

Dear Eric's Family,

I am sending you my prayers. I know, personally, that the death of someone you love never gets easier. With time, it may fade, or you might have an hour or a day of happiness, but then you see their favorite flower, or hear a song they loved, or go to tell them a joke, and it is as rough as the day it happened. But even though it will never be easy, it will get softer. You won't cry when you hear the song, or see the flower, or know the joke. You'll smile, and celebrate the life he lived. You'll sing along, and he'll sing in your heart. You'll smell the flower, and he'll smell it too. You'll go to his grave and tell him all the jokes, and he'll be looking down at you and laugh. Eric gave his life so someone like me can be free, so that I can even go to school and learn about him and his sacrifice. Sometimes it feels terrible that the person you loved had to sacrifice themselves and not come home, when other people's families in the Army or Marines or Navy can come home. But we have to remember that even when we are not the lucky ones who has our loves come home, we are the lucky few who are free and understand the price for being free. And we know he is up there in Heaven seeing how much we care and how proud the world is of people like him. He died for us, so now we must live for him. Sing, smell, and laugh for him. Be free as a people, because that is what they are giving us. Thank you very much for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Lillis Lake