



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.



Newsletter, May 2012

“Defining Moment”

By Robin Barnes McCarthy, National President

It was a remarkable weekend in Washington, D.C., celebrating Memorial Day at our nation’s capitol. It is clearly exciting to meet the celebrities present over the holiday, to see the masses of motorcycles from Rolling Thunder who ride through the City on Sunday, to visit the various memorials and attend the special concerts and events scheduled throughout the weekend. I was honored to be there, representing BSMA as your National President.

But for me, the defining moment was at Arlington. Yes, there is the official televised ceremony on Memorial Day, when the President of the United States addresses the visitors in the main amphitheater. And he presents a wreath to the Honor Guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns. We, too, presented a wreath after the President had spoken to us, following immediately behind the American Gold Star Mothers and the Gold Star Wives.

However, the most moving images that still circulate in my memory are those of the families of our fallen heroes, sitting at the gravesites, writing letters to their loved ones, crying softly, or just waiting there in silent vigil. Area 60, which is the designated spot in the Cemetery where our OIF/OEF heroes are being buried, was colorful and festooned in red-white-and-blue balloons and ribbons. Headstones had little rocks on them, to indicate when someone had visited the grave to pay tribute. Many family members had left pictures or notes there, and of course, there were the flowers. Dozens and dozens of roses, carnations, baby’s breath and greens adorn the spots where these young men and women were laid to rest.

Widow



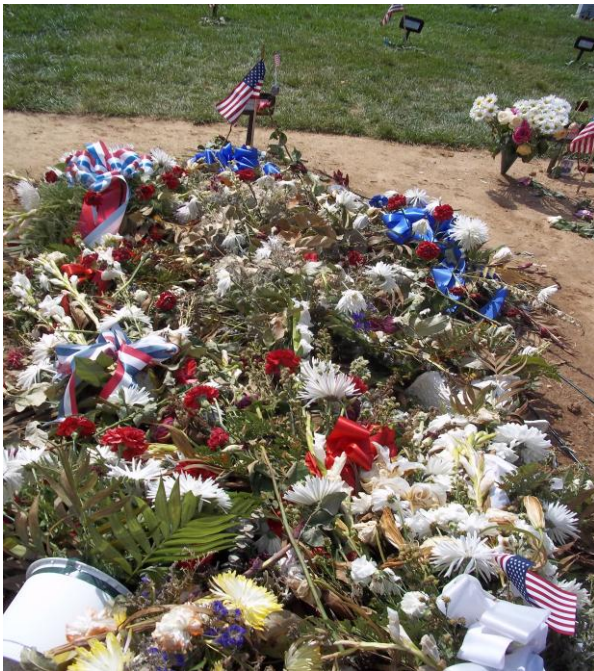
Blue Star Mother



Blue Star Dad



Casualty



Arlington National Cemetery



Memorial Day
May 28, 2012

In this article I include five pictures of Arlington:

- One is of a young widow sitting on the grave of her deceased husband, writing him (presumably) a love letter.
- The second is a picture of a Blue Star Mother, sitting on a blanket before her son's tombstone—who can imagine her pain?
- The third image is that of a father whose son was killed near the start of the war in Iraq. He told me he visits the site three or four times a year. He was sitting in silence on a lawn chair, facing the tombstone. I get choked up just writing about it.
- The fourth picture is the grave of a fallen hero who was buried on Friday before Memorial Day. There isn't even any sod yet on his grave, and of course, no headstone—only a plastic marker bearing his name, rank and branch of Service. You will notice that even the wreaths of flowers are still fresh and have their color.
- The final image is a headstone, which speaks for itself. I'll let you decide what its message is.

Arlington was a “defining moment” for me—its grace and beauty—and my life has been forever changed by it. I will never forget the images. And I will return, in years to come, to that place on the day set aside to honor our military dead. May God bless our troops, our veterans, and the families of our fallen heroes.

(See my FaceBook Page for more images of Memorial Day.)

