



FEBRUARY 2014

WHAT A YEAR! 2013 NUMBERS IN REVIEW

By Susan Gordon

Looking back, 2013 was a remarkable year for Quilts of Valor. Our first-ever leadership conference in July in Nebraska City, NE, enabled State and Regional Coordinators who had worked together and communicated via e-mail and telephone, many of them for years, to put names, voices, and faces together. It was such a meaningful gathering for everyone that we will repeat the event in 2015, and plan to also have some regional meetings in 2014.

Additionally, 2013 included our 10th Anniversary—the very first QOV was awarded by Catherine Roberts in 2003.

By November 2013, over 90,000 quilts

had been awarded, an amazing statistic considering all our quilters and leaders are volunteers! Early this spring we will award QOV #100,000. Watch for it—it's coming.



For me, the best number from 2013 is the rise in Quilts of Valor awarded during the calendar year. In 2012, we presented 6,169. Last year, we awarded 12,314, doubling the number awarded in one year. Quilters, you are amazing. I am humbled by your passion and your commitment to our mission.

Finally, a number I will never forget is 10-21-2013, the date "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams" devoted Brian's "Making A Difference" segment to Quilts of Valor. Following that national publicity,

many local groups were contacted for interviews and news stories, donations were received at our national "office" and, over the next 10 weeks until the end of the year, more than 1,000 new requests for Quilts of Valor were received. Several State Coordinators got over 100 QOV requests within their state, one state as many as 400 requests.

Thank you all for your work and dedication in making 2013 an outstanding year. Based on the overwhelming response from the public, it's obvious the Quilts of Valor name and our mission are becoming better known. The number of individuals and groups joining the QOVF doubled over the past year. With continued efforts, by the end of our second decade, Quilts of Valor Foundation will be a cherished, household name.

QOV DESTINATIONS: A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

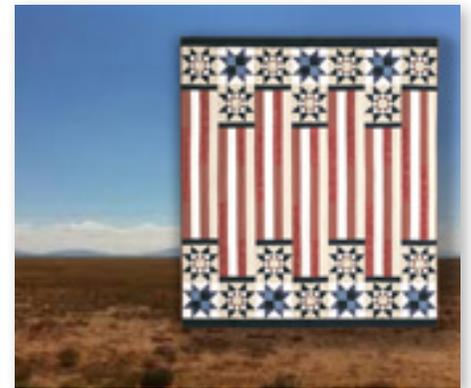
By Susan Gordon

When I started sewing with my Quilts of Valor group, the Destinations Coordinator (DC) gave me a destination for our first box of quilts: the Intensive Care Unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan. After a series of communications with a captain in that unit, I decided I wanted to send all our quilts there. I contacted the DC and told her I had more quilts to send to this captain. As kindly as she could, the DC told me the number of quilts for that destination had been filled, and quilts were needed elsewhere. It was an important lesson, and reminded me that I am serving others, not myself.

Many of us get a feeling of satisfaction when we deliver or send our QOVs to those with whom we personally connect.

It becomes even more compelling as we begin to hear back from recipients and staff at those destinations. The human connection completes the circle for us: from fabric, to quilt, to destination, to recipient. That's a strong bond.

As the troop drawdown in the Mid-east continues, the areas of need for our Quilts of Valor are changing. Fewer quilts are required at the front lines as several of our destination sites have closed over the past year. Landstuhl Medical Center and Weisbaden Army Airfield are still destinations, but more and more Quilts of Valor are needed stateside. The increasing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who have returned home, added to our Vietnam, WWII, and Korea vets, creates the shift in destinations for our quilts. The landscape of need is changing, and there is a sense of urgency as many of these veterans are aging and have not been honored.



I encourage you to remember it's all about the recipient, not us. Help QOVF meet stateside needs so that we can say someday, "we've offered honor and comfort to all who have put themselves in harm's way." Consider asking our DC where the greatest need is when you seek destinations for your quilts.

FABRIC GROUPS PERFECT FOR QOVVS

By Marianne Fons

The first thing I do when I step into a quilt shop is look for its section of red, white, blue, and gold. Adding to my stash of “patriotics” supports independent shops and motivates me to start my next Quilt of Valor.

Two new patriotic groups have recently shipped to stores. Here’s what’s currently available from quilt-shop-only vendors:

Love & Glory from **Marcus Fabrics** is a follow-up to Faye Burgos’ earlier American Valor collection. The group includes an updated panel as well as stars, flags, textures, and a neat stripe. A free pattern, also called Love & Glory, has been sized



Love & Glory from Marcus

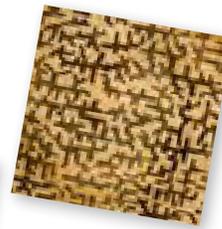
specifically for Quilts of Valor. View swatches and download Heidi Pridemore’s pattern here.

A Nation’s Song from **Quilting Treasures** was inspired by this year’s 200th birthday of our national anthem. The collection includes a zigzag stripe, a sprinkled star in red and blue versions, and a print featuring the words of the “Star Spangled Banner” itself. View swatches here. A pattern sized for a larger-sized QOV (72" × 84") is available for purchase here.



A Nation’s Song from Quilting Treasures

Other collections available are **Quilted in Honor** from **Island Batik** and the enduring favorite, **Stonehenge Stars & Stripes** from **Northcott**. When you buy Stonehenge, be sure to let shops know Northcott supports QOVV not only by creating gorgeous fabrics but also by



Quilted in Honor from Island Batik



Stonehenge Stars & Stripes from Northcott

printing our informational brochure by the thousands!

If you don’t find these collections at shops you frequent, let store personnel (especially the owner!) know you want to buy them, and that you and your fellow QOVV volunteers have a constant need for patriotic prints.

(About the Author: Marianne Fons serves on the QOVV Board of Directors as liaison to the quilting industry. She and her husband Mark live in Winterset, Iowa. Contact Marianne at marianne.fons@QOVV.org)

NEW GO-TO GAL FOR BROCHURES

By Kerry Barnes

Veterans’ Day, November 11th, 2013, is a day I won’t forget—for more than one reason. That’s the day a pallet of 15 boxes containing 25,000 brochures was delivered to my home, completing the transition to my newest role as the distributor for the QOVV informational brochures.

I serve as the State Coordinator for New York and volunteered at last summer’s QOVV Leadership Conference to take on this new job. Teamwork helped make a seamless shift of stewardship for the QOVV tri-fold color brochures from Marianne Fons’ basement in Iowa to my garage in New York.

Since November, I have repackaged and sent out over 18,000 brochures in bundles of 100-1000 to over 35 requesters using US Postal Service flat rate boxes. When the current supply of brochures gets low, a new order with updated information will be submitted to our friends at Northcott Fabrics. Currently, there is no charge for the brochures; however, you must register with QOVV to receive them. Go here to register your



Kerry Barnes



QOVV brochures piled high in Kerry Barnes’ garage await shipping.

affiliation with QOVV before submitting a brochure request to brochures@qovv.org.

(About the Author: Kerry Barnes is the State Coordinator for New York and now the QOVV Brochure Coordinator. She lives in Oswego, New York. Contact Kerry at kerry.barnes@QOVV.org)

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE: YOUR DESTINATION COORDINATOR

By Judie Yates

As Destination Coordinator (DC), I have the privilege of working with some very special people, not only our community of volunteers but also those who care for our wounded at home and abroad. I am humbled by their amazing level of compassion towards those who have laid their lives on the line for all of us and by their commitment to cover them all in a QOV.

I am thankful to be doing this job during a time when we are pulling out of war zones and bringing our sons and daughters home. This has made my job interesting as we work to keep up with the changing military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, the resultant reduction in need for QOVs abroad, and increased needs stateside. Where we once had trouble fulfilling overseas destinations, we now are challenged to cover those who have made it home without ever having received a Quilt of Valor.



Judie Yates

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Leadership Circle cont.

My job is to stay in touch with our Points of Contact in facilities caring for returned service members, assuring that their needs are being met and that we always have accurate shipping addresses for our QOVs. I collect each incoming Request for Destination (RFD) and match the supply to those needs.

With the recent coverage on the “NBC Nightly News” and FOX News, we’ve had a huge increase in requests for deserving Veterans here at home. Barbara Conner, our Individual Requests Coordinator, our State Coordinators, and I work together to manage the challenge of supplying quilts to those newly aware of QOVF who have requested quilts for themselves or others. The job also includes finding suitable local people to award those quilts. This is where Barbara has become an expert. She always finds just the right person and, as a team, we find a way to make the award happen.

My dream is to one day have no overseas destinations, no fresh wounds to cover, and no painful wounds from the past to heal.

(About the Author: Judie Yates is the Destination Coordinator for the QOVF. She and her husband Terry live in Mountain House, California. Contact Judie at judie.yates@QOVF.org)

DON'T MISS OUT, PINS GOING FAST

By Susan Gordon

Our 2014 one-inch lapel pin, which marks our first ten years and the upcoming presentation of 100,000th quilt, is already a resounding success! Almost 6,000 pins have been distributed to QOVF State Coordinators (SCs). Contact yours to make a \$5 donation and get a pin you can proudly wear all year, or email pins@QOVF.org to order one. Remember, when they're gone, they're gone!

