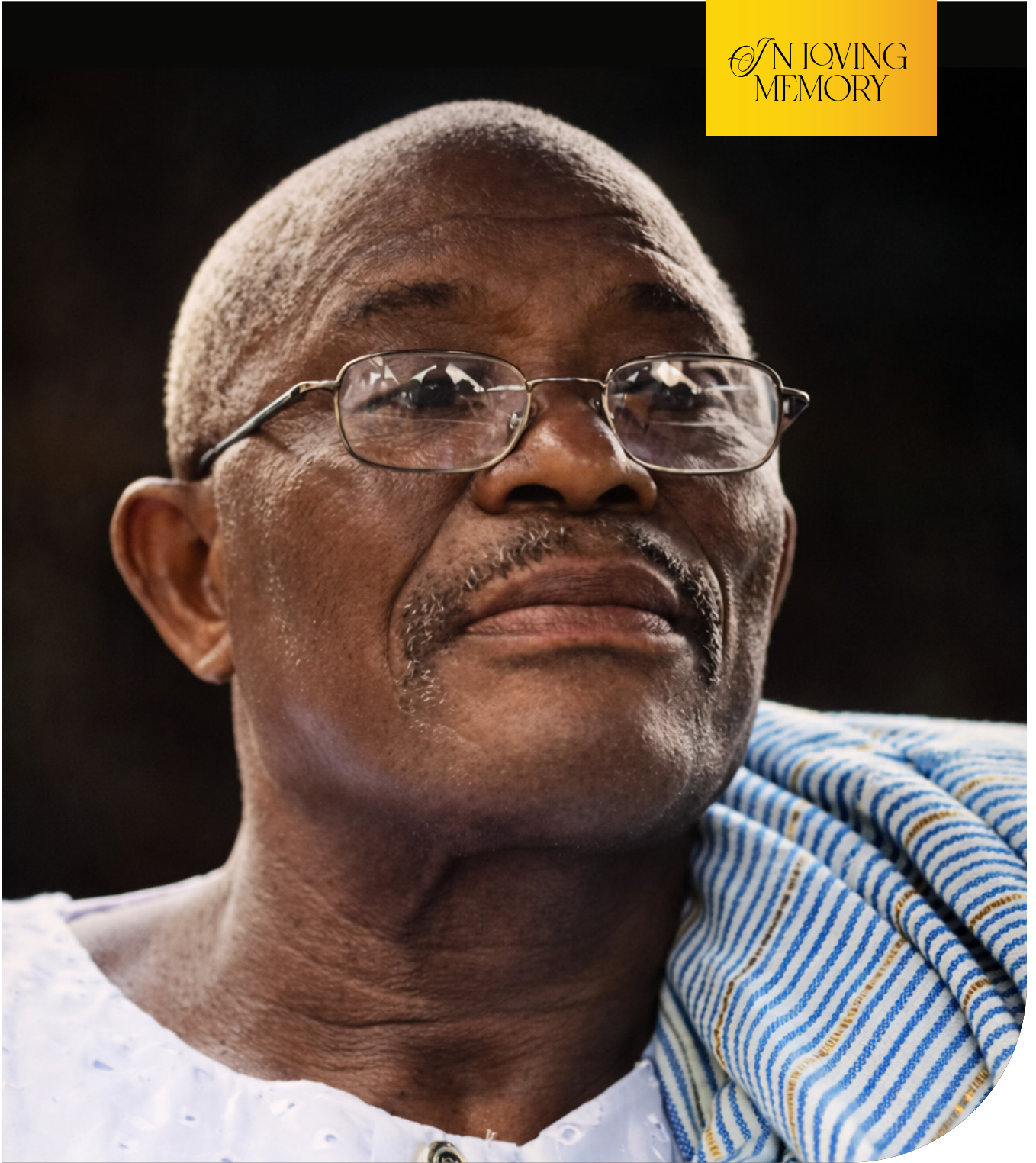


IN LOVING
MEMORY



WOI RAPHAEL YAOVI DEKU

1 9 4 4 - 2 0 2 5

FUNERAL & BURIAL SERVICE

Saturday, 21st February 2026
At St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church,
Ashale-Botwe



OFFICIATING MINISTERS

1. Rev Fr. Henry Cafuie Ahorlu
2. Rev Fr. Frederick Asante Owusu

ORDER OF SERVICE

Part 1 – Reception of Body

Filing Past and Reading of Tributes:

1. CHB 688 In Heavenly love abiding
2. CHB 682 I am thine, O Lord
3. CHB 662 Now the Labourer's task
4. CHB 617 Rock of ages
5. CHB 717 When peace like a river
6. Never part again
7. Where is our God

