

# WAR'S TOLL

From page 1

it is new again each time it happens, and equally horrifying. The rest of us, those who have not lost someone to war, often struggle to find words that can help the survivors.

They will tell you, in the story below, what those words might be. Arguably, all war is political, but theirs is not a political story. The survivors certainly harbor differing opinions about the direction of the war on terror and our leaders in it, but grief slices through the political questions and settles at the heart of the matter: love and loss.

Those who speak here and many more like them live in Lee and Collier counties. They get up every day to go to work, or the store, or the beach, or a church, or a restaurant, like the rest of us.

But unlike the rest of us, these men and women offer a gift they're forced to keep on giving, every day and forever — the sacrifice of those they love in an American cause.

In the truest sense, therefore, this is the story of the real war, the American war, the one that won't vanish when American troops are finally withdrawn from distant and bloody lands.

**NOTE:** Survivors were asked to answer only a few questions: Does time assuage the grief? Was the loss worth it? Would they have felt differently about the loss in 1944 (World War II), or 1968 (Vietnam), or 1991 (The Persian Gulf War)?

And finally, they were asked what they would like to say to other Americans about this loss, or to other Americans with loved ones in uniform, who fear such a loss every day.

In the course of answering those questions, inevitably they introduced or answered others. Here are their abbreviated stories, and some of their words.

**David Childress, 38, of Fort Myers, was Marc Anderson's best friend.**



Marc Anderson, 30

**He taught middle school science in Fort Myers with Anderson, who joined the Army both to pay off student loans and in response to 9/11.**

**After Anderson's death, Childress quit teaching, and became an Emergency Medical Technician at the Lee County Port Authority, as well as a Florida State Highway patrolman. Specialist Anderson, 30, an Army Ranger, was**



COURTESY PHOTO

**Butch Shanaberger, father of Staff Sergeant Wentz "Barron" Shanaberger, met with Pres. Bush at his request following Barron's death. Also attending were, from the left, Chief-of-Staff Andrew Card, Barron's mother Cheryl, his wife Corey and sister Lisa Shanaberger Fischer.**



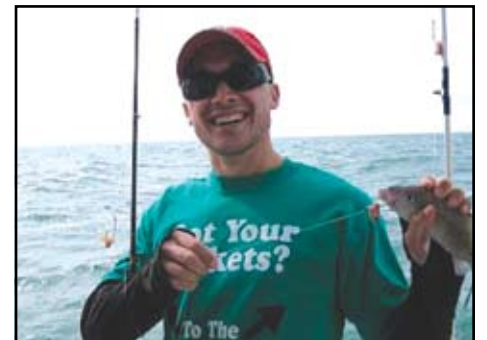
COURTESY PHOTO

**Marc Anderson's memorial after being killed in action on March 24, 2002, in Afghanistan.**



COURTESY PHOTO

**Capt. Dan Eggers was killed in action on May 29, 2004, in Afghanistan. He is pictured here with his father Bill Eggers.**



COURTESY PHOTO

**Miles Henderson was killed in the crash of his AH-64 D Apache Longbow Helicopter on November 6, 2006, in Iraq.**

**killed in action on March 24, 2002, in Afghanistan.**

"Is it easier now? No. I've seen a lot of bad things as an EMT, but this is different, somehow. You never get over this kind of loss, you just move past it.

"In Marc's case, for me, it wasn't worth it, because even over there, he was truly a teacher. And I think of all those students he'll never teach, now. So that loss is not worth it.

"However, Marc had a goal, and that was to be the best Ranger and soldier that he could. I remember reading that when they were going into the mountains to rescue Roberts (a Navy Seal Anderson died trying to save), he turned to a soldier and said, "Today, I feel like a Ranger." I would not cheapen his sacrifice by telling him that what he did was not worth it.

"The difference between now and World War II, and maybe even Korea, is this — there was a definite sense of evil then that was palpable. We knew

they were bad. Now with terrorism, you ask, "Was it this person or country or political structure, or that one?" Besides bin Laden, we don't know. We can't say, "There's the bad guy, let's go get him."

"When we look at the numbers of casualties, it doesn't mean so much. But when you know somebody, it means a lot more.

"So I would say this: If you have loved ones overseas, the first thing you need to do is support them. They're just doing their job, and it's an unpopular war, as was Vietnam, but they're doing their job. So we need to treasure their memories and support the memories of the lost loved ones.

"I would also say the price of freedom has to be refreshed from time to time, by patriots. And the men and women we send over there, even though we would like for them to be home, are there to secure our freedom, and our responsibility. And our responsibility is to support them from the home front and bring

them home.

I also want to share some words from a letter that my dad, a former Army officer, wrote in 2002:

"On Monday, March 11, family, friends, colleagues, students, and fellow Rangers buried Specialist 4th Class Marc A. Anderson in the Florida National Cemetery. He was killed in action in Afghanistan. He leaves behind an inconsolable family, grieving friends, a grateful nation, and a legacy which will continue to thrive because Marc was, first and last, a teacher.

"He died an American soldier, a member of the famous 1st Battalion of the 75th U.S. Infantry Regiment. He was justly proud to have earned his airborne wings and his Ranger tab. He was proud to serve his country in the military as his father and his brothers had done.

"He had pride and a sense of duty which made him a good soldier, but soldiering was not his passion. Teaching was.

"I cannot say that I knew him well, but

## NEVER SEAL Your Wood or Pavers Again!







FREE

No Obligation Estimate

\$100.00 Off

Any Job Over 1000 sq. ft.

Not valid with other offers or after deposit. Expires 9/31/07.





239-590-0093

www.SealMaxx.com

"Very personable and courteous service. It's a job extremely well done, and it appears to be working very nicely, too." Robert - Cape Coral



"We don't just clean your wood or concrete to like new condition, but permanently protect it from our harsh environment, and back it up with a 25 year transferable warranty."