



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

April, 2012 Newsletter



LIFE SENTENCE

As a hospice chaplain I witness a lot of death. As a hospice chaplain supporting veterans, I witness a lot of death *and* hear some very interesting stories. Their obituaries rarely cover these stories, but I wish they did. Even if a simple sentence said, "Mr. Smith is a Pearl Harbor survivor," or "Mrs. Thorn was a correspondence secretary during World War II," or "Mr. Thompson was part of the liberation of France during WWII," I think it would tell more about the life of these people and what they brought to the world. That got me thinking about my "life sentence," and how I would like to be remembered.

I recently spent some time with a friend in Arizona who is a caregiver for a 94-year-old woman. Sitting on their hot front porch, my friend informed me that the door to that porch had never been opened—someone had lost the key before they ever moved in and no one ever replaced it. So I thought, *That's something I can do, I can have a key made.* We called a local locksmith (who had a small fee for house calls) and he came to the house to make a key for the deadbolt on the door.

The \$10 charge for a new key began to rise when the locksmith informed us that they don't make that kind of lock or key any more (he would have to forge a special one at his shop), that the lock itself was made in 1920, and the company had gone out of business forty years ago. All these obstacles! So I paid for a different deadbolt to be installed—one that could be opened from the inside with a simple flip of a thumb—and voila! The door now opens.

My friend and I sat on the porch enjoying a cool breeze with her little lady, who kept saying, "That door has never been opened... that door

And I found my "life sentence," how I want to be remembered, *"She was someone who opened doors that had never been opened."*



I strongly believe we should leave a place better than we found it, so I am trying to do that in the final days before the end of my term as National President. That means leaving a journal for my successor, instructions for the new Board, and let's have "roundtable discussions" with anyone who comes to Convention early. I want to lay out the structure of the actions taken by this year's NEB, so you have an opportunity to weigh in on issues we have handled and how we have done what we were assigned to do.

This year's Grievance Committee divided the country into "regions" that worked together on the cases they were assigned, and I believe it was a successful venture that we should consider for the future of BSMA. The use of "regions" would be helpful on many levels (Compliance, Communications, Website, to name a few), and I believe the time has come to implement such a plan across our Organization. Come to National Convention and let's talk. It's an open door that you are invited to walk through.

In the meantime, practice leaving the place better than you found it. And maybe we all can be remembered as *"Women who opened doors that had never been opened."*

--Robin Barnes McCarthy, National President

WE HAVE A NEW DEPARTMENT!!!

WELCOME ARIZONA

Arizona is a wonderful, diverse state! We have mountains in the north where the winter snows fall heavy, desert in the south where the cacti reign supreme, and a mix of both in the middle where it all comes together!

We also have a great group of Blue Star Mother chapter members across the state! Several months ago the presidents of the Arizona chapters began a discussion about the benefits of forming a Department of Arizona. Coming from a state that has had a Department for years, and having sat on the Department board – I personally know the great advantages to be had in having a Department in your state.



After all the discussion, all the paperwork, and all the arrangements of time and location – we finally made it happen! On April 21, 2012, the Department of Arizona was installed by Robin Barnes-McCarthy, NP. It was a privilege to have Robin here with us in person! We had a beautiful installation ceremony and then a great department meeting.

Department of Arizona Officers

Rebecca Leatherwood, President
Brenda Searle-Sung, 1st Vice President
Theresa Koontz, 2nd Vice President
Laura Sutton, 3rd Vice President

Rachelle Hornby, 4th Vice President
Jeannie Warnke, Recording Secretary
Lisa Collins, Financial Secretary
Lori Atwater, Treasurer

The Department of Arizona consists of members from AZ2, AZ3, AZ4, AZ5 and AZ6 (all our current chapters), so we have a good representation of all our chapter members from across the state. We will be holding our Department Convention the October 26th & 27th this year. We are looking forward to accomplishing much and expanding our chapters' outreaches! We also have concentrated goals of starting some sorely needed chapters in the Northern and Eastern regions, as well as adding a chapter in the Tuscon area. And we are all committed to serving at the three beautiful VA facilities here in Arizona, as well as helping at the VA outposts.

I know I speak for all the Department of Arizona members when I say we are honored to be able to serve in this capacity. And so...we begin. --Respectfully Submitted, Rebecca Leatherwood, President, Department of Arizona



HAVE YOU JOINED BIG DIPPER YET?

