

PS4FS Monthly Newsletter - September 2011:

Dear PS4FS friends,

The Prayer Shawl Ministry in Hartford will have their 11th annual "Gathering of Circles" event in Hartford, Saturday, November 5th, 2011. Details are in the newsletter under "Communications From You". I hope a number of you will attend and look forward to meeting you there!

Once again we should all be humbly inspired by our immediate response this past month to the Chinook helicopter crash, sending a total of 179 prayer shawls to Dover Air Base. Over 300 people attended the Dignified Transfer Ceremony at Dover. President Obama also attended. Thank you for caring – thank you for demonstrating to our families we are here and are thinking of them. It means so much to them!

This month, we have a farewell note from Dover's Army Chaplain Chuck Wallace. His moving message reminds us how important our work is at that base. Thank you, Chaplain Wallace! You may read his message under the "Dover Program" section. We warmly welcome Chaplain Wallace's replacement: Chaplain Garry Losey. I have yet to meet him, but am looking forward to chatting with him about our program and look forward to working with him.

As always, thank you for all you do here! You are an amazing group and inspire me every day! Blessings to you for your work and love of these families who now, because of you, know they are not forgotten! Remember to share thank you notes – our families enjoy reading them as much as we do! We continue to add new members – with three new groups, and two additional individuals added to our roster this month! Their names appear under the "Current Statistics" section. I urge each of them, and all of you, to share photos of yourselves, your work, so we may continue to know each other.

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:	5,206	Includes Dover prayer shawls (numbers below)
# sent to Dover since inception of program (Sept. 2009):	1,442	
# sent to Dover this past month:	179	This number is included in green total above
# Prayer Shawl Groups/Individuals:	277	

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

Contact Name	Town	State	Group Name	Date Joined
Sandy Lingle	Camp Hill	PA	St. Timothy Lutheran Church	8/7/11
Lana Blankenship	Thaxton	VA	Shady Grove Baptist Church	8/10/11
			Chicks with Sticks, Troy United	8/11/11
Gail Joyner	Troy	IL	Methodist Church	
Millie Walker	Burkburnett	TX		8/21/11
Nancy Drew	Ft. Lauderdale	FL		8/24/11

II. COMMUNICATIONS FROM YOU:

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Karen Hanson, who joined us in June, lives in Murphy, Texas. She sent 2 much-needed prayer shawls to Dover and shares her work in the two photos right. Thank you, Karen! Your timing could not have been better with shocking news of the helicopter crash!



PS4FS Lana Blankenship, who heads the active Shady Grove Baptist Church prayer shawl group in Thaxton, Virginia, was right on board to send prayer shawls to Dover in answer to the Chinook helicopter crash. This group only joined us this month! Lana writes: (1 photo below left)



Row 1 L-R: Shirley Carter, Dorthea Martin, Irene Pangler

Row 2 L-R: standing: Lana Blankenship (director), Sabrina Myers, Nancy Lawhorn, and Nilah Leland

I have watched one of our knitters work and know that with each stitch she makes she is sending her prayers and wishes for blessings to whoever wears it. I know how the prayer shawls give such comfort. We have been making them for our church for several years and the recipients have always come back to us with thanks for the feeling they have after wearing a shawl. We gave one to a young woman that was going through tough financial times. After she received the shawl, everything turned around and worked out for her entire family. So we are eager to pass these on in hopes that it gives comfort to at least one person. And yes put us down for the 5 shawls to Dover, I will mail them out today. Bless you for your ministry. I know that this gives great comfort to a lot of people. I truly hope that soon this will not be such an urgent cause. The ladies were excited that the shawls were accepted. And three more patterns were requested. Bless You!! Have a blessed day! Lana

Lana, we ALL join your hope that the military need for our ministry will go away! Keep that thought in your prayers, ladies, as you make your prayer shawls – to find peace throughout the world, may the work of our military be that of peace-making, and may they be kept safe while over there. God bless them all!

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Patricia Jones-Williams, heads the Unity Church Centre prayer shawl group from Girard, Ohio! She shares some photos with us of the group. Unfortunately, Patricia is not among them as she took all the pictures! Pat explains the four photos below as follows:

We had our 5th Annual Retreat this past weekend. We collected 5 shawls that we will be sending to Dover in the next few days. I wanted to send you some pictures of our ladies during this retreat. The women pictured are Alison McNeal (who just returned from teaching in China this past year), Cay Tomerlin (who graciously opened her home for the retreat), Sally Welke, Debbie Blough, and Charlene Gore. I'm not in the picture (because I was taking the picture). I wanted you to see the faces of the ladies who have been with me and with PS4FS since the beginning. They are all very happy to participate in PS4FS and thankful that what we love doing can be shared with so many deserving and sacrificing people. The group is wonderful to lead. No matter what I ask/suggest, they always come through. They love knitting/crocheting and giving. When there is a lull with our donations they get antsy!



PS4FS Sharon Rosner, who heads the LIFEthreads, Lord of Life Prayer Shawl/Prayer Blanket Ministry at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Memphis, Tennessee, offered to send 6 prayer shawls to Dover Air Base this past month. This group, who joined us 6/29/2010, requested to send their Dover prayer shawls in memory of their former group leader, Jane Hercz. Sharon writes: (right: photo of Jane and her husband, Philip)

I would like to request the address for the Navy if you have one. I have a box of 6 shawls tagged and ready to send. My very first donation to Dover. I am sending this box in Memory of Jane Hercz, founder of Life-Threads Prayer Shawl Group at Lord of Life NALC here in Memphis. Jane passed away on August 14, 2011. She and her sister Joyce started Life-Threads in 2006. I have the privilege of continuing this wonderful ministry. Jane was an L.C.D.R. Navy nurse during WWII. She was always proud of her service in the Navy. She was also an RN in Supervisory position at Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut after the war. I am sure she would be very proud to know that her ministry carries on, especially to her fellow soldiers. Yours in Christ, Sharon Rosner Coordinator of Life-Threads PS Ministry, Lord of Life NALC Memphis, TN

Pauline Jane Hercz-Navy Nurse Corps (USNR), Main US Hospital tour in the Robert Heyman Bermuda Clinic. She served in the Navy during WWII 1943-1946. She was a LCDR, 11 1/2 years from 1951-1962. After her service in the Navy, Jane served as an RN in supervisory position at Yale-New Haven Hospital in Connecticut



The Prayer Shawl Ministry in Hartford will have their 11th annual "Gathering of Circles" event in Hartford, Saturday, November 5th, 2011. I plan to attend, and hope many of you will consider going. This event always fills up fast, so if you're considering going, visit their website and register. The hall holds 300, and each year they must turn away a number of registrants – it fills up every year! This year they have a group attending from England! How exciting! They have a wonderful lunch, and the registration fee is very low (I believe it's about \$7 each). Vicky and Janet's "Prayer Shawl Companion" Books will be on sale. Many of us have prayer shawl patterns or poems in these wonderful books! (They may also be ordered on the web path below.)

Please let me know if you plan to go so we may plan to sit together! Below is the website address, however, as of this writing, the registration is not on line, but will be any day – just keep checking so you may register!

<http://www.shawlministry.com/events.html>

III. DOVER PROGRAM:

Below are two inspiring messages from our Dover contacts. Robin Raine shares a story about the uplifting value of our prayer shawls!

Thank you for always including me in you newsletter, Cozette. You do such a nice job with the newsletter; I really enjoy reading them. I was involved with a family at the Fisher House last week, and the mom was so moved in getting one of your lovely prayer shawls that she was inspired to start a mentorship program in her hometown to get young girls involved in knitting. We so appreciate all you do for our families of the fallen here at Dover AFB. Kind regards, Robin Raine, M.A., Chief, Families of the Fallen Support Branch

Chaplain Chuck Wallace's term at Dover Air Base was over mid-August. As he looks forward to returning home, we will certainly miss him, and wish him well as he heads back to Texas. He served our families well! Chaplain Wallace shares some important parting thoughts with us:

I wanted to share the summer-time experience here. I thought the hot weather would have meant less interest in the prayer shawls but this is not the case. Families continue to be blessed by the shawls regardless of the 90+ degree weather. They tend not to take them to the flight line, but I see them carried in the Fisher House and on the way back to the airport for their return flight. There is something special about a handmade item, much like a good home cooked meal.

My time at Dover has come to an end and I am preparing for my return home to Texas. This year has been one of the most significant in my ministry, career, and life. It has been a sacred honor to be here with the families of Our Nation's Fallen. I want to say thank you to each person out there crafting these special items and sending them to Dover. Your work goes to show in a very tangible way that America cares for those left behind when a service member falls. Your shawls and prayers cover a young wife coming to terms with the reality that her soul mate won't be coming home, a grieving mother left an emptiness she is still trying to understand and child with a legacy of a hero to look up to. What you do is important.

I will encourage CH (LTC) Losey to continue as we have for the last few years receiving the shawls and making them available for the families. I do not have good contact info for him as of yet as he is not on the ground. The addresses, everything else will work as it has been. I will encourage him coordinate with you of course. Thank you for all you do to

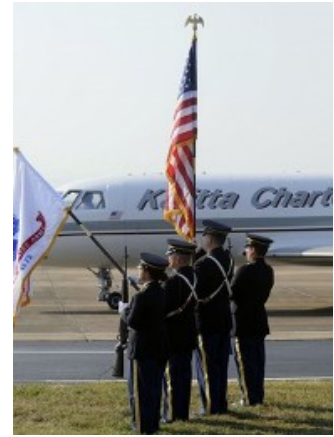
make this happen. I wish we had more feedback for you but when the families leave Dover, I do not have interaction with them after that but what they say while they are here is only heartwarming.

I am sorry that I was unable to send each of you a note personally after receiving the shawls but I want you to know your support our Nation's Families is conveyed here. Thank you for the blessing of knowing America cares for its Fallen.
CH (MAJ) Chuck Wallace

Thank you, Chaplain Wallace! Your parting words mean so very much to us! It is a labor of love with this group, who cares so very much about the grief of the families suddenly faced with the reality of making the trip to Dover. It's good to know our work offers some measure of comfort to them, along with the consoling comforts offered by the Dover staff. Blessing to you, and to all the staff at Dover Air Base!

IV. THANK YOU NOTES AND MESSAGES:

PPS4FS knitter/crocheter Elaine Tabor, who works with the Christ United Methodist Church prayer shawl group from Franklin, Tennessee, graciously accepted a direct request from Susan Repkie, mother of PVT Robert Repkie, DOD 6/26/11. Susan lives in Athens, Tennessee and writes: (3 photos right) *My son died in Afghanistan June 24, 2010. I would love to have one of your beautiful shawls. I truly believe you are earth bound angels. Thank You, Susan Repkie*



April 15, 2011: Members of the University of Tennessee Ranger Company Team, Winners of the 2011 Mountain Man Memorial March, pose with Mrs. Susan Repkie, Mother of PFC Robert Repkie



PS4FS knitter Barbara St.Cyr, who has been part of our ministry since April 9, 2008, works with St. Pius X Church in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts. I've had the pleasure of meeting Barbara at a workshop she put on a few years ago. Barbara received a lovely thank you note from a Dover grandmother, Ruby Wyly, from Hickory, North Carolina, regarding her grandson, CPL Johnathan W. Taylor, DOD 2/22/11. Barbara writes: (2 photos left of Johnathan Taylor and 2nd of Barbara StCyr)

I was reading your August Newsletter and noticed that another group received a thank you from Ruby Wyly from North Carolina. What a wonderful thank you note I received also. Due to the constant sending of these shawls, it is so nice that our grieving families can receive their gifts from a variety of our knitters from across

the country. They help us to see through their pain know much we all are grieving with them through our prayers and support. It was wonderful to be able to see a picture of Jonathan Taylor, and it reinforces how much we want to see our troops come home - but not in this manner.

Ruby wrote:

Dear Ladies, I want to thank you very much for the beautiful prayer shawl given to me on February 25, 2011 at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, when the body of my grandson, Johnathan Taylor, was returned from Afghanistan. Every time I look at it or use the shawls, I will think of you and remember my very special Marine, 23-year-old grandson, and my hero. Gratefully, Ruby Wyly.

