

Blue to Gold Program Procedures  
Prepared by BSMA National 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, Revised 7/2024

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. 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 presentation of the Gold Star Banner is a solemn obligation of comfort and love to another parent and spouse.

It is also very important to remember, our Organization has been entrusted with the honor of presenting the Gold Star Banner.

The decision to receive and how to receive the Gold Star Banner is always at the wishes of the family.

## **Chapter Blue to Gold Liaison: What you should know before beginning the Blue to Gold process**

- If you or any member of your chapter has questions about protocol and procedures, please email the National 3VP (N3VP) [3vp@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:3vp@bluestarmothers.us).
- Chapters should designate a Blue to Gold (BtoG) Liaison and indicate this on your Chapter information form during Compliance. A database is kept of BtoG Liaisons.
- Follow the guidelines and protocol found in this document of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. This is a must in order to have a standardization of presentation within the Organization.
- Read this Blue to Gold Program Guide before you attempt to arrange a Gold Star Banner presentation.
- Work with the N3VP/Blue to Gold Program. Our Governing Documents mandate that any and all Gold Star Banners presented by a Chapter of BSMA, Inc. go through the Blue to Gold Program.
- DO NOT order the Gold Star Banner until verification is completed with the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) and approval is given by the N3VP.
- Work with the CAO. The duty of the CAO is to protect and honor the family. The CAO answers to the family and the Department of Defense (DOD). 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. If you are not able to contact the CAO, contact the funeral director, or N3VP for assistance to make the contact.
- Be patient, the CAO is overwhelmed, the families are overwhelmed.
- Abide by the wishes of the family and the instructions of the Casualty Assistant Officer (CAO). Banner Presentations must be coordinated with the CAO, make sure all arrangements and details are finalized with the CAO. Note: More than one CAO may be assigned to the family. If the Parents are separated, a CAO will be assigned to each Parent. A Spouse will also have a CAO assigned. Make sure to coordinate with all.
- The Banner does not have to be presented at the Funeral or Graveside Service. Some families will wish to wait a year or more because they are so overwhelmed. You will need to wait to hear from them. If the family reaches out to you, that is the only time you may work directly with the family.

- Protect the privacy of the family. Under NO circumstances are any members 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 BtoG Liaison is friends with the Gold Star Mother or she is a member of that individual Chapter.
- Do not question the status or qualifications of a Mother who states she is a Gold Star Mother. If a Mother states she is a Gold Star Mother, we accept her word.
- Train others in your Chapter about the responsibilities and duties of the Chapter BtoG Liaison.
- Notification of a Military death is emailed to Chapter Presidents and BtoG Liaisons. The emails are created by the N3VP and distributed by the BSMA Webmaster. You may know of a Military death and have not received a notification; in that case, email the N3VP, she may not know about the casualty.
- It may not be possible for a member to present the banner. Options are the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) or another organization, such as TAPS, American Legion, VFW or the Patriot Guard. Under rare circumstances, the Gold Star Banner may be mailed.
- 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 the relationship to take precedence. Remember, this is not about the Chapter, but about the Survivors of the deceased.
- If a member needs assistance to locate another BtoG Liaison, contact the N3VP.
- The N3VP maintains the BSMA, Inc. Fallen Hero Database. In the event that Chapter BtoG Liaisons do not go through BSMA, Inc., the name of that Fallen Hero will not be added to the Master Database.  
This database is used for the Memorial Service at National Convention and a monthly report to the BSMA National Executive Board (NEB).
- The N3VP also maintains for the National Chaplain a master list of the name and address 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 by mailing 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 her loss.
- The N3VP assists the National 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President in the yearly BSMA, Inc. yearbook, providing the names and pictures of the Fallen Heroes for that fiscal year.

- Chapters may order banners from a provider convenient to the Chapter, as long as the provider embosses the Gold Star over the Blue Star so that a thin blue line shows around the Gold Star.
- 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.
- If your chapter is within a Department, see the notes on page 8

### **DOD Notifications**

- The Department of Defense (DOD) remits notification to the N3VP 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 if available.
- The DOD does not remit notification of non-combat casualties and/or stateside casualties. The N3VP doesn't have the CAO information for non-combat, stateside, casualties. In this case, the CAO information can be obtained from the Funeral Home Director.
- Any non-combat casualties or stateside casualties that your chapter is made aware of are to be reported to the National 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President for her records. She relies on each Blue Star Mother to remit this information to her.

## **Eligibility for the Gold Star Banner**

**BSMA, INC follows the eligibility requirements used by the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.**

- 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 Veterans Administration (VA) through a DDI300 – Report of Casualty.
- Families of a Military Member, Killed in Action, but whose remains were lost (MIA) and have now been recovered and repatriated.
- Families of a Member of the National Guard or Reserves who are on active duty, basic training, ADT individual job specific training, drill status, or while on deployment.
- “Academy Cadets” are included as “Active-Duty”, as long as it is a U.S. Military Academy and not a private institution like the Citadel.
- If a CAO has not been assigned, then the family is not eligible to receive a banner.
- If there is any question regarding eligibility, it is the responsibility of the N3VP to contact the CAO who will verify with the Veterans Affairs (VA) and/or the DOD to confirm eligibility.

## **How to start the Blue to Gold Process**

- All banner presentations must be processed through the N3VP.
- After receiving an email notification of a Military Casualty from the 3VP and the family lives in your Chapter area, start the process following the steps on page 8 of this document.

If you discover a Military death and you have not received a notice from the N3VP, contact the N3VP via email (please, not messenger or text).

- Contact the Funeral Home Director and explain who you are and who you represent and what your mission is to ask for the CAO contact information.
- Make contact 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 provide the authorization to you.
- You will need to find out from the CAO if the family wishes to receive a banner:
  - How many banners (up to three). One banner for the parents (if the parents are separated, one for the mother and one for the father), one banner for the spouse.
  - The name and branch of service to be embossed. The rank is not embossed as the Hero is usually promoted posthumously.
  - How many Blue Stars for siblings, the Blue Stars are embossed only on parent's banners, with no names or branches.
  - Where and when the family wants the banners presented.
  - The mothers address, the fathers address (if separated), the spouses address.When you have the above information, go to the next section of this document.

### **How to seek approval for a Gold Star Banner Presentation**

1. Log in with your profile on the BSMA, Inc. Website  
-click on the red bar titled “Blue to Gold”.
  2. This takes you to the Blue to Gold Program page.
  3. Click on “Request Approval for a Gold Star Banner Presentation”
  4. You will be prompted to again login using your profile user name and password.
  5. Complete the Form in its entirety – being careful to check the correctness of all information, making sure it is accurate.  
-The name of the fallen should be listed as the Mother has requested.
  6. When you have completed the form, click the “submit” button.
  7. The N3VP will receive the request via the website.
  8. You will receive an email from the N3VP with detailed instructions in the email for purchasing the banner.
- Your Chapter is responsible for ordering and paying for the banners. If your chapter falls under a Dept, seek guidance from your Dept 3VP/Liaison.

### **What to do if your Chapter is part of a Department**

- Contact your Department 3VP or BtoG Liaison first, she will contact the N3VP.
- Your Department Blue to Gold will assign the closest chapter and relay the CAO contact information to you.
- She will fill out the Banner Presentation request on the BSMA website. For Michigan chapters, she will forward the approval from the N3VP to you.
- Minnesota and Ohio Departments will order and purchase the needed banners for their chapters. Michigan chapters order and purchase the banners.
- You will then reach out to the CAO to arrange presentation of the banner.
- Department Blue to Gold Liaison’s/3<sup>rd</sup> VP’s will assist in all aspects of the Blue to Gold process for the Chapters within their Department.

## Guidelines for Presentation

- The Blue to Gold Program is an honor and a privilege bestowed on BSMA, Inc. When a Chapter presents a Gold Star Banner, please remember you are representing BSMA, Inc.
- Coordinate with the CAO when, where and how the family would like to receive the Gold Star Banner.
- Before the presentation, double check that everything on the banner is correct! If something is not correct, contact the CAO and he/she will talk to the family about how to handle it.
- It is preferred that the 'official' Blue Star Mothers uniform be worn; white blouse, navy jacket, pants or skirt, navy or black shoes, garrison hat and white gloves (borrow them if you need to)  
Jewelry should be limited to the BSMA official pin and your child's service pin. No scarves. No pins on your garrison hat. If a uniform is not available, suitable funeral attire should be worn.
- It is best to have at least two members attend the presentation. If you are presenting 2 or 3 banners, enough members should attend so that each banner is carried separately.
- Upon arrival for the presentation, contact the Mothers CAO, he/she will introduce you to the family.
- It is acceptable to show some emotion during the presentation, it shows you care. Just be discreet and do not actually cry.
- Hold the Gold Star Banner facing outward, folding up the bottom section.
- It is best to state one sentence during your presentation. We suggest the sentence below. 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.
- Reverently, kneel, unfold the banner, state: ["On Behalf of the Blue Star Mothers of America, we offer our sincere condolences and present to you this Gold Star Banner in honor of \(Name of Fallen Hero\)'s service in the United States \(Branch of Service\) and \(his/her\) sacrifice."](#) Give the banner to family members, stand and place your hand over your heart. DO NOT salute unless you are or have been in the Military.
- You may wish to show respect at the casket depending on when the presentation is done, sign the guestbook (adding BSMA, Inc., Chapter name and id), review pictures and medals that are on display, and take a moment to hug the parents, spouse and siblings.
- If you have the opportunity to speak to family members, DO NOT ask what happened. Instead, ask the question "tell me about your child".



### **Blue Daisies**

- When a Chapter Member passes, she becomes a BSMA, Inc. Blue Daisy. It is important that Chapters advise the N3VP ([3vp@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:3vp@bluestarmothers.us)), National Chaplain ([chaplain@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:chaplain@bluestarmothers.us)), National 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President ([1vp@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:1vp@bluestarmothers.us)), National 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President ([2VP@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:2VP@bluestarmothers.us)) and National Webmaster ([webmaster@bluestarmothers.us](mailto:webmaster@bluestarmothers.us)). Blue Daisies within a Dept should also be reported to the Dept 1VP, 2VP and Chaplain.
- The N3VP maintains a master list of all Blue Daisies for that fiscal year and they also recognized in the BSMA, Inc. annual Yearbook and at National Convention.
- We encourage Chapters to send a photo of the Blue Daisy to be used in the Yearbook and in Remembrance at National Convention.

### **Veterans**

- If you discover the death of a Veteran, please report their information to the N3VP. Their names will be printed by month in the National BSMA newsletter and they will be recognized at National Convention.
- If your Chapter is part of a Department, report the information to your Dept 3VP or BtoG Liaison. Departments will have Memorials at their Department Conventions.