

# Quilts of Valor Foundation

*Quilting Honor and Comfort for Our Wounded*

## QUILTS AIN'T SEXY

*Catherine Roberts is the Founder and Director of the Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF).*

I was waiting to hear if we had won a grant that QOVF applied for several months back. I knew in my heart of hearts, we would win. How *could* we lose? The deadline for the announcement passed with no notification. Maybe servers were down worldwide or an incipient worm had intercepted the email telling us we had won. Two weeks into denial, reality kicked me in the behind when I saw with my *own two eyes* the list of recipients on the donor's website...We weren't listed. I knew why. Quilts ain't sexy compared to a week at a hunting lodge or fishing trip or some mechanical or electronic do-dad.

Are you following my line of thought? Do you know where I'm going?

Read these quotes from two QOV recipients.

*"I thank you very much for the quilt. And I will keep it until I die and pass it on to my son, and know that one day he will look for the person who made it. And thank you very much for your support." Love you all, J. R."*

*Dear Quilt Makers, I really appreciate the quilt I was given. Right now I am in the hospital because I suffer from PTSD. When I got that quilt, it made me feel really great inside. I'm giving it to my son so he knows there are people out there who care what me and all my fellow Americans do. Thanks again. M.B."*

What these warriors are describing are **beirloom quilts**. The recipients understand that their wartime quilts are part of the family and go with the family and will be passed on from one generation to the next.

Long after the parades are over, the food is eaten, and the week long trips become a faded memory, their wartime quilt will still be around lying on the couch or bed. Time will not diminish that *unsexy* quilt's ability to be the soothing comforter it always has been. That quilt has a limitless supply of loving and comforting hugs that will help quell some of the wartime memories that disturb one's peace of mind. So looking at the whole grant application with hindsight, I see that our

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## STATISTICS

Sep 8, 2007	Iraq	Afghanistan
Killed	3739	438
Wounded	54244	7106
Date	QOVs Awarded	
Sep 8, 2007	11458	

*For much more information regarding the statistics from Iraq and Afghanistan, go to [The Iraqi Coalition Casualty Count](#)*

grant came in the form of these two quoteables.

Yep. Quilts ain't sexy. They're much *more than* sexy. They are a lifetime full of comfort and reassurance that someone appreciated what they did for their nation. What more can we ask of our wartime efforts for our servicemen and women and veterans who have stood in harm's way? Abraham Lincoln advised the nation in his second inaugural address on March 4, 1865 to strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle. To me, our QOV community is following this sage advise to the letter.

Still at war; still quilting,



Catherine Roberts 2/10

## QUOTABLE

*Our quotable this month is sent in from Laura in California, it is an article from the LA Daily News.*

A Pieced-Together Thanks For Soldiers

BY DENNIS MCCARTHY

You can't take a parade home with you. You can't package all the congratulations, handshakes and hugs that young servicemen and -women receive when they return from

Iraq and Afghanistan so they can enjoy them later at home.

But a quilt made just for them - that's something they can take home and treasure. That they can spread across their beds at night, or take to the park for a picnic with their girlfriend, like David Sarabia does every weekend.

"When a lot of us got back from Iraq, we were overwhelmed with the reception we got," said the 25-year-old Army veteran who spent four years in the service, including his last year in Iraq. He was discharged in March 2004 and now works at the Sepulveda VA in North Hills.

"We wondered if we deserved all the accolades because we were just doing our job. But as the months and years pass, you realize it's nice to be remembered, that your service counted and you're still relevant."

Still relevant. Like a lot of returning soldiers who saw combat, Sarabia was beginning to wonder.

When you've spent a year in Iraq armed to the teeth every day, wondering whether there was a mortar attack or a land mine waiting for you around the next corner, simple things like long walks in the park with your girlfriend without looking over your shoulder or carefully

watching where you step aren't so simple.

When you've spent months on body duty, recovering the dead and helping the severely wounded make it back to safety, what's happening on "Desperate Housewives" this week just doesn't seem real relevant to anything.