Barbara continues: (next page)



I continue to make and send shawls for adults and children in the colors of our flags so that they can be proud of what their daddies have done for our country. I also make them in the colors of the services, to have another connection for the adults. I'm afraid we'll be doing this for some time - but at least we can do this to show them how much we care and support them with our hands, minds and our hearts. Bless you for what you have started and what you continue to do.

*One of our members, **Fran Forest**, passed away about two months ago. She left us her yarn, oodles, so we can carry on and she will be a part of it. She was a young, feisty 86! Love and Bless you, Barbara*

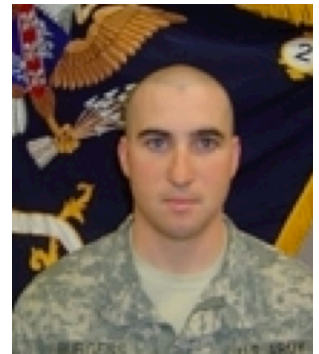
Oh my but this hit me hard! I met Fran at Barbara's gathering 3 years ago, and Fran quickly became one of our hardest working members, seeking out military families via the internet, leaving messages on message boards. I am so sorry to hear of her passing and ask you all to hold her in your hearts as a loving, good person!

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Helen Pointer, who heads the Sit and Stitch prayer shawl group of the Federated Church in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, shares a thank you note from Terry and Beth Burgess, proud parents of SGT Bryan Allan Burgess, DOD 3/29/11. Terry and Beth live in Ft. Worth Texas and write: (1 photo right, and video tribute below)

Our son, Staff Sgt. Bryan A. Burgess was killed in Afghanistan in March. We travelled to Dover Air Force Base and stayed in the Fischer House during the Dignified Transfer. The Prayer Shawl you made was in the Meditation Room. It meant so much to us that you took the time to make something so beautiful for the families of the fallen. We took the shawl home with us and will cherish it always. Our grandchildren are only 3 and 4 years old, but when they are older we will give it to them in loving memory of their father, and so they too can know how caring and generous you were. Our thanks to you and everyone at the "Sit 'n Stitch Prayer Ministry". You are all truly wonderful people. Terry & Beth Burgess

Click below for a video tribute to this hero:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PUU6lfsA8Q>



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Carolyn Venditti, of Madison Heights, Michigan, has been in our ministry since December 2009. Although she has not been knitting lately (due to hand surgery), she is "chomping at the bit" to get back into clicking those needles! She says, "Won't be long now before I get those knitting needles clicking again...**not** knitting has been **awful!**" Carolyn shares a moving thank you message from Sandra Vollmer,

proud mother of SPC Chad Joseph Vollmer, DOD 12/23/06. Carolyn says Sandra's message "was so touching; it's in my prayer box now, a treasure I'll keep. I've continued sending up my prayers for our soldiers and their families, but I'm looking forward to starting some new shawls for them as well." (2 photos upper left, 1 right)

Sandra lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan and writes:

Dear Carolyn, Thank you so much for the beautiful prayer shawl that you made (for me) in honor of my Hero "Chad". It will go with me when I visit him on the hill of the cemetery. It is always so windy up there. I will tell him all about it and the wonderful people, such as you, that do remember and honor our soldiers and their families for their sacrifices. Always, Sandi Vollmer

Sandra, if you are reading this message, we all want you to know how much your message means to us. Often we do not receive thank you notes from families, and we have come to not expect them. We understand your grieving process is far more important than the formalities of a thank you note. However, when we do receive them, it means so very much. Yours was particularly touching – wear Carolyn's prayer shawl with pride – may it bring many fond memories of your beautiful Chad We hope it does it's healing work, bringing you the quietude of peace, pride, and joy in Chad's absence.





