



"Because A Friendship as Strong As This Will Never Let Us Forget"/Haim Guri

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In memory of Arbel Reich (z"l) who on Thursday July 12, 2007 fell during combat operations in the Gaza Strip

First Sergeant Arbel Reich (z"l), from Yuvalim in the Misgav Regional Council, son of Moshe and Yael Reich, founding members of the community, and brother to Moran and Einav, an IDF NCO from the Recon Battalion, Elite Unit of the Givati Brigade fell during combat operations in the Gaza Strip, when an IED was activated against his unit in battle.

Arbel, aged 21 was eight months prior to his honorable discharge from regular army duty.

On Friday afternoon, July 13, 2007, under a hot sun, Arbel came to his final resting place in Misgav's regional cemetery. Thousands came to tearfully accompany him, pay their last respects and console the anguished members of his family to the sound of the heart-wrenching tears of his stunned young friends unable to comprehend the loss. But who could...

The photos he left behind show a fine young man. The eulogies said before his grave painted a picture of a humane, ideological, sensitive and caring person, one who loved

life, his family and country, a young man who was dedicated to his service, and saw friendship as a supreme value.

The following are portions of the various eulogies said during Arbel's (z"l) funeral

Remarks made by Moshe Reich, his father

"We will continue Arbel's path, his path of giving, love, his way of helping others and humility"



"Arbeli, I tried all night to write something, but I couldn't. In fact, it was only after we returned this morning from the hospital in Nahariya, after we gave you our final kisses goodbye that I was able to write a few words.

What an absurd world it is, where fathers eulogize their sons and not the opposite. Even more absurd is that a grandmother is bringing her grandson to be buried.

How symbolic it is Arbeli, you were born on the 10th of Iyar, the anniversary of the death of your grandfather Yitzhak for whom you were named, and today, the 27th of Tamuz, the anniversary of the death of your grandmother Sima, we are bringing you to your eternal resting place.

The last phone call that I received from you was on Wednesday around 4 after noon, when I was on my way from Nahariya to kibutz Afeq.

Between us, there was an unwritten agreement that you would call to update each time you knew that you would not be able to call that evening and from this, we would understand that you were heading out on an operational activity, and I always asked you to take care of yourself and wished you success, this time too. But this time we made a date to meet this Friday. Unfortunately, the bitter announcement reached us sooner. Yesterday at 6:15AM, we were informed that you had fallen in battle while on an operational activity with your company in Gaza.

Even today how symbolic it was my dear Arbel, we drove to the hospital in Nahariya to say our goodbyes to you, to the place where your final journey began. How symbolic it is that it was the same hospital that we said our goodbyes to both your grandfathers, Baruch and Yaacov.

My dear Arbel,

We will continue to remain together as a family, to support one another and be as strong as possible- Einav, Moran, and your mother Yael and grandmother Sarah, with all the rest of our close and distant relatives, friends and acquaintances.

We will continue Arbel's path, his path of giving, loving, his way of helping others and his humility.

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

Goodbye to you, our dear and beloved son.

A son of Yuvalim

A son of Misgav

A son of the Galilee

A son of an Elite unit of Givati and the Israel Defense Forces

A son of the State of Israel and the Jewish People."

**I Feel - a song written in memory of Arbel
Written and Sung by Tcholo (Ilan Fleishman, a friend from Misgav)**

"Can you feel how my heart is shattered into pieces?"

You know my brother, that the sun will shine tomorrow!
That tomorrow there will be light and sunset, a moon and blossom!
Can you hear, my dear friend, the chirping of the birds?
Can you feel how my heart is shattered into pieces?
When will you return? When will you wake up?
Where do we go from here?

Tell me my friend!
When will it end? Where are you going?
It is hard for me without you... friend...
Do you know my friend that winter is fast upon us?
Do you hear the sounds of war, my friend?
Can't you feel my friend how everyone is crying over you?

When will you return? When will you wake up?
Where do we go from here?

Tell me my friend! } x2
When will it end? Where are you going?
It is hard for me without you... Arbel...

You know my friend...

