

PS4FS Monthly Newsletter - November 2011:

Dear PS4FS friends,

I am sending this month's newsletter early to inform you I cannot attend the Prayer Shawl Ministry's Gathering on Saturday, November 5th. If any of you attend, please send photos and stories. I've so enjoyed meeting a number of you at this wonderful event! The friendships, the outstanding lunch, and now a THIRD new book coming out soon! I'm always amazed at the huge network we've all established with our yarn! Isn't it amazing!

The Army's casualty list is being delivered again – but on a rather *erratic* basis. If your group would like names from this list, let me know, however, we no longer cross-reference Dover recipients with the chaplains. It would be up to you decide whether to possibly give again to a Dover family who may have already received one while visiting the base. As you all know, about 95% of the our families travel to Dover, so it's likely they had the opportunity to choose a prayer shawl at The Fisher House before going out to the tarmac to witness the Dignified Transfer Ceremony. Again, let me know if you'd like names from your state, and I'll be glad to send you what I have.

There are some interesting stories in this month's newsletter, including my own *bragging rights* - showing off my "Joseph's Coat of Many Colors" prayer shawl. If you want to make one like it, go to our website under the Directions page, there is an easy printable "click" button for directions to several patterns. In the meantime, be well, be kind, keep smiling, keep knitting and crocheting!

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.) CURRENT STATISTICS:

# Prayer Shawls made since October 2007:	5,381	Includes Dover prayer shawls (numbers below)
# sent to Dover since inception of program (Sept. 2009):	2,201	
# sent to Dover this past month:	55	This number is included in above totals
# Prayer Shawl Groups/Individuals:	278	

I. COMMUNICATIONS FROM YOU:

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Elaine Tabor, who has worked with the Christ United Methodist Church prayer shawl group in Franklin, Tennessee, an active group who joined us in September 2008, shares a photo of a brilliant red, white, and blue prayer shawl for Dover Air Base's Fisher House. Thank you, Elaine, for sharing your work. I encourage all of you to share your work and stories! Elaine writes:

Here is a picture of the shawl I will mail to Dover today. These ladies at Christ United Methodist Church make some beautiful shawls. There would not be a ministry without them and some beautiful shawls made by these members have been sent to Dover in support of the families who have experienced such a loss. Thanks for all you do for this cause.



I am very proud to show you my second "Joseph's Coat of Many Colors" prayer shawl – my first was made July 2009 for Timothy and Fay Dolan from Roy, Utah, proud parents of SPC Daniel George Dolan, DOD 8/27/2006. Fay heads her state's Gold Star Mothers, a noble support group for the military families of our fallen. This prayer shawl has not yet found its owner, but I'm sure it will find its way to the perfect family, just as the first did with Fay and Tim Dolan! What is very special about this prayer shawl is that it is made completely from yarn accumulated from other prayer shawls – all my prayer shawls are made in solid colors, so every color in this prayer shawl represents a prayer shawl sent a military family –and though I did not count all the colors, there are at least 15 in this one. The pattern is a "Janie Lester" cross pattern, which you may print from our website (see Directions page), and although the knitted cross did not show up very well, it IS there, as you may see in the close-up photo below right. Note: the fringe is on the side edges, tying together each new color. No fringe is made at the ends.

Below is the Biblical story of Joseph's Coat of Many Colors. I urge you to use left-over yarn for a this beautiful prayer shawl – I feel it's very special because it is made from pieces of so many other loving prayer shawls, it has its own extraordinary energy. I will be anxious to share with you the story about who receives this prayer shawl. Somehow, the perfect person always does, don't you all find that to be true, time and time again?



JOSEPH'S COAT OF MANY COLORS

Joseph's father, Jacob, favored him and gave Joseph the colorful coat as a gift; as a result, he was envied by his 11 older brothers, who saw the special coat as indicating that Joseph would assume family leadership. His brothers' suspicion grew when Joseph told them of his two dreams (Genesis 37:11) in which all the brothers, and the moon and

stars in the skies bowed down to him. The narrative tells that his brothers plotted against him one day when he was 17, and would have killed him had not the eldest brother, Reuben, interposed. Reuben persuaded them instead to throw Joseph into a pit and secretly planned to rescue Joseph later. However, while Reuben was absent, the others planned to sell Joseph to a company of Ishmaelite merchants. When the passing Midianites arrived, the brothers dragged Joseph up and sold him to the merchants for 20 pieces of silver. The brothers then dipped Joseph's coat in goat blood and showed it to their father, saying that Joseph had been torn apart by wild beasts.

Ten years later, as a slave in Egypt, the Pharaoh favored Joseph for his ability to explain dreams. Upon hearing the Pharaoh's dream, Joseph urged the Pharaoh to store grain for 7 years of bounty, which would be followed by a 7-year famine. During the famine, Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt to ask for grain. Upon seeing Joseph, they did not recognize him and bowed down to him (as in the dream) asking for grain. Joseph held no remorse toward his brothers saying, "I am Joseph! Is my father alive?" But his brothers couldn't answer him because they were afraid. Joseph said, "Come here. I am your brother, the one you sold! Do not worry, and do not be angry at yourselves for selling me, because God has put me here to save people from starving." So his father, his brothers, and their families came to live in Egypt with Joseph, and they had all the food they needed.



We often talk about a small world when our paths cross. PSFS knitter/crocheter Brenda Saunders, who heads the Ashburn Presbyterian Church's prayer shawl group from Ashburn, Virginia, visited her sister a year ago in Troy, Illinois. While there she met a member from Chicks with Sticks prayer shawl group from Troy United Methodist Church, Troy, Illinois, and told them about PS4FS. Chicks with Sticks joined us in August, and Gail Joyner is the group's contact person! Welcome Chicks! We like your name!

II. DOVER PROGRAM:

A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR PROGRAM:

For those of you who are newer to this program, below is a short history of what we've done in our short 4-year history:

The Dover Program continues to be an integral part of our ministry, after changing our ministry's operation three times to accommodate the current needs. As many of you know, we began, back in 2007, writing post cards to families, in an attempt to fulfill over 3,000 names on the Army's Casualty List. This was a time-consuming and costly process, including writing the post cards, stamps, often sending a second post card when we received "no response". Add to that the cost of the prayer shawl's yarn and mailing the prayer shawl, one should be amazed we caught up to the Army's Casualty list in 2 years. (Do you believe we did that!) We then entered the "maintenance stage" where we *maintained* the incoming list each month, but we also went back over the *no responses* and tried again to find them - many times we were successful and the families were elated we persisted! We still find them today!

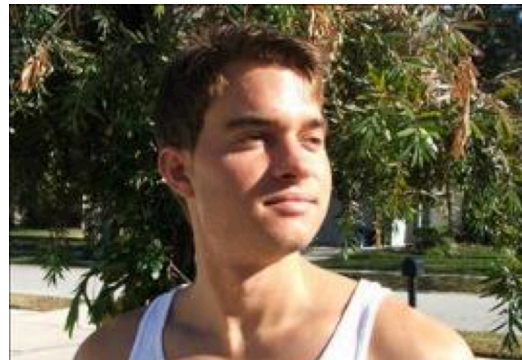
The third stage, the "Dover" stage, is, of course, today. I received a phone call out of the blue from Chaplain David Sorensen at Dover Air Base. He wanted to know if we'd be willing to send prayer shawls directly to the Base for families who traveled there to witness the *Dignified Transfer Ceremony*. President Obama had just approved next-of-kin attendance at ceremonies held there on an almost daily basis. Nearly all close relatives attend this somber ceremony, held on the tarmac of the base. About 95% of the families take one or more of our treasured prayer shawls. The chaplains accompany families to the base's Fisher House, where they select prayer shawls displayed across chairs, couches, and tables. They then proceed out onto the tarmac to witness the *Dignified Transfer Ceremony*. The chaplains tell us in the colder months, the prayer shawls act as warmth, but in reality, they add so much more than that - they are an immense source of emotional and spiritual comfort. To date, we are working with our third chaplain, Chaplain Garry Losey. Each one has confirmed the importance of our prayer shawls to their work at Dover, telling us how much our prayer shawls mean to the families who visit the base. Quoting Chaplain Losey from his letter last month: *"This giving out of a deep felt-love for others is the most precious gift that God has given us and as I see it in my wife's work, I see it in each and every shawl that we give to the families that come through Dover. God bless you for your labor of love for the Families of the Fallen. Thank you for your support."*

