

Honor and Remember Flag is 151st County Barn Quilt

Jeremy and Kelly Erdmann had thought quite some time about getting a barn quilt for their barn at N4985 County J, Tigerton, but couldn't decide on a pattern. Then, several weeks ago, they saw an article in the Shawano Leader about a new patriotic flag called "Honor and Remember." With Kelly being a veteran, the flag design and its meaning really appealed to them. So they contacted the Honor and Remember organization which granted their request to use the design for their barn quilt. The flag represents a national campaign to promote a universally recognized symbol that specifically acknowledges men and women of our U.S. armed forces who never made it home.

The quilt, Shawano County's 151st, was sponsored by Lon and Ellen Swedberg and their daughter, Ginger, and son Todd, of Shawano. It was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric of Shawano.

Jeremy and Kelly's children, Hailey and Cole, are the fourth generation of Erdmanns to live on the farm. Originally purchased by Hiram Johnson in 1873, it changed hands several times over the years until it was purchased by Wilson and Agnes Erdmann from Lloyd and Edna Curtis in 1950. They retained ownership until selling the 80 acre farm to their son, Gerald, and his wife, June, in 1971. In 2006, Jeremy and Kelly purchased a 40-acre parcel of the farm along with 1.25 acres on which the house and barn are located.

The Honor and Remember flag, depicted in the Erdmann barn quilt, recognizes all individuals who have died as a result of serving in the United States military dating back to the founding of our nation. The flag serves as a symbol of national gratitude for the hundreds of thousands of American men and women who bravely made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve the freedoms we enjoy. The flag also helps to promote healing for the thousands of families who deserve recognition for the sacrifice of a lost loved one.

Kelly served four years of active duty from 2002 to 2006 as an Army nurse stationed at Madigan Army Medical Center, Fort Lewis, Wa. From March to November of 2003, she was in the 47th Combat Support hospital in Kuwait for the war. She ended her army service with the rank of Captain. "We enjoy seeing all the quilts as we drive around Shawano County," Kelly said, "and I hope ours will be recognized as having a significant message."

As the sponsors of the Erdmann quilt, Lon and Ellen Swedberg appreciated the opportunity to support the barn quilt project. "It really is such a positive thing for Shawano County," Ellen said, "and this particular quilt will be so meaningful to so many. As owners of Swedberg Funeral Home, we know first hand what it means when people lose a loved one."

The symbolism on the Honor and Remember Flag is particularly significant. The **red field** on the flag represents the blood spilled by brave men and women in America's military throughout our history.

The **white field** below the gold star recognizes the purity of sacrifice. The **blue star** represents active service in military service from the American Revolution to present day. The **gold star** signifies the ultimate sacrifice of a warrior in active service who will not return home.

The **folded flag** signifies the final tribute to an individual life presented to the family for their significant loss. The **flame** is an eternal reminder of the spirit that has departed this life, yet burns on in the memory of all who knew and loved the fallen hero.

To learn more about the Honor and Remember campaign, go to: www.honorandremember.org.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or via email at jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site includes photos and information on every quilt on display in Shawano County along with a map showing each quilt's location. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.

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Photo caption (Photo by Jim Leuenberger)

Lon and Ellen Swedberg, at left, are shown with Kelly and Jeremy Erdmann and the Erdmanns' young children, Cole and Hailey, and the barn quilt they sponsored for the Erdmanns, called Honor and Remember. The Erdmanns' dog, Charlie, is also in the photo.