



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **A WORD FROM A VERY SPECIAL SOLDIER**
- **CONVENTION RECAP & FUNDRAISERS FOR CONVENTION**
- **2013 CONVENTION CORNER KEEP ON TOP OF WHAT'S GOING ON**
- **YEARBOOK PHOTO COLLECTION IS CLOSED-BUT THERE IS STILL TIME FOR BOOSTERS**

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HONORING OUR CHILDREN

Linda Clevenger 1stVP - Blue Star Mothers of Fredericksburg

There are many ways to honor our children.

We celebrate their success, build them up when they believe that they have failed (even when we know that they haven't), we support them with their decisions and allow them to make mistakes. We aren't able to physically hold their hands forever. However, we do emotionally hold their hands forever.

During a radio interview last week, I was asked the question..."How did you feel when your daughter joined the military?" After a second, I answered the best way that I knew how. I told the DJ that I knew that joining the Army was her decision. She was an adult and I couldn't dictate her life for her. I don't think I would have described my feelings as happy. However, I was excited that she had made a life decision that would help her grow into adulthood.

Some children know, from a very young age, that they are destined to join the military. They even know which military branch they will join and

their focus will not be skewed in any other direction. This can be hard for a parent to discern. One of our Blue Star Mothers experienced this first hand. Her son joined the Army as soon as he graduated high school. He is now 19 years old and just left for his first tour in Afghanistan. Just thinking about him leaving makes my heart hurt because it is easy to think of all of the events that he will miss being so far away from his family. I've been there...done that. It hurts just as much as if it were my own child missing a birthday or holiday.



So, how do you get through the hard days? The radio station asked me this question too. My answer was very simple. You lean on the strength of those who have

been there before. (And there are many mothers in this position in the Fredericksburg Area). You know that it is ok to cry, laugh and be happy too! I know that this isn't easy, but it is necessary to keep every sane. You take one day at a time, and enjoy the little dot showing up on Facebook to give you a short few minutes to "talk" to your child. Honoring your child means celebrating every minute that you are able to spend with them, even if they are few and far between sometimes. And, lastly, honoring your child means continuing on with your life as if they were right here with you, and not thousands of miles away. Why? Because even though they may not be here physically, your happiness can be the support that they need, all those thousands of miles away.

Commemoration or Celebration?

Memorial Day weekend in Washington DC was a sea of humanity. There were hundreds of thousands of Rolling Thunder members in town for their annual ride. There were students there for annual school trips. And there were military members, Veterans, Gold Star Mothers and Fathers and Blue Star Mothers and Fathers.

The Candle Light Vigil Walk to the Wall began the Memorial Day weekend. As night fell, the walkway of the Vietnam Memorial was completely lined with men, women and children four and five deep, who silently stood there to commemorate the 58,282 men and women who gave their lives to keep us free. As the Flame of Freedom began to travel toward the apex of the wall, its light guided the Gold Star and Blue Star families. As the light stopped at the center of The Wall, mothers and fathers paused to remember and pray for their children. Those who had lost a son or daughter in service to their country remem-

bered them as they were forty to fifty years ago, forever young. Those who have children currently serving our country, or who are veterans of military service, prayed for their safe return. This was a solemn occasion, one of quiet reflection on what was and what could have been.

A visit to Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day takes you past rolling green hills of silent white stones. Families walk among the monuments, taking their times to read the hundreds of thousands of names. The quiet is comforting, calming.

A visit to Arlington National Cemetery Section 60 is far from calm, it is far from silent. Section 60 is the final resting place for many of those who lost their lives in our current conflict. There are families sitting on blankets, sitting in folding chairs. There are children playing, families gathering in celebration. There are military members and veterans gathering to celebrate the lives of their fallen comrades. You hear laughter and

hear stories of good times together. There are tokens left for our heroes, from coins, flowers, pictures and flags to cigarettes and the occasional bottle of beer. There are those who come to honor men and women they have never met. They honor the sons and daughters of good friends, and of total strangers. They come to celebrate.

