

QOV's Ruffled Feathers Newsletter- March 2005

“Hello Washington, we got a problem.”

Who would ever think that making quilts for wounded service members would lead to reading Government Accounting Office (GAO) publications? I didn't until I googled the word “med-hold” in preparation for this newsletter and read Diane Grassi's “Walking Wounded Face Healthcare Disparity” *. In her article, she summarizes the GAO's February 2005's report on the Gaps in Pay and Benefits...for Injured Army National Guard and Reserve Soldiers. Briefly the conclusion the GAO reached is this largest activation of reservists since World War II is being short changed when it comes to taking care of them when they are injured or ill. They find that the Army bureaucracy has failed to support these brave soldiers fighting up to 18 months defending our nation in the Global War on Terror. These servicemembers and their families are experiencing untold hardships which are unacceptable given the substantial sacrifices they have all made and injuries they have sustained. Even though the Army is trying to streamline this bureaucratic maze, it still has a long way to go. In the meantime, real reservists and their real families are suffering hardships that any of us would find appalling.

On Feb. 17, 2005, Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA, 11th) of the Committee on Government Reform held its first full committee hearing “Wounded Army Guard and Reserve Forces: Increasing the Capacity to Care” on the GAO's findings**. He found that “the burdensome, stove-piped procedures and systems within the Department of Defense (DoD) leaves no one responsible to the affected service members”. He admonished the DoD for what he described as an ongoing “turf fight.”

Many recognize this is a good start but it shouldn't be limited to the treatment of Army Guard and Reserve members. Guard and Reserve members of other Services are facing similar hardships when they are released from active duty because of an injury or confusion in the handoff between DoD and the VA. This confusion leads to the disruption of the continuity of care which they need to recovery fully. It also puts the financial burden on the reservist and not the government***.

After I read the above articles, I wasn't at all surprised. In fact, it confirmed what I had been hearing all week from chaplains at the VA hospitals/centers. I am learning about the plight of our injured, wounded and homeless (yes! I wrote homeless) many of them reservists and their families from our Global War on Terror. Our wounded exist as in-patients on the wards in military hospitals and as vets suffering in silence in our communities. We as quilters are making a difference in the lives of these men and women. Our QOV's help to heal and our collective voices to our legislatures will help rectify this nightmarish bureaucratic our servicemen and women face. Here is a link where you can find your elected state and local officials and their email/phone numbers and addresses. <http://www3.capwiz.com/y/dbq/officials/>

Our mission is daunting. I don't know if I am 'ready' but I am determined to accept this challenge to leave no wounded uncovered. I acknowledge the image of the in-patient wounded service member is much more appealing than a depressed vet in a shelter but in the end, they all merit our admiration and appreciation for a job well done. I look forward to sharing whatever portion of this mission you can to spend sewing. Sew and let our voices be heard.

Catherine

Numbers as of 3/20/05

Casualties (killed): 1,520

Wounded: 11,220

Total QOV awarded:

Jan: 137

Feb: 169

March: 132

Overall since 11/03 to present: 786

Quilt-toppers:403

Longarmers:142

Number of hospitals: 21

Number of chaplains, etc: 24

Our newest hospital addition is Elmendorf's AFB in Alaska. CH Shao said the Army (next door) will probably be interested in the qovs. Tripler Hospital in Hawaii will most likely come onboard this week. And, I made contact with a VA social work supervisor in Miami who is working proactively with our returning reservist troops in her area. More on this next month.

Catching-Up News

QOV Challenge or This Match was Made in Heaven!

I have had such fun working with Marcia Stevens. Being the ignorant quilt-topper I am, I didn't know much about her. Little by little, I am learning that as one of the pioneers in the longarming world, she is a quite humble when it comes to her accomplishments. Marcia since introducing the Challenge in her January's **Unlimited Possibilities** newsletter could be described as having taken on this project with a vengeance. (For challenge details visits www.houseofhanson.com/qov.html.) With a goal of 1,000 QOV's by mid-May, she has been receiving postcard entries on a daily basis. Marcia will be manning a QOV booth at the **Machine Quilters Expo (MQX)** April 15-17 in Manchester, NH www.MachineQuiltersExpo.com and at the **Machine Quilters Showcase (MQS)** May 11-14 www.imqa.org. Both venues will feature special events related to QOV. Example: At MQX, there will be a "Celebrity Quilt-In" on Saturday evening where celebrity longarm teachers will be dueling with their quilting machines - quilting QOV's. Please stop by the QOV booth at either show to greet Marcia and drop off any QOV's or QOV pillowcases. For QOV pillowcases donated, Marcia will provide a gift of a spool of thread (one per person). Two quilting machines will be available for quilting of QOVs during both shows.