Remarks Made By Arbel's Regiment Commander

"You fought heroically and with determination to complete the mission, at the head of our forces, setting an example for the rest of the company under fire, during combat and just as you always did during routine times."



"Arbel, only yesterday you fought so bravely and courageously under heavy fire in Gaza and today we are here paying our respects and saying goodbye. It is strange to speak about a soldier in the past tense, especially one such as yourself, Arbel, so dominant, brave and everyone's friend.

You could always be seen leading your soldiers, whether in routine activities or in battle.

As a unit sergeant, you took care of all your soldiers' needs, both large and small. I remember meetings with you during briefings before and after an operation. Always so professional, always so eloquent and above all with a clear and concise opinion, you always knew to stand your ground and you were never afraid to say what's in your heart.

Last night, once again you were leading your men, and this time as a machine gunner, you were killed by those terrorists. You fought heroically and with determination to complete the mission, at the head of our forces, setting an example for the rest of the company under fire, during combat and just as you always did during routine times.

For months now, we are fighting those terrorists who are determined to disturb our lives and harm the children of Sderot and of the Negev.

We have been given this important task, a mission and mitzvah to stop those terrorists. The best way to do this is by conducting surgical incursions led by brave and qualified commanders and soldiers such as you.

Arbel, it is important for you to know that your friends completed their mission and acted with determination and commendable courage in order to attain the objectives of this operation and reach your murderers.

Reich family, no words can console you or compensate for your loss, although one thing I can tell you is that Arbel fell in defense of the State of Israel, its residents, and her citizens with the understanding of the significance of this operation. Arbel fully believed in this mission and acted accordingly.

Moshe, Yael, Moran and Einav, yesterday on the 26th of Tamuz, July 12, 2007 at 3:00 in the morning our fates were tied in blood, the Givati Reconnaissance Battalion and Brigade will do all that it can to ease your suffering, even if only in a small way. I hug and embrace you into our hearts and promise to continue to act in the spirit of Arbel, both as a commander and a soldier.

Arbel's legacy will be a candle to our feet.
We are with you for all eternity.

Arbel, I salute you in your final path, may your soul rest in peace"

Arbel

Written by: Jonathan, a soldier and friend from Arbel's unit

"Arbel simplified for me the abstract term of friendship"

"I want to tell you a little bit about who Arbel was for me and our unit. To me it always seemed that from the day he enlisted, and even long before, Arbel knew how a team in a Special Ops unit was supposed to be like and how he supposed to behave.

Maybe it was from the stories he heard from his friends, or maybe the older guys from the classes above him, those who served in these elite units - Arbel clearly understood the social significance of the unit's reciprocal responsibility for one another.

He simply waited to enlist, to join a team in an elite unit and apply on us everything he had ever dreamed and imagined as to how we would look and behave.

I remember his saying "the team, it is not something for the present, it is for our years of reserve duty, it is for life."

Now, writing those words on these pages, I suddenly understand that Arbel was the core of our team, bringing together those who took a greater or a lesser lead, as well as those who were connected to each other and to those who are less connected.

He was our leader as far as our social cohesiveness was concerned, team gatherings, barbeques and beer and parties.

Actually, our first team gathering we had, was here, in Yuvalim, at Arbel's house. Arbel spoiled us with tremendous quantities of meat, breads and beer, enough for the whole unit.

For me Arbel simplified the abstract term of "friendship".

When you are carrying a stretcher and suddenly feel a tap on your back that symbolizes a switch, you can be assured that it is Arbel who is tapping on your back, waiting to replace you.

If suddenly, at the last minute you need a volunteer who would stay on duty over Rosh Hashanah, Succoth or Passover; it will most likely be Arbel.

If it was a kitchen duty, guard duty, or some other stupid routine task or an assignment, it was more probable that Arbel will be the volunteer.

If it were to celebrate David's birthday at midnight, cover him with soap, oil and sand, to tie him to a stretcher and drag him to the showers- the whole team would be there- but Arbel would be the only one who would run to plant a giant kiss on his head, in the middle of all the mess.

