

## Quilts of Valor

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun  
Friday, 09 June 2017 11:16

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## Comforting Soldiers with

### HANDMADE Quilts

“Just one star can comfort a soldier”

A quilting club is making the difference in the lives of veterans. On a Saturday, women from near and far gathered at UNM-Gallup’s north campus with a goal of creating 10 quilts. Sewing machines hummed as blocks of fabric were slowly and methodically turned into colorful

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tapestries.

The ladies talked and giggled as they worked, but they take their responsibility to heart as members of “The Loyal Order of the Quilt.”

The Loyal Order of The Quilt designs and stiches together quilts for local veterans here in the Gallup area. Each year, 10 veterans are nominated by members of the community and receive their quilts at the “Quilts of Valor” ceremony. In its fifth year, the ceremony will be held June 30, at the UNM-Gallup north campus.

The yearly event was inspired by Gallup Service Mart’s quilt club, whose members made 80 “One Star Blocks” and sent them to the Moda Fabrics company, who in turn made 100 quilts in 100 days and sent them to veterans across the United States. Those members then decided to start making quilts for local veterans.

The first ceremony was held December 2013 at the Winter Festival at UNM-Gallup, and two quilts were presented to local veterans attending the college. The event blossomed from there. Last year, Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney proclaimed the last Friday in June as Quilts of Valor day.

The Loyal Order of The Quilt group has four QOV sew days to complete all 10 quilts.

Coordinator Lynn Olinger says the quilts provide comfort to veterans.

“The quilt blanket will comfort them when they have their dark days of past war experiences that we may never understand,” Olinger said. “The blanket will act as hugs holding them for their service they have done for everyone.”

The ladies of this group come from the surrounding area, and each has her own story on why she volunteers for this special project.

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From Continental Divide, Dorothy Slaughter found out about the club through her neighbor, and volunteering each year has left a lasting an impression on her.

“I came to a meeting one time and fell in love with it, it’s just amazing to me how wonderful it is that these people get together and do this for other people ... they are just so unselfish,” she said.

Linda Williams, of Church Rock, who is an ombudsmen volunteer in the local community said she loves to help, and enjoys the camaraderie she shares with the other women.

“I thought that I would try it and I love doing this for the veterans,” she said. “I’m doing pretty good ... slow ... otherwise I love it.”

Carolyn Foreman, of Grants, who is a member of the Mt. Taylor Quilt Guild, comes and lends a hand because she believes it’s a worthwhile project. She has three brothers that served during the Vietnam War era; a father who served in WWII; and her son is currently in the Air Force.

“It’s a matter that is close to my heart,” she said. “We come to help out the Gallup ladies because the veterans are worth our time.”

Nellie Kelsey, from Gallup, has been quilting since the idea of QOV was formed.

“I’ve been doing this for the past three years,” she said. “I love it and visiting with these ladies for this worthwhile cause.”

The community is invited to come out to the ceremony to honor all veterans for the service they have given.

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