



# Rolling Thunder

## New York Chapter 3

### Calendar Update

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**MISSION STATEMENT:** Rolling Thunder®, Inc.'s major function is to publicize the POW-MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars. To help correct the past and to protect the future veterans from being left behind should they become 'prisoners of war/missing in action'. We are committed to helping American veterans from all wars.

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Our chapter wishes to acknowledge **American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.** as an organization, like our own, that dedicates itself to the support of the behind-the-scenes heroes of our country's military actions. We also want to recognize and honor **all** Gold Star parents, and let them know they are in our thoughts and prayers, always.

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February 2017

This month I would like to take the time to give a little history lesson on "The Gold Star Mothers". I spend a lot of time either on the train or in a hotel room so I try to find subjects that keep my interest. So one day this past January, I simply went on line and typed in "Gold Star Mothers". I read through the history of when the Gold Star Mothers came to be, why they came to be and the incredible things they do to help each other, but most of all, how they inspire all of us to continue to support all of our military actions and each other.

Now for a little humor!!

After numerous rounds of, "We don't know if Osama is still alive," Osama himself decided to send Ted Kennedy a letter in his own handwriting to let him know he was still in the game. Kennedy opened the letter which appeared to contain a single line of coded message, 370HSSV-0773H. Kennedy was baffled, so he e-mailed it to John Kerry. Kerry and his aides had no clue either, so they sent it to the FBI. No one could solve it at the FBI, so it went to the CIA, then to the NSA. With no clue as to its meaning, the FBI finally asked Marine Corps Intelligence for help. Within a few seconds the Marine Corps cabled back with this reply, "Tell Kennedy he's holding the message upside down." So, a Marine figured this out, me too!!! But can YOU ???

So as I indicated in my opening statement, I thought it would be appropriate to Formally bring forward to all our members who may not know what the "Gold Star Mothers" organization is all about.

## Founding

The Gold Star Mothers was founded by Grace Darling Seibold of [Washington, D.C.](#)<sup>[4]</sup>

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, George Vaughn Seibold, 23, volunteered, requesting assignment in aviation. He was sent to Canada where he learned to fly British planes since the United States had neither an air force nor planes. Deployed to England, he was assigned to the British Royal Flying Corps with [148th Aero Squadron](#). With his squadron, he left for combat duty in France. He corresponded with his family regularly. His mother, Grace Darling Seibold, began to do community service by visiting returning servicemen in the hospitals.

The mail from George stopped. Since all aviators were under British control and authority, the United States could not help the Seibold family with any information about their son.

Grace continued to visit hospitalized veterans in the Washington area, clinging to the hope that her son might have been injured and returned to the United States without any identification. While working through her sorrow, she helped ease the pain of the many servicemen who returned so war-damaged that they were incapable of ever reaching normalcy.

But on October 11, 1918, George's wife in Chicago received a box marked "Effects of deceased Officer 1st Lt. George Vaughn Seibold". The Seibolds also received a confirmation of George's death on November 4 through a family member in Paris.

On Sunday, December 15, 1918, nine days before Christmas Eve, the following obituary appeared in [The Washington Star](#) newspaper:

Lieut. G. V. Seibold Killed in Action  
Battling Aviator, Recently Cited for Bravery in France, is War Victim.  
Lieut. George Vaughn Seibold, battling aviator, cited for bravery in action some time ago, lost his life in a fight in the air August 26, last. His father, George G. Seibold...has been officially notified of his son's death by the War Department.  
Lieut. Seibold was a member of the 148th U. S. Aero Squadron. He was first reported missing in action, though a number of circumstances led to the fear that he had been killed. Hope was sustained until now, however, by the failure to receive definite word.

George's body was never identified.

Grace, convinced that self-contained grief is self-destructive, devoted her time and efforts not only to working in the hospital but also to supporting other mothers whose sons had lost their lives in military service. She organized a group consisting solely of these mothers, with the purpose of not only comforting each other, but giving loving care to hospitalized veterans confined in government hospitals far from home. The organization was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran. After years of planning, twenty-five mothers met in

Washington, D.C., on June 4, 1928, to establish the national organization, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.

On May 28, 1918, President Wilson approved a suggestion made by the [Council of National Defense](#) that, instead of wearing conventional mourning for relatives who have died in the service of their country, American women should wear a black band on the left arm with a gilt star on the band for each member of the family who has given his life for the nation.

"The Service Flag displayed from homes, places of business, churches, schools, etc., to indicate the number of members of the family or organizations who are serving in the Armed Forces or who have died from such service. Service flags have a deep Blue Star for each living member in the service and a Gold Star for each member who has died." Thus, the Gold Star and the term Gold Star Mother, as applied to mothers whose sons or daughters died in World War I, were accepted; they have continued to be used in reference to all American military engagements since that time.

## History of membership criteria

Membership in American Gold Star Mothers was originally restricted to those who lost sons or daughters in World War I, and was later expanded to include mothers of those lost in [World War II](#), then the [Korean War](#), and then other specific conflicts. Today, the membership criteria do not consider the place or time of the military service and do not consider whether the circumstances of the death involved hostile conflict or not, and also allow membership for mothers of those [missing in action](#).