Whether you were in Arlington this past Memorial Day weekend, in a cemetery in your home town, marching in a parade or attending a wreath laying service, the goal was the same. We gathered together to commemorate, to remember the sacrifice of our fallen heroes. We gathered together to celebrate their lives, to rejoice in the gift of their life. We are all the better for having known them, for having been a part of their lives and for having them in ours.

Anita Wagner

Ohio I



A WORD FROM A VERY SPECIAL SOLDIER

I've noticed a few key factors in how to survive a deployment and I thought I would put them down, as it seems to be something which people struggle with.

First and foremost, always tell the ones in your family how much you love them. Tell them twice. Tell them thrice. Make sure they know that you are their world. We often assume they know, and we say it once or twice when we hang up the phone, but that is not enough. Take the time to say and mean it.

Realize that you either have family, or you don't have family. Either they will be there no matter what, or they won't. Nothing you can do or say will change who they are. If they say they are there for you, believe it and do not question.

Everyone is scared. Family is scared because they don't know what's going on. You are scared because you do know what is going on. You do not know what it is like to be in their shoes, and they

don't know in yours. Stop worrying about trying to make them understand. Don't ever tell them that they'll never understand.

Do your job, do it better than the person before you. Do it to the best of your ability. Don't bother telling people how good you are, let your actions speak for you.

Tell your family again how much you love them.

Write emails, write letters, write, write, write. It will help, trust me. Also your family will love to have these letters to hang on to.

Take lots of pictures. Be that guy who is called "that guy". After your deployment you'll look back at the memories but have no pictures. You'd be amazed what you capture on that and how much it means to you in a few years.

Leave the dramatics for Hollywood. Yes, something bad happened somewhere, and it *could* have been you. But it wasn't.

You don't have to exaggerate to your family about how crazy it is. They know

you're stressed, don't add to it.

Your wife/girlfriend has a life. She is not going to stay at home and wait by the phone. Do not let your imagination play tricks on you. If she is out with friends, she is out with friends. If she meets people, she meets people. You can ruin your relationship with jealousy and doubt. Have faith in your significant other, she loves you, and as said before, family is either there for you, or is not.

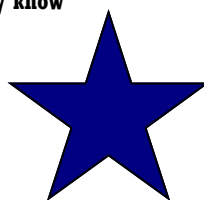
All the other stuff, what to do tactically and what to do technically can be taught to you by your unit. But these are the things which will mentally prepare you and get rid of all those shenanigans in your head so you can focus on your mission.

By the way, did I mention to tell your family you love them? :)

“HAPPY MOTHERS DAY”

Anonymous

2013 Convention Corner



Check out the "2013 Convention Corner" on the website and get the latest convention-related news. You can ask your convention questions by clicking on "Member Forums" (left-hand navigation bar) and select "2013 Convention Corner". The forum is intended for

members to post questions regarding the upcoming convention, seek roommates, share travel plans and receive the latest convention-related information (e.g., links to proposed changes to the governing documents, latest conference agenda, schedule changes, etc.)

Stop by often to stay
abreast of the latest





CONVENTION RECAP

Important Reminders:

Convention Registration form, Delegate form and Vendor Table forms will be available on the website soon!

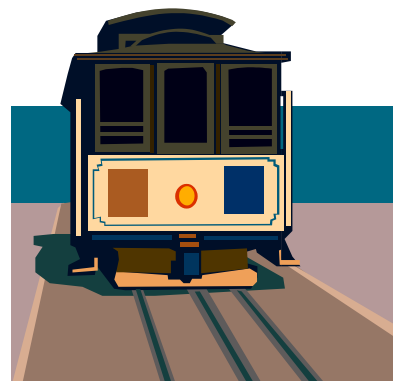
So will the proposed changes to the Governing Documents! Be sure to review them and be prepared to vote on each proposal at Convention.

