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Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

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VA marks Gold Star Families Remembrance Week

WASHINGTON — This week, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is commemorating [Gold Star Families Remembrance Week](#), designated to honor families affected by the loss of a service member who died while serving in the U.S. armed forces.

Beginning this week (Sept. 23-29) and over the coming months, commemoration plaques to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives and the families they left behind are being placed at VA national cemeteries across the country.

“We are duty bound as a nation to the families of loved ones who gave their last full measure of devotion to protect our freedoms,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Recognizing Gold Star Families by placing memorials on the graves of these heroes reminds us of their sacrifice and is a fitting tribute to their sacrifice for our freedom.

“VA commends the U.S. Senate on its passage earlier this month of [Senate Resolution 522](#), designating a full week to honor the families of members of the armed forces who died in the line of duty,” he added.

Visitors to national cemeteries and other VA facilities may find other tributes to Gold Star Families, such as the recently dedicated Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the [Louis Stokes VA Medical Center](#) in Cleveland, Ohio, and one at [Washington Crossing National Cemetery](#) in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

The term Gold Star Family references the service flag, first flown by families during World War I. The flag included a blue star for every immediate family member serving in the U.S. armed forces. If that loved one died, the blue star was replaced by a gold star. The U.S. began observing Gold Star Mother’s Day on the last Sunday of September in 1936.