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PS4FS Monthly Newsletter - June 2011:

Dear PS4FS friends,

Oh my but we've had a BUSY month – all due to direct requests from Gold Star Mothers! Never in the history of our ministry have we had this much "direct request" activity! We had ELEVEN direct requests from various branches of service, the majority of them Marines (it's about time!). The requests came from Arizona, Alabama, 2 from Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. 2 of the 11 direct requests are PTSD (taking place back in the states), a third also took place here in the states, but we do not know it was PTSD-related. It is good we are able to connect with these families, all of our families, across the board. Our ministry continues to evolve, changing the way we find our families and how they find us! For each direct request, I continue to email those of you from the requestor's home state, giving the information to the first one to respond.

I could not determine why suddenly so many requests from Gold Star Mothers – so asked Dover's Robin Raine if she knew, but Robin says she is not responsible for the sudden surge in activity. I can only guess the work of PS4FS Julie Aamot, of Custer, Washington, has something to do with it. A few months ago, Julie contacted Gold Star Mothers about us, and I believe the word has spread among them. For whatever reason, the word is out, and we've been very busy!

If you'd like to donate to these direct requests (even though you may be from a different state), please let me know. I'll " earmark" any names/groups and it would make my job a bit easier. I've been extremely busy, and barely keeping up. It takes a lot of time to go back and forth, then search for photos, writing to requestors, donors, etc. As you all know, I'm preoccupied with a busy day-time job and therefore must ask your patience if I do not get back to you right away.

Our Dover program continues to run smoothly, but sadly, having finished out a busy few months, they are currently running low on their supplies, so please notify me if you'd like the Dover address. Please include the number of prayer shawls you plan to send to Dover so I may add that number next to your (or your group's) name to maintain accurate statistics. Please remember to attach a card/note with each prayer shawl with your contact information, allowing the receiver to write a thank you note if they choose. We all understand our families are often too grief-stricken to follow through with thank you notes, so there are no expectations from our part. (Again, visit our website for many ideas on cards/notes, and prayer shawl patterns.) Chaplain Wallace sends us a message, which you may read in the newsletter. It includes a link to a website regarding Dover and linking our thank you notes with a family's name.

Thank you EVERYONE for continuing to make this ministry a huge success, despite the fact that we have changed and successfully evolved several times! Thank you for sticking with me, for sharing your stories, and fast replies when your help is needed! You are all simply amazing and move me emotionally whenever I think about how much we have accomplished together in a short time! We've been together FOUR years, we continue to grow (267 groups with 4 new members this past month!) – I honestly believe there is no stopping us! Our families are so happy to learn about our ministry, they also enjoy reading our newsletters which have become a kind of internet tribute to our military fallen and their families. Thank you for reaching out and making all of this happen! I urge you to share a photo of you and your group for future newsletters. And remember to share stories/notes from our families. Blessings to you all, and please continue to pray for peace, that our military will be protected and come home soon!

Note: If you prefer to be removed from this list, please notify me. Remember to let me know if your email address changes.

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

Fondly,

Cozette

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I.) CURRENT STATISTICS:

# Prayer Shawls made since October 2007:	4,778	<i>Includes Dover prayer shawls (numbers below)</i>
# sent to Dover since inception of program (Sept. 2009):	1,647	<i>This number is included in green total above</i>
# sent to Dover this past month:	36	<i>This number is included in green total above</i>
# Prayer Shawl Groups/Individuals:	267	

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

Contact Name	Town	State	Group Name	Date Joined
Terrie Hostmark	Morehead City	NC		5/3/11
Carol Zapolnik	Grand Rapids	MI		5/4/11
Mitzi Christian	Alexandria	VA		5/5/11

III. DOVER PROGRAM:

Robin Raine from the Fisher House shares some photos of our prayer shawls and how she adorns them gracefully for incoming families to choose. Robin writes: (2 photos below from Robin)