Non-Profit and Trade-Marking

I received word from my lawyer yesterday that our charitable corporation, **QOV Foundation, Inc.** is just awaiting my signature. I am still in the dark as to what implications this has for all of us. When I find out more, I will update you on what you can and can not do as far as deductions go.

I know many of you are raising monies at your local level. These funds help with postage and purchasing supplies. If we were to raise lots of money, how would you like to see the funds directed? Solely for postage and supplies or extend our scope? I await your thoughts.

As far as the trade-marking goes, it's going. Someone awhile ago emailed me to ask if the name Quilts of Valor was trade marked. I thought it rather an odd question but in my naïve manner replied. Only recently did I discover the most probable intent. I went to register 'qov dot something' and found that all the qov dot names were taken! Some enterprising person has registered all the possible 'qov dot somethings'. Well, I was skunked but I did register www.qovfoundation.org. NO ONE had taken that one.

Marine Gala

I have more than enough qovs for the Marine Gala. Only the Marines and their families and invited guests are going to be present. We'll all have to wait for CH Dillman to send us pixs and stories of the Gala. I want to thank all of you who are making or offered to make these qovs. When yours is ready, let me know.

QOV Accessories

I know the pillowcase door slammed right in front of my face but guess what? Another door called 'qov accessories' opened right next to it! It's fun, silly and outrageous and we're all probably too old to engage in such activities and frivolity. But do we care?

We now have various accessories for our qovs. Take your pick. Pillowcases, labels, embroidered labels, stenciled labels, calling cards & qov pins (thanks to Janet-Lee Santeusanio and Mary Schilke from MQX). FYI, I have not seen the pins nor do I have any at the time. When they become available, I will let you know. Maybe we can even get trading cards! Some items will be free for the taking and others will probably have a minimal cost. If you have a qov accessory you'd like to share with the rest of us, send the information/pattern/image to me. You'll find a link called QOV Accessories and from there you will be able to download or maybe even order your accessories. I don't know how I'll arrange this but it's on the stove top.

You've earned a reward for wading through this newsletter so far. Two little pearls. The first is health related. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) is a great source of information on health. Here is their take on Colorectal Cancer Awareness. <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colortcl/>.

The second pearl is for the computer-literate fans out there. This is from Maximum PC's Windows Tips-Feb. 2004. [Shut Down Your PC Faster](#). If you're sick of performing multiple clicks to shut down your PC, keep on reading. Do this at your own risk and please don't ask me for support. It works great on my computer.

- Right-click your desktop and create a new shortcut.
- In the location line, type:
Shutdown -s -t 0 (that is—dash 's' space dash 't' space zero)
- Name it and click 'OK'. You might want to give it a different icon, such as the red shut-down icon.
- Drag this icon onto your quick launch taskbar or leave it on the desktop. Either way, clicking it once will now completely shut down your PC. To make a similar 'restart' shortcut, the location line needs to read: shutdown -r -t 0 (that's a zero at the end, and not an 'oh').

Quality and YOUR Control

Overall, the chaplains have been very pleased with our qovs. There have been many occasions where the chaplains have taken a qov to one of their general meetings to do a show n'tell. They get requests for qovs from the non-wounded. They sometimes say they can't find a postcard or name in the box with the qov. So, don't forget to include them. I have had a couple of chaplains tell me

about *stained* qovs. All I can say is this is **not** acceptable. Please remember to WASH your qov before sending it off. If you notice stains and they don't come out with a good washing, don't send it.

Time Off

I am starting to take a day off here and there to avoid burn-out. Doing this has at times become all-consuming. I need time away for my sanity. The long and short of it is I am still here. If I don't answer you right away, don't fear. I'll respond. And, if you become impatient, email/call again. I don't mind. When I go where there is no email, I'll let you all know.

Old Dogs Learning New Tricks

This past week, I had a Native American longarmer, Diane F. from the Cheyenne Sioux Reservation in South Dakota contact me saying she had a Lone Star Quilt she specifically wanted given to a wounded Native American service member. Huh? I had no idea what she was talking about. She then commenced to tell me about the Native American custom of giving Star Quilts as a way of honoring the recipient. I sent out a request to my chaplains and the GySgt from Hawaii emailed saying he had two wounded Native American Marines. Diane is sending two Star Quilts to them. After talking to her, I realized I know so little about my own country and its peoples and customs. If you're interested in knowing more, you can read what she sent me on this custom which I will put on the website. Thank you Diane.

