

Ceremony will honor fallen Wis. reservist

By Nancy Quick

The (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.) Daily Tribune

Justin Ross will be remembered at a ceremony at 11 a.m. May 27 on the lawn of the Wood County, Wis., Courthouse.

Ross was killed in Afghanistan on March 26, when his unit came under small arms fire from insurgents while on a routine clearance mission. The ceremony has been planned by the Wood County Veterans Memorial Committee.

"We are sad but proud to place a name on the wall," said Jim Strasser, a member of the committee. "Placing a name on the wall means that a member of the community has paid the ultimate price so that we may live free."

Ross was born in Wisconsin Rapids, moved away with his family, and returned in 1997 when he attended Grove Elementary School. He is the son of the Rev. Ronald and Deborah Ross of Green Bay. Many members of his extended family live in this area, including his grandparents, David and Ruth Freeberg. Some members of his family will take part in the ceremony.

Ross was a member of the 428th Army Reserve Unit out of Wausau. As a combat engineer, it was his job to work in route clearance in Afghanistan.

In addition, 22 legacy stones will be dedicated at the ceremony. These stones honor military members and their families for service to their country. Many have served during war time and others during peace time.

"We are always happy to dedicate new legacy stones to honor and recognize members of the community for their military service," Strasser said.

Steve Day of Port Edwards will be the speaker. He is the Coast Guard deputy commander for Mobilization and Reserve Affairs Atlantic Area. The Rev. Timothy Wenger of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, and retired chaplain of the U.S. Army, will give the invocation and benediction.

Also taking part in the ceremony will be members of the Wood County Veterans Memorial Committee, including Tom Marshall and Brian Ruesch. Strasser and Elmer Loechler of Wisconsin Rapids made arrangements for members of American Legion Post No. 9 to give the rifle salute. Members of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2534, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 101 and Post 9 will provide the color guard.

Students from Lincoln High School will sound taps, and members of Explorer Post 120, the military exploring program, will provide special assistance