Part 2: Holy Mass

8. Processional Hymn: CHB 449 Angel voices
9. Introit: Nɔ Mawu fe asinu kpɔm
10. Kyrie: Latin Mass (Mass IV)
11. Opening prayer
12. 1st Reading: Wisdom 3:1-9
13. Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is my shepherd (Ezabel)
14. Gospel Acclamation: Osee praise
15. Gospel Reading: John 14:1-6
16. Homily:
17. Prayer of the faithful:
 - Mawu mie de kuku
 - Mighty Father, king of glory
18. 1st Collection: Borborbor singing group
19. Incensation: Xonye nu nana le asinye

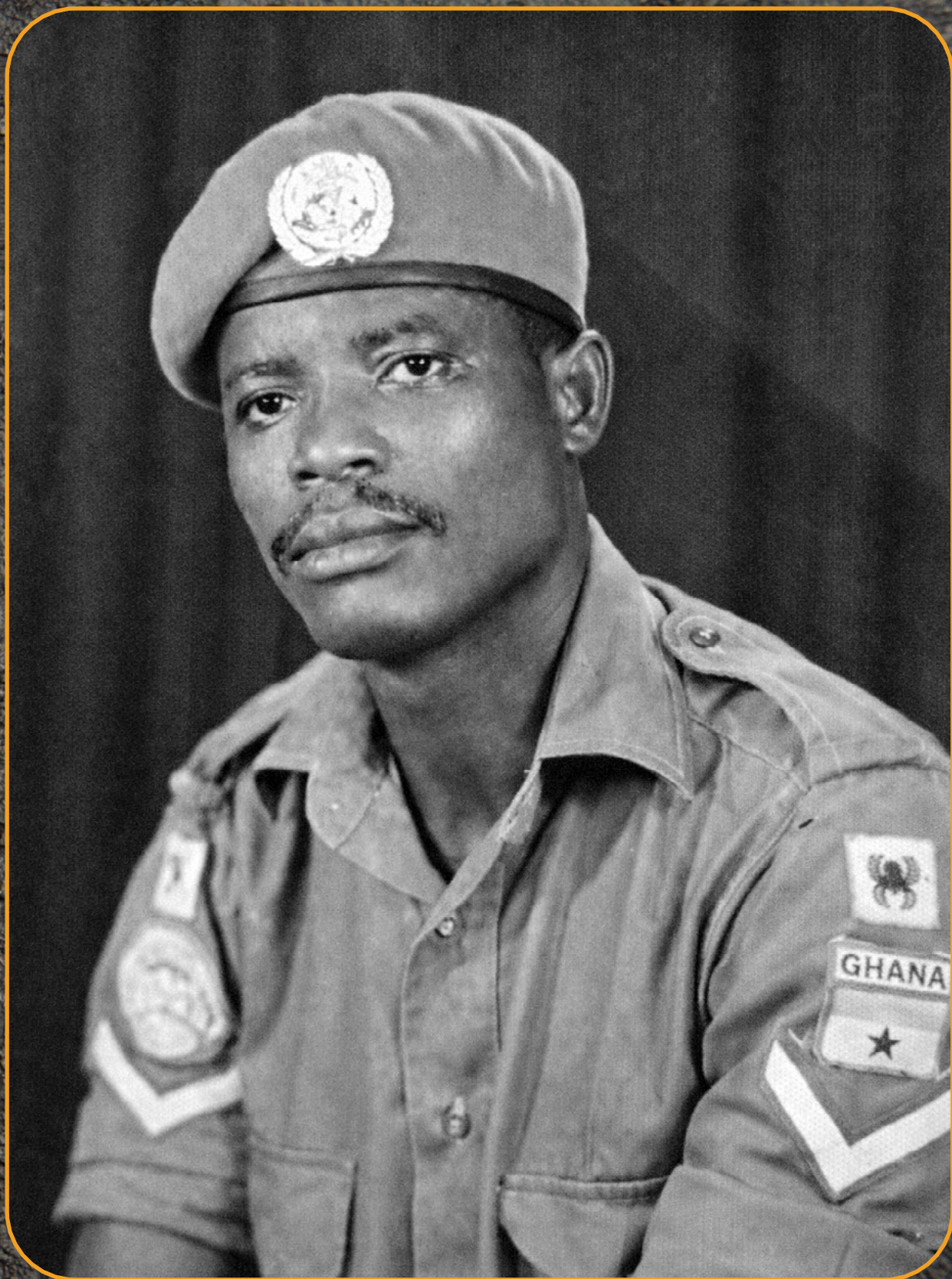
20. Sanctus: Latin mass (Martin de Porres)
21. Memorial Acclamation:
22. Great Amen
23. The Lord's Prayer
24. Sign of Peace:
25. Agnus Dei: Latin Mass (Martin de Porres)
26. Communion:
 - CHB When I survey the wondrous cross
 - MHB 215 The strife is over
27. Post Communion: And I saw a new heaven
28. 2nd Collection: St Francis of Assisi Choir
29. Concluding Rites
30. Acknowledgement & Announcement
31. Final Commendation: CHB 656 God be with you till we meet again
32. Recessional Hymn: CHB 458 Hark! Hark, my soul

