



FAMILYPRINT™



ONE FAMILY'S
UNIQUE REFLECTION
DURING WAR

“When a National Guardsman deploys there are truly two people at war: the soldier who goes to fight the enemy and the spouse who stays behind to face, in many ways, an equally difficult task. Tim and Tiffany Stoner’s new book is a useful reminder of the debt we owe to both members of any National Guard Family.”

MITCH DANIELS

INDIANA STATE GOVERNOR

“This special story about the Stoner’s journey captured through words and photos that touch our hearts compels us to be better people – to live in a way that makes a difference to our families, communities and country. In spite of separation and even fear, we see a family filled with joy, purpose and faith.”

TERESA LUBBERS

FORMER INDIANA STATE SENATOR
INDIANA COMMISSIONER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

“Tim and Tiffany exemplify all that is good about the American family... patriotic, entrepreneurial, loving, fun, compassionate. It is my honor to call them friends.”

MAJOR GENERAL (RET) TIMOTHY J. WRIGHT

UNITED STATES ARMY



DEDICATED TO AUNT NINE,
an endearing woman that made a lasting imprint on our lives
with her powerful force and enormous personality.

The Stoner Six



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Introduction

FROM WINGTIPS TO COMBAT BOOTS

In the fall of 2006 I began to hear “whispers” of Indiana sending their first Black Hawk unit into Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Indiana had previously sent units to Bosnia, Kosovo, and Kuwait, but never into combat.

It could not have been a more challenging time in my life: having just lost my mother to cancer, myself being diagnosed with skin cancer and experiencing the births of our twin girls. As luck would have it, I soon received the phone call that would change our lives – forever. The call confirmed that I was to command the first unit going into Iraq.

We were a brand new MedEvac company, and stood late in 2005. If you understand the National Guard commitment of: one-weekend-per-month and two weeks in the summer, you quickly understand that 18 weekends and one annual training period later (or 51 days) – we went from inception to mobilization for war.

As an Army National Guard Soldier, I am just one representation of the million soldiers who live their lives in your communities and contribute to this nation’s social fabric. I am a family man, your neighbor, the one in the restaurant, and the one in your church. We are a critical element in the nation’s defense, the ones willing to answer the call, and accept the transformation from wingtips to combat boots.

INCREDIBLE TEAM

Through all of the considerations in the preparation for war, the one thing that never concerned me was the team. I had an incredibly talented, highly capable, and confident team. It was my one “silver bullet.” I had Indiana’s best Maintenance Personnel, Test Pilots, Crewchiefs, Flight Medics, and Aviators. Through all of our successes and absence of incidents and accidents, “they” were the ones I had to thank for our incredible success.

