

BIOGRAPHIES

MILIJA KOSTIC (1913-1979)

Mr. Milija Kostic, ex-member of Yugoslav Royal Air Force (lieutenant — reconnaissance observer) passed away in his 66th year of life on the 16th of June 1979.

He was born in the town of Sipanj near Kraguje-Vac, Central Serbia, Yugoslavia, where he completed high school. Subsequently, he graduated Yugoslav Royal Military Academy, 59th Class of graduates in 1934; in 1936 he was transferred to the Air Force where he completed reconnaissance (explorer) school.

War of 1941 (April 6, 1941) found him in Zagreb as a member of the bombers unit. After bombing several targets in Austria his unit left for Greece and then Africa on April 17, 1941. He continued to fight the enemy, first as a member of the Yugoslav, and later, as a member of the British Air Force, fighting in Germany and Italy. He participated in many reconnaissance flights deep over enemy territory and was fortunate enough to return back to his base — several times in a very damaged and limping airplane.

His contribution to the cause of our allies gives credit, not only to him but to our whole nation. He received several high military decorations and certificates of recognition.

When the war ended he lived with many of his Yugoslav countrymen through the great injustice: We won the war but we lost the Country. He refused to return to Yugoslavia, taken over by Marshal Tito and his communist government. He stayed in England where he finished the School for Surveyors and then took a job as a Land Surveyor. In 1951 he married Vera, his fiancee since before the war, who joined him in England. Their only daughter Helen, was born in 1952.

In 1953 they came to Canada to enjoy freedom and opportunity to build a better life which they could not do in their own country. In 1958 he was admitted as an O.L.S., he worked as Party Chief-Surveyor for several years, but due to bad heart he was transferred to drafting office, Central Region, D.H.O., now M.T.C. After 25 years with Province of Ontario, he retired on May 1, 1979. He did not enjoy his well deserved rest for too long. He was a great patriot, respected as an ex-airforceman-flyee, husband and father, and prominent member of Toronto's Serbian community.

Due to war and other life hardships, his heart gave up on June 16, 1979, and he went on his last flight with no return. He left behind him his family here in Toronto and in Yugoslavia. He was buried in York Cemetery on June 20, 1979.

At the cemetery the final good-bye was said, in addition to the priest, by his class-mates from Yugoslav Military Academy, Messrs Ivan Jakovljevic and Aleksandar Djordjevich, who also served with him in the same airforce unit during the last war.