**Memorial Service/Ceremony/Funeral Selections: A Collection of Christian Prayers, Eulogies, and Meditations**

 **Death of Active Duty Soldier**

**INVOCATION**

 **God and Father of us all. We are gathered here this afternoon to pay tribute to one of our own, SSG John Doe. Be with us this day giving strength, comfort, and mercy to all of us who grieve. Guide the words we say and may you be glorified. In your Holy Name. Amen.**

 **MESSAGE**

 **We must express our grief. Too often people express it inappropriately by trying to drown their sorrow. Crying, weeping, is a very appropriate response to grief regardless of what our society says about men not needing to cry.**

 **Depression and loneliness are a part of grief. With depression comes doubt--doubt in our God or that there is even a God. Depression is not unique to any one person. All of us experience it, and the closer we were to the one who has died, the deeper it is. But depression will pass. The clouds will roll back and the sun will shine.**

 **If we don’t deal with our grief appropriately, we can become physically ill knowing why. We often feel guilty about the loss. We ask, “What could I have done to prevent this death?”, and turn the thoughts over and over in our minds until it becomes an obsession. If we don’t deal with this problem it can dominate our life.**

 **What many of us are feeling this afternoon is resentment and anger. Resentment that our fellow soldier was killed. Anger in that we don’t know why or who committed the crime. Our anger and resentment can cause us to be overly suspicious of even the most innocent statement or person.**

 **This afternoon, we have gathered in memory of our fallen comrade, our fellow soldier SSG John Dow. A soldier of the highest caliber, a strong family man, a super trooper according to his 1SG. Others of the company commented that he was a nice guy, a SGT who cared for and looked after troops like a father. A strong professional soldier and military policeman. SSG Doe died in the line of duty, doing what he did best, providing security as a military policeman.**

 **I feel that as he lived, served, and, died, he would want the memory of his life to be positive. He would want everyone to be professional both on duty and off duty.**

 **Even as we grief the death of SSG Doe, we must remember that grief is a natural part of our human experience. We express a sense of lost a loved one or a close friend. There are both inappropriate and appropriate ways of grieving.**

 **Appropriate grieving begins with realizing that you are in shock. Shock enables us to get through the first few hours and days after the death of coworker or loved one. We need to stay busy, not sitting around doing very little. We act hostile toward our coworkers and toward those with whom we cooperate with.**

 **As we work through these various stages of grief, and even though we may revert back to one or more of them, we come to the point of seeing hope and affirming reality. It takes time. Often a year and getting past the 1st anniversary.**

 **The neutering of faith in God can ease the problems and stresses of grief. Not giving up on our creator, but affirming Him and His presence can help us get through the situation and relieve our resentment and hostility.**

 **We can’t bring SSG John Doe back, but we can remember our good relationship with him. We can recall the good times and the stressful times. One the best ways of reverencing his memory is not taking out our frustrations, resentments, and anger out on people. Apply that emotion to doing something constructive. SSG Doe, with his ability, strength, personality, will be missed greatly by each one of you here. Realize it, deal with it, and continue to live your life.**

**Memorial Service**

**Situation: Two soldiers killed in an automobile accident.**

**Text: Psalm 103**

 **We have gathered here today to pay our final respects to and , comrades and friends killed in a tragic accident. Their sudden and unexpected death gives us a vivid reminder of the truth of the words of Scripture read a few minutes ago: “As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.” {Psalm 103: 15-16}**

 **That’s the way it is with mankind. One day we can be very much alive and flourishing; the next day we can be dead and gone. In just such a way death has come to and . They were so very much a live only a few days ago, but now they are gone from our midst. Never again will we see their faces or hear their voices. Their death is a sobering influence to each of us. For in their deaths we reminded of the tenuous nature of our own existence. Your death, or mine, can come just as suddenly. Just as unexpectedly.**

 **Now that’s something that we don’t like to think about too much because it is a pretty grim thought. But it is true. I am happy to say, however, that there is also a word of hope and comfort for us here. For in this same Psalm which speakers of the shortness and uncertainty of human existence on this earth also tells us of the steadfastness of God’s love for his creatures. So we can find comfort and hope, not in ourselves or our actions, but in the God who created us.**

 **Our text reminds us that the God who created our feeble frames knows us. “... he remembers that we are dust.” {Psalm 103:14} His dealings with us take our nature into account. He deals with us in mercy. The Psalmist says that “As a Father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.” {Psalm 103:13}**

 **“He does not treat us as our sins deserves or repay us according to our iniquities.” {Psalm 103:10} God loves us and wants to share a vital relationship with us. Our sins prevent us from sharing such a relationship with God. But even so God does not say “All right, if that’s the way you want to be, to hell with you.” Although that is all that any of us deserve or can realistically expect, God, because of his love for us, has taken action to remove our sins from us. The Psalmist put it this way, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” {Psalm 103:11-12}**

 **We live in a world that is ever changing. Life is short and uncertain, at best. It comes and goes quickly. Only in God’s steadfast love- a love that never changes- can we find comfort and hope for our lives- and, yes, in our deaths.**

 **God has made his love known in Jesus Christ. God’s word to you and me is this: “I love you. I sent my son to die for you. If you will accept the provision I have made for you in my love which I expressed through my son Jesus Christ, I will forgive your sins and you will enjoy fellowship with me forever.”**

 **God calls to each one of his creatures. He offers love, mercy and forgiveness to all who answer his call. How will you respond to God’s love?” We can reject his love, decide to live by our own strength and will until we return to the dust from which we came. Or we can accept his love in Jesus Christ, live by his power in fellowship with him both here and hereafter. The choice is up to each one of us. Our eternal destiny rests on that choice.**

 **To accept God’s love means a whole new perspective on life. Of course, it does not change or deny the reality of our short life here on earth. Rather, it helps us focus on the fact that God’s love is an even bigger reality than death. Human life is filled with uncertainties, but we can find hope in the certainty of God’s unchanging love for us. And assured of God’s love, even in the midst of death we can say with the Psalmist: “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” {Psalm 103:1} Amen.**

**Memorial Service**

 **PVT John Doe was born on 10 December 1949, in Whitesboro, Texas. He graduated from high school in Collinsville, Texas. Before entering military service, PVT Doe worked as a welder.**

 **In June 1974, PVT Doe joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to Fort Ord, California, for basic training and AIT. He enlisted for Fort Sill as his station of choice. He was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 37th Field Artillery where he served as a cook.**

 **PVT Doe is survived by his wife and two daughters, Ann {five years old} Leah {four years old}.**

**MESSAGE:**

 **We have gathered this afternoon to pay tribute to one of our own fellow soldiers,**

 **Doe. We have all been saddened by his passing. I, along with many of you, remember him as the shy but smiling little cook basic Headquarters Battery. I recall my first conversation with him in the field about 3-4 weeks ago. He told me he how he had tried to get in the Army for seven years and had been turned down because he was under weight. After finally reaching the minimum weight standard, he joined the Army. He had had previous experience as a cook and it was apparent that he was enjoying working in that MOS. During the last few weeks, I was able to talk to PVT. Doe numerous times and got to know him in a small way. I noticed his dedication to his work and energetic effort. In a few short days that I knew him, I couldn’t help but feel drawn to John Doe. Everyone who knew him liked him.**

 **But PVT Doe is suddenly gone now. His passing is yet another solemn reminder to us all of how fragile and fleeting life is. How true the scriptures are that say, “What is your life? It is even a vapor of smoke that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”**

 **Though his life was short and his death premature, he was yet able to leave his mark on many of us. With the firm determination to serve in the United States Army, even if it took seven years, his pride in his work, his cheerfulness-all of these are lasting contributions to us who knew him. Even though he is gone, these qualities will remain and live on as an example and challenge to each of us.**

 **In our attention to death today, let us not forget life. Let us remember that while death is inevitable, life more powerful. In the words of the poet, “Death, you too shall die.” Just as the cold, chilly, winter months must give way to the light and warmth of spring, so death cannot stand before the advance of new life.**

 **Our Lord has given us a legacy of hope for the future when he said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that lives and believes in shall never die.” Let us not fear death but face it; let us not cower before the future but walk boldly into it.**

 **Then too, let us go on to take advantage of today’s responsibilities and opportunities. let us live each day well-- one at a time. Since we have only one life to live, we should give it our best. Each of us needs a cause and a purpose that is bigger than ourselves to which we can dedicate our lives. Let us stop regretting the past and fearing the future so we can get on with the business of living the present. May we learn, day by day, to seize the opportunities at hand, complain less, and thank God more.**

 **Today’s tribute to PVT Doe is most fitting and proper. He served the United States Army and his country well, and we pay our deep respect to him and our sympathies to his family. It is also fitting and proper that we, living, renew our commitment to life and resolve that God, being our helper, we will pursue only that which enhances life not that which threatens or destroys it. Let the words of one writer help us as we work toward that goal: “I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”**

 **Chaplain**

**Memorial Service**

**Suicide of Young Soldier**

 **SPC {P} John Doe was born in Cleveland Ohio. He joined the U.S. Army on 30 October 1985, and completed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He had AIT at the Ordnance Center and School at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland.**

 **He served his military career with Delta Company, 701st Support Battalion, from 9 June 1986, until the present. During this time, he worked with the Mech. Maintenance Platoon in the Shop Office, and in Shop Supply.**

 **His military awards and honors include the Army Service Ribbon, Rifle Sharpshooters Badge, and the Mechanics Badge.**

 **SPC {P} John Doe was born 10 April 1967, and died 8 January 1988.**

**INTRODUCTION**

 **We are gathered here this afternoon to pay tribute to Specialist {Promotable} John Doe. The circumstances surrounding his death are tragic and not easily explainable. It is times such as these that we realize our own mortality. How we deal with this realization affects our individual lives.**

**PRAYER/BENEDICTION**

 **May the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God , and his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you remain with you always. Amen.**

**PRAYER**

 **Father thank you for the privilege of prayer. Thank you for hearing us in our hour of need. Give us the understanding we need and desire at this time in our lives. Guide us to be sensitive to each other at all times. Make us aware of our fellow man as each of us struggle with the vicissitudes and problems of life. Grant us peace and forgiveness this day. In the name of Jesus Christ Your Son and Our Savior. Amen.**

**MEDITATION**

 **Specialist Doe took his own life. This we cannot deny. We must accept this fact, however puzzling as to the reasons why.**

 **As I visited with his fellow soldiers, coworkers, supervisors, and commander, I found a soldier who was well liked, who was a caring individual, and who was a sensitive person.**

 **Why do people commit suicide? Researchers have come up with several reasons: to escape intolerable situations {in their own minds}; to punish survivors; to gain attention {which is an inappropriate attention-getter because the person is not there to acknowledge it); to manipulate others, to avoid punishment; to avoid becoming a burden; to pursue an irrational, impulsive whim; or to express love. There are ramifications to each suicide far beyond which the individual committing the act cannot imagine--setting the stage for family, friends to consider the act also.**

 **As I searched the scriptures to see what the Bible has to say about suicide, I found that in most cases it was committed by those who felt hopelessness, disappointment, remorse, anger. Christ was tempted by Satan to commit the act in Luke 4:9. We also find principles that prohibit the commission of the act: the sacredness of the body, the expectancy of faith in meeting Christ, and the prohibition against murder.**

 **It is my understanding of scripture, based on John 3:16, and Matthew 12:31 & 32, that SPC Doe did not commit the unpardonable sin. In my conversation with Mrs. Doe, I learned the loved God, and had a personal relationship with Christ. He will be forgiven of suicide.**

 **Each of us here must realize that I am not condoning the act. There is help available for each of us who are experiencing difficulty with the family relationships, friend relationships, finances, etc. Each of us may be capable of the act. There is no one type of person immune. We can be rich or poor, Christian or non Christian, young or old. Depression plays a part in those who do not complete the act but not always significant. Most show some signs, but not always. The responsibility for the act belongs to the individual because he does the specific act. We cannot take that responsibility from them.**

 **For us today, we must live each day to the fullest. We must seek help to deal with problems. We must talk with others. We must be alert to the needs of others as presented by indicators. We should grieve for John Doe and his family in this time of death. We need to consider the fact that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. It is running away from a problem. Often times people run because they can’t, won’t admit they need help or they don’t know how to seek help and guidance.**

 **Psalms 130 has much to say to us. We are crying out from the depths of our souls seeking answers to the death of John Doe. We seek mercy and forgiveness for our thoughts and actions. We seek mercy and understanding as we individuals contemplate death both our own and John’s.**

 **We are in the depth of despair, sorrow, and agony, cry unto the Lord. Don’t turn to man’s way to alleviate stress, pain, despair, but seek God. Allow him to minister to you.**

 **Open your hearts to receive his comfort, to acknowledge his understanding. Wait on him to give forgiveness, grace and peace. Allow him to be a part of your loves. Watch and wait for him with more intensity than you would wait for the enemy at stand to each morning in the field.**

 **Let God be a comfort to you. Don’t give up today. Don’t give up easily. Let him pour out on you his grace, peace and understanding.**

**Memorial Service for an Infant**

**OPENING: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear {Psalm 46:1, 2a}.**

**INVOCATION: Our Father in heaven, Thou art the refuge of the distressed, and the helper of the needy: Out of the depth of our present grief we turn to Thee, praying that the light of Thy countenance will shine upon us, a sense of Thy presence will strengthen us, and the reality of the unseen world will console us, through Jesus Christ, who conquered death, we pray. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters... Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me...” {Psalm 23:1, 2,4}. “He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom...” {Isaiah 40:11}.**

