

*The scene opens on a pristine summer's day. A warm sun and a slight breeze are present. Birds can be heard chirping over the rustling of the tree branches overhead. We see a small hill, with a single maple tree sitting at the top. Below the tree sits a single gravestone. Two men enter slowly and climb the small hill. One is wearing a military uniform, the other a suit. The one wearing the suit is carrying folded American flag.*

Jack:

I can't believe it's been so long already.

Mark:

I haven't seen you here in a while. How've ya been.

Jack:

It feels like it was only yesterday...

Mark:

Shut up Jack. No sob stories today. You knew what we signed up for. You knew it was a possibility. For any of us.

Jack:

Meghan is still doing well. The kids visit her when they can and some of the other guys that are still around are always willing to lend a hand.

Mark:

She was always an independent kind of woman wasn't she?

Jack:

The kids are good too. All grown up.

Mark:

It really has been a while since I've heard from you. Last I saw them they were still kids running and playing in the yard.

Jack:

Little Joey isn't so little anymore. He graduated from law school a few years ago and just got his first big case. You should've seen the look on his face.

Mark:

Law school? *(audible exhale)* I never thought I'd see the day. I mean, I loved the kid, but I would have never guessed lawyer back then. Last I remember he was still dreaming of being a soldier like daddy.

Jack:

Rachel is a teacher now, middle school English. She just got married too.

Mark:  
Married? Jeeze I missed everything.

Jack:  
It was a beautiful ceremony, a small church overlooking the river bend. You could see for miles. The smile on her face was priceless.

Mark:  
I wish I could've been there, to see her in that dress. I bet it was beautiful.

Jack:  
*(Places the flag on the grave stone)* We miss you Mark. Me, Megan, Joey, Rachel... The guys. We miss you.

Mark:  
I miss you guys too.

Jack:  
You died for the rest of us. The entire platoon. You saved us Mark, and I can never thank you enough for that.

Mark:  
I'd do it all over again too.

Jack:  
I kept my word buddy. Your family is doing fine. I'm around for them as much as I can be. I know you're watching over them from up there.

Mark:  
I'm always around Jack. Thank you for keeping my family safe. Tell Megan and the kids I love them.

*Jack begins to cry. Mark moves to comfort him and remind him that everything is ok. Jack has no reaction to the touch of Mark. After the embrace Mark moves away to face Jack.*

*Jack stands at attention and salutes. Mark replies in the same fashion. Once Mark breaks the salute, Jack follows.*

Jack:  
Happy Birthday buddy.