



"Grandpa's Hands"

October 2015

It was a hot summer day, 95 degrees and humid, and very little wind to speak of. While the rest of the world was enjoying a summer weekend, there they were at the Lagoon searching. Standing on the edges of the Lagoon, you could see their orange dive suits bobbling up and down in the thick murky water searching for Human remains and any clue that could help solve this heart wrenching case. Bosses, Commanders, Chaplains, Detectives and scores of support personnel were all there, to lend their expertise and assist in any way they could. After three long hours of searching in the water, out came the orange suits, our men and women of the marine unit, totally drenched and exhausted but determined, as one officer said to me "you gotta to do, what you gotta to do". Ready to continue after taking a break. CFD personnel were also on scene, to do decon, take vitals, and a welcomed shower of fresh water from the hose. As we were watching our troops cool off, one of the troops said to me "what you see here, is a moment that not to many people can understand". Here you have men and women in blue, who go out every day to do G-d's work, of helping others, regardless of rain, heat, mosquitoes, in lagoons, or in the most difficult of circumstances. Why? the officer continued, because "you gotta to do, what you gotta to do". " Many times it seems unappreciated or thankless, but that has never, ever stopped anyone of us, from answering the radio when called". It was a moment that made me proud of each and every one of you. It reminded me of the story of..... "Grandpa's Hands"....

Grandpa, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. He didn't move, just sat with his head down staring at his hands. When I sat down beside him he didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if he was OK. Finally, not really wanting to disturb him, but wanting to check on him at the same time, I asked him if he was OK.

He raised his head and looked at me and smiled. Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking, he said in a clear strong voice. I didn't mean to disturb you, grandpa, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK, I explained to him. Have you ever looked at your hands, he asked. I mean really looked at your hands? I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point he was making. Grandpa smiled and related this story: Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life. They braced

and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my rifle and wiped my tears when I went off to war. They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They wrote the letters home when I was in the Army. They trembled and shook when I buried my parents, and also trembled when I walked my daughter down the aisle. Yet, they were strong and sure when I dug my buddy out of a foxhole and lifted a plow off of my best friend's foot. They have held children, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands! are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of my life. But more importantly it will be these hands that G-d will reach out and take, when he leads me home. And son, I was looking at my hands, thinking they did so much for me and I never expressed my appreciation, never take them for grantedend of story.

I will never look at my hands the same again, they do so much for us yet we never give them a second thought.

My message to you today is, thank YOU for being the hands of our society. So much of what you do is never seen by the public. You see their pain, their loss, and their shortcomings. They have left you shrugging your shoulders, leaving you with more questions than answers. Seldom do you get the proper thanks for your hard work. Yet your response is always like grandpa's hands, even though they get banged and scratched "they do what they gotta to do". For that brothers and sisters, on behalf of ALL the Chaplains, we say thank you and G-d bless you. Society could never survive without you. Should you need a shoulder to lean on, your Chaplains are here for you 24/7.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

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