



Photo courtesy of the Navy News Service

May - Gold Star Awareness Month

by Gary A. Mayes, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, Commander, Navy Region Northwest

The freedoms and liberties we enjoy every day as Americans is a direct result of the sacrifices and courage of the service men and women who died defending this great nation; and it is truly heartbreaking when we lose any service members.

We know the loss of a service member has a profound impact on his or her family. Regardless of the cause, location or circumstances of the loss, surviving family members deserve our acknowledgment and deepest respect.

Although the passing of every Sailor reverberates throughout his or her local military community, it is the loss on his or her immediate, surviving family that can be the most traumatic. We understand that losing a part of your family is a journey that no one wishes to take. The loss of a father or mother to a child is not replaceable. The loss of a brother or sister cannot be measured. The loss of a spouse is a deficit to the widow that can never be recompensed. The loss of a son or daughter is inconceivable to a parent.

In an attempt to assist our Navy Gold Star Families, we are committed to providing continuing support for as long as they desire by helping to foster resiliency, provide resources, and create opportunities for these families to connect with one another.

The Navy Gold Star Program has dedicated the month of May as Gold Star Awareness Month. This is to bring awareness to what it means to be a Gold Star Family member and to ensure that we honor and remember the men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

It is important to me, and the Northwest Navy Gold Star Program, that our military community ensures that our Fallen Heroes and Gold Star Families will never be forgotten.



Chaplain's Corner: Sometimes There Are No Words

by CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

The Bible provides an account of a rich man named Job who had everything. He was considered a success by anyone's standards. He had seven sons, three daughters; owned thousands of farm animals; and had many servants. He was considered "the greatest man among all the people of the East". Then one day, sequential calamity hit. One messenger after another arrived at Job's house with negative reports. Job learned his 10 adult children died; thieves violated his property line and stole his livestock; and everything that defined him as a success went by the wayside as quickly as the mist on a hot July morning (Job chapter 1).

When tragedy arrives at our doorsteps, there, simply, are no words.

In the second chapter of Job, the most noteworthy event occurred. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, upon hearing Job's significant emotional trauma due to loss, came to visit. Their mission was to comfort him, cry with him, and identify with his grief. Instead of carrying out their noble agenda, in sighting Job, the three friends were

taken aback at his appearance. They barely recognized him! Instead of carrying out their original plan of care, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar tore their clothes, sprinkled themselves with ashes and sat in silence with him. No one said a word because they saw how greatly he was suffering (Job 2:13).

When you cast your eyes on a situation of suffering, sometimes, there, simply, are no words.

The caring imperative in this account is elegantly simple. Whether it is Job's story or ours, there are times when the best company we can receive is from those who have no words. Few are those who simply desire to sit with us in our pain. No commentary. No analysis of the life situation or advice. No speculation. Sit simply with those who suffer, and be a listening presence of care in the calamity of life.

Sometimes there are no words.

Navy Gold Star Tribute

Triannual Rotating Watch

In 2016, we were proud to announce that we instituted a Fallen Triannual Rotating Watch, a tribute to a Fallen Sailor whose family resides in the Northwest Region. The Fallen Sailor's photo and a brief biography is framed and displayed for approximately four months, at several Northwest Region installations and NOSC/Navy Reserve Centers across our 11-state footprint. After which time, another Fallen Sailor will be rotated in, so another Northwest Family can have their Fallen Hero remembered. Our inaugural First Watch was EOD1 Sean Carson (see the article on page six).

If you are interested in submitting your Fallen Hero to take a Watch, contact your Northwest Navy Gold Star Coordinator.

The following are our Watches for the last three Rotations:

EOD1 Sean Carson

Watch: September 2016-December 2016

EOD1 Sean Carson entered active duty on May 28, 1999.

Following multiple successful deployments, EOD1 Carson transferred to Platoon 3-3-1 as an EOD Team Leader and selflessly volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan, supporting NW Squadron THREE.