FAMILYPRINT

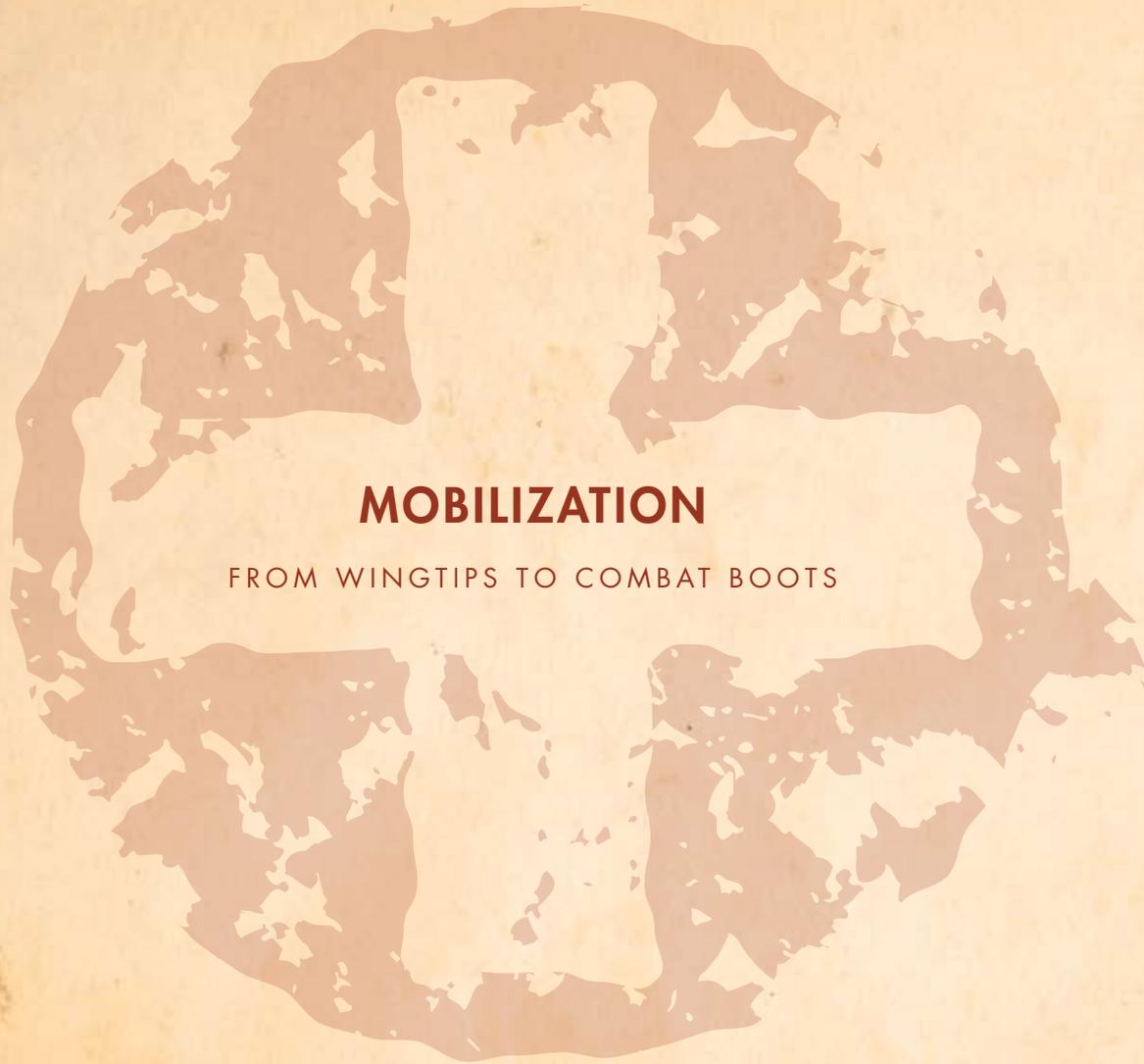
My wife, Tiffany, and I had been married for a decade and were “chest-deep” in raising four children under the age of six. She is my personal pillar and our family’s center-of-gravity. She is highly intelligent and possesses the work ethic of a farmer. I attribute our family’s ability to endure the hardship of war and separation – solely to her. Tiffany transformed this difficulty into an experience of graciousness, growth, and gratitude.

FamilyPrint: One Family’s Unique Reflection During War reflects the collection and maturation of the communication we used every day to: stay in touch, dispel our fears, display our love and articulate the gratitude we have for our family and for those who affected our experience. The compilation brought many emotions, perspectives and fueled support for Tiffany at home and me in-theatre. The dialogue drew in our families and supporters and touched so many people’s lives. Throughout the experience, we discovered that our family has a unique signature that is analogous to a fingerprint. *FamilyPrint* became our compass and the foundation for why we created this book.

This book is dedicated to all of our supporters, neighbors, friends, the soldiers who went in with me, our extended families, and The Stoner Six.



Throughout this book you will read experiences from both Tim (signified with the 🇺🇸 symbol) and Tiffany (signified with the 🇺🇸 symbol).



MOBILIZATION

FROM WINGTIPS TO COMBAT BOOTS











Indiana
INDIANA







FRIDAY | APRIL 4, 2007

Tie A Yellow Ribbon

We are so blessed to live amongst neighbors that are amazing friends. We were overwhelmed last Sunday when we went for a walk at 7 p.m. and yellow ribbons were being hung by several neighbors. And ... not just a few yellow ribbons ... the trees in the neighborhood and lamp posts are covered. It really is a beautiful sight. I took several photos.

