

QOV Name Recognition In The Unlikeliest Places

by [Catherine Roberts](#)

Executive Director/Founder

Catching Up with our POCS

There's nothing like hearing from our Points of Contact (POCS) with stories about our wartime Quilts of Valor (QOVs). Last week, I was able to sit down and interview an air force chaplain who was our POC at our largest hospital in Afghanistan, Bagram AFB. He told me about the hospital but more specifically, their trauma center where our service-members and coalition forces are treated for injuries sustained in country. In addition to treating US and coalition forces, they also treat local Afghans. For him, there was no such thing as 'a real day off' or 'privacy'. He was always 'on call'. Helicopters came in bearing their wounded, dropped them off and flew back for another mission. The emergency room (ER) triage areas were always BUSY. From what I understood, the operative word was "organized chaos".

I had many questions for him but specifically asked about our Quilts of Valor in theater. He laughed and said that our quilts are *very* popular. In fact, they are known by name. He replied, "There are quilts and blankets and then there are *Quilts of Valor*." One time, a quilt recipient came up to him saying "Sir, I received a blanket but it's *not* a Quilt of Valor! Do you think I can get a QOV?"

I was speechless. *QOV branded in Afghanistan?* "How do they know the difference?" I asked. He said that QOVs are known to come in a pillowcase (presentation case). They also have a label on the back and many have a letter or accompanying journal. "This coveted quilt

package is what is known downrange as a QOV".

Can you believe that we have *name recognition* downrange (in theater...war zone)? I can also add that at our various VA and military medical centers worldwide, QOVs are recognized right off the bat by their presentation cases. This assures the POC of a quilt that is befitting of our wounded combat warriors.

At the end of my interview, I asked what did he have to say to our QOV community. Without missing a beat, he said,



"Never underestimate the power of your quilt."

Going with this thought of Quilt Power, our February newsletter is full of inspirational stories about the **power** of your wartime quilts, their makers and recipients.

Still at war; still quilting,

Catherine Roberts, Executive Director/
Founder (1/10)

QOVF Community News

Here is news from around the country about your fellow QOV'ers. Their stories inspire and motivate. If you want to show up here, email newsletter@QOVF.org.

Charter School Involvement

Hello,

My students are just completing their 4th quilt for this year (7 total, 3 last year). Our goal is 6 quilts. Currently, I am making a Harley Davidson quilt that we will raffle off to raise money so my students can travel to Prescott, AZ in June to be there to see their quilts presented.

I teach at a charter high school that specializes in at-risk students. Currently I have 12 students who meet twice a week for 45 minutes each time to quilt. They love to get together and quilt. They often pester me to allow them to quilt more often. We were interviewed for the local news morning show...here is a link to the video:

<http://www.koat.com/video/18014841/index.html>

[Melinda](#)



Stuck in Traffic?

Do you spend time in traffic trying to decipher those puzzling personalized license plates?

Wartime quilter, Mary Lynn Slough, recently changed her license plates so she could advertise both her involvement with *Quilts of Valor* and her love of quilting as she travels around her hometown of Virginia Beach, VA. If your state offers personalized license plates consider promoting *Quilts of Valor* in such a special and public way.

[Mary Lynn S](#)

Wartime Quilter

"Still at War, Still Quilting"

News from Members of the Tidewater Quilters Guild of the Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Chesapeake, VA



We enthusiastically participate in the making of what we call the Virginia Star Blocks from free kits made available at monthly guild meetings. Over the past year **960 star blocks** have been made into **48 completed quilts**,

with more under construction. It's easy to get someone to include the making of one block a month in their busy lives; try it with your guild and you will be pleasantly surprised at how well the idea is received - and how many quilts you can make!

[Mary Lynn S](#)

Wartime Quilter

"Still at War, Still Quilting"

Quilt Finally Finds Its Way to Owner

What I can tell you is with over 21,000 QOVs awarded, not one has been permanently lost. This story has a very happy ending!

Early last year, Beth Sizemore of Englewood, Tennessee, learned about the Quilts of Valor program. Because of her military connections, she decided to participate. She made her quilt top, notified Quilts of Valor (www.QOVF.org), a program that has provided almost 19,000 quilts to our wounded warriors, and was assigned a long arm quilter, Terri Dudley-Ayers from Greenback, Tennessee. For various reasons, the quilt was a while in the works, but both Mrs. Sizemore and Mrs. Dudley-Ayers, whose husband served in Iraq, decided that they wanted their quilt to go to an East Tennessee veteran.

They chose to send their quilt to Stephen Lenior of Etowah, Tennessee, who, although he returned from Iraq unharmed, had developed multiple problems as a result of something that he was exposed to while in Iraq. Among other problems, a heart transplant was necessary and one leg was amputated. He had been fea-

tured in The Daily Post Athenian Athens, Tennessee, when he was home on leave.

Once the quilt was finished and had met all QOV guidelines, QOV organizer, Catherine Roberts, assisted Mrs. Sizemore with making contact with a Chaplain at Fort Collins, Colorado, who would arrange for the quilt to be present. Then came the waiting. The quilt was sent in August and in November, when Mrs. Sizemore had heard nothing from anyone, she started trying to find out what happened with the quilt. Finally, an Army Specialist connected with the Chaplaincy program agreed to assist her in her quest. Through his efforts, he reported that it appeared that the quilt had been stolen. Catherine Roberts told Mrs. Sizemore, "We can send him (Stephen Lenior) another quilt that has been submitted." Sizemore and Dudley- Ayers told Roberts that they would make another quilt for Lenior to replace the missing quilt. They felt strongly that this East Tennessee young warrior needed a quilt from East Tennessee quilters.