Most of the shawls are over in our Meditation Pavilion within the Campus for Families of the Fallen, although I do keep a prayer shawl rack here at the Center. I have included a picture of both so you can see how we display them. As far as I can tell, we have one box left, unless Chaplain Wallace has some stored away. I just want you to know that we REALLY appreciate what you all do for the families. I know it warms their hearts when they receive a shawl knowing what love and care is put into the making of them. Best, Robin Raine, M.A., Chief, Families of the Fallen Support Branch

We also received a message from Chaplain Wallace where he shares some of his thoughts about our shawl colors, and a valuable website to look up contacts we may have made with our Dover families:

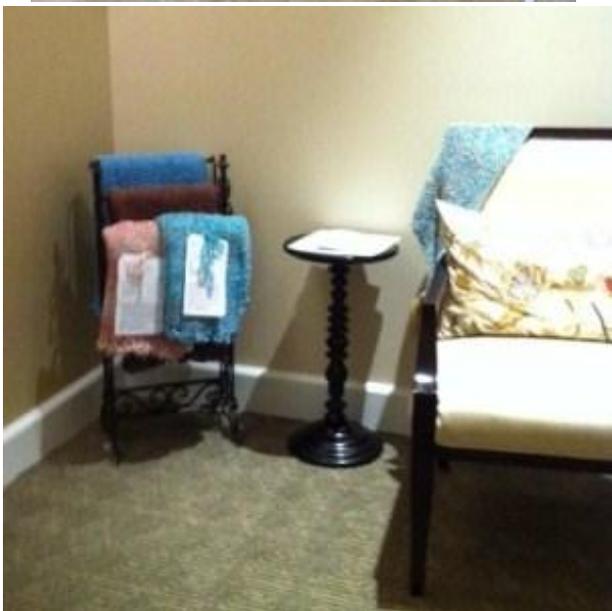
The thing that sticks out in my mind is comments from wives mostly about colors of shawls. Wives are naturally drawn to pinks, especially if they have daughters. Pink and (ironically) camouflage are the some of the colors I hear spoken of the most. Also, some groups send the shawls with ribbons tied around them and they are really easy to display with a ribbon around them.

Unfortunately, the month is finishing out busy. Another open source web site that displays information on our casualties is

www.militarytimes.com/valor/index.php

If a family member writes a letter back to a knitting group, they can view the soldier's public information on this site. That might be helpful with a group that makes a connection with a family.

CH (MAJ) Chuck Wallace



II. COMMUNICATIONS FROM YOU:

PS4FS members Melanie Staubitz and Sharon Schuesler, both from Cincinnati, Ohio area, received a message which Sharon said “gave me the goose bumps!” And it does! We often say it’s a small world, and this is another example of running into someone with one of our prayer shawls. Sharon received an email message from Terrie (last name unknown) asking to join our group to make prayer shawls. Below is what happened to Terrie in her own words:

Hi, I was on a flight from Philadelphia to Charlotte and sat next to a woman who was holding a hand crocheted blanket. I asked her if it had a special meaning, as she seemed to be treating it with special care. She told me that last Wednesday, her brother had been killed in Afghanistan and that she and her family were on their way home after making arrangements for his body to be transported. With shaking hands, she showed me pictures of her brother and his 3 children. The whole time, she never let go of that blanket. She also told me about how much comfort that blanket gave her, and how much it meant to her to have it. I asked her for more information, and she gave me your email address. I love to crochet and would be honored to donate some blankets to the Prayer Shawl Ministry. It broke my heart to see how much pain the woman was in, and I would like to be a part of offering some comfort to people in such a situation. Thank you in advance. Terrie

PS4FS Kecia Stanley, who formerly headed Laconia New Hampshire’s Stitches of Love Prayer Shawl group, but recently moved to Crestview, Florida, shares a photo from her new home state.

Hi from the South! I went to the Eglin Air Force Base Museum yesterday. They had this wall displaying all Florida service people killed in this war. It was really touching, all done in tiles. I’m wondering if we sent shawls to Florida. Hope you all are doing well! God Bless

Kecia, we send many to your new home state of Florida! We’re in every state! Be well and stay in touch!