PS4FS knitter/crocheter Barbara Conway, who works with Our Lady of Victory prayer shawl group in Centerville, Massachusetts, received a reply to a message left on a message board long ago! The message was left for SGT Timothy Craig Kiser, DOD 4/28/05. Tim's sister-in-law, Victoria Kiser, responded to the message board. (We do not have her home town/state, only her email address.) She writes to Barbara: *(1 photo left)*

Hello, I was on the Fallen Heroes site and saw your message. I personally and as a surprise for my husband, Timothy Kiser's only brother, we would love to have one! We miss Tim so much. I know my husband, Jim, hurts everyday not being able to talk to him and I would love him to have one. Thank you. Victoria Kiser

Barbara will send them a lovely blue prayer shawl.

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Mitzi Christian, who joined us the past May, lives in Alexandria, Virginia. She has been busy, with two notes to share with us.

We received a direct request from Jeanette Poston, mother of SSG Zachary Ryan Wobler, DOD 2/6/05 (notice early DOD). Many of these requests come from messages left on message boards/guest books on line, so we're happy when family members find us! Jeanette is a Gold Star Mother, she lives in Gate City, Virginia. *(1 photo right)*



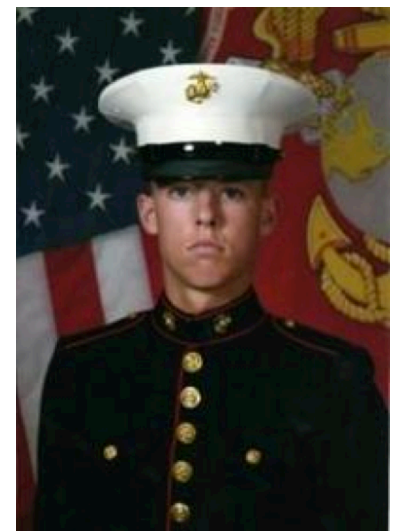
Mitzi's second message arrives from a Dover family, extending to her a moving thank you note. Father, Craig Gross, who lives in Oldsmar, Florida, was accompanied along with his wife to Dover Air Base where they chose two prayer shawls. Their son's name is CPL Frank Renea Gross, DOD 7/17/11. Craig writes: *(1 photo left, 4 below)*

Mitzi, I am Craig Gross – my son is CPL Frank R. Gross; he was killed in action 16 - July 2011. I was at the Fisher House at Dover Air Base and my wife and I went to the Chapel to prayer. My wife took a shawl, and I took one as well. Every morning I pray with your shawl draped over my head, just like the Jewish would pray. Thank you for this kind gift. It reminds me every day to seek the Lord. God Bless you Richly, Craig L. Gross.



PS4FS knitters/crocheters Melanie Staubitz and Sharon Schuesler, both of Cincinnati, Ohio's Messiah Lutheran Church, received a thank you note from the family of LCPL Nicholas S. O'Brien, DOD 6/9/11. The family lives in Stanley, Connecticut. I learned from an internet search that Nicholas was only 23 years old, this was his first deployment. The family writes: *(1 photo right)*

Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and for the two prayer shawls we received at the Fisher House in Dover. Our family appreciates your kindness and support during this difficult time. Sincerely, Richard, Tammy and Haley O'Brien, Family of LCPL Nicholas S. O'Brien - USMC



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Rachel Eggleston, from Gilbert, Arizona, has been very active with this ministry, joining us in the early days of 10/12/07! She answered a direct request from Lori Deysie, proud mother of PFC Ara T. Deysie, DOD 5/19/08. Lori lives in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. As usual, all our members from that state were notified, and the first one to answer the call received the name to contact and send a loving prayer shawl. Thank you, Rachel! Lori's message is below: (3 photos below left)

I would like a prayer shawl in memory of son, PFC Ara T Deysie KIA May 9th 2008, Army 101st Airborne, Fort Campbell. I gave



birth to him in Blythe, California., raised him in Parker Arizona. He came out bigger than life at 10 lbs 7 ozs. 23.25 inches long! He chose the military and insisted that I sign him up at age seventeen. I am A Proud Mother of a fine Hero that has stood for our Freedom. This is the first time I'm requesting anything. I am grateful for my son, but wish I could have him for one more day. Mother, Lori L Deysie. Thank you for your thoughts and gifts. A great loss to me and his sisters, but he is with his Father