When the report of the missing quilt went to Roberts at QOV, she recommended

that Sizemore contact the wife of Chaplain Kallerson, who had helped her start the program at Walter Reed Hospital. Mrs. Sizemore made the contact. A few days before Christmas, Sizemore was notified by the Commander of the Hospital at Fort Carson that the quilt had been found and would be presented to Stephen Lenior. Sizemore said, "It was my absolute best Christmas present!"

Sizemore received notification on January 13, 2009, that the quilt had been presented to Lenior. " I feel like I almost know Stephen by this time. I've had several opportunities to talk to his parents. His mother, who was by his side for the first 7 months of his recovery, reported that he had passed the one year mark with his new heart and that he and his wife are expecting a baby. He's expected to return home in March. I'm thrilled to know that he has finally received the quilt that was meant especially for him," said Sizemore. "I hope he realizes how much East Tennesseans appreciate all that he has done on their behalf."

Hello from Steilacoom WA

Hello to all,

Just to let you know a few things.

First off, Thank you to all who showed up on Jan 10th Sew and Fellowship. We had a great time and got 5 tops completed and 3 that just need the borders put on. I also have some new ladies that are learning how to sew and make quilts.

The next Sew and Fellowship will be May 9th so make plans now for it. We will be meeting again at the VFW in Tacoma and

have a potluck. This will be open from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

We are working with the VFW on a project for some of our Retired Veterans. There will be a new Nursing Home opening at the VA American Lake and it will have 86 beds. This will be open Jan/Feb 2010 and our goal is to have a QOV quilt on every bed the day the ribbon is cut. I am working with a Retirement home in Tacoma and the ladies there have been sewing up a storm to date with the sew and fellowship and my quilt angels at Pt. Defiance Village, we have a total of 56 tops done and getting ready to quilt. I have to purchase backing and batting and I will send some to Tamara, who has been partner with me through June to start getting them quilted.

We have added a new topper to us. His name is Peter and he joined us on Jan 10th with his dog Panda. Peter has just finished making 150 quilted socks for the VA Seattle and 200 socks that went to Iraq. He is looking for something new to do and came to sew with us. He called me the other day and said that he has some tops done and will see us in May with his pile of quilt tops.

I presented a quilt to a gentleman on Jan 12th. His name is Frank Baker and he is a Vietnam Veteran. After he got his quilt he said "Now I feel welcomed, Now I feel like what I did was worth what happened". There will be a quilt presentation at a VFW State Commanders dinner on the 24th, I will be presenting 2 or 3 quilts that night and talking about QOV how my VFW Post/Auxiliary is working with QOV.

I will keep you updated on what's new. If you have any question just give me a

email or call me at 253-882-722. Our next Sew/Show will be Sept 11-13th at the VFW with a 911 Memorial Service to kick off the show. Besides May 9 we will have one more sew/fellowship before the Sept show. I will try to have that date before our May date.

Stitching with Prayers and Quilt Angels

Sheryl A. Steilacoom, WA

News from Maureen M. in New York

Hello - my Quilt Guild is the Mexicali Quilters, of Mexico, New York of course! We are only one year old, but have done a lot in this short time. Our members number about 25 and come from all walks of life and all levels of quilting.

This year we completed eight QOV quilts of red/white/blue and we used the Zip Zap Bricks pattern and they were wonderful when finished. It gave us, as a Guild, one "common thread" between us.

We were also written up in the local newspapers.

Tomorrow night, January 22nd, we will be completing eighteen Kids Comfort lap quilts from the Armed Forces/YWCA foundation. What a treat this was for us to do! The kits come already cut, and you just have to sew them together and quilt. I loved looking at the pictures of the little 18 month old girl I had. This was my first time, and it won't be my last.

Over the Christmas season we had many classes and demonstrations, and completed a Christmas wall hanging with fusible appliqued pattern pieces.

With our January meeting, we now have an official Mexicali Quilters Project completion pin. It's a large gold safety pin, and each time we complete a project or teach a class, we receive a certain type of bead to place on the pin. We are all excited about this and can't wait for people to ask us why we wear them. This was our President, Linda Spencer's idea. Well it's quite cold here in Mexico NY (Oswego County) we got 40 inches of snow on 1/16th - and it's only January - so we'll be doing LOTS of quilting in the next month or two.

Thanks for letting me share our accomplishments with you.

[Maureen M](#)

News From Downrange

by [Karen](#)

Karen is the marine mom for the 1/8 marines who were on the front for the second assault on Fallujah. Some of the 1/8 marines now are with the 3/8 and they are in Afghanistan. Several months ago, Karen asked for us to adopt these 3/8 marines. We are now bonded with this marine company. They are family and we grieve the recent loss of 2 marines from the 3/8.

Too often what we are doing for our war wounded gets lost in the translation. There is a disconnect between us and "downrange". Karen F is our connector. She has her finger on the pulse of the 3/8 marines in Afghanistan.

