

A Brief History of Gold Star Mothers and Family's Day

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GOLD STAR MOTHER'S AND FAMILY'S DAY

The origin of what would become Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day started with a simple accessory: a black armband with a gilt star.

During World War I, family members would wear these armbands to represent a loved one who had died in the war. The stars would later find their way to being

displayed on banners that were hung in windows or front doors. Banners with blue stars were hung to represent immediate family members who were serving. Some would have one star; others would have two or three. The stars symbolized the people who were supposed to be home but were missing from the dinner table. If a family member died during their service, the blue star would be replaced with a gold one.

Grace Darling Seibold was one of these mothers with a gold star in her window. Her son, 23-year-old George Vaughn Seibold, volunteered to be an aviator and was sent to England in 1917 as part of the British Royal Flying Corps. Grace and George had regularly exchanged letters until she suddenly stopped hearing from him. Nevertheless, she held out hope. In 1918, she received his personal belongings and confirmation of his death. George's body was never identified.

Grace then used her time and grief to reach out to other mothers trying to cope with similar losses. Twenty-five of these women banded together in 1928 to create American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. — a group that still exists today — to honor their children, heal together, and support veterans and the nation. In 1936, Congress designated the last Sunday in September as Gold Star Mother's Day (now known as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day).

Following the end of World War II, Congress designated the Gold Star Lapel Pin. The pin was modeled after the banners and features a gold star with a purple background surrounded by laurel leaves. According to law, the United States military must present the lapel pin to the immediate family member of the deceased. If you see someone wearing this pin, know that they lost someone close to them who served the country heroically.

Gold Star mothers and families suffer a loss too terrible for most people to imagine. Nothing can erase that tragedy from their lives. Today, we honor their sacrifices. This Sunday, September 25, Arlington National Cemetery is honored to host Gold Star Mothers and Families to commemorate the holiday at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier