



THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON

More than 3,000 grave markers planted in the Lucas County Courthouse lawn honor the war's fallen.

# Peace group sends stark message on tombstones

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As the winds whipped across the lawn of the Lucas County Courthouse, Mary Anthony said she hoped this would be the last time that a display honoring fallen soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan would be erected in Ohio.

Ms. Anthony, whose son is a 23-year-old Navy Seabee just beginning his second tour in Iraq, was among 40 members of the Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition who spent yesterday planting thousands of white wooden tombstones downtown.

The tombstones, which list the name, rank, and birthplace of soldiers killed in Iraq or Afghanistan, were arranged symmetrically on the courthouse lawn to emulate the Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Ms. Anthony said the wooden tombstones should serve as a reminder of the lives lost in the con-



Stephen Masternak of Toledo, a Navy veteran and member of the Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, erects a sign tallying war deaths.

flicts overseas.

It was also a reminder to herself that her son, Christopher Anthony, is among the personnel fighting in Iraq.

"I hope that people will take a good look and see the names and ages of all the soldiers and realize that they are not just a stone," she said. The 3,475 tombstones represent the number of U.S. troops killed

so far in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The peace coalition is using the display to call attention to the conflict in Iraq, which is entering its fifth year.

Coalition member Sue Carter said the display calls attention to the human cost of the war.

"We hope that people who see this

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will understand the visible costs of the war and that it will make it more real in their minds," she said. "A delay in ending the war will only mean the loss of more American troops and Iraqi lives."

Added Ms. Anthony, "I hope that people will realize the names on the graves could be somebody's child, husband, wife, brother, or sister, and that this is an unjust war."

The group will mark the beginning of the war at 8:15 a.m.

today when a bugler will play taps and coalition members will recite the names of the 149 Ohio soldiers who have died.

The display will remain at the courthouse through Saturday and will be staffed round the clock by volunteers available to help people locate specific tombstones of soldiers.

In a separate area the lives of more than 650,000 Iraqis who have died in the conflict are memorialized on similar monuments on the courthouse lawn.

The group also erected white markers with the names of 114 soldiers who the government said committed suicide in Iraq and Afghanistan.