

BLUE TO GOLD PROGRAM

(2.29.20 Voted on by the BSMA, Inc. National Executive Board
8.22.20 Prepared by the National 3rd Vice President)

After the September 11 terrorist attack on American soil and impending War on the horizon, fear and sorrow entered the hearts of Blue Star Mothers. Memories of the Vietnam War surfaced. Determined to not let our Nation mar the sacrifice of the Warrior or the family left behind, the Blue to Gold Program was borne out of honor, love and respect.

In military tradition, when a man or woman enters the Armed Forces of the United States of America, pledging to defend America with their life, a Blue Star Banner may be displayed by their family.



The Red border of the Banner represents the blood shed by past Warriors in defending our Nation.

The field of White symbolizes the purity of Spirit – the price of Peace that only a Warrior understands.

The Blue Star signifies the loyalty, honor and duty entrusted in our Defenders.

If Fate causes the death of a Defender, a smaller Gold Star for Valor and Sacrifice is placed over the Blue Star. In earlier years, the border of Blue is a constant reminder the Warrior and family will always be remembered and honored by the brothers and sisters who lived to tell the tale. We, the Blue Star Mothers, stand beside our children in this legacy. The new Gold Star Banners do not contain the blue border and instead just contain the Gold Star.



The presentation of the Gold star Banner is a solemn obligation of comfort and love to another parent and spouse. The decision to receive and how to receive the Gold Star Banner is always the decision of the family. It may not be possible for a member to present the banner. Options are the CAO, another organization, such as TAPS or the Patriot Guard. Under rare circumstances, the Gold Star Banner may be mailed.

Chapters should designate a Blue to Gold Liaison. If Chapters overlap the general area, it is encouraged that they work together and share the honor of the presentation. Occasionally, there is a personal relationship between Members which are outside of the designated boundaries. Much compassion and understanding should be given in these circumstances to allow relationship to take precedence. Remember, this is not about the Chapter, but about the Survivors of the deceased Defender.

It is also very important to remember, the Organization has been entrusted with the honor of presenting the Gold Star Banner. Privacy of information must be protected.

A database will be kept of Blue to Gold Liaisons. If you wish your name and contact information to be included on the distributed list, written authorization must be submitted to the National Third Vice President. In order for the Blue to Gold Liaisons. If a Member needs assistance to locate another Blue to Gold Liaison, contact the National Third Vice President.

***I have never kept a database of Blue to Gold Liaisons? Is this something that the Webmaster has perhaps? Please advise.....*



CHAPTER LIAISON GUIDELINES

- Commit to abiding by the wishes of the family and the instructions of the Casualty Assistant Officer (CAO). **Note: More than one CAO may be assigned to the family. Make sure to coordinate with all.**
- Commit to follow the guidelines and protocol of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.
- Commit to work with the National Third Vice President.

- Commit to a standardization of presentations within the Organization.
- Commit to ensure that all arrangements and details are finalized with the CAO.
- Commit to the privacy of the family.
- Commit to train others in the Chapter of the responsibilities and duties of the Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison.

CHAPTER PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

- Contact the National Third Vice President for instruction if your Chapter or Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison does not know the protocol for the Blue to Gold Program.
- Read the Blue to Gold Program and Guidelines before you attempt to arrange a Gold Star Banner presentation.
- Do not approach a family member directly, nor attempt to locate a family member by social media.
- Contact the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO). The duty of the CAO is to protect and honor the family. The CAO answers to the family and the DOD.
- If you are not able to contact the CAO, contact the funeral director, or National Third Vice President for assistance to make the contact.
- If you have attempted three (3) times to contact the CAO to arrange a Gold Star Banner presentation and they have not responded to you, do not continue to reach out to the CAO. You have left your information with them; they will contact you. This could also mean that the family does not wish to have the Gold Star Banner at this time. Please know that the CAO is involved with the family for 1 year.

- After contact has been made with the CAO, explain who you are, who you represent, provide your contact information and information on the Blue to Gold Program and your request to present the Gold Star Banner to the family. This will be relayed to the family by the CAO. The CAO will then check with the family for authorization for the presentation and information on family contact will be given to you by the CAO.
- Coordinate the presentation with the CAO. Only order the Gold Star Banner when verification is completed with the CAO.
- Dress appropriately for the presentation. Dress code is: Navy Pants or Navy Skirt, White Blouse, Navy Blazer (optional), Garrison Hat, and white gloves.

DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

- If your Chapter falls under a Department, the Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison contacts the Department Third Vice President.
- The Department Third Vice President then orders the Gold Star Banner(s) through the National Third Vice President.
- The Department Third Vice President works with and assists the Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison for the presentation.
- Chapters that fall under a Department, must go through the Department Third Vice President and not contact the National Third Vice President directly.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE GOLD STAR BANNER



BSMA, Inc. follows the Eligibility requirements used by the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

- Families of active duty military personnel killed in battle, as well as military personnel who pass away while serving in our nation's military, during a time of conflict are eligible to receive the banner.
- Families of an active duty Service Member who dies while on active duty, no matter how they pass.
- Families of a Service Member who dies as a result of service determined by the VA with a documented DOD Rating, as defined by the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., and as reported by the VA through a DDI300 – Report of Casualty.
- Families of a Service Member who, while on Active Duty, is deemed MIA.
- Families of a Member of the National Guard who are on active basic training, ADT individual job specific training, drill status, or while on deployment.
- Families of a Member of the Reserves who are on active duty, basic training, ADT individual job specific training, drill status, or while on deployment.
- ****NOTE:** It is important to remember that once a service member begins basic training, they are considered on active duty. However, this does not apply to National Guard or Reserve.
- ****NOTE:** If there is any question regarding eligibility, it is the responsibility of the National 3rd Vice President to contact the Casualty Assistant Officer (CAO) who will verify, with the Veterans Administration (VA) and/or the Department of Defense (DOD) to confirm eligibility.

- ****NOTE:** “Academy Cadets” is included as “Active Duty”, as long as it is a U. S. Military Academy and not a private institution like VMI or the Citadel. “Active Duty”, according to Federal Law, the term “Active Duty” applies to anyone serving full-time duty as a Cadet or Midshipman at the United States Military Academy, “or at any of the other Military Service Academies.”

ORDERING A GOLD STAR BANNER

- All Banner requests must be processed through the National Third Vice President via the BSMA, Inc. Office Website at www.bluestarmothers.org.
 1. Chapters are NOT allowed to use Gold Star Banners that are not processed through Service Flags. Our Governing Documents require that all Gold Star Banners for the Blue to Gold Program must be obtained through Service Flags.
 2. Chapters are NOT allowed to present a Gold Star Banner that has not gone through the proper protocol through the National Third Vice President and wherein the National Third Vice President has not approved your request.
 3. DO NOT Order a Banner if you have not arranged and been approved by the CAO that the family wishes to have the Gold Star Banner presentation.
 4. After logging in to your profile on the BSMA, Inc. Office Website, click to the right-hand side where it states “Blue to Gold”.
 5. This takes you to the Blue to Gold Program Page.
 6. Click on “Request A Banner”
 7. You will be prompted to again log in using your profile log in user name and password.
 8. Complete the Form in its entirety – being careful to check the correctness of all information.
 9. All information on the form must be completed accurately.
 10. The name of the fallen should be listed as it is in the DOD listing or as the parents or spouse have requested. NOTE: If name is different from DOD listing, explain on form citing reason for change.
 11. When you have completed the form, click the “submit” button.
 12. The National Third Vice President will receive the request via the website.

- I3. After checking the information for correctness, the National Third Vice President will approve and process your request.
- I4. You will receive an email from the National Third Vice President with detailed instructions in the email for you to finalize your Order.
- I5. Your Order is not finalized until you complete the instructions in your confirmation email and pay for your shipping or your Banner.
- I6. Gold Star Banners are returned within 7-10 business days.
- I7. Service Flags no longer do overnight mailings.



INFORMATION THAT MUST BE COMPLETED ON THE
BANNER REQUEST FORM

- *Contact Name: Because you have logged in, your Name will appear in this area.
- *Email: Primary Email: Your email will appear in this area automatically.
- General Section:*
- Number of banners requested
- Date of Death
- Date of Funeral
- Date Banner is Needed
- Name of Deceased Service Member (How you wish the name to be printed on the Gold Star Banner. Make sure your spelling is correct)
- Branch of Service
- *When you are ordering a Gold Star Banner, to also include a Blue Star for a second child serving, list the Name of the Surviving Sibling you wish to have engraved under the Blue Star.
- The Branch of Service for the Surviving Sibling.
- Family of Deceased:*
- Mother's Name.
- Mother's Street Address

- Mother's City
- Mother's State
- Mother's Zip Code
- Father's Name
- Father's Street Address (*If the parents are still together, only the Mother is present the Gold Star Banner. If the parents are divorced, the Mother and the Father is presented a Gold Star Banner each.)
- Father's City
- Father's State
- Father's Zip Code
- Spouse's Name (if applicable)
- Spouse's Street Address
- Spouse's City
- Spouse's State
- Spouse's Zip Code

General Section:

Person Ordering This Banner:

- Your Name
- Your Street Address
- Your City
- Your State
- Your Zip Code
- *The Chapter Name will automatically appear as: Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.
- *Your Chapter State and Number will automatically appear.
- Ship to Name (if different from address of person ordering the banner). If you want the Banner(s) shipped to a different address than yours.
- Address
- City
- State
- Zip Code
- Overnight Delivery: YES/NO. Please NOTE: Service Flags no longer overnights the Gold Star Banners
- Hit the "SUBMIT" Button.

GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATION

- Always check with the CAO as to the wishes of the family and whether they would like a Gold Star Banner or not at this time. Some family members do not wish the Gold Star Banner right away because they are very overwhelmed with everything going on.
- Coordinate with the CAO when, where, and how the family would like to receive the Gold Star Banner.
- The Banner is shipped with a letter from Service Flags. Either the CAO or the Funeral Director can give this and the brochure from Service Flags to the family after you have done your presentation of the Gold Star Banner.
- It is preferred that the 'official' Blue Star Mothers uniform (white blouse, Navy jacket, pants or skirt, Garrison Hat and white gloves)
- Jewelry should be limited to the BSMA official pin and your child's service pin. If a uniform is not available, suitable funeral attire should be worn.
- When presenting the Gold Star Banner, white gloves should be worn.
- Hold the Gold Star Banner with the Star facing the family.
- It is best to remember to state one (I) Sentence during your presentation. We suggest the following I Sentence. Please remember that the families are going through so much at the time of the funeral and they probably are not hearing anything that you are saying at this moment because they are so overwhelmed.

“On Behalf of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. and a grateful Nation, we present this Gold Star Flag in honor of (Name of Fallen Hero) service in the US (Branch of Service) and (his/her) sacrifice.”

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT CHAPTERS & CHAPTER BLUE TO GOLD LIAISONS GO THROUGH THE NATIONAL 3rd VICE PRESIDENT FOR ALL BLUE TO GOLD PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS?

- The National 3rd Vice President maintains the BSMA, Inc. Fallen Hero DataBase. In the event that Chapter Blue to Gold Liaisons do not go through the BSMA, Inc. Protocol, the name of that Fallen Hero will not be added to the master DataBase.
- The National 3rd Vice President lists the name of the Fallen Hero on her monthly report that is remitted to the BSMA, Inc. NEB. If the name is not given to her, their name does not get reported.
- The National 3rd Vice President assists the National 2nd Vice President in the yearly BSMA, Inc. Yearbook listing the names of the Fallen Heroes for that fiscal year. If

the name is not given to her, their name will not be recognized and honored in the yearly Yearbook.

- The National 3rd Vice President maintains for the National Chaplain a master list of the name and addresses of each Gold Star Mother that obtained a Gold Star Banner for that fiscal year. The National Chaplain recognizes on Gold Star Mother Day each Gold Star Mother for that fiscal year by remitting a hand-designed card on behalf of BSMA, Inc. If the information is not given, the Gold Star Mother will not receive our card recognizing their child's loss.
- The Blue to Gold Program is an honor and a privilege bestowed on behalf of BSMA, Inc. When a Chapter presents a Gold Star Banner, please remember you are representing BSMA, Inc.

BLUE DAISIES

When a Chapter Member passes, they become a BSMA, Inc. Blue Daisy. It is important that Chapter's advise the National 3rd Vice President (3vp@bluestarmothers.us), National Chaplain (chaplain@bluestarmothers.us), National 1st Vice President (1vp@bluestarmothers.us), and National Webmaster (webmaster@bluestarmothers.us). The National 3rd Vice President maintains a master list of all Blue Daisies for that fiscal year and also recognizes all Blue Daisies in the BSMA, Inc. annual Yearbook. We encourage Chapters to also send in photos In Remembrance for us to use.

DOD NOTIFICATIONS & NON-DOD CASUALTY NOTIFICATIONS

The DOD remits notification to the National 3rd Vice President of DOD Combat-Casualties and DOD Non-Combat Casualties that happen during deployments. This information is then remitted, via email, to Chapter Blue to Gold Liaisons and Chapter Presidents. This email will have the contact information of one of the CAO's.

The DOD does not remit notification of non-combat casualties and/or stateside casualties. Therefore, the National 3rd Vice President does not remit a non-combat casualty email to the Chapter Blue to Gold Liaisons or the Chapter Presidents. The National 3rd Vice President doesn't have the CAO information for non-combat, stateside, casualties.