I couldn't even contain my emotions. It solidified the fact that we live in "Pleasantville" ... a term I coined a few years back. Tim was equally emotional about the sight of the ribbons as well.



MONDAY | APRIL 7, 2007

And ... He Is Off!

We said goodbye to Tim on Sunday morning as he flew the last Blackhawk from Shelbyville, Indiana to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma.

The kids and I were joined by our families for an emotional send-off. For the first time, I believe Briggs understood the situation, as well as a seven-year-old can. The three youngest will hopefully never remember. Although, I am worried it will be the toughest on Gage in the short-term. He is Daddy's #1 fan!

We are so very proud of Tim. Please enjoy the amazing images that Nate took. I think these are some of the most incredible images he has ever caught ... they look as if they should be in *Time* magazine. I am so thankful to have such a talented brother.

This is undoubtedly the toughest time we will endure. Thank you for all of your support, thoughts, and prayers.





SATURDAY | MAY 12, 2007

We've Arrived

“We are all blessed to have you as part of our lives. We live in the best country in the world and having leaders like Tim in charge of our troops brings comfort. May God bless both your family and unit with safety. You both are ‘Top Guns’ in many aspects of your lives.”

– Loretta Smith

All, thank you all for your unbelievable support and care for our family!!! We are truly blessed to have you in our lives! Thank you! Most of the flight crews arrived late Sunday evening and the rest of our troops, by bus, Monday morning at 4 a.m. We’ve been immersed in multiple “in-briefs,” coordination meetings, inventories, unpacking, and making our flight line operational. Every hour of every day has been programmed as we prepare to go into theatre. Internet connectivity is sparse from both the time available and the means. Additionally, some domains and services have been blocked (gmail) by the military net. The only way I can get to gmail is through open access points (which are rare).

I’ll write again when I can.

Thank you all for supporting my family!





MONDAY | MAY 14, 2007

Anthrax

We received the highly controversial anthrax vaccination this week. Along with protein that is developed from the anthrax bacteria, the vaccination contains several things including aluminum and formaldehyde.

Our orders state that the anthrax vaccination is not required for deployment, but the Army passed a new law earlier this year that mandated the vaccination for all deploying soldiers.

I told the lady that was about to give me the shot "Oh well, at least I'm glad we are done having children ... go ahead."



MONDAY | MAY 14, 2007

Weapons

Also this week, we completed the academic and hands-on training on the MK19 (pronounced "Mark 19") and M2 .50 cal (pronounced "ma deuce" or "50 cal") weapons systems. The MK19 is a machine gun that shoots grenades (unbelievable weapon) and the .50 cal is used against equipment and "light-skinned" armored vehicles. Both weapons have been around for several decades.

The term "light-skinned" refers to vehicles that do not have heavy armor - think armored personnel carrier, as opposed to a tank.



"Tim, I fired a .50 cal in 1970. I hope they have improved them, the thing was a beast. The MK19 sounds interesting. Personally the Claymore mines were the scariest weapon I ever saw."