Part 3: Interment

1. Processional Hymn: CHB 86 Just as I am
2. Blessing of the grave: Blewue
3. Prayers
4. Song: CHB 165 Yours is the glory
5. Vote of Thanks by a Family member
6. Final Prayer and Blessing
7. Closing

Ranger!
WO!
Old Soja!
Akpakpai!
Efo
Amega Deku!
Daddy!
Grandpa!





Biography of the late **WOI RAPHAEL YAOVI DEKU**

A Life of Service, Faith and Quiet Strength

Early Life and Education

Raphael Yaovi Deku was born on 29th April 1944, in Kléme Aflao. He was the first of nine children born to Mishiso Deku and Adonor Avunyra Adorsoo, both of blessed memory. From an early age, he carried the responsibilities that often accompany firstborns, such as imbuing discipline, sacrifice, and perseverance within a close-knit family.

His early education began in Assahoun in the Republic of Togo. In 1954, following the return of the family to Ghana, he was enrolled at Avoeme RC Primary School in Aflao where he continued his elementary education. Through diligence and commitment, he went on to complete Standard Seven education at Avoeme RC Middle School in Aflao, obtaining the Middle School Leaving Certificate in 1960.

Young Yaovi aspired to become an engineer. However, recognising the financial strain this ambition would place on his parents, who were also educating his younger siblings, he made the selfless decision to seek opportunities elsewhere. After completing middle school, he moved to Accra to live with his brother, Milla Dzidonu, to pursue a practical pathway toward his dream.

Apprenticeship and Technical Training

With the support of his uncle, Adalesoshi Adorsoo and his devoted mother, Adonor Adorsoo, Yaovi began a four-year apprenticeship in Automobile Mechanics at a vehicle workshop in Accra. His work ethic, discipline, and eagerness to learn quickly distinguished him, earning the respect of his master, who pleaded with him to remain under his mentorship. Driven by ambition, Yaovi sought permission to attend evening classes at the Accra Technical Institute (later Accra Polytechnic and now Accra Technical University). With the consent of his

master, he enrolled in a Motor Vehicle Mechanics programme. He successfully passed the City and Guilds of London Institute Intermediate, completing both his academic and apprenticeship training with distinction in 1965.

Raphael took up employment with the Ghana National Construction Company (GNCC). This promising beginning was abruptly cut short following the 24 February 1966 coup d'état, which resulted in widespread redundancies, compelling him to return to Aflao. Young Yaovi remained resilient. Upon the advice of an uncle, he later returned to Accra to seek assistance from another uncle, Kwashivi Gbormita, then serving in the Ghana Army - an encounter that would shape the course of his life.

A Calling to Military Service

Before officially joining the military, Yaovi dedicated himself to the service of God. In 1967, he joined the St Catherine Catholic Church Choir in Burma Camp, where his deep bass voice, commitment, and faith quickly became evident. His consistency caught the attention of the Choir Director, Colonel J. P. K. Mensah Brown (of blessed memory), who also served as Deputy Director of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (DD EME).

One defining moment occurred during choir practice when the Director asked, "Young man, what is your rank in the Army?" The choir responded unanimously that he was not a soldier. When asked whether he wished to become one, the choir again answered in unison, exactly what he wanted. That simple exchange marked the beginning of the journey of Yaovi into the military service.

Invited by Colonel Mensah Brown to his office, Yaovi was introduced to the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (D EME). Both DD EME

and D EME were impressed upon learning that he held a City and Guilds Certificate in Motor Vehicle Mechanics. As a result, he was immediately assigned to 3 Station Workshop and arrangements were made for his medical examination at the 37 Military Hospital and within four days, the process was completed.

On 26th April 1971, Raphael Yaovi Deku was formally recruited into the Ghana Army, a moment he later regarded as a divine affirmation of Proverbs 18:16 (A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men).

Military Career and International Service

After completion of the military recruit training, Young Yaovi was posted to the General Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (GEME). Ex-WOI Raphael Yaovi Deku believed in self-development. Thus, throughout his service, he consistently pursued professional growth. In 1982, he obtained his Ordinary Level Certificate from the School of Advanced Education at the Military Academy and Training School (MATS) after which he pursued the City and Guilds Certificates in Motor Vehicle Engineering (Part II and Finals).

