



## The Takeoff- September 2020

This is hard, super hard to write about our nephew that is no longer here. There is not a day that we don't think about Zach and say a prayer for his parents and siblings who miss him so much. We thought we would share some things about Zach and his influence on his cousin Wes for this month's letter.

I've included a picture of Zach and Wes when they were little. You can definitely tell that they are cousins. During family gatherings the boys stuck together (since they were outnumbered by the girls). When they were little they played so good together with their action figures and cars, then when older it was of course it was all about sports. I still recall the day when Zach was in high school trying to convince his cousin to give up baseball and take up Lacrosse instead. Zach told Wes that he would be a great fit for Lacrosse because Wes was a fast runner. Wes would have probably switched sports if his high school offered Lacrosse.

When Zach joined the Navy, we were very proud. He would be serving just like his grandfathers and Uncle Darren before him. We loved seeing his adventures on Facebook during his Navy days. While Zach was stationed overseas, his Uncle Doug had a massive stroke. After hearing of this news, Zach reached out to us and also made a visit to see his Uncle while on a leave back to Colorado. Zach and I (Janon who's writing this letter) connected on Snapchat while he was in Florida. We would trade pictures of what beers we were trying out, his menu plans for the week and other off the wall stuff you only see on Snapchat. Snapchat gave Zach the opportunity to see his cousins grow, and we got to see Zach as an adult. Zach had the best sense of humor. I looked forward to seeing his daily Snap. Wesley since mid-high school had wanted to possibly go into the military. After a semester at college, during break he said "college isn't for me, I'm ready to go into the Navy". Over that Christmas break, Wes called Zach to get the low down on signing up for the Navy. These were Zach's first words to Wes – "Why do you want to go into the Navy?" Wesley's answer was "to travel as much as I can". Zach told Wes that if he wanted to travel to join the Air Force instead. Zach was spot on 100% with his advice. Wesley is stationed in Italy and has traveled all over Italy. He has also traveled to Germany, England and Austria. His next station for 2021 will be in Korea. I thank God all the time that Wesley reached out to Zach to get this advice.

There is not a day that goes by that Doug and I don't think about Zach. He was a true blessing to all of his family and friends.

Janon and Doug Swink

September 7, 2020