Any non-combat casualties or stateside casualties that your Chapter is made aware of are to be reported to the National 3rd Vice President for her records. She relies on each Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison to remit this information to her.

ENGRAVEMENTS ON THE BANNERS

Ranks are no longer listed on the engraved Gold Star Banners from Service Flags because fallen heroes are promoted, post-humorously. When a Chapter orders the Gold Star Banner, then they are promoted, the banners prepared would then be incorrect for the families.

IN-PERSON PRESENTATIONS

EFFECTIVE: March 31, 2020, BSMA, Inc. issued a suspension of “No In-Person” presentations. All States have their own specific guidelines due to COVID-19. BSMA, Inc. felt that the Blue to Gold Program needs to be universal for all BSMA, Inc. Chapters. Your State may be ‘opened’, but another State may not be. Many National Cemeteries are closed to the public and remain closed at this time. Due to COVID-19, Military Funerals were limited to under 10 people in attendance, which has since been increased, but remains a limited number of attendees.

Due to the above, Chapter Blue to Gold Liaisons can arrange through the CAO’s the mailing of the Gold Star Banners from their Chapters to the families directly or arrange to have the Gold Star Banner presented by the CAO and arrangements may be made to drop the Gold Star Banner off at the funeral home.

COSTS OF BANNERS

Banners through Service Flags are free provided they are ordered within 30 days from date of the death and you pay shipping costs. Shipping costs should be no more than \$8.00 to your Chapter.

Service Flags has a no exceptions rule to the 30-day rule for free Gold Star Banners.

Gold Star Banners can still be ordered after 30 days from the date of the death; however, your Chapter pays for the banner(s), estimated at \$16.85, plus the shipping costs.

There is no time frame of when a banner can be ordered.

REPLACEMENT OF BANNERS

Service Flags does not replace Gold Star Banners.

If your Chapter wishes to replace a Gold Star Banner, these Banners are ordered directly from Service Flags and the Chapter purchases them at your cost, plus shipping.

BANNERS WE PROVIDE & ORDERING ADDITIONAL BANNERS

We present the Gold Star Banner to the following individuals and your Chapter is allowed to order up to 3 Gold Star Banners per family:

Mother & Father (if still together, Mother is presented the Banner)
Mother (if divorced)
Father (if divorced. Father gets the Banner, not the step-mother)
Spouse

Chapters may order additional banners for family member, if you like, but this would be done when you finalize your Order directly through Service Flags. This information would not be listed on the Gold Star Banner order form. Chapters would be responsible for the costs of each of these additional banners.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS – RECAP



**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION**

1. If you have in your possession the white mini “Blue to Gold Liaison Handbook”, please destroy. On February 29, 2020, the BSMA, Inc. National Executive Board voted to remove this Handbook from the BSMA, Inc. website due to the BSMA, Inc. Blue to Gold Program changes. The Blue to Gold Program Guidelines and Protocol are those that have been outlined above and are available on the BSMA, Inc. website.
2. It is never okay to question a Gold Star Mother of their status or qualifications. If a Gold Star Mother states they are a Gold Star Mother, we accept their word. Please remember that no Mother wants the title of Gold Star Mother.
3. Under NO circumstances are any Member of BSMA, Inc. to contact the families of the Fallen Heroes directly or search for them using social media. Rare exceptions are if a Chapter Member or Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison is friends with the Gold Star Mother or she is a Member of that individual Chapter.
4. If your Chapter has never done a Blue to Gold Presentation, please educate yourself with the BSMA, Inc. Blue to Gold Program Guidelines and Protocols. For additional questions and guidance, please email the National 3rd Vice President at: 3vp@bluestarmothers.us.

5. Our Governing Documents mandate that any and all Blue to Gold Banners presented by a Chapter of BSMA, Inc. go through the Blue to Gold Program Guidelines/Protocols and through the National 3rd Vice President.
6. Our Governing Documents mandate that all Blue to Gold Banners for presentation on behalf of BSMA, Inc. Chapters and Chapter Blue to Gold Liaisons be purchased or obtained for free through Service Flags.
7. Chapters are not to order their Gold Star Banners directly through Service Flags, without filling out the request form on the BSMA, Inc. website and obtaining email confirmation of approval from the National 3rd Vice President.
8. Chapters are not to order the Gold Star Banner until they have obtained approval of the Blue to Gold presentation to the Families.
9. Chapters are not to present Gold Star Banners obtained through another source and not filling out the required form on the BSMA, Inc. website through the National 3rd Vice President.
10. Chapters are not to present Gold Star Banners until they have received notification from the National 3rd Vice President that their request has been approved and processed.