

# Acton's U.S. Marine...

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tions. He was also in charge of all ECM systems (Electronic Counter Measures), which are used to defeat the use of remote detonated IED's (improvised explosive device) from insurgents.

On September 13, 2006 Tim's unit set sail from San Diego for Kuwait. Along the way, they made stops in Hawaii, Singapore and the Maldives, where they provided humanitarian aid. After unloading their gear at the Kuwaiti Naval Base, they were escorted by the Kuwaiti Army to Camp Buerhing where they awaited orders to proceed into Iraq.

"On November 17, 2006 the Marines and Sailors of the 15th MEU SOC were ordered to move into Iraq to help address the security situation, seize emerging opportunities and maintain favourable momentum in the fight against terrorist networks," said Tim.

Tim's unit was spread all over the province of Al Anbar, but he was to operate in the city of Rutbah, escorting enemy prisoners of war to the Al Asad Detention Facility via helicopter as well as working as a radio operator. His unit conducted daily and nightly security patrols where they would gather INTEL from the locals using an interpreter. They searched houses, schools, businesses, "anything and everything", mostly all random. If they gathered enough information on a particular place, they could

conduct a raid, where they would find things like guns, bomb making material and fake ID's. Operations lasted until they were finished.

"At one point I went 78 hours without sleep, that was the longest I have ever gone. Even when you lie down, it's still hard to get back to sleep. To me, Iraq was the worst place I had ever seen in terms of poverty and all. When you're on patrol, you would never see kids in clean clothing, there was raw sewage all over the streets, garbage everywhere, kids in bare feet with used needles scattered all around. We would hand out candy to the kids from the

packages we received from family and church groups back home. Although, sometimes we were even weary of doing that because we weren't sure if they had a weapon or if they were a suicide bomber. But at the same time it was nice to see a smile on their face.

"I'm sure people would want to hear about gunshots and fighting, and that's an experience any one person has to deal with on their own, but I'll tell you what, the first time you hear shooting, it's like everything goes into slow motion. When I heard them for the first time I didn't ever realize it. I kind of hesitated for a second and then mus-

cle memory came into play. When I thought about it after I was like "whoa". I guess the countless hours of training actually helps because I did exactly what I needed to."

For two months after leaving Iraq, Tim suffered from insomnia and the worst nightmares he'd ever had.

"Although I think part of that was knowing where my brother was and actually knowing what he does. He was, and still is, in Afghanistan. I felt bad for my mom and dad; I couldn't imagine what they were going through."

"I don't know what else to say, and to be honest I don't want to have to re-think what

I did or what happened while I was over there. It's something you don't want to keep bringing up. The best way to understand it is to be in it, until then it's hard. That's part of the reason I joined during the war. Everyone talks a lot about what's going on and what is worth going to war for, but that's nothing but an opinion. When you have been over there and see all the negative and positive things that are going on, it means something."

I have to tell you, listening to Tim talk about his experience in Iraq brought on chills and tears. Knowing that Andrew is still in combat and that Tim will be going back makes me want to grab them out of harms way and protect them forever. It brought on new feelings for me. Being so reserved, Andrew doesn't talk much about what he's experienced. He was the first to go overseas and every time I logged on to the computer and saw Andrew on line, I breathed a sigh of relief. At that time, I didn't really know what it was like over there. Now, after hearing about Tim's experience, worry will be more prominent. I can't imagine what my aunt and uncle are dealing with having both sons away.

Throughout a five month tour in Iraq, Tim's unit, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit SOC (Special Operation Capable), suffered 110 casualties out of a total of 220 Marines and Sailors. That was five out of nine months that he was on deployment. During that time, he went to Hawaii twice, Sin-

gapore, the Maldives, Kuwait and Australia. He was gone from September 13 2006 to May 30 2007.

Since then, Time has continued training in San Diego. He is a Sergeant (E-5), the same as his brother, Andrew. He will be heading back to Iraq in January 2008 for seven months, his last tour before he's finished with active duty.

Writing this story made me relive the good times I had with Tim, and Andrew, before he enlisted. I was able to spend an evening with him while he was home on holiday this past June. I saw the man he has grown to be, instead of the teenager I knew before he left. Although I was reluctant to see him go, the pride I feel knowing that he is fighting for something he truly believes in trumps my apprehensions. No, I don't want to see him go back to Iraq, and I wish Andrew was home now instead of in Afghanistan. But I know that they both have such a good head on their shoulders and are going to make a difference.

I just have to do my best not to worry every day as the war presses on, although that's easier said than done. These two young men, who I still think of as kids, are doing more than anyone else I know. It's hard not to remember Tim as that stubborn, rebellious child who thought any risk was worth taking. I know he's still that same person only now he does it with logic that he's gained along the way, logic he's learned from his parents, Glenn and Carol, his brother Andrew and the training from the US Marine Corp.

## History of Cenotaph

by Justina Pembleton

Every year, on the Sunday closest to November 11, the Royal Canadian Legion holds a parade for war veterans that ends at the Cenotaph on Mill Street, where they lay wreaths and flowers for the fallen soldiers of war.

This is not just an Acton tradition; this is done by all Legions, at Cenotaph's across Canada. It began in 1919, when Prime Minister Lloyd George insisted that Edwin Lutyens, as a small part of the Peace Day events, build a memorial.

The Cenotaph was originally a wood and plaster construction, which

was intended for the first anniversary of the Armistice in 1919. When it was unveiled, people spontaneously began covering the base with wreaths for the dead and missing from The Great War. Cenotaph literally means "Empty Tomb" in Greek. There was so much enthusiasm for the Cenotaph from the public that it was decided that it should become a permanent memorial. The permanent monument was unveiled in 1920, was made from Portland stone and bore the inscription "The Glorious Dead." The service held every year at the Cenotaph is to commemorate British and Commonwealth servicemen

and women who died in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

The memorial service has not changed much since it was first introduced in 1921. Hymns are sung, prayers are said and a two-minute silence is observed and the playing of the last post. Official wreaths are laid at the base of the Cenotaph and the ceremony ends with past war veterans marching, out of respect for fallen comrades.

Although style and size of Cenotaphs vary across Canada, an exact replica of Lutyens' original stands proudly in London, Canada.

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