

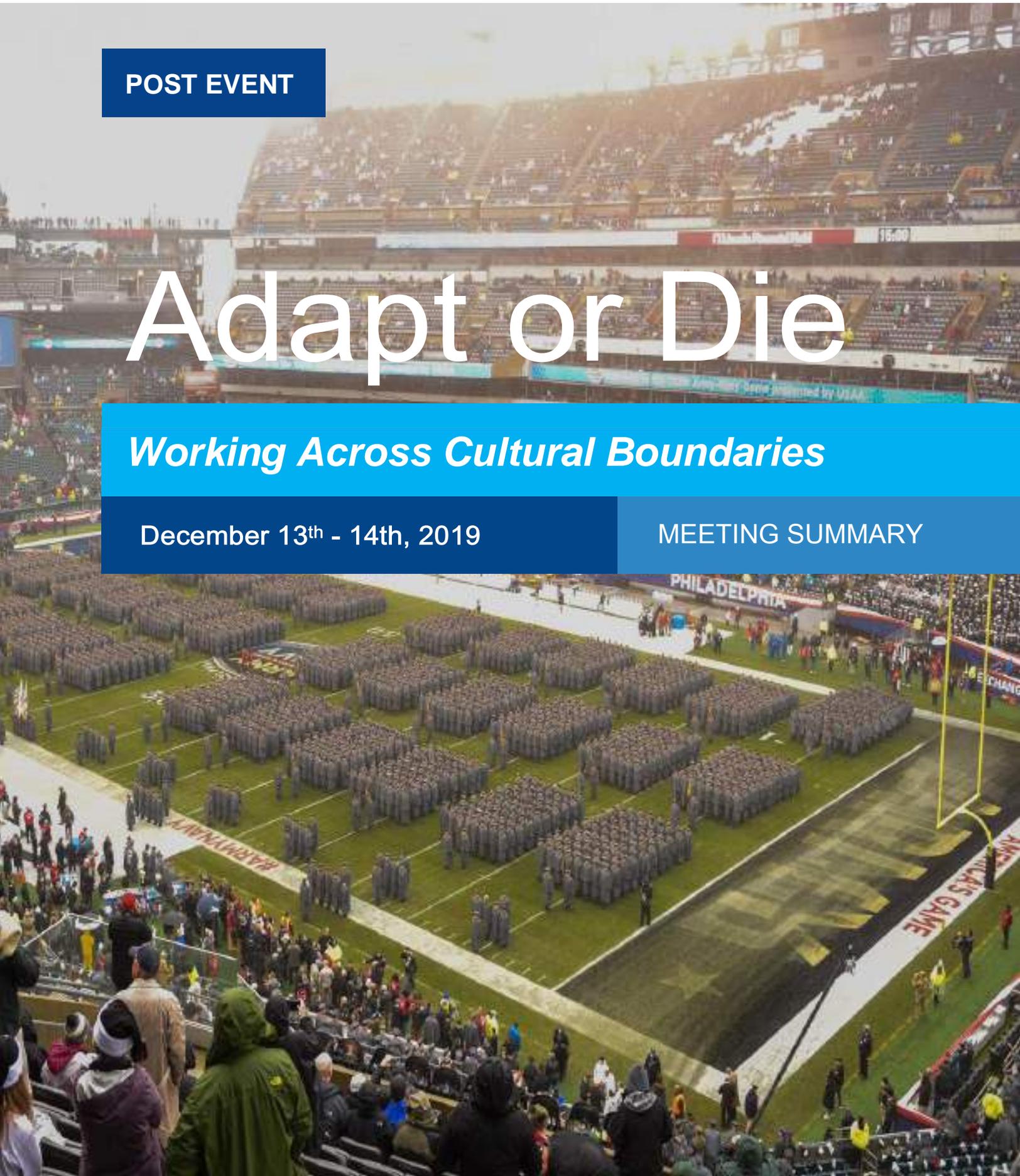
POST EVENT

# Adapt or Die

*Working Across Cultural Boundaries*

December 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019

MEETING SUMMARY



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## Working Across Cultural Boundaries

**On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of December 2019 the 13<sup>th</sup> Zensights Adapt or Die conference got underway in downtown Philadelphia to discuss “Working Across Cultural Boundaries.”**

Many times we think of ethnic or geographic boundaries, but what about organizational or professional boundaries? How does your profession create boundaries? Language is one example, with extensive use of acronyms that so many professions are guilty of adopting.

Professions like aviation, legal, medicine and especially the military are known for their own lingo. Using language shortcuts may make communication easier for those within the system, but the downside is that it creates real barriers.

