



Soldiers' Angels

"May No Soldier Go Unloved"



Sewing Team Newsletter



Volume 2009, Number 2

Publisher: Dee Jerge

Editor: Karen Giffin

comments/feedback: bohnewsletter@gmail.com

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NOTE: You will not be able to link from this newsletter. You can link from the email that delivered it.

Vice President—Sewing Team Director—Blankets of Hope

Dee Jerge

blanketsofhope@soldiersangels.org

bob@soldiersangels.org

djerge@soldiersangels.org

Germany

Maryann Phillips

mphilips@soldiersangels.org

Sand Scarves

Anita Dice

sandscarf@soldiersangels.org

Cooling Scarves

Deborah Delcorio

coolscarf@soldiersangels.org

Crafts Corner/Crochet Team

Deborah Delcorio

crochet@soldiersangels.org

Operation Top Knot

Caren Vink

optopknot@soldiersangels.org



Have you visited the Forums?

This is an excellent way to learn more about SA and get/give Sewing Team information:

<http://soldiersangelsforum.com>

Log in under "User Info" (or register to be a forum user). Page down to the section "SA Team Forums," then click on "Sewing Teams."

Questions/problems with the forum?
Contact Lmartin@soldiersangels.org.

Welcome to Blankets of Belief 2009

Last year Soldiers' Angels sent more than 38,000 of your home-made blankets to the warzones for our deployed heroes. Despite the national preoccupation with the election and a sliding economy, you participated to make sure the armed forces we serve know that we love and believe in them. Thank you all so much for your support!

I'm sure that you had a reason for making a blanket last year, and that there's a reason you are reading this newsletter. Since last year, I have three new reasons myself.

The first reason is PUNKIN. He knows who he is! Punkin flies a big transport airplane and is the son of a dear friend of ours. He's 28, has crystal clear blue eyes that twinkle when he smiles, and a heart the size of China. He currently lives in a tent in Afghanistan.

The second reason is DADDY. That's what his three sons call him. His is the empty seat at the dinner table, the soccer field bench and the play in the school auditorium. He was to be my new neighbor, except that he never got to move in before leaving for the warzone, perhaps arriving in a transport flown by Punkin.

The third reason is my older brother JOHNNY. Growing up in a family of eight, he and I were best friends, the two cutups! He arrived home from the Vietnam War to an ungrateful nation and a head full of nightmares and PTSD. As the Marine Honor Guard draped the flag on his casket, I could hear him in my left ear with a running commentary of wisecracks on the proceedings!

Will you help me ensure that the Punkins, Daddys and Johnnys in our lives know that we love and believe in them? Will you help us get them the message that we have not forgotten them and will be here until they all come home?

Please visit www.soldiersangels.org and click on "Blankets of Belief" for information and guidelines on blanket-making and shipping.

Thank you on behalf of Patti and the Sewing Team — and especially on behalf of those who will receive their own Blankets of Belief this holiday season.

Love,

Dee Jerge :)

Vice President – Sewing Team

NOTE: Guidelines for Blankets of Belief and a one-page flyer (which you can print and distribute) may be found on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

Blankets of Belief

Guidelines — Blankets of Belief 2009

[Note: Crocheters and Knitters, please see pages 8-10 in this newsletter.]

- BLANKETS:** *Quilts – Quilt type with batting - cottons and flannels are good
 *Fleece No-Sew – Directions link below
 - fleece - single sided - please back with another fleece or flannel
 - fleece - "personalize" with patriotic buttons, embroidery or appliqués
- COLORS:** Red/white/blue/patriotic – OR – other bright/cheerful colors
- SIZES:** 45" to 55" wide by 65" to 75" long
- ROLL:** Roll your blanket up tightly, tie with a ribbon, and tag with a note/card
- CARD:** Enclose a holiday card or download ours at www.soldiersangels.org (Blankets of Belief)
- NOTE #1:** Write a note or note card that says "This blanket was made with love and belief in you by _____ from Soldiers' Angels."
- NOTE #2:** Enclose a note inside the box with your name/address/email on it + the number of blankets in the box, so you can be notified of its arrival at the shipping location.
- SHIPPING:** If you are East of the Mississippi Please send your blanket to:
 Soldiers' Angels
 BLANKETS OF BELIEF
 112 Greenhill Road
 Ramseur, NC 27316
- If you are West of the Mississippi Please send your blanket to:
 Soldiers' Angels
 BLANKETS OF BELIEF
 914 Tourmaline Drive
 Newbury Park, CA 91320
- DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 2009**

THANK YOU on behalf of Soldiers' Angels and the troops we serve.