For the first 77 years of its existence, AGSM restricted its membership criteria to admit only [U.S. citizens](#). As a way to create pressure to change the rule, an application for admission was submitted in 2005 that deliberately highlighted the applicant's lack of citizenship.<sup>[5]</sup> The application, from Ligaya Lagman, a [Filipino permanent resident of the United States](#) living in [Yonkers, New York](#), who had been living in the U.S. more than 20 years and whose son, Marine Staff Sgt. Anthony Lagman, was [killed in action](#) in [Afghanistan](#) in 2004 at the age of 26, was rejected in May 2005.<sup>[6]</sup> In the next month after that incident, which received a "firestorm"<sup>[7]</sup> of publicity that included negative commentary by New York [U.S. Representative Eliot Engel](#) and New York [U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton](#),<sup>[5]</sup> the group agreed on June 27, 2005, to change its membership criteria,<sup>[6]</sup> and it accepted its first two non-citizens as members a few months later in early September 2005.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Current membership and charter



Gold Star Mothers listen as Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley (not pictured) offers remarks during the 80th Gold Star Mother's Day commemorative ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Sept. 25, 2016.

The AGSM is a private [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) nonprofit organization<sup>[2]</sup> that sets its own rules for who is allowed to become a member.<sup>[1]</sup> The current charter, held under Title 36 § 211 of the United States Code, was established on June 12, 1984.<sup>[4]</sup>

Today, membership in American Gold Star Mothers is open to any woman who was a U.S. citizen or legal resident of the U.S. or its [Territories](#) or [Insular Possessions](#) at the time their child (or adopted child) was inducted into military service and whose child (or adopted child) has died or has become [missing in action](#) while in the [United States Armed Forces](#) (or died later as the result of such service). Membership is not contingent on whether the child was killed in action<sup>[8]</sup> or on the theater of operation or the time period of the service (which differs from distinctions made by the [Department of Defense](#), which confers special status to service in particular periods of time and particular hostile operations).<sup>[11]</sup> Non-adoptive stepmothers are also eligible for membership if they assumed responsibility for the child before the age of fifteen and raised them. Husbands and children of Gold Star Mothers are eligible to join as Associate Members. Honorary membership is available to mothers who were not citizens or legal residents at the time their child was inducted. Associate Members and Honorary Members cannot vote or hold official positions (and are not required to pay dues).

AGSM is made up of local chapters, which are organized into departments. Five members are required to start a local chapter. If no local chapter is available, a woman may join the organization as a member at large.

Just as when it was founded, AGSM continues to concentrate on providing emotional support to its members, doing volunteer work with veterans in general and veterans' hospitals in particular, and generally fostering a sense of patriotism and respect for members of the Armed Forces.

The group currently<sup>[when?]</sup> has 933 members.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Uniform

The uniform consists of a white skirt, white shirt, and a white blazer, with a gold star embroidered on either lapel, and gold piping on the sleeve cuffs, and collars, and white shoes, either [Mary Janes](#) or [pumps](#), with a white cap, similar to a women's service hat, with gold piping. This uniform is worn at all parades, meetings, and social functions connected with military functions (e.g., [Memorial Day](#) services at [Arlington National Cemetery](#))

## Notable memberships



Gold Star Mothers  
commemorative issue of 1948

Aside from the founder, perhaps the mother most known for being a Gold Star mother was Aletta Sullivan, the mother of the five [Sullivan brothers](#), who were killed in action when their ship, the [USS Juneau \(CL-52\)](#) was sunk by an enemy torpedo on November 13, 1942 during the [Naval Battle of Guadalcanal](#). On September 21, 1948, the U.S. Post Office issued a [commemorative stamp](#), specially designed by artist [Charles R. Chickering](#), honoring the Gold Star Mothers. Mrs. Sullivan was given the first sheet of stamps issued.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Gold Star Mother's Day

On the last Sunday in September, **Gold Star Mother's Day** is observed in the U.S. in honor of Gold Star mothers, as established in [Title 36 § 111 of the United States Code](#).<sup>[10]</sup> This was originally declared by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936.<sup>[11]</sup> In September 2012, [Barack Obama](#) issued a presidential proclamation commemorating September 30, 2012, as "Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day".<sup>[12]</sup>

## American Gold Star Manor

American Gold Star Manor, located in [Long Beach, California](#), is a 348-unit retirement home for parents of soldiers killed while serving in the military. It was founded in the early 1960s by Eleanor Boyd, then president of the American Gold Star Mothers organization.

Hopefully, I have helped you all better understand what our beloved Gold Star Mothers is about. I certainly was enlightened regarding the history of such a considerate and worthwhile organization.

# NEWS & STORIES

## [Airman Missing From World War II Identified \(Mumford\)](#)

**By** | January 18, 2017

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. John D. Mumford, missing from World War II, has now been accounted for. On June 6, 1944, Mumford, while serving with the 318th Fighter Squadron.

## [Soldier Missing From Korean War Identified \(Sharp\)](#)

**By** | January 11, 2017

Army Sgt. James W. Sharp, missing from the Korean War, has now been accounted for. In late November, 1950, Sharp was a member of Battery B, 57th Field Artillery

## [Airman Missing From World War II Identified \(Carlson\)](#)

**By** | January 10, 2017

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Charles E. Carlson, missing from World War II, has now been accounted for. On Dec. 23, 1944, Carlson was a P-47 pilot with the 62<sup>nd</sup> Air Wing.

[Read More](#)

## [Airman Missing From World War II Identified \(Gray\)](#)

**By** | January 06, 2017

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. William J. Gray, missing from World War II, has now been accounted for. On April 16, 1945, Gray was a member of the 391st Fighter Squadron.

Well, that's all folks!! As always, I have enjoyed writing this months newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Your Brother Member

*Joseph Dall Vechia*

