

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

JROTC posting names at MHS of those who serve the country

Roll of Honor



Bulldog Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Chris Bouldin shows the tribute being assembled at Martinsville High School

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By KIM BARTO - Bulletin Staff Writer

The Martinsville High School Bulldog Battalion JROTC is collecting the names of current Armed Service members from the local community for inclusion in a "living tribute."

As a service project, JROTC cadets set up a display in the foyer of the school auditorium dedicated to those serving in the current conflicts and those who have lost their lives since the beginning of the Iraq war. Lt. Col. Dave King said he modeled the idea on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The display includes a bulletin board with nearly 100 names listed so far, and King hopes to add many more. He also would like to post a second bulletin board where people can leave notes and messages of support for the troops.

"We want to make sure we don't leave out anyone from Martinsville or Henry County," he said. "The cadets hope it will truly be a 'living tribute' with the community input and because the list will change as names are added. It's an opportunity for the community to connect with people serving."

Below the board is a glass case containing a pair of combat boots, an American flag and the names of five local men who died in the line of service: Lt. Ryan Betton, Cpl. Jonathan Bowling, Lance Cpl. DeMarkus Brown, Pvt. Daniel Fisher and Spc. Rush M. Jenkins. "No matter what you think about the Armed Forces, you have to think about the people who have given their lives for us," said Bulldog Battalion Maj. Jeffrey Lawrence, a senior and son of Donald Lawrence of Martinsville.

Most of the names so far came from the local Army recruiter, King said, and many remain to be added as other military recruiters share their information.

"I hope we'll see it grow," said Bulldog Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Chris Bouldin, son of Timothy Bouldin of Martinsville.

"Some people think the military is not a big part of this community," Bouldin added. "I think this will open their eyes to see how many people from Martinsville and Henry County are serving." Cadets worked together for almost a week to create the display, said Lt. Lee Cox, a junior and

son of Jeff and Leta Williams of Martinsville. School librarian Martha Coleman made the banners, while JROTC members helped plan the design, contacted recruiters, and typed and alphabetized the names.

Several cadets have ties of family or friendship to the names on the list. "I realized that a lot of my friends were in there," Cox said. "We should be appreciative, because there are a lot of people doing a lot for us to keep our freedom."

Bouldin's name is part of the list because he joined the Army Reserve at 17 with his parents' permission, and he will continue his service when he attends Virginia Military Institute next year.

"I've just always wanted to serve in the military and find a way to help my country," Bouldin said.

Lawrence may soon add his name, as well. After graduation, he said, he wants to join either the Army or Marine Corps.

King invites community members to share names of family and friends for the wall.

"Particularly with Memorial Day coming up, we're trying to capture all those names because we want to remind people of those who are in danger every day, serving and protecting our freedoms," King said.

Names of current service members can be left at the main office of Martinsville High School.