



Oberlin pays tribute to living, dead

Daughter's words honor father, all military personnel

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Hugh's essay can be found on Page 4A.)

The wind blew, the sun shined, the flags flapped and — except for a faulty speaker system — conditions were almost perfect for the annual Memorial Day service at the Oberlin Cemetery.

With 381 American flags flying high from poles throughout the cemetery, veterans, friends and families met among the decorated graves to honor both the dead and the living.

The ceremony was delayed a few minutes while organizers tried to get a balky speaker system going. When that failed, the master of ceremonies, Judge John Bremer, had John and Connie Simonsson raise the main flag while Decatur Community High vocal music teacher Susan Nelson sang "The Star Spangled Banner."

The flag was then lowered to half staff to honor the dead as the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary held wreath and poppy-laying ceremonies in front of a monument honoring those who fought in American's many wars.

Decatur County Undersheriff Randy McHugh, a sergeant first class in the Nebraska National Guard, introduced his daughter Jordan, who read her essay on supporting the country and the war. The essay was written for her freshman speech class at Decatur Community High School.

Sgt. McHugh left soon after the ceremony for his second tour of duty in Iraq. He also had two tours of duty at airports following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

(The complete text of Miss Mc-



Col. Badsky

Col. Floyd A. Badsky, an Oberlin native and retired Air Force officer who now lives in Norman, Okla., told the crowd that they were there to honor the memory of the 381 men and women whose flags were flying above them,

but also the living veterans, guard and reserve members, and others who have defended this country. He asked everyone to take part in a National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. and never forget the prisoners of war, missing in action, widows and widowers, orphans and disabled veterans.

After a closing prayer by Dr. Don Harrier, chaplain of the Oberlin American Legion Post, the Legion firing squad gave a gun salute and Allie Moore played "Taps."

The flags, which usually spend most of the day aloft, were taken down about noon due to the gusty Memorial Day winds.

Judge Bremer thanked the many volunteers who work from Thursday through Monday each year to prepare for the annual ceremony.

Over on the front terrace at the Good Samaritan Center, a second flag display featured 87 small American flags snapping in the wind.

The flags, honoring veterans living and dead, were purchased for \$10 each as a fund-raising project for the nursing home's residents' fund. The money will be used for supplies and activities by residents who suffer from Alzheimer's disease or dementia, said activities director Lisa Stacy.

DURING MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES on Monday at the Oberlin Cemetery, Sgt. Randy McHugh watched his daughter Jordan read an essay about the military, terrorism and the Iraqi war. Miss McHugh urged Americans to support her father, who leaves this week for another tour in Iraq, and all service personnel. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



FRAMED BY MEMORIALS from World Wars I and II, music teacher Susan Nelson (left) sang the national anthem while Judge John Bremer saluted. At the Good Samaritan Center (above), workers erected a smaller but equally patriotic display.



MEMBERS OF THE OBERLIN American Legion firing squad gave a rifle salute to all those who have given their life for their country. The salute was part of Memorial Day ceremonies at the Oberlin Cemetery on Monday.