**PRAYER: Eternal God, our heavenly Father, calm our troubled hearts with the quieting ministry of the Holy Spirit. {Accept our thanks for babes and little children, for the joy they bring and the lessons they teach us. Enable us to live lives that are richer and know a love that is deeper because of our association with this dear child whom thou hast received unto thyself.} Help us, O Father, to find our comfort in Him who took little ones in His arms and blessed them. In the name of Him who liveth to make intercession for us, grant us strength for our days, so that finally, when we come to the end of our journey here, it may be in the victorious faith that we shall be united again with our loved ones in the Father’s house, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Meditation:**

**INTO GOD’S HEAVENLY GARDEN**

 **In the most beautiful gardens, though carefully tended by the most skillful botanist, there is an occasional rose that buds, but never opens. In all respects the rose is like all the others but some unseen cause keeps it from blooming. It wilts and fades away without coming to its radiant unfolding.**

 **What happens in nature’s garden occasionally happens also in the garden of God’s human family. A baby is born, beautiful, precious-- but with some unseen, mysterious band sealing that life so that it can never come to its full unfolding. This child, too, like the bud that never fully opens, gradually fades away to be gathered back into God’s heavenly garden of souls where all imperfections are made perfect; all injustices are made right; all mysteries are explained; and all sorrows turned to happiness.**

 **Into the skilled hands of God we must entrust the care of this infant as Mrs. M. E. Smith did when she wrote: “An angel came and hushed my baby’s cries, and while I prayed that he might stay, stopped his breathing, stiffened his little limbs, and bore his spirit to heaven. On the brow was written with God’s own finger, Everlasting peace; on the still breast, Perfect purity; in the palms of the little hands, No rough scars of earthly work shall ever stain them; on the white round feet, Earth’s thorns shall never wound them; on the sealed eyelids, No tears shall wet them; and on the serene lips, No cry of pain shall pass them.**

 **Confident of the blissful abode of the innocent, we commit this infant into God’s heavenly garden of souls.**

**Now like a dewdrop shrined**

**Within a crystal stone,**

**Thou’art safe in heaven, my dove!**

**Safe with the Source of love,**

**The everlasting One.**

**And when the hour arrives**

**From flesh that sets me free**

**Thy spirit may await,**

**The first at heaven’s gate,**

**To meet and welcome me.**

**COMMITTAL: “In infinite wisdom and love our heavenly Father has received unto Himself the spirit of this little child. We therefore tenderly commit the body to its resting place in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”**

 **“May we take to heart these solemn moments, for each of us will one day be brought to the grave. May our trust be in Him who said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.”**

**PRAYER: {I read the Lord’s prayer.} Matt. 6:9-13.**

**Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**BENEDICTION: The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.**

**Complied from: Ministers Service Manual**

**His international Service, Minneapolis, MN and the Minister’s Service Handbook, Fleming H. Co., Westwood, NJ**

**Memorial Service for Retired Officer**

**Introduction:**

 **On behalf of Mrs. Doe and the Doe family I thank each of you for showing your love and support by coming to this memorial.**

**Call:**

 **Our help is in the Lord who made heaven and earth. {Ps. 124:6}**

 **From my distress I called upon the Lord: the Lord answered me and set me free. {Ps. 118:5}**

 **{Jesus said} Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many rooms if it were not so, I would have told you so, I would have you; for I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there you may be also. {John 14:1-3}**

**INVOCATION:**

 **Almighty and everlasting God you surround our brief moments on this earth with the eternity of your love and care and you make our frailty the object of your compassion and mercy. We come before you this time of sorrow and memorial acknowledging that you are the only lasting provider of help and consolation. We thank you for your grace and power through which we have life and the hope of eternal life.**

 **Look with compassion on the family and friends of Colonel Doe who are at this bereaved, and whose hearts are heavy with grief. Help us now to put our trust in you that we may obtain the blessing of your grace, the comfort of your peace, and the patience of eternal hope. Through the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**EULOGY:**

**SCRIPTURE:**

 **But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. But someone will say, “How are the dead raised?” And with what kind of body do they come?” How foolish! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat of something else. But God gives it a grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wishes, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.**

**So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory...Thanks be to God, who gives. {I Corinthians 15: selections}**

**SERMON:**

**PRAYER:**

**Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far flung battle line, to whom all ranks of life report, we bow before you with reverent hearts and in sublime faith knowing that you do lead us in death, as you do in life. Again you have ordered a fellow servant of our country to the realm of death. We are grateful for his life and those good and charitable works that he did while with us. Hear now the sorrows of those who mourn. Help us Lord, during the trial and the agony of the moment to preserve within us a faith and trust which does not doubt your love and your care. We particularly pray for the Doe Family. Touch their aching hearts with healing. Comfort them in their sorrow, protect them with your holy care, and may it be that through your grace this loss would encourage them and prepare them for an everlasting blessing and hope in that world where they may be forever with one another and with you through the work of Jesus Christ our savior. Amen.**

**SILENT MEMORIAL:**

**PSALM 23:**

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou their aching hearts with healing. Comfort them in their sorrow, protect them with your holy care, and may it be that through your grace this loss would encourage them and prepare them for an everlasting blessing and hope in that world where they may be forever with one another and with you through the work of Jesus Christ our savior. Amen.**

**BENEDICTION:**

**To you who mourn: May the Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.**

**FIRING OF VOLLEYS:**

**SOUNDING OF TAPS:**

**PRESENTATION OF COLORS:**

**DISMISSAL TO RECEPTION:**

**This conclude the Memorial Service. On behalf of the Doe Family, I invite you to join them in the Reserve Center Dining Room for the reception.**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Funeral Meditation**

**Suicide of Teenager**

**Psalm 23**

 **We are here today, as a family, as a community, to mourn the loss of a friend, a son, a brother. The crowd this morning attests to the fact that John Doe touched many lives and was indeed a very special person. There was so much that was commendable, genuine, and compassionate. He was a gifted artist and one who voiced aspirations to perhaps one day enter the ministry. His specialness could be further illustrated by each of you. John did not realize his own worth in the hearts of so many.**

 **We may find peace today knowing that John is now released from his deep distress and inward turmoil. Only God can fathom the inner workings of our hearts and minds. We do not know the reasons for the death. It is not our duty individually to condone or renounce, to pronounce judgment, or censure. God alone understandings.**

 **Death is usually caused by physical accident or disease; this one has been caused by emotional factors--a disease is real as physical illness. Apparently, John was driven to escape what seemed to him an unbearable situation. For many the termination of the flesh is the way the troubled mind can be put at ease. Let us assume that this untimely death was the result of an irresistible urge to find peace from that which was emotionally troublesome. In this assumption, may we find comfort.**

 **We may also find peace of mind in the reassurance of the resurrection. That the human spirit lives beyond physical death is a basic affirmation of the Christian faith. It is verified by historical witness which put it beyond the realm of human doubt. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; and he who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”**

 **So we mourn our loss, and it is for our benefit that we have assembled here today.**

 **I would like you to hear the work of God this morning above anything else. I’m hoping I will be an instrument that God uses so that when you leave here, having heard the ministry of music, having meditated upon his word, and hearing the sermon, you will say authentically, “The Lord has spoken to my life today at this service.”**

 **Here now the word of the Lord, {Ps 23}.**

 **David is writing this Psalm as a renegade, a fugitive from the king of Israel, Saul.**

 **He is hiding in the deserts or perhaps in the Judean Hill Country or even inside the Cave of Abdullam.**

 **The king of Israel, Saul, is in hot pursuit; driven by his jealous spirit to try to capture and kill the popular David.**

 **If we see the Psalm in this reality it helps us to appreciate all the more the meaning of these words as David uttered them.**

 **This Psalm is not the product of a man, who after much meditation in the quiet of a private study of library, writes the words which describes his God.**

 **These words are sung from the insecurity of a cave, of a desert wilderness, from the disappointment of fleeing from rightful promise, in the despair of possible death.**

**I. SATISFACTION AND REST {v.2}**

 **David says that because the Lord is my Shepherd, I must sing a song of satisfaction and rest. Verse 2 speaks of green pastures and still waters. It evokes the pastoral scene of a shepherd with his flock, lying in green pastures, beside a softly, babbling brook, with white-puff clouds reflected in the rippleless waters.**

 **What I want us to see is that David’s life at this point was anything but peaceful. You can read the accounts in the books of 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicle. David returned from a successful military campaign to the adulation of the adoring crowds. And from then on he has been pursued. He has posted his sentries to watch for Saul’s pursuing men. He knows that one false move, one false calculation, and he will be captured.**

 **David is unsettled, he is never still, never calm, never at rest. He is a fugitive from the law.**

 **He is like Bonnie and Clyde as fugitives who make their way from state to state with the law always one step behind. Only David has done no wrong.**

 **And in the midst of these tumultuous external circumstances he wants to sing a song. A song that says “The Lord is my Shepherd, and inside I’ve got still waters and grass so green.”**

 **Because the Lord is his Shepherd, his inward man sits down and rests beside the still waters, while his external man is pursued by the hot breath of Saul.**

 **This morning as we are grieving, as we feel the sharp pain of sudden loss, if the Lord be our Shepherd then we too can sing of green pastures and still waters.**

 **As we face the reality of our situation, we feel as if we would be overwhelmed by this loss. In our own human power there is no way to get rid of our senses of grief and sadness and fear.**

 **And yet it is David who shows us that it is in the midst of this situation that we can have God’s satisfaction and rest. It is in the midst of our fear that we remember that “God’ love casts out all fear.” It is in the midst of our sadness that we remember that, “The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, and patience.” It is in the midst of our grief that we must remember that it was God the Father who sent His Son, “to heal the brokenhearted.”**

 **We must learn what it means to have the Lord as our Shepherd when we are in our own cave of fear, guilt, and grief.**

 **God wants to be our Shepherd amidst the turmoil, not after it. God wants to be our Shepherd amidst the storm, not after it.**

 **David knew that there was rest amidst the turmoil because he let his inward experience of trust and confidence in God control his outward circumstances. David submitted to God’s power and discipline and was therefore able to say, “He maketh me to lie down....”**

**II. RESTORATION AND GRACE {v.3}**

 **I want us to see that this is more than even turmoil for David. It is despair and desperation. He has been anointed to be king. He has received the promise of the kingdom from God. But he is not on the throne in Jerusalem. He is running for his life. His life is going down the drain.**

 **But because the Lord is his Shepherd, David knows that there is one who can restore his life; one who can turn his paths of fleeing into paths of righteousness.**

 **{At this point I gave an example of my wife who restores furniture for a hobby, but God can restore life itself!}**

 **At times life has a way of beating us down, of making us ask “What does it all mean, and what does it all count for?” “What am I doing here in this cave when I have been anointed as king and have received the promise?”**

 **If the Lord is our Shepherd the He has the power to restore our life to His word of promise. Listen now to God’s word of promise to us:**

 **“Praise the Lord, O my soul and forget not all His benefits.**

 **He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases: He redeems**

 **my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion.**

 **He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is**

 **renewed like the eagles.”**

**“Never will leave you: never will I forsake you,” so we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.”**

 **We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, and in all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ, who loves us.”**

 **As David looked out of that cave, down in the valley where Saul’s army was pursuing after him; he saw those hoof prints, those tracks in the sand, and in his own natural mind he must have thought that certainly those were paths that were leading to his destruction.**

 **But because he had received and believed in God’s promise for his live, he was able to say “He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” {“The Weaver”, read here.}**

**THE WEAVER**

**My life is but a weaving**

**Between my Lord and me;**

**I may not choose the colors,**

 **He knows what they should be;**

**For He can view the pattern**

**Upon the upper side,**

**While I can see it only**

 **On this, the under side.**

**Sometimes he weaveth sorrow,**

**Which seems strange to me;**

**But I will trust His judgment,**

**And work as faithfully;**

**‘Tis He who fills the shuttle,**

 **He knows just what is best,**

**So I shall weave in earnest**

 **And leave Him the rest.**

**Not till the loom is silent**

 **And the shuttles cease to fly**

 **Shall God unroll the canvas**

 **And explain the reasons why--**

**The dark threads are as needful**

 **In the weaver’s skillful hand**

**As the threads of gold and silver**

 **In the pattern He has planned.**

 **--Anonymous**

**III. Courage And Comfort {v. 4-5}**

 **As David was fleeing Saul, he saw death’s shadow over that valley. Yet David was able to say, “I will fear no evil,” because he had claimed the promise of the presence of God. For David, that was a presence of protection and comfort. It was a presence that allowed him to say that even in the midst of his enemies, his Shepherd had prepared for him a banquet table.**

 **David was confident in looking toward the future, to that great day in Jerusalem when there would be feasting and celebration and banqueting at his inaugural ceremony.**

 **And so it is with us this morning, yes, there is shock, and pain, and grief, and remorse, there is guilt and anger. But this need not to lead to disillusionment and bitterness. With the Lord as our Shepherd we can work through our pain, we can submit to God’s grace and come to an acceptance of this reality so that life will not be endured but once again enjoyed.**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Death of Young Soldier**

**“Who Has the Last Say?”**

 **As I was considering what I would say to you men about the death of one of your friends I anticipated that my predominant emotion would be sadness. But I was surprised at myself because that which I felt was anger. As I pondered over that emotion I began to be able to verbalize my anger.**

 **What was I angered about? The thought that death has the last say, the final word for the majority of people in the world. It has more people in bondage than any prison or political system ever could have. The worst part, or best part, depending upon how you look at it, is that death does not have to have the final say.**

 **What do you think about when you think about death? How you think about death is going to affect how you think about life.**

 **For many, far too many, death is an escape from life. The suicide rate is climbing every day. People are exhibiting more and more self-destructive behavior because life is disappointing, pressure-packed, unhappy and most often meaningless.**

 **You’re going to die, maybe tragically at 19 like Smith; maybe at 26 like SGT Doe with a wife and three children; maybe at 35 from an unexpected heart attack like too many are experiencing today; or maybe at 80 after a long full life; but you’re going to die. So am I.**

