



Blue Star Mothers Bill Signed Into Law

UNITED STATES SENATE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

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*Will Help More Mothers of Military Service Members Join
Support and Service Organization*

Washington, DC – The President today signed into law a bipartisan bill sponsored by U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) in the Senate and Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO) in the House to expand membership in Blue Star Mothers of America to more mothers of current or former military service members

Blue Star Mothers of America is a congressionally-chartered, non-political veterans service organization that supports mothers of service members, promotes patriotism and democracy, and organizes service projects to support the troops.

“Mothers and families of our service members make tremendous sacrifice at home when their sons, daughters, sisters and brothers are deployed,” said Bennet. “Blue Star Mothers is a fantastic way for mothers and families to better support each other and their serving family members. This new law will ensure Blue Star Mothers is open to all types of mothers whose sons and daughters have served in recent conflicts.”

“As a military spouse and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I deeply appreciate the support that our Blue Star Mothers provide not only to our men and women in uniform, but to their families,” said Senator Ayotte. “I am pleased that the President has signed this legislation into law, allowing more women to become involved in this patriotic organization and to support America’s brave service members and their families who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and security.”

“It’s been an honor to carry this legislation in the House and I am proud to see that it is being signed into law,” said Tipton. “We owe our men and women in uniform a tremendous debt of gratitude, as well as their families. The Blue Star Mothers serve an important support role for our troops and veterans, and I am honored to have played a role in helping their organization grow and provide an even greater impact.”

“The structure of families has evolved drastically since our Charter in 1960 or our original founding in 1942,” said Blue Star Mothers President Robin McCarthy. “We recognize the impact made upon the lives of our service men and women by all those maternal caregivers who have played the role of ‘mother’ for them. It has been our intention to include and support them all in the membership of Blue Star Mothers of America.”

Last year, the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. voted to update its charter for the 21st century. It expanded membership opportunities for more women who have supported service members in new conflicts and addressed the composition of today’s family. This law updates the Congressional Charter to reflect that vote and is fully endorsed by the Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

The law updates the Blue Star Mothers Congressional Charter to:

- Include grandmothers, foster mothers, and female legal guardians;
- Expand membership to mothers whose children have served more recently, by removing references to specific conflicts; and
- Expand membership to eligible mothers living outside of the U.S.

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BLUE STAR MOTHERS ~ Eastern Massachusetts ~ MA 2

Caring For Our Military Heroes In The Holiday Season



Meet Fern Sericolo-Panzer A THREE Blue Star Mother

And Her Sons:

Sgt. Mario Sericolo

Cpl. Luciano Sericolo

1st LT Santino Camillo Sericolo



The Christmas Poem She Has Written:

Today my son sleeps all alone in the cold
in the close distance the bombs explode.

A good soldier, a hell of a man
he keeps watch in Afghanistan.

This was his choice, his duty, his calling
I stand proud but tears often are falling.
Each day I pray for GOD to keep him strong
let angels keep watch and nothing go wrong.

The pictures he sends reflect what our country stands for
the hearts that he touches of a people at war.
With children he shares water, candy and food
to ease for a day their sombering mood.

A fourth generation soldier in combat tonight
he is out on a mission, family pride is his light.
His brothers also serve, one soldier one Marine.
For our nation, my sons are one hell of a team.

It's Christmas eve, we should all be together
what separates us is more than just weather.
A call of duty to country brings all 3 satisfaction
the youngest at war far away, ready for action.

Their mom all alone prays to GOD up above
keep my son safe, let him know he is loved.
And his comrades, please GOD safely keep them tonight
let their hearts know what they're doing is right.

Back at home there are Christmas lights decorating the homes
may they know though, they are not all alone.
For where ever you drive across our street, our land
Flags fly freely in abundance, we've taken a stand.

We thank you and love you, at home you have a voice
it is that of freedom and having a choice.
To our men and women in uniform across the globe
Americans are proud, of the key that you hold.
The key of sacrifice of making a difference in life
May the blessings of GOD keep you safe tonight.

GOD BLESS OUR MILITARY !!