Kisses





FALLEN HEROES

DOD ~ May 2012



Sgt. Nicholas M. Dickhut, Rochester, MN
Capt. Bruce K. Clark, Spencerport, NY
Staff Sgt. Zachary H. Hargrove, Wichita, KS
Master Sgt. Gregory L. Childs, Warren, Ar
Sgt. John P. Huling, 25, West Chester, OH
Staff Sgt. Thomas K. Fogarty, Alameda, CA
2nd Lt. David E. Rylander, Stow, OH
Spc. Junot M. L. Cochilus, Charlotte, NC
Sgt. Jacob M. Schwallie, Clarksville, TN
Spc. Chase S. Marta, Chico, CA
Pfc. Dustin D. Gross, Jeffersonville, KY
PO2 Jorge Luis Velasquez, Houston, TX
1st Lt. Alejo R. Thompson, Yuma, AZ
Sgt. Wade D. Wilson, Normangee, TX
Spc. Alex Hernandez III, of Round Rock, TX
Spc. Vilmar Galarza Hernandez, Salinas, CA
Sgt. Brian L. Walker, Lucerne Valley, CA
Pfc. Richard L. McNulty III, Rolla, MO
Staff Sgt. Israel P. Nuanes, Las Cruces, NM

Sgt. Michael J. Knapp, Overland Park, KS
Sgt. Jabraun S. Knox, Fort Wayne, IN
Capt. Jesse A. Ozbat, Prince George, VA
2nd Lt. Tobias C. Alexander, Lawton, OK
Spc. Samuel T. Watts, Wheaton, IL
Spc. Arronn D. Fields, Terre Haute, IN
2nd Lt. Travis A. Morgado, San Jose, CA
PO1 Class Ryan J. Wilson, Shasta, CA
Pfc. Cale C. Miller, Overland Park, KS
Cpl. Keaton G. Coffey, Boring, OR
Hospitalman Eric D. Warren, Shawnee, OK
Spc. Vilmar Galarza Hernandez, Salinas, CA
Spc. Tofiga J. Tautolo, Wilmington, CA
Capt. John R. Brainard, Dover-Foxcroft, ME
CW5 John C. Pratt, Springfield, VA
Sgt. Julian C. Chase, Edgewater, MD
Lance Cpl. Steven G. Sutton, Leesburg, GA
Cpl. Nicholas H. Olivas, Fairfield, OH
PO2 Sean E. Brazas, Greensboro, NC

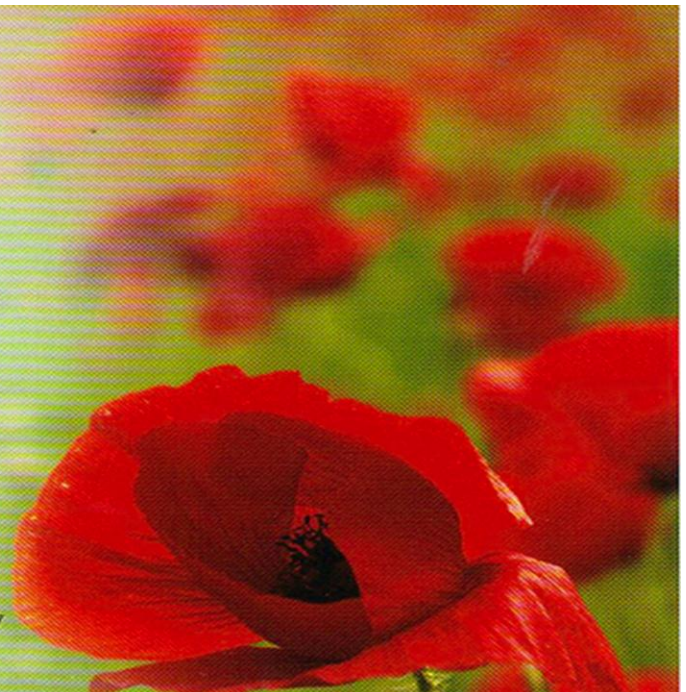
IN FLANDERS FIELDS

by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



MEMORIAL DAY

In the United States, we set aside 'Memorial Day' to remember and give honor too all those who have given their lives in the military service of our country. Memorial Day is a Federal Holiday, and is presently observed on the last Monday in the month of May each year.

Since 1950, the President of the United States has issued, in accordance with Congressional joint resolution (see US Code Title 36, Subtitle I, Section 116), a Presidential Proclamation which calls all Americans to a solemn remembrance of our beloved heroes. The most recent Proclamation (2012) reads in part:

"Since our Nation's founding, America's sons and daughters have given their lives in service to our country. From Concord and Gettysburg to Marne and Normandy, from Inchon and Khe Sanh to Baghdad and Kandahar, they departed our world as heroes and gave their lives for a cause greater than themselves. On Memorial Day, we pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate price to defend the United States and the principles upon which America was founded. In honor of our country's fallen, I encourage all Americans to unite at 3:00 p.m. local time to observe a National Moment of Remembrance. Today, Americans from all backgrounds and corners of our country serve with valor, courage, and distinction in the United States Armed Forces. They stand shoulder to shoulder with the giants of our Nation's history, writing their own chapter in the American story. Many of today's warriors know what it means to lose a friend too soon, and all our service members and their families understand the true meaning of sacrifice. This Memorial Day, we express our deepest appreciation to the men and women in uniform who gave their last full measure of devotion so we might live in freedom. We cherish their memory and pray for the peace for which they laid down their lives. We mourn with the families and friends of those we have lost, and hope they find comfort in knowing their loved ones died with honor. We ask for God's grace to protect those fighting in distant lands, and we renew our promise to support our troops, their families, and our veterans. Their unwavering devotion inspires us all -- they are the best of America."

The Proclamations request Americans to unite to pray for permanent peace, usually designating a particular time for that prayer. American flags are flown at half-staff from dawn until noon throughout our land. And, in accordance with The National Moment of Remembrance Act (Public Law 106-579 -- signed into law in December of 2000), each American is asked to pause at 3:00 pm (local time) to remember those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in the military service of our country.

Memorial Day is sometimes still referred to by its original name, 'Decoration Day' ~ called thus, in relation to the practice of 'decorating' the graves of Civil War soldiers with flowers. These annual Spring time tributes began in May of 1866 and were observed in both the north and the south. On May 5, 1868, Major General John Logan, the National Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (a Veterans Organization), issued General Order No. 11, proclaiming May 30th 'Decoration Day' nationwide:

"The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

The first celebration of such was held at Arlington National Cemetery on May 30, 1868, with General James Garfield giving the tribute speech on the veranda of what was once the home of General Robert E. Lee. More than 20,000 graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers laying at rest on the hallowed ground of Arlington were then decorated by those who had come to pay honor.

Over time, some twenty-five cities stepped forward claiming to be the 1866 'birth place' of the observance of this great tribute. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson and our federal government declared it to be Waterloo, N.Y., giving it this distinguished honor.

After World War I, those to be honored by this observance broadened to include the fallen of all American wars. In 1882 the name 'Memorial Day' began being used, growing in popularity particularly after World War II, and becoming the 'official name' under Federal Law in 1967.

The Uniform Holiday Bill, passed by Congress on June 28, 1968, moved the observance of 'Memorial Day' from the date of May 30th to the last Monday in the month of May. (Said Federal Law taking effect on the federal level in 1971; Public Law 90-363.)

Since that time, many have been advocating to have the observance returned to the traditional date. Beginning in 1987, Hawaii's Senator Daniel Inouye has introduced measures at the Congressional level to do so. The 2002 Memorial Day Address of the Veterans Of Foreign Wars states:

"Changing the date merely to create three-day weekends has undermined the very meaning of the day. No doubt, this has contributed a lot to the general public's nonchalant observance of Memorial Day."

To this day, the national ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery continues annually, with the President or Vice-President of the United States speaking to the thousands who have gathered to honor our war dead. Wreaths are laid at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers and American flags are placed on graves across the Cemetery. People across our land visit cemeteries, march in parades, and attend events to signify their great debt of gratitude to those who have given so much that we might live in the Land of The Free!