 **I don’t know what your philosophy about death is. Maybe you’ve never thought about it. Maybe you just figure that when it comes it comes, for you have no say about it. Maybe you believe in reincarnation like so many do today. Maybe you believe that there is nothing beyond the grave and like an animal you decompose and that’s it.**

 **Everyone who believes that there is nothing after this life has relinquished all power to death. Death has the final word you do not. Everyone who believes that there is something beyond the grave, call it eternal life, or Heaven, or Hell, or Hades, or whatever has relinquished all power to the One who is going to manage that.**

 **Either way you are the one has the choice of what or who has the last word. You don’t have any choice about the fact that your body is going to die, but you do have a choice about who has the last say.**

 **The Bible has some very clear statements about death. You can consider them or disregard them, you can act upon them or be apathetic to them. That is your choice.**

 **The most basic statement is recorded in the ninth chapter of the book of Hebrew. “It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment.”**

 **The Bible clearly states that there is a judgment for all men following death, that we all die, and we all die once. For those or you who may be depending upon reincarnation you may want to rethink that position through. A true believer in reincarnation, stemming from Eastern religious thought, is trying to break our of that system. The heart of reincarnation is that you are not good enough in this life to make it in the next, therefore you need to be perfected by future lives of suffering. Not bliss, but suffering. Scripture says “It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment.”**

 **The next basic statement about death is that death is the enemy of God. Scripture says “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”**

**The writer of Hebrews writing to a Jewish audience said this of Christ; “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliever all those who through fear of death were subject to life-long bondage.”**

 **God’s nature is that of life not of death. God created us for life not death. He created us to have a personal relationship in community with Him, not separation from Him. Death is against God’s nature of life, and because of this He has taken steps to destroy death. But, that’s another message.**

 **The third basic statement about death is that there can be two parts to death, the second being called the second death. Scripture records this in symbolic imagery. John in Revelations saw this. “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire; and if anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.”**

 **The point being made supports the first statement that “It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment.” The second death is the result of God’s judgment on man is found to have disregarded God’s great and gracious salvation.**

 **The last basic statement from the Bible about death is that death does not have to be the final word. In the Old testament Isaiah has this to say: “He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken.”**

 **In another place it says, “Death is swallowed up in victory.**

**O death, where is your victory? But thanks be to God, who give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

 **Scripture make it very clear that God has the final say, if we want Him to, or death will have the final say.**

 **In conclusion, I have discussed four basic statements about death. That man dies once, that death is God’s enemy, that there is a judgment with the result being the second death, and that death does not have the final word.**

 **The greatest thing is that you and I have a choice, it does not have to be left to chance or futility. It is my prayer that Smith’s death did not have the final word, and this his death will force all of us to think through our own view and that your choice is that which you want to live with and govern your life.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Accidental Death of Young Woman**

**John 11:17-36**

 **A week ago yesterday your friend and co-worker Sue was alive. Despite the injuries she suffered in the accident, she was hopeful of getting well. She loved and felt loved; she cared and felt cared for; she had her private thoughts and was thought about. Her life, like most of ours, was routine, fairly common, and yet filled with unexpected events and feelings. Yes, a week ago yesterday Sue was alive. A week ago today Sue died. Or did she?**

 **There are two very clear messages we must read from Scripture today in the midst of our sadness, and our unspoken identification with Martha and Mary as they said to Jesus-- “Lord, if you had been here, our brother would not have died.”**

 **Perhaps we share the stabbing pain and suppressed resentment in their complaint to Jesus because we are having to again be reminded of another loss in our lives. A loss that remembers other losses.**

 **To put it more directly--where you God when a two minute delay would have prevented a whole accident? Were you asleep? Did you turn your back? Didn’t you care that a young woman was needlessly dead before her 21st birthday? What’s the reason God? On what basis do you take one life and leave another?**

 **The loss to death, like all the other painful losses in our life, hurt us and cut us deeply. They leave us with emptiness or fear or bitterness or anger or sadness.**

 **Loss drives us to stand on our feet and shake our fist at God and say where were you when it really counted? Is this blasphemy?**

**Do we even dare express outwardly what we might be thinking in our heart of hearts?**

 **The first message we must hear today from Scripture is a short two-word sentence that speaks first to us in the most painful of times. And without this sentence we would not hear the second one. That sentence is “Jesus wept.”**

 **We can confront God, not because we are righteous and good and strong that He will be intimidated by our anger. We can confront God because He is big enough to take it and close enough to share in the pain with us. Jesus wept--God grieved; Jesus wept--God hurts us; Jesus wept--God is moved deeply.**

 **When we stand on our feet and scream at Him in bitter rage or when we hide under our pillow and pour out ears of fear and frustration--how does God meet us? He meets us by drawing near to where we died inside, wraps His love around us and weeps with us.**

 **Jesus wept. God became flesh and blood. He hurt, he felt loss, he was sad. As Scripture says--”Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are affliction with the comfort which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Jesus wept, God must first speak to us in the midst of our hurt and He does.**

 **Once we dare to ask our unanswerable questions, once we dare confront The God of Life with our misery from loss and death, then we may be more prepared to dare listen to the other words of Jesus that He spoke to Martha and Mary. “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”**

 **Oh what an answer for us to ponder. An answer that forces us to expand our thinking, to stretch our faith to the outermost limits. Listen again! This is the inside truth about Christian life and death. He who lives and believes will not die. Though he die, he will not really die.**

 **Common sense, tells us Sue’s heart stopped beating. She is no longer with you at work or play or in a hospital. She is dead. That is what the reality of common sense tells us.**

 **Uncommon sense, the sense of our Christian faith, puts a different meaning on last week, because Jesus redefines life and death for us. Life is not measured in length of days. It is defined in moments of living in a daily touch with Jesus Christ.**

 **Life is not what lies ahead in some ungrateful moment. It is not some future achievement that will grant us security or recognition. Life is carved out for us as we meet each moment with the God of life. Life is really happening in the moment spent loving one another, or serving one another, or making something better for someone else.**

 **And, yes we are painfully aware that any moment with our Lord is never complete. As long as we are earth-bound, life with God is fragile, quickly broken off. No moment of joy is totally lasting, no act of service totally pure, no dream or goal lastingly clear. But, even in part, life is when we encounter our moments with Jesus Christ. All other life, from the uncommon sense of faith, is not really living. It is time spent searching for life to live.**

 **So, for the Christian, for Sue, for you and I, death is but a transition to life that is fully complete. A transition to life that has never-ending moments of life with the author of life. This is our hope, that is the fruit of belief in the resurrection. Faith responds to Jesus’ answer, “He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall live.”**

 **This means God know us by name, and we will continue in time, sharing all moments with the God of life. It means we will continue on, not as a spirit being absorbed into a cosmic oneness or remain as dirt in the ground. It means we will be given a body that is just as real, just as tangible as this one. Only different and equipped to live forever.**

 **A week ago, today Sue died, but now lives more fully. Our task is to strengthen ourselves and each other to live in partial moments that we are gifted with, for the rest of our days. To Jesus be the power and glory forever for His great love for us. Amen.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**God Shares Our Sorrow**

**Romans 8:32**

 **Our reaction to death is conditioned by the way in which death comes into our lives.**

 **If death comes at the end of a long and useful life, it comes as a welcome guest. I have known older people who longed for death, who prayed for it. Their bodies were old and weak with age. They felt helpless and inactive. Their closets friends had gone, and they were lonely here. They looked forward to the coming of death as one might anticipate the dawn of a new day.**

 **If death comes at the end of a long illness, during which suffering has become increasingly serve, it comes as a welcome guest. Sometimes the clearest evidence we have of the mercy of God is when He lays the soothing hand of death upon a body racked with pain.**

 **The coming of death, however, is not nearly so welcome when it comes into our midst suddenly and with startling alarm. We are left stunned. Our hearts cry, “Why?” and our faith is tested to the breaking point.**

 **We shall keep steady in and hour such as this if we find some message from God. What does He say to our anguished hearts in this trying time.**

 **I. First of all, he would remind us that length of days does not always mean completeness of life. Some of the finest things on earth do not last long. The most beautiful flowers last but a season. Man seems to place more importance upon length of days than does God. God is more concerned with life’s quality than with its durability. He calls even Jesus unto himself when Jesus had journey the paths of this world less than half a lifetime.**

 **II. Secondly, God would remind us that one of the best evidences we have of quality of life is the willingness to lose life in fulfilling some worthy purpose. When a person plunges into a great cause and believes so deeply that he is willing to lose his life for it, he has achieved a nobility of life, a heroism, which is not limited by the barriers of time. That sort of life is timeless. It is immortal.**

 **III. God would remind us that such a sorrow as we face is not experienced by ourselves alone. Our grief is shared by many. Most especially does God share our sorrow.**

 **Sir Harry Launder lost a son in the First World War. One evening, he was walking down the street with a small friend of his. They passed a home where a service flag, bearing a gold star, hung in the window. The boy asked Sir Harry what the meaning of the flag was. Sir Harry told him that the gold star meant that the parents in that home had lost a son in the war.**

 **They walked on for some time in silence and finally saw the evening star just appearing on the distant horizon. “Look, the boy said, “God is hanging out a gold star. He, too must have lost a son.”**

 **God did have a son who died for humanity in the service of a great ideal. The NT tells us: “He...did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.”**

 **God has experienced the sorrow of death in his family. Remember also that, even as Jesus Christ was his Son, so also was .. John Doe.. his child. Today he shares our sorrow at the death of one whom he also loved. God shares our sorrow, and he will help us to bear the burden of our sorrow.**

 **Chaplain {COL} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

 **Not too many years ago a couple stood before your altar. They were young, nervous, and full of great confidence as they professed their undying love for each other. They became one in sacrament of matrimony. As persons they were so different, and yet as they passed by, so alike because of their unity and love. Through the years they shared this love through countless small ways with each other, in countless parts of the world, with all those who came within their circle of love. To say all was perfect and all bliss in this circle of love and not the passing clouds of romance which come and go.**

 **Through the years was a deep, silent awareness that the circle would someday be broken. I say silent because it is very difficult for many of us to talk about the possibility of death of a loved one. If we had our wish, humanly speaking, it would never happen--but we know it will, all too quickly and all too soon.**

 **There is so much more that could have been said, so much more that could have been shared--and through it all there never seemed to be enough time.**

 **And yet, God in His infinite wisdom, decide that this was the time, this was to be the place, this was to be the beginning. Yes, the beginning, I did not say end. Yes, the circle of love had to be broken so that it could become wider. Like the seed that must die, so new life can grow and rise up--so the same is true here.**

 **It is hard to let go, but let go we must in order for our loved one and for all of us to rise, to rise not only to a new life, but also to new insights, understanding, awareness of our need for each other--and above all, our need for Jesus.**

 **Throughout these last days, I am sure all of you have gone through much soul searching. In questioning the death of a loved one, we question ourselves and our own life-style and values. We reexamine our own priorities and the main thrust of our lives. We must use well the precious gift of time, because it goes by so quickly.**

 **And so we have the time and we have the opportunity to heal the circle of life and love. Today we have the opportunity to reach out with open arms and once more embrace all those within our circle of love.**

 **Chaplain {COL} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**For Whom the Bell Tolls**

**Romans 14:7-8**

 **“No man is an island, entire of itself. Any man’s death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”**

 **“None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” St. Paul {Romans 14:7-8}**

 **The quotation by John Donne, has always captivated me and forced to think. It speaks about the European practice of tolling the church bells when one of the local citizens died. The solemn trolling reminds both village and countryside alike that a neighbor and the reality of death. Many of them often thought, no doubt, “Someday those same bells will be tolling for me.”**

 **I don’t know if the practice of tolling the bells ever caught on in our country. If they did, we’d never hear the tolling for all the radios, TVs, stereos, cars, airplanes. But today, this afternoon, I want you to sit and listen, hear the bells, hear the bugle and think about what they are saying. The mourning of the bells speak to us on the deepest emotional level about the sinful human condition. For thousands of years, since the beginning of man and sin of Cain, mankind has been touched by suffering and death. We haven’t been able to escape its grip, or cure the disease. Men and women keep on dying. The bells remind us of the millions of people who have gone before us and of our own brief life spans and the inevitable death we will experience. Science has conquered the moon, the ocean floor, inside the earth, but there is one last frontier it cannot penetrate--the realm of death.**

 **I’ll never forget the story I read once about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. After the crew of the Enola Gay had dropped the heavy bombs over the city, and then watched the destruction and devastation their hands had released, they radioed back to their base. As they were leaving the target area, they made one last glimpse below and radioed back only these words, “No high ground.” There was no hiding place, death was everywhere.**

 **And so it is in our world--death is the great leveller, no respecter of persons--rich or poor, black or white, religious or irreligious. All of us must face it, not as a group, but as individually, personally. And we need to face the reality of death now. Especially as young people with good health and our lives before us. We may be tempted to forget that we too shall die. In our pell-mell race through life in our cars, on our motor bikes, we need to stop and consider, where am I going? Am I not like the flower that appears for a little while and then passes away? Like a spark in the night I glow for a brief moment in time and then pass on. What about life after death? The ancient, Job, put the question this way, “If a man dies, will he live again?” The tolling of the bells, the blowing of the bugle, says that something has gone wrong with our world. This is not what He intended to be--God never wanted us to know sin, the whole Pandora’s Box of human woes has come to us. The bell and the bugle remind us that death has been and still is a very real part of life and we must deal with it.**