He was then shifted to Kandahar Province and conducted combat operations with Charlie Platoon Seal Team THREE, and Afghanistan National Army Commandos.

Sean was killed in action on August 16, 2012. He was 32 years old.

"The day he left for the Great Lakes, I thought to myself that he was leaving as a young boy, but would be back when he was a grown man. I tried to visualize what he would be like. When my son was a teenager, someone in my family said that he was a follower. I want everyone to know that my son, Sean Carson, is a leader and a hero."

– Fran Carson, Gold Star Mother of Sean Carson

CMC Jeffrey James Garber

Watch: January 2017-April 2017

On February 20, 2009, we took Jeff to the pier at Norfolk Naval Station and said our goodbyes. The air wing was embarking aboard the aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower for a deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was the Command Master Chief of the Air Wing.

Saturday, June 20, 2009, the day before Father's Day, our doorbell rang at 6 am. Although I could see them through the window in the door, my heart couldn't believe that they were going to tell me what my head said they would. Jeff was gone. While on deployment, he had died from a massive heart attack. Our children were 17, 15, and, 13 when Jeff died. They had lost their hero.

Jeff had written a paper shortly before his last deployment titled *About Me*: "...Being a Command Master Chief is like being a father for the first time over and over again. I will tell you that I enjoy coming to work every day and making a difference in someone's life, whether that's giving career advice or making someone smile, I just enjoy being me."

"We miss and love Jeff so very much and we will do our best to carry on his legacy of faith, love, courage, decency, and humility."

– Amy Garber, Gold Star Spouse of Jeff Garber

SCPO Jayson Brettin

Watch: May 2017-September 2017

Senior Chief Petty Officer Jayson Brettin entered active duty on July 7, 1992, when he was 19 years old.

Jay was a great sailor and an even better man. When I first met him, we were both sailors, the submariner and the reservist. At that time, I outranked him, but it didn't last long, as he quickly moved up the ranks. He was admired and respected by the many sailors who served with him and under him. Jay was very proud of serving his country and had been at sea commands most of his 23-year career. Sadly, he passed away while preparing to go out to sea, yet again, on the USS Alabama.

Jay loved his family very much and was looking forward to his upcoming retirement and being able to spend more time with his family and friends. He was a kind, generous man with a big heart and a warm smile, and exhibited those traits every day. His was the definition of a life well-lived! He touched many people's lives and is greatly missed.

– Lisa Brettin, Gold Star Spouse of Jayson Brettin



Resilience: Learning to Thrive Through Loss

by Kourtney M. DeBoer, LMFT

Clinical Counselor & Family Advocacy Case Manager
Naval Station Everett



Anyone who has experienced loss can describe the toll it exacts on the mind, body, and relationships. Simply put, grief diminishes the zest of life. While grief is commonly associated with death, it is also applicable to other losses, such as unexpected career changes, divorce, and even changes in our physical abilities. Despite the commonality of some losses, bereavement is nevertheless subjective and fluid.

Grieving is a natural process, yet how we cope with grief depends in large part on our resilience. Resilience is an adaptive quality that enables us to cope with significant stressors, such as death. You may be more familiar with the phrase “bounce back.” While it is often referred to as a personality trait, the remarkable truth about resilience is that it is also a skill that can be learned and strengthened. It is neither static nor immutable, and every single person inherently possesses resilience. There are several ways that we strengthen our capacity for resilience in difficult times, and these include creating community, making meaning, and welcoming hope.

Community is more than the city you live in; it is the group of people with whom you choose to experience life. We create our own communities through shared experience, and we do this by making memories and sharing stories. When we invite others into our personal community, we create an opportunity for connection, growth, trust, friendship, and family. When grieving, it is important to rely on these support systems. Sharing your experience of grief, while difficult, is beneficial to your well-being. Our community members rally to support us in myriad ways, they act as safe keepers of our most difficult emotions and fears during times of loss, and they remind and assure us that hope exists.