Moina Michael, who initiated the idea and was the first to wear a red Poppy on Memorial Day, also wrote this poem in 1915 in response to the famous 'In Flanders Field':

**We cherish too, the Poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led,
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies.**

Bury me with Soldiers

I've played a lot of roles in life; I've met a lot of men. I've done some things I'd like to think I wouldn't do again. And though I'm young, I'm old enough To know some day I'll die, And to think about what lies beyond, Besides whom I would lie. Perhaps it doesn't matter much; Still, if I had my choice, I'd want a grave 'mongst soldiers when At last death quells my voice. I'm sick of the hypocrisy Of lectures of the wise. I'll take the man, with all the flaws, Who goes, though scared, and dies. The troops I knew were commonplace They didn't want the war; They fought because their fathers and Their fathers had before. They cursed and killed and wept--- God knows They're easy to deride-- But bury me with men like these; They faced the guns and died. It's funny when you think of it, The way we got along. We'd come from different worlds To live in one no one belongs. I didn't even like them all; I'm sure they'd all agree. Yet I would give my life for them, I hope some did for me. So bury me with soldiers, please, Though much maligned they be. Yes, bury me with soldiers, for I miss their company. We'll not soon see their likes again; We've had our fill of war. But bury me with men like them Till someone else does more. ~ Author Unknown ~

Blue Star Mothers HOME CA 30

May 2012 Events & Recognitions

•Mother's Day Cake Give Away Event Sponsored by Tasteful Cakes, Corona, CA

www.tastefulcakes.com

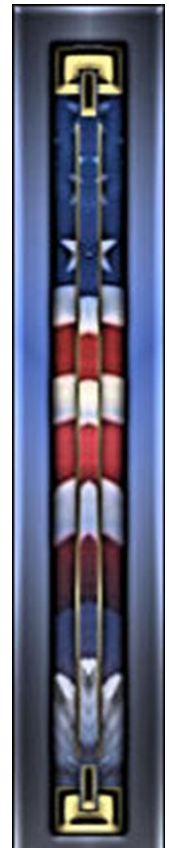
5/11/12



Below: some of our appreciative moms with one of the owners of Tasteful Cakes, Eddie Surman



Below: Some of the 150 Blue and Gold Star Moms at the event shown in front of our "Hero's Wall"



Blue Star Mothers HOME CA 30

May 2012 Events & Recognitions:

•May Declared "Blue Star Mother's" Month By The State of California, City of Corona and Eastvale, California

During The Ceremony At The Capitol In Sacramento



Above (L to Right): Barbara Madrid, 1st VP, Teri Figueroa, 2nd VP/Fundraising, Tandra Johnson, President and Margie Harper, 2nd VP with Proclamation, after The Ceremony, Capitol Building, State Of California.

Tandra Johnson, after the ceremony



Blue Star Mothers HOME CA 30

May 2012 Events & Recognitions:

•May Declared "Blue Star Mother's" Month By The State of California, City of Corona and Eastvale, California



Outside City of Corona Council Chambers with Proclamation

Back Row: Jennifer Buchannan, Moira Fisher

Front Row: Teri Figueroa, Margie Harper, Barbara Madrid, Tandra Johnson, Christy Payne and Annie Lara



Outside City of Eastvale Council Chambers with Proclamation

Back Row: Teresa Williamson, Cj Wallace

Front Row: Pam Zirbel, Christine Haley, Robin Rooker, Margie Harper, Annie Lara



Please submit articles for the Newsletter.

Blue Star Mothers across the country would like to see what our Chapters are doing. Get to know other mothers, share information, learn new things.

Submissions are due by the 15th of June for the June newsletter and July 15th for the July newsletter.

Send pictures, articles, poems, and other things of interest to: Newsletter Editor, Second Vice President:

Rev. Lin McGee at Rev.Lin.McGee@gmail.com

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

MINNESOTA CHAPTER FEATURED IN LANDSTUHL HOSPITAL CARE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Supporting Our Troops Through Fundraisers & Drives

Organizations, businesses, and individuals around the country support our troops by donating proceeds to Landstuhl Hospital Care Project. Here are a few of the fundraisers and drives held in 2012. Thank you to all who contribute!

Blue Star Moms of Minnesota's Newest Chapter



Blue Star Mothers (BSM) is an organization for women who have served or are serving in the military. They are made up of local chapters across the United States which are organized into departments.

These special mothers provide emotional support to each other, support our troops stateside and overseas, volunteer with veterans and veteran hospitals, and generally foster a sense of patriotism and respect for members of the Armed Forces.

