF Officer

*Worku Abaye, 23, lost his parents at a young age and could never imagine he would one day serve as an officer in the IDF; 'For me, service is an honor,' says Abaye.*

By Omri Efraim, Ynetnews.com 

Worku Abaye was orphaned from his mother when he was three years old, and 11 years later, his father died. When he was 15, he made aliyah. He volunteered for the Israeli army after he was not recruited for health reasons, and yesterday he became an officer.

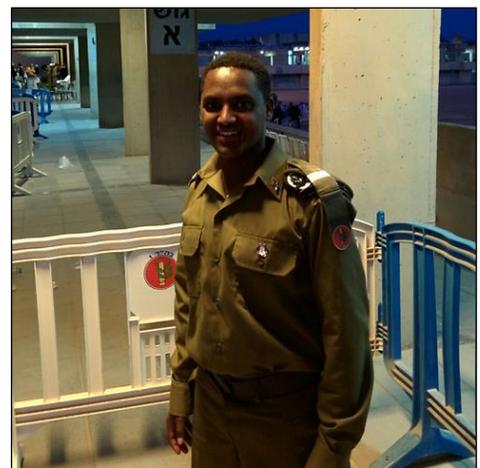


Amongst the excited cadets who stood on the grounds during the graduation ceremony for officers that took place at Base 1, there was also a soldier for whom this was a victory against all odds. "I realized a dream" said Werko Abaye, 23, a lone soldier who was orphaned from his parents years ago and who made aliyah when he was 15. "If you had said a decade ago, when I was an orphaned child and alone in Ethiopia, that I would stand here today in uniform and with this rank, I would not have believed you" he said.

Abaye took a difficult path to reach the parade grounds at Base 1. When he was three years old, his mother died and he was left under his father's care until he was 14, when his father also died. Without parents, Abaye wandered between the homes of his extended family until 2007, when he was living with his cousin's family, and they all decided to make aliyah, taking him with them.

When they arrived in Israel, the family was sent to an absorption center in Afula. After two years, when his cousin's family left the absorption center, Abaye came to study at the Yemin Orde boarding school, near Zichron Yaakov.

In August 2013, Abaye decided to volunteer for the army, after he was not recruited because of medical problems. He was placed in the communications unit in one of the computer departments of the army. Within the framework of a special track for Ethiopian immigrants, Abaye served there as the "Network Director". He finished his basic training as an outstanding soldier. "From my perspective, service is a privilege. After everything I've been through, I know that the state was there for me and I want to give back as much as I can".



During the last few months, he served in Operations "Brothers Keeper" and "Protective Edge", and most recently decided to fulfill his dream and become an officer. Yesterday he finished the officer's course in the "Nachshon" track. "It's important to me to make an impact and to teach from my experience how to cope and to succeed, to show that if you want, anything is possible".

The story of Abaye's aliyah was made into a documentary film, produced in the U.S., called "Take me Home". ###

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*Friends of Yemin Orde is the U.S. based fundraising arm for Yemin Orde Youth Village and Yemin Orde Educational Initiatives. For more information, visit [www.yeminorde.org](http://www.yeminorde.org) or email [info@yeminorde.org](mailto:info@yeminorde.org)*