Dee Jerge
 Vice President - Sewing Team
BoB@soldiersangels.org

LINKS:
www.soldiersangels.org and click on
 "Blankets of Belief" for instructions.



Adorable quilt made by Girl Scout Daisy Troop 2021 in Orem, UT



Making fleece blankets at Bae Systems



Quilted Blanket of Belief, tied with note card



Quilted Blanket of Belief made by an Air Force Mom





The Soldiers' Angels Sewing Team Announces

BLANKETS OF BELIEF

Our goal is to send 180,000 **HOMEMADE BLANKETS**
made with "love and belief in you"
to our service members spending another holiday in the warzones.

Will you please make just **ONE?**

The "Blankets of Belief" guidelines can be found at www.soldiersangels.org

Click on "Blankets of Belief"

Questions/comments: BoB@SoldiersAngels.org

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1, 2009

Thank you on behalf of Soldiers' Angels and the troops we serve.

Soldiers' Angels is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization. Please visit www.soldiersangels.org for more information.



Sand Scarves

Sand scarves are made from 100% cotton knit fabric (like tee-shirt fabric). They have to be in 100% cotton because cotton does not stick to the skin in a fire, as synthetic fabrics do. They are usually made in tan colors. The finished measurement of a scarf is about 14"x 60" (or 14"x55" if the fabric is only 55" wide). It doesn't look like much at all... it is just the piece of fabric that is either serged or zigzagged on all four sides.



When in a sand storm, the soldier wraps the scarf around his face and head to prevent the sand from entering his mouth, ears, and nose. The scarf also limits the amount of sand entering the soldier's uniform.

Instructions for making Sand Scarves

- Fabric should be 100% cotton knit t-shirt fabric. Sometimes it is a little hard to find 100% cotton knit, but please do not use latex or synthetic blends (90-95% cotton). Synthetic blends could cause burns to the soldier.
- The fabric often comes rolled on a long cardboard tube and is 60 inches wide. I recommend folding it in half first (selvage to selvage then cut a 14 inch strip). Therefore, the scarf is 60 inches by 14 inches.
- You don't need to turn the edges under, merely zigzag (with a regular straight sewing machine), or serge the around edges with a serger sewing machine. The point is to keep the edges from fraying.
- Because supplies of fabric are not always available in some colors, stay with solid sand color/ tan/beige or sage green. Sand is the most popular and normally blends with camouflage uniforms for all services. Army has been the only service that can use the sage green, however the Air Force and Navy has introduced camouflage uniforms that are very close to the appearance of the Army ACU's.

When you have sand scarves ready to ship, please email me, Anita Dice, with how many you have and which color(s), and I will provide you with a contact name and military address to ship them to. Thank you, sand scarf sewers!

Anita Dice

sandscarf@soldiersangels.org

NOTE, Sand Scarf sewers: These are the instructions to include in your shipment of scarves:

How to Use a Sand Scarf

Soldiers' Angels is providing these sand scarves to you to help protect your troops from sand storms. They should come in handy.

It may not sound like a big deal until you are in a 40 mile an hour wind, with sand blowing in your face, while you try to carry 30 to 50 pounds of gear on your back, hold a weapon in your hand and try to keep the sand out of your mouth and nose... and all this while still keeping your helmet on your head! The scarves should help to keep the sand and dust from permeating every crevice in your head.

You can place it under a hat or helmet and keep your nose and mouth covered to keep the sand out. These pictures are a couple of examples of how to wear the scarf.

The sand scarf is 100% cotton so it will wash and wear well and is in desert tan (or other appropriate color) so it will blend in well with the uniforms currently being worn.



Cooling Scarves

What is a Cool Scarf for the Troops?

Troops that are deployed to the Middle East often face hot temperatures of 130 degrees and higher. Troops wear them like ties around their necks, which gives them a feeling of a cool wet cloth on the back of their necks.

A cool scarf is a strip of cotton woven fabric that has been filled nontoxic polyacrylamide granules (crystals) concealed in the casing of the scarf. When the scarf is soaked in water for 15-30 minutes, the granules absorb the water, expand 400 times, and turn into a crystalline gel. The cotton fabric absorbs water from the gel, and then the water evaporates for a cooling effect. Scarves stay cool and moist for hours due to the polyacrylamide's water-retaining properties. When the scarves are allowed to dry, the gel returns to crystal form.