I'm not sure why I am writing a monthly column for the QOV newsletter. I am not a quilter, in fact I can barely sew a stitch. Neither am I a writer. What I am is a wife, daughter, sister and an aunt; a Marine aunt! Our youngest nephew enlisted in the US Marine Corps before he graduated from high school. What we did not know at the time was that when a family

member enlists in the USMC the entire family enlists right along with him. What a road he and we have traveled over these last ten years. And who knows where this road will take us in the future.

A Marine who formerly served with our nephew in 1st Battalion 8th Marines is now serving with 3rd Battalion 8th Marines in Afghanistan. We, the Marines, Sailors and families of those who served with 1/8 during their 2003 and 2004 deployments to Iraq try to do what we can for each other. We are a family! So when this Marine, Ben, deployed with 3/8 in November we offered to find people to support Ben's platoon with letters and packages. Ben gave us the roster for his platoon.

Catherine Roberts was kind enough to appeal to all of you on behalf of Ben's platoon. She asked that those who would like to "adopt" a Marine or Navy Corpsman for the course of this 3/8 deployment contact me. So many of you came through! Perhaps you adopted a Marine, perhaps you are on my list of those who would like to adopt a Marine from another battalion in the months to come. Thank you!!

Whether or not you have heard from your Marine please know that your letters and packages make a difference! Mail is the high point of their week! The reassurance that people back in the USA support them, the packages that contain items they need, and the packages that contain special treats lighten the load that these men carry. You make them smile! And if you are including clothing, blankets, toys, shoes, school supplies for the Afghan people, you are helping the Marines achieve their mission.

As some of you found out over the last two weeks, these men are real, they are

not just a name on a list. They die. They are injured. And when a platoon member dies or is flown out with life threatening injuries those who stay behind to carry on the mission carry an even heavier load. From personal experience I can tell you that they carry a heavier load for the rest of their lives. Please hold the men of 3/8 in your prayers. Please hold the family of LCpl. Brennan (KIA 01-24-09) and PFC Preach in your prayers. And please pray for Cpl. Bowen as he fights the hardest battle he will ever fight, the fight to survive severe burns and loss of multiple limbs.

Our military men and women are real people, they are distinct individuals with families who love them. You are making a positive difference in their lives! Your quilts are making a difference and I will talk more about that next month.

Shipping Relief For APO/ FPO Addresses

After one of my Sunday destination sessions, Karen, a first Naval Construction Regiment Ombudsman, emailed telling me about shipping APO/FPO. Here is what she said.

I am one of the folks that just received your email about sending our QOV's to Germany. Since this is an APO there is a special flat rate box just for shipping to APO's that is CHEAPER than a normal box.



This is a new thing at the post office. It's been out about a month or so. It's slightly larger than the old flat rate boxes. The box says "flat rate" and "APO/FPO" right on it. If you don't get that box they will charge a couple of extra bucks instead of giving you the discounted rate!

I am an ombudsman for a soon to be deployed unit and have already scouted out these boxes for our families to use during deployment. All post offices should already have these. The boxes themselves are free.

Thank You,
[Karen H.](#)

Dear June...

June is our longarm coordinator. She is anxiously awaiting tops for her waiting machine quilters. Here for your reading enhancements are some recent problematic emails she has received.

Dear June,

I received a quilt from a topper and she sent has poly fleece with woven cotton strips sewn to each side for the backing. She also asked that I not trim after quilting so she could just fold the backing over to the front for binding. I am the wife of a Marine, and I do not think this quilt will be appropriate for honoring a wounded warrior. What should I do?

Lucy Longarmer

Dear Lucy,

Please send me a picture, and I will contact the topper.

Do you think the quilt could be salvaged if she sent an appropriate backing

and the finished quilt had conventional binding?

Please let me know.

June

Dear June,

The topper you paired me with three weeks ago never sent the quilt. Please find me another quilt.

Anxious Annie

Dear June,

The quilts I sent to Sally Slow and Mary Missing have still not been returned even though it has been six months. Neither of them has replied to my email inquiries.

What should I do? You told me to remind you if I didn't hear back.

Diane Devastated

Dear Diane,

I am so sorry. I have emailed both of these quilters as well as leaving phone messages, but neither answers. Their business websites appear to have been abandoned. I do not know why they just dropped out of sight instead of letting me know they couldn't complete your quilts.

Sometimes health or family problems prevent longarmers from fulfilling their commitment, but all they have to do is let me know so that I can get the quilts to another quilter.

I wish I had better news,

June

Greetings From The QOV Shop!

by [Joyce](#)

I want to publically thank Joyce for all the uncounted hours that go into the running of our little shop. In it, you can find items that will make your qov-making a little easier...like the preprinted labels. Our QOV tote-bags are made here in USA by Americans. Let's keep Joyce busy. Don't want her to be like the Maytag repair man with nothing to do!

Wow – It was a busy fall and early winter season at the QOV Shop. Thanks to everyone who's been keeping me hopping! But as the weather warms (it was almost 50 degrees in NH today) then we start to think about our spring and summer quilt shows and of course our QOV booths at these shows.

The postcards will now be shipping from the shop. These are great handouts when people come to your booth and want to know how they can help. There's one specific to machine quilters, one for piercers and another for donors.

You can buy the 3 pack (50 of each card) for \$20 which includes shipping. If you want larger quantities or only one of the cards, please email me and I'll get you a quote for the quantities that you want.

And while we're talking about getting the QOV name out there, if you would like to order quantities of items to have at your booth, please email me a list and I'll get you a "bulk" pricing quote.

I've really enjoyed meeting many of you via email – regarding shop purchases etc – and if you're going to be at MQX in Manchester, NH in April – be sure to stop by the QOV booth to say hi!

Joyce

Journaling

Here are several takes on this thing called journaling which I have tried to camouflage by calling it a 'little letter', 'anecdotal stories' and such. Whatever it ends up being called, your written thoughts become just as loved and coveted as the quilt itself.

Connecting the threads from quilters to quilt recipients

By [Susan C. Slaninka](#)

Thanks to all of you for your wonderful efforts in piecing, quilting, and mailing your quilts to the Quilts of Valor. There is no question presentation of these quilts makes a difference in the lives of our military personnel. The word from the field is that it is the journals that make Quilts of Valor special. The recipients are thrilled to find out something person about the person who gave this wonderful gift to them. They love reading the labels on the quilts and also love reading the journals included with the quilt.

Here are just two examples of journal entries from one of our faithful quilters:

"I started a new Quilt of Valor today and decided to make this one a patriotic quilt. The red, white and blue colors are so vibrant and these patriotic quilts seem to be very popular with the recipients. I spent quite a bit of time searching for just the right fabrics and even included some fabrics with some texture to them for those of you who are visually impaired. I love working on this project and can't wait to get started with the stitching. It's chilly here today and I feel like I need a quilt

myself to keep me warm. I'm trying to imagine you in the future with this quilt wrapped around you like a big hug from Quilts of Valor. Know that this quilt was made with a lot of love in every stitch and that when you put it around you, the hug the quilt gives you is straight from me. Thank you so much for your service to our country. There are no words to describe my appreciation for your service so I hope this quilt can show you a little bit of how I feel."

"Today was a rainy day here in Florida. What a great day to pull out the quilt and start stitching. I'm missing my children today. They live across the country and I don't get to see them as much as I would like. I started to cry a bit and was feeling a bit sorry for myself and then I thought to myself what it must be like for your parents knowing that you have been in harm's way as you serve in the military. I'm sure they can't wait to see you back in the United States safe and sound. That is what we hope for all of you."

I'm sure that you can see how powerful these entries would be for the person receiving a Quilt of Valor. Try to take just a little time to add this piece to your quilting time. THANKS SO MUCH!

Journaling Made Easy (Or at least Easier)

By [Louise T](#)

When I started making quilts for Quilts of Valor I kept an actual hand written journal as I went. I documented the steps

in making the quilt, my thoughts as I was doing it, and the dates. However, this process became old fast. Since I often work on several projects at once I just could not keep up with the journals.

However, I feel strongly that some sort of documentation is needed. Otherwise the donation becomes impersonal. So I decided to write letters to the recipients on my computer. I tell them a little about myself and I ask the Longarmer to give me some information about her to include, as well. I also describe the process of making a quilt and some tidbits about the particular quilt they are receiving.

Here is the EASY part. I have a “stock” letter on my computer that I can easily use for any quilt. All I have to do is make a few changes: The name and date of the quilt, info about the Longarmer and some notes about the particular quilt I am donating. I feel so much better knowing that there is some personal connection between us and the man or woman who receives our quilt. I hope you will consider including a Journal with your quilts!

[Louise T](#)

Lafayette, California

Louise's example of her stock letter.

January 22, 2009

My name is Louise T. and I live in Lafayette, California, near San Francisco. I was born and raised in the Bay Area, and went to the University of California where I met my husband, Jim. After graduating from college, Jim and I moved to Connecticut to take a job. We only planned to stay there “for a couple of years”, but it turned out to be 26 years. I guess we

really liked it there! We moved back to the Bay Area in 2000 to take care of our elderly parents. We have one daughter, Julia, who is married and lives nearby – but no grandkids yet! I have had a few different careers over the years but now I am fortunate to be retired so I have time to do the thing I love most – quilting!

I have been sewing since I was a little girl. I made most of my own clothes for many years, but at some point I got hooked on quilting and I never looked back. So I have been making quilts for over 25 years. I have made quilts for friends and family, I have made quilts for sale. Now I am honored to be making quilts for our wonderful service men and women.

In the Quilts of Valor program “many hands make light work”. One person makes the quilt top, another person does the quilting, and other people organize who does what and determine where the finished quilts will be sent.

Making a quilt takes many steps. The first step is to find a pattern, or design your own pattern. I design many of my own patterns. Next you need to find the fabrics to make the quilt. This is one of my favorite parts – finding fabrics that are suitable for the pattern and go nicely together. I buy fabrics at quilt shows, local quilt shops and online. When I start a new quilt I use some fabrics I already have, and I add others that I need. Next I cut the fabrics into MANY pieces (squares, triangles, rectangles) and then sew the pieces together to make the desired designs. Small pieces are sewn

into blocks, then the blocks and any borders are sewn together to make the completed top.

The pieced top is then sent to another volunteer who does the actual quilting. She takes the three parts of the quilt (pieced top, batting and backing) and puts them together like a sandwich. She determines the stitching pattern to be used and does the actual quilting using a special Long Arm Quilting Machine. This holds all three layers of the quilt together and adds to the beauty of the quilt. The final steps are to bind the quilt, make a label and make the presentation case. The quilt is then sent on its way to the final destination which is determined by the Quilts of Valor coordinator.

NAME WITHELD of Las Vegas was my partner for this quilt. Here is what she wrote: I was born in Illinois on an Air Force Base, but my dad retired in '69 and I have lived in Vegas since I was 5 years old. I'm married to a son of a Navy man and we have 3 children. We are very patriotic!! I have been quilting for about 25 years, but machine quilting (long arm, professional) for about 10 years. My family and I lived in mainland China for a year as Christian missionaries, which only increased our appreciation for this INCREDIBLE country!

Just a few notes about your quilt. The economic downturn of the past few months has inspired me to go "back to basics". I chose my favorite traditional quilt block which is called Ohio Star . I also challenged myself to use mostly fabrics that I had in my "stash". I was amazed what I could do with the fabrics I

had, though I did add a few here and there.

Both NAME WITHELD and I are very grateful for the sacrifices you have made for your country – for all of us. This quilt is just a token of appreciation for your service. We are happy to send you this quilt and we hope that you like it!



Here is another example of Journaling from Rita in North Carolina.

When I do a journal.. I try to include my impressions of the colors, the prints or patterns in the fabric, what they remind me of.. not today, but in years gone by. I saw one that looked like part of a milk separator. Doubt if young people today know what one for the home is or looks like. Another made me think of my Dad and his Calvary unit riding into Batan just about the time of the Philippine Invasion of WW1. We had two brothers in WW2, one was wounded.. Another was in the Korean War.. Hubby was in the Cuban Invasion, Faulkland Island invasion, parts of Viet Nam. our Daughter was in the AF in Diesel Maintenance.. She crawled up in the runway snow removal equipment to clean it, since she was the only one small enough. We had a son-in-law in the Navy on the USS Enterprise.

I talk a little about the birds and squirrels in the back yard, the grand kids, our adult kids.. types and colors of fabric I like to

work with most and the style of quilt, like traditional.

I may mention what we eat for supper, compared to the spam meals we had with 4 kids at home.. LOL...

Just anything I think Might or could be interesting to someone who is able to reach beyond the pain and depression.

I also make sure I tell them how much I appreciate them, pray for them, send hugs and good thoughts for them..

[Rita A](#)

Sanford NC 27330

“Quoteables”

These are jewels of inspiration for us and those who need to know what a QOV means. Read and allow the intent of the speaker to enter your heart. You can not help know that our wartime quilts of valor heal some of the wounds of war.

“Katy Vickers and those that helped to make my quilt...”

My name is Aaron I. I am a Captain in the U.S. Army. I have just recently returned to Fort Riley from my 3rd back to back combat deployment. While in Afghanistan on my last deployment I was wounded during a combat operation along the Pakistan border. I had to endure a long and difficult hospital recovery process that is hard to explain. After returning to Fort Riley I was placed in the Warrior Transition Battalion to continue hospital treatment. I was going through a difficult time until one day when I was asked to go see the Chaplain. The Chaplain presented me the quilt that you all had made and I had to fight back the tears. I had no idea that people really cared so much.

I just wanted to take the time to let you know just how much your quilt matters. I ask that you please keep up your hard work. You are bringing a warm and much needed 'welcome home' to so many people that need it.

Thank you so very much. I have attached pictures.”

Captain Aaron I.

From Bobby W. San Diego USO Director

This quoteable is from a volunteer at the San Diego Neil Ash Airport's USO. I am including Bobby W's intro to the email sent to him. We don't have the picture Cindy talks about.

This one email sent from my volunteer, Cindy. I can tell that each person is most thankful. They express their gratitude in many ways but their emotions are what really tells the story. Words like...”This I will NEVER forget” “ This is my War Quilt, and I always keep it forever”, “This is the most wonderful thing anyone has ever done for me”. Most importantly, they KNOW our American people CARE and appreciate what they do as protectors of our freedom.

Thank you again for involving the USO, and we look forward for the next shipment.

All the best... Bobby W.

Cindy's email

My name is Cindy and I am one of the volunteers at the USO at the San Diego airport. The other day, our director, Bobby W, gave a young Marine one of your

beautiful quilts. This young man had returned from Afghanistan that morning and had showered and shaved and was ready to head to Camp Pendleton. His job for the last several months had been search and rescue. Happily, he told me, everyone in his unit had made it back in one piece. He posed for his picture and seemed very pleased with the gift. Afterwards, he came up to me and told me that he had been in the Marine Corps for eight years and no one had ever given him a gift or any recognition. Most gentlemen his age just give you the perfunctory thank you, but the look on this kid's face was very special and very memorable. I have a feeling this quilt will go with him every where he goes in life. Please know what a difference you made today with your beautiful quilt of love. Each Thursday at the USO is my favorite time for the entire week. I really hope I get to be present for future gifts of quilts as this time has been one of my favorite days at the USO.

Sincerely,
Cindy

This is the story of a Quilt of Valor -- one very much like those any one of us has made.

This quoteable is from a [Laurie A](#), a blue star mom.



This QOV was "pieced into being" by me in Pacific Grove, CA, in February 2008; then lovingly longarmed by Jackie R in Warrenton, MO. Attached (#1) is a photo of it on display. Roberta Speh of Foley, AL, and I visited Chaplain Kelvington at the Pensacola (FL) Naval Air Station Hospital in May -- he had enthusiastically participated in awarding QOVs to the wounded since the previous November. Chaplain Kelvington advised us that he'd received orders to deploy to Kuwait in July. He did not know exactly what his duties there would entail, but his support for QOV would continue, if it were feasible. I gave him this Quilt of Valor during the May visit.



Now fast-forward to December 2008 -----

When this email arrived from Chaplain Kelvington:

Email from Chaplain Kelvington

"I know you will enjoy this picture, taken the day before Christmas. We don't get very many true combat-injured troops here in Kuwait - most are medivac'd to larger facilities outside of the area. However, the Marine pictured here (LCPL Drew C.) was shot through the arm about

a week ago up in Iraq and came here for surgery and recovery time. The nurse in charge of our Warrior Return Unit notified me and asked if I had another QOV I could present.

The one I had was the one that you had a hand in making! General Petraeus was visiting the next day so I submitted the idea of me presenting the quilt to the Ma-



Marine Lance Cpl. Drew Crossland, a Columbus, Kan., native, and Lt. Cmdr. Doran Kelvington, chaplain, EMFK, pose for a photo with Petraeus during his visit to the Warrior Return Unit. Crossland is assigned to India Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, and is currently recovering in the WRU after a gun shot wound to the arm.

rine and then having a picture with the General as well. As you can see it worked out very nicely! Additionally, the public affairs SGT is going to run the pictures he took of the event in the weekly "Desert Voice" Army magazine."

Laurie's Thoughts

So this Quilt of Valor -- one very much like all the others each of us has made and sent off or delivered -- completed its journey in Kuwait, when it was presented to a dear wounded Marine... by a Navy chaplain and..... (OHMYGOSH!!!) a four-star Army general: David Petraeus, the former Commanding General of the Multi-National Forces in Iraq, and the current U.S. Central Command Chief.

Everyone who witnessed the ceremony or saw the article in the "Desert Voice" magazine now knows about Quilts of Valor and the dedicated group of Americans who are "still quilting because we're still at war."

And so, dear makers of Quilts of Valor, what is the moral of this story? That EVERY Quilt of Valor should be crafted with love, pride, gratitude and quality materials & workmanship because each one will go to someone who is special and deserving of our support!

Sometimes, it may go through the hands of a four-star general -- and it can't hurt our cause to have him know about Quilts of Valor too.

"I should let you know that I use my quilt every night."

It is literally the centerpiece of my apartment and is always nicely folded at the foot of my bed. Not an evening goes by that I don't think about all you and your group have done for us wounded vets as we get our feet back on the ground. I am truly humbled and thankful for all you have done for me and my fellow veterans.

Todd B, IAVA.org

"I am a combat photographer in the US Air Force Reserve."

Shortly before Christmas my sister, Karen and I received a beautiful, touching letter from the recipient of one of our quilts.

(She apparently sent a letter to the quilter but we haven't been able to figure out which quilt she received so we don't know who the third team member is.) I am sending passages from the letter that you might want to include in your "Quotables" section. We are always deeply moved when we hear from a hero. It reaffirms and refocuses our commitment to honor our wounded warriors. Other QOV volunteers might be inspired as well.

I am a combat photographer in the US Air Force Reserve. I was deployed to Iraq in 2005, and I am the lucky recipient of the beautiful QOV that was made by the three of you.

The QOV Ceremony was held at the hospital that provided follow-up care for my injuries once I returned home. For the veterans who were retired for either medical reasons or by choice, this ceremony gave them an additional moment of pride as their names and branch of service were called out and they walked up to the front of the auditorium to be handed their quilt.

It was also a great moment of healing for many as individuals realized that they were not alone as they worked to move forward with their lives, and that many people and organizations in our great country are here to assist and support them.

The labels in the the QOV state that the quilts are to wrap the individual in warmth and comfort as the individual heals from physical and psychological injuries. No one performs a tour of duty without experiencing one or both of those injuries and

your selfless and generous offering of your time to create such a wonderful gift is as important as the mission of the service members serving our country.

A college student came to my unit to interview returning veterans for historical purposes so their experiences can be documented for the Library of Congress. One of the questions put to me was to state my best and worst days while deployed in Iraq. There were too many best times to pick just one, and the worst day was the day I left because I could not take my comrades home with me.

One of the best days I have had since my return was receiving this beautiful quilt. It has become one of my most cherished possessions and I cannot express enough, the gratitude and honor I feel being the recipient of your gift and having the privilege to serve you.

K.A.

Catherine, I think this captures the very spirit of what Quilts of Valor is doing. I wept when I read the letter. There is just no question as to why we are doing what we are doing. And, as you repeatedly try to convey, no one comes back from war unscathed.

Thanks,

Sandi

Quoteables from gentle Maria R. from the VAMC in NM.

Kathy F and her group have been working with Maria in NM for years. I want to thank Kathy for forwarding Maria's observations when it comes to our healing Quilts of Valor.

Dear Friends at QOV,

Thank you for inviting us to share some of our experiences for the Feb. Newsletter. One of the places our group has been privileged to send QOVs for the past couple years is a program for women vets with PTSD at the Albuquerque, NM VA. Maria R. who is our contact there sends the most beautiful thank you emails. This is one we received recently -

A patient story for you and your quilters:

A patient came into my office and was so touched about the way her quilt made her feel she decided to take sewing lessons and to learn how to make quilts. She said she had an old sewing machine her mother had given her it was just sitting in her attic and hadn't been used in years she wasn't even sure if it worked or not so she took it into the "Sewing Machine doctor" for a complete exam. She said " I don't know how to sew anything except putting on buttons". The sewing classes have been lots of fun for her and she can't wait to start making quilts. She also said sewing makes her mind work and keeps her from being depressed. She couldn't stop thanking me for having given her, her quilt and introducing her to the world of quilts. I said all her thanks belong to you and your quilters.

If you hadn't found our little clinic and adopted us, myself and my patients would never have know about the wonderful world of quilts, and the magic they posses.

The soothing, comforting and "warm hug" feelings your quilts have passed on to our patients have been described as:

1. " My adult security blanket" - From a women who was afraid to fly, she took the quilt with her on the plane, through her layovers and connecting flights.
2. " My best friend" - A single women with no children and no family members.
3. " The shoulder I need to lean on" - A women going through a divorce
4. "The guiding hand to help me make it through another day" - A breast cancer survivor
5. "The person I can cry with after a bad day" - A women who lost her job. She was called for an interview and hired for a new job the day after she got her quilt.
6. " The Thank You I thought I would never receive" - A World War II vet
7. " It makes me feel empowered" - A female Marine

Kathy F for the CCC Quilts of Valor Project

P.S. Our final total for 2008 was 376 QOVs.

I was deeply moved to tears by the tribute and gift you sent me.

This moving email is from Betty S. Always present are our Vietnam combat vets. They are not in the limelight now but they surely are present. I have always held that when all this generation of wounded combat warriors/vets are covered, then we focus on our Vietnam Vets. Betty already is there.

I made a quilt for my brother-in-law who served as an x-ray technician in Vietnam 40 years ago. I received the following letter from him. [Betty S](#)

Dear Betty,

I was deeply moved to tears by the tribute and gift you sent me. It was 40 years ago in September of 1968 that I went to Vietnam with the 312th Evac. Hospital out of Winston Salem NC. I was a green reluctant soldier as were most of the members of our reserve unit. Needless to say we served and we served well. Technically you could say that I was wounded in action during a very early morning rocket attack on our hospital. I cut my foot while running barefooted to a bunker in only my underwear, helmet and flack jacket. I chose to not apply for a Purple Heart for my meager wounds, and the fact that I was in my underwear. After all the carnage that I witnessed my wound seemed trivial.

Some time in 1969 our unit was ordered home in Richard Nixon's first

troop withdrawal. After all of us having been dispersed across Vietnam, our unit reassembled. Luckily we all returned home safe.

There are many unsung heroes of that war or any war, like all the family members that stayed behind. They kept us go-

ing with their letters, goodies, caring, and prayers for our safe return. You are one of those unsung heroes that sends out your love and caring to give us all a boost. Thank you for this wonderful gift of your creativity, your caring and your patriotism. I will cherish your quilt for the rest of my life.

Expect a big hug the next time I see you.

My love to you,

David

QOV-UK (United Kingdom)

by [Jean](#)

Jean is the director of QOV-UK. She is working to make sure that their fledging program gets off to a good start. Before her presentation of their QOVs at a local barracks, she received sad news.

Sad news from the barracks where I am going to the presentation on the 26th. One of their soldiers was killed in Afghanistan yesterday. I am sure that will put a damper on the presentation for the soldiers. It really brings it home to you when you hear the news of what the soldiers and their families are going through.



The QOV concept is new over here in the UK. However, I have made contact with our local army barracks and they have told me of a number of their soldiers who have been injured in Afghanistan. The regimental welfare personnel had not previously heard of QOV but they were enthusiastic about the expression of support and goodwill from the community that these quilts represent. Arrangements are in hand

for me to attend a presentation to 7 soldiers at the end of January. I'm looking forward to meeting these brave guys who are doing so much for us and I hope that this will set off a chain reaction with quilting groups throughout the UK.



I am very excited that I am able to initiate the first QOVs to be awarded to UK military and I will give another update next month.

I had a call from their Captain yesterday to see if I minded it going in the Soldiers magazine and also into the newspaper. The paper they want to put it in is called the Metro. It is a free paper with over a million copies in circulation each day. Now that's what I call publicity. The pictures were also sent to Afghanistan to the military serving there.

QOVF Website Working For You And Others...but You Have To Use It

Free Patterns for You

Please check out the latest free patterns donated for you from both toppers and machine quilters. They are located on the left hand column under **PATTERNS**. Thank all of you who have contributed.

Please register to be a Local Contact. You can find more about this [here](#). This helps newcomers find people already involved and helps potential points of contact reach local quilters.

Emails To The Editor

We welcome your comments. Send to comments@govf.org

FINDING POINTS OF CONTACT

Here's a short description of how I've made some of my POCs. Hope it can be helpful. Roberta

FINDING POINTS OF CONTACT

What works in one area may not be effective elsewhere, but here is what has worked for me on the Gulf Coast.

Connecting with other organizations helping our wounded has provided me with several POCs. Homes for Our Troops was building a handicapped-accessible home for a local Marine. I got in touch with them and wound with names of two

Marines needing QOVs. (www.homesforourtroops.org). Check their website and contact them if you see a home is being built in your area. That contact also introduced me to the local Marine Corps League and that in turn led to an invitation to have a QOV display at the state convention where I asked the various detachments to notify QOV of any Marines needing quilts.

Another way is just to be curious and talk to everybody. When I saw a sign outside a local motorcycle shop about a benefit poker run for Wounded Warriors, I went in and asked if I could set up a QOV display. They were very welcoming and the end result was finding out about a group of wounded SeaBees stationed locally for OP rehab. None has received QOVs and the C.O. of the base was very pleased to have his group recognized.