- Mike Lombard

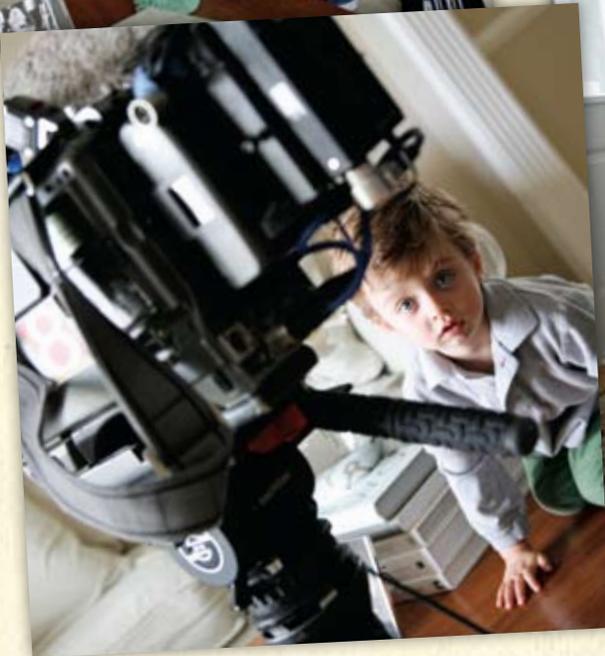


FRIDAY | MAY 18, 2007

TV Coverage

It occurred to me that some missed the interview that aired on WISH-TV evening news several weeks ago. It is entitled "Hoosier MedEvac Pilot to be Deployed." It highlights our family (crazy house) and Tim's mission quite well. There was also news coverage on each news station from the formal send-off last weekend. You can really see and hear how emotional Tim was in this clip but he always chooses his words perfectly. As typical, we had our "personal photographer" on hand.

Thanks again to Nate!





SATURDAY | MAY 19, 2007

Bad Wife

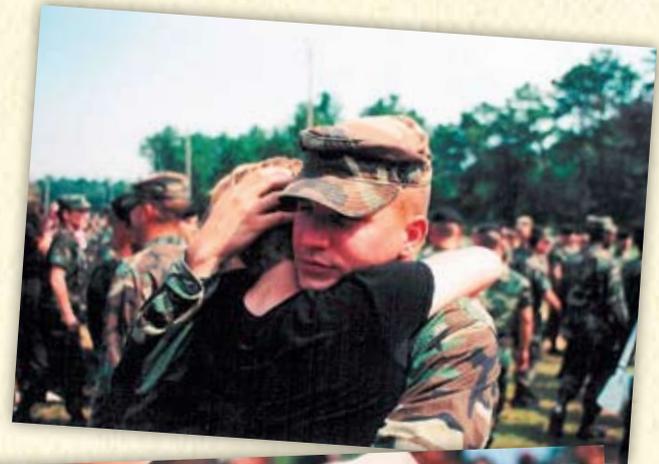
When Tim was in Ranger School, I sent him at least two letters a day ... oftentimes more. Partly because I wanted to really support him and keep his spirits high. Partly because I was absolutely in love with him and could hardly bear being separated for three long months. Really because I was hoping he would propose when he returned. BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY because it was my strategy of smuggling food to him.

If you are unfamiliar with Ranger School, then Google it. Only 10 percent of the starting class actually graduate. And, those standing at the end are hardly able to even stand after losing close to 30 percent of their body weight during the process. They exist on less than three hours of sleep at night, at best. And, they are given only one MRE (meal ready to eat) per day. And, that does not even cover the physical challenges they endure.

So, getting back to the story. I took anything I could find and smashed it as flat as I could. Fruit roll-ups were a huge hit ... sometimes just packets of creamer ... ANYTHING with calories. See, the cadre (the instructors) randomly asked the Rangers-in-training to open their mail in front of them to ensure there was no contraband food. (No secret ... a lot of people had our same smash-the-food-strategy.) Where our strategy went one step further was if he got multiple pieces of mail he could easily select the flattest, lightest envelope to open in front of the cadre. They were typically satisfied and moved on to the next hungry guy.

While Tim is definitely not enduring Ranger School again, it did come to my attention last night as we were on the phone that he has only received ONE letter since he left. Hence, bad wife! The kids and I got busy this morning to ship some letters and drawings out to him immediately.

If you have the time, please write a real letter to him. It beats email! Did I mention they are on lock-down on the base? Yeah ... a letter would go a long way.





SATURDAY | MAY 19, 2007

Great Wife

Everyone,

If you know Tiffany, even peripherally, you know what an incredible woman, wife, businessperson, and mother she is to our children.

Writing multiple letters everyday was simply a reflection of the "time-available" in that stage in our lives. Now we have four beautiful children, managed by a beautiful CFO (Chief Family Officer).

I'll gladly forego all letters, knowing she is at the helm of the most important ship afloat.

I love you, bud! Thanks for being my partner!