Cool scarves are easy to mass produce from readily available materials.

Finished cool scarves measure approximately 1 1/2"x43" and will fit an average adult.

Getting Started

Choose tightly woven 100% cotton fabric for its wicking properties (water-absorbing and cooling). Avoid loosely woven fabrics--the gel could seep through a loose weave. Scarves are worn wet, so select colorfast fabrics so the dyes won't bleed onto clothing or skin. Look for solid colors in tan/sand color or sage green.

Choose medium-size crystals for best results. Throughout the process, do not soak the scarf. It should remain clean and dry until received and put into use by the troops. You may want to make one for an experiment to see one that has been put to use.

Material Needed

44/45" 100% cotton woven fabric

Fabric needs to be solid color tan/sand color/ or sage green.

No camouflage or muslin fabric, or embellishments please.

Approximately 1 teaspoon of medium-size polyacrylamide crystals

Matching all-purpose thread

Tube-turner



Tip: Polyacrylamide crystals are nontoxic, but they can create a fine dust. Some suggest wearing a dust mask when handling the crystals. For best results wear gloves and safety glasses, remove contact lenses, and wash hands after use.

Cutting and Sewing

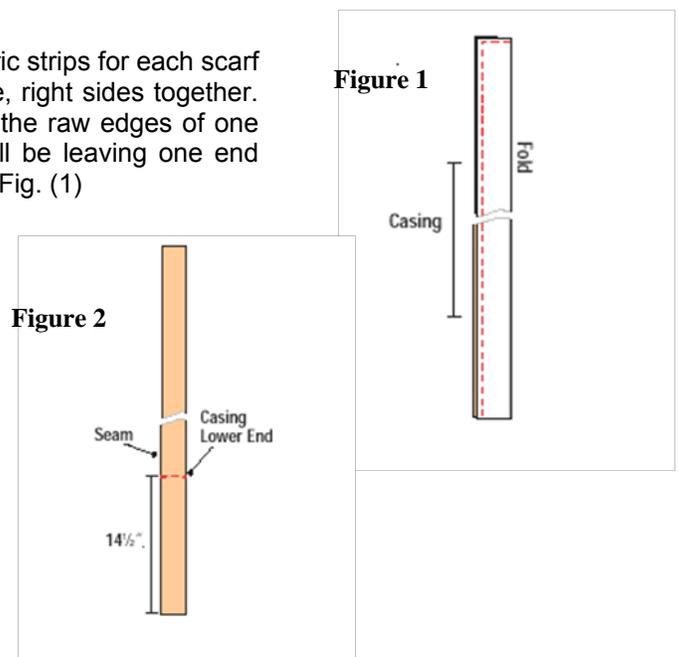
Fold the fabric in half lengthwise. Cut 4 inch fabric strips for each scarf (9 @ 4" strips per yard). Fold the strip in half lengthwise, right sides together. Using a medium straight stitch, sew a 1/2" seam along the raw edges of one end and continue the entire length of the strip. You will be leaving one end open for turning and filling. Trim corners; turn and press. Fig. (1)

Tube turners: You can find different varieties of tube turners in fabric stores. However, you can make your own at home out of PVC pipe and a wood dowel. You can take a small diameter PVC pipe about 50 inches long, and a dowel that fits inside of the pipe.

After sewing the edges together, slip the pipe into the tube and stick the dowel in the closed end of the fabric. When you push the dowel through the PVC pipe, it turns the fabric around quickly. This helps with your mass-production efforts.

Press the scarf which is now turned right sides out. The entire casing should be 14". Fig. (2)

Cooling Scarves article continued on next page.



Cooling Scarves, continued

Filling the scarf with crystals

Hold the open end of the scarf upright and use a teaspoon to insert 1 teaspoon of crystals into the casing. You can insert a PVC pipe into the casing and pour the crystals into the PVC pipe so that they go directly to the lower end casing.

Finish

Stitch across the scarf 14 ½" from the upper open end to close the casing to prevent crystals from leaving the casing. Be careful that you push all of the crystals to the far end of the casing so as not to stitch on top of crystals. Fig. (3)

Finish the open end by tucking the ends inside and machine stitch or hand whipstitch across the end of the scarf. You can press the end of the scarf.

