



# Quilts for our Veterans

Timeless Stitches — Quilt Capital of Kansas

Sharon Vesecky



November is a month of Thanksgiving and reflection. Of course, Thanksgiving is probably the first holiday that comes to mind with its abundance of special and delectable food. Our other opportunity for thankfulness is Veterans Day. I can remember when we called it Armistice Day to celebrate the official end of World War I at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month. President Eisenhower officially changed the name to Veterans Day.

Locally we celebrate Veterans Day by presenting quilts to our veterans. The quilts are made by a local group of quilters and their efforts are supported solely by donations. The group started in 2015 and have presented 98 quilts to veterans from all branches of service. This year's presentation ceremony is scheduled for Nov. 11 at 1:0 p.m. at the Lumberyard Arts Center. The gathering is open to the public. If you want to help honor our veterans and let them know that you appreciate their service, please join us. If you know of a veteran who has not received a quilt and lives in the Baldwin School District, please provide the veteran's contact information to Quilters' Paradise.

As we honor our veterans this month, it is an excellent time to appreciate their support staff. I remember the stories handed down in my own family. One uncle was in the navy during World War II and another was in the air force. My dad, grandfather and an uncle were farmers and worked very hard to produce food for our country. Food rationing left its mark on many of us. My grandmother continued to stockpile sugar for the remainder of her life. I grew up in a family that was reluctant to discard anything that might have use later. That could be the beginning of my appreciation of scrap quilts.

Another uncle who was too old to serve in the armed forces was an electrician. He did a lot of the wiring at Forbes Air Force Base when it was built. He and my aunt had a tan Pontiac coupe and used it to pull a tiny trailer house. While living in that trailer, they moved around and worked in several factories that supported the war effort including Pratt Whitney. Yes, Aunt Letha was a "Rosie the Riveter!"

Another aunt went to Washington, D.C. and became employed in the Pentagon offices. She described her "civil service test"—she was escorted into a room containing a stone, a washing machine, and a typewriter. If she could identify the typewriter, she would be hired!

These are some of the stories I grew up with and I'm sure that many families have handed down similar accounts of that time in our country's history. My own personal hero is Mrs. Miller who worked in the grocery store in Burlingame. She fiercely protected each delivery of evaporated milk until my mom could come to purchase what she needed to mix up my formula.

This month is the perfect time to reflect on our past and how so many pulled together to protect our freedom. As history has shown us, World Wars I and II were not "once and done" events. Maintaining our freedom is a continuous process. A special thanks to our veterans, and additional thanks to their "support staff."

Happy Veterans Day! Happy Thanksgiving!