



Convention 2011 ~ 69th Annual

Held in Washington DC August 9-13, 2011

THEME: War After The War

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2009-2011 National President, Wendy J. Hoffman (left)
2011-2012 National President, Robin Barnes-McCarthy



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.



Convention Highlights

Wendy Hoffman

Past National President

Planning a convention from nearly 2000 miles away was a challenge but the Convention Committee rose to the occasion to help me with the details and logistics and we pulled it off. Registered attendees totaled 186 with an additional 31 guests. Because of the generosity of the members and chapters represented at convention we were also able to provide banquet tickets and other expenses for 53 wounded warriors to attend as our guests.

On Tuesday evening the well coordinated registration desk in the lobby took care of the initial sign in and registration package. Members were directed to the lower lobby where they received their convention bags loaded with valuable resource material from several agencies including Congress. Members were also given a first peek at the 2011 yearbook and if you have not yet seen it there may still be copies available in the online store. The vendor room was open during registration and at 7 pm everyone gathered in the Atrium Ballroom on the Mezzanine level for the opening reception.

The hotel understood the concept of the evening plan and had arranged lobby tables on the lower level and theater seating above complete with popcorn and soda for the movie “21 and a Wakeup” that followed the reception. Chris McIntyre, producer and director, was our official videographer for convention and will be making a DVD of the event.

Wednesday morning was the official opening of convention according to our ritual and our first guest was a representative from the Mayors office to welcome us to DC. The Mayors office also provided the DC flag and stand that were delivered just moments before the opening ritual but in time to be carried in procession.

Wednesday afternoon we boarded busses and were taken to Arlington National Cemetery where our Convention Chair Susan Nail had arranged a wonderful and solemn Memorial Service on hallowed grounds next to the amphitheater. Mothers were able to visit the Tomb of the Unknowns briefly before boarding the busses.

Before leaving the cemetery we were taken up the hill where we walked a short distance to Captain George Maine’s grave. Our historian, Joretta Weaver passed out Blue Daisies which we placed on the grave of our founder as our Chaplain Rev. Lin McGee led us in prayer.

Thursday morning we met briefly before boarding the busses again for the Capitol where we were divided into two groups for a tour of the Capitol and then bussed to the White House or the Pentagon. Many of those at the White House were met by White House staff and a few got a glimpse of the President as he walked out to board his helicopter.

Thursday afternoon was packed with speakers; all connected to our theme “The War after War”. Beginning with Megan Egerton, author of 101 Tips for when they’re back, we then heard from Matt Stiner of Justice for Vets who introduced a resolution for the establishment of Veteran’s Treatment Courts.

Other speakers were our own Charilyn Damigo who spoke of her own experiences as the mother of an incarcerated soldier and the work of the Family Alliance for Veterans of America. Pam Hayes, founder and President of The Arms Forces spoke of her own experiences recovering and dealing with TBI and the hidden wounds of war.

To lighten things up after the break and to introduce a valuable therapeutic tool, Claire Trevidi, Laughter Yoga Leader, led us through a series of laughter yoga exercises and literally had us laughing in the aisles. Erin Rooney of the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) Real Warriors Campaign described the partnership of Blue Star Mothers and the Real Warrior Campaign and introduced us to the resources available for the troops and veterans as well as the military families on the Real Warriors website. We ended the afternoon with an entertaining Mardi Gras moment with the New Orleans second line and a presentation by Janet Broussard encouraging the establishment of a true National Auxiliary of the Associate members.

Friday morning we were honored with the presence of Secretary Eric Shinseki of Veterans Affairs (VA). I was told by his staff that when he was first given his speech to review he cut out almost all of it and rewrote it himself. What we heard was genuine Shinseki from the heart and a copy of his speech appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Deborah Amdur, LCSW, Chief Consultant, Care Management and Social Work Service who has overall responsibility for five national programs provided extensive information about the VA Caregivers Program recently launched.

John Campbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Wounded Warrior Care & Transition Policy) introduced us to the

National Resource Directory and spoke of the importance of the central registry as an aid to our veterans and families.

Laura Balun, Director, VA Volunteer Services office spoke about the VAVS program and the need for all hospitals and medical centers to have Blue Star Mothers representation.

At lunch LTG William Troy, Director of Army Staff (DAS) spoke about a bridge, the link between the military and the mothers and examples of how Blue Star Mothers can work with the military in areas of reintegration along with the importance of our involvement.

At lunch on Friday we were saddened to learn of the death of one of our DC members, a registered attendee who was excitedly working on getting the DC chapter chartered during convention. Our chaplain draped the charter in honor of Viola Drath before we began our session of bylaw amendments.

The convention would not be complete without Fun Night and with the reinstatement of the Big Dipper at the 2010 convention the Big Dipper members were once again in charge of this portion of the convention. They did a fantastic job. From the lower lobby to the mezzanine the hotel was populated by flappers, gangstas and other roaring 20's costumed members. In the atrium ballroom there were card games and other activities as well as a photo op at the Ritz.

Saturday Morning National elections were held and the new slate of officers for the 2011-12 term are Robin McCarthy (OH3) – President, Janet Broussard (LA1) – First VP, Lin McGee (CT1) Second VP, Teresa Bullock (CA9) Third VP, Pattie Kelley (MN14) Fourth VP, Charilyn Damigo (CA4) Recording Secretary, Julie Roberts (NM2) Treasurer and Anne Parker (SC7) Financial Secretary.

Following elections we enjoyed a video from Homes for Our Troops of the surprise wedding at an HFOT key ceremony arranged by VA5.

We excitedly listened to a presentation by Patrick Guiltari of the United War Veterans Council regarding involvement and participation of Blue Star Mothers of America in the New York City Veterans Day Parade as well as advertising and visibility of the mothers.

Other speakers throughout the entire convention were the chapter members who came forward with chapter reports and we were able to hear them all this year. It was wonderful to hear of the many different activities and projects across the country. These chapter reports will be available with the convention minutes when they are posted online.

Following the VIP reception the banquet was attended by 260 members, delegates, guests and wounded warriors. Homes for Our troops did a recap of the past 2 years and our special guest speakers, HFOT recipients Matt and Tracy Keil spoke of the benefits of the HFOT program. Our total raised for the Presidents Project this past term was over \$32,000 in addition to all the volunteer activity for HFOT.

In this last newsletter of the 2010-11 year and as we end our fiscal year I want to offer congratulations to each and every one of you for a job well done. I look forward to the coming years as the BSMA organization continues moving forward and wish Robin and the 2011-12 elected officers a wonderful year.



~ Greetings From Your 2011-2012 BSMoA Elected Officers ~

National President ~ Robin Barnes McCarthy



Robin with her sons Sgt Stephen Barnes on the left (OEF soldier) and Spec Nathan Barnes on right (OIF soldier).

"Have You Heard about the Blue Star Mothers"

When my older son Stephen swore an oath to defend and protect the Constitution of the United States, he joined the Army, and I became a "blue star mother." Proud but scared, happy and numb, I began this journey of wanting to support him and his fellow troops. Like you, I was suddenly aware of an entirely new world of military mothers, who now had restrictions on them ("Mom, you can't send me any mail or packages for six weeks"), while all I wanted to do was just talk to him and find out what he was thinking and feeling.

After attending his basic training/AIT graduation ceremonies, I saw how the Army was doing for him the very thing that I as a single mother would never have been able to do--make a man out of a boy. It wasn't long before I saw the same new excitement in my second son Nathan's eyes, and he too had joined the Army. Over the course of year or so, I had driven to Ft Benning four or five times to watch a son graduate from basic training/AIT and then Airborne school.

