

# PS4FS Monthly Newsletter - April 2011:

Dear PS4FS friends,

I am amazed at your support of our new “exclusive” Dover Program! I plead guilty for having underestimated your passion for this program! Thank you for all your messages of support! We have now moved into our new phase, sending our prayer shawls to Dover. To date, we have sent 1,503 prayer shawls to Dover Air Base - that’s in 2 ½ years! In March alone, we sent 124! We are now 262 groups (this changes with a few leaving, a few joining). I thank you for all your support! As I said last month, we are “veterans” in this ministry – we’ve received so many wonderful letters from our Families, if there are less thank you notes to share on line, that’s not what propels us to continue sending our loving gifts to our Families at Dover Air Base. We know from our Chaplains how much our work means to our grieving Families who are faced with that awful trip to the base.

There are three important reminders with the Dover program:

1. Please notify me when you want to mail prayer shawls to Dover – and give me the number of prayer shawls. I will mark down the number next to your name to ensure we keep track and have a good idea how many are being sent. I will also reply with the current chaplains’ names/addresses. (Note: You will **not** find the chaplains’ addresses published anywhere on the website, as they understandably have requested it not be published.)
2. Attach a card/note to each prayer shawl with your contact information, and include our web site address. It’s important that the receiver is able to thank you. Ideas on what to write are on the website. Note: There have been many changes made on the website, so please check it out!
3. If your email address changes, please notify me.
4. Send me a photo of you or your group, and share with us what you are doing! (Include a list of names with the photo.) Photos help to bind us together! It’s safe to assume with our new program, we’ll receive less information in the newsletter. Pictures of each other help to maintain our bonds in this new stage!

Carry on! I’m so proud of our work, and what we’ve achieved together! Once again I’ll say it: “Oh what a bit of yarn can do!”

Note: If you prefer to be removed from this list, please notify me.

<http://webpages.charter.net/ps4fs/Shawls/>

Fondly,

Cozette

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### **I.) INFO:**

#### **1.) CURRENT STATISTICS:**

# Prayer Shawls made since October 2007:	4,618	<i>Includes Dover prayer shawls (numbers below)</i>
# sent to Dover since inception of program:	1,503	
# sent this past month:	124	
# Prayer Shawl Groups/Individuals:	262	<i>This includes three new members!</i>

\*A Warm Welcome to New Groups/Individuals who Joined PS4FS in April 2011

Contact Name	Town	State	Group Name	Date Joined
Mary Otte	Peoria	AZ		3/16/12
Michelle Calhoun	Coppell	TX		3/22/11
Michele Robinette	Washington	DC		3/28/11

## 2.) DOVER PROGRAM

Thank you for your many responses to the changes in our program. I am truly in awe over your understanding and passion for our ministry. We have done a lot together, and it seems we'll continue to do so with less direct contact from our families. Your reactions and messages have inspired me tremendously! Below are three typical sentiments to share, although, there were many:

**PS4FS knitter/crocheter Linda Chamberlain, from Grace Episcopal Church, Manchester, New Hampshire,** offers her sentiments about our new program, sentiments echoed by many of you:

*I think allowing the Chaplains to receive the shawls and decide who they need to give them to is a great idea! I can envision a situation where perhaps a mother, a grandmother and several sisters come to claim the soldier and they should all get a shawl. They are there and they should be allowed to make the distribution decisions. Thank you, as always. Linda Chamberlain*

**PS4FS knitter/crocheter Nancy Kahrs, from Ft. Walton, Florida,** echoes similar feelings:

*Although I love the one-on-one with the families, I certainly understand the need for the new plan. Hopefully this will ease some of the clerical work for you as well which I am sure has been huge. This program has touched so many people, both the families receiving the shawls and those of us who have been privileged to knit them. You have given all of us a chance to serve and be served and that is awesome. I look forward to helping to continue this ministry and thank you once again for starting it. Nancy Kahrs*

**PS4FS knitter/crocheter Martha Bicknell, who works with the group from Rangeley Congregational Church Prayer Shawl Ministry Circle in Rangeley, Maine,** enthusiastically says:

*Definitely -- we MUST keep going with the Dover Shawl Program! What a blessing that the more personal prayer shawl program was able to happen at all and for so many years. Well done, shawl sister! And now, God calls us, with you as our coordinator, to wrap love and prayers around the families coming to Dover. Thank you so very much for the poignant link to all that happens at Dover. It is truly "dignified"! May these wars end one day and until then, our Prayer Shawls will bring warmth and love to those families who have given so much for America. Shawl sister love to you, Martha Bicknell*

Amen to that, Martha!