 **The bells toll of the intense suffering go mankind but they also say something else. They say God suffers too, alongside of man--that God is hurt deeply by our sin, by the death of our friends, our own deaths. God grieves, He mourns. Maybe we haven’t always thought of it that way. Perhaps we have sometimes thought God was up in His heaven, sitting with arms folded, watching man squirm, sort of a “He made his bed, let him lie in it,” attitude. Not so! He identifies so much with us that He came to be with us--to sweat like we sweat, to hurt like we hurt, to cry like we cry, to die like we die. The bell tells us that God cared enough to send the very best, His only Son, Jesus. If your remember, Jesus cried when He was here on earth. The shortest verse in the entire Bible “Jesus wept,” is perhaps the most profound because it shows Jesus weeping over the death of a friend whom He deeply loved. He sorrowed over hard heartedness of His people and disciplines. And my friends and fellow soldiers, heaven weeps, God morns, Christ laments the death of our friend, SSG Doe. If this loss touches our hearts, how much more does it touch the heart of our heavenly Father. Thus, He comes this afternoon to comfort and console--not to condemn and accuse. The bells tell me that God sees and hears--that He loves us so much that it hurts--that He died for us. That’s how much God cares.**

 **And that brings me to the last thought the bells and the bugle bring to mind. Both of these instruments can play joyful and glad notes as well as solemn and somber ones. On this mournful day when all of us are saddened by the loss of our friend and fellow soldier, let us not miss another sound which the bells and bugle bring to us--the note of hope and forgiveness. In the midst of our sin, our sorrow, our seeming hopeless, there is hope, there is indeed high ground, for all who would look to a little hill outside ancient Jerusalem 2000 years ago. On that high ground was raised a saviour who is Christ the Lord. In Him there is victory for our defeat, light for our darkness, life for our death. And because He lives, we have hope of not only life after death, but most importantly, life before death--the promise of full meaningful, abundant living.**

 **On the 200th birthday of our country, the bells of chapels and churches across this country rang in chorus in celebration of freedom. The bell and bugle today also call us to freedom-- inner freedom from the evil in our hearts, from the habits that claim our fellow men. Let us hear the bugle today, let us think, let us pray. It speaks of the sin and sorrow of dying world; it speaks of suffering love of a Savior who cared so much that He died to save the world, but if you listen closely, you will hear the clear note of God’s word to us, “You are loved, you are forgiven, I am with you.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Accidental Death of Young Soldier**

 **Today once again we are reminded how alarmingly short life is, and how near to death we all are. We have gathered here this afternoon to pay tribute to one of our own fellow soldiers, PFC John Doe. We have all been saddened by his passing. During the approximately nine months that he was in the 1/30th, some of your probably came to know PFC Doe fairly well. Many of you perhaps did not know him at all, while others only knew him a little. I would fall into the last category. PFC Doe came to see me about four weeks ago, and in our conversation I was able to get to know John to some extent. He was concerned about his life. He had, like many of you, met with the harsh realities of life in his 19 years. The death of both of his parents when he was only 15, was naturally a serve blow to him. At the close of our discussion, I felt like we had made progress and that John was more optimistic about his own situation and the future. Needless to say, I was saddened at the news I received on Monday that PFC Doe had drowned over the weekend.**

 **For the last nine months, he lived in your unit. He ate, slept, and worked with many of you on a daily basis. Now he is suddenly and tragically gone. His passing is yet another solemn reminder to us all of how fragile and fleeting life is. How true are the Scriptures that say, “What is your life? It is even a vapor of smoke that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” How careful we should be in focusing our lives on the things that the secret of living is giving oneself and his abilities in service to God and others. If we always put ourselves first and live only for “I”, we will find a very narrow existence and very small dividends from life in the end. But, if we are more concerned with giving than getting, sharing than acquiring, we will find an expanded and fulfilling life.**

 **And after all, life is what all of us are involved in. In our attention to today, let us not forget life. We recognize the reality of death but we do not worship or fear it. Let us remember that while death is inevitable, life is more powerful. In the words of the poet, “Death, you too shall die.” Just as the cold, chilly, winter months must give way to the light and warmth of spring, so death cannot stand before the advance of new life. Our Lord has given us a legacy of hope for the future when he said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me though he were dead yet shall he live. And he that lives and believes in me shall never die.” Let us not fear death but face it; let us not cower before the future but walk boldly into it.**

 **Then too, let us go on to take advantage of today’s responsibilities and opportunities. let us live each day well--one at a time. Since we have only one life to live, we should give it our best. Each of us needs a cause and a purpose that is bigger that ourselves to which we can dedicate our lives. Let us stop regretting the past and fearing the future so we can get on with the business of living the present. May we learn, day by day, to seize the opportunities at hand, complain less, and thank God more.**

 **Today’s tribute to PFC Doe is most fitting and proper. He served the United States Army and his country well, and we pay our deep respect to him and our sympathies to his family. It is also fitting and proper that we, the living, renew our commitment to life and resolve that God, being our helper, we will pursue only that which enhances life not that which threatens or destroys it. Let the words of one writer help us as we work toward that goal: “I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”**

**BENEDICTION**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Death of Young Soldier**

**Stop, Look, and Listen**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

 **Memorial services are in keeping with a time-honored radiation of remembering fellow soldiers who die in the service of our country. Today we are here to remember John Doe, son, brother, friend, and classmate.**

 **A few years ago, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler Ross wrote a classic book, titled On Death and Dying, in which she outlines the nature of the grief process. Persons experiencing a loss have feelings of denial, anger, depression, and finally come to a point of acceptance. There are perhaps those experiencing those feelings here today. Death always comes personal tragedy, particularly for those who knew and loved John Doe. We do not understand why death claims the lives of people, particularly when one is so young and in the prime of life.**

 **Death is a reality of life, and when it occurs it is like a sign at a railroad crossing reminding us to stop, look, and listen.**

 **It is time to stop. We live in a very fast-paced world in which it is difficult to slow down, and death has a way of making us stop, if only for a few moments to realize how brief life really is. In James 4:13,14, we are reminded of life’s brevity, “Now listen, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why you don’t even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”**

 **Death then makes us consider our priorities, our families, our values, our goals, and our relationships. For some, it is a time to ask the deeper questions of: “Who am I?”, Who am I in relationship to God?” “Who am in relationship to you?”, and “What am I doing with my life?”**

 **It is a time also to look. I have worn glasses for so long I feel as though I was born with them. I simply cannot see clearly without them. Sometimes, even when I’m wearing them, I don’t see clearly! There are many people who for whom reality is out of focus and not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually. They have a distorted, unrealistic view of reality, and say such things as: “Things shouldn’t happen this way.” “Life shouldn’t be the way it is.” So, it is important for God to give us a spiritual focus when we don’t humanly understand the realities of life. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:23, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...” Further, in 1 Corinthians 13:12 Paul reminds us again,”...We see but a poor reflection, then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”**

 **Some people are like the Arab who woke up hungry at night and began eating the dates beside his bed. He picked up the first one and looked at it against the candle. he saw a worm and threw it out of the tent. He picked up a second date and again saw a worm. A third date, the same thing. Don’t turn off the lights of reality.**

 **It is the time to listen. Listening is a major problem in many relationships. There is so much noise around us, or we are just too busy and preoccupied to really listen. At times like this, it is really important to listen to your feelings. So often the tendency is to run away and ignore them. Remember the story of Elijah? After fleeing from Queen Jezebel, he was feeling depressed and hiding in a cave, and God told him to get out and stand on the mountain, for he was about to pass by. There was a great wind that tore the mountain apart, but Lord was not in the wind. After the wind, a great earthquake, but Lord was not in the earthquake. Then a fire, but Lord was not in the fire. And then came a great whisper. It’s at times like this that God whispers to us. And, it’s a time to “be still and know that He is God.”**

**To stop, look, and listen...**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Exodus 6**

 **Today, we need to hear more that ever, the word of God to our lives situation. And yet as we struggle with our shock and sense of loss and grief, it’s almost as if we raise our voices to God and say, “I can’t hear you when I’m hurting,”**

 **And so this morning, I ask you to reflect with me upon the life situation of God’s people, the Israelites, as they too struggled with some of lives more disappointing and despairing aspects. For God’s word to them is also God’s word to us as the Scriptures declare,**

 **“Forever O Lord is thy word settled in heaven.” Listen now to the word of God from the book of Exodus, chapter 6, verses 2,5-9.**

 **Two things should be observed in this passage before us, The first is the threefold declaration of God’s faithfulness, and the second is the inability of the people to hear or take to heart this truth.**

 **First, note the progression of the promise as God declares Himself the I am who “will bring”, “who brings” and who did bring,” His people out of bondage. In verse 6 statement is “ I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” In verse 8 the promise is not focused on the exodus but on the entrance into the promised land. It reads, “And I will bring you in unto Land, concerning which I did promise to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give to you for a heritage: I am Lord.”**

 **This means that the promised exodus is now viewed as an accomplished fact, and we see the conclusion of the matter. He is the ever faithful “I am, the One who will be true to His word, who is being true to His word, and the One who has been true to His word.”**

 **But having looked up into the face of our faithful God, we need to look down upon the despairing people who hurt so badly they can’t hear God’s voice. We need to look upon their circumstances with discernment and into their hearts with compassion and understanding why and how they are deafened by despair.**

 **In the 9th verse the phrase, “For anguish of Spirit” reveals the reaction of the oppressed people to the circumstances which is the most critical factor. I say that because it is when we forget the fact that we are not people without hope that our circumstances overwhelm us. God does not want to lift us out of our circumstances, rather he wants us to go through them but with his presence and promises. When we do, our experience will be difficult indeed, yet underneath it all will be an overriding sense that everything is really okay.**

 **The deafness to the divine encouragement was caused primarily by anguish of spirit. It is the factor mentioned first an is obviously the most significant reason why the Israelites had given up on God. Today by God’s grace may we respond by taking to heart the words of the old benediction which prays,**

 **“Lord dismiss us with thy blessing, hope, and comfort from up**

 **above; let us each, thy peace possessing, triumph in**

 **redeeming love.”**

 **This determination to hope in the faithfulness of God is demonstrated against the dark backdrop of difficult times. For we do not hope in the absence of trouble but in the midst of it. In fact, it is the existence of difficulty demands hope.**

 **The words of verse 9 describe the pre-exodus of God’s people as “ cruel bondage.” The Apostle Paul described our human situation in the book of Romans when he said,**

 **“For I consider that our present sufferings are not worth**

 **comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For**

 **the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own**

 **choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope**

 **that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage**

 **to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the**

 **children of God. For in this hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for that he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”**

 **We are now experiencing the frustrating side of our human existence. And for as long as God permits it, we must be prepared to endure it.**

 **With that in view, I suggest that we look at this and see in it the reflection of sin, suffering, and salvation. For our faith must give answers to the questions raised by suffering, and discover how to endure that we may once again enjoy.**

 **Sin is the starting point of the story. The sin-filled heart that caused Pharaoh to enslave the Jews also drove him to defy God. And this anti-God, anti-good attitude made things miserable for the people of God. Our situation too begins in sin, for in some mysterious way we all have participated in Adam’s transgression and subsequent fall. We all likewise, will share in Adam’s retribution as God said, “Thou shalt surely die.” The Israelites’ story did not end in despair and neither will ours.**

 **For God came down in power and set His people free. That fact they celebrate to this day in the annual celebration of Passover. As Christians we celebrate the faithfulness of God through the symbols of bread and wine, the Holy Communion. With the wine and bread we remember the shed blood and broken body of our Lord who entered into our pain as he encountered and conquered sins and its ultimate end--death.**

 **-That is what the incarnation is all about.**

 **-That is what the loneliness of Gethsemane was about.**

 **-And that is what this service is about. It is an acknowledgment of his presence in the midst of our pain.**

 **That is why we can’t a deaf ear toward him. That is why we can’t help but hear and experience His words of promise and power. For he stands beside us even as He is in the midst of us through the presence of the Holy Spirit saying, “I am with you always.”**

**Today I do not offer you easy answers to the problems of grief and pain. I simply call your attention to the record of God’s redemptive acts on our behalf, and remind you that it reminds us of a God who came down to speak to us face to face--to heal our hurts and give us hope. All I ask is that you open your heart to receive Him this day. Listen to His words though they may be hard to hear. For in them, you will find God’s promise and power which makes everything okay.**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Suicide of Young Soldier**

**Job 3:20-26**

 **A comrade has taken his own life. This is despair. We live in an age when despair seems to be a constant companion. Every where we turn, it seems, we see signs of despair. What can we say? How do we address it?**

 **Scripture relates the story of one man who knew despair. The book of Job is about despair. Listen to Job’s cry: {Read Job 3:26-24; 30:16-19}.**

 **Despair is not some intellectual topic to be debated. Despair is part of life. Despair is real. Despair is something that men and women feel. Despair is life gone bad. Job cried out, “I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.” {Job 3:26}**

 **None of us can understand the despair of another. It cannot be measured and weighed, says Job, but it is real and terrible.**

 **knew despair. It drove him to take his own life. We can never know what despair must have been for him. His world went dark. We cannot judge him because we did not feel what he felt. All we can do toward understanding what happened to is to think of the despair that we have felt in our lives and perhaps feel even now. His despair must have been much worse.**

 **We cannot understand despair. Even medical science does not understand it. Often we don’t know how to deal with it. Drugs can’t help it; the concern of friends doesn’t seem to help it. It is a mystery to us, but it is real.**

 **We don’t know what happened with , but something did happen. His despair was real. We can’t understand it, but it was there. And it hurt. And it was very real. So we cannot condemn it or judge it. It just happened. After saying this what can I say?**

 **Only this. As scripture affirms the reality of despair, so it also gives us the assurance of hope. That hope is like a luminary round fired over our heads in the darkest of nights. It gives us light by which to carry on. It was this kind of hope that the Psalmist must have had in mind when he wrote in Psalm 118:5-6, “In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and he answered by setting me free. The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.”**

**This is hope. This is hope in despair. It is hope for us. Our faith offers us hope. God is always there in despair even when the darkness seems to hide him. Psalm 139 asks God, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there... Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,for darkness is as light to you.” {Psalm 139:7-12}**

