

To: Colonel Morgan

From: EZ Speechwriters

Colonel,

 Below is your speech.

 A speech that celebrates you, after so many decades of service.

 I’ve gone over all the suggested pointers in previous speeches, so you’re familiar with those.

 Although this is different from the point of view of the recipient, the speech cadence and rhythm should remain as you have done countless times before.

Our best to you and yours in retirement. At the end of the speech, just for you and your families enjoyment, (unless of course you want to use it), is a poem from one of my books, dealing with,…………retirement.

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“Good afternoon, everyone, welcome, welcome. This is amazing. I have to say, looking out and across this vast hanger today, and knowing I have done this type of talk dozens of times throughout the years, this crowd, this audience is one of the largest, if not the largest, in my memory. A sudden thought just crossed my mind: Is this huge audience here to show appreciation for my career contributions, or did the whole darn base turn out because your happy to see me go!”

 Laughter

In either event, thank you. I am Colonel Patrick Morgan, and I am humbled by your reception.

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Is this the **beginning**, or is this the **end**? And we’ll answer that momentarily.

And to our Unit Chief, (Look in his/her direction),

 I say to you: “**Ah-hui-hu”** (pronounced **AH-HOOIE-HOE**).

And we’ll also answer that before we’re finished.

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This is a once in a lifetime moment. I have shared these experiences before with some very honorable individuals, who were retiring after exceptional service to their country. But this time it isn’t a third party, it isn’t someone sitting in the audience or up here near the podium. This time it is me, and that has an impact, because my words, my feelings, are directed both outward, and this time, inward.

First and foremost, anything and everything I have accomplished could not have been without the support and encouragement of those dearest to me. My daughter Lindsey, who was with me every step of this journey. My brother Jim. And the very special woman in my life, Hannelore, here today. Lindsey’s husband Brian, and their daughter, Harper. Jim’s wife Janet. And to those we have lost and are not with us anymore, I know they share with me, the pride and joy of this day.

These remarks, these types of speeches can tend to have a lot of folks mentioned, and this will be no exception. When an individual spans a journey of almost forty years, that just doesn’t happen without support, guidance, and the care of so many human beings. People, family, superiors, friends, and those who we command, are all part of the building blocks of a fulfilling and successful career.

Sometimes personal acknowledgements in speeches are glossed over, but not today. I want to thank, and recognize:

\* The Georgia National Guard leadership, without exception, a level of command that sets new standards by example and commitment.

\* I want to acknowledge Lt. Colonel Chad Asplund, the new 165th. Medical Group Commander. After twelve years, I leave knowing that there will be a seamless transition, and a continuation of striving for excellence. Thank you, Lt. Colonel Asplund.

\* Adjutant General, General Grabowski, I am honored at your presence here today, sir.

\* To Wing Commander Colonel Noren, I thank you for your leadership, your enduring support, and your complimentary words.

\* And to those who are the embodiment of the Armed Services and specifically the Air Force: I thank my fellow group commanders, Squadron Commanders, all the Wing Service members, and especially the members of the 165th. Medical Group.

And lastly, and of equal recognition, is a salute to those who planned and organized this event, as these ceremonies require forethought and follow though. To our Chaplin for his/her heartfelt invocation, and to that inspiring voice who brought us our National Anthem this afternoon, thank you both

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Forty Years! That is four decades. I have ties older than some of our young airmen and airwomen here today!

 Laughter

It all began with Basic Training in the late, and very hot summer of 1976, at Lackland AFB. Followed by my first assignment at Shaw Air Force Base, in the fire department. Forty accumulative years later, a Colonel. Packed into those four decades, which at times seems like just yesterday, were opportunities and hard work, all supported by my family and friends. (pause and look out at them). Then with the GI Bill, and the opportunity to transfer to the South Carolina Air National Guard, I completed my undergraduate college education. That gave me the ability to attain my commission, which in turn opened an opportunity for me to become an Air Battle Manager with the 117th. Air Control Squadron.

 Those were fulfilling days working side by side with some exceptional airmen, such as Ron Spier, Floyd Harbin, Tom Dickson, Robby Terral, Dennis Cooper, and many, many more. For those who I have just mentioned, and are here this afternoon, it means so very much to me that you wanted to attend, thank you. And may I say, with the straightest of face, (smile and look out at the audience), we were sent to some very demanding locations, where the climates were extreme, the surroundings challenging, and the scenery like nothing we had been trained for. But we were Airmen, we didn’t shirk our responsibilities, and we accepted what was before us. We simply prepared ourselves by going to the PX for SP-50 sunscreen, surfer’s Jams, and straw hats, for when we were unceremoniously off-loaded on the primal beaches of the Bahamas and Turkish-Caicos Islands. And if memory serves me correctly, we even received hazard pay for those sharp umbrella toothpicks that held the ‘lime to the coconut’, in our Pina-Coladas.

 Laughter

During my assignment to the 117th. I began to fly as a commercial airline pilot, which was an amazing opportunity. But my intuition was for medicine, and the Air Force once again, supported my aspirations, and to medical school I went. Completing med school and my residency program, I returned to active duty in military medicine. After four years of an AD commitment and another year from the tragedy of 911, I was able to transfer the Georgia Air National Guard. Then working alongside friends Gary Harvey and Tom Dunham, both prior Medical Group Commanders, Gary successfully recommended me to Wing Commander General Simmons, for promotion to medical Wing Commander. A command of which I have held for an astonishing twelve years. And I want to again thank and acknowledgement our current Wing Commander, Colonel Noran, for your continued confidence in my abilities.

