

January 6, 2019

# Scott's Thoughts



News Years day has its rituals associated with it. In this part of the country it is a must that you have black eye peas with ham, greens, and corn bread. Other parts of

the country change that just a little. Where I was raised, it was navy beans with ham and cornbread. Somewhere in our travels since we married Ava found a recipe for a 3-bean soup with ham and cornbread. In recent years we have enjoyed a big pot of big butter beans with boudin (Cajun Sausage) we did so this year.

I have another tradition, although it is not limited to New Years day. I call my cousin Linda on most major holidays. We will often talk for an hour or more. Linda was older than I by enough that we knew each other but she was always with the older group of cousins I was more in the middle group. In 2011 there was an event that made us both think about each other and found out that we really wanted to know each other better.

Her brother, Randy was just younger than I and we played together many times as children. In 1967 I finished high school and entered the Navy. Randy bounced around for a bit and then enlisted in the Army. He is one of the young men who “gave their all” in service to our country. At the end of July 1971 Randy was reported KIA/NBF by the U.S. Army. That means, Killed In Action/No Body

Found. It was hard for my aunt and uncle to deal with this tragedy, but to have to attend a service and place a marker on an empty grave made it worse.

Forty years would pass with very little contact with Linda. She was young when she married and she and her husband made their home in Florida. But in 2011 the Army began to correspond with Linda at first they asked question and then collected DNA samples from her and her sisters. In July of 2011 that empty grave was opened and Randy’s remains were buried there. It was an emotional time for the entire family. But it was something that brought Linda and me together. She was the oldest surviving member of Randy’s immediate family and she reached out to me asking me to officiate at the service.

That request started an exchange that has continued. I look forward to our phone chats because they bring us together across the years and distance between us. I know more about her and she knows more about me than we ever did when we were growing up as children. We have found that we agree on many things and disagree on a number of items. We cherish the things that we agree on and refuse to be divided over the things we disagree.

We are all the family of God. Can’t we, as God’s children, live more like loving brothers and sisters than like Cain and Able?

Thanks for listening and keep on shining.

—Scott