

Eric:

I do not know you. You did not know me. But through your father Eric and Wendi I have learned a great deal about you. Not everything, mind you – but enough to know how caring of a person you were, to everyone around you. And to know that you were a fine Marine, one who worn the uniform with pride and never backed down from a challenge.

Eric, even in your passing, I hope you realize how many gifts you continue to bestow on people. People like myself, who did not even know you. People from across the country in Michigan. People who have read about you and smiled at your achievements, but then shuttered when they thought about your terrible loss. But I know and they know that you are always with us. All of us. Constantly. And I know that you are taking good care of those that have followed you into eternity, like any good Marine would do. I have no doubt of that. These are all invaluable gifts that you have granted us. Gifts that stand the test of time, and breach the immortal divide between here and the afterlife, a heavenly eternity from which I know you are watching over all of your family and friends. I know you are watching over them closely, and not a moment goes by that you do not protect, comfort, and confide in those who love you so much.

So happy birthday to you, Eric. This world indeed is richer because of your presence and your contributions. Thank you for everything. And thank you for being a Marine. I hope you know that you continue to inspire people all over, everywhere. Real inspiration to real people. And with real love to you. I wish I could call you a friend of mine, but I'm too humbled to even sort of do that. Perhaps I can just think of myself as an admirer. An admirer of Eric W. Herzberg, who laid down his life, but not his immutable soul, for an eternally grateful nation. May an entire country's admiration lay with you. You are remembered, forever. Happy birthday to a hero.

Edward