Recognising his engineering knowledge and technical expertise, the military sponsored him for Specialised Training in Armoured Vehicles -the Mowag Piranha in Switzerland. He was subsequently posted to the Recce Regiment, where he handled complex armoured vehicle repair and maintenance. In addition, he served as a part-time instructor at the Base Workshop EME, training others in armoured vehicle operations and maintenance. His guiding principle and mantra was;

... 'with limited resources and challenge in critical operations, you need to be brutally decisive, prompt and aggressively spot-on through innovation and creativity in keeping the armoured vehicle functional to the task'.

His technical expertise and commitment to excellence led him to further obtain a Diploma certification on emerging technologies, including the Ratel Armoured Vehicles in Libya.

The expertise of Ex-WOI Raphael Yaovi Deku in engineering, leadership and service extended beyond the borders of Ghana. He participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions, including deployments to the United Nations Emergency Force



(UNEF) in Sinai Desert in Egypt, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group ECOMOG in Liberia. Throughout these missions, he served with courage and distinction, bearing both visible and unseen scars of service, including a knee injury he sustained in an accident involving his beloved armoured vehicle.

Ex-WOI Raphael Yaovi Deku served with dedication at multiple posts in the Military. He served at the Ministry of Defence (Records), 1 MT Battalion, 4 MT Coy, the 3 Station Workshop, the Forces Headquarters, PNDC Headquarters and finally the Recce Headquarters, where he served with distinction for over fifteen years. After a lifetime of commitment to his country and comrades, Ex-WO1 Raphael Yaovi Deku was honourably discharged on 24 January 2003. However, in recognition of his technical expertise, he was retained on contract by the Military to undertake Special Missions for a few more years before finally separating fully from active service. He left behind a legacy of discipline, dedicated service, and unwavering integrity.

Life After Military Service

Life after the army was marked by active social engagement, networking, and a deep commitment to giving back to society. Despite persistent knee challenges, he remained passionately involved in the Ewe 'Haborbo' group and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Party, where his dedication and leadership saw him rise to the position of Branch Chairman of St. Francis Catholic Primary School.

His love for God's work was especially evident in his devotion to the Church. He found great joy in being in the house of the Lord and in lifting his voice in song as a proud and committed member of the choir. Drawing on his rich experience from St. Catherine at Burma Camp, he served faithfully as Choir President for two consecutive terms at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Ashaley Botwe. He was also instrumental and actively involved in several other groups in Aflao which required him to make several trips to the village. During such journeys he would call and say 'I am firing the engine cylinders at full throttle', i.e. 120km/h, the man could cautiously speed!.

In all his engagements, he consistently projected peace, respect, unity, and love for one another; values that defined both his character and his legacy.

Marriage and Family Life

Yaovi met Victoria Adede, a professional teacher at Osu Salem '2' Primary School, in Accra. Their union was first sealed in a traditional ceremony and blessed with six children. On 11th February 1989, they solemnised their marriage at the St. Catherine Catholic Church, where their journey together had been spiritually nurtured.

Victoria, fondly called "Vic", was the anchor and love of his life. A fortress and bulwark never failing for him, their children and his extended family. Her discipline, prayers and emotional support sustained the household for thirty-six years. Her passing in May 2005 left an irreplaceable void, yet, like the 'onward Christian soldier', Yaovi pressed on with quiet resilience.



He later married Yawa, who brought him renewed companionship. Stepping into a difficult role after Victoria's passing, Yawa supported him faithfully, especially in his latter years, accompanying him to hospital visits and caring for him devotedly until his home call on 24 December 2025.

Conclusion: A Life Completed

Though his voice may now be silent, his song endures and his kindness lives on. Even though sometimes misunderstood, his deeply sincere quest for unity remains a testimony to the largeness of his heart. His love, sacrifice, and unyielding devotion to his family, both nuclear and extended, cannot be erased.

After decades of service, steadfast faith, and song, his final words echoed with quiet triumph, 'εὖ' (it is finished) Indeed, it is and it is well. For as the hymn so beautifully reminds us:

*"Come, come, ye saints, no toil nor labour fear;
But with joy wend your way;
Though hard to you this journey may appear,
Grace shall be as your day.
God's hand of love shall be your guide,
And all your needs He will provide;
His power shall every foe dispel-
All is well. All is well."*

Today, we take comfort in the assurance that the God who guided him through every season of life has now granted him eternal rest.

*Ranger! WO! Old Soja!
Akpakpai!
Efo Amega Deku!
Daddy!
Grandpa!*

Truly, All is well, All is well, Rest well.