Package the scarves in a plastic bag with directions for wear and washing. (see below)

Sources for crystal purchases

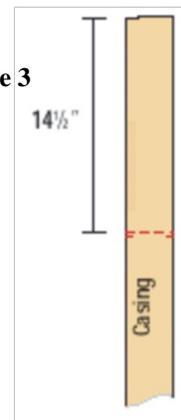
Polyacrylamide crystals are available under many brand names. Look for them in the garden section of home-improvement centers, discount department stores, nurseries, or in the candle, fragrance or flower areas in craft stores. Check packaging for granule size and to verify there are no additives.

Expect approximately 115 teaspoons per pound of medium-size granules.

For mail-order or Internet purchases, and for other project ideas:

- Watersorb/Polymers Inc., (501) 623-9995, www.watersorb.com.
- Polymer Crystals from The Artistic Shop LLC, (262) 691-1353, www.theartisticshop.com.
- Soil Moist from JRM Chemical Inc., (800) 962-4010, www.soilmoist.com.
- Water Crystals from WaterCrystals.com, (719) 599-7141, www.watercrystals.com.

Figure 3



Below are the directions for wear and washing:

Using a Cooling Scarf

Soak in cold or ice water 15-30 minutes until crystals turn to gel. Avoid over-soaking.

Distribute gel along the casing with your fingers. Lay the scarf on a hand towel to absorb any dripping water

Tie the scarf loosely around your neck.

To keep the casing cool while wearing, roll it to redistribute the gel or dip it in cold water for a few minutes. Refrigerate extra cooling scarves for breezeless humid days. When one scarf reaches body temperature, swap it for a cool one.

Storing - Store wet scarves in an open plastic bag, hang them to dry, or store them in the refrigerator.

After several days of drying, the crystals will return to solid form.

Washing - Hand-wash crystal-filled scarves using a few drops of liquid detergent. Rinse well and hang to dry. Don't machine-wash or dry. Press the casing only after the gel is completely crystallized.

Shake the crystals to one end of the casing to press the opposite end. Then flip and repeat. Don't iron the crystals or expose them to iron temperatures.

Polyacrylamide is a super-absorbent, nontoxic polymer that was developed in the 1960s to retain water in arid soil. Polyacrylamide holds up to 400 times its weight in water--one pound of polymer can hold up to 48 gallons of rain water! Different forms of polymer are widely used in many industries and in numerous products, such as disposable diapers, hot and cold compresses, toothpaste, cosmetics and flower arrangements.



Why Sand Scarves are necessary...



Marines walking through sandstorm
Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan
Summer 2009



Sandstorm at
Camp Bastion, Afghanistan



Sandstorm in Iraq



USMC convoy in Afghanistan



Why Cooling Scarves are necessary...

Average high temperatures in Baghdad, Iraq

June	106 degrees
July	110 degrees
August	110 degrees

Average high temperatures in Kandahar, Afghanistan

June	99 degrees
July	102 degrees
August	99 degrees

Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands.
Protect them as they protect us.
Bless them and their families
for the selfless acts they perform for us
in our time of need.

Amen

Crafts Corner—Crochet Team Helmet Liners

The troops endure winter temperatures below zero in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea and Kosovo. Please use soft 100% worsted weight wool yarn, so they can stay warm in winter. In addition, wool wicks away moisture and is non-flammable.

Colors allowed by our military are tan, black, brown, charcoal, and olive drab.

Gauge with K hook = 4 sts per inch and 5 rows per inch.

Materials for Adult Large:

Size K and H hook — 6 oz soft, washable, worsted weight 100% wool yarn

Directions:

Rnd 1....Using the 'K' hook, chain three. Join with a slip stitch to the first chain. Work 6 scs in ring.

(Suggestion: Mark the 1st stitch in each round using a stitch marker or small safety pin. Move the marker/pin with each round marking the 1st stitch. Makes it EASIER to count!)