Community is like a flexible net. When we lose something or someone so significant that it changes everything about us as a person, our community opens up to receive those difficult thoughts, emotions, and behaviors we experience as we grieve. The community we create around ourselves acts as a safe space for these things to exist until we can begin to process and cope with the loss. When we are ready, our community supports us as we sift through the changes in our lives.

Then, when someone we love experiences a loss, we take their place in the community as a supporter. We can empathize and encourage from a place of shared experience and understanding. In this way, we help each other build resilience.

One of the most difficult aspects of grief is learning how to cope with change, and we do this by making meaning of what has happened. We organize our lives around meaning. For example, whether we consider ourselves a service member or a civilian is meaningful and it affects our world-view, behaviors, and goals. Making meaning from loss can be difficult, and at times seem impossible. This is particularly true when a loved one dies. The circumstances of their death and the role they played in our lives may completely alter how we go about our daily lives or how we choose to live the rest of our lives.

To demonstrate this concept, I will share a brief story of a client I saw many years ago, who I will never forget. She was a young woman in her late twenties. She was married and had two young children. Throughout her life, her heart had failed on several occasions. Her first pacemaker was implanted on her 21st birthday and it was replaced the day she gave birth to her daughter. When she came to see me, her heart was no longer responding to the pacemaker as it should, but she had taken up running marathons and martial arts. She told me something during our first meeting that I have carried with me every day: life keeps going, with or without us, but it is as meaningful as we determine it will be. I learned from her that how we make sense of loss, or even the anticipation of it, is determined by our beliefs. If we allow the idea that loss has purpose in our lives, we find that we learn so much more about our own resilience and the strength of our community. Every person comes to view loss and death differently, but each person makes meaning of the experience in a way that affects how they carry out their lives, from the mundane tasks of daily living to deciding to begin dating again.

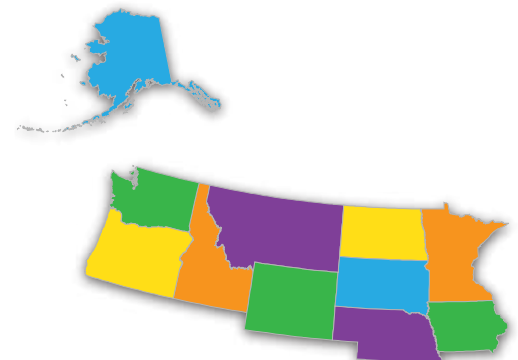
Embedded throughout this article is the concept of hope. Sometimes we struggle to find it for ourselves, and so our community rises up around us to encourage and support us through our difficult moments. Hope is what inspires us to make meaning of our losses and even propels us into action, such as creating scrapbooks or nonprofits. When we welcome hope into our lives, our resilience grows. In death, they call those who remain survivors. Through community, meaning-making, and welcoming hope into our lives, we adapt to the losses we experience. At first, we may feel like we are simply surviving, yet as we strengthen our resilience, we can learn to thrive again.

We Need Your Help!

There are Memorial and Gold Star events in many states across our 11-state region, which includes Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Iowa. We try to share information about these events through e-mail. However, if we do not have a current e-mail address for you, then you probably have not heard from us about such opportunities. Please feel free to e-mail your Support Coordinator with your most recent contact information and we will ensure you are on our distribution list.

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Developing Your Child's Healthy Self-esteem

Let's consider what self-esteem is by breaking it down. Esteem is to hold something or someone in high regard, as special, significant or worthy. Self refers to the individual. Self-esteem is an abstract thought that has no physical substance and is separate from reality. Self-esteem consists of our own personal evaluation of our self-worth and value as an individual. We develop our self-esteem by interacting with other people. If our interactions results in feelings of validation, importance, significance, and worthiness we tend to form healthy self-esteem. On the other hand, if our interactions results in invalidation, insignificance, unimportance, or unworthiness we tend to form self-esteem that is negative.

Children make decisions about their self-worth internally, however, parents can influence their children's beliefs about themselves. There are numerous ways that parents can help their children develop healthy self-esteem. Following are nine ways that parents can help their children develop healthy self-esteem.