...Tribute to *my Beloved Husband*

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Revelation 21:1

I am here today to honour the life of my husband. Though our hearts are grieving, we find comfort in the assurance that he has left this earthly life for the glorious new heaven prepared by God for His faithful children.

Efo, as I lovingly called him, lived a life of sacrifice. His love was not shown in words alone, but in the quiet, steady actions that defined who he was. He carried life's burdens with resilience and faced every challenge with courage, always trusting God even when the road ahead was uncertain.

When you suddenly became ill in December 2025 and were on admission, I believed, as I had, through the many storms you overcame, that you would be well again and come home for Christmas.

I held on to that hope. But as the Lord wanted it, that was not to be. He called you home, to a place where there is no pain, no fear, and no suffering.

Though your physical presence is no longer with us, your spirit, your teachings, and your love remain deeply etched in our hearts. My heart aches at your absence in ways words cannot fully express. Yet I hold on to God's promise in Revelation 21:4, that "He will wipe every tear from our eyes." Your journey here is complete, and your rest is assured in the presence of the Lord.

Until we meet again.
Rest in perfect peace.
He de nyuie.

Tribute by CHILDREN

"The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death". Isaiah 57:1-2 (NIV)

Some men leave footprints in the sand, but our father left them in our hearts". Today, we stand before you with grateful hearts, though heavy with loss, to honour the life of our beloved Daddy.

We grew up in Burma Camp, where Daddy served diligently in the military. Life in the barracks shaped our childhood in many ways. After his retirement, we moved to Ashale-Botwe, but the discipline and structure of military life never left our home.

Daddy was stern, very stern. He was particularly hard on his boys and did not spare them the rod when he felt discipline was necessary. But he never disciplined his girls with his hand or a cane. That role was often left to our mother, Victoria Adede Deku, a teacher whose popular mantra was, "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

Yet strangely, even though Daddy never beat his girls, Esi, Cele and Mawunyo feared him more than anyone. All it took was one disapproving look, and if you were unfortunate enough to hear him say, "Hey!" you immediately felt like disappearing. Whenever Mummy said, "I will tell your Daddy," our hearts would sink. But when the report finally reached him, all we mostly received was that powerful, silent look of disappointment. Why we were always so afraid remains a mystery. Maybe that is just the special

weight a father's presence carries in the hearts of his daughters.

Daddy loved music. He was a committed member of the Catholic Church Choir for as long as we could remember- from St Catherine in Burma Camp to St Francis of Assisi in Ashale-Botwe. His baritone voice was rich and exceptional. We fondly remember teasing him whenever he had to sing in Twi, a language he could not speak. All we would hear was the powerful baritone sound, but hardly any clear lyrics! Yet within the choir, his voice blended so beautifully that no one would notice. Those are memories that now bring smiles through our tears.

He was a peace lover and a peacemaker. Daddy hardly held grudges. He could be upset with you one moment and, in the next, speak to you lovingly as though nothing had happened. That was his heart, gentle beneath the stern exterior.



Daddy loved his military career, especially his armoured vehicles. It was more than a profession, it was a passion. But that passion came with sacrifice. We remember when he returned from a peacekeeping mission wounded and limping. As children, we did not fully understand what had happened, but we knew something was not right. Though he recovered, he lived with a knee problem for the rest of his life, a permanent reminder of his service and sacrifice.

Daddy and Mummy were a remarkable pair. Married for 36 years until Sister as we fondly called her, went to be with the Lord, they taught us what partnership looked like. They did not stay angry for long. Daddy often said his father advised him that when tempers rise, one should walk away, cool off, and return later and he lived with that wisdom.

Daddy loved family deeply. Growing up, there was always an uncle, cousin or relative living with us. Even when resources were stretched, Daddy and his devoted wife, Adede Victoria made room. He cared about the welfare of everyone connected to him. After retirement, church became his priority, he went for early morning mass and never missed an opportunity to pray for even our friends. Daddy made it a point to always check on us, his famous "roll calls" were constant and when a call was missed or not returned after a long while, you were sure to be reported to his abled accomplice and 'PRO' Mawunyo, his last baby. He consistently checked on us and his grandchildren. In good and bad times, Daddy showed up for us, he was always there.

When we visited him at the hospital, he looked fine. We prayed together. Esinam and Celestina asked him to sing his favourite song, and once again the familiar baritone voice was heard, full of quiet conviction. In that sacred moment, as though drawing strength from the very words he believed, he began to sing:

"My God loves me,
His love will never end.
He rests within my heart,
For my God loves me."

