

**SOUTH DAKOTA  
FALLEN HERO**



*Your  
Memory  
lives on in  
our hearts.*



*In Loving Memory*

*1LT Thomas M. Martin*



*Huron, SD*

*US Army*

*10-10-1980 to 10-14-2007*

*Iraq*

## **1LT Thomas M. Martin**

Tom was born October 10, 1980, in Huron, SD. Because of his parent's military service, he left South Dakota as a young boy, went to school for a short time in San Marcos, TX, and then graduated from high school in Cabot, AR in 1998. That same year he enlisted in the United States Army as a Field Artilleryman. In 2000, Tom was accepted for admission to the United States Military Academy. After attending the United States Military Academy Preparatory School, Tom entered West Point in the fall of 2001. As a West Point Cadet, Tom started on the Rugby team, was a member of the Military Tactics Team, and earned his Parachutist Badge by graduating from Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Tom majored in Military Science and graduated with his class in May 2005.

Tom was commissioned as an Armor Officer and completed the Armor Officer Basic Course at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He volunteered for Ranger School and graduated earning his Ranger tab in May of 2006. Tom reported to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 40<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment at Fort Richardson, Alaska in June 2006. Upon arrival, Tom was assigned as the Sniper Platoon Leader in Crusader Troop and deployed with the unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in October of 2006. Tom served in Iraq for more than a year, participated in nearly 300 missions, and walked nearly 1000 kilometers (nearly the distance between Rapid City to Sioux Falls and return!) when he was killed in action on October 14, 2007.

1LT Martin was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart Medal posthumously. His previous awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the Army Overseas Ribbon w/numeral 2, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Ranger Tab. As a youth, Tom was active in his church, community, 4-H, high school band, theater, the Boy Scouts of America, and attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

Tom kept an online journal of his experiences. His online blog was once a way for our family and friends to keep up with him – with updates and photos – and is now so much more. Today his journals are read by family members, friends, and even complete strangers who have happened upon them searching the web for Calvin & Hobbes, rugby or West Point. You are invited to browse through Tom's journal experiences at [www.tommym1080.com](http://www.tommym1080.com)

Tom's sister Sarah once sent him a survey asking, "If you could go through your life again from the beginning, what would you change?" His response: "I could write a book on this one, but I'll keep it short by saying I'd study more and screw around less, I'd drive safer and I would say hi to the million or so people that I passed every day without talking to."

At the time of his death, Tom was survived by his parents Ed and Candy Martin, sisters Sarah Martin Hood (husband Jeff), Laura Martin, and Becky Martin, his fiancé Erika Noyes, a host of aunts, uncles, and cousins, and the multitudes of friends he made in his 27 years of life. Our family has continued to grow, now including a nephew and another brother-in-law – Sarah and Jeff's son Colt, and Laura's husband Leo Rangira.

Words cannot describe the overwhelming pain we feel from his loss. As his family, we find comfort in remembering Tom and his signature smile. The 1LT Tom Martin Memorial Foundation was established in 2010 to honor the life and legacy of Tom. The foundation supports tomorrow's leaders today and is dedicated to uphold the principles of sacrifice and service that characterized Tom's life. You are invited to

*learn more about the 1LT Tom Martin Foundation at [www.tommartinfoundation.org](http://www.tommartinfoundation.org).*

*First Lieutenant Martin was buried in the West Point National Cemetery at West Point, New York. He will forever be remembered as a little boy who became a man with undaunted determination, fiercely dedicated to his men, his mission, and his country.*



*“When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart. For as long as you remember me, I am never entirely lost.” ~~ Frederick Buechner*