In preparation for this afternoon, I asked myself what comes to mind, as well as gives me a sense of pride, throughout my time as an Airman, and as a Medical Wing Commander?

For me some of the numerous highlights were Fight Surgeon training to be part of the 158th C-130 flying community. As was the 158ths. deployment in support of the Iraqi Enduring Freedom campaign. And as such, and as a pilot myself, observing our cockpit crews performing amazing combat theater aerial maneuvers in approaches and climb-outs, to avoid hostile fire.

For us as a medical group, we have much to be proud of: our Multiple Health Services Inspection and Unit Effectiveness Inspections. Our Organizational Readiness Inspections. Participation in the States CERFP/HRF Response Force. Our Joint Services Humanitarian Mission, providing health care for thousands of Savannah area residents. And foremost, the comprehensive combat of the Covid Virus, from sanitizing nursing homes, dispensing thousands of vaccines, and countless hours in support of overwhelmed Georgia and regional, hospital personnel.

And who are these dedicated and exceptional professionals of the Medical Wing? They are the physicians, RNS, Nurse Practioners, Physicians Assistants, Medics, Bioenvironmental technicians, Public Health officials, Optometry, Dental; all of which are supported and coordinated by Administration, Group Superintendent Chief, our 1st. Sergeant, and Medical Logistics. Everyone, a viable, integral, and essential component of our Medical Group.

I have said it many times, and it bears repeating here again. To our young people who think they’re standing below a very tall unscalable mountain, that is a myth you can disprove. Regardless of any preconceived notions you have, regardless of any trepidations you feel, and regardless of how much you may have struggled, anything can be achieved, and I mean anything you set your heart to. There are endless opportunities in this country. There are endless career directions available to everyone in each branch of our Armed Services. And there are resources. Resources that can educate, train, mentor, and teach. Resources in human relations, technical skills, tactical skills, medical skills, and most importantly, people skills. We’re called a unit, we’re called a group, because we’re made up of human beings. Human beings who yearn to learn, to understand, and to apply that to our careers and family. And lest we not forget those who came before us, who gave us strength, encouragement, and the materials to grow and succeed. To those open ears and minds here today, if you take away just one thought from this afternoon, it is this. You are someone, you always have been, and you always will be. Hold your heads high, take full advantage of what our country offers, and what the Air force offers. As you go along through that growth, you will segue into a teacher, a leader, and an inspiration to those who come up behind you. And the result will be professional and personal fulfillment, along with contributing to the American spirit, the American ethic, and your fellow human beings.

We have been though a lot together. We have seen the unsightly, we have seen the unthinkable, and we have seen the faces of those who in desperation, turned to us. The military must never rest on its laurels, never allow mediocrity to set in, never stop moving forward. There is work to do, there are people who need us now, this afternoon, tomorrow, and beyond. And we must be prepared. When it comes to catastrophes, and grueling conflicts, there is no do-over, there is no reboot button, there is no download for updates. We must be those updates, they must be installed, instilled, and they must be muscle-memory. People’s lives, people’s futures, depend on our readiness, and we must be not only **ready**, but we must also be **willing**, and we must be **able.** And I **am confident** you will be.

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**Unit Chief:** When I first came aboard the Medical Group, they had recently returned from Tripler, as in Honolulu, as in Oahu, as in the south Pacific. Now it is my understanding that our group is once again tasking to Tripler, after I retire. Unit Chief, I also understand that it may have been planned that way, and if so, then a word to the wise, or words to the wise: **Ah-Hui-Hu** unit Chief. That means in Hawaiian; ‘Until We Meet Again’. So, Unit Chief, when you’re on the beach at Waikiki, and it’s late, and you have to return to base,….and in the distance you see a tanned silhouette, with a surfboard under one arm and his other arm around Hannelore, just remember, I don’t have to return to base, because,….I am **Pau-Hana**, **(pronounced ‘POW-HANNA’**), meaning Unit Chief, **‘my work is done’**.

 Laughter

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So, returning to the beginning of this conversation this afternoon: Is this the **beginning** or the **end**?

It is a seamless, professional, transition for **you**, ………..and another beginning for **me.**

I **received** this command from capable hands, and I **leave** it to capable hands………………….

**……………………”Lt. Colonel Asplund,…….you have the controls”**

 **Thank you All,**

 **God-Speed, and God Bless America.**

Step away and wave to the crowd

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 **Second Wind**

*“After rounding the far corner*

 *And passing the torch,*

*Time to run with the big dogs*

 *Rather than all cozy-up on the porch.*

*Cattle to market*

 *Close the house,*

*Backpacks and the Red-Eye*

 *You and your spouse.*

*Instead of the senior center*

 *Clutching a recycled tote,*

*Book passage up the Nile*

 *On a mysterious gambler’s boat.*

*Pushing the envelope*

 *Part crazy, part brave,*

 *Ride the Space-X*

 *Or North-Shore wave.*

*The kids all fussy*

 *Worrying their inheritance blown,*

*Look-em straight up sayin`:*

 *“You darn-betcha, you’re on your own”.*

So grab your Stetson

 Her that red thong,

And regardless of the destination

 Write your own country-western song.”