

Dear Charles,

It is simply impossible for those of us born in the latter half of the 20th Century to understand or appreciate how perilous and uncertain times were when you were in service to our country. We have grown up amid the safety, bounty and comfort you and your compatriots put yourselves in harm's way to afford us. There are no adequate thanks to be offered to you, but a start is to simply say, "Thank you, Charles."

While at the time you would have had no way to know this would come to be so, in the years after your return from service, your son would grow to be an honorable, talented, loving, faithful and profoundly solid human being. He would bless the lives of those whom he would touch through his music and his very presence.

If there is a finer measure of a man than his children, I do not know it. Our children are reflections of more than our DNA, for they carry forward what they observe of us in our humanity, our hearts and our ability to imagine love and act on it where we do not find it. All of these things I see, experience and appreciate in Michael. I have not met you, Charles, yet I know you by your son.

In those darkest of your days in service to our country, when you scouting enemy movements on that lonely island in the Pacific, if only it would have been possible for you to have imagined with clarity how the goodness in you was to carry on. Today, we may all see that goodness in you with perfect clarity, and what we see is excellent and sweet.

I thank you for your service to our country, and I thank you for your son. Both have proven to be of inestimable and profound value to the likes of me and countless others. Thank you, Petty Officer Second Class McDonald.

With my appreciation and love,

Marty Hall, FOM (Friend of Michael)