1. Demonstrate that you believe your child is capable by providing him/her opportunities to demonstrate his/her capabilities. Parents interfere with children feeling capable when they do too much for them. For example, dressing a child that is capable of dressing him/her self.
2. Provide opportunities for your child to contribute and have influence by participating in decision making. An example of this is when parents give children choices, "Would you like to have a banana or an apple with your lunch?" Family meetings are formal ways of giving children opportunities to participate as valuable members and to have influence. Children who do tasks that help with the maintenance of the household learn that their contribution is important.
3. Differentiate between the behavior and the child. This helps parents stay focused on the behavior in order to find reasonable solutions. For example, giving the dog a hair cut is not okay, but the child is always okay just the way he/she is.
4. Teach children that mistakes are opportunities to learn. When children know that their mistakes are not a measure of their self-worth they feel better about themselves. Children who feel good about themselves are more capable of learning from their mistakes and making different choices. Another way parents can help with this is to model the desired behavior themselves.
5. Listen to your children and take them seriously. This teaches them that what they have to say is important, that their thoughts matter and they are worthy.
6. Avoid over using praise. Praise teaches children to become "approval junkies" – dependent on others for their sense of self-worth. In other words, "I'm valued only when others approve of me." Praise is about the observer for example, "I'm so proud of you for finishing your homework." Praise also suggests to children that your love is conditional. Instead of praise use encouragement. Encouragement is about the doer and his/her effort, "You worked hard to finish your homework."
7. Avoid comparing children. Remember, each child is unique and needs to feel accepted just the way he/she is. Parents can support their



children's uniqueness by learning more about them and accepting them as they are. Spend special time with your child, this helps the child feel special and unique.

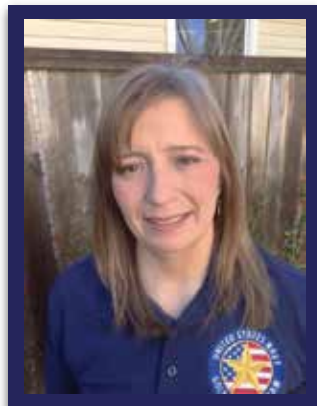
8. Avoid name calling as this can easily become a negative label that the child takes on. Telling your child that he/she is clumsy, stupid, lazy, or irresponsible is disrespectful. Instead parents can focus on solutions. Rather than saying, "You're so lazy," say, "The dishes aren't getting washed after dinner, what can we do to solve this problem?"
9. Children will encounter other people who do not respect them or say hurtful things to them. Teach your child that when people choose to be hurtful it says more about that person than the child. Help your child talk about his/her feelings, this will help him/her feel okay even when some people are hurtful. Encourage your child to find helpful ways of responding to people who are hurtful. It's important to not overdue for your child and to let your child solve his/her own problems when the situation is safe to do so.

Children with healthy self-esteem have greater resiliency than children with unhealthy self-esteem. As parents it's important for us to look at what we're doing and ask if our actions are contributing to our children's healthy self-esteem or interfering with its healthy development.

If you would like to know more about ways to improve your child's self-esteem, please call the Fleet and Family Support Center at (866) 854-0638.

It's OK to be Scared

by Sandra Neuman, sandra.neuman@navy.mil, (360) 396-2708
NW Region Navy Gold Star Coordinator
Naval Base Kitsap, Keyport



It has been an honor working with Gold Star Families these last few years. I remember the very first time I had to contact a family member who had recently lost their service member. It was actually a little nerve racking, okay maybe very nerve racking. How can I just call this person, out of the blue, and introduce myself to them to just check in to see how they are doing? What do I say? How do I answer any questions? How do I sound sincere without sounding too sincere? What if they are angry, sad, frustrated, or annoyed... So, I steeled myself, steadied the soul and called. My heart racing, I dialed and the phone rang, and then rang, and

then... voicemail! Another fear ripped through me as I was unprepared to leave any kind of message. I did my best and left some sort of rambling message that I am sure went way too long, and I think I repeated my name and phone number about seven times.