Be prepared. I carry a 3-ring notebook with QOV information and show it to people at every opportunity. [Roberta](#)

My favorite quote is:

"The life you live is the lesson you teach."

I found it in a local shop printed on a small clear blue plastic disc. There is no acknowledgment. I have the disc attached to my computer terminal at work where I can see it everytime I look up.

Deanna B, Pomona, Ca.

I'm a quilter/longarmer for many years

I'm a quilter/longarmer for many years and have done several QOV's. My own son is a Major in the Marine Corps and just completed a stint at the Pentagon. Next week he deploys to Afghanistan on his third tour in the Middle East in as many years. Having spent some time at the Pentagon he saw many of our heroes receive quilts from QOV. He always tells me what a special time it is to see our men (and women) rewarded for their bravery.

I am so very proud to be a part of this organization. Thank you every one who gives of yourselves to help our own.

May God be with our troops until they all return home!

[Amy A.](#)

Proud Mother of A Marine

A Public Thanks

Dear Editor and fellow QOV stitchers,

I would like to publicly thank Catherine Roberts for the very quick response and favorable resolution to a problem I perceived in the distribution of Quilts of Valor at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. It was an ultimate example of excellent "customer service" for all involved, the efficiency of email and of her caring spirit and dedication to the program.

On December 29 I visited Walter Reed with my former Army son who had worked there a few years ago. He and I had met with Chaplain John Kallerson in

2004, and since that time I had sent over 250 quilts from our little stitching group here in "the Icebox of the Nation", International Falls, MN. So this past December, I was excited to have the opportunity to tour the WRAMC facilities, check on the quilt distribution and bring home good news to our group. However, I was disappointed in the reception we received and the response of the director that we spoke with. When I returned home, the first email in my box was the QOV January newsletter--I took it as an omen, a "call to action" and a way to vent. So I wrote to Catherine late on a Friday night explaining the situation and getting the frustration off my chest. Well, in less than 12 hours and on a weekend!, I had a reply, and by Tuesday the situation was resolved. Catherine emailed Jane Bockel, the Red Cross volunteer who now distributes the quilts at Walter Reed, who got right on the problem and within hours assured me that the quilts were going through and to the right people. The efficiency and grace with which the problem was solved was awesome and renewed my spirit. All of the stitchers out there can be assured that the QOV organization has the people at the top who care and who get things done--unlike some of the executives we have heard of lately.

I am by nature a shy person, a Gold Star military Mom who just loves to sew and make quilts for any occasion. Quilts of Valor has become my passion, my life's work and yes, an excuse to play with fabric. Besides, what else can a quilter do but sew when the temperature is below 0 F for days on end. I am so glad that I wrote to Catherine and I can assure, not only the gals in my little group here, but the quilters all over the country that the quilts are appreciated, and the people in

charge of the organization and distribution have caring hearts, kind spirits and undying loyalty and patriotism. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Katie Valentine

Here is a poem I wrote yesterday when it was --23 F and I was giving my Bernina a rest:

A QUILT OF VALOR

I stitched a special quilt today--
It's red and white and blue--
To be given to a soldier,
Who has fought for me and you.
I hope it helps to comfort,
It's a hug I cannot give,
A "thank you" for preserving
The freedom that we live.

The top has little pieces,
Just like the USA--
Many colors, shapes and sizes,
But united just the same.
Bravery, pride and courage
Are the threads that hold each part,
Patching us together--
Each stitch comes from the heart.

The backing is the folks at home
Who live and work and play,
Enjoying every privilege,

Every person, everyday.

The quilt is bound with love and prayers,
Unending 'round and 'round;
Hugs and hopes of comfort
In the batting can be found.

My hope is that a hero
Who is hurting from the war,
Can wrap up in the quilt I made,
Be warmed right to the core,
And know that there are people
From "sea to shining sea,"
Who appreciate the sacrifice
That's been made to keep us free!

Katie Valentine 2/2009

Upcoming Projects

Podcasting, video interviews!!

If you are interested in being interviewed, please contact me at cath@QOVF.org. Or if you have a class you want to teach, let's do it.

Requesting Articles For Upcoming Newsletters

Send your article, how to to's, news to newsletter@qovf.org. If do-able, please include a "what I would have done differently" section so we all can learn from your experience.

Classifieds

If you have a sewing need, consider posting here. We'll see how it goes. Send your requests to: newsletter@QOVF.org. Put QOV Classifieds in the subject line.

Need Threads/Fabrics in the UK

Jean in the UK is in need of sewing stuff. You can reach her via email at jean@QOVF.org. As far as I know, fabric, threads are very expensive.

I would be very grateful for any materials you can get me. Red, blues, creams, beiges, browns. Anything would be welcome though. Do you think I could ask you a favour if possible. I could do with some sewing cotton. I like the Superior thread called

The Bottom Line. I usually buy the 3000 yds when I come to Houston. The colours I need are Medium Brown 618 and Grey 622.

Mission Statement

Well? Do you know it? If not, check [here](#).

Stats

These are the latest stats as of 2.17.09. It is difficult to get an accurate wounded number as it is for quilts awarded. We do know the two hallmark injuries of this war are post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Total QOVs awarded.....	20,592
*Iraq/killed.....	4,245
*Afghanistan/killed.....	651
*Wounded.....	many

*<http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>

Contact Us

Editor: editor @ QOVF.org (no spaces in email)