Immediately after Stephen received orders to go to Ft Drum (NY) in preparation for his first deployment to Afghanistan, I knew I couldn't do this alone. I am a veteran of the US Army myself (joined the Army at the end of the Viet Nam war), and I had personally experienced basic training, the gas chamber, PT and all the other entry-level expectations, but deployment? Afghanistan? Risk of losing my son? That was all new to me, overwhelming, until some little angel at the post office (who recognized the military address on a package I was sending to one of the boys) asked me, "Have you heard of the Blue Star Mothers?" What a glorious question that was, and how grateful I am that Miss Gracie brought me into a circle of military mothers like myself who could understand my fear and disbelief, my pride and joy, moms who "sleep with one eye open."

You might think it was a little bit of heaven from the start, but just the opposite was true. At my first meeting, the president got into a hot debate with another mother (who had been the founding president), and people got up and walked out. Both mothers had good reason for what they were saying, but most of the mothers just wanted to pack a care package for their sons and daughters. It was at that moment I decided I was going to stay. I mean, really stay in this organization, because we had to find a way to listen to both--both ladies had a heart for their military kids and Blue Star Mothers needed their insight.

Since joining in this Organization in 2006, I have served as Chaplain for my Chapter, 3rd, 2nd, 1st VP for the Department of Ohio, elected to two terms as President of the Department (and as such, served on the NEB for two-and-a-half years), and now elected to serve as your National President. By day I am a hospice chaplain, and I work exclusively with veterans and their families. So you can see I am totally immersed in this vision, and our mission "to support our troops and veterans" is at the very heart of who I am.

I pray that we can continue moving forward into the 21st century, that we can always heed the wisdom of our older Mothers (many who have been members for more than 25 years!), and work through our differences with decorum and dignity. Thank you to our Past National Century Blue Star Mothers, for your commitment to BSMA. And I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your National President. I will strive to keep before us the fact that we are "Old and Young--BSM STRONG!"

Robin



National First Vice President ~ Janet Broussard

I am a native Louisianan and have been a member of the Blue Star Mother's for 8 years. I founded the Blue Star Mothers of Louisiana Chapter 1 and served as president for 7 years.

I am married to Floyd Broussard. My son is LT Mark St.Romain, Jr.; Mark has been a member of the Louisiana National Guard for 12 years and has completed 4 Middle East Tours. I am also the step-mother to Nick Broussard. Nick just completed college and is living in New Orleans.

Our two greatest joys in life are our precious grandsons Beauregard and Benjamin St.Romain.

I serve as a Commissioner on the USS KIDD and Veterans Memorial and also on the Advisory Boards of the Operation Homefront and the US Army Baton Rouge Grassroots Advisory Board. I work as an EMR Systems Specialist at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge.

I am so very humbled and honored to have been elected as 1st Vice President of the Blue Star Mothers of America. I am looking forward to having a great year serving the Blue Star Mothers of America.

National Second Vice President ~ Rev. Lin McGee

Rev. Lin is married to Rev. David McGee, a Vietnam War veteran who received two Purple Hearts while serving his country as a United States Marine. She is also the daughter of Navy Seabees veteran, James P. Funk, who served in the Pacific Theater during WWII. Her son CSM JamesPeter M. Matthews has served with the United States Army for 27 years and is a veteran of OEF and OIF, having completed three deployments. Her son SSGT Daniel W. Matthews has served with the United States Marines for 18 years and is a veteran of OEF and OIF, having completed two deployments.



To honor their service and that of all who have served past and present, Rev. Lin founded the first Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. in Connecticut ~ the Connecticut Blue Star Mothers, CT Chapter 1 www.ConnecticutBlueStarMothers.org ~ in early 2006. She works there among the other mothers as President, Pastor, Blue to Gold Officer, BSM VAVS State Rep, Veterans Service Coordinator, Media Manager, Patriot Guard Riders Rep, Patriotic Instructor, and Website Manager.

During our September 2009 – August 2010 National BSMoA year, Rev. Lin served our organization as the National Patriotic Instructor. During the 2010-2011 year term she served as our National Chaplain.

She also serves with other troop/veteran support organizations as the founder of Precious Stars www.PreciousStars.com, a member of the Patriot Guard Riders www.PatriotGuard.org, a rep for the American Soldier Memorial Project StitchingForTheFallen@gmail.com, Chaplain, Patriotic Instructor, and Webmaster for the VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post #296 www.vfwpost296ladiesaux.com, and the State Chaplain for the Missing In America Project www.MIAP.us which works nation wide to locate, identify, and inter the remains of our nation's veterans (and their families) who have been cremated, yet unclaimed for burial.

She is affiliated with both Military Ministry <http://www.militaryministry.org/> and Christian Military Fellowship <http://cmf.com/> and has a large military/veteran support ministry at one of the churches she pastors, the Eagle Rock Church www.EagleRockChurch.us in Thomaston, CT.

Rev. Lin is a pianist, author, counselor, pastor, public speaker, retreat leader, minister of music, and member of the ordained clergy. But most important of all, she is a wife, mother, daughter, and friend. Rev. Lin has 16 children (8 boys and 8 girls), 33 grand children, and 6 great grand children.



National Third Vice President ~ Teresa Bullock

Hello Ladies,

I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Teresa Bullock and I was elected to the position of 3rd Vice President on the National Executive Board of Blue Star Mothers of America. I consider this position an honor and privilege. As some of you know I am a Blue and Gold Star Mother, I hope to assist all of you to continue to provide the love and support that was given to me by my Blue Star Chapter in the darkest moments I have ever had.

Judy has been helping me immensely and while there have been a couple of bumps in the road we are making the transition as painless as possible. She spoke very highly of all of you and I hope to continue the same wonderful service she provided for you.

As I have said many times in the last couple of weeks, if there is any way I can help you or answer any questions for you please don't hesitate to contact me.

National Fourth Vice President ~ Pattie Kelley

Pattie Kelley's only child, Jesse, served in the U.S. Army assigned to an SF Unit. Pattie's father also served in the U.S. Army and while she refers to him and others his age and older as Veteran's, Jesse is now in that same category having served his Country with pride and honor.

It was during the time Jesse was stationed in South Korea that Pattie was searching online for other military mom's that she found the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., and she has been an active member ever since. On October 15, 2011, the Department of Minnesota will hold their Department Convention, and at that time she will have fulfilled her two terms as their Department President. As N4thVP, Pattie is honored for the opportunity to work with moms to Charter new Chapters which will help in the growth and strength of our Organization. Having been born and raised in Minnesota, Pattie is in her 31st year working for the City of Saint Paul as Admin Assistant to one of the Saint Paul City Councilmember's.





National Recording Secretary ~ Charilyn Damigo

Charilyn Damigo became a Blue Star Mother in 2004 when her son Nathan joined the Marine Corps during his senior year of high school. She became actively involved in her local BSMA chapter (South Bay Blue Star Moms - CA ch. 4). Nathan served 3 1/2 years, which included 2 deployments in Iraq. One month after his return from his second deployment, on the anniversary weekend of his best friend's KIA date, Nathan was arrested for a crime he committed while having a PTS flashback. He is currently serving a six-year prison sentence. His story is one of those featured in the HBO

documentary Wartorn: 1861-2010.

Charilyn has spent the last 4 years advocating for her son and other veterans who have been affected by the justice system. She has been working with other families to establish a non-profit, peer-to-peer family support network. FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America) is an affiliate of WestCare Foundation, already established in 15 states and 2 US Territories to help meet the needs of mental health, suicide prevention, drug addiction, domestic violence and homelessness.

Charilyn's husband is also a Marine veteran and together they have 5 children and 3 grandchildren. She has previously worked in the banking industry, and she has been an educator and school administrator for 24 years

National Financial Secretary ~ Anne Parker

Anne is the President and founder of Grand Strand Blue Star Mothers of Little River, SC. She is the Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary Post 186, Little River. She is also the State of SC American Legion Chairman of National Security (which covers support of our military and their families) and Chaplain for the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of South Carolina. Anne is the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Lodge 2840, Little River. She is also a member of Operation Welcome Home in Myrtle Beach, an organization that goes to airports, homes, and welcome home parties (as the military person and his family wish) to welcome our men and women home from deployments. Anne also organizes and facilitates each month a joint venture with Barefoot Church and Helping Hand a food distribution on the first Saturday of each month in Atlantic Beach. This is a no questions asked distribution to over 200 people each month. Anne and her husband, Gordon, have four children and two grandchildren and reside in Longs. Gordon is an aviation mechanic who works internationally. They own and operate Gordy the Handyman in Longs and attend Barefoot Community Church. Anne spent most of her career working as a bookkeeper, office manager, medical transcriptionist or administrative assistant.



Message From Anne: I look forward to the opportunity to serve Blue Star Mothers as the National Financial Secretary and working with such an amazing group of women. I am always available to answer questions you may have. Please allow at least two weeks to get items from the online store.

Anne Parker Proud Blue Star Mother of CPT Leigh Swafford, CPT William Swafford and CPT Andrew Lechanski United States Army

REMEMBER OUR ONLINE STORE!! Blue Star Mothers official merchandise can be purchased from our national online store by visiting our website: www.BlueStarMothers.org



National Treasurer ~ Julie Roberts

Julie Roberts, originally from Utah, has been living in New Mexico for 21 years, where she met her second husband, Bryan while out dancing with her father, who loves to Two Step. Her dad and Bryan (both E7's) bonded instantly. In 1991 both of the men in her life (Dad and Husband) were off to the great sand box. Little did she know that many years later, she would have three going to the exact same place.

Anthony, her oldest child, is a 1st Lieutenant with the 286Th Engineering Company based out of Denton, Texas and is being deployed on September 21, 2011 for a year. He joined the Army eight years ago when he started college at New Mexico State University and graduated in Civil Engineering with a minor in Math and Military Science. He met the love of his life, Megan, and they were married on October 23, 2010.

Kira Marie, her second child, is a Staff Sgt in the Air Force and has been full time for 5 years. She is in the Security Forces, and works out of NORAD in Colorado Springs. She has been deployed to Iraq and is expected to return sometime in 2012. Kira's husband, Chad Waller, is also in the Air Force. He is a Staff Sgt. and is with the TACP based out of Fort Carson. He is currently deployed since June 6, 2011 and is scheduled back hopefully in December 2011. This is his 3rd Tour. They are the proud parents of William Blain, Julie's first grandson. Julie and Bryan have had the pleasure of watching him quite regularly since he was born due to his mom and dad's work schedules, trainings, and deployments. They plan to watch him when they are both over in the Middle East.

Julie's youngest son Alac, has graduated from High School and has decided to join the Army National Guard. He feels that he has always served his country by helping out his brother, sister and brother-in-law and now has a chance to do it for himself. He is an associate member with Albuquerque Chapter NM2.

Julie joined the Blue Star Mothers just before Kira's deployment in 2007. She started out in the chapter level as the membership mom, and then quickly moved up to 1st VP, and then Chapter President for 2 years. She currently serves on the NEB as the Treasurer and served as the 1st VP for 2010-2011. Julie has served two years as the National Bylaws and Resolutions Chairwoman. She has also served on the following committees: Finance, Convention, Shadow Run, and Executive Director.

Her day time job (and some nights) is a paralegal with The Rodey Law Firm and has been in this occupation for the past 18 years.

When she is not busy being a Nana or working with the Blue Star Mothers, her newest passion is scuba diving. She is also a die hard Steelers Fan!

www.ServiceFlags.com

Please remember Service Flags for any of your military and veteran purchases. They have a wonderful selection of items. Also, they are kind enough to assist us with our Gold Star Banners, absorbing much of the cost themselves.

~ Greetings From Your 2011-2012 BSMoA Appointed Officers ~

National Chaplain ~ Gloria Cervantes

Gloria is from California and is a member of the South Bay Blue Star Moms, CA 4.

Please notify Gloria if you have a Gold Star Mother in your Chapter; if a member of your Chapter is ill or passes away; if there is a military stateside loss; or if there is any other Blue Star Mother's need she can help you care for. You can reach Gloria at chaplain@bluestarmothers.org



National Patriotic Instructor ~ Linda Bayer

Linda Bayer and her husband Gary have been married for 31 years. They reside in San Jose, CA, the heart of Silicon Valley. She has worked in the dental field as Office Manager for the past 24 years. They have 2 sons and 1 daughter. Ryan and Jared both joined the Air Force after 9/11. Ryan has served stateside at Mt. Home and Luke AFB and is now a Veteran. His twin, Jared, has served 7 years and was stationed at Dover AFB, DE. Jared has deployed twice to Iraq, Balad 2005, Tallil 2007 and once to Al Udeid in 2009. Currently he is a reservist stationed at Travis AFB, CA. Their daughter Stephanie has a passion for singing and dance and currently teaches at a local dance studio. The family loves hockey and can be seen wearing black and teal in support of the San Jose Sharks.

Linda is a member of the South Bay Blue Star Moms CA #4 and has served on the Executive Board since joining the chapter in 2006. Their chapter was chartered in 2004 and has grown to over 100 members. Linda is a Past President of her chapter and credits her sons for introducing her to the Blue Star Mothers. She says that the wonderful friendships she has made with her Blue Star Mom sisters would not have been possible had her sons not decided to serve their country.

Linda is looking forward to the honor of serving as Patriotic Instructor for the 2010-2011 term and the opportunity to get to know more of our mothers.

We are looking for articles of interest to place in the Newsletter each month.

Please submit your articles to the editor by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the following month's newsletter. Send submission to Rev. Lin McGee, 2ND VP at: secondvp@bluestarmothers.org



National Historian ~ Maura McGowan Yanosick

Maura lives in Massachusetts and is a member of Eastern MA Chapter 2. Maura serves as the Communications Coordinator at Homes For Our Troops. She is also a Board member for both Operation Military Kids and the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund.

A Warm Welcome To Our Newest Chartered Chapters

CA33 - Merced County Blue Star Mothers, Merced County
PA11 - Chester County Blue Star Mothers
NC14 - Fayetteville, Ft. Bragg, Hope Mills, Spring Lake
MN16 - Pine City Blue Star Mothers
KS4 - Blue Star Mothers of Southwest Kansas

National Sergeant At Arms ~ Judy Sinclair-Leczal

I am honored to be your Sergeant-at-Arms for the next year under the leadership of National President Robin McCarthy.

I have been a firefighter/paramedic for the past 37 years and I think I am about ready to retire! I have 3 sons of whom I am very proud.

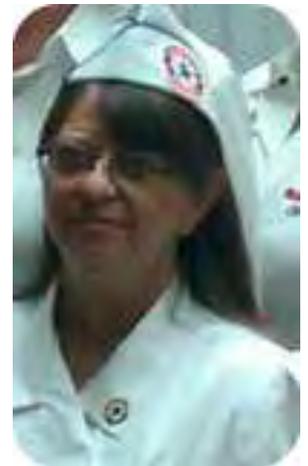
Michael Leczal is an Aeronautical Engineer working for a defense contractor out of Buckley Air Force Base in Denver. He is married to my wonderful daughter-in-law, Peggy, and they live in Larkspur, CO. They have 2 children, Michael, currently serving in the US Navy aboard the USS Denver, based out of Sasbo, Japan; and Candace, a senior at Wyoming State University.

Russell Sinclair, is Lead Test Engineer for the Marine Corp Command and Control group. He entered the USMC in 1987 and retired after 20 years in 2007. He lives in Stafford, VA. He has 3 children: Nikolas (14 years old), Ethan (12 years old), and Kaelee (9 years old).

Anthony Sinclair is with the Texas Department of Justice in the Belton County Sheriff's Office. He served in the US Army 2004 to 2009. He lives in Killeen, TX. He has 2 children, Anthony II (9 years old), and Danni (6 years old).

My grandchildren are my greatest achievement! They are all different in temperament and personality and the reason that I get up in the morning.