Our modern word has become more and more specialized. Take medicine for example, the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) confirms there are 120 medical specialties and subspecialties that graduating medical students have available to them when completing their studies. Each one of these entities has their own language, just as the military and other professions do. Within any given profession there is specialization, which naturally leads to silos. These silos may provide deeper knowledge for those working within, but they also build walls, preventing others from participating.

The backdrop of the day’s event was to hear firsthand examples from two panels, one with a military background and the other from a pharmaceutical / healthcare perspective. The meeting was held on the eve of the 120<sup>th</sup> Army Navy football game, which provided for enthusiastic support



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from the Army / West Point participants and a few shout outs from the Navy side. While the interservice rivalries are quite evident at what is called “America’s Football Game” all graduates from West Point and the Naval Academy will most likely work side by side throughout the rest of their military career.

## The Launch of Adapt or Die Leadership Meetings



**Bob Jansen** attended a senior leadership conference while working at Wolters Kluwer. While continuing education is always welcomed, he had the added honor of meeting the esteemed American hero **General Rick Lynch**. From that meeting on, the two developed a lifelong bond. After hours of conversations focused on how the military transformed from the dark days of the Vietnam War, to now being thanked for their service at coffee shops and airports all across the country. Rick asked Bob why the pharmaceutical industry suffers from such a poor image as the industry has done so

much to help American Service men and women. Bob’s response was price elasticity, supply and demand and other market factors. General Lynch promptly challenged Bob’s thinking and stated it wasn’t economics, but poor leadership. The army learned from the failings of the Vietnam War and the West Point cheating scandal of 1977, when 90 cadets were expelled for honor code violations. The West Point Honor Code states, “A cadet will not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.” The discharged cadets included those who actually cheated on an electrical engineering exam and those who did not cheat, but knew of those that did cheat, but did not turn in their fellow cadets. Could you – would you – turn in your friend or roommate for an ethical infraction? Tough to know until you are tested. *With this background, General Rick Lynch and Bob Jansen started to bring leaders from the US Army and the pharmaceutical industry together to learn from one another, and that is how the Adapt or Die Senior Leadership series began.*

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## Keynote - Lt General (Ret) Rick Lynch

With an exemplary career's worth of examples, **General Rick Lynch** engaged the audience with lessons learned over his accomplished military career. Because the meeting was comprised of Army personnel, General Lynch shared a life defining story; he went to West Point because he got his acceptance letter on a Monday and being ecstatic with this opportunity, he accepted that very day - only to get an acceptance letter from the Naval Academy the very next day! *Whoever said fate doesn't play a role in life!?*



**“Stove Pipes & Silos”** – both of these terms represent things that are contained and are potentially hard to penetrate. Using these analogies, General Lynch shared his 6 Key Skill Sets to working effectively across cultural boundaries, which are:

1. Share success stories
2. Develop personal relationships
3. Think like them
4. Be a role model
5. Use common vernacular
6. Determine unconscious bias

Some of General Lynch's stories were recollections from his various active duty tours. Rick likes to say, “people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” Very true! As a true leader, stop worrying about what's best for you and start working toward a common goal. That is leadership, where actions speak louder than words. Also remember that the higher you go in any organization, the more exposed your actions are. People will watch your every move, so

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your actions need to match your words. Deeds, not words make a difference! Another small tidbit, but worth noting; tell stories to convey your message, as humans learn and remember stories. Do you have unconscious bias and are not aware of it? Your words and actions are powerful communicators and if you take the time to reflect on how you present yourself to others (use your mirror) you can be more effective.

## **Panel # 1**



General Lynch moderated this esteemed panel of accomplished individuals, who all pursued various careers both in the military and in the civilian sectors. Each shared 'lessons learned' that helped them navigate the numerous obstacles they encountered over their careers.

- **Lt. General (Ret) Thomas Bostick – 53<sup>rd</sup> Chief of Engineers – US Army**
- **Lt. General (Ret) Kathleen Gainey – Commanding General - DLA Distribution (Defense Logistics Agency)**
- **Kevin Chambliss Ph.D. – Vice Provost for Research, Baylor University**
- **Major General (Ret) Brian Lein, MD – VP GME, HCA Healthcare (Graduate Medical Education)**

Note how both the military (DLA) and medical (GME) terminology requires explanation as acronyms are prevalent in both sectors. Highlights from the panel.

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- **Tom Bostick** – was hosting a news reporter on the battlefield and was assured by Shepard Smith – Fox News that he didn't need to prepare for a live interview. In addition to smiling on and off the camera, Tom was ready for the interview. Shepard then asked about **SWEAT**. Tom was caught off guard and Shepard explained it stood for **Sewer, Water, Electricity and Trash**, the basic infrastructure for moving an army. Tom further explained the massive programs the Army Corps of Engineers does throughout the country and in the battlefield. Having testified in front of Congress 34 times (feels like studying for final exams), he certainly knows how to successfully engage others, like Congress, for obtaining the necessary funding needs as the Corps has more projects than budget dollars. When it comes to solving problems, it is imperative to engage those on the ground and don't assume senior decision makers have all of the answers.