The Big Dipper is an auxiliary of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., which honors outstanding members of the Blue Star Mothers, sponsors the 'Fun Night' at convention, and provides educational scholarships to students. Membership is only \$5.00 a year. Please contact the Big Dipper President, Paulette Golden of MI 180 for any questions you may have about joining [pgloden60@hotmail.com](mailto:pgolden60@hotmail.com)



WELCOME HOME!!!



Oklahoma families are welcoming home their heroes from the war in Afghanistan. While many families are reuniting, another is just beginning. SPC Bethany Pierce recently returned from 7,000 miles away to find SGT Warren Fairleigh, whom she met while they were both deployed, waiting for her in the crowd. He had returned home first and he was there to greet her with a sign with a welcome home message on one side and a proposal of marriage on the other! Her reply was, "Yes!"

"She was one of the medics and there were a lot of women, but she went to Bible study and I actually had a chance to run Bible study and one thing led to another.", said SGT Fairleigh. "I never expected to meet my future husband in Afghanistan," SPC Pierce said.

Oklahoma still has 1,400 soldiers serving in Kuwait and Afghanistan.

K-9 Care Packages

Contra Costa, California, Blue Star Moms
Are helping to support our Military Service dogs...
These dogs save lives!



www.ccbluestarmoms.org

Exciting news!

Additional hotel lodging necessary for our
70th Anniversary Convention!

Let's continue to roll with it...



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

2012 National Convention
Cincinnati Ohio

July 31 - August 4, 2012

Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. celebrates 70 years at our 2012 Annual Convention in Cincinnati Ohio. Come celebrate our history and make new Blue Star Mother friends. Our Convention this year will be held at the historic Cincinnati Club in downtown Cincinnati.

We have had such a resounding response from members for our 70th annual convention that we have filled 77 rooms at the Garfield Hotel, and we have now made arrangements for a "sister" hotel to house our members.

Additional hotel rooms are now available for our members at the Millennium Hotel in Cincinnati, 150 W. Fifth St. The Millennium has reserved a block of rooms for BSMA, and the hotel is approximately five blocks from our Convention venue of the Cincinnati Club. All rooms have queen-sized beds, and can accommodate up to 4 people. The daily room rate for 1-4 people is just \$109+ tax (\$127.53). All rooms are NON-SMOKING, and have free wi-fi. The Millennium has a free 24-hour fitness center and an outdoor swimming pool. Parking fees are \$22 per day.

To register at The Millennium, please call 1-800-876-2100 and mention **Blue Star Mothers** when you make your reservations, in order to get the special convention rate.

More information on National Convention can be found on our website: www.bluestarmothers.org. Once you are logged in, click on side bar that says: CONVENTION 2012.

See You In Cincinnati!

JOIN US FOR BIG DIPPER FUN NIGHT!!

HOLLYWOOD CANTEEN

- Dinner
- Silent Auction
- Costumes ~ prizes!
- So Brave CD
- 50/50 Raffle
- Patriotic Music
- Fun with Friends!
- Celebrating the USO!!



WHERE: Blue Star Mothers Convention in Ohio

REGISTRATION: Form will be online at our National website
www.BlueStarMothers.org soon!!

WHEN: Please arrive for dinner at 6:30 pm on August 2nd

DINNER: Begins at 7:00 pm

MUSIC: Angelina will begin playing/singing at 8:00 pm

SUPPORT THE BIG DIPPER!!!!

**WE PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIP MONEY FOR THE CHILDREN OF
OUR MILITARY SO THEY CAN ATTEND SCHOOL!!!**

YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT IS NEEDED!!!

**ALSO, HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR A SCHOLARSHIP IF YOU HAVE A
SCHOOL AGED CHILD?**



Blue Star Mothers 70th Anniversary Pins and Patches

To celebrate our 70th Anniversary in 2012, The Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. is offering a specially designed anniversary logo pin and patch for \$5 each, plus shipping and handling.

We are offering these for sale to our members prior to the Convention (using this form) and at the 2012 National Convention in Cincinnati.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Pins : _____ x \$5= \$ _____

Patches: _____ x \$5 = \$ _____

Postage & Handling on orders of 10 or less: \$2.50 S&H per order

Postage & handling on orders of 11 or more: **FREE SHIPPING**

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Make checks payable to: **Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.**

Your pre-Convention orders and checks may be mailed to:

Anita Wagner
2827 Purdue Rd
Kettering OH 45420



US Heroes Who Have Fallen



Department of Defense Releases For April 2012

Spc. James E. Dutton, 25, Checotah, OK
 Cpl. Michael J. Palacio, 23, Lake Elsinore, CA
 Staff Sgt. Christopher L. Brown, 26, Columbus, OH
 Cpl. Christopher D. Bordoni, 21, Ithaca, NY
 Capt. Nicholas J. Rozanski, 36, Dublin, OH
 Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey J. Rieck, 45, Columbus, OH
 Sgt. 1st Class Shawn T. Hannon, 44, Grove City, OH
 Cpl. Alex Martinez, 21, Elgin, IL
 Spc. Jeffrey L. White, Jr., 21, Catawissa, MO
 Spc. Antonio C. Burnside, 31, Great Falls, MT
 Staff Sgt. Tyler J. Smith, 24, Licking, MO
 Constructionman Trevor J. Stanley, 22, Virginia Beach, VA
 Lance Cpl. Ramon T. Kaipat, 22, Tacoma, WA
 Spc. Philip C. S. Schiller, 21, The Colony, TX
 Lance Cpl. Abraham Tarwoe, 25, Providence, RI
 Sgt. Tanner S. Higgins, 23, Yantis, TX
 Staff Sgt. David P. Nowaczyk, 32, Dyer, IN
 Cpl. Aaron M. Faust, 22, Louisville, KY

Capt. Michael C. Braden, 31, Lock Haven, PA
 Staff Sgt. Joseph H. Fankhauser, 30, Mason, TX
 1st Lt. Jonathan P. Walsh, 28, Cobb, GA
 Pfc. Michael J. Metcalf, 22, Boynton Beach, FL
 Chief Warrant Officer Nicholas S. Johnson, 27, San Diego, CA
 Chief Warrant Officer Don C. Viray, 25, Waipahu, HI
 Sgt. Chris J. Workman, 33, Boise, ID
 Sgt. Dean R. Shaffer, 23, Pekin, IL
 Spc. Manuel J. Vasquez, 22, West Sacramento, CA
 Spc. Benjamin H. Neal, 21, Orfordville, WI
 Spc. Jason K. Edens, 22, Franklin, TN
 Spc. Moises J. Gonzalez, 29, Huntington, CA
 Lt. Christopher E. Mosko, 28, Pittsford, NY
 Staff Sgt. Brandon F. Eggleston, 29, Candler, NC
 Sgt. Dick A. Lee Jr., 31, Orange Park, FL
 Staff Sgt. Andrew T. Brittonmihalo, 25, Simi Valley, CA
 Master Sgt. Scott E. Pruitt, 38, Gautier, MS
 Pfc. Christian R. Sannicolas, 20, Anaheim, CA

18TH ANNUAL TAPS NATIONAL MILITARY SURVIVOR SEMINAR AND GOOD GRIEF CAMP FOR YOUNG SURVIVORS



Memorial Day Weekend | May 25th - 28th, 2012



Crystal Gateway Marriott
 Jefferson Davis Highway | Arlington, Virginia

For more information go to: www.taps.org

OHIO 10 RECEIVES PROCLAMATION!!



Pictured above is Rose Ann Elliott, President of Ohio Chapter 10 with Mayor Smith of Lancaster. He attended the Chapter's April 12 meeting to present them with a proclamation which declared May Blue Star Mothers month!!

MAY DATES TO REMEMBER, CELEBRATE & OBSERVE

- May 3, 1898 = Marines land at Cavite, Philippines, and raise US flag
- May 13, 2012 = Mother's Day
- May 8, 1884 = Birth date of US President, Harry S. Truman
- May 8, 1911 = Birthday of Naval Aviation
- May 8, 1945 = VE Day, Germany's unconditional surrender to the Allies
- May 11, 1958 = Minnesota becomes a US State
- May 11, 2012 = Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- May 13, 1908 = Birthday of the Navy Nurse Corps
- May 19, 2012 = Armed Forces Day
- May 23, 1788 = South Carolina becomes a US State
- May 28, 2012 = Memorial Day
- May 28, 1980 = First women graduates from US Naval Academy
- May 29 1790 = Rhode Island becomes a US State
- May 29, 1848 = Wisconsin becomes a US State
- May 29, 1917 = Birth date of US President, John F. Kennedy
- May 30, 1868 = Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) observed in the United States for the first time

Join the Blue Star Mothers of Alabama Chapter 1

"Walk-a-Mile" in their Boots



July 9, 2012

Veteran's Park, Alabaster, AL

Registration 7 a.m. - Walk Starts 8 a.m.