You begin to wonder what is relevant and if you're ever going to be able to fit into civilian life again, Sarabia says.

"I had a tough time coming home because the war was still too fresh in my mind. I didn't know if it was just me. It took a while, but I learned it wasn't just me.

"That's why what these women are doing for veterans coming home is so important," he said. "When the welcome-home parties are over and they're trying to readjust to civilian life, they'll have one of these quilts at home to remember what they did over there wasn't just a job."

The quilts that Sarabia and more than 300 other returning combat veterans, many of them wounded, have been getting at Sepulveda and West Los Angeles VA are from members of the San Fernando Valley Quilt Association and Valley Quiltmakers Guild in Northridge.

It's called the Veterans Quilt Project and was started a few years ago by Sepulveda VA volunteer Julie Stranges and the members of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Chatsworth chapter.

"It's our welcome-home gift to them," Stranges said Wednesday, stacking another dozen quilts that had just been delivered.

"Most of the guys receiving them are like David. They think they didn't do anything special over there, but they did. We want them to know that and remember it every day when they look at that quilt."

There are about 370 women throughout the Valley sewing blocks for those quilts destined for returning veterans, says Karen Van Den Brink, past president of the San Fernando Valley Quilt Association.

"We've made quilts for disaster relief organizations, children's hospitals and wherever else they're needed, but I've never seen the members get behind something like they've gotten behind this veterans project.

"It's near and dear to all our hearts. Everybody does their own thing as far as patterns, but there's been more emphasis on red, white and blue quilts because those are the ones the

young men want the most," she said.

"If that's what they like, that's what they're going to get."

A Heroes In Our World sew-athon will have volunteers trying to finish more than 100 quilts for returning veterans. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sept. 8, and 10 a.m. to 4:40 p.m. Sept. 9 at the Airtel Plaza Hotel, 7277 Valjean Ave., Van Nuys. For information, call (818) 784-4612 or see [www.sfvqa.org](http://www.sfvqa.org).

### QUILTS FOR AN HOUR

By Judy Laquidara

Recently, I have been doing a project on my blog called A Quilt for an Hour which can easily be used to make QOVs. <http://judylaquidara.blogspot.com>.

Here's how it works: Shortly before the first of the month, I post a picture of a quilt that I've made. This is so you can see the design ahead of time and know if it's something you want to make. It also allows you to decide what fabrics you would want to use. I post instructions during the week for what should take about one hour a day to do. Most quilts take about 15 hours to make, so, in three weeks, you have a completed top. Many of the

participants have been making these quilts for QOV's.

You can check my blog to see the quilt we're going to be making in September. Please feel free to join us and make a quilt for a wounded soldier.

### CONNECTING THE THREADS

Notes from the Journal Guru  
By Susan C. Slaninka

I thought that I would spend this month talking a bit about setting the stage for journal writing as you work on your Quilts of Valor.

I have an image of each of you as you set up your work space to sew your Quilts of Valor. Hopefully, you have a Quilts of Valor tote bag that carries all the essentials to work on the quilt: material, needles, thread, pin cushion and pins, thimble, quilt blocks, patterns and pattern pieces, quilting magazines, etc. You play a CD and relax into the couch or your favorite chair (with good lighting of course) and you work on your quilts. Each stitch is done with love as you imagine the person who will receive the Quilt of Valor at the end of the process. I know that so much thought goes into each quilt.

How does this apply to journaling? Think of the journal as part of the set of essentials