When the song was over, prayers were said. Amid his failing health, when he could barely speak, he still managed to put us at ease. When you said, 'According to the yam', daddy would respond by saying, 'The cassava no don'

Ranger!
"Rangers do it better"
Ranger!
"Rangers always lead the way"

To us, it was just a minor illness, and Daddy would be home in no time for us to celebrate Christmas and New Year as has become our custom. But alas, God had a different plan, a plan to lead the 'Ranger' home, to a place where there is no pain, no suffering and no strife. We take consolation in the words of Apostle Paul in Romans 8:38 that says, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life will be able to separate us from the Love of God"

Daddy, you gave your best to everyone. You often put aside your own comfort, happiness, and opportunities for the sake of those you love. Now it is time to rest.

Rest from your labour.
Rest from the pain.
Rest in the bosom of the Lord you served.
We miss your voice, Daddy.
We miss your roll calls.
We miss you telling us, "I am very, very beautiful" whenever we asked how you were doing.
We miss your visits.
We miss the special 'gari' you always buy from the village for us.
We miss your beautiful smile
We miss your very presence.

Rest well, Daddy.

We will forever love you.
(Francis, Anthony, Esinam, Celestina
and Mawunyo)



Tribute to GRANDPA

"A good man leaves an inheritance for His Children's Children" - Proverbs 13:22

We never imagined that Grandpa would leave us this soon because he had a very special place in everyone's heart. We always looked forward to his birthday and Christmas but as stated in the Bible, everyone will be called back home to the Father in Heaven when their time is due. The pain we felt on the day you fatefully departed was truly unbearable, and mere words cannot describe how we felt when we heard the news, especially as it occurred on the eve of Christmas, a time when the family usually came together to celebrate.

We will never forget the life stories you shared with us, especially those about the military that always fascinated us, nor the morals that touched every part of our lives year after year. We cherish the words of encouragement you gave us and the hope you had for us to become people at the top of society, leading and taking charge of every aspect of our lives.

You were a precious gift from above to all of us. Even in your weakened state, you still tried to do as much as you could for us. Although we feel deep pain, we cannot fight the decisions made by the Father in Heaven. Thank you for instilling the fear of God in your children, our parents, uncles, aunts, and in us, the grandchildren. Thank you for everything you have done for us throughout the years and for leaving behind such a strong and lasting legacy as our one and only Grandpa

There is a saying that 'a man is not dead unless he's forgotten', so to us, you are not dead because we will never forget, we will always remember you.

Rest easy, Grandpa,
Rest in perfect peace.





Tribute by **NIECES AND NEPHEWS**

'Now the labourer's task is over; now the battle day is past; now upon the farther shore lands the voyager at last: Father, in thy gracious keeping, leave we now thy servant'- By John Ellerton.

Uncle, with profound sorrow and sadness in our hearts, we stand here to bid you farewell and to celebrate your remarkable life well lived here on earth. You were an uncle in a million, and your sudden death came as a shock to us all.

No, there will never be another you!
Who's going to fill your shoes?
Who's going to stand that tall?
Who's going to bind us together?
Lord, I wonder who's going to fill his shoes.

Uncle Raphael, you were more than just an uncle - you were a guiding light, a safe haven, and a constant source of love. Your welcoming spirit opened your home and heart to us, making us feel seen, heard, and loved. Uncle, your wise counsel and listening ear helped shape us into who we are today.

You instilled in us the value of education, encouraging us to strive for excellence and pursue our dreams. Your disciplinarian approach taught us the importance of hard work, responsibility, and perseverance.

You took your role as an uncle seriously. You have been there for us in both joy and sadness. You were just a call away from any of our events, always showing up for us - even when it wasn't easy. From graduations to weddings, naming ceremonies, and more, you were there, cheering us on and celebrating our milestones. Your presence was a gift, and we'll cherish those moments forever.

You always emphasized the importance of family unity. Thus, you always end each conversation with us with the phrase: 'Mià w nvi hee, mi le nvishie', and we'll carry that lesson with us until the end of time. Your presence in our lives was divine, and we'll miss you dearly. Though you are gone, your loving memory will continue to linger on through the countless memories we shared and the values you instilled in us.

Uncle Yaovi, you were our confidante and springboard; to whom shall we go from here? Tell us, Daddy, your nephews and nieces are listening! Many were our plans and secrets shared fondly, but you could not wait any longer to see some of them materialize.

Hmmmm!!! Death, why are you always like that? Uncle Raph, through our numerous discussions, you said, "One day, you would challenge those who doubted you, and that they will be among the witnesses, and they will clap for you, and you will forget that they once criticised you". Where is the lie?

Rest in peace, dear Uncle Yaovi.

Until we meet again, fare thee well, uncle.

Uncle Raphael Yaovi Deku, xede nyuie eye na dzudz le nutifafa me.