And when one of the guys had to move out of his apartment and there was not enough money to pay the movers- Arbel, without thinking, went to the ATM, took out 700 shekels and stuck it in his friend's hands.

In training, he was constantly concerned with the condition of the team, and he initiated motivation talks.

He always had the motivation to please and come through in every mission on the best side – if it was a score of the team in some test – or the success of field navigation. The main focus was on the team and their success.

When we were together in our NCO training course, to see that I was dog-tired, give me one of those stupid glares that only he knew how to do, tap on the bed next to him and asked laughingly "you want to cuddle"?

Our Arbel wanted to be a combat soldier so much - to be in the thick of the battle! Our Arbel was killed in Gaza. After this, Arbel will no longer be in our active soldier's list.

Nevertheless, today I feel as if his parents Moshe and Yael and his sisters Moran and Einav joined our team.

I hope that in some small way we too will succeed in becoming part of the Reich family."

During the "Shiva" two young men came to the Reich family home. They came to each of the members of the family, expressed their condolences and presented themselves: they were two friends from Haifa, who had just now completed high school and a few weeks ago visited the 'Givati' enlistment booth in Tel-Aviv at an information fair which was about all the different units in the army. It was there that they met Arbel.

The two of them told the family "we had a long conversation with Arbel, who had only praise for his service in 'Givati' and became fully impressed by Arbel's patriotism, love of the army and pride for his unit. We understood then and there that we were dealing with a special young man with high ideals. After we saw his picture in the paper, as a soldier who had fallen in Gaza, we felt the need to come and console you, to tell you how in spite of our brief acquaintance, he had succeeded in impressing us so greatly".

As a result of this conversation with Arbel, one of the two young men volunteered to serve in 'Givati'. (The other young man was already placed in another combat unit.)

Arbel

Written by: Amnon, a soldier and friend from Arbel's unit

"How did it happen that you volunteered to stay on the base during Rosh Hashanah and Succoth, because you wanted the guys to go home for the holidays"

"Always smiling and laughing

I am trying to write something and cannot believe that I am writing it about you. It was only yesterday that I came and told you what a "pain" it was to carry the machine gun in action and you of course naturally smiled and laughed.

It is so strange to know a person so "good" that his boxer shorts are in the colors of nation's flag and torn through and through and he calls them his "lucky shorts", and suddenly we are here and you are there. How is it that every morning you would wake us all up with a smile glued across your face from ear to ear yelling "GOOD MORNING", just because the sun had risen and a new day had began.

There was not a single hike that if someone indicated even the smallest pain while carrying the stretcher you were there to replace them, even tough you had just finished carrying the stretcher for the past hour.

Who cared about our team more than you did?

Who was it if not Arbel that organized all the discussions about how we could improve the unit.

How did it happen that you volunteered to stay on the base during Rosh Hashanah and Succoth, because you wanted the guys to go home for the holidays.

You had a special standing in the unit, everyone felt that you were a person whom they could consult with on just about anything. There were times when it was you and only you who would keep us together in the most difficult of situations. We are trying without much success to comprehend what has happened. How will we be able to continue with seeing you only in pictures?



Arbel you are a friend in the truest sense of the word.
We love you; you will be in our hearts forever."

Arbel

Written by: Amir, a soldier and friend from Arbel's unit

"You were always the glue that kept the team together and motivated us, the one who would organize unit gatherings, hikes and trips, a true leader"



"When you think of Arbel, you begin to understand why they say that God always takes the 'good ones', you were always the best, the best in everything, the glue that kept the team together and motivated us, the one who would organize unit gatherings, hikes and trips, a true leader". No, we will not forget how you took it upon yourself to instill all the "city kids" with a passion for hiking in nature...



How after a back wrenching week of orienteering, whether in the north or the south, when most of us just wanted to lay under the air-conditioner, you tried to drag us to another hike in the Judean Desert, just one more creek. We will never forget how on nights that we were dying for pizza after another hard day in the field, we would be running after you collecting wood for a fire for another pot of soup that you loved so much, because in your unit, that's what we ate.