I am looking forward to the coming year with the Blue Star Mothers. I have been elected as President of NM Chapter #1 with the installation to be on September 6th. I am anticipating another great year with the Chapter and with the new National Board I feel that great ideas are out there among us all and this year will see many of those ideas become projects that will strengthen our organization.



~ Greetings From Your 2011-2012 Big Dipper Officers ~



Big Dipper President ~ Paulette Gloden

Paulette lives in Michigan and is a member of Blue Water Chapter, MI180. She had a wonderful surprise when her son arrived unexpectedly during the Big Dipper fun night at Convention!!!

Big Dipper National would like to announce the recipients of this year's Josephine Colenda Fund for Educational Assistance. They are:

Suzanne Bronson CO 4
Melissa Cotterman OH 1
Lauren Cust CT 4
Ray De Angelo IN 8
Kathy Duncan KY 6

Patrick Graves KY 6
Megan Miller MI 180
Lindsey Rettke MI 180
Toya Scherer MI 179
Gregory Wax CT 4

Big Dipper First Vice President ~ Pat Wilson-Perkins

I was born in New York, I'm the youngest of 3 daughters and the mother of 3 sons. As a young girl we moved constantly, and we weren't in the military. I believe my mother had gypsy blood in her.

I've been married to my college boy friend for 37+ years. We met when he was a fraternity pledge at Phi Kappa Theta and I was a sister at Phi Mu. (He had lost his pledge pin to one of the other sisters and he asked me to help him get it back. The rest as they say is history.)

Our oldest son, Dave, Jr. is 36. He is a major in the Army, Individual Ready Reserves. Dave's a corporate attorney in New York City. Our younger sons are twins - Tom and Jim and they are 27. Tom lives in Queens, NY and plays in 2 bands that make money and also works at a health food store/deli. Jim is a Captain currently stationed at Ft. Bragg while he goes through the Special Forces' Q-Course. He was a Combat Engineer for 5 years stationed in Germany before changing to Special Forces.

In 2008, Dave and his wife, Ann, were deployed to Afghanistan and Jim was deployed to Iraq. Ann had already been deployed to Kosovo and Iraq previously. After returning from Afghanistan, Ann decided that she didn't want to be married any longer. I founded our local chapter of Northern Fairfield County - Blue Star Mothers in December 2008 to find other mothers who would understand what I was going through and so that I could support other mothers as their children deployed. At our first meeting there were 15 mothers interested in forming a chapter.



Big Dipper Recording Secretary ~ Dr. Sarah Young

An internationally recognized print and broadcast journalist, seminar speaker, disabled advocate and therapist, Dr. Young is familiar to San Diegans and followers worldwide. Her first love, however, is empowerment education and advocacy. "Dr. Sarah" has performed on television and radio since she was seven years old, but San Diegans know her best as the host of "The Mind, Body and Spirit Show" on KCEO Radio, AM 1000.



Big Dipper Financial Secretary ~ Robin Johnson

Robin Johnson has been elected to serve as the Big Dipper Financial Secretary for the year 2011-2012

Big Dipper Treasurer ~ Dawn Jones

Dawn Jones has been elected to serve as the Big Dipper Financial Secretary for the year 2011-2012

All Officers that did not have a picture and bio in this edition of the newsletter and all Officers that are appointed after this newsletter is published are encouraged to send your information to the editor for publication in the next edition. *THANK YOU!*

WHO IS THIS?

Do you know the little girl in the far right of this picture who is having a birthday party?

[Answer to be found in Editor's Notes]





Big Dipper Sergeant At Arms ~ Ann Cordero

Bio- I have lived in California my whole life, from the oceans to the mountains. I have been a member of Blue Star Mothers for 3 years and helped start the Feather River Blue Star Moms CA1 earlier this year, of which I am currently the president. My husband of 27 years, Tony, and I have a son, Anthony, in the Army in the artillery (he likes shooting big guns!). He is married to a wonderful girl, Valerie, and they have our only grandchild, another Anthony. We also have a high school age daughter, Ciera, who is very much into horses and animals.

Message-I have personally felt the support network we have with Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. In turn, I have been given opportunities to give back that support to other mothers when they were in need of a shoulder to cry on or just someone to talk to. It feels good to know we make a difference in the lives of military families. I joined Big Dipper to support furthering education for blue star moms and military families. I challenge every chapter to hold just one fundraiser this year for Big Dipper. *Ann Cordero*

Big Dipper Chaplain ~ Rev. Lin McGee

Hello, I wanted to thank everyone for such a special year in 2010-2011. Laura really got the Big Dipper moving again and we were able to accomplish many special things. Thank you Laura!!!

10 scholarships were given to our children so that they will now be able to further their education! And that is what it is all about – won't you join us in this important endeavor? We would love to have you join the Big Dipper!!! Check the National website for how!

We hope you enjoyed Fun Night at Convention! Our theme was the Roaring 20s and we tried to bring authenticity from the times while finding fun things to bring your way! The costumes were wonderful and I think everyone had a great time!

There were special CDs that Pat made with music from the time – and we had special coins, bracelets, and other memorabilia to celebrate and remember the evening. If you were not able to go to convention, get in touch with one of the Big Dipper officers and we will let you know how to receive them. Remember, all donations go for scholarships for the coming year!

I am very privileged to serve as Big Dipper Chaplain again this year. If there is anything at all that I can help you with at any time, please just let me know. Our home door, phone, and computer inboxes are open to you at any time.

Peace, Lin



Please Remember To Pray For The Families, Loved Ones, and Chapters of our Sisters Who Have Recently Passed Away. We will miss each of them dearly.



EVA MORRISON



VIOLA DRATH



AUDREY PERRY



ANGELA HARPER

NATIONAL BIG DIPPER

Auxiliary

**Roaring 20's
Fun Night**



Food, Games, Prizes,
Period Photos, Silent
Auction, Costume
Judging, Music, and
Dancing



**Thank you for helping us raise money
for our children's scholarships!
And, it was a FUN night!!**



The Big Dipper Organization was adopted November 7, 1951 in Milwaukee, WI. The name is derived from the Big Dipper constellation. The emblem is a flat bottom dipper with a long handle, used on all stationary and worn as a guard pin, attached to the pin of the parent organization. Objects of this organization are to provide funds for educational assistance awards given annually and to sponsor a "Fun Night" at the convention. Any member of the parent organization, Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., in good standing, may apply to be a member of the Big Dipper. Annual membership fees shall be \$5.00. Sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of Blue Star Mothers of America, veterans and active duty personnel as well as Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., members are eligible to apply for educational financial assistance. Assistance can be received up to four times. Educational Assistance Applications must be sent to Department Big Dipper President or National Big Dipper President within 20 days prior to their Conventions.



We were honored to have Secretary Eric K. Shinseki with us at our 69th Annual BSMoA Convention held this year in Washington, DC.

Mr. Shinseki is the Seventh United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He served as the 34th Chief of Staff of the Army from 1999-2003, retiring as a United States Army four star general.

Remarks by Secretary Eric K. Shinseki at our Convention on August 12, 2011:

Wendy [Wendy Hoffman, President of Blue Star Mothers]—thank you for that kind introduction, and for your leadership of Blue Star Mothers of America. Let me also acknowledge: Gold Star Mothers with us today; Susan Naill, Convention Chairwoman and past National President of Blue Star Mothers; Julie Roberts, First Vice President; Patsy Varnell, National Veterans Service Representative; other Blue Star Mothers, fellow Veterans, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I am truly honored to join you for your National convention. In this room are some of the most generous, selfless people I've met with in two-and-a-half years as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Between Blue Star Mothers and Gold Star Mothers runs a sense of patriotism that is strong enough to allow them and those they love most to assume risks for the entire Nation.

We hear, oft-repeated, that less than one percent of Americans safeguard this Nation in uniform. That means less than one percent of Americans have willingly assumed risk for the American people, and that their families, through love and support, share those risks and the burdens that go with it. So you can appreciate my sincerity when I say I am honored to be with the mothers of America.