Amen.



Tribute by **BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

Man born of a woman must surely depart one day into eternity and that is the loss of our dear brother Ex Warrant Officer Class one Raphael Yaovi Deku. It was so Sudden and unbelievable. Death indeed is a thief; it has snatched our dear brother like an eagle does to unsuspecting prey.

Today, we gather not just with heavy hearts, but also with hearts full of gratitude for the

gift that God gave us in you. As your brothers and sisters, we are still coming to terms

with the reality that you are no longer with us physically. Yet we rejoice in the truth

of God's word that assures us that you are now resting in the presence of the Most High,

where there is no pain, no sorrow and no tears. You were more than a brother to us, you

were a source of strength, wisdom and unwavering love.

You have always been there for your siblings, opening not only your home but your heart to us. When we lost our mother, you did not hesitate. Though newly married, you and your young wife, Sister (Victoria Adede) as we fondly called her took on the added responsibility of becoming family to us in every way, she stepping in as a mother and sister, and you as our steady guide and protector. All six of us, at one time or another, lived with you and came under your

tutelage as you prepared us for the journey of life. In your home we found discipline, direction, comfort, and love.

Being the youngest among the siblings, Sromawuda especially remembers how you assumed the role of our mother after her passing. Soon after the burial and funeral rites, you took him with you to Accra, where he continued his schooling at Labadi Wireless, then Gondar at Burma Camp, before proceeding to secondary school. In those quiet acts of sacrifice and responsibility, you filled a painful void and shaped a future, something we will always carry in our hearts.

Misunderstandings are part of any human set up, but Efo made sure he played his part such that we always agree to disagree at the end of it all.

One statement he normally made under such conflict situations was "dadavi Tsikpl o bna mee nawo" to wit, the bond between Siblings of the same mother is unbreakable.

As we say goodbye for now, we do so with thanksgiving for the memories, for the

laughter and the bond that death cannot break. You fought the good fight; you finished the race and you kept the faith. Rest in the eternal embrace of our heavenly Father until we meet again.

Efo Xede Nyuie
Efo Xede Nyuie
Wò luv nedzudz le utifafa me.

Tribute by THE IN-LAWS

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the Death of His Faithful Servant" Psalms 116:15

Today, we celebrate your life for the love you showed us for all the years we had with you as our father-in-law. You welcomed us not just into your home, but into your life. You did not try to impress or look down upon us in any way. You allowed things to unfold naturally.

Your nature made it possible for us to develop a close relationship with you. Your Godly advice to us anytime we call or visit will continue to be our guide. You treated us as your own and it was easy for us to call you and have a conversation with you.

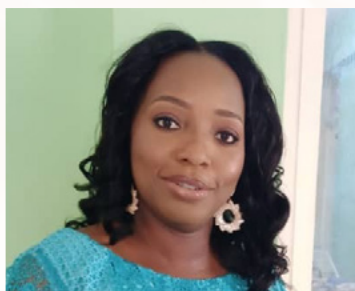
You also had an incredible capacity at your age to give a helping hand whenever the need arose. Till the time you left us, you were assisting in bringing some of your grandchildren home from school. A task you did with so much pride and joy.

Now that you are gone, there is an empty space that feels both quiet and profound.

Our get-together every Christmas with you and your grandchildren is going to be missed greatly. A gentle soldier, a lovely father, thank you for raising wonderful children who are our spouses.

Who wouldn't like to have a father-in-law like you?
You may be gone, but you are forever in our hearts.

Rest well Daddy, till we meet again.
(Eric, Richard, Victoria & Sylvia)



Tribute by **THE NDC, ADENTAN CONSTITUENCY**

"A giant tree has fallen."

The NDC Adentan Constituency mourns the profound loss of a dedicated cadre, Comrade WO1 Raphael Deku. Since joining the Congress in 2011, WO1 distinguished himself as a pillar of loyalty and grassroots mobilization. As the Branch Chairman of St. Francis Catholic Primary School, he was instrumental in the reorganization and structural stability of our party at the local level.

Beyond his official duties, WO1 was a father figure and a sagacious counselor. He was a man of peace whose doors were always open to any comrade seeking advice or mediation. His sudden departure has left a void in our hearts and our political machinery that will be difficult to fill. We have lost a remarkable man, a disciplined soldier of the revolution, and a true friend.

