



Sgt. Maj. Mordechai Butbul



August 6, 2006 – Sgt. Maj. Mordechai Butbul, 28, of Shlomi, was killed when a Katyusha missile fired by Hizbullah terrorists landed in Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, where he was stationed.

Mordechai and Cheftzi met through friends, and got married three years ago. Just two weeks ago, they celebrated the second birthday of their son Shalev. It never occurred to them that this would be their last celebration together. “Shalev was always more attached to me,” said Cheftzi. “But that weekend in Jerusalem, he wanted only his father, as if he knew that they didn’t have that much time together. He simply didn’t want to leave him for a second, and they played together the whole time.”

When the fighting started along the Lebanese border, Moti was infused with motivation and requested to join an active unit so that he could fight. “He was one of those who said that this war is just,” said his wife. “He said that we need to fight to the end and not stop in the middle, or else we would have another war every two years. He wasn’t afraid.

“When we were at home in Shlomi and Katyushas would land near us, he would go out to the balcony to see where they had landed. He said that when his time came, it would happen.”

But Cheftzi didn’t share his enthusiasm. “When they were about to call him up, I asked him not to answer the phone if his commander called. But they called the house. We didn’t have caller ID, so he answered.”

Moti was called up last Wednesday. He and Cheftzi would speak on the telephone every few hours, and Cheftzi would tell him where she and Shalev were, because of the missile attacks. Their last phone call was at 8:00 in the morning. “He told me not to stay here, to get out, that it was dangerous. He didn’t want me to be alone with Shalev. He worried about me and my life and our son, but not about his own life.”

After Cheftzi heard about the missile attack in Kfar Giladi, she tried calling Moti, but couldn’t reach him. “It was clear to me that he had been killed,” she said. “In the evening I spoke with his commander’s wife, and she told me that her husband had been killed. At that point I was certain that Moti was also gone. I called the IDF city liaison and told them that they didn’t need to come to my house, that I knew.” But they came anyway according to directives, and told Cheftzi after Moti’s body had been identified.

Moti worked as a foreman for a moving and transportation company. Cheftzi said that he was always smiling and joking, that he loved to find humor in things, and helped everyone he knew. “He was always ready to help, even people he didn’t know, with whatever they needed. Even if it cost him his life.”

Sgt. Maj. Mordechai Butbul was buried in Shlomi. He is survived by his wife Cheftzi, his son Shalev, his parents, three sisters and two brothers, one of whom lives in the United States.

