**Speaker touches on history of the Stars & Stripes at Belmont’s Memorial Day ceremony**

**BY DONNA RHODES**

BELMONT — Memorial Day in Belmont was a solemn occasion when all gathered to honor those who serve for a noble cause were honored in a speech by keynote speaker, retired U.S Army Lt. Col. Kurt Webber, while the meaning of the American flag was addressed by Charles Kilborn American Legion Post 49 Commander Rich Stanley.

The ceremonies begin with a parade along Main Street, led by members of the Belmont Police Department Honor Guard. Once the assembly arrived at the monument on Church Street, Legion members Woody Fugger and Howard Brown dipped the American flag then returned it to full mast. The flag raiser was followed by the Belmont High School Band's performance of "The Star Spangled Banner." Commander Stanley spoke to the crowd about some of the history of the American flag and the meaning of its stars and stripes. In 1776, he said, Betsy Ross was asked to follow a sketch that was drawn by General George Washington, and from that created the very first American flag. Adopted in 1777 as the nation’s official flag, Stanley said the 13 stars presented on the flag at that time represented the 13 original colonies. The white stripes stand for purity and innocence, the red for heroism and valor, and the blue for the stars representing the president, which at that time was Washington. "This red is significant to me though," Stanley said, "as I believe it also represents the blood of those people who (died) for our freedoms." He then called attention to the names etched on the monument behind him and asked everyone to remember that those were more than names. They were real people from the town who fought for the country they loved and never came home.

Webber, an Iraqi War veteran, took on the topic of heroes and he called attention to the men and women in uniform, "Come on down, you earned it. Memorial Day is to remember those who lost their lives while serving for our country."

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CEREMONY

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whether it be police, fire, or military. He believed they all were heroes. He announced them all to be noble and heroic people, each working around the clock to protect the citizens of the United States both at home and abroad.

War. Webber said, is a horrible thing, but he was grateful for those Americans who stand up to fight for what they believe in, one of the hardest sacrifices a person can make.

In the course of the battles he’s witnessed however, Webber said he personally saw many acts of kindness, humanity and personal sacrifice; acts that are seldom shown in the media. Among them were things such as U.S. soldiers handing out candy to young children, providing medical assistance to Iraqi residents and even pitching in to rebuild communities.

It was constantly impressed upon him that their courage, their kindness and decency to the Iraqi people. War brings out both kindness and courage,” Webber said. “They all make personal sacrifices for the common good.”

Also taking part this year were young citizens of the Belmont community. Members of Boy Scout Troop 65 laid a wreath in front of the monument while representatives of Girl Scout Troop 21532, Brownies and Daisy Troop 12117 participated once again by cutting flowers into the Tioga River to honor all who lost at sea.

As the sun rose over the “Echo” bell on Memorial Day, former Post 58 Commander Robert Stewart read the names of veterans from the area who died in the past year.

Amidst the celebration of freedom the speakers touched on acts of kindness, humanity and personal sacrifice.

Members of the Belmont Police Department Honor Guard looked on as Woody Fogg and Howard Bacon of Charles Kilborn American Legion Post 58 raised the American flag to full mast on Memorial Day. As Steve Bracey rang a memorial bell to honor their life and service to the nation, BHS trumpet section soloist Cody York, with H. Lavallee providing the “Echo” response, then performed “Taps.”

The ceremonies concluded with the community joining together in the singing of “God Bless America,” led by Grace Shaw.

CLEANUP

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cover two people who had erected a tent as a temporary residence in the woods off the trail.

A total of six occupants and one dog were displaced by the fire and were being assisted by Red Cross, Joubert said, and no injuries were incurred by firefighters as they battled the blaze.

Cause of the fire has been deemed to be accidental, due to the improper disposal of smoking material on the porch.

TNFD officials noted that this is the second home in Tilton that has sustained significant fire damage from discarded smoking material in the last four months.

“You can’t put cigarette butts in just any container. They need to be fully extinguished by dousing them in water or sand before disposing of them in a properly rated container,” said Firefighter Deick Ogg.

Assisting the Tilton-Northfield firefighters for the call were crews and equipment from Franklin, Belmont and Laconia, along with members of the Tilton Police Department, while the Sunburyton and New Hampshire fire departments provided station coverage.

FIRE

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Belmont Fire and Police departments worked a large tree out of the way, the two agencies also working along beaches, trails and Belmont Town property on Lake Winnipesaukee.

Those occupants were directed to local community service agencies where they could receive assistance in finding more suitable living arrangements.

Representatives of Belmont Boy Scout Troop 65 laid a wreath at the monument in Belmont Village on Memorial, honoring veterans of the community who never came home from their battle for freedom.

Belmont Girl Scouts, Brownies and Daisy Scouts were joined by American Legion Auxiliary representatives Sue Flanders as they cast flowers into the Tioga River on Memorial Day to honor those lost at sea.

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If your birthday is in June your car inspection is due by: 6/30/17

Keytown Service Station

N.H. State Inspection Station

Complete Service & Repair

Propane & Kerosene Filling Station

J&J Daniel Webster Highway (Route 3)

Meredith

(603) 279-8509

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