A few years have passed and when I reach out to a Gold Star Family Member with either a phone call or first meeting, it is not any less noteworthy. However, with experience, time and my own career path, I have a bit more confidence and ease in communication. Basically, I have learned that no matter what a Gold Star Family Member has gone through, I will never fully understand their grief journey, but I can appreciate their loss. I have the greatest sympathy and empathy for the grief and life steps they are now being forced to take.

I have also discovered that no matter what I can do to assist a grieving parent, spouse, sibling or child, the most beneficial assistance I can possibly give is letting them know they are not alone. One of the Navy

Gold Star Program's purposes is to bring Gold Star Families together by alerting them to events or get-togethers that we think they might have interest in. Many times these opportunities to meet do not work with our families' schedules or living locations. That is totally understandable. Yet, if one is hesitant to go because it feels daunting, stressful, or maybe even similar to those fears I had before I made that first phone call, I want them to know that fear is okay.

Everyone has their own way of getting through each and every day and, perhaps, you are not quite ready for such a get together. Let me share with you a phone call I had, not that long ago, with a Gold Star sibling whose sister died from a self-inflicted wound. She called me to express interest in an event a nonprofit organization was doing in the state she lived in. She had lost her Sailor sister three years ago. She told me that she was fearful to attend an event where there will be people who lost their loved ones as 'killed in action or other such ways'. I was saddened to hear of her fear, but also understood. I explained that if she attended the event, she might be surprised to discover it really doesn't matter the manner of death, when it happened, or even why. What matters is that everyone in attendance has experienced the same loss of a piece of their heart. These are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters and sons who have all experienced the sudden ache, the difficult days, the daunting holidays as well as the smiles from funny stories and good remembrances of their fallen military family member. Many of these events do not focus on the loss, but more on the excitement of life, the fun of each other and the sharing of experiences.

If you see an event in your area and are curious about it, reach out to your Navy Gold Star Coordinator and talk to us about it. We should be able to give you an idea of what to expect and be able to either answer your questions or find someone who can. Email or call us, and if you get our voicemail, feel free to leave a rambling voicemail. I know how easily that can happen. Oh, and yes, the Gold Star Sibling did attend the event and called me to say she was very thankful she went and was looking forward to participating in more activities.



Three Financial Benefits to Remember, for Spouses

by Kathleen Johnson, AFC, Master Trainer
Personal Financial Management Specialist
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Your Casualty Assistance Call Officer (CACO) walked you through and informed you of many benefits you, as a survivor, are entitled to. It can be overwhelming to remember them all. We would like to highlight and remind you of three of these.

Government Move

Surviving spouses and children are entitled to a one-time move to a location of your choice not just the home of record. You have three years to make this decision and should contact a Navy Gold Star Coordinator or local Personal Property Office to schedule your move.

Dependents Education Assistance (DEA)

Spouses have 20 years to use this benefit. Children can use it from ages 18-26. Children may also be eligible for the Fry Scholarship, but cannot use both at the same time. Visit the Veterans Administration website (www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/survivor_dependent_assistance.asp) to apply and enact your benefit.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

If your service member was participating in the TSP, these funds are now available to you. Hopefully, your service member completed a beneficiary form, but if they didn't, there is a beneficiary waterfall: spouses, children, parents, siblings or relatives. A spouse can elect to have a beneficiary TSP account. All others must move the money to another account. We recommend moving it to an IRA to avoid paying the any taxes, if the monies were in the traditional tax-deferred account. Visit www.tsp.gov for additional information.

If you are a surviving spouse, you are eligible to receive individual financial counseling. Visit www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil to find the closest installation near you.