You did not always have it all your way, but you never got tired, and you never gave up on us.

We will never forget, how always, on early wake up calls... you were the address for the heart breaking pleas of Amnon: "Arbel, just 5 more minutes... give us just 5 more minutes... if we (your team members) had just 5 more minutes with you, 5 minutes to say good bye properly... but no, you did it your way, and when you decide something, everyone agrees, just like a true leader.

Aside from the giant hole that you left in each and every one of us, you left a giant hole in our unit. Officers came and officers went but Arbel the leader always stayed with us.

Now you are gone, I have absolutely no idea who will take your place, who will motivate everyone. I do not understand why God took you. I guess that he needs someone like you up there, someone who will keep things moving, wake up the sleepy ones and the lazy ones refusing to get up.

We will miss very much:

Amir, Akerman, Amnon, Gross, Hezi, Eisenberg, Udi, Tycho, Mangisto, Yarden, Schwartz, Siag, Rivlin, David, Ivan, David, Turgeman, Michael, Zimmerman, Kfir, Kozi, Yigal, Nati, Giora, Yuval, Shacham, Shweitzer, Adiel and Gilad.

And the entire "Orev" Givati family, that loves you and misses you and hugs your family real hard, is crying that they have joined our "family" under such painful circumstances.

Arbel, you will remain in our hearts forever, we have lost a true friend..."

Arbeli

By: Gidi Zilbar and the friends of Arbel from Yuvalim

"That's how you lived your life, always the first one, always giving of yourself for others"

"Arbeli, our brother,

Just this past Wednesday we spoke with you, you told us about your weekend experiences and 24 hours later we are sitting in your yard, not believing that you are not here with us...

It is hard to believe that we won't have any more "Cuervo" Tequilas at Shperver's house, no more coffee along some stream that you dragged us to or we won't hear your rolling laughter anymore.

We went through everything together, from the kindergarten to the army, you were always there, looking after us, our Polish mother.

As a little boy you would always be with a basketball in your hand and new shoes from America.

How is it that we will no longer smell that special fragrance of "Jango" your dog, that you loved so much, and you will not be there to declare, "This is the best odor in the world!?"

Who will make us watch "Eskimo Lemon" and "Charley Vachetzi" on the contention that it is a classic and a quality film? Now we will have to fess up and say that we loved, loved it all...

Arbeli, you always wanted to be a hero, to be the first. For you the army was the peak of your aspirations, already from a young age, you dreamed of going far and giving of yourself as much as you could.

We remember you every Friday at Iris' house, telling us stories about the army with a giant smile wiped across your face, proud of all the sores and pains you managed to accumulate in all of your strange and unique ways. That's how you were in your life, always the first one, always giving of yourself for others. At least we can take solace in the fact that you ended your life in the manner in which you believed in, as a hero.

Now though many things remain open. Who will build the ranch that we all dreamed about? Who will travel the world with us after the army? Dreaming for us all of the big dreams?

Where will you be when all of us "rags" get discharged from the army? Where will we sit on the second evening of Passover? When all of us get married?

Arbeli, we will always remember that last picture of you, the good looking guy with the polo t-shirt from our last evening together. Arbeli, you were like a brother to us and now that you are not among us, we promise that your family will be our family.

Arbeli, we love you, you were everything and more for us.

Loving you and remembering always,

The Yuvalim kids, minus one".

The Reich family lost a beloved son. Misgav has lost one of their best, a student at the regional high school, an athlete- a basketball player who played on the local team, a musician, a drummer in a band at the local community center, a young man who always touched everyone with his sensitivity, joy and mischievousness, wise and involved in the community, a social magnet, ready to volunteer for every task.

It is with this spirit of volunteerism, instilled with the knowledge that this is the right thing to do for this country, its trails he lovingly traversed, volunteered for an elite army unit, the Givati Brigade's Recon Unit, and in battle against terrorists met his heroic death, at the age of 21 years old. In the hearts of all who cherish him, he will remain young and special and beloved, forever...

May he rest in peace and his memory be blessed!