

# Susan Stockwell unveils work made with recovering soldiers at National Army Museum

By Ryan Murphy | 14 April 2014

## Artist Susan Stockwell is launching a new exhibition in collaboration with rehabilitating UK soldiers at the National Army Museum



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Piece Makers was commissioned in 2012 by the museum to look at the themes of the Army, conflict and rehabilitation 100 years after the start of the First World War, which saw the most significant impact on the mental health of soldiers in Europe at the time.

The museum hopes to reflect issues facing soldiers today during and after active service.

Touring Regimental Museums across the UK from June, the piece started life in art workshops in two UK recovery centres where Stockwell met with soldiers in rehabilitation.

They used drawing, sewing and quilting to tell their stories of being a soldier and recovering after duty.

Stockwell, whose installation *Sail Away* occupied the main exhibition space in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in 2013, also completed her own work for the exhibition. *Peace Makers*, a patchwork quilt made up of discarded army blankets, will become a permanent fixture in the museum after the tour.

The quilt is the artist's personal response to this highly moving commission and features a central screenprint by veteran Michael Crossan of soldiers at war.

Surrounded by dark grey and white swatches, the quilt represents the game of war while the patchwork signifies the fragmentary yet ultimately peaceful recovery process. Quotes from participating veterans are embroidered on many of the patches, as well as poems.

On the back is the word **PEACE** on a silk flag in Army colours is a simple yet evocative call for harmony.

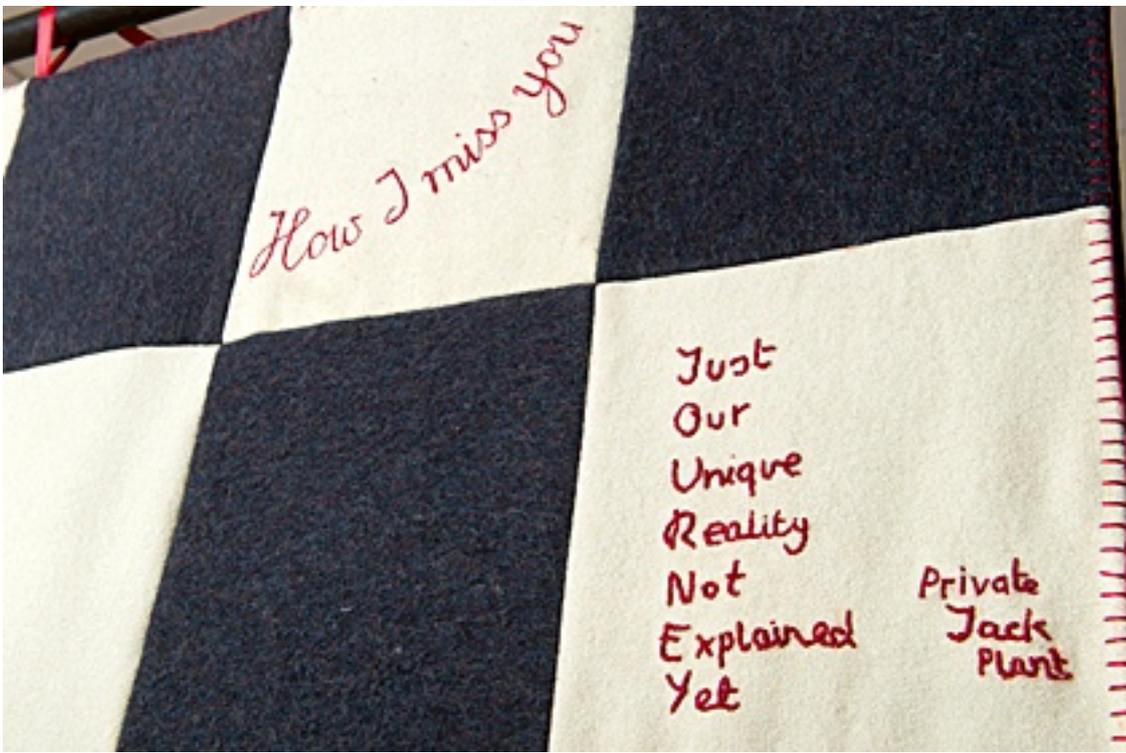
"There is a long history of soldiers sewing and quilting in the Army," says Stockwell, discussing the concentration on textiles within the exhibition.

"Through the *Piece Makers* project, ex-soldiers have told us their stories of battle and their life since leaving the Services.

"I know that finding their own form of creative expression helps people who have had traumatic experiences; I'd even go as far as to say it saves them."

*Piece Makers* is part of the museum's *Building for the Future* project, which will see the building transformed as well as community projects and nationwide tours while the work is being carried out.





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