 **Even in the pit of despair, even in the darkest moment of life, God is there.**

**St.Paul put it this way, “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all -how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us form the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” {Romans 8:31-39}**

 **Sometimes that’s hard to believe. Events in life often seem to indicate the contrary. Yet God is there. Nothing--ABSOLUTELY NOTHING--can cut us off from God’s love in Jesus.**

**That’s hope. That hope is power in life that provides strength to carry on. And the greatest news of all is that hope and power is available to you and to me if we will simply trust God and walk with him in faith. Amen.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Accidental Death of Child**

**Luke 19:1-10**

 **and , a few short days ago your lives were suddenly disrupted by a very tragic and unexpected event. An unwelcome intruder invaded your home. The intruder’s name was death. Death has stricken a member of you family. Little ‘s life has ended at the tender age of five.**

 **On the way from the airport yesterday, , you asked me a question. A question that each of us is asking. A simple but heart rending “Why?” And I wish I could answer that question. But I don’t know why. We may never be able to understand why had to die at such a young age. And I suspect that even if we knew, it wouldn’t help much. For it would not lessen the pain and sorrow of the loss.**

 **Last night when I talked to about this service she told me about a song that had learned at Sunday School and had been singing for the past weeks. The song is about Zacchaeus and the words go: Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see. And as the Savior passed him by, he looked up and said, ‘Zacchaeus, you come down, for I’m coming to your house today. ‘“ that little song gave you strength and comfort as you sang it too during those long anxious hours at the hospital as hovered between life and death. As I reflect on the song I am struck by the thought that Jesus’ coming to Zacchaeus’ house was totally unexpected. Certainly, in much the same way, the events of these past days were also unexpected. But just as certainly, Jesus has come to the house of another little man. And although I don't know why had to die, there is one who does know. That one is Jesus. For he has the keys to death. And what is important for us now is to rest in the comfort that Jesus who came that all might be saved, calls the children to come unto him. {Another scripture reading in the service was Matthew 19:13-15}**

 **is in his care now. The same Lord Jesus who, as we heard moments ago, took the children in his arms and blessed them, continues to bless and care for his children today. Jesus has called out of this world that he may be with him.**

 **and , today you weep. And we share your sorrow with you. We weep not for , but for ourselves. For we are left here to bear the loneliness, sorrow and grief that comes when a loved one is taken from us. But for we can rejoice, for he is with the Lord. He has been spared all the pains and sorrows of this world. He will know nothing but joy as he abides in the presence of the Lord. Someone is taking care of --the Lord Jesus himself. And he is taking good care of him! God knows the sorrow and grief you feel. He knows what it is to have a son die. His son--died on the cross that first Good Friday. So God shares our suffering with us. But even in the midst of suffering we have hope. For we know that God has said that he would turn our sorrow into joy. Just as God raised up his son Jesus from death that first Easter, so too will he raise up those who believe in Jesus to live with him in his kingdom. In Jesus Christ, death is not the end. Rather, it is the beginning of real life--life with heavenly Father.**

 **Then we will all be united with our departed loved ones. Then our sorrow will be turned into everlasting joy.**

**How fitting it is that this memorial service for , who died on a Good Friday, should be held on Easter Sunday when we celebrate Christ’s victory over death--a victory which, through faith, he shares with us.**

 **As Christians, then, we can rejoice even in the face of tragedy. Knowing that our present sorrow will only last for a little while. Then it will be turned into joy as we share in the victory Christ has won for us over the power of sin and death. Praise be to God who in his great love for us has sent his son that we might share in his victory over death through the resurrection into life everlasting. Amen.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Why Me, God?**

**II Cor. 1:3-4**

**INTRODUCTION: In times of tribulation or sorrow, we desire to shake our fist at God and say, “Why me, God?” In a time such as this it is good to know that God provides comfort for sorrow. He does not always give us answers but he does give us comfort.**

 **GOD PROVIDES COMFORT FOR SORROW II Cor 1:3-4**

**I THE SOURCE OF COMFORT IS GOD {3}**

 **A. He is the Father of Mercies.**

 **1. Who worked historically.**

 **a. Mercy is descriptive of God the Father--a characteristic.**

 **b. “Compassionate treatment of the offender.”**

 **c. Because He gave His son--Jesus Christ. Jn 3:16. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

 **d. No greater illustration of what mercy is than in God’s gift. II Cor 5:21. “For He Hath made him to be sin for us, who know no sin; than we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”**

 **2. Who works experientially.**

 **a. Can receive his mercy now.**

 **b. Mercy precedes comfort--must respond to His mercy by receiving Christ. Rom 10:9. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him form the dead, thou shalt be saved.”**

 **c. God is the Father of Mercies.**

 **B. He is the God of Comfort.**

 **1. Who comes to our side.**

 **a. Comfort is a beautiful word. It is a word picture “calling to one’s side”**

 **b. A picture of the Friend who puts his arm around you.**

 **c. His divine presence is right by your side helping us bear our grief. God is the author of all possible consolation and comfort.**

 **2. Who brings us courage.**

 **a. The word also pictures exhorting and encouraging. Not to give up, God is the source of comfort. Comfort which He provides to us in sorrow.**

**II THE SUPPLY OF COMFORT IS GOD**

 **A. It is perpetual supply.**

 **He “goes on comforting.”**

 **B. It is purposeful supply.**

 **1. For ourselves.**

 **a. Believer’s unique promise. Part of availing ourself of God’s mercy in Christ.**

 **b. When? At the time of all our affliction. Anything which burdens the spirit.**

 **2. For others.**

 **a. Answer to question “Why me, God?”**

 **b. Comfort is received in order to know how to be able to comfort others. To bear them consolation.**

 **c. The ability to comfort is acquired by being comforted. This qualifies us to comfort others.**

 **d. A person who hasn’t been through sorrow can console based on Word of God. But, one who has been comforted by God brings a whole other dimension to this ministry- that comfort which he received from God.**

 **C. It is a perfect Supply.**

 **1. Nothing is left out. The comfort encompasses all our sorrow--all theirs. {Quote Rom 8:35, 38-39 for beliver’s funeral}**

 **2. No matter what the affliction, God supplies comfort. There’s nothing too big for Him to deal with.**

**CONCLUSION: It’s good to know that in times of sorrow and affliction God supplies comfort to us for our needs.**

**GOD PROVIDES COMFORT FOR SORROW**

**Memorial Meditation**

**Not even a week has gone by since I stood in this same place and preached about the brevity of life. Today we are once again reminded of the swiftness and suddenness of death, taking young and healthy people, as well as those who are elderly and weakened by many years. We can see again that life at best is only very short and death comes all too soon. We have met here this evening to pay tribute to SPC John Doe. I’m sure many of you knew him and liked him. Perhaps some of you did not know him at all. But of this I am sure, that all of you, upon hearing of his death, have asked yourself the question, “Why? Why did this have to happen to someone as John Doe?” I think that is a natural inquiry, and yet I’m afraid that the answer to that is one is difficult to discover. Death is a mysterious force. No one can rationally understand it nor explain it. Why it chose one and not the another is the mystery of all mysteries; why it takes the best of people and leaves others is hard to understand, and yet we know that it does. Death, as contradictory as it sounds, is a fact of life and it is a reality which we all need to face and deal with.**

 **The question of death is a very personal one. It is one we have to answer for ourselves. Someone else’s answers will just not do for us because no one else can die for us-- the old Negro Spiritual says, “We must walk this lonesome valley, we have to walk it by ourselves. Oh nobody else can walk it for us. We have to walk it by ourselves.” In a very real sense it is a “lonesome valley”, which each of us must experience and find answers for. Yet on the other hand, the greatness of the Christian message about death and the answer to the problem of death--is that we don’t have to face it alone. God is with us. We just read, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” Christ’s promise to his people is “Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.” So, while it might seem we have to face the threat of death alone, we are not really alone. As the spiritual also says, “Jesus walked this lonesome valley.” He has gone out ahead of us and destroyed the last enemy--death itself--it need have no more terror over us. We, who belong to Him, need not fear. He has sent His Spirit to be with us all the way.**

 **But in our attention to death today, let us not forget life. For after all, life is what all of us are involved in. We should recognize the reality of death and prepare to meet it but not worship or fear it. Let us remember that while death is inevitable, life is more powerful. In the words of the poem, “Death, you too shall die.” Just as the cold, chilly, winter months must give way to the light and warmth of spring and summer, so death cannot stand before the advance of new life. Our Lord has given us legacy of hope for the future when he said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me though he were dead yet shall he live. And he that lives and believes in me shall never die.” Because we are not alone, we can face death not fear it; We can walk boldly into the future and not shrink from it.**

 **For the last few months, SPC Doe lived with you in your unit. You ate and worked with him on a daily basis. Now he is suddenly and tragically gone. His passing is yet another solemn indication to all of us of how fragile and fleeting life is. How true is the Scripture that says, “What is your life? It is even a vapor of smoke that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Since life is so short, how careful we should be in focusing our lives on the things that really count. No man’s life is in vain if he knows that the secret of living is giving oneself and his abilities in service to God and others. If we put ourselves always first, and live only for “I”, then we will find a very narrow existence and very small dividends from life in the end. But, if we are more concerned with giving than getting, sharing than acquiring, we will find an expanded and fulfilling life.**

 **We are here today to honor the memory of SPC Doe. It is as it should be. In the time which he was on active duty, he served the United States Army and his country well, and we pay our deep respect to him and our sympathies to his family. It is also fitting and proper that we the living, renew our commitment to life and resolve that God, being our helper, we will give ourselves only to life and will pursue only those things which enhance and fulfill life not destroy it. Let these words be a guide and goal for us, “I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore, that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now; let me no defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”**

 **Some of us may not have known John, but he is not unknown to God. No man is an “unknown soldier” to God. Everyone of us is “somebody” before Him. We are counted and important to Him. God cares about what happened to John. He is deeply pained at his death. If not a sparrow can fall without Him knowing it, how much mores does he care when one of us is hurt? Gentlemen, let us remember that though death is a fact of life, so is God, and God, who is life and love, is stronger than death and hate. Let us always remember that we are not alone in life; we are not alone in death. God is here too. He is with us.**

 **Chaplain First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

 **A famous preacher said, not too long ago, that there are two types of people in the world. The first are those who are loved by God and know it. The second are those who are loved by God, and don’t know it yet. Those who know God as One who knows them, have a special way of bringing that love into the lives of those around them by the unselfconscious way they live and serve. As you leaf through the family albums tucked away in your hearts and minds, you will recall, again, how wonderfully God has touched all of your lives through the special and distinct personality of John Doe.**

 **Jane, I really valued yours and Dick’s sharing with me some of the vignettes of your husband and father. For you see, it is in the loving service toward one another that we catch glimpses of the God who so dearly loves us. Your sharing triggered a memory of a wonderful little story by Martin Bell, entitled “The Way of the Wolf.” The story goes something like this.**

 **“I think God must be very old and very patient. Maybe he used to look splendid and fine in his general’s uniform, but no more. He’s been on the march a long time, you know. And look at his rag tag little army! All he has for soldiers are you and me. Dumb little army. Listen! The drum beat isn’t even regular. Everyone is out of step. An there! You see? God keeps stopping along the way to pick up one of his tinier soldiers who decided to wander off and play with a frog, or run in a field, or whose foot got tangled in the underbrush. He’ll never get anywhere that way. And yet, the march goes on.”**

 **“If God were more sensible he’d take his little army and shape them up. Why whoever heard of a soldier stopping to romp in a field? It’s ridiculous. But even more absurd of a general who will stop the march of eternity to go and bring him back. But that’s God for you. His is no endless, empty marching...He knows where he’s going. And he means to take every last one of his soldiers with him. Only there aren’t going to be any forced marches.”**

 **And, after all, there are frogs and flowers, and thorns and underbrush along the way. And even though our foreheads have been signed with the sign of the cross, we are only human. And most of us are afraid and lonely and would like to hold hands or cry or run away. And we don’t know where we are going, and we can’t seem to trust God- especially when it’s dark out and we can’t see him! And he won’t go on without us. And that’s why it is taking so long.**

 **“You see? God keeps stopping along the way to pick up one of his tinier soldiers who decided to wander off and play with a frog, or run in a field, or whose foot got tangled in the underbrush. And yet, the march goes on... I’m glad God gifted all of you and our great Army with a soldier of John’s caliber, leadership, and sense of service. My prayer is that when you play with a frog, or run in a field, or get tangled in the underbrush. of help a child with a n education, or a homeless with a meal, or giving someone a smile of encouragement, the memories of John’s service will support you. And, that the love and grace of God will sustain and bind you together in your continuing service to one another and this great nation called America. AMEN.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

**For just a few brief moments today Mr. Smith has helped us in a beautiful and special way. He has focused our attention away from work and the ordinary stresses and details of life, and focused our attention on the special personality of and ordinary human being. A human being who, in his own quiet way, served his country and his fellow workers for over 25 years. To those whom he loved and those who know him well, he gifted them with the individuality of his life. For you, the loss will be much greater and the grief deeper.**

 **For many, grief is a deeply personal and private matter, but death is not. Death is a public reminder of own vulnerability and mortality. Death confronts us with our reason for being and touches that deep part in each of us that wonders what lies beyond the grave for us.**

 **Some maintain that there is nothing beyond this point and live as if that were true. Others believe in a world of ghost like beings to which we will one day belong. Some believe that we will one day be merged into some source of life and be forever lost in that oneness. And some, jokingly, believe in an eternal space of time to indulge in their favorite pastime or fantasy.**

 **But our faith says something very different. It is something unique that the Christian faith holds out to the world, to offer it a special hope. Hope not just for after death, but for right now as well.**