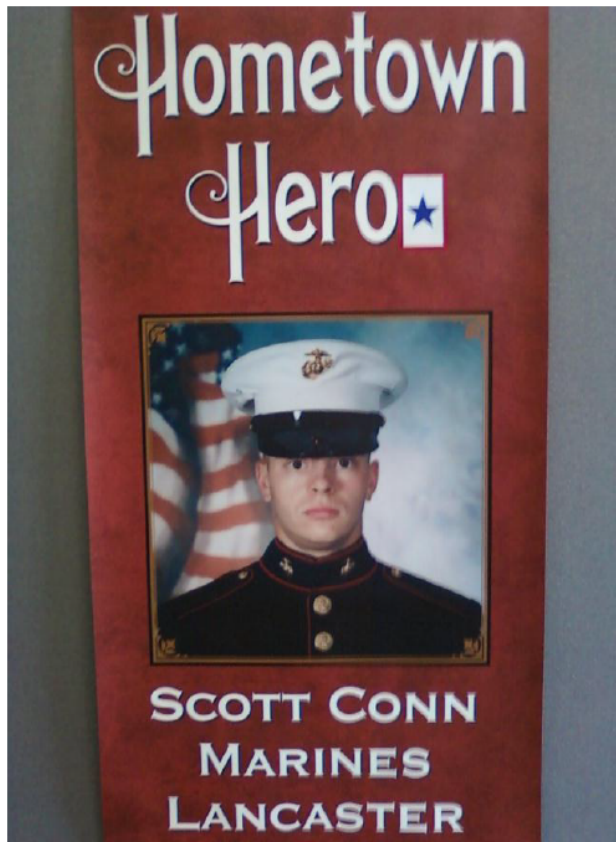
We will be walking in honor of our children who are serving.

We will actually be walking in their Combat Boots!

This is to raise money for care packages. Please support the Blue Star Mothers by contributing to each mile we walk!

<http://bluestarmothersofalabama.club.officelive.com>

Local soldiers to be honored with downtown banners Lancaster, Ohio



Lancaster, OH, will be displaying flags honoring individual soldiers from the Fairfield Country from the first week of May until November. The faces of 14 local soldiers will line Broad and Columbus streets in Lancaster to serve as a visual reminder to others of the sacrifices service members are making for their country. The flags were bought by the members of Blue Star Mothers Chapter Ohio 10, and contain each soldier's picture, branch of military service, and hometown. Rose Ann Elliott, the Chapter's President, said the idea for the banners came from a similar project undertaken by a California chapter of Blue Star Mothers.

Rose Ann said she hopes the banners will remind residents of the sacrifice local servicemen and women are making for their country and also raise awareness of Blue Star Mothers. The Chapter is assisting homeless veterans through the Arthur B. Keiffer Veterans House in Lancaster and, of course, our troops.



Remember.....

www.ServiceFlags.com

1-866-887-6678

For all your patriotic purchases.

When ordering, use your discount code: "BSM" for your 15 % discount.

For The Second Time in Less Than A Year, Connecticut Honors A War Hero Long Awaiting His Purple Heart!

On April 2, 2012, Connecticut resident, Jerry P. Winn, was honored at a ceremony at VFW Post 296 in Winsted as he received ten medals and ribbons which included the Purple Heart. In 1970, at age 19, Winn pushed a fellow Marine out of the way of a landmine while serving in Vietnam; Winn himself sustaining injuries which resulted in multiple surgeries and rehabilitations. The honors came 42 years after Winn, a Corporal in the United States Marine Corps, had originally been injured.



Above, Congressman John Larson pins Winn's Purple on him as CT Commissioner of Veteran Affairs, Linda Schwartz, and the Post's Commander, Neil Hunt, look on. As Winn was immediately airlifted out of Vietnam after stepping on the landmine, Winn had never received his medals.

This marks the second time in less than a year that Connecticut has honored their heroes from past wars by presenting them their due medals. Marine PVT George Haddad finally received his Purple Heart on September 21, 2011, 66 years after being injured in the Battle of Iwo Jima.



OKLAHOMA CHAPTER 19

Care Packages are packed, loaded, and handed off to the USPS.
"NO CHARGE TODAY"..... said the postal worker
It seems that an anonymous donor paid the postage!
A Special Thank you to our Earthly Angel



REMEMBERING OUR HEROES

Each year the American Red Cross Connecticut Region honors people who make a difference in their communities. This year the Military Hero Awards for Lower Fairfield County and Greater New Haven County were awarded posthumously. It is a privilege to be able to learn more about our heroes as we attend these events. These stars have turned to Gold.