## II. INFO, IDEAS, AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM YOU:

**PS4FS Janet Shott, who works with the Palmdale United Methodist Church prayer shawl group in Palmdale, California,** shares an important message from her church's pastor. It's one I wish could be shared with all churches and places of worship across the country. Thank you, Pastor Jim, for your support for this program! Janet writes:

*One of our members received a beautiful letter of thanks for hers prayer shawl. One Sunday our Pastor Jim ended his sermon by reading the letter - so poignant! Many of our members are from the Edwards Air Force Base (in California) and so it was meaningful for them. The Pastor emphasized to members, however, that even though you may be elderly and homebound, there are ways to give service to others (as the knitter of this shawl does).*

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Ellen Powell, who works with the Central Hill Baptist Woman's Missionary Union 10270 in Central Hill, Virginia, shares a wonderful photo of their active group! We are so blessed to have so many groups all over the country! Again, I encourage you to share a picture with us, and also share your works of art, and your correspondence! We like getting to know one another! It helps our cause in this ministry!

This past month, Central Hill Baptist sent **35** prayer shawls to Dover Air Base! I do believe you broke our record ladies! Marie Stephenson (not in the photo below) and her husband made the trip. Thank you, Marie, and thank you all from this marvelous group! Thank you for caring, and sharing your talents with our military families at Dover Air Base! Notice their handiwork on the table in front of them!

Ellen tells us:

*I am amazed at the support that this project has spurned and thank God for the giving and gifted "hands". By the way, we have been tagging the shawls individually and three of us have received correspondence from a family that received the shawls some of us made. Reading the notes brought us all to tears because we could envision the touching moments of what the families were experiencing, wishing that no one should ever experience such tragedy.*



*Above, 1<sup>st</sup> row from L-R: Peggy Mercer, Audrey Stokes, Jane Jones, Betty Crocker, and Marian Gray*

*2<sup>nd</sup> row : Evelyn Bryant, Ellen Powell, Teresa Nurney*

*All the ladies but one are either housewives or retired from public service. Sadly, this picture does not include everyone who has contributed to the success of our shawl ministry.*



### III. THANK YOU NOTES, NPC RESPONSES, AND MESSAGES:

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Debra Laughlin, who works alone in our ministry, and lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia, joined us about a year ago. Debra is unique, (I hope you don't mind my saying that, Debra) because she is visually impaired, yet she joins us in this ministry to help console our military families. Her experience comes from being a naval mother, something she shares with many of us! I admire you so much, Debra! She says she works slowly, but our ministry has many loving knitting/crocheting hands, so the speed does not really matter – our accomplishments come from the huge **heart** of our group!

Below is a letter Debra included with her prayer shawl sent to eight-year-old Damarques Newman, son of SSG Jaime Carlos Newman, DOD 9/17/10. Young Damarques lives in Powhatan, Virginia. Debra's letter reads: (2 photos right, including a photo of Damarques' lovely prayer shawls from Debra, and a video clip below)

*Dear Damarques, It is with great sadness that I write to you. My name is Debra Laughlin and you do not know me. I belong to the "Pray Shawls 4 Fallen Soldiers" Ministry. I made an afghan blanket for you in memory of your father, SSG Jaime Carlos Newman. In my eyes and in the eyes of many Americans worldwide, your father is a hero. The legacy of a hero is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example. You will no doubt miss your father your whole life and I hope you can wrap yourself in this blanket and feel your father's love.*

*"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal"*

*~From a headstone in Ireland*

*May God bless you and keep always, Debra Laughlin*



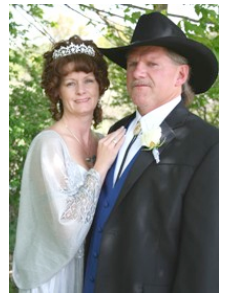
PS4FS knitter/crocheter Lynette Schneider, who works with Common Threads Prayer Shawl group from St. George Episcopal Church in Belleville, Illinois, has always been most passionate about contacting our families directly. She is very much at ease with this method, and often receives thank you notes and letters as a result. Lynette shares notes from a prayer blanket/lap cover she made and hand-delivered to a mother battling MS disease. Lynette tells us Maria Brown's spirit is "so inspiring, that I just had to go to meet her." Maria is the proud mother of SSG Brian Lee Mintzloff, DOD 12/18/06, and lives in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Maria and her husband, Rally, thanked Lynette in the following message: (5 photos)

*Thank You, Thank You, for what you have done Angel Lynette ♥ The prayer blanket is absolutely beautiful!. I will cherish this blessing for the rest of my life, as I will cherish the memory of our first visit together. You are truly an awesome young woman and /we are so honored to have had the privilege of your company. That you made time to make the trip, thank you! I pray that you've made it home safely honey ♥ God Bless you always. You have lifted our hearts! With Love, Maria & Rally ♥♥*



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Barbara Conway, who works with the Our Lady of Victory Prayer Shawl group in Centerville, Massachusetts, received a thank you note from Wendy Ralston, from Hastings, Michigan. Wendy and Harvey are the proud parents of PFC Daniel Courneya, DOD 5/12/07. (2 photos right)

*The prayer shawl arrived in today's mail. It is very pretty, and quite soft! I love the colors, as well. It will be the perfect comfort on cold days as I think of my Daniel's love of snowboarding, and sledding! Thank you for every stitch of love and compassion that you made just for me! Wendy*



As we all know, time does not erase the pain of losing a loved one. We are now adding our first name from the Vietnam War, PS4FS knitter/crocheter, Barbara Conway, who works with Our Lady of Victory prayer shawl group from Centerville, Massachusetts, tells us about a prayer shawl she made for a family whose husband died in 1965 in Vietnam! Barbara writes: *Yesterday I offered to make a prayer shawl for a widow of a man killed in Vietnam in 1965! He died at the age of 50. I met his daughter who was 15 at the time. The interesting thing is that my husband was flying med evacuation helicopters at the same time in Vietnam. Kathy's mother is now 93 and lives in a military-supported nursing home in Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. Would this be the first shawl given to a Vietnam soldier's family? It will not be completed for a couple of months, as i have two more I am working on. I love this ministry!*

We love you too, Barbara! Thank you for your passion in this work! Thank you for continuing to make a difference for our families! You have been a tireless worker bee among us!



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Dottie Stevens, who works with the ladies from "Stitched in Prayers" at Trinity United Methodist Church, in Smithfield, Virginia, shares two thank you notes, the first is from Diane Myers, a mother from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who accepted a prayer shawl from Dover Air Base for her son, PFC Brandon Michael Stayer, DOD 10/15/09. (2 photos left)

*October 22, 2009 - Dear Mrs. Stevens, You will never know how much the prayer shawl you made and delivered to Dover, Delaware means to me. My husband and I got word last Thursday evening, October 15th, that our son, Brandon, had been killed in action in Afghanistan. My husband and his two daughters went down to see Brandon brought back to the United States on Friday evening, October 16<sup>th</sup> They picked up this beautiful burgundy-colored prayer shawl for me. Since I received it this past Friday night, I have slept with it over me every night. I plan to continue doing so. It*

*brings me great comfort to know there are so many, many people who care that Brandon died and that we are in extreme sorrow over this tragic loss in our lives. We are Christians and United Methodists at that! Brandon will be brought back to Lancaster County tomorrow morning and we will have a viewing tomorrow evening with the funeral on Saturday morning. It is destined to be a huge tribute to Brandon's heroic life in the short time he was in the Army. The whole community and beyond has been overwhelming supportive to us, through prayer, cards, food, comfort, hugs and love. I work as a teacher at Lancaster Christian School and my school has just been absolutely amazing in their love for our family at this time. Again, I just needed to write you as a mother, and let you know how much your wonderful gift of a prayer shawl has given me comfort over the past week. Sincerely, Diane Styer*



The second thank you note Dottie shares with us comes from Celeste Calderon, loving aunt of CPT Paul Wenceslaus Pena, DOD 1/19/10. Celeste lives in Wilmington, Delaware, and writes: (2 photos right)

*December 8, 2010 - Dear Dottie: On January 20th I accompanied my sister, Cecilia, to Dover, Delaware. It is an accident of geography that I live between the Philadelphia airport, where she arrived from Texas, and Dover Air Force Base, where we welcomed our beloved CPT Paul Pena back to American soil. It is an accident of circumstance that I had been teaching in Dover and made the trip every day. Of all of the trips, I made the very one that changes lives forever. Your gift of comfort has been a part of that change, that evolution to accepting a different world without Paul. I am sure that you are aware that there are no words to describe what the trip is like – I have tried many times to write a word of thanks or just a note to let you know who picked up one of your Prayer Shawls. My words may not have come readily, but the prayers did. I have several rocking chairs, and the shawl has spent time on the back of each of them, and, yes, on my back as well! Just a glance at it is a comfort. There is specialness to objects made for the specific purpose of facilitating prayer. We are Catholic and our prayer environment at church is filled with such, and so is my home. I say the rosary regularly with the shawl around me. Thank you for taking the time to crochet with care and for others. May you and yours enjoy the best of the season. Affectionately, Celeste Calderon*