 **What is this hope of the Christian? What is this thing that the Apostle of Jesus became so excited about just days after His tragic and painful death? What is this hope that has enabled people of all nations, over many centuries, to be persecuted and killed for? What is the one thing we stake our very existence on when we accept Jesus Christ?**

 **Is it an earthly life free of pain or suffering? No. It is a life free of anxiety and trial? No. It is so our soul will melt into some smoke-like essence in the great beyond? No. Then what is this hope?**

 **Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthian Church- the HOPE of the Christian is THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. What does Paul mean when he says this? He means that when this perishable body stops functioning, God has prepared a body that cannot perish to enclose the soul and spirit and personality and individuality renewed by the Holy Spirit.**

 **Let us pay close attention to Scripture as Paul tells each of us how this is possible, and listen as he argues with those who do not have this hope. “Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; and if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe. More than that, we are shown to be lying about God, because we said that he raised Christ from death--but if it is true that the dead are not raised to life, then he did not raise Christ. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion and you are still lost in your sins. It would also mean that the believers in Christ who have died are lost. If our hope in Christ is good for this life only and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.**

 **But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. For just as death came by means of a man, in the same way the rising from death comes by means of a man. For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ.” I Corinthians 15: 12-22.**

 **Yes, this is possible because God has already resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead, to pave the way for those who follow.**

 **But, let us listen further as Paul describes how this body is imparted to us.**

 **“Someone will ask,. “How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they have?” You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground, it does not sprout to life unless it dies... God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body...This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised it will be beautiful and strong. When buried it is a physical body; when raised, it will a spiritual body. There is, of course a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body... Just as we wear the likeness of man made of earth, so we will wear the likeness of the Man from heaven. What I mean, brothers, is that what is made of flesh and blood cannot share in God’s Kingdom, and what is mortal cannot possess immortality. I Corinthians 15: 35-36; 42-44; 49-50.”**

 **The body is a spiritual body given by God: Let us not confuse a spiritual body with some type of vaporous ghost-like form. A spiritual body is a body that just as real, just as definable as this present body, yet it is a body more glorious that this one, specially suited for the kingdom of God, and one that can never be destroyed.**

 **Yes, this is the Christian hope. This is what gives ultimate meaning to life and victory in death. Yes, I say victory! For that is precisely what Paul says:**

 **“So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal then the Scripture will come true: ‘Death is destroyed; victory is complete!’ ‘Where, Death, is victory” Where, Death is your power to hurt?’ Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin get its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! I Corinthians 15:54-57**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

 **Saturday was a beautiful day. It was payday weekend, the sun was warm, the sky was clear, the birds were singing and people all over were attempting to do those things they enjoyed. It was a day that dawned full of hope and ended in tragedy for Mary and John Doe and their three children.**

 **One moment their was the excitement of feeling the power of a finely tuned racing cycle; the moment there was no more feeling and never will be in this life. One moment there was the desire to teach and be with dear friends; the next moment there would never be contact with those same people in this life. One moment there was pride in a wife, three beautiful strong boys and bright hopes for a promising career; the next moment that no longer existed.**

 **When I notified Mary and the three children of the death of their father and experienced this tragedy with them there were two things that made a terrific impact on me.**

 **The first thing was how suddenly the course of life can be changed. For John it was suddenly death from life full of hope and vitality. For Mary it was a life of a bright family future to one of instant isolation, loneliness and terrific responsibility. Her whole life was changed by the words, “your husband is dead.”**

 **The next morning I was talking with my wife about the whole situation and she made a statement about the impact this tragedy had on her. She said how often she keeps living for next week, next month or next year and misses what today has in store. She said she would feel terrible to go through life and have to say that she had not enjoyed life to its fullest. I have to say that she had not enjoyed life to its fullest. I have to confess that I often do this to.**

 **Life can be changed very quickly. Any of us could be dead tonight. What would be said of it? Would your family and friends regret that our days with them were spent in complaining, hopeless suffering, trouble after trouble and a lack of joy because we can never enjoyed anything about this day?**

 **The Bible has something to say to us about life. In a story form Jesus was talking himself being the Savior of His people. He said, “I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”**

 **This tells us that God’s intention is that we have life, not just existence; that we full life not an empty life. This does not mean a life without any pain or suffering, but a full life life lived in the security of God’s love and care. Jesus went on to say, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” This tells us that Jesus laid down his life in payment for our rebellion and disobedience to God to bring us back to a relationship with God in which we could live an abundant life in the security of His love and care.**

 **The second thing that made a terrific impact on me was a statement made by a woman who worked with Mary to the children. However, I think she was saying it more to herself in her own grief.**

 **In response to the child’s question - “Will I ever see my daddy again?” This woman said - “Honey, your daddy went to be with Jesus in heaven and you will get to see him again.” Then in an aside, almost to herself, she said “My God, there has got to be something, there has got to be hope, otherwise we can’t go on.”**

 **The Bible not only take talks about life, but it looks squarely in the face of death and answers some very important questions that we may have about death.**

 **That Apostle Paul says in one place that “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” In another place he goes on to say that “The sting of death is sin, and is the law. But thanks to be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

 **This tells us that our sins, our rebellion and disobedience to God, has a very a definite impact on own death, but in Christ death is not the last answer or the victor any more.**

 **And why is this true? Scripture says “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.” Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, so we also can in Christ.**

 **Let me explain what this statement means. I can best do it in contrast to another popular belief about what happens to us when we die. That belief is the immortality of soul. This means that when we die our body is of is of no concern anymore and that our soul lives forever, by being incorporated into some big oneness “up there” somewhere.**

 **This is not what the Bible is saying when it talks about the bodily resurrection of the dead. The Bible says that not only will our souls be saved, but that we will be given a definite tangible body called a spiritual body that is equipped to live on forever. God made us as distinct individuals and will raise us up as distinct individuals. The bodily resurrection of Jesus hold for us the promise of a very definite, tangible life after death because God is concerned about every part of us, not just our soul.**

 **It is in the faith and assurance of this life beyond death that gives motivation and hope to live life to its fullest now.**

 **This is why God wants to start renewing our hearts and minds right now so that he can equip this new mind and heart in a new body that can go on forever in company and fellowship with God.**

 **Let us grieve with the Henry’s; let us share in this tragedy, but let us also learn from it. Let it make an impact on us that may just make our life much more full and meaningful. When we confront death with its implications we will then be able to live life to its fullest, with hope and assurance.**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

 **This service will have greater meaning to us if we understand why we are here, why we are doing this, why the time, effort, resources for conducting a Memorial Service? Is it not to demonstrate the importance the Command puts on people? Doesn’t it show that we have our priorities right?**

 **We spend billions on supplies/equipment. But people, like equipment, require attention, because they are our country’s most precious resource.**

 **So, why are we here, today?**

 **FIRST, we are here as Fellow Service Members, whether AF members, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, or Coast Guard.**

 **Ours is a notable profession--we sail, we fly, we march, we ride, we wear different uniforms, and use different acronyms. We are bound together by a common spirit. It is the spirit of courage, of patriotism, of peace. It is a strong spirit. That spirit creates a closeness, a unity, so that each individual counts. The loss of even one of everyone HURTS. John Donne’s famous line is never more true of anyone than a military person. He wrote:**

 **“No man is an island, every man is piece of the continent, a**

 **part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea the**

 **continent is less for it. Any man’s death diminishes me, for I**

 **am involved in mankind... Therefore, never send to ask for whom**

 **the bell tolls, it tolls for thee!”**

 **We have gathered to express our loss, to articulate our grief. The bell that tolled for Lt Col John Doe has gathered us. It brought us into assembly. We heard its peal. We, too, came to answer its call. For, we are inseparably united in spirit, the most basic of human bonding. We are fellow service members!**

 **SECOND, we are here as fellow citizens.**

 **A popular song from a few years back was entitled “Freedom Isn’t Free.**

 **For a nation to remain free, some of its citizens must wear the country’s military uniform. We have done that and we are all volunteers.**

 **If our children and grandchildren enjoy freedom 20-30 years from now, it will be in some measure {most like in great measure}, due to our service and the sacrifices of some of us. Just as the freedoms we enjoy were purchased by the sweat, tears, and blood of our predecessors.**

 **So, since each service member is a volunteer it is never correct, to say he “loses” his life. Whether in a sinking ship, an exploding tank, a burning crash, by an esoteric, tropical disease, or through “natural” causes, one can’t lose what he already gave.**

 **The service member gives when he swears allegiance to his country, when he puts on the uniform, when he gives faithful service. He never “looses”. Lt Col Doe didn’t lose his life last Saturday night. He gave it, years ago.**

 **THIRD, we gather as friends.**

 **Young King David, upon hearing of the death of his good friend, Jonathan, cried, “I am distressed for you, my brother, Jonathan” {2 Sam 1:26}. At the tomb of his good friend, Lazarus, “Jesus wept” {John 11:35}.**

 **If true and satisfying wealth is measured by one’s friends, Less Newton was incredibly wealthy.**

 **When I know that I will be conducting a memorial service, I pay close attention to what I hear people say about the person. Here is some of what I’ve heard from only a few of Lt Col Doe’s friends:**

**-- A fellow officer {Army} down the hall: John was a professional in the best sense of the word, a precise planner, thought the world of his wife and kids. When he left his Army buddies with a jolly blessing, “May the force be with you”, they never knew for sure if it was a benediction or an Air Force recruiting pitch.**

**-- A civilian co-worker: While some may grow bitter and look backward, he was still looking forward to life. I knew him five years and never saw him in a bad mood. He always saw the good, the positive, in people and situations.**

**-- A secretary in the office: His most unique quality was concern for others, all persons, races, and ranks. He established immediate rapport. He always went those extra steps.**

**-- A close associate and friend: He had the most unique ability to put people at ease. Everyone always felt better when they walked away from talking to him.**

**-- CPT, advanced course student, fellow pilot: I felt a tremendous personal loss, Lt Col Doe never failed to take time to talk with you. But, more so, I feel a professional loss. Those 18 years experience can no longer be shared. Those that had the opportunity of gaining that perspective from Lt Col Doe are most fortunate.**

**-- The mail clerk: To the question, in what way was Lt Col Doe special, he answered, he soldiered, but didn’t let it keep him from being a person. He always took time to talk to me. I respected him. I will miss him.**

**-- A tow-headed kid after chapel: Franklin’s dad was my friend, he was a “generous” person. I asked what he meant. He said, “He was a good man”!**

 **So, the purest truth about Lt Col John Doe, in its simplest profundity, came form the mouth of a child: He was a good man!**

 **So, we have gathered today as loved and loving family, as fellow service members, as fellow citizens, and as friends.**

 **Finally, one last question: Why are the Chaplains, leading the service? {Doctors, lawyers, commanders, nurses, social workers, and counselors also care about people, and are helping persons.}**

 **To warn you about the frailty of life. James 4:13ff “life is like mist...don’t boast about tomorrow...say if God wills...”**

 **To teach you the stewardship of safety; the safety is a spiritual value. It is not just a practical or operation concern.**

 **To remind you of the value of life, that its quality\success is measured not by wealth of status, not how one dies, but by how one lives.**

 **We lead you in this service to share the resources of our faith to declare that there is hope, based on firm spiritual reality, that endures hardships, tragedies, that survives. And that it is the blessed hope, that God, who has loved us through Christ, does really care, and will never forsake his children. And, that what is lost here in this life, that is suddenly, even cruelly snatched from us, will be more than recovered in that life that knows no end, where there is no more sorrow nor separation, eternal in Heaven.**

 **My dear friends, may the rich blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon you, to comfort, to instruct, and to sustain you. Amen.**

 **Chaplain {COL} First Mi. Last**

**Memorial Meditation**

 **Today we fear the open grave. One who has been our comrade, fellow-worker, friend, has been suddenly taken from us.**

 **In shock we see displayed the fragile nature of our own lives.**

 **We ask questions about the meaning of life and wonder if there is any comfort for the heart deep inside us.**

 **Face to face with man’s brief life, we are comforted by the eternal love of God. Ps 103:15-18**

**A. Man’s Life is Temporary {15-16}**

**Psalmist uses plant life to illustrate man’s frail destiny.**

 **1. Life may be plain or beautiful.**

 **Grass - acres of ordinary grass provides food for animals, oxygen for us to breathe. Necessary and needed.**

 **Flower - in full bloom - exquisite, unique beauty.**

 **2. Life is Brief.**

 **Wind reaches the plants - grass and flowers alike.**

 **David’s image - the hot desert winds - represents every form of peril which threatens life.**

 **3. Life is Insubstantial.**

 **Vanish away without leaving any trace.**

 **Empires and monuments provide no guarantee.**

 **Eventually they erode to dust the same as adobe bricks.**

 **Flowers bloom with bravery only to winter and be tossed in trash. They disappear without a trace.**

 **Yes, man’s life is temporary. To stop here would leave us without cause. But David goes on to give us a strong ground for comfort and hope. Comfort that is as solid as a rock: Eternal Love of God.**

**B. God’s Love is Eternal {17-18}**

 **1. The loyal love of God is given to the believer. “Loyalty”- military understands. Quality of faith.**

 **a. “Loyal Love” describes God’s relationship to his people. “Thoroughly loyal” as demonstrated by historic displays to Israel--Exodus from Egypt, return from captivity is spite of Israel’s continued wondering away.**

**“STEADFAST LOVE”**

**The steadfast love of the Lord never cease**

**His mercies never come to an end**

**They are new every morning**

**Great is the faithfulness, O’Lord**

**Great is thy faithfulness.**

 **C. God is “throughly loyal” to those that “Fear Him”- Precedes the loyal love. Describes submission to God. How? Through Jesus Christ {Jn 3:16}**

 **God’s loyalty is given to those in proper relationship to him -- believers.**

 **D. “God’s love to the believers is permanent. “Forever”. Not transitory or temporary. I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor Monarch or earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God’s whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!” {Rom 8:38-39 Phillipians}**

