**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** The first day that we entered Gaza I was on my period. I walk out of the vehicle, changed my pad and then I speak about it with the men soldiers that were in the vehicle with me, to them to understand that I need help, and I need my privacy. But it didn't prevent me from doing everything that I did.

**Mishy Harman (narration):** Hey listeners, it's Mishy. So as you know, we're continuing our series of Wartime Diaries. An attempt to collect slivers of life during these difficult days. One of the very few positive outcomes of this war is that the ongoing debate surrounding the participation of female soldiers in combat has been decisively answered. Women are, as the IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi told the soldiers of the mixed gender battalion Caracal back in November, an integral part of the military effort. They serve in tanks and in field intelligence posts; as pilots and naval officers; infantry soldiers; engineering specialists; canine handlers; medics; and the list goes on. In fact, out of the 625 doctors and paramedics operating in Gaza in late December, 73, more than 10% were women. Our producers Yael Ben Horin and Mitch Ginsburg drove down to *Machane Tzur*, an army base near Yeruham to talk to one of them: First Lieutenant Dr. Sharon Gutman Gilor. Here she is.

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** So my name is Dr. Haron Gutman Gilor. I am 28 years old. And I'm a military physician, or medical officer. I was born in Argentina, and I made Aliyah to Israel when I was seven years old, and I grew up in Be’er Sheva, in the south of the country.

I'm a person that really loved the interaction with other persons and also biology. And when I was 18 years old I really wanted to be a doctor. And also I needed to go to the army, to my service. So I joined to Tzameret program to be a combat physician. And I'm the medical physician of Gdud sheva estre (17) battalion. And I am married to Yuval. He is the medical physician of battalion 51 of Golani.

So we both were in the Gaza Strip the last few months.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** And then October 7th…can you describe the day and where you were and what happened?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** So I was in Kissufim, a base, with my husband. I travel to see him during the weekend because he is a medical physician and also I am, and we never match with the weekends to meet each other at home. So I drove to his base to spend the weekend with him. And we are so used to be around Gaza Strip. I live in Be’er Sheva. I go to the beach in Zikkim. o I didn't think that something like this would happen. I even didn't check where the bomb shelters were.

So Friday night it was a regular night at the base. We had dinner with all the officers and we go to sleep. I think that around 6:30 we hear the bombs. I was in pajama. And only thing that I could find was my sandals. I put them on and went from the room. And I saw two soldiers that come to me and say: “Come here we have a bomb shelter in the *hamal* (like in the operation room).” So I went to the operation room without medical equipment because I was like in a vacation for the weekend. And after I think 10 minutes I saw Yuval come to the operation room with his medics, with equipment and after that a lot of wounded people, wounded soldiers. The soldiers were also like me in pajama.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Was that your first time treating people who had been wounded in combat?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** In combat, yes.We had a lot of training during our program, but I never had to deal with something like this. It's not like to treat one person, it's to treat 22 persons that came one after the other with few equipment. We call it in Hebrew, *erua rav nifgaim*.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** A mass casualty event.

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** Yes.

**Yael Ben Horin:** What's your mindset at this point? Are you scared? Are you nervous? What are you feeling when all this is happening?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** I think that we get to an automatic mode, like we had to do the things that we were trained to do. Like we don't think about the danger that we are in when we treat a wounded soldier. I think that there's a lot of adrenaline, and we are focused on our mission. And my mission is to bring wounded soldiers alive. And successfully we could make to 21 people to get alive, and just only one soldier have died arriving to the hospital. But I think that we made it to save as much people as we could do. And it was very special for me to do something like this with my husband.

**Yael Ben Horin:** And what happened next?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** Around 8pm I successfully went from Kissufim right back to my base to join my people—still in my pajama.

**Yael Ben Horin:** What was it like saying goodbye to your husband?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** It was really hard. At first I didn't want to leave him. And I said that I don't want to evacuate from there. But then we speak and we understood that we had to go each one to his battalion. I have a role. I have an important role. And I think that we understood in that time that we are in war. We said goodbye. We didn't know when it was the next time that we will meet each other. **Mitch Ginsburg:** Did you see your husband in Gaza at all? **Sharon Gutman Gilor:** No, I didn't see him in Gaza. But we had the opportunity to see each other in the middle of the war at the border, just for two hours. And like two weekends ago we finally had the chance to went to our home. And now I'm here in the base and he's in Gaza Strip. And I'm really waiting for him to come home.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** So then on November 3rd, you went into Gaza. What was that like?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** The first day that we entered I felt like some fear because I didn't know what I'm going to meet. We drove 12 hours…the troops are in combat…We are in the *achzarit* (heavily armored personnel carrier)…behind. And it's like we are waiting for them to call us if there are any wounded soldiers.

**Yael Ben Horin:** Can you say a little bit more about being a woman in the army, and especially in a combat situation.

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** So I was the only woman in that vehicle with I think eight more soldiers: men. They're 18 to 20 years old, and I'm 28. So I found myself every time being like the adult that is in charge…to clean, and to make sure that everything is going to happen just exactly as I want to. And also whenever one soldier was like home seeking or he was upset, I was like also a psychologist role. I have a lot of roles I think in that war. I'm a soldier; I'm a medical physician; I'm a woman; and I'm the adult in charge.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** A little bit of the mom if you have to make them…

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** Yes, like an old sister. Yes.

But I don't know how I'm going to pee; how I'm going to eat; how I'm going to change clothes. When was the next time that I will shower. A lot of thoughts that are not really about if I'm scared or not to be at a war zone. But more thoughts that me being a woman. But the men respect me, respect my privacy.

And we can do exactly the same things that our men soldiers did. I land two helicopters during the my time in Gaza Strip. And the Air Force was side by side, we work together, and it was like one of the things that I think saved most people life during the war, and we could confront everything.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** And while in Gaza did you also treat Palestinians? **Sharon Gutman Gilor:** Yes, we were in a humanitarian passage that we were in charge of, and there was civilians that passed through. There was a lot of old people that were with no medication, and we treat them. We gave them water, and we gave them food, and we gave them the medication that I had. I didn't have like blood pressure medications or medication that are to old people, because I treat soldiers that are 18 to maximum 25 years old. But we gave them painkillers to the people that were hurt.

**Yael Ben Horin:** How did they react when an Israeli soldier treated them?

**Sharon Gutman Gilor:** They thanked me. And they called me *doctora* and it was really important for me to say them in Arab *ana doctora* because I took an oath to treat people no matter what.

**Mitch Ginsburg:** Thank you so much.

 **Sharon Gutman Gilor:** *Toda* (thank you).