

Honoring the ultimate sacrifice



Every week, as a remembrance ritual, Chet Borowski walks to the end of his driveway and updates the war memorial that he constructed out of common household materials. *~ Photo by Terry Mayer/The Week*

How a war memorial found a home in Sharon

~ Story by Cathleen Loud

Chet Borowski wants to remember those who have died in the war that, while officially over, continues to rage and take lives in Iraq.

Every week, as a remembrance ritual, Borowski walks to the end of his driveway and updates the war memorial that he constructed out of common household materials.

It's not a flashy memorial; it's rather simple—plywood, a few flags, some plastic, a stone and some paint is all it took to build. It's his way of honoring the men and women who have lost their lives in combat since the start of the war in March.

Borowski, a self-described news nut, realized that throughout the bombarding coverage of the war, the number of casualties was omitted from

the news updates. He said that people deserve to know how many people have died and who they are because those who have died are not just numbers but actual people with names and faces.

To honor these names and faces, a little over three months ago, Borowski erected a war memorial at the foot of his driveway.

The war memorial is a piece of plywood, roughly 11 feet high, painted black.

On each side of the memorial are flags. Originally just an American flag and a British flag, he has recently added a Danish and Polish flag as well. The flags signify the countries that have lost men and women in combat. Borowski

also ordered an Australian and Spanish flag, both of which he plans to fly from the memorial. A number stands out below the board. It signifies the actual number of coalition force casualties. The number stands at 331. As the number continues to grow, the memorial shares a small piece of the story of each man and woman who is listed.

Borowski found a site on the Internet that lists the age, name, unit the soldier fought in, hometown and cause of death for each coalition force soldier that has died in combat in Iraq whose family has been notified.

A photo accompanies the data. Borowski compiles the data each week and adds the losses to the board. It is time-consuming and labor-intensive, he said, but nothing compared to what the soldiers are facing.

The soldiers are fighting in 120-degree weather and sleeping on the roofs of their barracks to keep cool, said Borowski. His amount of effort is pale in comparison.

Currently, Borowski has placed more than 28 panels on the memorial with each panel containing about 13 people. "That's a lot of people," lamented Borowski. He pointed out a photo of one of the soldiers.



"It's heartbreaking. These are kids. And parents, husbands, wives and grandparents."

"Here's a gentleman that is 37 years old," he said, shaking his head. "Nineteen years old," he said pointing to another. "It's heartbreaking. These are kids. And parents, husbands, wives and grandparents." Borowski appreciates that he can find the information so readily and it is his duty, he said, to pay tribute to the lost lives of the soldiers.

"The sun rises over there." He turned and pointed east, the direction in which the back of the memorial faces.

"The sun sets over here," he said pointing west and in the direction the front of the memorial faces. "These people are never going to see the light of day."

Borowski doesn't include his personal politics in the memorial. There is no sign of his agreement or disagreement with the war or the tactics used in fighting. The board pays tribute to lost lives and serves as a message to people that these soldiers must not be forgotten.

There is a small ladder leaning against the memorial. He invites people to come and look. "If they want to come by, they can. They can leave a tribute or read the names because that's what it's about," he said.

Borowski's memorial is located just between Sharon and Darien at N1190 Peters Rd. During the evening hours, a light illuminates the wall.

