

Blue to Gold Program Guide
Prepared by BSMA National 3rd Vice President, Revised 3/2025

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

- Read this document before you attempt to arrange a Gold Star Banner presentation.
- If you or any member of your chapter has questions about protocol and procedures, please email the National 3VP (3VP@bluestarmothers.us).
- Chapters should designate a Blue to Gold Liaison (BtoG) and indicate this on your Chapter information form during compliance. A database is kept of Blue to Gold 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.
- Work with the N3VP/Blue to Gold Program. Our Governing Documents mandate that any and all Blue to Gold Banners presented by a Chapter or Department of BSMA, Inc. go through the Blue to Gold Program.
- Military branches have different titles for the Casualty Officer (CO)
Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) – Army
Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) – Marines, Navy, Coast Guard
Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) – Air Force, Space Force
- DO NOT order the Gold Star Banner until verification is completed with the CO and approval is given by the N3VP.
- Work with the CO. The duty of the CO is to protect and honor the family. The CO answers to the family and the Department of Defense (DOD). If you have attempted three (3) times to contact the CO to arrange a Gold Star Banner presentation and they have not responded to you, do not continue to reach out to the CO. This could also mean that the family does not wish to have the Gold Star Banner at this time. The CO is involved with the family for 1 year. If you are not able to contact the CO, contact the funeral director, or N3VP for assistance to make the contact.
- Be patient, the CO is overwhelmed, the families are overwhelmed.
- Abide by the wishes of the family and the instructions of the CO. Banner Presentations must be coordinated with the CO, make sure all arrangements and details are finalized with the CO. Note: More than one CO may be assigned to the family. If the Parents are separated, a CO will be assigned to each Parent. A Spouse will also have a CO assigned. Make sure to Coordinate with all.

- 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 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.
- 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.
- Notifications of a Military death are emailed to Chapter Presidents and BtoG. 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 (please, do not text or message) the N3VP, she may not know about the casualty.
- It may not be possible for a member to present the banner. Options are the CO 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, contact the N3VP.
- The N3VP maintains the BSMA, Inc. Fallen Hero Database. In the event that Chapters and/or Departments do not go through the 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 received a Gold Star Banner for that fiscal year. The National Chaplain recognizes on Gold Star Mother Day each Gold Star Mother 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 2nd 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.

- Train others in your Chapter about the responsibilities and duties of the Chapter BtoG.
- 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 7

DOD NOTIFICATIONS & NON-DOD CASUALTY NOTIFICATIONS

- The DOD remits notification to the N3VP of Combat-Casualties. This information is then remitted, via email, to Chapter BtoG and Chapter/Department Presidents. This email will have the contact information for one of the CO’s if available.
- The DOD does not remit notification of non-combat casualties and/or stateside casualties. The N3VP doesn’t have the CO information for non-combat and stateside casualties. In this case, the CO 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 N3VP. 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 Military Member who dies while on active duty, no matter how they pass.
- Families of a Military 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 (KIA), but whose remains were lost (MIA) and have now been recovered and repatriated. They are assigned a CO. These Heroes are not Veterans.
- Families of a of a Member of the National Guard or Reserves who are in basic training, or on active duty.
- Academy Cadets are included as Active Duty, as long as it is a U.S. Military Academy and not a private institution such as the Citadel.
- If a CO 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 CO 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.
- 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), she will need to research and confirm the family's eligibility to receive a banner.

In this case, wait to contact the Funeral Home Director until you have heard from the N3VP. After a response from the N3VP, you will need to follow the steps as outlined below.

- After receiving an email notification of a Military Casualty from the N3VP and the family lives in your Chapter area, start the process as outlined below.
 1. Contact the Funeral Home Director and explain who you are and who you represent and what your mission is to ask for the CO contact information.
 2. Make contact with the CO, 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 CO. The CO will then check with the family for authorization for the presentation and provide the authorization to you.
 3. You will need to find out from the CO if the family wishes to receive a banner:
 - How many banners. 1 banner for the parents (if the parents are separated, 1 for the mother and 1 for the father). 1 banner for the spouse. Additional banners may be presented depending on family dynamics.
 - The name and branch of service to be embossed. The rank is not embossed as the Hero is usually promoted posthumously.
 - The spelling of the name as per the Mothers wishes.
 - How many Blue Stars for siblings who are serving in the Military, the Blue Stars are embossed only on parent's banners, with no names or branches.
 - Where and when the family wants the banners presented.
 4. Log in with your profile on the BSMA, Inc. Website
 - Click on the red bar titled "Blue to Gold".
 - This takes you to the Blue to Gold Program page.
 - Click on Gold Star Banner Request (either Printable Form or PDF Fillable Form)
 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 parents have requested.
 - Email the form to the N3VP.

6. Once the N3VP verifies the banner presentation is approved, you will receive an email from the N3VP indicating approval and including detailed instructions for purchasing the banner.
- Your Chapter is responsible for ordering and paying for the banners unless your chapter is under a Department.

What to do if your Chapter is part of a Department

- Contact your Department BtoG first, she will contact the N3VP.
- Your Department BtoG will assign the closest chapter and relay the CO contact information to you.
- She will fill out the Banner Presentation request on the BSMA website and forward the N3VP approval to you.
- Departments will order and purchase the needed banners for their chapters.
- You will then reach out to the CO to arrange a presentation of the banner.
- Department BtoG'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 behalf of BSMA, Inc. When a Chapter presents a Gold Star Banner, please remember you are representing BSMA, Inc.
- Coordinate with the CO 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 CO and he/she will talk to the family about how to handle it.
- It is preferred that the 'official' Blue Star Mothers uniform (white blouse, navy jacket, pants or skirt, garrison hat and white gloves). Please refer to the Code of Conduct; Art 9, Sec 5.

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 two members attend the presentation. If you are presenting 2 or 3 banners, enough members should attend so that each banner is carried separately.
- Contact the Mother's CO upon arrival if you are presenting at the funeral, 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.
- Hold the Gold Star Banner facing outward, folding up the bottom section.
- 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. It is best to remember to state one sentence during your presentation. We suggest the following Sentence.
- Reverently, kneel, unfold the banner –

[“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 \(Name of Fallen Hero\) 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 Chapter’s advise the N3VP National Chaplain (chaplain@bluestarmothers.us), National 1st Vice President (1vp@bluestarmothers.us), National 2nd Vice President (2VP@bluestarmothers.us) and National Webmaster webmaster@bluestarmothers.us).
- The N3VP maintains a master list of all Blue Daisies. Blue Daisies for the past year are recognized in the BSMA, Inc. annual Yearbook.
- We encourage Chapters to also send a photograph to use in Remembrance at Convention and in the Yearbook.

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 BtoG. Departments will have Memorials at their Department Conventions.