- **Kathleen Gainey** – a true pioneer, as a woman working in a primarily male-dominated transportation sector of the U.S. Army was rare. Her goal was to make DLA more customer centric and the transportation choice for the army and other government agencies like FEMA. She learned that it was imperative to develop personal relationships with your constituents and really understand their issues. For really large projects, it's best to break them down into manageable tasks and shorter timelines, under 6 months for



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example. This allows for a series of small ‘wins’ in order to achieve the objective. She also learned to ‘follow the money’ when it comes to learning how to get interagency collaboration. She created an interagency council, referred to as the “Coalition of the Willing” which is still in existence today. It is this infrastructure that the Army and organizations like FEMA uses during unexpected events, like Hurricane Sandy, as an example.

- **Kevin Chambliss** –with a short stint at West Point, Kevin found it ironic to be on the same



panel with the esteemed US military leaders. Kevin explained that academia is maybe even more siloed than the military. He manages over 900 people, who really don’t want to be managed and half have tenure, and his profession requires shared governance. Talk about a challenge! In this environment, he learned to listen more and allow others to take credit for his ideas. He drank a lot of coffee over the years meeting with constituents just to listen to their point of view and slowly made

progress. Listen more – talk less! To his surprise, he got unexpected support from the Arts & Science sector of the university when looking for approval on a capital endeavor. Be patient and be fully transparent about your objectives. Tell those who are involved what is expected and then step back to let the others do the talking. When working outside of your core group, learn the ‘language’ of the entire audience, which may still be English (may not too), but it demonstrates you know their world. Acronyms are so much an integral part of our professional discourse, so try not to use them but learn their lingo.

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- **Brian Lein** –spoke about the ‘profession’ and ‘professionalism’ and as a doctor, his is the



profession of patient care. As a professional, he had to make a difficult decision when called into the operating room in the middle of the night, as the staff was concerned about the behavior of the surgeon on call. Turns out the surgeon on call was not fit to perform surgery, so Dr. Lein took over, but had to later confront his colleague about his condition. He issued an ultimatum, either self-report or Dr. Lein would. It goes back to the Cadet Honor Code, “A cadet will not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do.” Would you

have the courage to confront a colleague about their behavior or just let it slide? Leadership isn’t always easy. Remember, the human body has 2 eyes, 2 ears and 1 mouth. Somehow the mouth runs in overdrive most of the time! Brian can now put his lessons learned to great use as he looks to improve Graduate Medical Education.

## Other comments from Panel 1

- Leadership is a contact sport
- Management by walking around – go to them, visit in their office, see what family pictures they have – do you know their spouses name? Should you?
- Even for remote locations and work from home staff – bring food, they will come!
- Visit unannounced, block your calendar, go after hours – have you visited the midnight shift at 2:00am? You should!
- Talk to people who are not deemed important – talk to young people, they have good ideas too
- Know your priorities and openly share them – and often

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- Write a lot of thank you notes – yes, handwritten notes still have meaning and have NOT gone out of style – recipients have been known to frame notes and display in their office
- Track your ‘touches’ as people notice if they are left out
- Managing your peers isn’t easy
- Most important piece of furniture is your mirror – use it daily! Do you like what you see?

## **Panel # 2**



Bob Jansen provided short vignettes of the panel and commented on the need for a proper work-life balance and how families often get the short end of the stick when accomplished people are hard at work advancing their careers. Corporate America and the Military can be very demanding, and it really impacts the family. Currently there are over 200,000 soldiers deployed somewhere in the world and not home with their families. Remember the old acronym for IBM – I’ve Been Moved?

- **David Elkins – CFO BMS/Celgene**
- **Nicole Mowad-Nassar – VP Commercial Analytics & Operations - AbbVie**
- **Brian Gragnolati – CEO Atlantic Health System & Chairman – American Hospital Assoc.**
- **Tom Cavanaugh – President Janssen Oncology**

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- **David Elkins** - started off with an interesting story about visiting a manufacturing facility in New England and being from finance, was surprised to learn the work force thought his visit was to announce the closing of the plant, because they have NEVER seen anyone from finance before. David has also made calls with the sales force during his career. Talk about getting out of your comfort zone. Amazing what you can learn when you get out of your office as people will often tell you a lot if you ask them. If people know who you are, they are willing to commit to your mission. Talk to the younger research scientists as they still have passion and haven't been bogged down by bureaucracy and experience. With his new role as CFO and tasked with combining Celgene with BMS, he is seeing firsthand how cultural differences play a role in day to day decision making. Bringing together two successful organizations to form one combined entity requires tremendous knowledge and patience.