Members of our volunteer community are coming up with creative ways to move pins. One husband, using a “soft sell” approach, pinned a half-dozen on his shirt before going to bridge club. When asked about them he explained the QOVF story, received donations, and returned home with only one pin left.



EDDIE BURKEL: THE AMAZING IRON MAN

Information provided by Rita Pennington

Illinois State Coordinator Rita Pennington was at a loss for words moments after Eddie Burkel walked up to her at a once-a-month QOVF sew day at Prairie Shop Quilts in Batavia and asked to help.

Rita offered machine sewing and rotary cutting options, but he said, “No, ma’am, I’m not able to do those things, but if you want me to press, I can do that,” emphasizing the word “can.” That’s when she looked at him closely and saw that where his arms should be, there were none. As Rita tried to apologize, he repeated, “No, I really can press.”

Eddie was born with arms not developed past the upper shoulders, but he is undaunted by his disability. “I knew I had two choices in life,” he says, “let others take care of me or learn to take care of myself. It was an easy choice.”

Eddie travels an hour to attend the monthly QOVF sewing sessions, spending about four hours holding a steaming iron with his arm stubs, pressing seams and finished blocks. Over time he has acquired a smaller iron and ironing board to make the task easier, but he still works up a sweat because his face is always close to the iron.

Eddie recently told the Elgin, Illinois, Courier News he wishes people with disabilities could join the military, to do clerical work or “something.” Because they cannot, he is willing to “do the little I can,” the newspaper reported.

Recently, when Rita told Eddie another Quilts of Valor group closer to his home was forming, Eddie’s response was, “Okay, I’ll check them out too.” Watch Eddie’s pressing skills yourself here.



Eddie Burkel pressing blocks with his smaller-sized iron and pressing mat.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AT RETURNING WARRIOR WORKSHOPS

Information provided by Carol Olsen, Western Washington State Coordinator

“The presentations that stick in my mind are the ones to recipients who have themselves awarded QOVs,” says Western Washington SC Carol Olsen. “With their own eyes, they’ve seen our quilts comfort those they have cared for.”

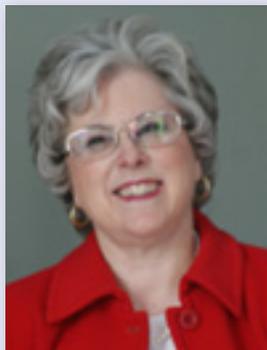


Carol Olsen hugs a Navy Returning Warrior.

At a medical unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan, “MJ” awarded Quilts of Valor to wounded warriors she treated there. Last year, she was one of 48 who received quilts at a US Navy Returning Warrior Workshop (RW/W), a program designed to help military personnel adjust to civilian life once their deployments have ended. Carol Olsen represented QOVF at the event.

During the award ceremony, which took place at the conclusion of the RW/W program, Carol had the opportunity to speak to the group about the QOVF mission, then wrap MJ in her quilt and give her a big hug. The other returning warriors each then chose a quilt. Their names were added to their chosen quilt’s label. Lynda Lutz, the Northwest Oregon SC, traveled to the Seattle event to help complete the quilt labels and to learn about RW/Ws.

“I like that we end the Returning Warrior Workshop with a high point,” Carol said. “We get to say to them, ‘Here’s an award for you because Americans care about your well-being,’ and we get to deliver the message with a beautiful, comforting Quilt of Valor.”



Susan Gordon,
QOVF Executive Director

SUSAN'S CALL TO ACTION

February is the month of valentines, so let's have some fun. **Send me a picture** of your sew group with a paper heart or a "We love you!" note in the photo. If you sew alone, take a "selfie." Let's see how many **"We ♥ you!"** photos we can collect to send a message to our service members and veterans showing our appreciation. Send pictures to susan.gordon.valentine@QOVF.org.

STATISTICS

Iraq

Killed: 4,489

Wounded: Many

Afghanistan

Killed: 2306

Wounded: Many

Suicides to Date:

Statistics Unknown

Total QOVs Awarded as of 2/6/14

96,706



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State Coordinators (SCs) are here to assist you establish new groups, help fundraise, establish new points of contact and to maintain QOVF standards. If you have any questions or need guidance, please contact the SC for your state. A full list can be found at <http://www.qovf.org/content/regional-coordinator-overall-view.html>

For more information regarding QOVF Structure and Volunteers, please visit: <http://www.qovf.org/content/about-us.html>

Newsletter

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Marianne Elliott, *Managing Editor*
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The mission of Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover all those service members and veterans touched by war with wartime quilts called Quilts of Valor (QOVs). Quilts of Valor Foundation is not about politics. It is about people.