Fern is a Funeral Director at All County Funeral Home in the Stuart, FL Chapel. She is a member of the Patriot Guard Riders and Forgotten Soldiers Outreach. Her sons are 4th generation military in their family. She has pictures of her grandfather and his 3 brothers in uniform during WWI, her father and his brother WWII, their father during the Korean War Era, and now her 3 sons. Her oldest (Sgt. Mario Sericolo, Army) age 33, is stationed at Ft. Lewis in Seattle, WA where he lives with his wife and their 2 sons. He was badly injured on his 3rd tour in Iraq near the Turkish border, yet remains on active duty. Her middle son (Cpl. Luciano Sericolo) age 30, is ending his first 6 years with the Marine Corps and upon re-enlistment will become a Sgt. He earned his Gold Wings at Ft Stewart, GA and is with a RECON unit. Her youngest (1st LT Santino Camillo Sericolo, Army) age 27, was stationed at Ft. Hood TX but is currently deployed to a Forward Operating Base with a Military Intelligence Battalion in Afghanistan. They were recently featured in a newsletter by FL Congressman West.

Fern's father was discharged with 42 years of service. She spent her youth at the American Legion and VFW where her father and mother were very active. When the boys were little, they never missed a Memorial Day or Veterans Day parade. They grew up loving and understanding a duty to their country and honoring those who served. It did not surprise Fern as one by one they made their own choices to join the military. She is very proud of each of them for their choices and accomplishments. "Being the mother of a military child is not easy. We do not have the luxury of living close to one another, and the boy's lives are constant movement from base to base, country to country. Deployments are always difficult, and they never get easier." When Fern gets home from work each day, the first thing she does is check her email to see if a new "letter" has arrived, or perhaps a picture.

Fern has applied for a BSM chapter charter in her area. FL Chapter 9. Anyone who would like to join contact her at LFD3900@aol.com

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES AND PICTURES

Please submit all newsletter articles and pictures to the Second Vice President at Rev.Lin.McGee@gmail.com by the 15th of the month. They will be placed in the Newsletter that comes out at the beginning of the following month. (i.e. articles submitted by December 15th will be in the December Newsletter which comes out by the end of the first week of January. This Newsletter relays what took place in the month of December, our Heroes we lost in December, and upcoming dates of remembrance or celebration that will take place in January. Thank you for your submissions.

Remember.....

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HAVE YOU JOINED BIG DIPPER YET?

The Big Dipper is an auxiliary of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., which honors outstanding members of the Blue Star Mothers, sponsors the 'Fun Night' at convention, and provides educational scholarships to students. Membership is only \$5.00 a year. Please contact the Big Dipper President, Paulette Golden of MI 180 for any questions you may have about joining pgolden60@hotmail.com

IT IS YEARBOOK TIME!!!

We are looking for:

- A picture of your Chapter members together
- A picture of your child
- A picture of your fallen hero
- Action Pictures

Please submit to:
Rev.Lin.McGee@gmail.com

We will need:

- Your pictures
- Your contact information
- Who/What the picture is of
- A signed written release that we may use the pictures

Please submit to:
Rev.Lin.McGee@gmail.com

IT IS TIME TO SELL THOSE ADS!!!

As you know, our Yearbook is paid for by the ads that we sell! Please begin selling your ads **ASAP!!**

- Full page = \$300.00
- ½ page = \$180.00
- ¼ page = \$100.00
- Business Card Size = \$50.00
- One Line Names = \$5.00

Connecticut Blue Star Mothers ~ CT 1

The Connecticut Blue Star Mothers were knitting and crocheting all year to gift our veterans within our VAVS system handmade hats. Our goal was 350 and we made it to 285!! Throughout the next year we will be making them scarves if anyone would like to help!!



Packing For Our Heroes!



Christmas without you, yet I wait and I pray
Christmas without you, can I get through this day?
Shoppers seem happy, I guess their gifts are for home
But I send mine to you, so you won't feel alone.

With Love, Connecticut Blue Star Mothers

5th Annual Soldiers Day Out

South Oklahoma City ~ OK 6 AND Oklahoma City North ~ OK 8

5th Annual Soldiers Day Out

On December 23, 2005, in the wee hours of the morning at Will Rogers World Airport, Oklahoma City, OK., The Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., South Oklahoma City, Chapter 6 and Oklahoma City North (Edmond) Chapter 8, provided Holiday treats to the Fort Sill Basic Trainee's that were going home for winter block leave. It was during this event that we were informed that some of the trainees were not able to go home for the Holidays. This painted a very sad picture in our collective minds and being caring the mothers that we all are, we immediately began thinking about the next Christmas season and plans were initiated so that we would be able to provide these troops with a little Holiday fun.



