

Hospitality Hero:

PHX Flight Attendant Laurie Liss

In honor of Veterans Day and those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, it's fitting that this month's Hospitality Hero is none other than **PHX based Flight Attendant Laurie Liss**, who honors Veterans year round with her Southwest Hospitality and military-inspired pillows.

Since the 2012 passing of her grandfather, a feisty WWII Veteran, Laurie has made it her mission to gift handmade patriotic pillows to Veterans she encounters on Southwest flights, both as a gesture of her appreciation for their service and to show them that she cares.

"I have met Veterans who have broken down in tears, given me mementos, and told me that my pillow is the first gift they have ever received. I even received an American flag from an Air Force Commander who flew the flag during a combat mission in Afghanistan. He is now a First Officer at Southwest! These are all cherished gifts."

Laurie's mission began when she came across a posting from a friend who was looking for volunteers to sew souvenir pillows for upcoming Honor Flights.

"Although I had never made pillows, it seemed as if I was meant to see this request," she says. "I made my first batch of 120 pillows for two Honor Flights. I packaged them up with a handwritten note, and the project began! I gave a dedication on the first Honor Flight in memory of my grandfather. It was a very special day."

Laurie's journey didn't end there; it was just the beginning. After learning about Southwest's involvement with Operation Freedom Bird, an organization that helps Arizona combat Veterans take a "Healing Journey" to their memorial in Washington, D.C., Laurie made pillows for this trip as well as active-duty soldiers on leave.

Hospitality is the way you make someone feel when they come into your home. For Flight Attendants, their home away from home is on our aircraft, so Laurie takes it upon herself to ensure Veterans feel special. Laurie has made approximately 4,000 pillows and has found her purpose.

"Every day, we have the opportunity to meet amazing people, make a difference in their lives, and show them that although Southwest Airlines is a large Company, it's made up of individual Employees who care."

Thank you, Laurie, for sharing your Hospitality with our Customers, one pillow at a time. ✈️

