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Campus community reacts to Crawford protests

Students weigh in on anti-war demonstration

By **DARREN WHITE**
Staff Reporter

The personal crusade of anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan that has drawn thousands to the small town of Crawford has also galvanized TCU students. Sheehan, whose son, Casey,

was killed in Iraq in April 2004, has camped outside President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford since Aug. 6. She asked to meet with him for one hour during his five-week vacation, which ended Tuesday.

The protest has drawn continued national attention, and Bush's approval ratings have dropped to an all-time low.

Freshman radio-TV-film major Jeff Thurber said Casey Sheehan volunteered for the

military, which weakens Sheehan's argument.

"It was his choice to join the armed forces," Thurber said. "He knew what he was getting into, and so did she."

Jason Ratigan, a senior history major, said that while he supports Sheehan's protest, he thinks some demonstrators are being opportunistic by using Casey Sheehan's death as a symbol of the peace movement. "Anti-war protesters are

taking advantage of something horrible," Ratigan said. "People are taking (Sheehan) and making her into an icon. We're losing sight of what she's mad about."

Junior English and history major Tyler Brown said he agrees with Ratigan.

"I think it's bad that the focus gets put on one woman," Brown said. "There are thousands of other mothers that lost sons in Iraq."

Though opinions are split, some students say they respect Sheehan's determination.

"I admire her willingness to confront the issue," said Lyndsay Peden, a freshman biology and political science major, whose father and brother served in Bosnia and Iraq, respectively. "I think it's great that someone from that arena is getting her point across."

Political science professor Manochehr Dorraj said Shee-

han may be the first ripple of a new wave of anti-war sentiment in America.

"Some members of the public have made the same conclusions as Sheehan," Dorraj said. "She is touching a salient issue in public opinion."

Dorraj predicted that as the war goes, so will Sheehan's star power.

"If things become worse, she will become more salient," Dorraj said.

Crossing paths



Stephen Spillman (Top) Andrew Chavez (Right) / Staff Photographers

Crosses represent casualties in the Iraq War at a makeshift memorial outside Camp Casey 2 near an alternate exit to President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford.

Some say crosses dishonor soldiers lost in Iraq War

By **TRAVIS STEWART**
Staff Reporter

For Army Staff Sgt. Richard Brown, planting one white cross represented far more than a commemoration of a life lost.

Marine 2nd Lt. Therrel Childers, Brown's brother-in-law, died March 21, 2003, making him one of the first recorded casualties of the Iraq campaign. Even though Childers died more than two years ago, Cindy Sheehan's

recent protests in Crawford have resurrected his name.

Childers is one of many armed forces members memorialized at Camp Casey, Sheehan's temporary site set up near President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford. Both a cross bearing Childers' name and a photograph have been displayed, along with those of 999 others, to recognize the first 1,000 American casualties in Iraq.

Brown, who lives in Fort Hood, reacted not with appreciation, but indignation.

"I heard about it, and I came and pulled his cross," Brown said. "I'm up here represent-

ing my family."

Brown, an active Army enlistee, said he sees Sheehan's group's use of these names and faces as an affront to the ideals they fought and died for.

"They don't know a tenth of what's going on (in Iraq)" Brown said. "They only know how many people are dying."

Brown said he not only had the local sheriff remove Childers' cross and picture from Camp Casey, but personally relocated it to Fort Qualls, a camp of Bush supporters in downtown Crawford.

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Gary Qualls

Temple

Gary Qualls' son, Louis, was killed in Iraq last fall. But when Cindy Sheehan tried to use his name in her protest and set up a cross with Louis' name on it, Qualls retrieved it. Since then, Fort Qualls has been set up in downtown Crawford dedicated to Louis.

"I have another son who is 16 who also wishes to serve our country," he said. "If it takes the sacrifice of me and my whole family, then (so) be it."

Dennis Kyne

San Jose, Calif.

Dennis Kyne was on the bus that dropped Cindy Sheehan off in Crawford on her first day of protest. Since then, he has helped equip Casey 1 with Internet access and cell phone boosters.

Kyne, who spent 15 years in the Army, spends most of his day across from Camp Reality entertaining fellow demonstrators with his guitar.

When he starts singing his signature song, "Skip for Peace in the Middle East," the rest of the protesters join in and start skipping with him.

Perspectives

By **OLGA BOGRAD**
News Editor

FORT QUALLS

• Set up by Gary Qualls, the camp is based in downtown Crawford. Guest speakers, such as Qualls, address the crowd. There are several tents bunched together with handouts of soldier biographies and pamphlets on the "good side of the war the media is not covering."

CAMP CASEY I

• The original camp near the bar ditch where Cindy Sheehan spent her first night and began her protest. Protesters hold signs facing Camp Reality while two guitar players and one harmonica player start singing to keep the shouting from one camp to the other down to a minimum. Protesters set up tents with free food and water along the road. A bus with Internet access and cell phone boosters is parked up the road.

CAMP REALITY

• Separated from Camp Casey 1 by a road. Pro-Bush demonstrators hold signs facing Casey 1, constantly yelling comments to the other side. Tents behind the protesters allow them to sit in the shade.

CAMP CASEY II

• The largest of the camps and the "home base" of the anti-war protesters. There is a large tent in the center with a stage and seating for hundreds of people. Free breakfast, lunch and dinner are served inside. Free water and first-aid kits are available at all times. Protesters have set up their sleeping tents around the center tent. Nine communal outhouses face the field. Parking supervisors direct incoming traffic and designate "all wheels off the road" parking spaces in the side ditch.

Zaida Walters

Houston

Zaida Walters stands across from Casey 1, pleading that her son's name no longer be used in anti-war demonstrations.

"He was very proud of his country and of what he was doing," she said. "I didn't want him to, but he wanted to do it. He chose to do it."

She came to Camp Reality to support the troops and their presence in Iraq.

"We need to stay in Iraq and finish the job we started," she said. "If they come back, then our kids really did die in vain."

Teena Barton

Manchester, N.H.

TCU alumna Teena Barton spent several hours in scorching heat to help hold a 40-foot, "Support our troops, bring them home alive," sign on the side of the road near Casey 2.

"I was tired of just thinking about protesting," she said.

Barton, who spent three years in the Air Force, said the military is extremely patriotic, making it easy for people to get swept up.

"When you're that young, you don't really know what you're getting into."