

THE BEANIE NEWSFLASH

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February Highlights

1499 beanies received

First beanies received from the states of Colorado, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and from Canada

5 new beanie makers

Operation Beanies for Our Service Members is the brainchild of Miki Sessler of Huntington Beach, CA. It was launched in December 2004.

Miki was born and grew up half a world away in Japan after WWII. After finishing her education, she went to work at Tokyo International Airport where she got a chance to use her English and French language skills. During this time she also started corresponding with Bert Sessler of Gardena, California – with whom she shared her hobby of stamp collecting. To improve her language abilities she planned to go to France after about 8 years on the job, but first she stopped in the US to visit friends and relatives - and her pen pal Bert. The moment Bert saw her get off the plane he knew this was the woman he wanted to marry. Miki's next stop was New York but Bert convinced her with daily phone calls, cards, and letters to come back to California. She enrolled at Harbor College in Wilmington, CA and in 1971 they got married.

Over the years, they owned and operated several businesses together and in 1989 moved their store *Miki's California Yarn Sales* - which is the headquarters of *Operation Beanies for Our Service Members* - to Huntington Beach, CA.

Bert passed away in 2003 and Miki continued to run the business. However, there was a big void in her life now, and she was looking for something meaningful and new to do. One day, as she was at home overlooking her flower garden, it was almost as if a lightning bolt had struck her with the idea of making hats for service members in memory of her late husband, who was a Marine himself, and to do something positive for her adopted country. On December 5, 2004 she became the first beanie maker and put up fliers in her yarn shop asking anyone to help her accomplish her goal of sending 1,000,000 beanies to service members. The first shipment of 150 beanies was sent to Iraq on Feb. 4, 2005.

In the early days, Miki and other volunteers could be seen every 3rd Sunday of the month at Central Park in Huntington Beach, CA, teaching anyone interested to knit or crochet beanies. But now she is focusing most of her attention on collecting and distributing beanies. She has her goal firmly in mind and is excited about every new beanie maker and every new state which joins this mission. It may still be a long way to finish 1,000,000 beanies, but as word spreads she is sure that it can be accomplished.

“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Author: Archbishop Desmond Tutu