- **Nicole Mowad-Nassar** - shared her earlier experiences of being a female leader in a global Japanese pharmaceutical company, which by default presented many opportunities to manage across cultural and gender boundaries. Nicole emphasized you need to invest time to get to know people and understand their goals and objectives to effectively bridge differences. She stressed the importance of being a role model for the behaviors you want to see in an organization. She also stated that doing the right thing is important. She shared an example of that when highlighting



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a decision that was made in the midst of a product withdrawal, which involved a company partner. She said the decision was made to do more than required in the contract to protect patients and employees. Decisions were made in the face of economic impact to put patient centricity first as well as overall employee considerations. Nicole also shared a difficult career decision earlier in her life to step back from her job after witnessing a major life event of one of her colleagues. The courage to resign from her senior leadership position took conviction and was consistent with her focus on her family. She highlighted that this life choice didn't impact her career progression as she is now leading a major commercial integration. She encouraged the audience to set their own boundaries to protect their personal priorities as well.

- **Brian Gragnolati** – serving as a senior hospital system leader as CEO and directing the



American Hospital Association, Brian is laser focused on raising the voice for better healthcare access, at an affordable cost. No one would replicate our current healthcare delivery system as the fee for service structure does not incentivize anyone to solve the problem. In fact, failure allows for subsequent invoices. No alignment here! Lots of talk about Medicare for All in the news, but even today the government is paying for ~ 65% of all healthcare expenditures: military, federal, state & local government employees, all retirees, Medicaid and Medicare. What if all of these silos come

together and bundle their services? On top of that, about 40% of all physicians are employed by a system and no longer the private practice doctor like the fictitious TV character, Dr Marcus Welby. Healthcare needs to break down silos and barriers by putting the patient first and working collaboratively on improving outcomes and not charging for each transaction, with a focus on wellness.

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- **Tom Cavanaugh** –stretch yourself! More than just words, as Tom did this by moving to



Spain to help change the culture of Celgene’s local office. While that was his mandate, the GM was still there and not too enthusiastic about this ‘Gringo’ coming over to this part of the world. This assignment culminated after numerous previous assignments that prepared Tom for this true challenge, having worked in Sales & Marketing, Medical Affairs, and Drug Development before moving to Spain. The local staff figured he wouldn’t last long so they could just wait him out, but Tom persevered. He took Spanish lessons, attempted to communicate in

Spanish, listened and learned. He found out there were a lot of relatives in the company, as a family’s last name is not universal in Spain. Ask a lot of questions and wait until you get an answer (first one to speak loses). In the end, he gained the trust of the team, their performance improved, the GM moved on, and Tom’s Spanish is still average. But he used his personal commitment, transparency, passion, and non-verbal mechanisms to connect with the team. Tom has since returned and moved on to Janssen, but his legacy still lives on as confirmed by David Elkins. Do the right thing, and you can be effective and you can make a difference in people’s lives.

## Other comments from Panel 2

- Transparency was a common theme amongst all panelists
- Be vulnerable – your current plan may not be right, be open to new information and be willing to adapt
- Life is a constant learning curve
- It’s OK to have a proper work life balance, no job is worth one human life

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- 5% of the healthcare industry are bad apples but their actions affect 100% of all players
- Why can't the pharmaceutical industry come together to improve healthcare vs waging small territorial battles for market share movements
- How to gain and keep the public's trust from all healthcare providers: pharma, hospitals and insurance companies
- We need solutions and a better healthcare system that reduces the cost of care and improves outcomes by aligning all participants towards this common goal – increased risk share
- What role can technology play to advance better healthcare outcomes

## **Conclusion**

Will this one-day session make a difference in our lives? Hopefully yes, but if nothing else, we hope this day challenged your thinking and you are willing to get out of your comfort zone. We heard from an impressive lineup of both military and pharma / healthcare leaders who have all experienced life or death situations firsthand, so their actions made a difference for those people. Once heard at a college graduation when a graduating senior spoke to his classmates – “I don't profess to change the world, but I do plan to change my world.” We challenge you to change your world by adapting the traits you know you possess, rather than falling back to your comfort zone. Life is too exciting to be lackadaisical, so push yourself, your team, your family, and your children to learn just a bit more.

As General Lynch likes to say, “What's your Dash?” When you visit a cemetery, you see a start date (DOB) then a Dash and then an expiration date. The Dash (-) is a simple character, but it holds a lifetime of experiences for that individual.

What would your Dash (-) say if it could talk? *Live your Dash* to its fullest and pass it on!

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A Special "Thank You" to Tony Coniglio for all Photos.



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