

## **FROM THE RABBI'S DESK 10/22/17**

I would like to share with you an article about my cousin, Major David (Dudi) Zohar, and our grandmother, Frania Goldhar, whom I remembered in my benediction for the ZOA, which I posted on September 14.

### **Apache Pilot Made a Grandmother Proud: "He's My Revenge Against the Nazis"**

Frانيا Goldhar, the grandmother of Maj. (res.) David (Dudi) Zohar, who was killed in a helicopter crash, was a Holocaust survivor. 'She finished her lectures to children by saying she has a grandson in the Air Force. The Nazis tried to exterminate her, and now she has a grandson that's part of Israel's defense,' Zohar told Yedioth Ahronoth in an interview in January.

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Maj. (res.) David (Dudi) Zohar, who was killed in an Apache helicopter crash at the Ramon Air Base on Monday night, made his grandmother Frania Goldhar, a Holocaust survivor, very proud when he became a pilot in the Air Force. "This is her pride and also her revenge against the Nazi enemy," Zohar told Yedioth Ahronoth in an interview in January, shortly after she passed away. Zohar, a 43-year-old father-of-five, will be laid to rest at 6:30pm Tuesday at the cemetery in Haifa. "My grandmother gave lectures to children about the Holocaust," Zohar said in January. "She always finished her lectures by saying today she has a grandson in the Air Force, and this was her revenge against the Nazis. They tried to exterminate her, and now she has a grandson who is part of the State of Israel's defense apparatus."

The interview with Zohar featured an emotional photo of Frania waving to her grandson who is flying a combat helicopter over her home with her arm stretched out, showing the number the Nazis branded her with when she was 21 years old: 50909.

The photo was taken some seven years ago, when Frania was 88 years old. "This is a photo of victory," said Frania's son, Eli, who took the photo.

"Her entire life, my grandmother worked for her family and took care of everyone. If I was able to make her proud, that makes me very proud," Zohar

Frانيا passed away earlier this year at the age of 95. Her husband passed away from a heart attack when he was only 57. Four years later, her younger son Koby was killed when he was only 16 when a tractor he was riding flipped over.

Her son, Eli, said his mother had two main lessons she made sure to instill in her children. "She always said, 'life is a gift, and this gift must be protected and make the most out of it.' The second sentence was that 'We only have one country, the State of Israel, and we need to protect our country, because if we wouldn't have Israel, we wouldn't have anything.'"

Near 9pm, an A-model Apache helicopter from the IAF's Magic Touch Squadron was returning to the Ramon Air Base from a routine training flight when it encountered a technical malfunction.

The pilots reported the malfunction to the control tower and continued approaching for landing. Shortly after that, the helicopter crashed between the two runways in the base.

An initial investigation into the accident found no connection between the technical malfunction the helicopter experienced and the crack recently discovered in the posterior rotor blade of one of the IAF's Apache helicopters during a routine check-up, which led to the grounding of two squadrons in June.

The Air Force is examining all lines of inquiry, but at this point it appears technical failure in the helicopter's back rotor operations was the main factor that caused the crash. Investigators are now checking whether the technical failure originated in the steering or the propulsion system.

The investigation is being overseen by Col. A., an aircrew instructor at the IAF's Command & Staff School and the former commander of a helicopter squadron.

The family commemorated Frania in a book documenting the story of her life, "Seal on my Heart," which comes with a CD of her poems, some written while she was incarcerated at the Auschwitz extermination camp.

"To tell everything is so difficult," writes Frania at the beginning of the book, "I have not forgotten, these are things you cannot forget, but it's better not to think about them again if you want to live under the sun, and not in the frayed shadows of nightmares. Most of my life I have driven the memories away, trying to go from moment to moment, from hour to hour, and move on, on and on."

About being sent to Auschwitz, she wrote: "When I turned 21, time stopped, and from the moment I was thrown off the train to the day I was liberated, my life was suspended, as if I were the sleeping princess in the enchanted palace. But it was not a palace that kept me asleep, but the Auschwitz death camp, and no roses covered its walls, but electric barbed wire fences. The lips of a prince were not waiting for me, instead it was Dr. Mengele's damning finger."

On the number branded on her left arm, Frania wrote: "This is the name I received at the age of 21. From that moment on, I had no other name but this number, which is engraved in my flesh to this day."

She painfully described the trauma of have to shave her hair. "I was willing to give up food, sleep, almost anything, but not my hair," she said. "I obsessively kept my body and head clean. In spite of the terrible filth and the terrible lice that lurked in every corner of the camp, I managed to meet German standards and avoid the frequent shavings that were forced on us."

But she was eventually forced to shave her hair. "I did not believe my hair would grow back and I mourned it bitterly. It was the last connection to everything that was dear to me," she wrote.

Frانيا kept a paper bag at the entrance to her house for 50 years that read, among other things: "Knowing how to give is about listening to the other's will, forgiving others' mistake, sharing your loved one's happiness, letting others make mistakes, and knowing how to accept."