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# Gold Star Mom Pleads With Government to Recognize Sacrifice of Her Son and Others Who Died in Line of Duty

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**Senator Novelle Francis presents Gold Star mother Delita Farrington Francis with flowers at the V.I. Legislature in St. Thomas on Tues. Sept. 20, 2022. By. V.I. LEGISLATURE**

Delita Farrington Francis appeared before the 34th Legislature on Tuesday, pleading that her son's life and others who died during active military duty, be respectfully memorialized as promised when legislators passed Act #7830 in 2013.

The act recognizes National Gold Star Mother's Day on the last Sunday in September, as a time to pay tribute to the countless mothers who have lost their children who served in the United States

Army.

On October 18th, 2013 Ms. Francis' son, Staff Sgt. Lyle Dervin Turnbull died during his 5th deployment in Kuwait at 31 years old. On May 2018, he was added to the United States Army pillar in Franklin Delano Roosevelt Virgin Islands Veterans Memorial Park in Charlotte Amalie, and she became part of a long list of grieving families in the territory and on the mainland.

Not a day goes by that she doesn't remember him but her plea was for the territory to do the same. "It's not easy, it's hard. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't remember him," she said.

Ms. Francis, who was asked to appear before the Legislature to receive a token of appreciation ahead of the official memorial on September 25th, held up a photo of her son and said, "I've been fighting a battle ever since I became a Gold Star mother. I fought with my son on the battlefield and I'm still fighting here today."

The aggrieved mother said nothing had been done in years to recognize the sacrifice of her son and others who died defending the mainland and the territory. "Please, it's hard; it's not going to bring our sons or daughters back but I'm asking you to acknowledge us. It's the law, it's on the books. It's not Delita only, there are many other Gold Star families here."

"The law was passed by our former Governor Mapp to acknowledge us the last Sunday in September. Stateside it's a big thing, but nothing has been done here for years. I personally always do something at home to recognize my son," she stated.

Ms. Francis said she has tried her best to keep her son's memory alive and when she attempted to hold a ceremony last year to include other families, she was unable to obtain the names or their information.

"I said okay, plan B, concentrate on Staff Sergeant Turnbull, my son. I did. There was a big write-up in the paper [and] that thing motivated me up until today."

She made an impassioned plea saying, "I'm proud of them and I'm here asking all of you senators and those of you listening on TV, please push your senators, family members that are here, support us. We need to be at least acknowledged; recognize us because we served with our children".

Staff Sgt. Turnbull who was from St. Thomas, died as the result of what the U.S. Department of Defense called a medical emergency at the time. At the time of his death, he was assigned to the 62nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 11th Signal Brigade, in Fort Hood, Texas.

The deceased was a decorated officer whose duties included providing communications, computers and Internet service to combat units.