

Dear Gina,

I am so sorry that it has taken me so long to get an email out to you! A lot has happened since Eric was taken from us and we are all at a loss for not having his presence amongst us! Your son was an inspiration to us all and his caring, humorous and fun loving attitude always kept things going around here. Even when times got tough, Eric got tougher! I remember always when we were in training at California and my fondest memory of Eric was when we pulled all the Marines in and had them do some ground fighting! Eric was known as the "German Tank" and I called him out to take on a Marine twice his size and Eric held the platoon's honor by beating the guy! Shortly after that, he took on two guys at once, and in my amazement, he beat them as well! I knew at that moment he was more than a special Marine. He was a great man, he got up shook both their hands and walk over to the side never boasting nor bragging about the marvelous feat he had just accomplished.

Your son was an honor and proud privilege for me to lead here and though his death will carry with me for a lifetime, his memory will go to eternity with me as I relieve him that grateful day at the Pearly Gates, for I know that God has chosen one of the FINEST MARINES there ever was to guard heaven's gates! I am working right now on getting you a copy of the memorial service we held here and please know that the Marines in the platoon send their love and prayers to you and your family! The memorial was heart felt and very emotional and Sebastian and other Marines that were very close to him did him so much justice in their remarks and actions during the ceremony! I will let you know soon as I can get a copy of it to you! I also wanted to take the time to tell you that a very gracious amount of packages have been being sent addressed to me with the remarks: "In Loving Memory of Lcpl Eric Herzberg" I wanted you to know how much it not only means to us but the amount of stuff that is being sent is so much of a boost for these young guys who do not get very much! It is always a great feeling and a warmness to your heart when you know how much people back there support and care for us out here! I will send you a list of names of all the people that have sent care boxes and would love for you to assist me in thanking each and every one of them! I will personally let them all know how much we appreciate and thank them for all that you all there do!

Also, my wife has told me of the donation you made and though I feel guilty for you giving so much, I can only think to THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart!!! I could never find the words to say how I wish it would have been under better circumstances but I know that I could never do that! Please know that every part of you goes with us and you will always be a big part of our lives. We are all planning a trip to Arlington upon our return, and would love for you to be there when we get off that bus! I would love nothing more than to have brought your son home Gina and I am so sorry that I let you down! We all tried that day everything we could and none of us will ever forget those last moments spent there with Eric! I'm sorry, forgive me!

Please know that everyone of us honor and cherish the time that we were a part of Eric's life and honor you and your family for the ultimate sacrifice that you have had to make! I could never imagine what it must feel like to lose a son, but please know that when I lose one of my Marines over here, it carries deep within my soul and my life is devoted to their dedication and honor!!!!!!!!!! I know that you have lost one of the biggest parts of your heart Gina, and it may not fill the hole left there but the Marines of 2nd Platoon, Kilo Company will always be here for you and consider you our "Mom"

God Bless You and Be With You Always,

Ssgt. Timothy P. Hanson
USMC