Comrade Raphael, fare thee well.
WO1, Hede nyuie. May your soul rest in eternal peace



Tribute by **ST. CATHERINE CATHOLIC CHURCH CHOIR, BURMA CAMP**

We gather today to celebrate the life of a true hero, Ex WO1 Raphael Deku, a dedicated soldier, and a passionate chorister. He joined the St Catherine Catholic Church Choir many years ago at the old site, now the Pension House. He was a mechanic and a civilian Defense Staff Worker with 1MT Battalion now the Defense MT Battalion. He was recruited into the Army and posted to the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME) CORPS and came back to the choir to continue his talent of singing. He served with honor in the Ghana Armed Forces, defending our nation with courage and distinction. His voice, once raised in battle, now echoes in the harmonies of the St Catherine Catholic Church Choir, where he found solace and purpose.

As a soldier, he stood tall; as a chorister, he stood with others. His legacy lives on in the melodies we sing and the values he embodied: duty, loyalty, and love.

He played roles in the Church as a Lay Reader and was reading the Gospel in Ewe his mother tongue. Again, he was a Tenor singer and became a bass singer years later. Ex WO1 Deku was very instrumental in the Choir until he retired from the Armed Forces when he moved out of the barracks. Nevertheless, he responded to calls from the choir whenever he was called upon. Recently he honored our invitation to our end of year get together in the year 2024. 'Akpakpai' as he was affectionately called will forever live in our hearts.

Rest in peace, Ex WO1 Deku Raphael. Your service and song will never be forgotten.

GACCCA; With Heart and Voice

LAUDATE; Dominum!!!

Tribute by **ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH AND MAIN CHOIR** **ASHALE BOTWE**

"...Blessed are the dead who from now on, die in the Lord. ... they will rest from their labors, for their deeds shall follow them." (Rev 14:13)

The Parish Priest, the Parish Pastoral Council, members of the St. Francis of Assisi Parish and the St. Francis of Assisi Main Choir of Ashaley Botwe grieve with the family of our beloved member, father, brother and friend, chorister and Counsellor and mentor, the late W.O.1 Raphael Yao Deku.

The late W.O.1 Raphael Yao Deku, who we affectionately called W.O or Old Soldier dedicated himself to St. Francis of Assisi Parish. He contributed his quota to the development of the Church, financially, musically and security wise. Having become a member of the Church, he joined the St. Francis of Assisi Main Choir which was undergoing reform in the year 2002 under the leadership of Mr. John Nyuagbe, then Chairman of the Church Pastoral Council. After the reformation of the choir, WO became Choir President and was assisted by Miss Rosemond Hinson, with Mr. Jesse Wilson as our then Choirmaster.

He demonstrated exceptional love for the Church and the Main Choir. True to his military background, he was an upright man, honest, fair, affable, friendly and surprisingly very humble.

The Main Choir is proud of old soldier for all the roles he played in the choir including being a Bass Singer, Choir President, Choir Father, Counsellor, Ex-Officio member of the Executive Committee and more particularly for instilling discipline and unity among the members. He would always call to ask permission when he could not attend rehearsal.

Until he was struck down by sickness, WO attended and participated in almost every activity or programme of the Church or the Choir. With courage and remarkable military resilience, you bravely endured and fought the knee pain without complaint until your body could no more go further hence you were admitted at the Ridge Hospital. Little did we know that our visit to you on the 23rd of December 2025 was to be the last moment we would share together.

Today, WO, you have responded to the call to Heaven. We grieve your passing but having died in the Lord, we pray for the repose of your gentle soul in the bosom of Abraham. We cherish the memories we had with you and have not forgotten the song you requested for. Yes, "Dzifo lexolagbo".

We salute you in your usual sarcastic manner: "According to the yam, the cassava no don!! And again, Boys you must know better!!!"

We thank God for your life, for being part of us, and a dedicated Christian. We believe you have gone ahead to join the heavenly host of choirs to continue the praise of Yahweh.

W.O! We love you more, but your Maker loves you most. May your good works follow you to Paradise, where there is neither pain nor sorrow. Fare thee well. Rest in perfect peace. Amen!



Hymns

CHB 322

My God loves me
His love will never end
He rests within my heart
For my God loves me.

His gentle hand
He stretches over me
Though storm clouds threaten the day
He will set me free.

He comes to me
In sharing bread and wine
He brings me life that will reach
Past the end of time.

My God loves me
His faithful love endures
And I will live like a child
Held in love secure.

The joys of love
As offerings now we bring
The pains of love will be lost
In the praise we sing.

Hymns

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life our redemption to win,
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
To every believer the promise of God;
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice;
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.

Hymns

Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt His name;
When in distress to Him I called,
He to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His succor trust.

Oh, make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide
How blest they are, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
Your wants shall be His care.

APPRECIATION

The family of the late EX WOI RAPHAEL YAOVI DEKU
extends a heartfelt gratitude to all who stood by them in this
difficult time. May God bless you and replenish your source.

Thank you



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