

Kickboxing champ sticks to her guns

By ETHAN MINOVITZ

The former World Kickboxing Association's women's lightweight champion, Vancouver-born Leah Goldstein has little to kick about these days. Instead, she's totting a gun as a member of the Israeli police force.

The 1987 championship that might have kicked off a movie career in Hong Kong

Israel. They gave me a few big guys to spar with, and they thought that I could handle myself pretty well."

The Vancouverite was the only female student (and only Canadian) in her class of 30 immigrant trainees at the police academy. As immigrants themselves, the participants were trained to deal specifically with olim.



Naor Rahav/Maariv

LEAH GOLDSTEIN aims to continue her career in the Israeli police.

has become little more than a memory for Goldstein, now 24. But she acknowledges that her flying feet have proven useful on the force.

"Sometimes, I've had to use my skills — especially running!" she said during a *Bulletin* interview. "I've had to chase enough people."

The police officer was in Vancouver recently to visit her family. Father Sam is a businessman and mother Ahuva, a housewife. An older sister, Iris, works as a bookkeeper.

Goldstein attended Eric Hamber Secondary School and took correspondence courses. After studying criminology for a year-and-a-half at Toronto's Granton Institute, the Vancouverite moved to Israel in 1989.

"I wanted to join the army for two years, just for the experience. I was deciding whether to do it in Canada or in Israel, but my family convinced me to do it over there," said Goldstein, now a resident of Moshav Udim, near Netanya.

Last year, she applied to enter the police force through the Israeli army, training at the Bad Shmona military sports base.

Her first "fight" was with the Israeli bureaucracy.

A secretary — ironically, a woman — kept refusing to enroll her. "I said to myself, Who am I talking to? I might as well go right to the top."

And she did. A few days after Goldstein sent a letter to Israeli police chief Ya'acov Ternner, his secretary called her for an appointment.

"I talked to him for 10 minutes, and he said to be ready in two weeks."

Goldstein remarked that her kickboxing career and achievements drew considerable attention.

"It's not every day that a woman boxer comes to

Other than coping with language differences, Goldstein has begun to understand the difficulties police face in dealing with Israeli immigrants.

"They're very aggressive and not afraid of officers like they would be here. They'll argue with you, but you have to learn how to be really tough and not to give in to anybody."

After graduating from the police academy last August, the rookie worked with traffic and other departments before spending the past five months on the undercover narcotics detail, doing "busts" and house searches from her base in Hadera.

In her beat, which includes Pardess Hanna and Or Akiva, "the hours are pretty long, and you work the night shift, which is from nine at night to five a.m. Sometimes you've got to come in the next day at 12."

Goldstein added: "And

CHAMP — Page 13

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