

Funeral Service  
For  
Captain Herbert C. Crosby  
25 May 2007  
Arlington National Cemetery  
Ch (COL) William Broome

**Welcome and Invocation:** I want to thank the family and friends of Herbert Crosby, Herby, for their journey to Arlington today to pay long overdue respects to a son, a brother, a relative, a friend and a fellow Soldier. Please bow your heads with me as I pray:

Loving and Merciful God, I ask You to join with us this morning as we gather to say good bye to Captain Herbert C. Crosby. He gave his life so that others could live out their lives in open freedom and happiness. His was a supreme sacrifice and one that this Nation honors today.

Your word tells us love is the greatest gift of all and there is no greater love than to give your life for others. Be with the family and friends as they mourn. Comfort them with the assurance of peace on earth thru our Lord. Let us not despair but let us rejoice in the blessed hope of a coming glory and eternity. I thank You for Your presence with us today, in the name of my King of Kings, I pray, amen.

As I begin this service I want to read a short eulogy taken from an article by Kristen Dooley:

Captain Herbert C. Crosby, a U.S. Army Reservist, was born on Memorial Day in 1947. As a young child he always thought the American Flag flew in honor of his birthday. Captain Crosby was a blond-haired, blue eyed Eagle Scout, high-school varsity football player, and popular young man who loved boating, cars, airplanes, the Beatles and a good practical joke. His family and friends affectionately dubbed Captain Crosby "Herby."

"Being from a patriotic family, Herby wanted to serve his country and didn't wait to be drafted," said Herby's sister, Mary Lou Wade. "He enlisted in the U.S. Army in November 1966 after graduating from high school in Georgia." During the winter of 1970, the Crosby's were delivered terribly grave news: Herby, a Firebird combat gunship pilot, was Missing in Action.

On Jan. 10, 1970, the Soldiers were returning to their base at Chu Lai, South Vietnam aboard a UH-1C Huey helicopter. Due to bad weather, their helicopter went down over Quang Nam Province. A search was initiated for the crew, but

no sign of the helicopter or crew was ever spotted. In 1989, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam gave U.S. specialists 25 boxes containing the remains of the U.S. servicemen related to this incident. It was then that the Crosby's caught a glimpse of hope.

In late July 2006, the Crosby's received word that Herby was in fact one of the positively identified, but it was not until Nov. 28, 2006 when the family received the official notification.

And just as Herby believed the American Flag flew in honor of his birthday so many years ago, the Crosby's thought it befitting to have Herby's internment as close to his birth date as possible so that "the flag will always fly in honor not only of his birthday, but also for his sacrifice to our country and freedom."

**Transition to Funeral Service:** Over 40 years ago, Herby put on the uniform of a United States Army Soldier. He stood up, raised his right hand and said that he would protect this nation and those he loved from oppression and harm; he gave his life in fulfillment of that pledge. His bravery, his courage and his sacrifice will always be remembered by those of us who knew him and in the recorded history of our Nation's conflicts. Today we honor and thank Herby and his family for that supreme gift to all our land for all time.

I want to draw our minds back to another man who also chose a life of sacrifice and service when he put on the uniform of humanity. His name was Jesus Christ and the account of this service for all is recorded in Philippians chapter 2 verses 5-11:

**5**Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

**6**Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
**7**but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

**8**And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

**9**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

**10**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**11**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Herby felt that the highest goal for mankind was to choose a life of service to mankind. Last night we gathered to remember and honor Herby in a less formal setting, to tell stories and share memories of our short time with him on earth. It was more than obvious to me that he was the genuine article. Herby Crosby cared about his family, his friends and this great country and the flag that represents it. This was borne out in testimony over and over again. He was a Christian and the values of God were a daily part of his life as evidenced in the Scouting Oath that he recited all the way to Eagle Scout.

I can't answer the great question "Why?" If I could, I would be the richest man on earth and would have an international best selling book on the subject. Every day people wonder what makes men and women willing to die for their beliefs. For me it is simple, they die because they believe goodness, kindness, gentleness, and love are important. They believe that freedom, equality, dignity and basic human rights are more than important, that they are God-given. Herby, like the men and women of our military today, believed it was important enough to give his life for and we are deeply grateful for people like this.

Jesus looked down on fallen humanity and saw the pain, grief, hopelessness and emptiness of sin and put the plan of salvation in place for those who wanted something more. For those who believe there is more to life than just today, who believe sacrifice and service are absolutes, for all people Jesus came and took our place on a cross that belonged to each one of us. In this life, we can freely choose what career we want, who we want to marry, where we want to live and who we want to serve. That is what freedom means. When this is done in selfless service for others, especially those less fortunate, it is the source for the stories of heroes. Today we say good bye to one of those heroes in Captain Herbert Crosby. Well done my good and faithful servant.

As you reflect on this service in days to come, I ask you to consider your relationship with God, the God who created the universe and who died on that cross in your place, the God who is coming back to claim those who belong to Him. Do you belong to Him today? If so, then this message is one of hope and promise for you. If not, then this message may be troubling and perplexing for you. I appeal to each of you to give your heart in open service to the one who gave His life in service to you, Jesus Christ. There is no greater joy, no sweeter peace and no greater love and acceptance thru any other.

**Let us pray:** Blessed Lord, walk with us as we walk thru that valley of death today, as we think about our lives and what they stand for. May our hope and assurance be grounded in Your Word and Your life for us. Thank you for people like Herby, for his willing sacrifice and love. Bless the family and each one here with the peace and hope of an eternal future. Watch over our brave military as they battle freedoms foes in Afghanistan and Iraq. This I pray in the Name of Jesus who is the Christ, Amen.