Lucille's Visit to James A. Haley VA

Lucille and her husband went to FL and were going to be in Tampa. She emailed the chaplain to see if she could drop off her qovs. She did and this is what she wrote. I'd like to share it with you. Chaplain LeFavor has reviewed and approved of it.

James A Haley V. A. Hospital, Spinal Cord Unit, Tampa Florida

Quilts Of Valor could be called Quilts of courage, quilts of guts, quilts for thinking that placing yourself in harms way every minute of every day is " Just doing my job, Ma'm'.

As quilters, we take whole fabrics and cut them up to then sew the resulting pieces into newer and more attractive, (to us) designs.

War takes our young men and women, places them into harms way, as that is what war is all about, where they can be sheared into many pieces. Our medical teams work miracles saving their lives. The resulting realigned bodies aren't always whole. But, their spirits are magnificent.

The recipients of two QOVs wanted to meet to thank the maker of their QOVs this past week. As the quilter, I was embarrassed as all I did was cut and sew fabric. Theirs was the important job. This project is all about them.

Chaplain LeFavor at the James A Hawley Spinal Cord Unit section of the VA Hospital in Tampa asked me to return to meet the two Marines that received my QOVs. My husband and I had delivered the quilts as we were visiting in St Petersburg.

Both of the Marines are young, barely 21. Both of them sustained head injuries in Iraq within the past 3 months. They are relearning to talk, walk, remember daily things. Surgery was in their past and probably in their future. Yet I got a gutsy grin and a thumbs up "Thank you".

My response was THANK YOU and hugs.

Chaplain Lefavor, in response to my questioning, said that they are getting younger soldiers. One of his men isn't even shaving yet. This unit receives all the spinal cord injuries for the entire east coast. It is a very busy unit situated in a 2 year old facility. It has wonderful new equipment, devoted personnel, and a full to bursting large parking lot. (Families come to be with their kids)

My husband wanted to know how the recipients were chosen. "Pain is indiscriminate" was the response. All of these soldiers deserve a quilt so it came down to the fact that he had two quilts and two Marines in the same room. No one would be slighted if they didn't get a quilt in that room.

Last week Chaplain Lefavor received ten quilts so he gave them to the Director of Volunteer Services and she distributed them to the incoming soldiers in an adjoining receiving unit. Our guys are in the rehab unit.

Many years ago I worked in a rehab unit so the sights were familiar, but the precipitating event is definitely different. Fatality numbers make the headlines. Our guys were lucky as their pictures did not show up on CBS or PBS's nightly tribute to fatalities.

You may read about the injuries our soldiers sustain in Iraq, or Afghanistan. You rarely read about the resulting struggles to return to a productive life a year later. Our quilts are recognizing that fact. They are a way of saying "We see you. We appreciate you. We are praying for you.
Hugs "

Lucille O., RN

Ideas for Postage

A group of enterprising gov-ers asked their State Senator to cover the costs of postage. He was delighted to do this.

Conclusion...or, are we all asleep?

I know you know I am forever thankful for your dedication to this project. Our qovs mean so much more to our wounded and their loved ones than we will ever know. Our nation IS at war and we are stepping up to the plate to help out. I know Rosie T. Riveter would be proud of our efforts. Thank YOU for being there for ALL our wounded.

References, Footnotes and Interesting Links:

Footnotes:

- *http://www.therant.us/staff/grassi/walking_wounded_face_healthcare_disparity.htm
- ** <http://reform.house.gov/GovReform/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=6802>
- *** <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33627-2005Feb17.html>

Wounded reservists:

- <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05125.pdf>
- <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4536377>

Find Your Elected Official:

- <http://www3.capwiz.com/y/dbq/officials/>

Stories from the war front and from the soldier's heart:

- PBS Frontline program on US Army's 8th Cavalry Regiment in Baghdad.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/company/>

- PBS Frontline program "The Soldier's Heart" tells stories of soldiers returning from Iraq and the psychological effects that many suffer from.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/heart/>

Follow ups:

- Major Duckworth
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4539763>
- Marine 1st Sgt. Brad Kasal
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4525928>

QOV Challenge:

- <http://www.houseofhanson.com/qov.html>