Ever since December 2006, the members of South Oklahoma City, Chapter 6 have been providing what we have titled "Soldiers Day Out" With generous donations from the great citizens and businesses of this wonderful town our Christmas Celebration has grown into full day of activities which began this year on December 23, 2011, at 0700 with breakfast and ended at 1000 after an evening meal and a visit from Santa.



The day out is optional for the Basic Trainees and since none of them ever know any of the details of the day, I'm sure they are all just happy for a chance to be away from Fort Sill and the drudgery of being in Basic Training. It was great to watch eighty-four sleepy soldiers escorted by four Drill Sergeants stumble off the bus after an hour and a half bus ride from Fort Sill to Oklahoma City. They removed their "cover", entered the Renaissance Hotel, dawned their Santa Hats and were greeted by Mr. Angelo Cipollone, several Chef's, many wait staff and the Blue Star Mothers of America. It was then that they saw the splendid array of breakfast foods and "COFFEE" that was provided by the Renaissance Hotel. It was great to see how quickly their sleepy faces were replaced by gigantic smiles when they filled their breakfast plates with made to order omelets and any breakfast food you could imagine.

After breakfast, our band of warriors marched ten blocks north to OK Cityscape which is a seasonal display of the Oklahoma City skyline that is made out of Lego blocks. They were greeted by Mr. David Matthews and News Channel 43 and were filmed for the evening news while playing with Legos. Using their creative minds, some soldiers created Lego armaments while others created Lego Drill Sergeants. Some were content to sit at the chalk drawing table and draw Merry Christmas scenes but all were in awe of the Lego city where each Oklahoma City building was built to scale with the exception of the Devon Tower that was too tall to fit in the building.



From Cityscape our tour continued with a visit to the 45th Infantry Museum where we were greeted by the museum curator, Mr. Michael E. Gonzales who welcomed our warriors and provided some great historic details of the 45th Infantry. Many of the Soldiers were surprised to see that some of Hitler's personal belongings were on display and were equally surprised to hear that these items had been "borrowed" by a WWII member of the 45th Infantry who had seen these items and hastily threw them together, placed them in a box and shipped them home.



By the time we finished our Museum tour it was lunch time and our next venue was at Gatti Town in Bethany. Our Soldiers were greeted by Mr. Jack Renfro who invited them to enjoy the full pizza buffet and then presented each of our Soldiers with game cards that were pre-loaded with ninety minutes of play time. For maximum enjoyment, Mr. Renfro suggested that they partake of the buffet before starting the time on their game cards and since he was aware that they couldn't really take any toys back to Fort Sill he asked that if they won any game tickets that they pay it forward and present their winning tickets to the children that were present. At the end of our visit to Gatti Town, Jack received a standing ovation from our Heroes after announcing to them that they had presented more than 30,000 tickets to some very happy children. Between Mr. Renfro, the children, our Military members and the Mothers, I'm not sure who enjoyed our visit to Gatti Town the most.

Our next event took us to Hey Day in Norman where Mr. Bryan Burks and Brad Little had scheduled several games of Laser Tag and soda pop for everyone. It took some talking but we finally convinced the Drill Sergeants to agree to a couple of games of laser tag. The Drill Sergeants really didn't stand a chance of winning and I'm not really sure how they managed but a couple of them actually survived the first round and were able to play another game. From the balcony it was fun to watch them laughing at each other while running through the maze trying to find the Drill Sergeants.

After an exhausting visit at HeyDay we drove north a couple of miles into the city of Moore where we held our final event at Earls Rib Palace which proved to be the most emotional venue for us all. We had arranged for the Patriot Guard to welcome our Heroes to Earls and in their traditional patriotic display they had lined the building with our Nations Banner and they started the applause that welcomed our Heroes into the building. Their enthusiasm spilled over to all of the patrons in the house who had risen to the occasion and were all standing, applauding until the last Hero had been seated. We were so very proud of our Patriot Guard members and the members of our community and as we looked around, there wasn't a dry eye in the building.



As the Drill Sergeants were shown no mercy at HeyDay, there was no mercy given to the Buffet of Bar-BQ that was presented to our warriors at Earls. They enjoyed BBQ chicken and chopped brisket with all the trimmings and even enjoyed a visit from the old man himself. Santa Clause, "Mr. Billy May" came in and "Rocked the House". They sang Christmas Carols and shouted out cadence and even the Blue Star Mothers attempted a cadence of their own. When everyone had been well sated, pictures were taken with Santa Clause and then it was time to say Good-bye.