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Lynne Neibert, who represents the active Trindle Spring Lutheran Church’s group from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, has actively sought out families who would like a prayer shawl. This month alone, Lynne’s group sent out 12 prayer shawls, mainly to names who were not Army, therefore new to our list. This is good news! Thank you, Lynne! She writes:

I will be sending you a list of shawls sent as a result of Gold Star Mother's Brigade, wesupportyoutexas.org and TAPS with the help of people who have already received shawls from us. I sent out a plea for help and it was great to get the response. I hope they keep coming. Today, I emailed iraqnam@fastmail.fm which I found on line looking for a soldier whose name came up while getting information about a soldier whose mother requested a shawl. I will be in touch. I hope that we will continue to get family names so that this ministry can continue. These people were so appreciative and thankful that their sons are not forgotten and that people are praying for them and with them for God's strength and comfort.

One mother’s letter to me was heart breaking. She feels that the families of soldiers who commit suicide while on active duty are "the forgotten ones" because the government does not want to acknowledge that so many men and women are taking their lives while serving their country. She said that she would understand if we could not send her a shawl and blessed our ministry, even if she did not receive a shawl, because it was a wonderful thing that we were doing.

IV. THANK YOU NOTES AND MESSAGES:



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Rachel Eggleston, who lives in Gilbert, Arizona, answered a particularly sad direct request from Bobbie Obal, mother of CPL Michael Curtis Obal, DOD 12/10/09. Bobbi lives in Cabot, Arizona and writes: *(1 photo left)*

My son was CPL Curtis M. Obal, USMC. He served in Iraq and we lost from PTSD when he returned home. This war has been a nightmare. The Gold Star Mom Rita Stokes wrote us about your beautiful gift. Thanks, Bobbi, Mother of CPL Curtis M. Obal, USMC , OIF 2007-22008, 12-12-09 My beautiful, handsome beloved son.



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Brenda Saunders, who heads Ashburn Presbyterian Church's prayer shawl group in Ashburn, Virginia, has been in touch with Gold Star Mother Rita Stokes. Rita is getting the word out, in this case to two Marine Corps moms who are now directly requesting prayer shawls. What a wonderful gift we are providing these mothers in need. One can only imagine the pain and suffering they have endured, and now, with the blessing and warmth of our handmade prayer shawls, maybe they can find some comfort and peace. That is our hope. Below are the requests made to Brenda: (1 photo left)

Hello, My name is Toni Rader from Bedford, Illinois, and I am the sister in-law of departed SGT. Dustin Lee Turpen, USMC. I found out about the shawls you make through a Gold Star Family member, Rita Stokes. Her son, and brother in-law were in combat together. Although Sean died in battle several years before Dustin and I never knew him, I felt as if I have through stories told. Dustin died on January 31, 2010 in Quantico, Virginia. He long suffered from PTSD and fell through the cracks on the Marine Corps system to get help. He was serving his country as a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and was a saw gunner during the Battle of Fallujah in 2004, which was later chronicled in the book "We Were One" by Patrick O'Donnell. He was a team leader and squad leader with the Third Battalion First Marines during two additional deployments to Iraq. He received the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, two Navy Unit Citations, Meritorious Unit Commendation Award, two good conduct medals, National Defense Medal, two Iraqi Campaign Medals, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal and three Sea Service Deployments. He was a member of the Bartlettville Christian Church and V.F.W. of Santee,

CA. Dustin took his own life in order to ensure the safety of my sister and nephew. My sister, since his passing, has a lot of guilt and "what if" situations running through her head. I hope a Prayer Shawl can be made for her. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated. Sister in-law to fallen American Hero, Toni N. Rader



Another direct request was made by Judith Casper, proud mother of PFC Levi W. Derby, DOD 4/5/07. Judy lives in Buckley, Illinois. PS4FS knitter/crocheter Lois Slocum, who works with Christ United Methodist Church, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, volunteered to send Judy a special prayer shawl. Judy's request is below: (2 photos: 1 left is a sketch by famous composite artist, Michael Reagan; and 2nd photo right)

I would like to inquire about a prayer shawl. I lost my son PFC Levi W. Derby to PTSD after his return from Afghanistan. Levi left us on April 5th, 2007. I know that he is in heaven watching over us but it pains me every day. I would be most happy to pay to have a white shawl made in the center picture from you web site that has a cross in the stitch pattern.

