



# Yossi and Jagger



Yossi is the stoic company commander of an Israeli Defense Forces unit on the Lebanese border. Jagger, who got his nickname thanks to his fun-loving rock star appeal, is the platoon leader. They have a secret. When they walk off in the snow together, it isn't because they're on patrol--it's because they're lovers. Jagger tells Yossi that he loves him, and longs to hear Yossi say it back to him. Yossi can't bring himself to make any promises. "This isn't some American movie," he tells Jagger...

This "non-American movie" was initially greeted with suspicion by the Israel Army, until hundreds of soldiers began rushing to see it as the film sold out a Tel Aviv cinema for three months. Ohad Knoller (Yossi) won best actor at the Tribeca Film Festival of 2003, and the film ended up being screened in Israeli Army bases.



## Israeli Army Service



Ever since Israel's establishment in 1948, army conscription has been compulsory for men and women aged 18. Men serve for three years, and women for two. After compulsory service men are required to serve up to one month per year in reserve duty until retirement from army service in their early forties.

While Druse and most Bedouins also serve in the Israeli army, Arabs and Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox Jews) are currently exempt from service. (This is the case as of Spring 2013. The recent general elections and new government may bring about a change to the situation.)

Prior to 1993, known homosexuals were thrown out of the Israel army. This ruling was cancelled in 1993, and since then open homosexuals serve in all areas of the army. The film is set several years after 1993.

## Geography

While Israel includes the stony beauty of Jerusalem, the deserts of the Arava, and the beaches of Tel Aviv, its most Northern point is in the Golan Heights. This area conquered from Syria in 1967 and again in 1973 is snow-covered most of the year, and is home to a ski resort open during the winter months.



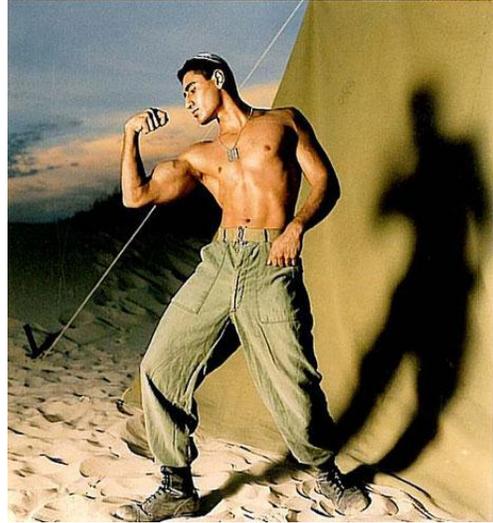
## Shiva Mourning House

According to Jewish tradition, burials take place immediately, followed by a week's mourning period. The family stays home all week and maintains an open house for well-wishers. Direct members of the family sit on low chairs, symbolically rip a piece of their clothing, and men do not shave.



## Homo-erotica and the Israeli Army

Around about the same time as Yossi and Jagger began making waves, an Israeli photographer was himself rocking the art world with his series "Soldiers". Adi Ness went on to make headlines with his world-famous depiction of the Last Supper, but his series of beautiful Middle-Eastern-looking soldiers had already begun to ask questions – as had Yossi and Jagger – about the nature of masculinity and sexuality in the Israeli army and in Israeli society.



A Wider Bridge works to bring the LGBTQ communities of Israel and North America closer together. Our programs include educational and cultural activities here in the U.S., including this film series, LGBTQ trips to Israel, and our online magazine, [www.awiderbridge.org](http://www.awiderbridge.org).

A Wider Bridge commissioned these study guides from Makom, and consulted fully in their development. Makom is the think-and-do tank for adult Israel engagement. You can find Makom at [www.makomisrael.org](http://www.makomisrael.org) and at [facebook.com/makomisrael](https://facebook.com/makomisrael).

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