

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS SAY:  
STOP USING ‘GOLD STAR’ IMMEDIATELY**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., August 23, 2005** – Four national military family organizations are calling for an end to the misuse of one of the nation’s most sacred symbols – the Gold Star – to politicize efforts for ending the war in Iraq.

The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., Sons and Daughters In Touch and American WWII Orphans Network oppose the use of and reference to the ‘Gold Star’ in the political demonstrations being carried out in Texas and other parts of the United States.

*In a joint statement released by the four organizations serving military families:*

**“The American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., Sons and Daughters In Touch and American WWII Orphans Network object to ‘American Gold Star Families for Peace’ misusing the term ‘Gold Star’ in its political demonstrations.**

**“These four organizations - representing the mothers, wives and children of U.S. service personnel killed in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and other U.S. military conflicts – are nonpolitical and do not take a position on the merits of the political demonstration being carried out by the group calling themselves ‘American Gold Star Families for Peace.’**

**“Our loved ones gave their lives to protect the freedom to protest, and we know all too well the pain that these families are now suffering. However, the Gold Star symbol – authorized by Congress to honor a family’s loss in service to our nation – must not be tarnished by partisan political demonstrations.”**

The Department of Defense awards gold star pins to family members who have lost a loved one in military service to their country.

**About American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.**

A federally chartered nonprofit organization, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. ([www.goldstarmoms.com](http://www.goldstarmoms.com)) comprises American mothers who lost a son or daughter during a major U.S. conflict, strategic military area, or while in service to the United States. Its 150 chapters work to perpetuate the ideals of Americanism for which their children so gallantly fought and died.

**About Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.**

Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. ([www.goldstarwives.org](http://www.goldstarwives.org)) is a nonprofit membership organization chartered by the U.S. Congress. Its 10,000 members nationwide in more than 60 active chapters are men and women whose spouses died while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces or died from a service-related disability. They actively educate and support surviving spouses and children of the fallen.

**About Sons and Daughters In Touch**

As part of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration this June, Sons and Daughters In Touch ([www.sdit.org](http://www.sdit.org)) presented more than 300 Gold Star pins to its members during a Father’s Day celebration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. SDIT works to locate, unite and provide support to the now-grown children of American servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

**About American WWII Orphans Network**

Founded in 1991, American WWII Orphans Network ([www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org)) comprises several hundred members from all over the nation – sons and daughters and other family member of Americans left with a void after World War II. Any son or daughter of a soldier, seaman or airman killed, missing or who died while on active duty during WWII, or as result of wounds, is eligible to join AWON as an Orphan Member.

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