The Tribute Through My Eyes

by Tina Soukup, tina.soukup@navy.mil, (425) 304-3721
Northwest Installation Gold Star Coordinator



On July 13, 2016, Naval Station Everett in Washington hosted the inaugural Triannual Tribute to the Fallen which included a ceremony and 5K. Sailors and civilians gathered together to honor EOD1 Sean Carson and to listen to the leadership reiterate the importance of remembrance.

The triad took to the stage along with Fran, Sean's mom. They told his story. They looked towards the Gold Star Family members in the audience and to Fran and thanked them for their support and honored their sacrifice. The story made him real. He was a Sailor. He was somebody's father, husband, son, and Shipmate.

As I sat in the audience, waiting for Sean's mom to speak, I glanced at the drawing and painting she had brought to display. During that moment, I went through the steps that brought us all here; the many phone calls, emails, and preparations over the prior months. I thought of that morning when my dedicated coworkers helped me line the streets with American flags. The commitment and excitement of those who helped me put everything together was overwhelmingly humbling. I was surrounded by a cadre of such an esteemed group of people.

Fran began to speak of Sean's childhood, the trials they had together, and her warmhearted memories. Her voice trembled slightly, but she pressed on with such great strength. I looked at the sailors to her right standing "at ease." Some looked at her; some looked straight ahead. Their faces showed admiration, pride, sadness, and joy all at the same time. To watch the men and women standing before her, giving her their unbroken attention, was a sight that I will not soon forget.

After the Tribute, there were smiles, handshakes, and many thanks. I exhaled. My intention for this event was to bring Sean's story forward; moreover, I wanted to bring Fran's journey forward. She was my focus. I did not want to disappoint her.

One year ago, I had an idea. In July 2016, it became tangible. To all the Northwest Fleet and Family Support Center staff who helped, I thank you! To all the Naval Station Everett staff, I thank you! To all the Gold Star Families, I thank you! To Fran and Sean, thank you for the opportunity to honor and celebrate you.

This next year will bring forth more adventures for the Navy Gold Star Program and those we serve. It will all begin with something as small as an idea. So, in the words Fran yelled to set off the 5K: "On your mark! Get set! Boom!"



Snowball Express

by Sandra Neuman
NW Region Navy Gold Star Coordinator
Naval Base Kitsap, Keyport

I had the fortune of representing the Navy Northwest Region Gold Star Program and worked as a volunteer at last year's Snowball Express in Dallas, Texas. I was excited to finally have an opportunity to meet some of the Gold Star Families I have only known as an e-mail address or voice on the phone. Working at Naval Base Kitsap in Keyport, Washington does not allow me much face-to-face time with most of our Northwest Gold Star Families as the Northwest Region is spread across eleven states.

The Snowball Express is a nonprofit that brings together children of our Fallen Heroes. Gold Star Children, from all over the world, share a four-day experience of fun and adventure. The last few years, the event has taken place in Dallas, Texas in December.

I went to the event not sure what to expect, but confident I would meet some amazing families, make some great connections and, hopefully, be of assistance in some way. Although my knowledge about potential benefits and referrals can be helpful, I find that I learn more from Gold Star Families every time I work with them. My experiences at Snowball Express reminded me, once again, of the true meaning of sacrifice, tenacity, and resiliency.

It felt like the entire city went all out to welcome the Gold Star Children and their guardians. We were transported to events such as parades, theater shows, and even a stop at a game center. I was in awe

of our caravan of buses to each attraction, which brought out fire trucks displaying the American flag at each highway bypass. Police, as well as groups of Patriot Guards on their bikes, escorted us to each event, making the families feel welcome and appreciated.

The organizers of the event not only worked at ensuring the families had fun things to do, but also provided a warm environment at the hotel and at the events. Watching children and their guardians create friendships with other families, based on a similar life experience, were probably the most impressive and awe-inspiring moments to witness and be a part of.

We would love to see more of our Northwest Region's Navy Gold Star Children at the event next year. It is scheduled for Saturday, December 9 to Wednesday, December 13. If you are even slightly interested in going, we strongly suggest you take a look at the website; www.snowballexpress.org and register your family under the Families tab. Children, between the ages of 5 and 18, of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty (not medically retired) on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible. Spaces are limited, but families who have never attended are given preference. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to give us a call and we can help or point you in the right direction. If you do go, please make sure to stop by the Navy Gold Star Resource Table in the Resource Room and say hi!

NW Navy Gold Star 2016 Events We Took Part In

1/9/16	TAPS Seminar at Joint Base Lewis McChord
1/15/16	Cycle in Remembrance at NAVBASE Kitsap
1/22/16	Cycle in Remembrance at NAS Whidbey Island
2/6/16	Operation Love Letters at Smokey Point Fleet and Family
3/1/16	Cycle in Remembrance NAVSTA Everett
4/2/16	Gold Star Wives Day Ceremony at Joint Base Lewis McChord
4/16/16	Military Appreciation Day Kitsap County Fairgrounds
4/16/16	Coffee Talk for Gold Star Families at Smokey Point Fleet and Family
4/22-24/16	Remember Together Gold Star Family Retreat at Jim Creek in Arlington, WA
5/12/16	Armed Forces Day Run at NAVBASE Kitsap
5/16/16	Cycle to Remember at NAVBASE Kitsap
5/26/16	Navy Gold Star Duatholon at NAVSTA Everett
5/29/16	Wear Blue to Remember Memorial Day Run at Dupont, WA
6/11/16	Fleet Week Portland, OR (Hosted GS families to visit a Navy Ship)
6/30/16	Gold Star Families attend Mariners game courtesy of 15-1 Kearsse Foundation
7/13/16	Tribute to Fallen (Kick-off of Triannual Rotating Watch) at NAVSTA Everett
8/5/16	Seattle Fleet Week Blue Angels and Gold Star Families meet and greet at Boeing Field in Seattle, WA
9/10/16	Megan Mclung Memorial Run on Whidbey Island
9/22/16	Bells Across America at NAVSTA Everett, NAS Whidbey, and NAVBASE Kitsap
9/23-9/25/16	Time of Remembrance for Gold Star Families in Richland, WA
Mid Nov.	Hero Tree at Bangor Fleet and Family
Mid Nov.	Gold Star Mom's of Washington State Partner Tree to Fallen at NAVSTA Everett
12/10-15/16	Snowball Express in Fort Worth, TX
12/17/16	Wreaths Across America - Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, WA - Orting Soldier's Home Veteran's Cemetery in Orting, WA - Bremerton Veteran's Cemetery, Bremerton in WA



Nongovernmental Organization/Resources to Honor our Fallen:

Fallen Heroes Project. Artist Michael G. Reagan will produce, a free, hand-drawn portrait of a service member who died in support of the global war on terrorism (GWOT). 7106 175th Place SW, Edmonds, WA 98026; (571) 633-7732; www.fallenheroesproject.org.

Fallen Soldier's Tribute. Artist Martha Wilcox provides free portraits to the families of deceased service members. (575) 491-2732; wilcox_martha@yahoo.com; www.soldiersportraits-mwilcox.net/.

Flags for Fallen Military (FFFM). This organization will donate and install a flagpole and donate an American flag in honor of service members killed in the line of duty. Survivors get to choose the location for the installation. (888) 616-3420; www.flagsforfallenmilitary.org.

Freedom Quilts. Freedom Quilts creates and donates quilts in honor of lost loved ones from the September 11 terrorist attack and the conflicts which followed. These quilts can take a year or more to complete. (712) 288-5328; <http://freedomquilts.net>.

Heart Strings for Heroes. Wade Sabourin builds custom guitars for Survivors. heartstringsforheroes@live.com.

Hero Portrait. Donates, upon request from families, a hand-painted portrait of the service member who died in the line of duty. (615) 499-1292; <http://heroportraits.org/process.aspx>.

Heroes Way. Erects highway memorial signs honoring service members who died in combat during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. <http://heroesway.org>.