 **2. The believer is required to be loyal to God. For us loyalty is action based on knowing of God. Psalmist doesn’t pull any punches -- man’s life is brief and fragile. However, in midst of this destiny of beauty David notes a strong ground for comfort. Comfort that is forever. Comfort that is solid as a rock - a rock to build the future on - THE LOYAL LOVE OF THE LIVING GOD.**

**Chaplain {MAJ} Wesley Sullivan**

**Memorial Service**

**2 Tim 4:6-8**

 **Death is always a very sad occasion, particularly when it comes so sudden and by accident as was the case with these two men. In our scripture reading, the Apostle Paul knew because of what it was he had to do, that his life was in constant danger. This is the same understanding that many of our pilots have because of the tasks they often have to carry out.**

 **As so realizing that death was now upon him, the Apostle Paul wrote about it with a glowing testimony of faith. In doing so, he mentioned three things about his pilgrimage that he knew were true. And I believe that those of us who can recall different details of laughter, work, school, family, recreation, conversations, experiences, and services can look back and say that we too know that these things hold true with CW2 Doe and CW2 Lee. “I have fought a good fight” which I think suggests quality.**

 **Paul would not accept any compromise that lowered the standard of what he stood for. One of the most important aspects about a life is not how great it is in the eyes of the world, but how great it is in light of what one desires to accomplish. There is no doubt that these two men were quality individuals who were task oriented and who enjoyed venturing out into life.**

 **CW2 Doe not only enjoyed flying, but he was part of a band which traveled throughout entertaining people with music. His mother said that he liked probing into risky hobbies like motor cycle riding and other types of dare devil activities.**

 **CW2 Lee was not only a member of flying club, he also enjoyed scuba diving and weight lifting and exercising so that he would perform the maximum standards on his physical training test and keep in excellent physical condition. He excelled above standards serving his second rotation in Panama.**

 **These men were not spectators, but participants as they fought through the hustle and bustle of life, learning, growing, and becoming quality soldiers. “I have finished my course” which I think suggests patience. In modern usage, “patience” means to stay at a job and preserve until it is completed successfully. Sometimes there are a number of things that would cause an individual to give up on a job or pass up a very valuable training opportunity, but no so with these two men.**

 **I remember talking with CW2 Doe while he was in the intensive care unit and hearing him talk about how he could not wait to get through this operation so he could get back to flying. Though he would be delayed awhile, he would not be denied the opportunity to finish what he trained for. CW2 Lee was full of energy, always seeking opportunities to do better and improve himself. He exceeded many of his peers in night vision goggle training and did not mind putting aside personal pleasure to beat the books and master the manuals so that he could stay a step ahead.**

 **These men would display patience and take long-suffering in whatever form it came as they strived to finish the task at hand, proving that endurance is the crowing quality and patience all the passion of great hearts.**

**“ I have kept the faith “which I think suggest trustworthiness. In one of the races of Ancient Greece, each contestant was given a lighted torch. The object was not to get to finish line first, but to get there with the torch still lit. It is very difficult to have a like mindedness that allows you to work with other people and yet keep your focus in perspective and gain the confidence of your peers while achieving your goals.**

 **These men made their mark in life and gained the respect and trust of many along the way, who were willing to be passenger or copilot with either one at anytime. They died holding on to their faith and doing what they loved to do most. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” I think these words very appropriately describe these two men whom we pay tribute to today. We do not understand why we have to suffer such a loss. We do not understand the purposes and elective choices of God for many lives. But I leave you with this poem to think about:**

**Sometime We’ll Understand**

 **Not now, but in the coming years,**

 **It may be in a better land,**

 **We’ll read the meaning of our tears,**

 **And there, sometime, we’ll understand.**

 **We’ll catch the broken threads again,**

 **And finish what we here began;**

 **Heaven will the mysteries explain**

 **And then, ah, then, we’ll understand.**

 **God knows the way, He holds the key,**

 **He guides us with unerring hand,**

 **Sometime with the tearless eyes we’ll see;**

 **Yes, there, up there, we’ll understand.**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Committal Service**

**I Corinthians 15:20-23**

 **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.**

 **For a believer: Inasmuch as it has pleased God in his infinite wisdom and providence to remove from this world the soul of John Doe we commit this body to the ground. Earth to Earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. There to await the glorious appearing of out Lord Jesus Christ. When at His coming to earth and sea shall give up the righteous dead and the bodies of those who sleep in graves shall be raised and made live unto His glorious body.**

 **For an unbeliever: Inasmuch as it pleased God in His infinite wisdom and providence to remove from this world the soul of John Doe, here we commit his body to its kindred dust, the spirit we leave with God.**

**“May we take to heart these solemn moments, for each of us will one day be brought to grave. May our trust be in Him who said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me shall never die.”**

**PRAYER: {I read the Lord’s prayer.} Matt. 6:9-13**

**Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

**BENEDICTION:**

 **For a believer: Jude 24-25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.**

 **For an unbeliever: “And now may the benediction of the Triune God rest upon each of his children now and forever. Amen.”**

 **Chaplain {LTC} First Mi. Last**

**Committal Service**

**THE SALUTATION:**

 **I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: He that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.**

 **I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though my body be destroyed, yet shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and no another.**

 **We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.**

**THE INVOCATION:**

 **Almighty and merciful God, the comforter of the sorrowful and the support of the weary, who does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men; look down in Thy tender love and pity we beseech Thee, upon these who joy has been turned into mourning; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, be pleased to uphold, strengthen and comfort them, that they may be lifted above the darkness and distress of this hour.**

**In Christ’s Name**

**Amen.**

**OBITUARY:**

**SCRIPTURE READING:**

 **“Let us hear the scriptures, God’s Word.”**

 **Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**The righteous cry, and the Lord hearth, and delivereth them out of their troubles. The Lord is neigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.**

**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish, or persecution, or fire or sword? Nay in all these things we are more than conquers through him that loveth us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**PRAYER:**

**Eternal God, Supreme Commander of us all, Lord of the far- flung battle line, to whom all ranks of life report, we bow before Thee with reverent hearts and in sublime faith, knowing that Thou dost in life. For again Thou hast ordered a fellow servant of our Country to the realm of death, forever with the unnumbered multitude mindful of service nobly done. Thou hast called him to everlasting rest. Thou hast sealed his lips.**

**Hear now the sorrows of those who mourn. Touch their tired hearts with healing. Protect them with Thy holy care. Keep clean in memory of life of the one Thou has permitted to be taken from this earth. Inspire us who live to an increase devotion to the best and noblest things of life. Bless and lead those whose lives are offered to duty for their native land. May we by our examples so live that we may die worthy citizens of our great land. Amen.**

**COMMITTAL:**

**For as much as God hath permitted to be taken out of this world the soul of this servant of our country we therefore commit his body to the ground, and leave his soul to God who gave it. The dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it.**

**BENEDICTION:**

**The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen**

**FLAG:**

**Firing Squad: Fires three rounds**

**Bugler: Taps**

**END OF SERVICE:**

**GRAVESIDE COMMITTAL:**

**A. Read: I Corinthians 15:20-23**

**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man come death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.**

**B. For a believer: In as much as it has pleased God in his infinite wisdom and providence to remove from this world the soul of {name of deceased} we commit his\her body to the ground. Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes. There to await the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. When at His coming the earth and sea shall give up the righteous dead and the bodies of those who sleep in graves shall be raised and made live unto His glorious body.**

**C. For an unbeliever: In as much as it pleased God in His infinite wisdom and providence to remove form this world the soul of {name of deceased} here we commit his\her body to its kindred dust, the spirit we leave with God.**

**D. “May we take to heart these solemn moments, for each of us will one day be brought to the grave. May our trust be in Him who said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.”**

**E. Prayer: {I read the Lord’s prayer.} Matt. 6:9-13. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

**F. Benediction for a believer: Jude 24-25. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.**

 **Benediction for an unbeliever: “And now may the benediction of the Triune God rest upon each of his children now and forever. Amen.”**

**END OF GRAVESIDE COMMITTAL**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Eulogy**

**1. A good memorial ceremony eulogy should include the following elements:**

 **a. PURPOSE: Why you are giving the eulogy, e.g., is the deceased a close friend? Did you ask for the privilege? Are you proud to do so as the deceased’s commander?**

 **b. BIOGRAPHY: A summary of the deceased’s personal history and military career. This should only deal with positive aspects.**

 **c. SURVIVORS: A listing of the survivors with an expression of sympathy, sorrow, prayer, etc.**

 **d. CLOSING STATEMENT: Include the eulogist personal feelings and an expression of the loss the unit {and country} has sustained.**

**2. The following is an example of a eulogy:**

 **“It is a privilege and honor for me to present the eulogy of SP4 John Q. Citizen who was an outstanding member of this command. SP4 Citizen was born on the 14th day of July, 1945 in Topeka, Kansas. He resided there throughout his early life and graduated from Unified School District # 364 in 1966.**

 **SP4 Citizen’s sudden death came as a great shock to all of us who knew him and we will share mutual grief in this moment of sadness.**

 **“SP4 Citizen was inducted into the Army in September, 1967. After Basic Training, he was assigned to the Army Flight School at Fort Rucker, Alabama. In December, 1967, he successfully completed the Aircraft Mechanic Course and was assigned to the Republic of Vietnam. SP4 Citizen served in the Vietnam Counter Offensive Phase II and III, and in the TET Counter Offensive Phase IV, V, and VI. During his tour in Vietnam, SP4 Citizen was decorated many times, to include an award for gallantry. Upon return to the States, SP4 Citizen was discharged from the Army and made his home in Dallas, Texas. In June 1971, SP4 Citizen reenlisted in the Army and was assigned to Division Artillery, 1st Armoned Division, Germany, where he served for 36 months. On August 8,1974, SP4 Citizen was assigned to Division Artillery of this Division.**

 **During his career in the Army, he adapted very well to service life. He was an excellent soldier who performed all tasks in a cheerful, efficient, and professional manner. Extremely conscientious in his work, he consistently put forth the extra effort required to get the job done well.**

 **As we are all aware, SP4 Citizen died of natural causes on 14 May 1975. It is unfortunate that a man of his caliber and dedication met death at such an early age. He will be buried in a private cemetery in Topeka, Kansas. SP4 Citizen is survived by five {5} brothers and sisters, all of which reside in Kansas. We all extend and express our sincere sympathy and deepest regrets in sharing in their grief. We pray that God will watch over them and comfort them in this time of sorrow.**

 **SP4 Citizen’s death is a great loss to the unit and to the country he so proudly served.”**

 **Chaplain {COL} First Mi. Last**

**Eulogy**

**John Doe was born in Enid, Oklahoma on November 2, 1950. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Doe of Fairview, Oklahoma. He attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University where he received his BA in history . He entered the military in July of 1972, in enlisted status and was commissioned a 2LT, Ordinance Corps, one year later after successfully completing Officer Candidate School. That same year he also attended Jump School and became a qualified parachutist. John’s first assignment was a Supply Platoon Leader in a maintenance battalion at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Eighteen months later he was appointed as the**

 **Maintenance Officer of that same battalion. John’s talents as a leader were readily apparent and he was selected to command a company in the maintenance company at Gelnhausen. In 1981, he was transferred to Hanau where he served as the Adjutant of the maintenance battalion. In 1983, he was reassigned to the U. S. Army Militay Personnel Center in Alexandria, Virginia where he served as a personnel assignments officer. In 1986, he was reassigned to Fort Stewart, Georgia and became my executive officer in November of that year.**

**I first met John Doe in April of 1986, when he was still at MILPERCEN in the Combat Support Officer’s Assignements Branch. I was immediately impressed with his knowledge and the enthusiasm he displayed when he talked about his future in the military. During the course of our conversation, he mentioned his desires to be the executive officer of a forward support battalion, in particular, the one I would command. His desires were fulfilled and he became my executive officer, the position he held until his death this past Friday.**

 **The Army has lost a great warrior. MAJ Doe was not a warrior in the sense that we normally use the term, but he was a warrior within the confines of the combat service support arena. In reviewing his OER Support Form, it was obvious that he has declared war on many things. He declared war on mediocrity--for he pledged to assist in the professional excellence and development of unit leaders. He declared war in ignorance--for he pledge to mentor leaders on the “How To” of their daily activites and their careers. He declared war on lethargy--for he and pledged to ensure fast, friendly logistics support to the First Brigade and its supporting units. He declared war on ineffective maintenance for he pledged to improve both direct support and organizational maintenance. He declared war on injuries for he pledged to demand high safety standards and make safety a part of every plan. In my estimation, he was a very successful warrior and succeeded in accomplishing every objective. His objectives also illustrate the selflessness of his orientation. He was always looking out for others and for the good of the unit.**

**John Doe was also very dedicated to his family. There was always a sparkle in his eyes when he talked about his wife Jane, or his sons Mark and David. Just this past week I handed him two photos that I taken of Mark and David while at the beach. The expression which emanated from his face was obviously one of love and affection and that of a proud and devoted father.**

 **MAJ Doe was an outstanding and totally dedicated officer. He was a brillant logistician, mentor, and leader. He was very strong both intellectually and professionally. We have all learned a lot from him and will miss him dearly as we continue to provide support to the high standards he has helped incorporate. His contributions to this battalion are everlasting. He truly made a difference!**

 **There is a saying I would like to leave with you today and it goes something like this: “When you die in love, you live in the hearts of those you left behind.” John Doe died on Friday, 31 July 1988, but I know he still lives in the hearts of those he left behind.**

 **Chaplain {CPT} First Mi. Last**

**Eulogy**

**Jane Doe was born on April 25, 1960, in the Naval Hospital on Guam while her father was serving in the U. S. Navy.**

**As an intelligent young lady, and an exceptional student, Jane received many honors and scholarships through her years of school. She earned a degree in home economics and in nursing from Pensacola Jr. College, from which she also received her certification as a Registered Nurse.**