IV. THANK YOU NOTES AND MESSAGES:

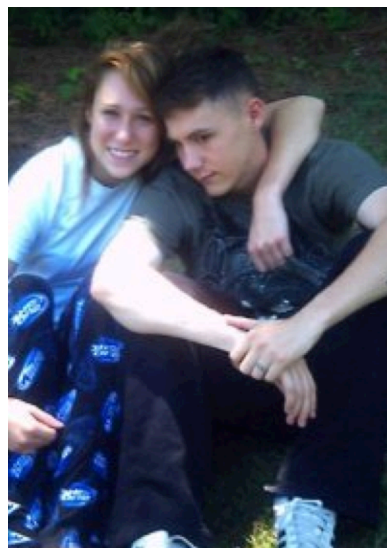
PS4FS knitter/crocheter Cathy McCormack, who heads the Bon Air Presbyterian Church prayer shawl group, from Richmond, Virginia, shares a touching thank you note from a Dover mother. Our work often goes without thank you notes, but when they do come in, they mean so very much to us all! Below is a message from Toni Gross, loving mother of CPL Frank Renea Gross, DOD 7/16/11. Toni lives in Oldsmar,

Florida; she writes: (3 photos right)

Dear Cathy, My son, Frank R. Gross, was killed in Afghanistan, July 16, 2011 of injuries sustained when the truck he was in hit an IED. The Army flew us to Dover AFB for the 'Dignified Transfer' Ceremony to be present for our son's return to US soil. While staying at the Fisher House, my husband and I walked thru the Memorial Gardens and Chapel next to the Fisher House. It was there that I spotted your prayer shawl - a white one. My husband and daughter each wanted one as well. Although this journey has been difficult, God has carried us through with His gentle yet firm arms. Your shawl gave me comfort and warmth and reminded me that God wraps His love in human arms of flesh and uses people like you! God bless you. Toni Gross, Oldsmar, FL



Below are four photos sent by the family of SPC Gary Lee Nelson, DOD 4/5/11. The **Trindle Spring Lutheran Church prayer shawl group from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, headed by Lynne Neibert**, sent two prayer shawls to this family: Kristina Nelson, Gary's sister, received a lap robe from PS4FS knitter Sandy Breech, and Patricia Atkinson, Gary's grandmother, was given a prayer shawl made by PS4FS knitter Shirley Kimmel. The family lives in Woodstock, Georgia. (4 photos below)

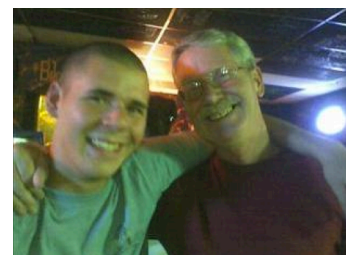
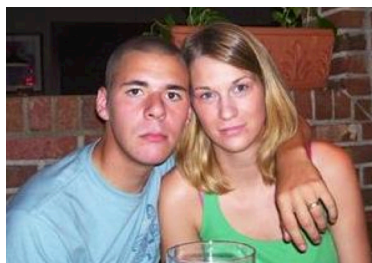


Left: Photos sent in by Gary's mother, Dawn. I believe the far left shows Gary with his father (same name, Gary Lee Nelson Sr., who passed away December 1997).

The far right is Gary with his 16-year-old sister, Kristina.

The **Trindle Spring Lutheran Church's prayer shawl group in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania** had an additional two submissions for our newsletter. The first is a thank you note from Gaye Bishop, proud mother of PFC John Thomas Bishop, DOD 4/23/08. Gaye lives in Gaylord, Michigan and writes: (4 photos found below, including John with his wife, mother, and father)

It is such a wonderful thing that the members of Trindle Spring Lutheran Church are doing. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about my son. It has been three years since his death and I still have this huge hole in my heart. I pray to God every day for the strength to live out another day without him. I will never forget that horrific day. It was April 23, 2008 and we had just returned from his grandmother's funeral. It was 11:30 PM and we had just settled down for the evening when we heard a knock at the door. Two soldiers informed us that our son was killed earlier that evening. We had two sons in Iraq at the time. The Red Cross contacted Kevin, my older son. He was allowed to come home and participated in his younger brother's funeral. We buried John on May 1st, which also happened to be my husband's birthday. Two of the hardest things I have ever done in my life were to bury my youngest son and have my other son return to Iraq. It was like God had ripped my heart out and was punishing me for something. I now realize this is not true. I believe God has our lives all mapped out for us before we are even born. We don't always know or understand what happens to us, but who are we to question HIM? Kevin has since returned to the states unharmed through the Grace of God. I know in my heart I will see my son again in Heaven and I look forward to that day. Thank you for the lap robe in memory of my son. God Bless you and all the wonderful work you are doing to remember our fallen soldiers and their families.



The third submission from **Trindle Spring Lutheran Church** included the dear photos of a son, sent by the family of SPC Joshua Campbell, DOD 1/29/11. Lynne tells me Mary Fertenbaugh (from her group), made a prayer shawl for Ashley Campbell, Joshua's wife. Lynne herself made a prayer blanket for Joshua's son, Jonathan, as pictured right. Ashley and Jonathan live in Bennett, Colorado. (2 photos of Jonathan, right – we hope to have more photos of the family next



month.)

One of the most fulfilling parts of this ministry is when we *uncover* a name that was listed as “No Response”. We have come to learn we often do not get responses from our letters/calls, due to the grieving process, and also because many families (especially wives) move within 6 months after a loved one is killed in war. We all join in thanking **Carol Weber's group, Grace Lutheran Church, Teaneck, New Jersey**, for finding Stacy Pintor, wife of CPT Dennis Lloyd Pintor, DOD 10/12/04 (notice the early DOD). (1 photo right)



Below is Carol's minister's wife's story about how she came to find Stacy Pintor:

I am Zulema Suárez, Carol Weber's pastor's wife. You asked how I met Stacy Pintor. I met her last January on a contemplative retreat for caregivers at the Garrison Institute in Garrison, NY. A Pintor family friend was working at the retreat and invited Stacy, since she is a social worker and, of course, needs self-care due to her loss. When I found out that she was the wife of a fallen soldier, I told her about PS4FS and asked her if she would like a prayer shawl. She said she would love one, and, unfortunately, it took us this long to get it out to her given more immediate losses. In any case, I am delighted that you are now able to cross her off your list. Thank you so much for your dedication to this ministry! Best, Zulema

Zulema, I need to comment we must never feel pressured to hurry our gifts! We women typically feel that way, but in this case, a few months are fine – our needlework takes time and love. If we take 4, 5, even 6 months to make a prayer shawl for a specific family, that it is too long! The gift will be all that much more appreciated. Thank you for sharing your story, and more than that, thank you for finding Stacy Pintor and ensuring that she receives one of our loving prayer shawls. May it bring her much comfort and ease any pain she may continue to have.

Below are excerpts from Dennis' obituary, sharing how special this young man was:

On Oct. 11, Dennis L. Pintor emailed a local newspaper, asking for help collecting school supplies for Iraqi children. He died the next day. "His last wish was for the Iraqi children. It wasn't even for himself," said Lillian Abelita, a family friend. "I hate to brag, but there was not a life he touched that was not better for it." Pintor, 30, of Lima, Ohio, died Oct. 12 when a bomb exploded near his patrol vehicle. Pintor graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1998. He is survived by his wife, Stacy, and 4-year-old daughter Rhea. "Dennis was the kind of father that would care for the baby in a restaurant allowing his wife to enjoy her meal before it got cold," said his uncle, David Garrison Jr. Abelita contacted area school districts asking for their help in gathering school supplies to send to Iraq. She wants to make sure Pintor's last wish is fulfilled.