Judy kindly wrote a thank you email to Lois:

Lois, Thank you for making this shawl for me. I will be forever thankful of your kindness. To lose a child is a pain no parent should ever have to know. I still wait for his phone call. A part of me was taken with him. For

now it is not for me to be with him in heaven, God must have a greater plan for me. Know that each and every time I wrap myself in this shawl I will feel my son's arms around me. Bless you, Judy

Judy then went on to write to all of us:

Thank you so very much. I will truly find comfort in this shawl. I want to share one last thing with you. Levi wrote out the Lord's Prayer in his letter good bye to all of us. First he told us he was sorry but that he was in a place where the sun was always shining, the flowers smelled like honey and the grass was always green. He then wrote to God and said "Dear God, this is my last and final prayer" and he then wrote out the Lord's Prayer. The very last of his letter was good bye to his son and his wife. I always felt the Lord's Prayer had so much power in it and now more than ever it has very, very special meaning to me. I must have prayed a million times that first year. I know that my faith in God was the ONLY thing that carried me thru. It still hurts and will always hurt. It is in this pain that one must learn to focus this in too a positive way to live the rest of your life in honor of theirs. Levi will live on because I live on. When I held that beautiful little boy in my arms for the first time, little did I know he would change my life in more ways than I could imagine. Levi didn't come into this world crying. I gave birth to him the day the Pope was shot. It was a short easy labor with no stitches, no pain or medication. When he took his first breath and opened his eyes; he smiled! May God Bless You!



Judy writes: This is Levi with his wife, Dianna and their son, Dylan. Levi loved this woman and son more than his own.

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Robin Lambert from Vinemont, Alabama, quickly replied to a direct request for a prayer shawl from Connie Gibson who lives in Repton, Alabama, proud mother of SGT Troy David Jenkins, DOD 4/24/03. (Notice the early DOD) Connie shares a story about her heroic son: (2 photos below)



Dear Blessed one, my name is Connie Gibson. I am the Mother of KIA, Sgt. Troy David Jenkins, Baghdad, Iraq, April 24, 2003. My son, Troy, was killed saving the lives of 5 fellow soldiers and the small Iraqi girl sent to them with a cluster bomb. My son, seeing it fall from the child's hand as she handed it to another soldier, rushed forward and pushed ALL to safety. Troy threw his own body on the bomb. I respectfully ask for a prayer shawl in Troy's name. His biggest desire was to become a minister of the Gospel, after retiring with 20 years in the military. The shawl will be passed down to his two sons when they are old enough, along

with everything else, newspaper articles, etc., I have saved over the years. Blessings on you all for remembering us. Thank you, Connie Gibson, Mother of a great American hero. I will be send you, sorry to say, many more Gold Star Mothers.

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Carolyn Venditti, from Madison Heights, Michigan, told me she was “honored” to fulfill a direct request from mother Sandi Vollmer from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Sandi writes: (5 photos below)
Thank you so much for remembering the families of the fallen. I would like to receive a Prayer Shawl in memory of my son : Sgt. Chad J Vollmer - KIA 12/23/06 _ Salman Pak, Iraq. Thank you for all of the beautiful work and dedication you wonderful ladies put into these prayer shawls. From the mom of one of America Hero's. Gone, but Not Forgotten, Sandi Vollmer



PS4FS knitter/crocheter Sharon Knibbe, who represents the St. Paul Prayer Shawl Group in Spring Branch, Texas, graciously took a direct request for three prayer shawls from Mary Todd, mother of SFC David James Todd, DOD 8/20/08. Mary is from Saint Hedwig, Texas. I told Mary we had two "abandoned" names, David's children, and she readily agreed she'd like to have 3 prayer shawls for the children (her grandchildren) and herself as well. Below are some moving photos and Mary's long but interesting story about her heroic son saving 12 others and a lovely poem for her son, David! She speaks for many other mothers! (3 photos below) (Note: David's son's name is also David, so Mary will refer to younger David)