And in saying that, I am not just talking about the exceptional volunteer work of Blue Star Mothers—in VA hospitals; in Honor Flights; in the extraordinary peer-to-peer support network you have built for military families; in laying wreaths in our National Cemeteries; or even through your special project, "Sew Much Comfort," tailoring adaptive clothing for combat wounded servicemen and women. Those initiatives are impressive, much needed, and appreciated.

But, your most meaningful contribution is the gift of example, of generosity in how to live our lives with character and grace and without being overburdened by fear. I hesitate here because to go further would be to intrude on the "undiscussable"—reserved for families, alone. Suffice to say, the example you set is profound.

No one knows more clearly than you that military service, particularly in a nation at war, involves risk—risk to that which is precious to all of us—sons and daughters who carry the hopes and dreams of forbears. Over long wars, that risk assumes a weight few are able to bear—tremendously difficult to carry, as mothers, fathers, and siblings wait for a son or daughter to return home safely. Blue Star Mothers have shown us such strength in shouldering that weight—amazing in and of itself—but even greater is your courage in turning that burden into service. I marvel at your strength, your grace, your generosity, and your nobility of character. And I am honored to share time with you today.

President Obama shares profoundly in this admiration of Blue Star Mothers. I know, as a retired soldier, that his job as commander-in-chief is made measurably easier knowing that our troops have you at home, keeping their families strong.

Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides healthcare and earned benefits for approximately eight million Veterans. I would like to take this opportunity to share some information on what VA is, what it does, and how it will continue to care for your sons and daughters—and Veterans of every generation—when they shed the uniform and return to civilian life.

Two-and-a-half years ago, President Obama gave me two priorities when I became Secretary: make things better for Veterans and transform your department so that it better serves them throughout the 21st century. Some pretty strategic guidance—serve Veterans, do it better, transform for the future.

Most people know VA as a large healthcare system—and for the most part, that is true. We provide exceptional healthcare at our 152 medical centers, 798 community based outpatient clinics, almost 300 Vet Centers, and our mobile clinics that serve Veterans in remote, rural areas. But here's what's also true:

- We have the world's best electronic medical record;
- Nearly 6 percent of Veterans using our healthcare services are female—and that will grow to almost 10 percent by 2020 and 15 percent by 2028.
- We run the Nation's largest national cemetery system—rated best in the Nation in customer satisfaction over the past 10 years;
- VA provides the 2nd largest educational assistance program in America;
- We have the only zero down-payment, guaranteed home loan program in America, guaranteeing 1.5 million mortgages, with the lowest foreclosure rates in all types of loans;
- We are the 7th largest life insurance enterprise in the country with a 96 percent customer satisfaction rating;
- We are the 2nd largest department in federal government with over 313,000 employees. Over 100,000 of them are Veterans—more than 30 percent—and our goal is to increase that to 40 percent.

President Obama has provided us his unwavering support, resources, and the freedom to act. When I joined VA in January 2009, I inherited a good budget—\$99.8 billion. In keeping his promise to care for Veterans and meet his obligations to the American people, the President has increased VA's budget by roughly 30 percent over the three budgets he has submitted to Congress. His 2012 budget, currently before the Congress, is for \$132 billion for VA—strong evidence of his care and concern for Veterans, their families, and our survivors.

With that support, for two-and-a-half years now, we have been focusing VA on three key priorities to better serve Veterans: increasing access for Veterans to VA benefits and services; reducing the backlog in disability claims; and, finally, ending Veterans homelessness by 2015.

Access: We have made measurable progress in outreaching to Veterans who don't know about VA, don't know they have earned benefits, or lost faith in us some time ago. The number of enrolled Veterans has risen by nearly 800,000—over 10 percent—in the last two-and-a-half years. More than a million service members will become Veterans in the next five years, and VA's mission is clear and compelling.

Veterans benefits / backlog: this past June, I swore in retired Air Force Brigadier General Allison Hickey as Under Secretary for Benefits. We could not have found someone more qualified, more compassionate, more understanding, and more determined to rise to the challenge of addressing the benefits needs of our Nation's Veterans. General Hickey is a Veteran herself. She is married to a Veteran. She is the daughter of a Veteran—and she currently has family members serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We expect a record of around 1.45 million claims to be submitted this year. We know that we will produce another record in claims decisions. But merely hiring more claims processors won't allow us to dominate the growth in disability claims that's been underway for years now. We must automate our processes, and quickly. General Hickey's focus will be on eliminating the disability claims backlog by 2015—and accomplishing that goal while processing all Veterans' claims in less than 125 days with a 98-percent accuracy rate.

Gi Bill: in 2010, over 518,000 Veterans and family members were enrolled in college under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. All told, over 840,000 Veterans and family members were enrolled in VA college programs last year. This year's budget request would expand post-9/11 eligibility to include non-college degree programs—vocational, on-the-job training, flight training, and correspondence courses, to name a few. It also funds full automation of the payment process to speed tuition and housing payments to eligible Veterans.

Electronic records: for the past two years, VA and DoD have been working to create a virtual lifetime electronic record for use by both departments. Secretary Gates and I agreed to focus our joint efforts on the most important component of the concept—a common electronic health record, and I will continue to pursue this goal with Secretary Panetta—beginning with my first meeting with him this afternoon.

We call our effort the "integrated electronic health record," or I-EHR. I-EHR will enable the free flow of needed medical information between not just DoD and VA, but also with other stakeholders and care providers who may urgently need the information.

Family caregivers: We've implemented new post-9/11 family caregiver benefits, providing more than \$430,000 in stipends last month to nearly 200 caregivers who were the first to complete caregiver training—this program will grow and expand to assist the families of those service members who have given so much in defense of our Nation.

In addition to those major initiatives, we are investing in the needs of women Veterans, rural Veterans, and with the support of the president, we have also taken on longstanding issues from past wars—Agent Orange, Gulf War Illness, and combat PTSD. There's still much to be done, but we have momentum in key areas and clear directions for the future. We will demonstrate the same level of dedication and selflessness as the men and women we serve.

Core values: This summer, VA reached a major milestone on another long-term leadership responsibility—identifying and promulgating the organization's core values and characteristics. We came up with five core values that underscore our moral obligation to Veterans, their families, and other beneficiaries—obligations inherent in VA's mission: integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, excellence.

Our values are more than just words. They represent our commitments to Veterans, family members, and other beneficiaries, whom we serve. Taking the first letter of each word—integrity, commitment, advocacy, respect, excellence—creates the powerful acronym, "I CARE," that reminds each VA employee of their obligations within this department. Now, I know at least some will wonder whether this is a cute marketing device to spur conversation. It is not. These core values come together as five promises we make as individuals and as a department to those we serve:

- Integrity — Because "I CARE," I will act with high moral principle, adhere to the highest professional standards, and maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.
- Commitment—Because "I CARE," I will work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries, be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission, and fulfill my individual and organizational responsibilities.
- Advocacy—Because "I CARE," I will be truly Veterans-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

- Respect—Because "I CARE," I will treat all those I serve and with whom we work with dignity, showing respect to earn respect.
- Excellence—Because "I CARE," I will strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement, be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, and be accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

You have my assurance that these are promises VA has embraced with serious dispatch.

Today, I seek your help. Earlier, I told you that VA provides care and benefits to over eight million Veterans. What is important to understand is that there are 23 million American Veterans. That means a little over a third of them come to VA for care and benefits. Now, not all of them are eligible, and many have other healthcare options. But many of them are eligible—and yet they either do not know what we offer or they do not care to come and see us.

That's what I'm asking you to help with. We are a department that cares—so help us encourage, not only your sons and daughters, but every Veterans you contact through the impressive network you have established. VA cares—and we want to help.

We know the importance of meeting our obligations to young Veterans like sergeant Evan Cole—one of the countless young men and women, whose sheer determination to rise above adversity have redefined courage for us.