Rnd 2....2scs in next 6 sts (12sts)

Rnd 3....(sc in next st, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (18sts)

Rnd 4....(sc in next 2sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (24sts)

Rnd 5....(sc in next 3sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (30sts)

Rnd 6....(sc in next 4sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (36sts)

Rnd 7....(sc in next 5sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (42sts)

Rnd 8....(sc in next 6sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (48sts)

Rnd 9....(sc in next 7sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (54sts)

Rnd 10...(sc in next 8sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (60sts)

Rnd 11...(sc in next 9sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (66sts)

Rnd 12...(sc in next 10sts, 2 scs in next st) 6 times (72sts) Stop for Adult Large

Continue working scs around the 72 sts until piece measures 7 inches from center to edge (usually 12 to 14 rounds)



For eye hole: without stretching your work, measure at least 7 inches. Place a marker or safety pin, count the stitches you will skip, and ch 3 more chs than skipped stitches.

Continue working around until piece measures approximately 10 more inches.

Fasten off and weave in ends. Using the 'H' hook, join the yarn with a slipstitch the yarn to any stitch in the face hole and sc around the eye hole. Fasten off and weave in ends.

For mailing instructions/questions, or for knitting instructions, write to helmets@soldiersangels.org or visit www.soldiersangels.org.

Crafts Corner—Crochet Team Operation Top Knot



Soldiers' Angels Operation Top Knot is a network of service clubs and individuals who sew, knit and shop to create gift baskets for infants and mothers-to-be in military families. Our mission is to commend the women and children at home for their strength, to let them know we are proud of their sacrifices as much as their husbands' and fathers'.

If you would like to nominate a family for Operation Top Knot care, or to join our team, go to www.soldiersangels.org and look under "Teams & Projects." Join today!

Crafts Corner—Crochet Team Blankets of Gratitude



Making sure America's Veterans know we still love and appreciate them!

This winter, thousands of veterans will spend time in a VA hospital or facility, away from the warmth of home, family and friends.

We want them to know that they are remembered, that we are thinking of them, and that we are grateful for their past service. Since we can't visit them all in person, our goal is to wrap 25,000 of these Veterans in lap robes, representative of our support and appreciation, called "Blankets of Gratitude." The lap robes will be a physical reminder that they are not alone. When a veteran receives a Blanket of Gratitude, he or she will know that somebody remembered them and that someone labored over a handmade robe with thoughts of them and hopes or prayers for their health and comfort.

Guidelines — Blankets of Gratitude

To show our Veterans staying in Veterans Administration facilities across the United States during the Holidays: We are grateful for your service!

Goal: 25,000 handmade lap robes

Lap Robes: May be crocheted, knitted or loomed

Colors: Any bright colors in washable/dryable yarns (patriotic and "masculine" colors are good choices)

Size: Approximately 36 x 48"

Shipping:

1. Roll up your lap robe, tie with ribbon, and include note card.
2. Enclose a holiday note card. Add "This lap robe was made with love in gratitude for your service to your country by [your name] and Soldiers' Angels."
3. Second note: Enclose another note with your name/address/email so that you may notified of its arrival.
4. Please contact Deborah at the VA Crochet & Craft Team (crochet@soldiersangels.org) for address to send it directly to a VA facility needing lap robes.

Deadline: Complete by November 1st, then box and ship (to the address provided by Deborah) to arrive by November 5th.

Have fun stitching, and Thank You on behalf of the Soldiers' Angels organization and America's veterans!

Deborah Delcorio
Soldiers' Angels VA Crochet Craft Team
crochet@soldiersangels.org
www.soldiers.angels.org



Help is also needed with smaller projects, such as hats, scarves, slipper socks, wheelchair bags and tracheotomy bibs. Please contact the Crochet Craft Team for patterns. Thank you!

NOTE: A one-page flyer for Blankets of Gratitude (which you can print and distribute) may be found on the next page of this newsletter.



The Soldiers' Angels VA Crochet & Craft Team Announces

BLANKETS OF GRATITUDE

Our goal is to send 25,000 HANDMADE LAP ROBES
made with "love and gratitude to you"
to our veterans staying in VA facilities this Holiday Season.

Lap robes may be *crocheted, knitted, or loomed.*

Will you please make just ONE?

The "Blankets of Gratitude" guidelines can be found at www.soldiersangels.org.
Click on "Blankets of Gratitude."

Questions/comments: crochet@soldiersangels.org

THANK YOU on behalf of the Veterans we serve and Soldiers' Angels!

Sponsored by:
Soldiers' Angels VA Crochet & Craft Team



Remember: Today's Soldier is Tomorrow's Veteran

Soldiers' Angels is a volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please visit www.soldiersangels.org.