The prayer shawls would be precious to our grandchildren. I think, if it is possible, they would love to have something like the "Praying Shawl" what a Blessing that would be. I don't know if you know this, but young Dave leaves tomorrow morning for Iraq, yes he is 19 and has already been to Haiti, Afghanistan and now Iraq. It has been a very rough time, grieving/missing our son, our son's birthday is on the 26th and you can just imagine what we are feeling right now. Young Dave came home for his two weeks R&R and we spent some very good time together. He loves coming home and we always have his room ready and refrigerator filled with his favorite food. He is stationed at Ft Bragg, NC and from there they will leave to their deployment.

I just don't know how much more the good Lord can put on our shoulders I ask myself, for this truly is too hard to handle and I am so thankful to my Gold Star Mom's support group and organizations like yourselves that help us in the time of our deepest grieve a parent can ever go thru.

I am a Gold Star Mom, I am the mother of my Fallen Hero, SFC David James Todd, Jr., who was KIA in 8-20-08 in Bala Murghab, Afghanistan, when he came to the aid of 12 American Soldiers; thus, the recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star among other honorary awards. Our son, was our only son, we are the parents to two children, our son and daughter. We live in Saint Hedwig, Texas (just outside of San Antonio, Texas.).

Please let me share my story of our son, so you can get to know the young man that we love, our hero, our Angel.

Our son was a soldier that every man wants to be, a father that every man hopes to be, and a friend who was admired and respected by all those who knew him, a true and honest human being that was always there for you. He's the definition of a true hero, never giving up until the mission was done, and never ever leaving a fellow soldier behind. That was proven in a fierce battle in Bala Morghab, Afghanistan August 20, 2008, where he saved 12 soldiers. He firmly believed this motto: "no man left behind". The American flag was carried inside of a bullet-proof vest over the back of SFC T.L. from Colorado. a portion of his tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Traditionally, American flags are carried by patriots to be used as visual markers for aircraft, flown over controlled areas by American warriors, and used to cover the bodies of our brothers in arms, who have lost their lives in our nation's defense.

SSG H. had prepared David's body for return home to America and had no standard American flag - instead had to drape David's body with an American flag constructed by American elementary school children from a bed sheet and tempera paint. The stars of the flag were stamped handprints of the school children who supported their fathers, uncles and brothers of the Farah team. This flag was carried into Badghis Province of Afghanistan and the city of Bala Murghab. (Badghis was one of the few Provinces of Afghanistan which was not conquered by the Russian Invasion of the late 1970's



Above photos include Mary dancing with her son; in her own words: This was our last dance together, my son and I, we were celebrating his birthday, before returning back to Afghan, little did I realize this would be our last dance together. I remember holding him tight and if I knew what was to happen, I would have never let him go.....



and has lived under various warlord and Taliban rule since the withdrawal of the Russian Army.) This flag was flown in the face of the enemy, from 8 August until 26 August 2008 over the newly established patrol base in Bala Murghab. On 20 August 2008 SFC T. L. was involved in a nine-hour battle in which a twelve-man patrol became beleaguered and in dire need of extraction from overwhelming Taliban forces. My son, SFC David J. Todd Jr., organized a quick reaction force of American soldiers and came to the aid of his men. SFC Todd served as a gunner during the fight, and recovered his brothers through a barrage of small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade impacts. He was killed during the extraction of the patrol from the city of Joy-I-Khawaja just 3 kilometers south of Bala Murghab.

After the battle of 20 August 2008, this flag's grommets were severed from its halyards' never to be flown again, and it was to be used to drape Todd's body. However, this flag was remounted upon the pole to mark the base during a Taliban counter-attack upon the patrol's return. It is because of David's sacrifice that the twelve men of the patrol survived!

