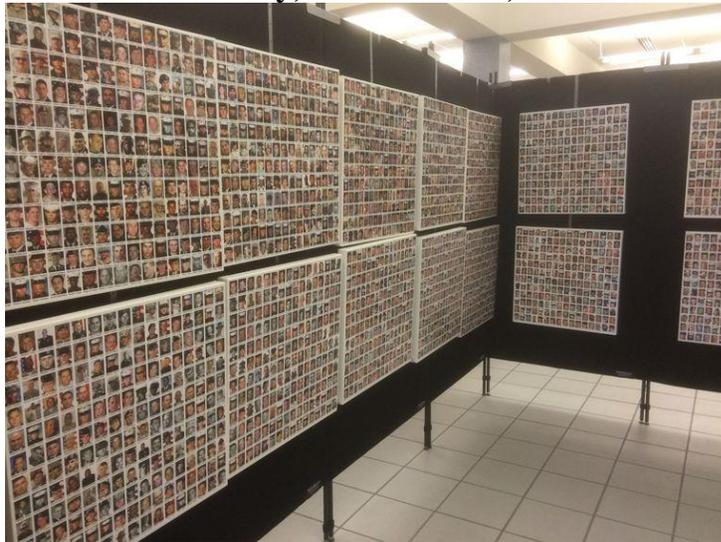


Ridgewater exhibit invites reflection on costs of war

http://www.crowrivermedia.com/hutchinsonleader/news/local/ridgewater-exhibit-invites-reflection-on-costs-of-war/article_d7cbe794-01ae-5627-9468-e9d654764a38.html?mode=print

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Wall of the Dead

The heart of “Always Lost” is the Wall of the Dead: individual photographs with names of the more than 6,500 U.S. military war casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001.

“Always Lost: A Meditation on War” is the theme of a nationally touring arts and humanities traveling exhibition now at Ridgewater College.

Visitors can explore it from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday in the Hutchinson campus’ concourse through Nov. 25. It was at the Willmar campus for three weeks in October.

The project evolved from a creative writing/sociology class project at Western Nevada College, Carson City, Nevada, in 2008. Organizers say it is a unique Iraq and Afghanistan war memorial that invites contemplation of the personal and collective costs of all wars.

The project has been displayed at colleges, universities, museums, libraries, conference centers, art galleries, and veterans' organizations across the nation. To view "The Story of Always Lost" video, go to www.wnc.edu/always_lost.

According to a news release, the exhibition's message of awareness and unity creates a powerful meditation on the effects that war has on all people.

"With words and images, 'Always Lost' creates a sacred space in which to honor those who gave their lives as well as those who made it home," the release states. "The heart of 'Always Lost' is the Wall of the Dead: individual photographs with names of the more than 6,500 U.S. military war casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001. The 'Always Lost' project team is committed to keeping the Wall of the Dead current, in honor of those who gave their lives and those who made it home."

By summer 2015, "Always Lost" will have been displayed in 39 communities across the nation. Organizers anticipate that the exhibition will be installed at nearly 50 venues by the end of 2016.

The exhibition is funded and maintained, in part, by grants and donations. To make a financial contribution, call the Western Nevada College Foundation at 775-445-3240, or visit www.wnc.edu/foundation.

"This is a remarkable exhibit," said Alan Stage, dean of instruction, Ridgewater College.

Stage said Ridgewater wanted to bring the project to Hutchinson and Willmar for two reasons.

"First, the toll of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have been great," he said. "The Wall of the Dead with pictures of every service member who has died in these conflicts, combined with the photos of the conflicts, memorializes these men and women. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on how the conflicts of the last 14 years abroad have affected so many in our own communities.

"Second, it is an important reminder that American service members continue to serve in forward areas around the world. This is especially significant as one of our local units is currently preparing to deploy..".