In the personal narrative to his application to catholic university in 2009, Evan Cole wrote, "on September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked. My best friend and I talked to an Army recruiter right away. By December, we were both enlisted in the United States Army as tankers.

"Our parents had to sign for us since we were still only 17. I knew I wanted to eventually go to college, but decided to put it off to serve my country. I figured one of the benefits of joining—the GI Bill—would help me pay for a school that I otherwise wouldn't be able to afford.

"After graduation, I completed basic training and was sent to Germany. In February of 2004, we deployed to Samarra, Iraq. I remember my first combat patrol, proudly heading into the city on our tank. I was 19 years old, thinking it was exactly like the photo in the book my dad had given me when I was seven. There were no pictures in that book of what came next. We were ambushed. Two roadside bombs and a landmine hit vehicles in which I was patrolling. Halfway through the tour, I accepted the fact I would be going home in a box. But the tour finally ended and I returned to Germany—alive.

"We refitted and trained, then deployed to Iraq for a second time to camp Ramadi in the western al Anbar province. Though the violence was nothing compared to the first tour, it only takes one blast. Six months into the tour, I was serving as turret gunner on a HUMVEE when we drove over a roadside bomb—January 30, 2007. My truck commander, and another soldier running up from behind to help us, were both killed. I was thrown about 30 feet straight up into the air and flew about 50 feet away from the vehicle before landing, with a large piece of the truck on top of me.

"The initial radio report listed me as killed in action. Once they found me, I was immediately evacuated, eventually to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I had broken every bone in my right leg, had a piece of it blown off, shattered my knee, cracked and ripped my pelvis open, had shrapnel punch through my left leg, shrapnel through my liver, broken my right arm, left hand, shattered most of my teeth, and had a traumatic brain injury. Two years and more than 15 surgeries later, I am ready to start down a new path.

"I don't regret my decision to join the Army. I'm proud of my service and I know I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the friends who were with me in Iraq, and even more than that, if God had not been with me. I made a promise to God and my friends that I would succeed and make something of myself. I can never get my friends back, but I can honor their memory and sacrifice by doing something worthwhile and meaningful with my life.

"I do have trouble remembering things sometimes. All that means is that I will have to work harder to reach my goals. But, I am no stranger to hard work. I manage to succeed at whatever I put my mind to because I absolutely refuse to give up, quit, or fail. I would like the opportunity to study architecture at Catholic University—for myself, to fulfill my potential—and to fulfill the promise I made to god and to my friends who never left the combat zone. I hope you will give me that chance." Signed, Evan Cole.

Sergeant Cole's college application essay carried the day—he was accepted to enter Catholic University in January of 2010. He completed his first semester with a 4.0 average. He continued to excel in his next two semesters at the school of architecture, and I have no doubt he will meet every challenge that life can offer—and prevail.

William Faulkner once said, "I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."

Soul, spirit, compassion, sacrifice, endurance, prevail. These words all encompass Blue and Gold Star Mothers and the wonderful examples you set for us.

May God bless your children, and may He continue to bless our Veterans and this great Nation. Thank you.



Remembering Our Nations Fallen Heroes ~ August 2011

Sgt. William B. GrossPaniagua, 28, of Daly City, CA
 Pfc. Brice M. Scott, 22, of Columbus, GA
 Staff Sgt. Leon H. Lucas Jr., 32, of Wilson, NC
 Staff Sgt. Patrick R. Dolphin, 29, of Moscow, PA
 Sgt. Dennis E. Kancler, 26, of Brecksville, OH
 Sgt. Christopher M. Wrinkle, 29, of Dallastown, PA
 Staff Sgt. Kirk A. Owen, 37, of Sapulpa, OK
 Spc. Barun Rai, 24, of Silver Spring, MD
 Pfc. Cody G. Baker, 19, of Holton, KS
 Pfc. Gil I. Morales Del Valle, 21, of Jacksonville, FL
 Capt. Waid C. Ramsey, 41, of Red Bay, AL
 Sgt. Anthony Del Mar Peterson, 24, of Chelsea, OK
 Sgt. Daniel D. Gurr, 21, of Vernal, VT
 Spc. Jinsu Lee, 34, of Chatsworth, CA
 Spc. Mark J. Downer, 23, of Warner Robins, GA
 Sgt. Daniel J. Patron, 26, of Canton, OH
 Sgt. Adan Gonzales Jr., 28, of Bakersfield, CA
 Sgt. Joshua J. Robinson, 29, of Omaha, NE
 Sgt. Alessandro L. Plutino, 28, of Pitman, NJ
 Lt. Cmdr. (SEAL) Jonas B. Kelsall, 32, of Shreveport, LA
 MCPO (SEAL) Louis J. Langlais, 44, of Santa Barbara, CA
 SCPO (SEAL) Thomas A. Ratzlaff, 34, of Green Forest, AK
 SCPO (EXW/FPJ) Kraig M. Vickers 36, of Kokomo, HI
 CPO (SEAL) Brian R. Bill, 31, of Stamford, CT
 CPO (SEAL) John W. Faas, 31, of Minneapolis, MN
 CPO (SEAL) Kevin A. Houston, 35, of West Hyannisport, MA
 CPO (SEAL) Matthew D. Mason, 37, of Kansas City, MO
 CPO (SEAL) Stephen M. Mills, 35, of Fort Worth, TX
 CPO (EXW/FPJ/DV) Nicholas H. Null, 30, of Washington, WV
 CPO (SEAL) Robert J. Reeves, 32, of Shreveport, LA
 CPO (SEAL) Heath M. Robinson, 34, of Detroit, MI
 PO1 (SEAL) Darrik C. Benson, 28, of Angwin, CA
 PO1 (SEAL/PJ) Christopher G. Campbell, 36, of Jacksonville, NC
 PO1 (EXW/FPJ) Jared W. Day, 28, of Taylorsville, UT
 PO1 (EXW) John Douangdara, 26, of South Sioux City, NE
 PO1 (EXW) Michael J. Strange, 25, of Philadelphia, PA
 PO1 (SEAL/SW) Jon T. Tumilson, 35, of Rockford, IA
 PO1 (SEAL) Aaron C. Vaughn, 30, of Stuart, FL

PO1 (SEAL) Jason R. Workman, 32, of Blanding, UT
 PO1 (SEAL) Jesse D. Pittman, 27, of Ukiah, CA
 PO2 (SEAL) Nicholas P. Spehar, 24, of Saint Paul, MN
 CWO David R. Carter, 47, of Centennial, CO
 CWO Bryan J. Nichols, 31, of Hays, KS
 Staff Sgt. Patrick D. Hamburger, 30, of Lincoln, NE
 Sgt. Alexander J. Bennett, 24, of Tacoma, WA
 Spc. Spencer C. Duncan, 21, of Olathe, KS
 Tech. Sgt. John W. Brown, 33, of Tallahassee, FL
 Staff Sgt. Andrew W. Harvell, 26, of Long Beach, CA
 Tech. Sgt. Daniel L. Zerbe, 28, of York, PA
 Cpl. Nicholas S. Ott, 23, of Manchester, NJ
 HN Riley Gallinger-Long, 19, of Cornelius, OR
 Sgt. Edward J. Frank II, 26, of Yonkers, NY
 Sgt. Jameel T. Freeman, 26, of Baltimore, MD
 Spc. Patrick L. Lay II, 21, of Fletcher, NC
 Spc. Jordan M. Morris, 23, of Stillwater, OK
 Pfc. Rueben J. Lopez, 27, of Williams, CA
 2nd Lt. Joe L. Cunningham, 27, of Kingston, OK
 Master Sgt. Charles L. Price III, 40, of Milam, TX
 Sgt. Matthew A. Harmon, 29, of Bagley, MN
 Cpl. Joseph A. VanDreumel, 32, of Grand Rapids, MI
 1st Lt. Damon T. Leehan, 30, of Edmond, OK
 Spc. Dennis G. Jensen, 21, of Vermillion, SD
 Spc. Joshua M. Seals, 21, of Porter, OK
 Lance Cpl. Travis M. Nelson, 19, of Pace, FL
 Pfc. Douglas L. Cordo, 20, of Kingston, NY
 1st Lt. Timothy J. Steele, 25, of Duxbury, MA
 Sgt. Andrew R. Tobin, 24, of Jacksonville, IL
 Pfc. Brandon S. Mullins, 21, of Owensboro, KY
 Pfc. Jesse W. Dietrich, 20, of Venus, TX
 Spc. Michael C. Roberts, 23, of Watauga, TX
 Spc. Douglas J. Green, 23, of Sterling, VA
 Pfc. Alberto L. Obod Jr., 26, of Orlando, FL
 Sgt. Devin J. Daniels, 22, of Kuna, ID
 Sgt. Colby L. Richmond, 28, of Providence, NC
 Spc. Kevin R. Shumaker

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Who Is This?

