



## HFM 005 – Why Israel Won the Six-Day War

**Michael Rank:** This is the History in Five Minutes Podcast, the #1 podcast for learning about anything in history in no time at all! I'm your host, Michael Rank.

Today's topic is the Israeli Six-Day War. How does such a tiny nation beat such larger neighbors? This is an interesting question because if you look at the numbers it doesn't make sense. Israel only has a population of 7 million people and within its vicinity is surrounded by 300 million other people like Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and a lot of those nations don't even acknowledge that Israel exists. Despite that fact, Israel has won four full-scale wars against the united military might of several Arab countries since it got independence in 1948.

Probably the most impressive of these victories was the Six-Day War of 1967. In this battle, Israel defeated Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon all in less than a week. After it did this, the size of Israel tripled and it held onto this until the 80's.

Why is Israel able to do this and why did it have so many military victories? Because in a way, Israel is like a Suzuki Crotch Rocket. It means it has an incredibly high-powered weight ratio. That's why a motorcycle can go up to 60 to 80 mph in three seconds while your gigantic Chevy Nova takes about 20 seconds to do the same.

Israeli soldiers are among the most battle trained in the world. From 18 years old, Israeli men are conscripted into the IDF, Israeli Defense Force, and they serve three years. Women serve two to three years. After this is over, individuals are on reserve duty until they're 40's and they each serve a few weeks a year. The soldiers are proficient in their skills including Krav Maga which if you know anything about martial arts is one of the most deadly forms of martial arts in the world. The IDF has about 170,000 active troops and 400,000 reservists.

Israel also has the highest defense budget to GDP ratio in the world. It spends about \$2300 per person. A lot of this money comes from US foreign aid which is about \$3 billion dollars a year and this number hasn't escaped attention of Middle Eastern nations that don't like Israel and they blame the US because of the problems that they have with Israel.

So with such a well-armed military, it's not a big surprise that Israel could handily win the Six-Day War. After this battle was over, they gained the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and all of the Sinai Peninsula which they later gave back to Egypt in 1978. If you have a chance to Google the map, you'll see the amount of land they gained would be like if America gained Mexico and Canada in a war. So it really changed things in the nation. One unforeseen consequence of gaining these lands in 1967 is that the Palestinian enclaves of the West Bank and Gaza Strip belonging to Jordan and Egypt now belonged to Israel and it's in Israel's hands to this day and the main source of its international political contention.

This is just an overview of why it's so strong. So the next time you go to Israel, don't try to pick a fight with anyone on the street thinking that you'll win because you might end up with a broken neck.



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