



BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, INC.
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Oklahoma Department Annual Report

September 1, 2010 – August 31, 2011

The 2010-2011 year could be primarily called the year of the Oklahoma National Guard. The deployment of 3,150 Army & Air National Guard men & women in May, June & July, 2011 completely filled our calendar with activities. Because of this deployment our Department has realized an increase of 168 Mother members since September 1, 2010 and those new members are mostly those of National Guard service members. We also lost two Blue Star Mothers this last year, Linda Wofford and Mary Kellogg from Wagoner, OK and we mourn their passing.

The Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment events kept us very busy. Between November, 2010 and January, 2011, we worked a total of 8 weekends helping the Oklahoma National Guard State Family Programs with children whose parents were soon to deploy as well as provide a resource table at each event giving information about Blue Star Mothers. In February, we handed out the USA Cares bags to Mothers that attended the Deployment Ceremony, gave them hugs and encouraged them to join a chapter in their area. In April, we worked the Youth Symposium and were honored guests of the Oklahoma National Guard's Adjutant General Deering's Volunteer Award's Ceremony. The Department of Oklahoma's Blue Star Mothers were awarded the Lari Lane Payne Community Partnership Award for our involvement with the National Guard. Lari Lane was their 1st Military One Source representative who was a retired Sgt Major and had 3 military children that had a developed the Lunch and Learn programs educating communities about the needs of the service members when they return from war. We were so honored to accept this award. In addition to receiving the award, we were greeted by General Petraeus' wife Holly!

Sadly, Oklahoma has lost 8 of their National Guard members since their deployment in June.

We held our Department meetings in March and July of 2011. At the March meeting Cynde Collins-Clark with Veteran's Families United spoke to us about PTSD and the impact on our families. I highly recommend reviewing their website at veteransfamiliesunited.org. In July, Patsy Varnell our National VAVS Representative spoke to us about the need to sign up and volunteer to work in our VA Hospitals and Clinics. She also demonstrated putting together a Mother's Wounded Warrior Backpack. This demonstration could not have been more timely as one of our Oklahoma Mom's received word that her son was severely wounded that very next day and was able to put the needed supplies together before they left to meet their son. The other major accomplishment for our Department was in completing the purchase of Quickbooks for all of our chapters in December, 2010. We also sent introduction letters to all 400+ funeral homes in the state of Oklahoma.

In May, OK9 in Mannford, OK disbanded but on the brighter side we have two new chapters being chartered – one in Tahlequah and one in Stillwater, OK.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Oklahoma's Department President. As I leave this office in October, I look forward to continuing my support of our military, veterans – our sons and daughters and our Gold Star Families – with the greatest VSO, Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Respectfully Submitted, Cindy Hood, President

Wartime Prayer: Dear Lord, Lest I continue my complacent way, help me to remember that somewhere, somehow out there a man died for me today. As long as there be war, I then must ask and answer: Am I worth dying for? –Eleanor Roosevelt