

PERSPECTIVE

Robin Barns McCarthy

Things look different from 10,000 feet. Yes, I said 10,000 feet. I recently had the unique opportunity to jump out of a (perfectly good) plane and parachute 10,000 feet in a tandem jump with an Army Ranger. You have probably already heard about the two octogenarian Blue Star Mothers who also jumped that day—Marge Bryan (83) and Marianna Sherman. [For those of you who attended National Convention last year, they were the two older women from Ohio who carried the flags into the Convention when I was installed as National President—some of you called them the “Queens of Ohio.” I called them the “Blue-Haired Daisies” this year, as we transported them and the other Quarter-Century Moms to the Veterans Day parade in NYC.] They had arranged the tandem jump to raise funds and awareness, in part, for Blue Star Mothers of America.

I want to keep that perspective in my life. The big problems below me (the airport in Lima, that possible “crash” landing site, the big lake next to the runway) truly seemed small from that elevated position. And falling to earth at a screaming 125 mph will give you a REAL facelift; surprisingly, it also lifts your “faith.” I can’t explain it, but it does change your perspective, and the floating part is really quiet and peaceful.

The morning of the jump, just before boarding the plane, the Ranger photographer snapped a picture of me pointing to the P.O.W. bracelet that I have been wearing since Memorial Day weekend. On that yellow bracelet is the name “Sgt BOWE Bergdahl,” the young soldier who was captured in Afghanistan on 6/30/09. When I think of this soldier—still in captivity three years later—and of his mother (Jani) and father (Bob) in Idaho, I get an entirely different perspective on my life and “problems.”

I can’t *imagine* the anguish these two Blue Star parents feel on a daily basis as they think about their son and his current situation. We all thought it was unbearable when our child(ren) went to basic and then advanced training, and eventually got deployed. We have also anguished over the Gold Star families who have received notice of the death of their child(ren). It’s part of our Blue Star Mothers mission to support the families of these fallen heroes, and we all do it with such dignity and aplomb. I often say (somewhat tongue-in-cheek) that Blue Star Mothers are the moms who “sleep with one eye open.” But I imagine the Jani and Bob Bergdahl are Blue Star parents who *never* sleep. Please keep them (and their son Bowe) in your thoughts and prayers. Daily.

So look at your life from a higher elevation. Maybe it will get you through this day with a renewed sense of gratitude for your family, the child(ren) who made you a Blue Star Mother, this organization and your role in it. I sincerely thank you for the blessed opportunity you gave me as National President of BSMA. And I look forward to seeing many of you at the National Convention in August. Until then, I will try to keep my perspective on “things above” and not so much on the negative things around me. I hope you can do the same thing and truly enjoy this wonderful day.



NEWSLETTER ~ June 2012



Ohio Blue Star Mothers Strong



Bowe Bracelet



Care Package Count

How many Care packages will Oklahoma BSM send this year?

May 2012: 335

**Total sent from
OKLAHOMA
9063**

Send packages count to
2vp@okdeptbluestarmother.org

2012 Department Meeting

14 July, 2012

Hosted by
OK21

Cherokee Capital
1286 W. 4th Street
Tahlequah, OK.

POT LUCK LUNCH

Contact:

president@okdeptbluestarmothers.org

Department of
Oklahoma



8th Annual
Convention

October 19-21, 2012

Western Hills Guest Ranch

Hulbert, OK.

(800)368-1486

Call now and reserve your rooms

DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA MEMBERSHIP

~ MAY 2012 ~

New Mothers = 3

New Dads = 0

New Associates = 0

State Total BSM = 435

Associates & Dad = 334

State Total Roster = 769

OK5

Broken Arrow

Blue Star Mothers of America



On Saturday, May 26th BA Chapter 5 attended the ceremony honoring those Veterans that passed away this past year. Their flags were raised for the first time.

On Monday, May 28th, we assisted the Boy Scouts from Indian Nations Council in helping to lower and fold 3053 flags at Floral Haven Cemetery; This was the 40th Anniversary of the Avenue of Flags. It was a beautiful weekend.