Remember the little girl a few pages back having her birthday party? Have you guessed who it is yet?

It is Pat Wilson-Perkins!!! There she is on the far right of the picture! She is from Connecticut and began CT 4 a few years ago. She has been serving them as their president and has also been serving as an Officer of the Big Dipper BSMoA Auxiliary! Last year Pat was the Big Dipper Sergeant at Arms and this year she is serving as First Vice President. Pat has three sons: Dave Jr., and twins, Tom and Jim. Dave Jr. is a Major in the Army Ready Reserves. He's 36. He's a lawyer in Manhattan when he's not activated. Tom is a civilian and is 2 minutes older than his twin brother Jim. They are both 27. Jim is a Captain. He's active duty. He was a Combat Engineer but changed to Infantry to go to Special Forces training, where he is now. He should graduate next May.



THANK YOU, PAT!!



Pat's son Dave



Pat at Big Dipper Fun Night!



Pat's son Jim with his dad

Our hearts shatter as we face each loss of our precious children that are serving. We watch the days of their youth slip by as they become the men and women who guard our nation and secure the world. And when they give all, we mourn not only their loss, but the loss of future days, unborn grandchildren, and daily joys that should have belonged to them. Each child – each loss. We mourn. Yet today, may we take a moment to remember the tremendous grief of our nation and the loved ones of those who were recently killed when their CH-47 Chinook was shot out of the sky. We all felt the horror, the heartache, the sick waves of disbelief. So many of us waiting in fear. It was the deadliest single loss for our troops since the war in Afghanistan began in 2001. Yet, stand strong, it is our place to care for and uphold their loved ones. It is our place to bring hope, comfort, and peace to our nation. As we travel the journey, may we be in prayer and may we remember the enthusiasm, strength, and courage that can so readily be seen on each of their faces in the pictures we see. The pride and spirit that lived within them can live among us, if we will but let it. I pray for your strength and for your wisdom, for there are many that need you now. Our children are the finest! They reach for the stars! They will always be our heroes! Live the journey they have given us to live! Praying for you, *Rev. Lin*

DAYS YOU MAY WISH TO OBSERVE, CELEBRATE, OR REMEMBER IN SEPTEMBER

September is Women of Achievement Month! September is National Preparedness Month!

The President has proclaimed September as National Childhood, Ovarian, and Prostate Cancer Awareness Month!

- September 01, 1752 -- The Liberty Bell arrived in Philadelphia.
- September 01, 1939 -- German army invaded Poland, marking the beginning of World War II.
- September 01, 1945 -- Japan surrenders ending WW II (US date 9/1; 9/2 in Japan).
- September 02, 1789 -- The US Treasury Department is established.
- September 02, 1901 -- US Vice President Theodore Roosevelt makes his famous "Speak softly and carry a big stick" speech at the Minnesota State Fair.
- September 03, 1777 -- The American Flag was flown in battle for the first time at Cooch's Bridge, a skirmish of the American Revolutionary War. (New Castle County, Delaware)
- September 03, 1783 -- The Treaty of Paris was signed, ending the Revolutionary War.
- September 03, 1826 -- USS Vincennes leaves NY to become the first US warship to circumnavigate the globe.
- September 04, 1950 -- First helicopter rescue of American pilot behind enemy lines (Korea).
- September 04, 1975 -- Sinai Interim Agreement is signed by Egypt and Israel -- stating that the conflicts between the countries "shall not be resolved by military force but by peaceful means."
- September 05, 1978 -- Camp David Accords: Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat begin peace talks at Camp David, MD.
- September 05, 1882 -- 10,000 workers participate in New York City in the first US Labor Day parade.
- **September 05, 2011 -- Labor Day (Federal Holiday - First Monday in September)**
- September 06, 1620 -- The Pilgrims sail from Plymouth, England, on the Mayflower to settle in North America.
- September 06, 1628 -- The Puritans settle Salem, which will later become part of Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- September 06, 1870 -- Louisa Ann Swain of Laramie, Wyoming was the first woman to vote in a general election in the United States.
- September 06, 1901 -- Assassination of President William McKinley by Anarchist Leon Czolgosz at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, NY.
- September 07, 1977 -- The Torrijos-Carter Treaties were signed between Panama and the United States on the status of the Panama Canal, guaranteeing Panama control of the Panama Canal after 1999.
- September 08, 1565 -- First permanent settlement in US formed (St Augustine, Florida).
- September 08, 1945 -- Cold War: United States troops arrive in Korea to partition the country.
- September 09, 1850 -- California becomes the 31st state admitted to the US.
- September 09, 1942 -- The first bombing on continental US soil, Mount Emily OR (WW2).
- September 09, 1948 -- North Korea (The People's Democratic Republic of Korea) is established.
- **September 10, 2011 -- World Suicide Prevention Day**
- September 10, 1608 -- John Smith elected president of Jamestown colony council, VA.
- September 10, 1913 -- The Lincoln Highway opens as the first paved coast-to-coast highway in the US.
- September 10, 1990 -- Iran and Iraq agree to resume full diplomatic ties with one another.
- September 10, 2007 -- Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returns to Pakistan after seven years in exile, following a military coup in October 1999.
- **September 11, 2011 -- Grandparents Day**
- September 11, 1789 -- First US Secretary of the Treasury takes office, Alexander Hamilton.
- September 11, 1922 -- British mandate of Palestine began.
- September 11, 1941 -- Ground breaking for the construction of The Pentagon.
- September 11, 1944 -- World War II: the first allied troops of the U.S. Army cross the western border of Nazi Germany.
- September 11, 1965 -- The 1st Cavalry Division of the United States Army arrives in Vietnam.
- September 11, 1990 -- President George W. H. Bush gives nationally televised speech, threatening to use force in removing Iraqi soldiers from Kuwait. (Gulf War)
- **September 11, 2001 Attack on America:**
- September 11, 2001 8:45 a.m. -- A hijacked passenger jet, American Flight 11, crashes into the north tower of the World Trade Center.
- September 11, 2001 9:03 a.m. -- A second hijacked airliner, United Flight 175, crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center.
- September 11, 2001 9:30 a.m. -- President George Bush, speaking in Florida, says the country has suffered an "apparent terrorist attack." The FAA halts all flight operations at US airports (first time in U.S. history air traffic has been stopped nationwide).
- September 11, 2001 9:37 a.m. -- A third hijacked aircraft, American Airlines Flight 77, crashes into the Pentagon.

