

James F. Walsh
1833 Merryvale Road
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

November 26, 2019

Chattanooga Times Free Press
400 East 11th Street
Chattanooga, TN 37403

RE: A Thanksgiving "Thank You!"

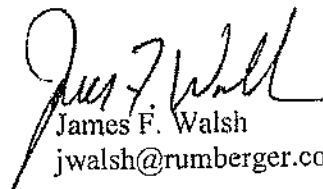
Dear Lifesaver,

I am a thankful Tennessee born veteran whose life was saved by so many people who live and work within this newspaper's geographic readership. This Thanksgiving, I am eternally grateful for the fact that you were there when I needed you. None of you asked who I was, where I was from, what I had done, or even why I was river rafting at nearly 73 years of age. You just acted in a very heroic way, and I want to thank you all for your gift of life to me.

On June 14, 2019, while rafting on the Hiwassee, I passed out without any warning or symptoms while steering a six man raft through a rapid. My aortic valve decided it was done, and I nearly died. My friends and my ten year old grandson took the first heroic steps, but a retired nurse came along in a kayak to aid me, a retired doctor showed up to help, another person offered two doses of Nitroglycerin and an aspirin, and a Park Ranger assisted. A lift for one of my friends allowed a 911 call and a superb EMS team literally "popped" me back to life. When I saw the proposed helicopter landing site, my Vietnam experience made me wish for a military pilot who knew how to land there; the pilot landed without delay, and promptly delivered me to Erlanger Hospital. The staff and doctors there were terrific and got me on my way to full recovery. The FBI agent who responded to my son's call was incredibly helpful to my family. Three of my West Point classmates and their wives who live in Tennessee even showed up promptly at Erlanger.

Without each of you, I could not write this letter, but Tennessee is and always has been The Volunteer State. I was so lucky and blessed to be touched by all of you. I cannot sing your praises louder, and cannot thank all of you enough. You were all a significant part of saving my life.

Very Truly Yours,


James F. Walsh
jwalsh@rumberger.com