

Merriam Park NEIGHBORS FOR PEACE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HUMAN COST OF WAR NOTED ON IRAQ WAR'S 5th ANNIVERSARY

Peace activists, veterans groups host Eyes Wide Open Minnesota war memorial exhibit for legislators, public at State Capitol

Eyes Wide Open Minnesota

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Noon–4:00 p.m.

Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda

St. Paul, MN – March 17, 2008 – As the Iraq War enters its sixth year, Minnesotans are taking time to honor those who have died, and to contemplate the human cost of war. The *Eyes Wide Open Minnesota* exhibit presents a memorial to those who have fallen and a witness to the belief that no war can justify its human cost. It includes a pair of boots for each Minnesota soldier killed in Iraq, shoes representing Iraqi civilian casualties, and a visual display showing the human costs of war to our communities. *Eyes Wide Open Minnesota* will be on display on Wednesday, March 19, from noon until 4:00 p.m. in the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda.

Noon: Opening ceremony featuring former Minnesota State **Senator Becky Lourey**, with a reading of the names of the 59 Minnesota military casualties

12:30: Reading of the names of the nearly 4,000 American military casualties and representative Iraqi civilian casualties, led by Minnesota state legislators

4:00: Short closing ceremony

Senator Ellen Anderson will be among the legislators reading the names of fallen soldiers. She comments, "With the fast-paced news cycle and our busy lives, it is too easy for us to forget the faces of the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to fight in this war. By having the *Eyes Wide Open Minnesota* exhibit at the Capitol, we once again remember that these are not nameless, faceless individuals; they are instead our neighbors and our children, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and friends. We are also reminded of the Iraqi civilians who have died due to this conflict. These men, women, and children are truly the innocent victims of this war."

"We want to honor the personal sacrifices made in Iraq by Minnesota service men and women. The human cost of the war—measured in time away from families and in lives lost—has been enormous," says Anne Benson, one of the event's organizers. She adds, "There has also been a financial cost to all of us in Minnesota, since every dollar of the hundreds of billions being spent on the war is a dollar not being spent on health care, transportation, education, veteran services, and other essential human needs at home."

This *Eyes Wide Open Minnesota* event is being sponsored by Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace and Crocus Hill/West 7th Neighbors for Peace. Co-sponsors include Friends for a Non-Violent World, American Friends Service Committee, Veterans for Peace – Chapter 27, Military Families Speak Out Minnesota, Women Against Military Madness, and Iraq Veterans Against the War – Chapter 22.

Contact: Jeannette Raymond: (612) 388-2669 E-mail: march19@mppeace.org
Krista Menzel: (651) 641-7592 Web: www.mppeace.org/march19

Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace and Crocus Hill/West 7th Neighbors for Peace formed in 2003 in response to the Iraq War. They sponsor speakers, film screenings, vigils, demonstrations, and other events and activities related to peace and social justice issues.



Phone: (651) 647-0580 or (651) 641-7592 • E-mail: info@mppeace.org • Web Site: www.mppeace.org

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Come anytime during the afternoon; stay as long as you are able.

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Noon – Opening ceremony featuring former Senator Becky Lourey

12:30 – Reading of the names of the 4,000+ American and coalition casualties, as well as representative Iraqi civilian casualties

4:00 – Short closing ceremony

Sponsors

Sponsored by Merriam Park Neighbors for Peace and Crocus Hill/West 7th Neighbors for Peace. Co-sponsored by Friends for a Non-Violent World, American Friends Service Committee, Veterans for Peace – Chapter 27, Military Families Speak Out Minnesota, Women Against Military Madness, and Iraq Veterans Against the War – Chapter 22.

More Information

march19@mppeace.org • Anne (651) 647-0580 • www.mpppeace.org/march19