Home of the Brave (HOTB) Quilts. Provides memorial quilts to families of service members killed in the line of duty (though the death did not have to occur in combat or in a combat zone). CJ Designs, 6776 Redlands Court, Riverside, CA, 92506; (951) 789-5363; quiltsforthebrave@att.net; www.homeofthebravequilts.com.

Honor and Remember. Promotes a nationally recognized flag to commemorate deceased service members. Presents flags to Survivor families. Sponsors Run for the Fallen events nationwide. Chapters in most states. www.honorandremember.org/, <https://www.facebook.com/HonorAndRemember.org>.

Honor/Memorial/Photo Dog Tags. Will provide ten free Honor Photo Dog Tags to the immediate family of a deceased active duty service member. The front of the dog tag has an engraved photo of the member and the back displays the name, branch of service, duty station, date of death and the short phrase Heroes Live Forever. (866) 696-5652; ozarkengrave@suddenlink.net; www.honormemorialphototags.com.

Kay Berry Memorial Stone. Offers a free engraved memorial stone for indoor or outdoor display to families of active duty military members who have passed away since September 11, 2001. Shipping charges apply. (724) 352-0370; (800) 426-1932.

KIA Honor Flag. Offers a free red flag with a distinctive design to Survivor families. <http://KIAHonorFlag.org>.

Memory Box Project. Provides handmade keepsake boxes to the families of service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. (805) 221-5087; david@dbcustomwoodworking.com; www.memoryboxproject.org. (Availability of these boxes depends on the level of donations received by the memory box project.)

Military Times: Honor the Fallen. Online database of service members who fought and died during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. www.militarytimes.com/valor/.

National Gold Star Registry. Searchable online registry of service members killed in action. The registry provides information and resources for families. The site also provides families an opportunity to create memorial pages about their loved ones. <http://goldstarfamilyregistry.com>.

Operation Never Forgotten. Creates billboards from family photos as public service announcements reminding Americans of military service and sacrifice. <http://operationneverforgotten.org/programs/gold-star-program/>.

Operation Remembrance. Provides memory boxes to the spouse or parents of service members killed while serving on active duty. www.operationremembrance.org.

Operation Thankful Nation. This organization sends a free keepsake package of a hand-painted porcelain memento and a CD to the closest relative of a fallen service member. www.operationthankfulnation.com/.

Our Fallen Soldier. Provides a free tribute web page for service members killed in action. www.ourfallensoldier.com/.

Patriot Guard Riders. Upon request of Survivor families, Patriot Guard Riders provides motorcycle processions for funeral services of American service members, veterans, and first responders. PG's stated mission is to show respect for service members, Survivors, and their communities and to shield mourners and friends from interruptions created by protesters. www.patriotguard.org/content.php.

Project Compassion. Provides, upon request, an 18-by-24 inch framed oil-on-canvas portrait of service members (and first responders) killed since September 11, 2001. (435) 835-9429; www.heropaintings.com/kzindex.aspx.

Project Never Forget. Provides Survivor families with one personalized 3-D charm memorializing their loved ones. www.foreverloved.com/Project_Never_Forget.html.

Remembering Our Fallen. A traveling, state-specific tribute to service members killed in Middle Eastern conflicts since the September 11 attack. www.rememberingourfallen.org/.

Soldiers' Angels. The "Living Legends Team," within this larger service-support organization, sends sympathy cards to bereaved military families and remembrance emails or cards on the anniversary of the service member's death. They also offer each family a wreath or live memorial tree, and referrals and other services, as determined by interaction with Surviving family members. 2700 NE Loop 410, Suite 310, San Antonio, TX 78217; (210) 629-0020; sacorporate@soldiersangels.org; www.soldiersangels.org; www.soldiersangels.org/Living-Legends-Team.html.

Wreaths Across America. Funds and conducts wreath-laying ceremonies at veterans' cemeteries. www.WreathAcrossAmerica.com.

WWII Memorial Registry. Searchable database of World War II veterans killed on active duty. Editable database of World War II veterans. www.wwiimemorial.com.