

10. The Origin of Quilts of Valour - Canada

On January 15, 2006 in Kandahar Afghanistan, a suicide bomber attack took the life of Canadian Diplomat Glyn Barry and seriously injured three Canadian soldiers. Watching the television news, the following evening, learning the soldiers were from Edmonton and seeing file footage of another soldier recovering from his earlier injuries in theatre, my reaction of “Where’s his quilt?”

It started a journey that could never have been planned. It took some time to determine where the soldiers were being cared for. Then the search began for finding quilts to give them. Unable to find any organization in Canada making quilts for our injured soldiers, I approached the American Quilts of Valor® Foundation to see if there were any Canadian quilters sending their quilts to the American injured. Quilts arrived from Diana Brown in Calgary.

Through the assistance of our Edmonton Garrison’s Family Resource Center and their suggestion I present the quilts myself. Arrangements were made for me to go the University of Alberta Hospital. On February 15, 2006 I met the family of Cpl Bailey, giving his mom a quilt to give to him. Jeff was in a coma. Pte Salikin joined the group of supporters at the hospital and I gave Wil a quilt too. The padre who escorted me to the soldiers in the hospital, Larry Wright and I then went to visit with Paul and present a quilt to him.

Meeting the young men whose lives were changed forever, also forever changed my life. As I wrote to the resource centres across Canada in June 2006 “The main goal of the Quilts of Valour (QOV) is to let every wounded Canadian soldier know we care about them and wish to honour their efforts in keeping our country free. We wish to give them a quilt of comfort. These quilts are made by mothers, sisters, friends, cousins and even some dads and brothers too! Some quilts are made by quilters who are not related to a soldier - nor do they have any connection with the military! All the quilters have one thing in common - to make a gift of thanks for our Canadian military’s support.” To all of those who have participated in this mission, Thank You.

Lezley Zwaal
Founder