Eric Soufrine was beloved and admired by family and friends and the 2009 Amity Regional High School graduate was rich in both. Pfc. Soufrine, who was two weeks away from completing a deployment in Afghanistan, was killed in action June 14 last year. Just two weeks before he was scheduled to return home. He had enlisted in the Army just a little more than a year earlier and had already received the National Defense Service Medal and the NATO Service Medal. His unit had just honored him as "Soldier of the Month." Coming from a family with a history of military service, Eric was patriotic and proud to serve. Eric played football at Amity and loved the outdoors. Relatives and friends told the many reporters covering the story of his death that Eric was an avid fisherman and hunter and loved boating and water skiing. The youngest of three

children, Eric inspired his older sister, Rebecca, to join the military as well. She is in Army Intelligence. Before he deployed to Afghanistan in December of 2010, Eric gave her a package and told her not to open it until she got to basic training. When she did open it, she told the Connecticut Post, Rebecca found letters and Post-it notes containing messages of love and support. Eric's parents, in conversations with reporters, recalled Eric as having "a kind heart," with plans to attend college after his tour of duty and had hoped to pursue a career in forestry. Eric Soufrine is recognized today as a Military Hero, but it is only an after the fact affirmation of the place he holds in the hearts and esteem of his family, friends, comrades and community. He was already their hero.

Eric Soufrine



Chief Petty Officer Navy SEAL Brian Robert Bill defines the category of Military Hero. His valor, honor and sacrifice place him among the finest soldiers to serve. His personal and military careers are filled with examples of his exceptional ability, commitment and bravery. From an early age, Brian "knew exactly where he was going and what he wanted to do," remembers his uncle, Jeffrey Davis. Brian was an Eagle Scout, a competitive swimmer and co-captain of his hockey team at Trinity Catholic High School. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Norwich University and, in 2001, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy to fulfill a life-long dream to become a Navy SEAL. Brian was the only one of 241 classmates to receive the "First Time, Every Time" award for passing every dive on his first attempt. He ultimately was assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Development Group, for which fewer than five-percent of SEALs successfully screen. Brian deployed eight times and was highly decorated, receiving four Bronze Stars, each with a distinguishing V for Valor, and one noting extraordinary heroism. Brian died August 6, 2011 on a dangerous mission in Afghanistan for which he had volunteered. His uncle remembers Brian's many interests outside of

Robert Bill



the military. He was a fly fisherman, skier, marathoner, rock climber and mountaineer with successful summits of Aconcagua in Argentina and Mt. Elbrus in Russia. Brian was also a tandem skydiver and had obtained his commercial pilot's license. He "played guitar and piano beautifully, independently studied Russian and became fluent in French," Davis adds. Davis also recalls comments from about Brian from those at his memorial service, including a classmate who remembered, "[Brian] was my friend when nobody else would be." Brian was posthumously awarded the George Van Cleave Military Leadership Award from the USO. His nomination by Captain Drew Bisset USN SEAL (Ret) reads, "SOC Brian Bill was a gallant warrior who fought with valor and died with honor."



OKLAHOMA CHAPTER 8

March 10, the elementary students of "People to People" spent the day with OK8. Arrangements were made by Carol Farmer for the group to share their community service project with the chapter. 22 students worked on fundraisers and the collecting of care package items to bring that day. Two fully loaded pick-up beds were delivered along with \$200.00 for assisting to send the items. They assisted OK8 in packing 45 boxes that day with plenty left over for additional pack outs.



Blue Star Mothers of Vermont would like to thank all who took part in our Chili Challenge at the Annual Colchester Winter Carnival on February 4, 2012. This fundraiser is just one step on our path to support our Vermont Veterans in transitional and post-transitional housing so that one day, the word homeless will never be used in the same sentence as the word Veteran.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful and VERY humorous judges:
Lt. Governor Phil Scott, Senator Dick Mazza and Becky Holt from COTS.

Overall we had 12 entries, the most ever, we heard. :)
The entries were judged on aroma, red color, consistency, taste and after-taste.

Congratulations to:

1st Place: Debra Woolford

2nd Place: Dave Ugalde

3rd Place: Colchester High School (Steve Davis)

Lt. Governor Phil Scott also donated a pot of chili to be auctioned off through the Colchester/Milton Rotary Auction. The final bid was \$125.00 by Marilyn Cormier. Marilyn graciously donated the chili back to Blue Star Mothers of Vermont so that we could sell the chili along with the other entries. Phil Scott and Dick Mazza also each matched the \$125 bid! We would also like to thank the Colchester Football Boosters for donating some of their chili when we ran out of ours!