We will never forget David, our brother, a leader of men. David was committed to his men and moreover he loved his family and country. Often we would see him awake at sunrise talking to his family. He and the other fathers shared stories of their children and old

memories of each of their childhood. One of our favorite memories of David is when his team, stationed in Delaram, Afghanistan, was preparing dinner. A young soldier attempted to grill steaks for the team, only to completely burn the first rack of steaks. David pushed him aside and began to prepare the steaks, taunting him for his age and inexperience at the grill. It is a simple memory, but to his team, so was David. He was a proud son, loving father, brother, and friend. His leadership qualities are a continuing yardstick for other's to strive for. He received the Bronze Star Medal, and Purple Heart. , Here is a "tribute" I made for our son, our Angel....

Below is a Tribute to our son, who gave the ultimate sacrifice, on August 20, 2008. Thank you and God Bless, Mary & David Todd, Sr., and family

<http://turbine.legacy.com/Legacy/MT/Tribute.aspx?TributePersonID=119785191&downloadTributeDownload=&Cobrand>

*A poem in honor or memory of our Fallen Soldier
In Memory of our Fallen Hero, SFC David James Todd, Jr.*

*"Silent Tears "By Mary E. Todd
Woke up this morning "Wept silent tears"
Talked to your picture and wish you were here
I hugged your combat boots and kissed your picture,
as I have a million times each year "Wept Silent Tears"
Can't understand why you're gone - -
Someone said God needed a Hero in Heaven
Someone said you work here was done
"Wept Silent Tears"
Silent tears are my partner, as I go about my day
Someone calls and tells me this too shall pass
I hang up the phone-knowing they will never know
The pain that rips thru my body each and every day "Wept
Silent Tears"
I no longer ask God, why?
That question will not bring you back
Memories of "yester-year" is what I reflect on
I ask myself each day "what are you doing, are you ok? "Wept
Silent Tears"*

If you decide that I can be honored with one of your beautiful shawls, I would be forever grateful for it will be the arms of my son, who will help me wrap this beautiful shawl. Thank you and God Bless each and every one of you. Thank you for your generous and loving gifts to Mothers of Fallen Hero's. (Note: now our grandson leaves to Iraq this week, please Pray for him that God will keep him safe and bring him home to us. Thank you)

God Bless you and your family of friends who knit these shawls, to bring comfort to their families. I would like to share this poem that I wrote for mothers who have Fallen Hero's, you are more than welcome to use it in your newsletter if you like. I wrote it on a day, where the tears were at the edge of my eyes and I did not want to let them escape, for I did not want to bring further grieve on those around me:

*I cannot believe it has been two years
Since I saw your handsome face
I have never known such pain, can you ease my pain, my son?
I do not like my new life, I miss my son, I miss you so...
We were such a team you and I
Did I tell you, I heard your favorite song in the old radio?
"Rhinestone Cowboy", you used to sing as a little boy
Could have sworn you were singing that song again
Sitting right next to me "Wept Silent Tears"
Funny, people tell me you're in a better place
I will not disagree, wish I was there sitting next to you
Drinking a cup of coffee like the one, we used to do
Talking, just talking you and I
How I miss those days "Wept Silent Tears"
Well, I best let you go my son
For one day we will pick up where we left off
And I will tell you why
I wept "Those Silent Tears"
(copyright @2010)*

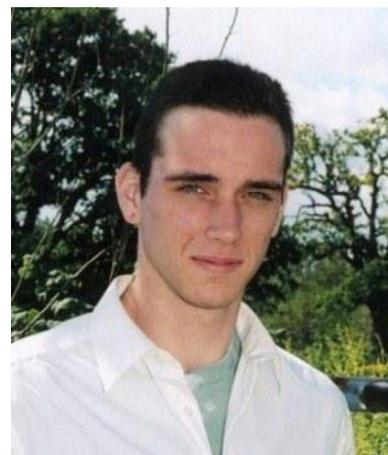
PS4FS knitter/crocheter Annette Gardner, who works with St. John's Lutheran Church's prayer shawl group in Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania, accepted a direct request from Nancy Hoffman, proud mother of Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert N. Gilbertson, DOD 9/7/07. Nancy lives in Valencia, Pennsylvania. (no photos found)

Your shawls are beautiful, and I would like to thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness. Gold Star Families always need prayer and help from God above to get us through the tough days, which there are many. I would like to request a prayer shawl for myself, I am a Gold Star Mother. My son was Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert N. Gilbertson. His DOD was Sept 7, 2007, He died in Jacksonville Florida.