As our Heroes began to file out of the building to get to the buses for their long ride home, there were many tear streaked faces that came up to us for a hug and they thanked each and every one of us for a wonderful day. As they got on the bus we handed each of them a goodie bag that was filled with home baked Christmas goodies and other assorted items and again we were blessed to receive many more hugs and accolades. One soldier came up to me and choked back a tear and said, "I was so sad that I wouldn't be able to see my mother for Christmas this year, but you've made it all ok". By this time, tears are rolling down my face as I told her that we all felt very much the same and that we couldn't see our Soldiers this year but being able to share this day with her and the rest of the Soldiers from Fort Sill made it all ok for us too.

JANUARY DATES OF REMEMBRANCE, CELEBRATION, OR OBSERVANCE

- January 01, 1622 ~ Papal Chancery adopts Jan 1 as beginning of the year (was March 25)
- January 01, 1962 ~ Navy SEAL teams established
- January 01, 1976 ~ Liberty Bell moves to new home behind Independence Hall
- **January 1, 2011 ~ New Years Day (Federal Holiday)**
- **January 1, 2011 ~ 50th Birthday of the Navy SEALs**
- January 03, 1959 ~ Alaska becomes 49th US state
- January 04, 1896 ~ Utah becomes 45th US state
- January 05, 1933 ~ Calvin Coolidge, 30th president of the US, dies in Northampton, MA
- January 06, 1912 ~ New Mexico becomes 47th US state
- January 06, 1919 ~ Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of US, dies in Oyster Bay, NY
- January 09, 1788 ~ Connecticut becomes 5th US state
- January 09, 1912 ~ US Marines invade Honduras
- January 09, 1945 ~ US soldiers led invade Philippines
- January 12, 1991 ~ Persian Gulf War: An act of the US Congress authorizes the use of military force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait
- January 15, 1943 ~ The world's largest office building and home to the Department of Defense, the Pentagon, was dedicated in Arlington, VA.
- January 16, 1991 ~ The United States of America declares war on Iraq, beginning the Persian Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm)
- **January 16, 2011 -- Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- January 17, 1893 ~ Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th president of the US, dies in Fremont, OH
- January 20, 1937 ~ The first Presidential Inauguration Date to be observed on Jan 20th every four years. [Was at one time held on March 4th] (Federal Holiday)
- January 22, 1973 ~ Lyndon Baines Johnson, 36th president of the US, dies in TX
- January 26, 1837 ~ Michigan becomes 26th US state
- January 29, 1861 ~ Kansas becomes 34th US state

CONGRATULATIONS and WELCOME To Our Newest Blue Star Mothers Chapters

Oklahoma #21 Thlequah, OK
Cherokee Capital
Billie Walker, President

California #36 Oakland, CA
Alameda Piedmont Oakland Blue Star Moms
Kellie Johnson, President

California #31 Lompoc, CA
Central Coast Chapter
Janet L. Harrison, President

Minnesota #18 Hugo, MN
Soaring Eagles Blue Star Mothers
Liz Wegner, President

New York #10 Germantown, NY
Cindy Schiller, President



Remembering Our Nations Fallen Heroes

December 2011 DoD

Staff Sgt. Vincent J. Bell, 28, Detroit, MI
Sgt. Ryan D. Sharp, 28, Idaho Falls, ID
Sgt. 1st Class Clark A. Corley Jr., 35, Oxnard, CA
Spc. Ryan M. Lumley, 21, Lakeland, FL
Spc. Thomas J. Mayberry, 21, Springville, CA
Lance Cpl. Christopher P. J. Levy, 21, Ramseur, NC
Sgt. Christopher L. Muniz, 24, New Cuyama, CA
Spc. Ronald H. Wildrick Jr., 30, Blairstown, NJ

Pvt. Jalfred D. Vaquerano, 20, Apopka, FL
Maj. Samuel M. Griffith, 36, Virginia Beach, VA
Spc. Mikayla A. Bragg, 21, Longview, WA
Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Altmann, 27, Marshfield, WI
Sgt. Noah M. Korte, 29, Lake Elsinore, CA
Spc. Kurt W. Kern, 24, McAllen, TX
Pfc. Justin M. Whitmire, 20, Easley, SC
Petty Officer Stacy O. Johnson, 35, Rolling Fork, MS



**My heart said 'no' -- You cannot go -- Don't be far from me
Yet you made ready -- And kept your mind steady -- Knowing that which must be
Your strength of steel -- How can this be real -- You are a Hero through and through
There was a depth to your soul -- That set your goals -- And lead you to what you must do**

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE LOVED