

Saluting the sacrifice

Canton pays tribute to fallen heroes during Memorial Day ceremony

By Brad Kadrich • OBSERVER STAFF WRITER • June 3, 2010

It's been nearly four months since her brother was killed in Afghanistan, and Jaime Turbett still can't believe he's gone.

Marine Cpl. Jacob Turbett of Canton was killed Feb. 13 and, for Jaime, it was like losing a hero. His death, she said Monday while attending Canton's annual Memorial Day ceremony honoring fallen servicemen and women, has altered the lives of those who knew him.

"He was always my hero," Jaime Turbett said. "He was always there. This has changed our lives forever."

Jaime and her mother, Redford resident Sheila Turbett, were in Canton Monday as the Canton Veterans Memorial Association dedicated a brick paver in the Canton War Memorial to Turbett, who lived his dream of becoming a Marine. Turbett was the 37th service member with Canton ties to die for his country, the first to perish in Afghanistan (there were 30 in the Civil War, four in Vietnam and two in Iraq).

Sheila Turbett said her son would have been proud to have the brick dedicated, not so much in his name as in the recognition it would have brought to the U.S. Marines.

"I think Jake would like having the Marine Corps name out there," said Sheila Turbett, whose dad and uncle served in World War II. "Even with my dad and an uncle were in World War II, it was too distant. Now it's up close and personal. I think (with Jake's death) we will always celebrate Memorial Day a little differently."

That's how it is for Rob and Tina Harris of Redford. Tina's cousin, U.S. Marine Sgt. Bryan Burgess of Canton, was killed in action in Iraq in November 2006. While attending the Memorial Day ceremony has had special meaning for the Harrises since Burgess' death three years ago, they definitely wanted to be there for the brick dedication to

Turbett Monday.

"It hits home when you lose a family member," Tina Harris said. "I don't think people realize how much they do for us. These soldiers gave everything for us."

Which, of course, was the point of the annual ceremony, which drew a good crowd to the War Memorial despite the threat of storms which were moving into the area. Canton Township Trustee John Anthony, himself a veteran Marine (1962-68), read the World War I-era poem, "In Flanders Fields," and John Spencer, president of the Canton Veterans Memorial Association, recited the names of the 37 military members who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The brick paver for Turbett was dedicated, and Jan Blumberg, who lost her son, Army Sgt. Trevor Blumberg in Iraq in 2003, laid the ceremonial wreath.

"With American military servicemen and women currently involved in two wars and other conflicts around the world, the relevance of Memorial Day should be clearly evident," Spencer said. "Memorial Day seeks to stir the patriotic feelings for every American citizen and remind us that we owe our freedom and liberty to these fine young men and women who have laid down their lives for us."

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Crystal Turbett, widow of Marine Cpl. Jacob Turbett of Canton, hugs her mother-in-law, Sheila Turbett, and sister-in-law Jaime Turbett after placing a brick dedicated to her husband in Canton's War Memorial Monday.



Jan Blumberg, mother of Army Sgt. Trevor Blumberg, places a wreath at the memorial. The fallen soldier died in Iraq in September 2003.



Canton's veteran's memorial is the setting for the annual Memorial Day observance.



Members of Vietnam Veterans of America Post 528 fire a salute to the fallen. (photos by Bill Bresler | staff photographer)

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