

My wife Jan and I have been searching for an obituary on the life of John Pepper and found your eulogy. I tried to log-onto your site to leave our condolences for his remembrance but could not understand how to do so. So, I'm sending you this e-mail to add as a comment from Mark Belue or do with as you please.

We have known John and Judy and their family for over 30 years. Through all those years we started and ran our separate businesses and attended church services and moved from the Charlotte area to Harrisburg NC and lived in the same neighborhood on the same street for many years.

If John was to be a character in a novel, and the writer of the novel wanted to create an often bull-in-a-China-shop character of love, caring, devotion to his Lord Jesus Christ, appreciation of the military service, as well as devotion of country and his beloved state of Virginia, mixed together with all sorts of spices and complexities and contradictions, he might come up with the character John and literally name him John PEPPER. He was all those things and more. He was like an unofficial godfather to our two children who are now in their early 30s. John knew them before they were born and knew them their whole lives. He was the big brother I never had.

To speak of John, one must include his life partner, Judy. John and Judy were a team at every level. We attended their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebration. They both hailed from Virginia, and they loved their home state. John spoke of his love and admiration for Robert E Lee on numerous occasions. John's desire was that his remains be spread there. Perhaps his family did that in a private ceremony.

He was native Indian of the Pamunkey tribe, from the Virginia region on his mother's side. He used to say that Pocahontas was Pamunkey Indian with pride, as she converted to Christianity.

He loved trains. He was a fanatic about trains, and model railroading. He built many model railroading sets. He would wake up in the middle of the night, get out of a perfectly good warm bed, and go down the tracks in Harrisburg waiting for the trains to go by. In the meantime, between trains, he would pull out his laptop and watch train videos.

There were few subjects that John was not well-versed in. He loved farming. He told us many things about chickens, livestock, farming in general, and various things in God's amazing creation. He loved gardening. He and Judy would garden and can their own produce. In the end, when they moved away from Harrisburg to New London NC, they raised chickens and gave fresh eggs to many people, including us. They were very much preppers and homesteaders of sorts. Judy was so talented in all her music, teaching, singing, cooking, and quilting. They shared one another's talents and encouraged one another's hobbies and interest. They made a great complementary pair.

Saving the most important for last, John understood that he was a lost sinner in the eyes of God. He confessed his sins publicly and professed his faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, cleansing him, eternally from that sinful life. By starting his business, Airline Maintenance Training, God allowed him resources, and freedoms, and made him generous towards the Lord and towards heaven through missions and his church. There is no telling how many times bibles have been smuggled into inaccessible areas around the world because of his gifted generosity and unique position. He served in churches that he was a member of and kept that faith to his end. He called me in May 2025, about one month before his passing and had one of our usual metal-to-metal talks about real things about the LORD and heaven to come.

Truly the cornerstone of his life was to build his life upon the Rock, who was the Lord Jesus Christ. John was a person who would not just tell someone *about* Jesus, or mentioned that he would pray for them, or invite someone to church. He would certainly do all those things – praying for them in that moment - and John would engage that person on a long-term basis and converse with anybody, anywhere what it means to be a Christian and talk a person through a point of decision for Christ.

Related to his Cav troop, John 15:13 would have been meaningful to him, as he quoted it many times on solemn occasions. He would often say this type of selfless love and sacrifice within military applications would only be exceeded by Jesus Christ, and His act of dying for lost sinners. I believe he commissioned a bronze plaque at Ft. Rucker, AL quoting this verse, if I'm not mistaken.

*“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*

John 15:13

The sacrifice of soldiers provide liberty to the citizens of their country. The death of Jesus on the cross provides the lost sinner liberty to live a peaceful and victorious life and guaranteed access to heaven.

*“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Romans 5:8

*“Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”*

John 12:24

I know he would want conveyed that nothing would please him more than if only one person would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, by the telling of his life story. Thank you for your tribute. He often spoke of you with friendship and admiration.

[John Pepper, SR, Dec 1st, 1949 to June 3rd, 2025 - Mark Belue](#)