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Opponents of Iraq war to rally Saturday in D.C. Tallmadge Marine's grandmother will join march By Mary Kay Quinn Beacon Journal staff writer

Having lost a grandson in the Iraq war, a Tallmadge woman supports the U.S. troops 100 percent. But she wants them to come home.

Barbara Davis, whose grandson Lance Cpl. Daniel ``Nate" Deyarmin Jr. was killed Aug. 1 in Haditha, wants to know why the war continues. It isn't changing anything, she said, and President Bush isn't providing any answers.

So this Saturday, Davis will join the tens of thousands expected for a protest in Washington, D.C. A flier promoting a bus trip by the American Friends Service Committee in Akron urges protesters to ``Hold Bush & Congress accountable for the deaths, the lies, the destruction & the toll on our communities."

Davis, who will travel on one of the buses, is making 12 T-shirts featuring a picture of her grandson and the question, ``What noble cause?"

The ANSWER Coalition and United for Peace and Justice are predicting more than 100,000 will gather in Washington. Among the speakers is Cindy Sheehan, co-founder of Gold Star Families for Peace and known for her protest outside President Bush's Texas ranch. Her son, Army Spc. Casey Sheehan, was killed in Iraq last year.

Sarah Sloan, a spokeswoman for ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), says buses will go to Washington from 200 cities. Regional demonstrations are planned Saturday in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

The Washington demonstration will be the largest since the ``shock and awe invasion of Iraq" began in March 2003, Sloan said.

At least five buses are going from Northeast Ohio -- two from Akron, one from Kent and two from Cleveland, said Greg Coleridge of the American Friends Service Committee.

Those without bus reservations will have to find another way to the capital -- Coleridge was trying to secure one more bus last week, but none were available.

The anti-war rally is not the only attraction. Many activists in Washington that weekend also plan to protest the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, Coleridge said.

United for Peace also plans an interfaith service and grass-roots activities on Sunday. On Sept. 26, activists will go to the White House and demand that U.S. troops be brought home.

According to www.unitedforpeace.org, nonviolent activists plan a dramatic demonstration with the risk of arrest. The Web site says, ``We will not leave until our message is heard!"

Coleridge said that anti-war protesters believe U.S. foreign policy, especially in Iraq, is wrong and that the United States has misplaced budget priorities.

Organizers see a connection between the devastation on the Gulf Coast and the war in Iraq.

National Guardsmen were ``displaced" to the war and funds that could have been used to strengthen levees were instead supporting the war, Coleridge said.

Most people calling the AFSC office about the rally are disillusioned, he said.

Among those is Shane Dugan, 17, a senior at Green High School who will ride the bus to the Washington protest.

“I didn't like that we were misled about why we were going (into Iraq),” he said. “They said there were weapons of mass destruction when there aren't any to be discovered.”

Shane said he is a pacifist and doesn't believe in war. Other young people his age, he said, seem most concerned about the possibility of a draft but aren't speaking up.

“Sometimes I feel alone in my vocal opposition,” Shane said. “But when I go to big events like this, I realize that there are other young people out there like me that want to end this war.”

Maureen Farris, an 18-year-old University of Akron freshman, has been volunteering in the AFSC office for five months and is helping to organize the bus trip. She's donated blood and sent money to aid hurricane victims, but the war remains on her mind.

“I can't just forget about the soldiers and the Iraqi people,” Farris said. “Because something else is always going to be going on, but we can't forget about Iraq.”

Mary Kay Quinn can be reached at 330-996-3778 or mkquinn@thebeaconjournal.com.