Each local chapter decides on their own local projects and what nonprofits they will support. LHCP has been fortunate to have several

BSM chapters support our endeavors. One of our members, Darla Haseltine is a member of a BSM group supporting LHCP. She describes their recent project below:

"One of Minnesota's newest Blue Star Mom chapters has chosen LHCP as its primary service project organization. For our first Chapter Fun Night, we thought we would kick it off with the focus on sending hugs from home by making fleece blankets for our wounded warriors. It was an evening that we certainly want to repeat!

We made 11 blankets filled with prayers, hugs, and probably a kiss or two in one short evening! Even those who could not sew were excited as they made the best



Pictured from left to right is Dawn Vilaysack, Darla Haseltine, and Marilyn Stomberg.

In addition we worked with the Yellow Ribbon Network of Hugo MN as they also help to support LHCP. For this project they teamed with us by covering the shipping of our "Hugs from Home" blankets.

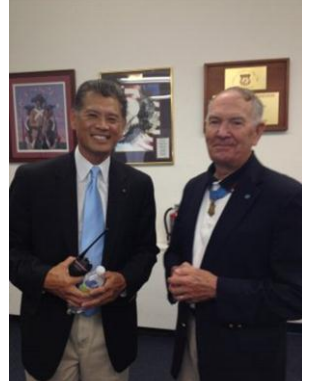
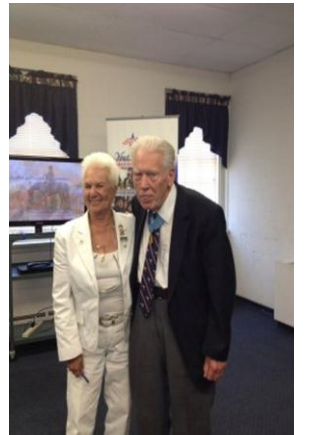
Thanks LHCP for giving us the honor of thanking and supporting our troops."

Dates To Remember or Celebrate in June

- June 1, 1792 ~ Kentucky became the fifteenth state to be admitted to the Union
- June 1, 1796 ~ Tennessee became the sixteenth state to be admitted to the Union.
- June 1, 1812 ~ War of 1812: U.S. President James Madison asks the Congress to declare war on the United Kingdom. (War to be declared by Congress on June 18, 1812)
- June 6, 2012 ~ D-Day
- June 10, 1854 ~ US Naval Academy holds its first graduation in Annapolis, Maryland.
- June 14, 2012 ~ Flag Day
- June 14, 2012 ~ US Army's 237th Birthday
- June 13, 1836 ~ Arkansas became the twenty-fifth state to be admitted to the Union.
- June 17, 1898 ~ Navy Hospital Corps established
- June 17, 2012 ~ Father's Day
- June 20, 1863 ~ West Virginia became the thirty-fifth state to be admitted to the Union.
- June 21, 1788 ~ New Hampshire became the ninth state to be admitted to the Union.
- June 22, 1944 ~ FDR signs "GI Bill of Rights" (Servicemen's Readjustment Act)
- June 25, 1788 ~ Virginia became the tenth state to be admitted to the Union.

Valley Forge Medal of Honor Grove

Submitted by Marian Moran, PA9



ARMY STRONG COMMUNITY CENTER OPENS IN CONNECTICUT

Army Reserve officials and local leaders in Connecticut celebrated the opening of a new Army Strong Community Center on Saturday, May 12, 2012 in Bristol, CT for military members and their families. This is the sixth (and possibly final) Army Strong Community Center that has been established throughout the country.

Among those present at the opening ceremony were US Senator Richard Blumenthal, Brig. Gen. James Young Jr. and his wife, Bristol Mayor Art Ward, The Governor's Foot Guard, members of the American Gold Star Mothers, and Connecticut Blue Star Mothers CT1.

Army Reserve officials say the new center will serve members and veterans of all military branches and their families by offering information, resources and referrals. Officials say Bristol was chosen as the site for the center because a large number of Army Reserve soldiers and their families live in the area.

The center will also help families when their loved ones are deployed. Please visit the Army Strong Community Center for all your military/veteran needs. It is located on the second floor in the City Hall Building, Main Street, Bristol.

