

Military service to be limited to army

Young Greek men will soon perform their military service only in the army and not the air force or navy, according to plans unveiled by Defense Minister Evangelos Meimarakis over the weekend.

Speaking on NET TV, Meimarakis said that he would like to see conscripts only in the army by next year. Currently, conscripts are assigned to either the army, air force or navy, although most end up in the army.

Meimarakis said that he is also aiming to reduce the time conscripts must serve to nine months, adding that the time is ripe for such a reduction.

The basic military service in the army is now 12 months, which is down from 18 months earlier this decade.

The defense minister said that this change would be accompanied by rules that would prevent would-be conscripts from putting off their military service for postgraduate

studies. Meimarakis suggested that it is difficult for someone with a Master's degree or a PhD to take orders from a drill sergeant. Last April, Meimarakis said that he may rekindle efforts to make it compulsory for all Greek men to do their military service when they reach the age of 18.

Meimarakis said that if performing military service is compulsory, the age at which it is performed should also be non-negotiable.

Currently, Greek teenagers can obtain permission to delay the start of their service based on family, psychological, health or education grounds. It is fairly common for teens to be allowed to finish their studies before having to serve in the military. A small percentage is also excused completely on medical grounds. The idea of compulsory conscription at 18 was raised by New Democracy in 2004, but discussions never led anywhere.

Greek teens regular Internet users

The percentage of Greek adolescents with regular daily or even once-a-week use of a computer totaled 88.2 percent in the first quarter of 2008, while the percentage of juveniles using the Internet totaled 71.7 pct over the same period, the National Statistics Service announced on Monday. The percentage of the same group using a mobile telephone over the same period totaled 86.5 pct.

In a report on the use of information technology and hi-tech communications by Greek households in 2008, the statistical service said the percentage of adolescents aged 12-15 years with access to the Internet totaled 84.9 percent in the first three months of 2008.

The majority of the same age group that use either a computer or have access to the Internet did so from either their schools or homes. Access rates from other areas, Internet cafes, public libraries, cultural and athletic clubs, totaled 23.5 pct for computer use and 28.3 pct for Internet access.

Some 68.3 pct of Internet cafes' visitors were males. The report also showed that 29.3 pct of adolescents were using MSN services for online communication.

Maccabee-era tablets found near Jerusalem shed light on ancient Jewish warriors

Three fragments of a Greek inscription, believed to be part of the "Heliodoros stele" were recently found at an Israel Antiquities Authority excavation at the National Park of Beit Guvrin.

The Heliodoros stele, dating back to 178 B.C.E. and consisting of 23 lines inscribed in limestone, is considered one of the most important ancient inscriptions found in Israel.

Dr. Dov Gera, who studied the inscriptions, determined that the fragments were actually the lower portion of "The Heliodoros stele". This discovery confirmed the assumption that the stele originally stood in one of the temples located where Maresha- Beit Guvrin National Park stands.

The new fragments were discovered in a subterranean complex by participants in the Archaeological Seminars Institute's "Dig for a Day" program.

As published by Professors Cotton and Wörzle in 2007, this royal stone stele bears a proclamation by the Seleucid king, Seleucus IV (father of Antiochus IV). The contents of the stele shed light on the Seleucid government's involvement in local temples, mentioning an individual named Olympiodoros, the appointed "overseer" of the temples in Coele Syria - Phoenicia, including Judea.

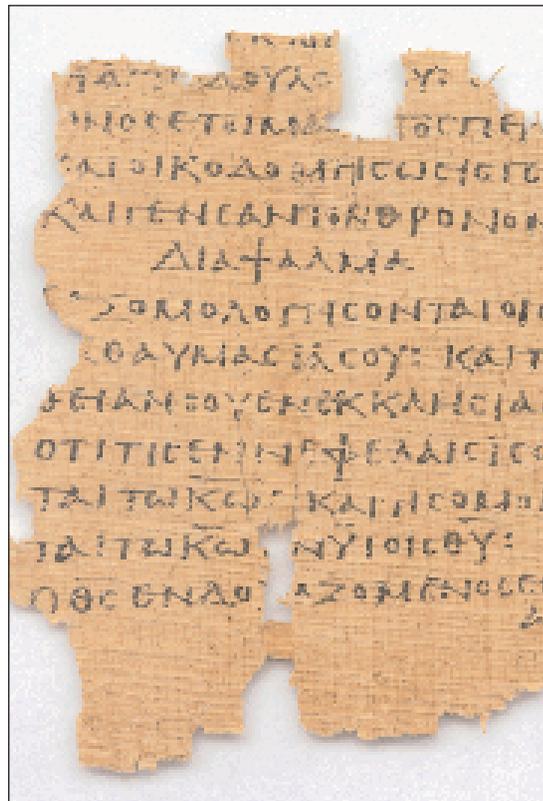
The order of the king was sent to Heliodorus, who was probably the same person mentioned in the book of II Maccabees. According to the story in Maccabees, Heliodorus, as the representative of King Seleucus IV, tried to steal money from the Temple in Jerusalem but instead was severely beaten as a result of divine intervention.

Three years later, Seleucus IV was

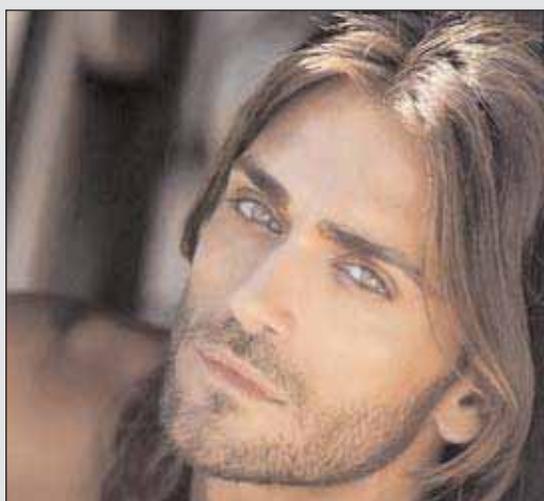
assassinated and was succeeded by his son Antiochus IV, who was the ruler, who according to II Maccabees, eventually issued an edict of persecution against the Jewish people and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem leading to the Maccabean Revolt.

In short, it can be determined that this royal stele originated in the city of Maresha, and adds important archaeological evidence and historical context to understanding the period leading up to the Maccabean Revolt, an event celebrated each year on the holiday of Hanukah.

Dr. Ian Stern, excavation director on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority adds, "this discovery is the fruit of a joint effort on the part of the Archaeological Seminars Institute's 'Dig for a Day' program, the Israel Antiquities Authority and the staff of the of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority in the National Park of Beit Guvrin."



Bulgaria Border Police Busts Greek Male Model Accused of Cocaine Trafficking



A Greek male model, Teo Theodoridis, has been arrested at the Sofia airport Monday during an attempt to leave the country with a false passport, the Darik radio reported, citing information from the Bulgarian Border Police.

The Border Police check-up revealed that Greek authorities have been trying to trace Theodoridis for the alleged traffic of 4 kilograms of cocaine from Columbia to Athens.

Theodoridis attempted to escape to another country through Bulgaria by using a false Greek passport. The Police found out that the passport has been stolen several days ago in the Thessalonvki area.

Theodoridis is going to be extradited to Greece and turned over to Greek authorities.