Avenue of Flags



Return Trip To Bethesda for Connecticut Military Mom



Nancy Bentley-Wennberg of Connecticut Blue Star Mothers, CT 1, will be making a return trip to Bethesda in June to visit with our wounded heroes. This past March, Nancy, gathered cards of cheer from her chapter and other military support groups, loaded them into her suitcase, and set off for her first journey. She hand delivered the cards while there, greeting everyone with a smile, as she served at a luncheon on the combat surgical ward. We know these special warriors enjoyed seeing Nancy and reading the messages of honor she brought. We anxiously await hearing about her upcoming journey upon her return in July. Thank you, Nancy, for bringing our hearts, notes, and love to those to whom we owe so much! Love and appreciation from all the Members of CT 1. (Nancy has served as Recording Secretary for the Connecticut Blue Star Mothers, CT 1, chapter for the past several years.)



KS 4

Memorial Day service at the Kansas Veterans' Cemetery at Fort Dodge, KS. Blue Star Mothers of Southwest Kansas participated in the service. One picture is of the Patriot Guard Flag Line and the other is of BSMs Jan Allen and Margaret Butcher assisting securing a memorial wreath in 50 mph winds. :)
Just another day in Western Kansas.



SPECIAL DAYS OF OBSERVANCE OR CELEBRATION IN JULY

- July 2, 1926 ~ US Army Air Corps created (forerunning os US Air Force)
- July 2, 1926 ~ Distinguish Flying Cross authorized
- July 2, 1976 ~ North and South Vietnam, divided since 1954, reunite to form the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
- July 3, 1890 ~ Idaho becomes the 43rd State
- **July 4, 2012 ~ Independence Day**
- July 10, 1890 ~ Wyoming becomes the 44th State
- July 11, 1798 ~ United States Marine Corps is re-established under the Constitution; they had been disbanded after the American Revolutionary War
- July 11, 1921 ~ Former US President William Howard Taft sworn in as 10th Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, becoming the only person to ever be both President and Chief Justice
- July 26, 1788 ~ New York becomes the 11th State
- July 30, 1909 ~ US Army accepts delivery of first military airplane



SGT Bowe Bergdahl

FATE

Anita Wagner
Spirit of Freedom, OH 1



SGT Andrew Trevor Britton-Mihalo

I traveled to Washington DC for the events in our nation's capitol this past Memorial Day weekend like I have since 2005. With each trip I take away a different thought, a different experience. The visits are never the same.

My first trip was filled with camaraderie. I met Blue Star Mothers and Gold Star Mothers from all over the country, who like me, had come to honor those who had given their all and paid the ultimate price. Many of these women I see every year when I return.

I have had the honor of representing Blue Star Mothers when meeting with the President of the United States and when laying a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I have been moved to tears at the candle light vigil walk to the Vietnam Wall with thousands of Vietnam veterans. Two years ago my daughter SSgt Jennifer Fleischman, USAF, was able to come to DC with her husband TSgt Reuben Fleischman, USAF, and she honored me by participating in the vigil (in the pouring rain) in her uniform.

I have listened to stories of Gold Star parents, Gold Star wives, fellow Blue Star Mothers and veterans of our nation's wars. I have put a face to the places we read about in history books and see on the news.

This year I sat at the annual Rolling Thunder banquet and listened to Bob Bergdahl speak about his son SGT Bowe Bergdahl, US Army. Bowe has been a POW since 6/30/2009. Bob spoke of the work that is on going to bring his son home. He spoke of the millions of people around the country who are praying for the safe return of his son.

As he spoke to us, he ran to a very large US flag and held on to it saying, "This is what we all fight for...." He then ran to an equally large POW/MIA banner and held it saying, "This is what I fight for." He pointed to the silhouette of that lone POW and said, "This is MY son"!! There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

I told myself that this weekend I was NOT going to check my email. There was nothing that couldn't wait until I returned home. As I walked by the business center at my hotel on Sunday, I caved. There was a gentleman there doing the same thing. As I read of yet another casualty, I made a comment out loud. He looked at me and said, "Bad news"? I explained who I was and what I had just read.

He told me that he was not in DC for a vacation either. He shared that he had just buried his son on Friday. As I expressed my sympathy, he showed me a Facebook page filled with loving comments and expressions of care and sympathy from hundreds of friends. He shared pictures of his son's solemn burial at Arlington. Was he angry? Yes, but surprisingly not as bitter as I thought.

I told him that every member of Blue Star Mothers is remembering his son along with all the sons and daughters who have died from these wars. He looked at me and said, "My wife is now a Gold Star Mother." I agreed with him but told him that in our hearts she would always be a Blue Star Mother.

As I left that room I shared with him that I wasn't going to check my mail during my stay in Washington and that something or someone had other plans for me. I told him that it was fate that brought me there to meet him.

On Memorial Day I visited section 60 of Arlington Cemetery, the final resting place of many of those lost in the Iraq/Afghanistan war. Of the hundreds of graves, I knew immediately which one was SGT Andrew Britton Mihalo. It was the newest one, the one with the blanket of flowers that his father had shown me.

As I looked at that sad sight, I was struck by the comment each father had made that was almost the same, word for word. Both Bob Bergdahl and Bill Mihalo shared this comment about their sons - and our sons and daughters, "They were doing what they wanted to do."

As I look at the pictures below I am struck by this thought - one father doesn't know where his son is...one father does. Which is harder? Knowing or Not Knowing?

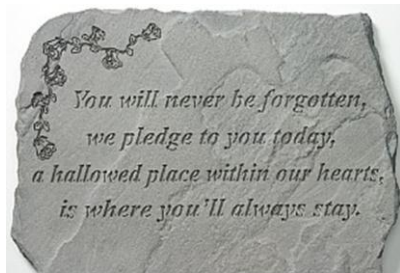
Perhaps it was fate that I met them both this weekend.

Fate defines events as ordered or "inevitable" and unavoidable.



The days come
And the days go
The ocean ebbs and flows.

It seems all life goes on
Except the one I understood
That one does not seem as it should.



I look for you but you are not there
You, my hope, my joy, my love, my life
Now I stand alone in this darkness and strife.

Yet the days of sorrow will one day end
For your spirit lives in all I say and do
And one day I will again be with you.



Heroes Of the United States Killed In Action June 2012 DOD Reporting



Staff Sgt. Roberto Loeza, 28, El Paso, TX
Staff Sgt. Alexander G. Povilaitis, 47, Dawsonville, GA
Spc. Kedith L. Jacobs, 21, Denver, CO
Pfc. Leroy Deronde III, 22, Jersey City, NJ
Spc. Gerardo Campos, 23, Miami, FL
Lance Cpl. Joshua E. Witsman, 23, Covington, IN
Pfc. Vincent J. Ellis, 22, Tokyo, Japan
Capt. Scott P. Pace, 33, Brawley, CA
1st Lt. Mathew G. Fazzari, 25, Walla Walla, WA
Cpl. Anthony R. Servin, 22, Moreno Valley, CA
Pfc. Brandon D. Goodine, 20, Luthersville, GA
MCPON Richard J. Kessler Jr., 47, Gulfport, FL
Pfc. Nathan T. Davis, 20, Yucaipa, CA
Spc. Bryant J. Luxmore, 25, New Windsor, IL
Cpl. Taylor J. Baune, 21, Andover, MN
SFC Barrett W. McNabb, 33, Chino Valley, AZ

Sgt. Nicholas C. Fredsti, 30, San Diego, CA
Sgt. Joseph M. Lilly, 25, Flint, MI
Spc. Trevor A. Pinnick, 20, Lawrenceville, IL
Pfc. Jarrod A. Lallier, 20, Spokane, WA
1st Lt. Ryan D. Rawl, 30, Lexington, SC
SFC Matthew B. Thomas, 30, Travelers Rest, SC
Spc. John D. Meador II, 36, Columbia, SC
Sgt. Jose Rodriguez, 22, Gustine, CA
Lance Cpl. Eugene C. Mills III, 21, Laurel, MD
Maj. Paul C. Voelke, 36, Monroe, NY
Pfc. Steven P. Stevens II, 23, Tallahassee, FL
Lance Cpl. Hunter D. Hogan, 21, Norman, IN
Lance Cpl. Niall W. Coti-Sears, 23, Arlington, VA
Staff Sgt. Matthew J. Leach, 29, Ferndale, MI
1st Lt. Stephen C. Prasnicki, 24, Lexington, VA,
Sgt. James L. Skalberg Jr., 25, Cullman, AL



BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA, Inc.

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