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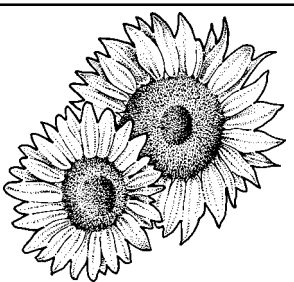


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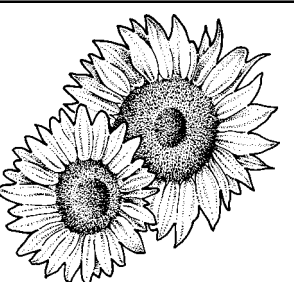
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Banners help families show their pride and patriotism as loved ones defend freedom

By Greg Stover
The Goodland Star-News

Family pride for one of its members serving on active duty in the military may be old-fashioned, but that does not mean it has lost any of its strength.

The men and women serving in uniform, regardless of where stationed, leave behind parents, spouses and children. However while these families experience the absence of a loved one and pray for his or her safe return, they also are proud of his or her decision to serve their country, even if it means going in harms way.

One of the ways a family can show its pride is with a Blue Star Banner. The banner is red with a white field with one blue star in it for every member of that family serving on active duty in the armed forces. No more than five stars can be on any one banner, after that a combination of banners is used.

The banners are usually displayed in the front window of the home, but the decision where to display it is up to the family.

For the past two Decembers the Goodland Elks held a ceremony during which area families were honored and received a banner for their loved one. Last December, 19 families received banners including two with two blue stars. In 2002, banners were given to 27 families three of which received a banner with two stars.

Should the service member die in the line of duty a gold star will be superimposed on the blue star representing him or her. The gold star will be smaller than the blue star so a border can be formed around it.

The Blue Star Banner was designed in 1917 by Robert Queissner, a captain in the U.S. Army, who had two sons serving on the front lines in France during World War I. The banners were widely used during both world wars but were not as popular during Korea and Vietnam. The war on terrorism and its impact on every American community has revitalized the pride for our military and rekindled interest in the banner.

The Elks are planning to hold another ceremony this coming December and will start gathering information in September, said Zona Price who coordinates the program. She said the minimum information she needs is the service member's name, rank, and current station. For more information call Price at (785) 890-6251.



Margaret Kaufman (center) of Goodland received a banner with two stars for her sons, Gary and Larry Kaufman, on Dec. 7. Joe Scheopner (left) is the exalted ruler of the Goodland Elks and Ron Barkley is the Elk's Americanism chairman. Both Kaufman brothers are in the U.S. Air Force. Gary is stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi and Larry at McConnell Air Force Base near Wichita.



Carol Stewart (left photo) displayed her pride in her son Andrew, a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany, by displaying her banner at work. She is a teller at First National Bank. A banner (above photo) is displayed in the front window of Vernice Leslie's home for her grandson Craig Townsend serving in the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor. An alternate way to show pride is with a banner window sticker (below).

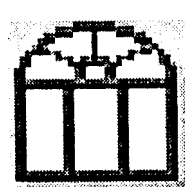
Photos by Greg Stover
The Goodland Star-News



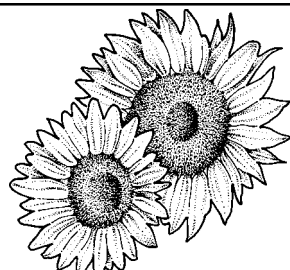
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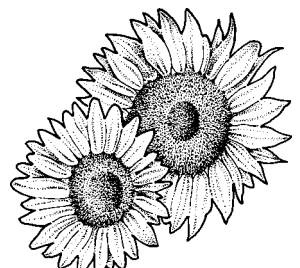
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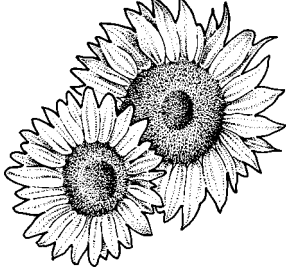
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