Banquet food options:

BREAST OF SONOMA CHICKEN; Mary's Natural Chicken Breast cooked with Artichokes, Roasted Tomatoes, Gigande Beans, over wilted Greens, topped with a Truffle Aioli

AMERICAN KOBE FLAT IRON STEAK; Grilled with Cracked Pepper Corns and Coriander, Caramelized Onions, Roasted Garlic Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes, Julienne Vegetables

Upon request, a Vegetarian platter will be available





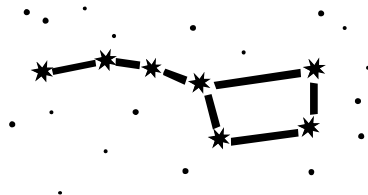
FUNDRAISERS **FOR CONVENTION:**



2013 San Francisco, California

- 1. President's Project: keep collecting that loose change! Let's see how much we can raise for the USO.**
- 2. Blue Star Mother license plates! Check the online store. Now available, license plates with our logo. Some states will allow you to place the license plate on the front of your car; others won't. For those states, simply place them in your back windshield and show your BSM pride. Only \$10 (plus shipping) and all funds will be used to defray Convention costs.**
- 3. Blue Star Mother 4" round magnets. Just what many of you have asked for! Available soon for just \$5.00 (plus shipping) each. Again, all funds used to defray Convention expenses.**
- 4. Silent Auction Individuals and chapters are encouraged to send/bring items for the Silent Auction to be held during the Banquet on Friday evening. We are tentatively making arrangements to accept credit cards (woo hoo!), as well as checks for purchases!**

For Big Dipper:



- 1. Silent Auction Individuals and chapters are encouraged to send/bring items for the Silent Auction to be held during the Big Dipper Fun Night on Thursday evening.**
- 2. Be sure to purchase the Blue Star charms that are available on the website.**

JOIN BIG DIPPER
FOR
BEACH BLANKET BINGO UNDER THE GOLDEN GATE

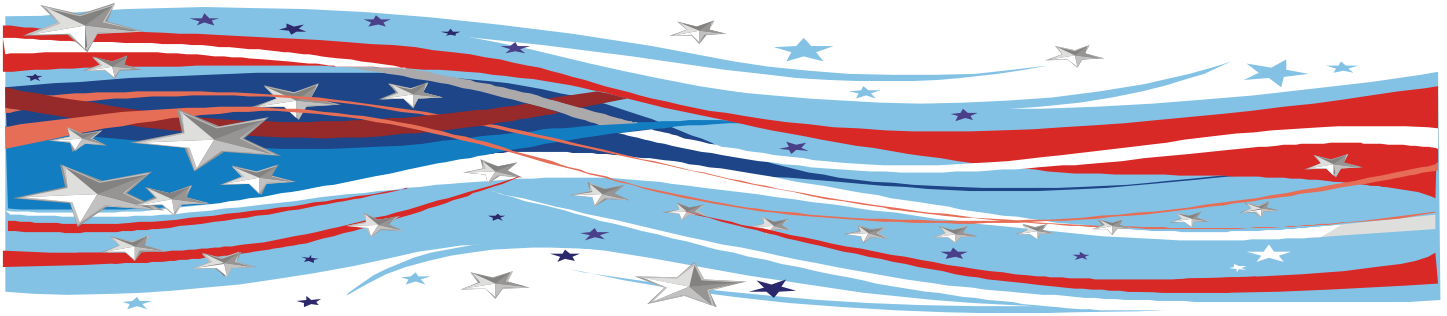


Big Dipper announces your opportunity to join us for a fabulous Fun Night of games in good company at [Beach Blanket Bingo Under the Golden Gate, August 15, 2013](#), (time and cost to be announced later) at the Annual Convention of [Blue Star Mothers of America](#). The main goal is to raise money for the Josephine

Colenda Educational Assistance Fund. And while doing that you will be having a GREAT time. Among the many activities planned during Fun Night, there will be a silent auction, a photo booth to commemorate your incredible costumes, raffles, games, (don't you love rubber ducky's?) and of course a beach blanket picnic. So get out those flip-flops, channel your best Annette and Frankie memories and join us.



