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# Women's Club members sew to provide comfort

by Diane Davis

STAFF WRITER

The members of the Bridgeport Woman's Club are partnering with an organization called Sew Much Comfort to adapt articles of clothing for wounded service members.

"There are six women in our club who are working on modifying clothing such as athletic shorts or lounge pants," President Ruth Allen said.

"The modifications are things like opening up a side seam, and inserting either Velcro or special snaps at the waistband," she said.

These modifications help the wounded veterans wear normal clothing instead of hospital gowns.

Sew Much Comfort is conducting this project all across the United States. These modified garments are offered to any wounded soldier free of charge.

The women at Bridgeport who are participating had to send samples of their stitching to the group to make sure it was acceptable.

After their seams had been approved, Sew Much Comfort then sent all the supplies needed to modify garments, including Velcro, binding and snaps. They can supply the clothing, or the group doing the work can purchase it.

The members of the Bridge-

port Woman's Club who are working on the alterations of veterans' clothing include Shirley Hadorn, Linda Rohrig, Eva Shearer, Polly Courtney, Judy Lawson and Ruth Allen.

"We have received a kit this week containing six pairs of shorts and supplies," Allen said. "We have 60 to 90 days to get these back, but we would like to return them sooner."

Sew Much Comfort will also accept monetary donations, but Allen wanted the group to become more involved in the project.

Sew Much Comfort was organized in December 2004 to provide custom made adaptive clothing at no cost to injured service members from all branches of the military and National Guard injured while serving in the current conflicts, according to Michele Cuppy, co-founder.

"My co-founder returned from a trip to Walter Reed Hospital where she witnessed a wounded soldier come down for a ceremony to receive a medal in his hospital gown," Cuppy said. "She came back and said we had to make adaptive clothing for these service personnel."

Sew Much Comfort took off nationwide when Cuppy's husband obtained a free website.

To date, Sew Much Comfort has been able to provide more

than 115,000 pieces of adaptive clothing, according to Cuppy. More than 1,200 volunteer seamstresses use copyrighted patterns and instructions created by Sew Much Comfort to create the adaptive clothing.

"Many wounded soldiers arrive in the United States from Germany for extensive medical treatment for bullet wounds, burns, head and limb injuries and amputations," Cuppy said. "Some of these injuries require large fixators, prosthetics and casts that are too bulky to fit under ordinary clothing."

The adaptive clothing was designed with input from the wounded and medical personnel. The clothing gives the service member and medical personnel the ability to have ready access to their injuries utilizing the adaptive openings in the clothing.

At the same time, the injured service member is able to have their clothing appear the same as normal civilian attire. This helps them have a more natural and comfortable recovery.

The clothing is adapted from either store bought garments or sewn with custom designed patterns.

Anyone who would like to participate in or contribute to this project can contact Allen at (304) 842-3638.