

Captain Michael (Micha) Ron-Besserglik ז"ל



He fell [in the line of duty] on 20th Cheshvan 5720 (10th November 1960).

Micha was born on 29th Tishrei 5697 [15th October 1936] in Jerusalem¹. He began his studies at the Ma'ala School and continued them at a working-class [primary] school. In 1947, when the country was at war and he was just 11 years of age, he already worked on the fortification of the broadcasting building and also knew how to wield a weapon.

During the siege on Jerusalem, Micha helped in the distribution of water to the city's residents and, when his parents were engaged in defensive duties outside the home (his mother received a badge of honour for the protection of Jerusalem), he took care of his younger sister and also served as a messenger between the positions.

In 1949, he moved with his parents to Tel-Aviv, where he completed his studies at the Max Fein vocational school, in the aeronautics course. When he was about 16, he received his pilot's wings, at first, in the Air Force's youth battalions. One year later, he joined the Air Force and completed the flying course as an excellent trainee. He was given his pilot's wings by the Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Chaim Laskov.

But apparently, his destiny was to be a harsh one. The first time in his life he was hurt was when the Palestine Post premises were bombed. His parents' house was destroyed and he was rescued, with his sister, from amongst the rubble. A second tragedy occurred on the day he had qualified to fly jet-planes - when he set out for a short vacation, he suffered a severe motor accident and there were concerns that one of his legs may need to be amputated. He lay unconscious for several days and, upon regaining consciousness, his first question was, "Doctor, will I be able to fly again?" All his thoughts in life were focused on flying. Micha stayed in hospital for three years and he managed to convince the medical committee that he was physically fit for active flight.

On his first flight after leaving the hospital, the examiner put Micha through difficult tests and he was required to prove his strength precisely with his left leg, which took great efforts on his part.

With further training, Micha made up the time he had lost during his long hospitalisation and, when he was selected for the [Dassault] Super Mystère² Squadron, which was one of the Air Force's elite tactical units, there were no bounds to his joy.

Micha was highly respected and he never missed a chance to fly. The feeling that he needed to make up for lost time always pursued him. Like every pilot, he hoped to prove his strength, also, in an "encounter with the MiGs³." And, indeed, in one of the most prolonged and exhausting aerial battles which developed into dogfights between our aircraft and the enemy's, Micha vanquished an enemy [plane] in battle.

¹ [TN: Michael was the son of Nuta (Natan) Besserglik and Bracha Frenkel, both from Częstochowa. They later adopted the surname Ron.]

² [TN: French fighter-bomber used by the Israeli Air Force.]

³ [TN: Russian aircraft widely used by the Arab nations.]

In the rejoicing that ensued in Micha's honour upon his return to the base, his comrades could not cease congratulating him on his success in shooting down the plane with its pilot. However, Micha, the stalwart warrior who was so adept in standing before great obstacles, said to them, "Comrades, I fully share your happiness as regards the aeroplane being shot down, but let us not forget that that pilot's mother surely awaited his return home. So, I find it difficult to rejoice over the loss of the pilot also". Here was revealed the tender and warm heart of the intransigent man, who knew no tiredness in his battles for life. But a fortnight later, this heart of his ceased to beat, when he fell in the line of duty.

Blessed be his memory.