PS4FS knitter/crocheter Annette Swartwout, who heads the Rocky Mount United Methodist Church group in Mooresville, North Carolina AND St. Mary the Virgin Church group in Falmouth, Maine, sent one of their groups' prayer shawls to Kae McGuire, mother of USMC PFC Daniel A. C. McGuire. Kae is from Mashpee, Massachusetts and writes: (1 photo right)

I learned about your prayer shawls from some other Gold Star moms and was hoping I could place a request for one. My 19 year old son, USMC PFC Daniel A.C. McGuire was KIA August 14, 2008 in Iraq. Sincerely, Kae McGuire

Please visit a beautiful video tribute to Daniel with a moving song about "May Angels Lead You In" – every word of this song is so perfectly written as a perfect tribute to Daniel's memory:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1FNh7PgZXc>



PS4FS Julie Dean, who represents the Hickory Knit & Crochet Group in North Carolina, accepted a direct request from Debbie Halstead, proud mother of SGT Nicholas Ray Gibbs, DOD 12/6/06. Debbie resides in Charlotte, North Carolina. Below is Debbie's request: (3 photos below)



My name is Debbie Halstead and my son was in the Army serving as a Proud Infantryman. He was killed in action in Ar Ramadi, Iraq on December 6, 2006. I think these shawls are ABSOLUTELY beautiful and would love to know how to go about ordering one. My son's name: Sgt. Nicholas Ray Gibbs, KIA date: December 6, 2006. Please feel free to contact me anytime so I will know what steps I need to take in order to purchase one of your BEAUTIFUL shawls!!! Thanking you in advance, Debbie Halstead, Proud Mother of a Fallen Soldier



PS4FS Elaine Tabor, who works with the prayer shawl group from Christ United Methodist Church in Franklin, Tennessee, answered the direct request from Lynn Forehand, mother of SSG Ryan Eugene Haupt, DOD 10/17/06. Lynn lives in Madisonville, Tennessee. She writes: (4 photo below including Ryan's wedding photo with his bride and family)

My name is Lynn Forehand. My son was Army Staff Sergeant Ryan E Haupt. He was killed in Iraq on October 17th, 2006, while escorting a convoy in Baqubah, Iraq. He had previous close calls before this, and we thought he had made it. His tour was over and he was scheduled to be on his way home three days later. He was actually escorting his unit's equipment when his Humvee hit an IED. He was part of an elite sniper unit out of the 4th infantry at Fort Carson, Colorado. Ryan was squad leader over two sniper teams. He was an expert marksman - and was one of the best! His sniper squads were responsible for making some of the roads safer in their area of Iraq. The soldiers he was in charge of, looked up to him and respected him. He got their respect by the way he treated them. Ryan loved the army and his job and firmly believed in what he was doing over there and he saw the results of their sacrifices. That is just a little something about my Ryan. We are in our 5th year without him and we still miss him terribly. There are so many days that are hard. I would so much like to receive a Prayer Shawl. I am just so thankful that there are still people out there who really care even after almost 5 years. Lynn Forehand



PS4Fs Julie Aamot, of Custer, Washington, accepted a direct request from Gold Star Mother Monica McNeal, from Redmond, Washington. Monica's son's name is LCpl Eric L. Ward, DOD 2/21/10. Monica writes: (2 photos below) *I am the proud Gold Star Mom of LCpl Eric L. Ward, DOD 2/21/10 in Afghanistan. Monica McNeal, Redmond Washington. Thank you and please let me know of the cost. Monica McNeal (2 photos below)*



I would like to take this opportunity to thank Julie Aamot for all her hard work finding all the above Gold Star Mothers who made requests this month. It's wonderful to be able to reach out to all the military branches, and offer the consolation our prayer shawls are meant to give.