Big Dipper is also challenging ALL chapters to have a fundraising event specifically to donate the proceeds to the educational assistance fund. The chapter who brings in the largest donation will receive special recognition at the convention. Time is getting short ladies, so get out there and use your imaginations – there are so many fun ways to raise money for our service members and their families to help further their educations.



APPLICATION FOR YEARBOOK BOOSTER PAGES

DEADLINE JUNE 24th

NAME: _____

TOWN & STATE: _____

BOOSTER FEE \$10.00 A SPONSOR

ADD YOUR NAME, CHAPTERS, AND SPONSORS AS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF
BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF AMERICA MISSION STATEMENT.

Make checks payable to: Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

Mail completed form & check to:

Kathryn Venable, Financial Secretary

Blue Star Mothers of America

P.O BOX 2518

Pocatello, ID 83206-2518



OFFICE USE ONLY:

WEAR A BLUE STAR



HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO WEAR A BLUE STAR
IN HONOR OF
YOUR MILITARY MEMBER/S.

THE BIG DIPPER IS OFFERING THESE CRYSTAL STARS AS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE JOSEPHINE COLEND A
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. EACH STAR IS 16mm. THEY CAN BE WORN ON A CHAIN
OF YOUR CHOICE OR CAN BE ORDERED WITH A 30 INCH NICKEL PLATED STEEL BALL CHAIN WITH
FASTENER.

THE STARS ARE \$5 EACH AND THE CHAIN IS AN ADDITIONAL \$1.

SHIPPING & HANDLING ON ORDERS OF ANY 5 ITEM IS \$3.00 PER ORDER.

SHIPPING AND HANDLING ON ORDERS OF ANY 6 ITEMS OR MORE
IS \$5 PER ORDER

QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED, SO ORDER YOURS TODAY.

NAME: _____

MAILING

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

STARS: _____ X \$5 = \$ _____

CHAINS: _____ X \$1 = \$ _____

S&H: 5 ITEMS OR LESS: \$3 _____

S&H: 6 ITEMS OR MORE: \$5 _____

TOTAL ORDER: \$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BIG DIPPER & MAIL ORDERS TO:

ROBIN JOHNSON
72 MINNERLY ROAD
COXSACKIE, NY 12051

Jean Burlingame
National Patriotic Instructor



Flag Day, Friday June 14th, 2013

People across the United States celebrate Flag Day on June 14 each year to honor the United States flag and to commemorate the flag's adoption.

The American flag, also nicknamed as "Old Glory" or "star-spangled banner", has changed designs over the centuries. It consists of 13 equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white, with a blue rectangle in the canton bearing 50 small, white, five-pointed stars. Each of the 50 stars represent the 50 states in the United States and the 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies that became the first states in the Union..

Although Flag Day is a nationwide observance, it is not a public holiday. The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation to: call on government officials in the USA to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on Flag Day; and to urge US residents to observe Flag Day as the anniversary of the adoption on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

It is a time when Americans reflect on the foundations of the nation's freedom. The flag of the United States represents freedom and has been an enduring symbol of the country's ideals since its early days. Americans also remember their loyalty to the nation, reaffirm their belief in liberty and justice, and observe the nation's unity.

Let's raise the flag and fly it proudly. Long may it wave!

June 14th, 2013 Happy Birthday

On June 14th, we wish the Veterans and Members of the United States Army a Happy 238th Birthday! ***We also wish our National President a happy birthday as she was born on Flag Day!***





May 1, 2013 - May 31, 2013 The Department of Defense announced 19 casualties. There are a total 151 casualties since August 1, 2012

*From Gold Star Mom~
 A Family should never stop honoring
 the Birth Day of their child. Even if
 the numbers in age may never get any
 higher; the celebration of life date will
 always remain the same.*