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Memorial Day is personal for grieving Hoopeston families

Mixed with the sounds of dignitaries speaking and the Hoopeston Area High School band playing at Monday's Memorial Day service was the sound of quiet sobbing as scores gathered to honor a local son killed in battle.

No one's thoughts were far away from PFC Jeff Wallace, who died Monday in Iraq.

Mayor Bill DeWitt called Wallace's widow, Sara, to the podium to present her with a proclamation that flags on city property will be at half staff until June 8.

Mrs. Wallace, who married Wallace shortly before he was deployed in January and who is expecting the couple's first child in September, leaned on her father, Larry Gossett, on her walk to the podium.

Speaking of the war, DeWitt said "it really hits home when it's one of our own."

Sgt. Nathan Wells, the ceremony's keynote speaker, fought to control his emotions as he spoke about his experiences in Iraq. Wells said he listened to his grandfathers' war stories but, after his tour, realized they left out a great many details. As a child, "I thought it was G.I. Joes and the A-Team," Wells said, "but after 15 months in Iraq...I saw many things over there."

Wells spoke of how his experience gave him a greater knowledge of the meaning of freedom. "I understand more than I did before," he said. "There's a lot behind this word 'freedom.' It's earned."

Soldiers who have died "did not leave this earth in vain," he said, choking back tears. The dead "are builders of our freedom, which is 'something beautiful that comes from something as ugly as war.'"

Cliff Witty, representing the VFW, spoke of a community coming together to help a family in its grief. "We are with you today as a community in mourning," he said, adding that Hoopeston residents' outpouring

towards the family has been "overwhelming."

The VFW solicited donations to arrange for Wallace's brother, Brandyn, and his family, come home



Sara Wallace, widow of PFC 1st Class Jeff Wallace, accepts a proclamation from Hoopeston Mayor Bill DeWitt Monday during Memorial Day services at Floral Hill Cemetery. Also pictured is Mrs. Wallace's father, Larry Gossett. PFC Wallace was reported killed in battle in Iraq last week.

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Police News



It was reported Friday that someone threw a beer bottle through a plate glass window at Russell Leigh and Associates, 228 E. Main.

It was reported Friday that a storm window on a door at Craftsman Printing, 217 Bank.

Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident reported Friday at Jerry's IGA, 1030 W. Chestnut. An unknown vehicle hit a parked 1987 Mazda owned by Hannah Shane of Hoopeston.

Two 20-year-old Kentucky women were

arrested after a traffic stop at 8:50 p.m. Friday at Front and East Young.

Krista L. Donelson of 203 Eagle Pass Dr., Radcliff, Ky., was charged with possession of a stolen vehicle, no valid driver's license and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Megan K. Whelchel of 48 Clearbrook Rd., Stopover, Ky., was charged with possession of a controlled substance.

Both women were taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville.

The car was impounded.

A 16-year-old boy was arrested at 10:32 p.m. Saturday at Fifth St. and East Main. He was charged with possession of

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Obituaries

BROUGHER—Larry Lee Brougner Jr., 26, of Hoopeston died at 12 p.m. Thursday, May 26, 2005 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday at St. Anthony Catholic Church, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery, Hoopeston. Visitation was 5-8 p.m. Monday at Brown-Alkire Funeral Home, Hoopeston, with rosary services at 8 p.m.

MILLER—Albert N. Miller, 71, of Hoopeston, formerly of Morris died Saturday, May 28 in the Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital emergency room. Funeral Mass will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at St. Anthony Catholic Church, Hoopeston. Cremation rites will be accorded. Visitation will be 6-8 p.m. Tuesday at

from Arizona.

~~See GRIEVING on other side~~

Grieving continued from other side

As the ceremony concluded with the playing of "Taps," Wallace's family and friends became more visibly moved. As the color guard marched out, veterans of other wars tried to console the family. "I just wanted to say thank you," one veteran said quietly.

Weather



Mostly sunny today. High 75. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 55. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 77, low 57.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston

Classifieds

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