**Jane grew up in a good home and had a happy childhood. She was very close to her parents and sister. There was much love, care and family cohesiveness, and she treasured these.**

**Jane met John Doe during her college years, and they were married on 14 Feb 75. As a devoted wife to an Army man she traveled where he was stationed: twice at Fort Polk, twice in Germany, and here at Fort Ord. John loved Jane. Her sensitive, delicate and warm nature showed through her generosity, her love and care. He valued these qualities.**

**Jane and John’s beautiful five year old daughter Jill exemplifies so many of her mother’s qualities. Her intelligence charm and friendliness added up to her being the kind of daughter any parents would be proud of.**

**For the past half dozen years, Jane has been struggling with a disease that has threatened her life a number of times. In the first week of this past May she again was hospitalized. John, her parents, and sister were continually with her, encouraging her, and praying for her recovery.**

**On 20 June, Jane left this life, into the loving care of the Lord.**

**She leaves to mourn her death: her devoted husband John, her sweet daughter Jill, her loving parents Frank and Ruth Roth, her caring sister Linda, and many others relatives and friends.**

**First Mi. Last**

**Illustrations**

**One approach to death was put simply by the father of Robert Browning. His cheerfulness on his deathbed so surprised his physician that he asked Browning’s sister in a low voice, “Does the old gentleman know he is dying?” But the dying man overheard the question and answered, “Death is no enemy in my eyes.”**

**Death, be not proud, though some have called thee**

**Mighty and dreadful, for thou art no so:**

**For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow**

**Die not, poor death...**

**One short sleep past, we wake eternally,**

**And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.**

 **John Donne**

**As the mother’s womb holds us for nine months, making us ready, not for the womb itself, but for life, just so, through our lives we are making ourselves ready for another birth. Look forward without fear to that appointed hour, the last hour of the body but not of the soul. That day, which you fear as being the end of all things, is the birthday of your eternity.**

**Seneca, the pagan philosopher {d. 65 A. D.)**

**George Palmer said before he died, “I’m homesick for heaven.” It’s the hope of dying that has kept me alive this long.**

**What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly.**

 **Richard Bach**

 **Easter morning is not a mere declaration that we are immortal, but a declaration that we are immortal children of God.**

 **George Matheson**

 **Dying believers seem to care comparatively little for hymns descriptive of the joys and the glories of Heaven, beautiful as many of these are. It is to the cross, not to the crown, that the last look turns, the lingering grasp cleaves.**

 **Dora Greenwell**

 **When John Owen the great Puritan, lay on his deathbed his secretary wrote {in his name} to a friend “I am still in the land of the living.”**

**“Stop,” said Owen. “Change that and say, I am yet in the land of the dying, but I hope soon to be in the land of the living.”**

**When death stung Jesus Christ, it stung itself to death.**

 **Peter Joshua**

**Life is eternal; and love is immortal; and death is only a horizon; and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.**

 **Rossiter Worthington Raymond**

**I have loved marble and paint. I have loved architecture and poetry. I have loved family and friends. I have loved God and the earth and heavens. I have loved life to the full and now I love death as its natural termination. God did not create me to abandon me. The forces of destruction have never overcome creativity.**

 **Michelangelo**

**There was a sign at Gibraltar with the words “Ne Plus Ultra”**

**{nothing beyond} on it. That was before the New World was discovered. Then when it was discovered, they had to change it by rubbing out the “Ne” to “Plus Ultra” {everything beyond}. Before Jesus rose from the tomb, over the portals of death was written, “Nothing beyond.” After He arose, it had to be written “Everything beyond.” For in Jesus death is not even an interruption; it is a larger beginning.**

 **Growing Spiritually, E. Stanley Jones**

**Hand In Hand**

**Do not fear, for I am with you;**

 **Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

 **I will strengthen you and help you;**

 **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.**

 **I am the Lord, your God, who takes**

 **hold of your right hand and says to**

 **you, Do not fear, I will help you.**

 **Isa. 41: 10,13**

**I have a friend who always hears**

**Each prayer that I may pray,**

**And walks in silence with me**

**Each step along life’s way.**

**He never fails to comfort me**

**When things don’t turn our right.**

 **And I can always count on him**

**In day, or darkest night.**

**His hand is always there in mine**

**To guide me lest I stray;**

**To pick up if I should fall,**

**And help me find my way.**

**And every day that dawns for me**

**Is just the way he planned,**

**Together we go down life’s path**

**My Lord and I, hand in hand.**

 **Bill Carr**

**Thank you God, for each new morning.**

**You are ushering in another day**

**Untouched and freshly new,**

**So here I come to ask You, God,**

**If You’ll renew me, too.**

**Forgive the many errors**

**That I made yesterday,**

**And let me try again, dear God,**

**To walk closer in Thy way...**

**But, Father, I am well aware**

**I can’t make it on my own,**

**So take my hand and hold it tight**

**For I can’t walk alone.**

 **Helen Stenier Rice**

**Precious Lord, take my hand,**

**Lead me on, let me stand,**

**I am tired, I am weak, I am worn,**

**Through the storm, through the night**

**Lead me on to the light,**

**Take my hand, precious Lord,**

**Lead me home.**

 **Thomas Dorsey**

**Don’t try to hold God’s hand,**

**let Him hold yours.**

**You do the trusting,**

**He’ll do the holding.**

**It’s hard to see tomorrow**

**When someone you love is gone.**

**And it’s hard still to realize**

**That your life will still go on.**

**But the Lord won’t give you burdens**

**Which He knows you can’t bear,**

**And He will not leave you comfortless**

**You’ll always find Him there.**

**We’re all our Father’s children,**

**Here on earth and up above,**

**And your loved one now walks close**

**To God surrounded by His love.**

 **When Peace Like A River**

 **Horatio Spafford was a successful lawyer in Chicago. In 1873 he planned a European vacation for the health of his wife. Due to some last minute business, he had to remain in Chicago but he sent his wife and four daughters on ahead as scheduled. He was going to follow them a few days later.**

 **On November 22, 1873 the ship on which his family was traveling was hit by another ship and sank 12 minutes later. Mrs. Spafford was saved but all 4 of their daughters perished.**

 **On December 1, the survivors landed in Wales, England and Mrs. Spafford sent a cable to her husband still back in Chicago with the words, “Saved alone.”**

 **Shortly afterward he left the U. S. by ship to meet his wife in England. As the ship on which he was sailing reached the scene of the tragic accident where his 4 daughters had drowned he wrote the hymn, “When Peace like a River.”**

**When peace like a river**

**attends all my way,**

**When sorrow like sea**

**billows roll,**

**What ever my lot you have**

**taught me to say:**

**It is well, it is well**

**with my soul.**

**And, Lord, haste the day**

**when our faith shall be sight,**

**The clouds be rolled back**

**as a scroll,**

**The trumpet shall descend**

**Even so - it is well**

**with my soul.**

**It is in times of calamity...**

**In days and nights of sorrow;**

**That the presence,**

**And the sufficiency,**

**And the sympathy of God,**

**Grow sure and wonderful.**

**It is then that we find**

**The grace of God is sufficient**

**For all of our needs;**

**For every problem and**

**For every difficulty;**

**For every broken heart and**

**For every human sorrow...**

 **What a Friend We Have in Jesus**

 **Joseph Scriven was looking forward to a life filled with happiness in 1846 after graduating from Trinity College when suddenly tragedy struck.**

 **He was engaged to be married to a lovely young woman who shared his ideals about life. But, on the day before their wedding she accidentally drowned in a pool. He suffered a shock that lasted with him the rest of his life.**

 **He left his home town of Dublin, Ireland and moved to Canada in hope of forgetting and starting life all over again. But he could never forget the tragic accident.**

 **Ten years later his mother who stilled lived in Dublin, Ireland experienced a great sorrow and was seriously ill. Unable to go and be with her to help and comfort her, he wrote her a letter.**

 **In the letter he wrote to comfort her he enclosed a poem which he wrote to be a comfort to her. He never intended that anyone except his mother should read the comforting words of the poem he called “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”.**

**What a Friend we have in Jesus,**

**All our sins and grief’s to bear?**

**What a privilege to carry**

**Everything to God in prayer!**

**O what peace we often forfeit,**

**O what needless pain we bear,**

**All because we do not carry**

**Everything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trails and temptations?**

**Is there trouble anywhere?**

**We should never be discouraged:**

**Take it to the Lord in prayer!**

**Can we find a friend so faithful,**

**Who will all our sorrows share?**

**Jesus knows our every weakness,**

**Take it to the Lord in prayer!**

**Are we weak and heavy laden,**

**Cumbered with a load of care?**

**Precious Savior, still our refuge,**

**Take it to the Lord in prayer!**

**Do your friends forsake you?**

**Take it to the Lord in prayer!**

**In his arms he’ll take and**

**shield you,**

**You will find a solace there.**

 **The Scar**

**To lose a loved one is to be**

 **wounded deep within the soul.**

**The wound will heal,**

**but the scar will remain.**

**The scar is not upon the body**

**but upon the heart.**

**To touch the scar is to recall**

**the image of the loved one.**

**To touch the scar is to experience**

**the love that still remains in him**

**and is eternally sheltered in you.**

**There is a time to be born and a time to die. God has appointed a time for every activity under heaven. There is a time to laugh and a time to weep, a time to dance and a time to mourn.**

 **Ecclesiastics 3:1-4**

**When Mrs. William Booth lay dying, she said, “I am passing over the waters, but I am not going under.”**

**World War II pilot when talking about death of some of his fellow pilots said, “They slipped the bonds of earth to touch the face of God.”**

**My heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices; my body will also rest in hope, because you will not leave me in the grave, nor will you allow your presence is fullness of joy, at your hand there are pleasures forevermore.**

 **Psalm 16:9-11**

**A song writer expressed death this way:**

**Just think of stepping on shore**

**And finding it heaven,**

**Of touching a hand**

**And finding it God’s**

**Of breathing new air**

**And finding it celestial,**

**Of waking up in glory**

**And finding it home.**

**I’ll Lend You A Child**

**“I’ll lend you for little time**

**a child of mine, “He said,**

**“For you to love the while she lives**

**and mourn when she is dead.**

**It may be six or seven years,**

**or twenty-two or three,**

**But will you, till I call her back,**

**take care of her for Me?**

**She’ll bring her charms to gladden you,**

**and through her stay be brief,**

**You will have lovely memories**

**as solace for your grief.”**

**“I cannot promise she will stay,**

**since all to earth return,**

**But there are lessons taught down here**

**I want this child to learn.**

**I have looked the world wide over**

**in my search for teacher true,**

**And from throngs that crowd life’s lanes,**

**I have selected you.**

**Now will you give her all your love,**

**nor think the labor vain,**

**Nor hate Me when I come to call**

**to take her back again?”**

**We fancied that we heard them say,**

**“Dear Lord, Thy will be done?**

**For all the joy Thy child will bring,**

**the risk of grief we run.**

**We will shelter her with tenderness,**

**We’ll love her while we may,**

**And for the happiness we have now**

**forever grateful stay.**

**But shall the angels call for her**

**much sooner than we planned,**

**We shall brave the bitter grief that comes**

**and try to understand.”**

 **--Author Unknown**

**Poem**

**He wished no one a last**

**farewell**

**Nor even said good-bye**

**He was gone before**

**we knew it.**

**And only God knows**

**Why,**

**They say that time**

**heals all sorrow.**

**And helps us to forget.**

**But time so far has**

**only proven,**

**How much we’ve missed**

**him yet**

**God gave us strength**

**to face it**

**And courage to bear**

**the blow**

**But what it meant to love**

**and lose him,**

**No one will ever know!**

 **Author Unknown**

**Little Angels**

**When God calls little children**

**to dwell with Him above,**

**We mortals sometimes question**

**the wisdom of His love.**

**For no heartache compares with**

**the death of one small child**

**Who does so much to make our world**

**Seem wonderful and mild.**

**Perhaps God tires of calling**

**the aged to His fold,**

**So He picks a rosebud**

**before it can grow old.**

**God knows how much we need them**

**and so He takes but few**

**To make the land of Heaven**

**more beautiful to view.**

**Believing this is difficult**

**still somehow we must try.**

**The saddest word mankind knows**

**will always be “Good-by”.**

**So when al little child departs,**

**we who are left behind**

**Must realize God loves children,**

**Angels are hard to find.**

**Have You Peace**

**You have tasted the joys of earth’s pleasures**

**You have traveled where’re me have trod;**

**But tell me, oh tell me, my bother,**

**In your heart have you peace, peace, with God?**

**You have answered the call of ambition**

**You have triumphed where others have failed;**

**But tell me, my brother, I pray you,**

**Have you peace when your faith is assailed?**

**You have followed the world and its treasures,**

**You have bartered your soul for its gold;**

**But tell me, my brother, oh tell me**

**Have you peace, are you safe in the fold?**

 **Oswald Smith**

**“It is Not Death To Die”**

**It is not death to die**

**To leave this weary road,**

**And, ‘midst the brotherhood on high,**

**To be at home with God.**

**It is not death to close**

**The eye long dimmed with tears,**

**And wake in glorious response**

**To spend eternal years.**

**It is not death to bear**

**The wrench that sets us free**

**From dungeon chain, to breathe the air**

**Of boundless liberty.**

**It is not death to fling**

**Aside this sinful dust,**

**And rise on strong exulting wing**

**To live among the just.**

**Jesus, Thou Prince of Life,**

**Thy chosen cannot die;**

**Like Thee, they conquer in the strife,**

**To reign with Thee on high.**

 **H. A. Cesar Malan,**

**Tr. George Washington Bethune.**