- September 11, 2001 10:00 a.m. – The United States military is placed on high alert worldwide.
- September 11, 2001 10:05 a.m. -- The south tower of the World Trade Center collapses.
- September 11, 2001 10:10 a.m. -- A portion of the Pentagon collapses.
- September 11, 2001 10:10 a.m. -- United Airlines Flight 93 crashes in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.
- September 11, 2001 10:28 a.m. -- The World Trade Center's north tower collapses.
- September 11, 2001 10:45 a.m. -- All federal office buildings in Washington are evacuated.
- September 11, 2001 11:18 a.m. -- American Airlines reports it has lost two aircraft: American Flight 11 (a Boeing 767 flying from Boston to Los Angeles with 81 passengers and 11 crew members aboard) and Flight 77 (a Boeing 757 on route from Washington's Dulles International Airport to Los Angeles with 58 passengers and six crew members aboard). It was Flight 11 that flew into the north tower of the World Trade Center and Flight 77 that hit the Pentagon.
- September 11, 2001 11:26 a.m. -- United Airlines reports that United Flight 93 (on route from Newark, NJ, to San Francisco, CA, has crashed in Pennsylvania, southeast of Pittsburgh. United also says that it is "deeply concerned" about their Flight 175.
- September 11, 2001 11:59 a.m. -- United Airlines gives confirmation that Flight 175, on route from Boston, MA, to Los Angeles, CA, has crashed with 56 passengers and nine crew members aboard.
- September 11, 2001 12:00 pm – President George Bush arrived Barksdale Air Force Base, LA, aboard Air Force One from Sarasota, FL.
- September 11, 2001 1:04 p.m. – President George Bush, speaking from Barksdale Air Force Base, stated that all security measures are being taken.
- September 11, 2001 1:48 p.m. -- President George Bush leaves Barksdale Air Force Base, LA, aboard Air Force One and flies to Offutt Air Force Base, NE.
- September 11, 2001 4:33 p.m. – President George Bush leaves Offutt Air Force Base, NE, aboard Air Force One and flies to Washington, DC.
- September 11, 2001 5:20 p.m. -- Building 7 of the World Trade Center complex collapses.
- September 11, 2001 6:46 p.m. -- President George Bush arrives back at the White House.
- September 11, 2001 8:30 p.m. – President George Bush gives his address to the nation.
- September 11, 2001 8:35 p.m. – President Bush meets with his full National Security Council.
- **September 11, 2011 -- Patriot Day**
- **September 11, 2011 -- 10th Anniversary of 9/11**
- September 11, 2002 -- Exactly one year after the attack on the Pentagon, it is rededicated after repairs are completed.
- September 12, 1990 -- US, England, France, USSR, East and West Germanys sign agreements allowing East and West Germany to reunite.
- September 12, 1994 -- Frank Eugene Corder crashes a Cessna 150 into the White House's south lawn, striking the West wing and killing himself.
- September 12, 2001 -- Article V of the NATO agreement is invoked for the second time in history (the other being in Bosnia) in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks against the United States of America.
- September 13, 1788 -- The United States Philadelphia Convention sets the date for the country's first presidential election, with New York City becoming the temporary capital of the U.S..
- September 13, 1814 -- Francis Scott Key is inspired to write The Star-Spangled Banner.
- September 13, 1814 -- The British fail to capture Baltimore, Maryland. Turning point in the War of 1812.
- September 13, 1948 -- Margaret Chase Smith is elected senator, and becomes the first woman to serve in both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate.
- September 13, 1993 -- Public unveiling of the Oslo Accords, an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement initiated by Norway.
- September 13, 2001 -- Civilian aircraft traffic resumes in the United States after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.
- September 14, 1901 -- President Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration.
- September 14, 2001 -- Historic National Prayer Service held at Washington National Cathedral for victims of the September 11 attacks.
- September 15, 1789 – The Department of Foreign Affairs is renamed the Department of State.
- September 15, 1916 -- World War I: Tanks are used for the first time in battle (Battle of the Somme).
- September 15, 1857 – Birthday, President William H. Taft (27th US President)
- September 16, 1919 -- American Legion incorporated by an act of Congress
- **September 16, 2011 -- Mayflower Day**
- **September 16, 2011 -- National POW/MIA Recognition Day**
- September 17, 1787 -- The United States Constitution is signed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- September 17, 1947 -- James V. Forrestal was sworn in as the first Secretary of Defense of the United States.
- September 17, 1978 -- The Camp David Accords were signed by Israel and Egypt.
- **September 17, 2011 – US Citizenship Day (observed September 16)**
- **September 17, 2011 – US Constitution Day (observed September 16)**

- **September 18 – United States Air Force Birthday**

- September 18, 1964 -- North Vietnamese Army begins infiltration of South Vietnam.
- September 18, 1987 -- Ronald Reagan announces joint destruction of nuclear warheads by USA and USSR.
- September 18, 2007 -- President General Pervez Musharraf announces that he will step down as army chief and restore civilian rule to Pakistan, but only after he is re-elected president.
- September 19, 1787 – The proposed Constitution for the United States is made public and printed copies are distributed.
- September 20, 2001 -- In an address to a joint session of Congress and the American People president George W. Bush declares "war on terror".
- September 20, 1881 -- Chester A. Arthur sworn in as president.
- September 20, 1884 -- Equal Rights Party nominates female candidates for President & Vice President.
- September 21, 1922 -- President Warren G. Harding signs a joint resolution of approval to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

- **September 21, 2011 – International Day of Peace.**

- September 21, 1953 -- Allied forces form West Germany.
- September 21, 1961 – First flight of the CH-47 Chinook transportation helicopter.
- September 22, 1789 – Congress passed the Federal Judiciary Act, which established a six man Supreme Court, the Attorney General Office, 13 federal district courts, and 3 circuit courts.
- September 22, 1863 President Lincoln makes his Emancipation Proclamation speech.
- September 22, 1975 -- Sara Jane Moore tries to assassinate President Ford in San Francisco, CA.
- September 22, 1980 -- Iraqi troops seize part of Iran in a border dispute; war begins.
- September 22, 1980 -- USS Eisenhower and Midway continued contingency operations in the northern Arabian Sea as war erupted between Iraq and Iran.
- September 22, 2006 -- Hezbollah claims "Divine Victory" over Israel in a massive demonstration in Beirut.

- **September 23, 2011 – Native American Day**

- September 24, 1862 -- Confederate Congress adopts confederacy seal.
- September 25, 1789 – Congress submits proposal for twelve constitutional amendments to the states for ratification. (Bill of Rights)

- **September 25, 2011 -- Gold Star Mothers Sunday**

- September 25, 1804 -- 12th amendment to the US constitution. (Provides the procedure for electing the President and the Vice President.)
- September 25, 1939 – Andorra and Germany signed an official treaty ending WWI, as Andorra had been left out of the original treaty in 1919, the Versailles Peace Treaty (they all had forgotten to include Andorra).
- September 25, 1940 -- The Selective Training and Service Act was passed by Congress which established the first peacetime draft in US history.
- September 25, 1981 -- Sandra Day O'Connor was the 102nd Justice sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the first woman to hold the office.
- September 26, 1789 -- Thomas Jefferson is appointed the first United States Secretary of State, John Jay is appointed the first Chief Justice of the United States, Samuel Osgood is appointed the first United States Postmaster General, and Edmund Randolph is appointed the first United States Attorney General.
- September 26, 1914 -- The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is established by the Federal Trade Commission Act.
- September 26, 1914 – UN troops in the Korean War recapture South Korean capital of Seoul from the North Koreans.
- September 27, 1777 – Lancaster, Pennsylvania is the capital of the United States for one day.
- September 27, 1941 – Liberty Fleet Day; the first WW II Liberty ship is launched, the SS Patrick Henry.
- September 27, 1996 -- In Afghanistan, the Taliban capture the capital city Kabul after driving out President Burhanuddin Rabbani and executing former leader Mohammad Najibullah.
- September 28, 1787 – Congress votes to send the newly completed United States Constitution to the state legislatures for approval. (Nine states are needed.)
- September 28, 1906 -- US troops reoccupy Cuba, stay until 1909.
- September 28, 1961 -- A military coup in Damascus effectively ends the United Arab Republic, the union between Egypt and Syria.
- September 28, 1978 -- Israeli Knesset endorses Camp David accord.
- September 29, 1789 -- The US War Department first established a regular army with several 1,000 men (1 regiment of eight infantry companies and one battalion of four artillery companies).
- September 30, 1980 -- Iran rejects the truce called for from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.