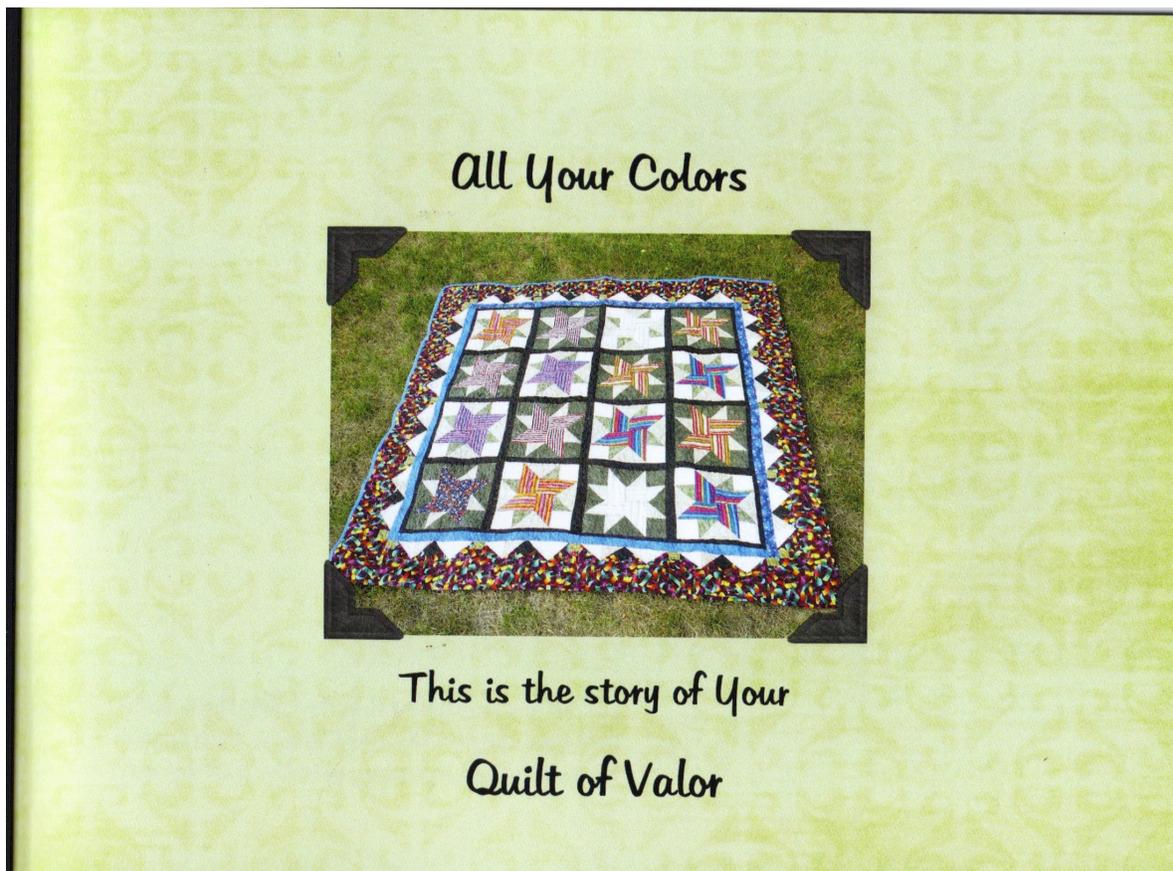
that you need to prepare the Quilt of Valor for your serviceman or woman. Perhaps you could get yourself a nice set of stationary (I have some wonderful patriotic paper that I found with stars all around the edge), and a good pen (I like pens with a fine point that glide across the page).

Just as you set the stage to quilt, you can prepare to journal. Think of it as a special time to communicate with the person that will receive the Quilt of Valor. Your entries need not be long or tremendously detailed, just from the heart. Catherine has indicated that the recipients “love receiving the journals as much as they love the quilts.” The journals offer the service-member a window into your life and enables them to picture you as they are surrounded by the love and comfort of their quilt.

I hope that you will send me some ideas regarding what works for you as you journal. Please share them by emailing [scsvu@juno.com](mailto:scsvu@juno.com) and I’ll be glad to include them in a future column.

BETH’S QOV PHOTO-JOURNAL

Catherine Roberts, QOV Director, has commented repeatedly on the importance and significance of journaling during the quilting process so that you can send your written thoughts and love along with your QOV. One quilter from Wisconsin took this to heart and created a unique and touching journal to connect with, and honor, the service member who would receive her Quilt of Valor “All Your Colors”.

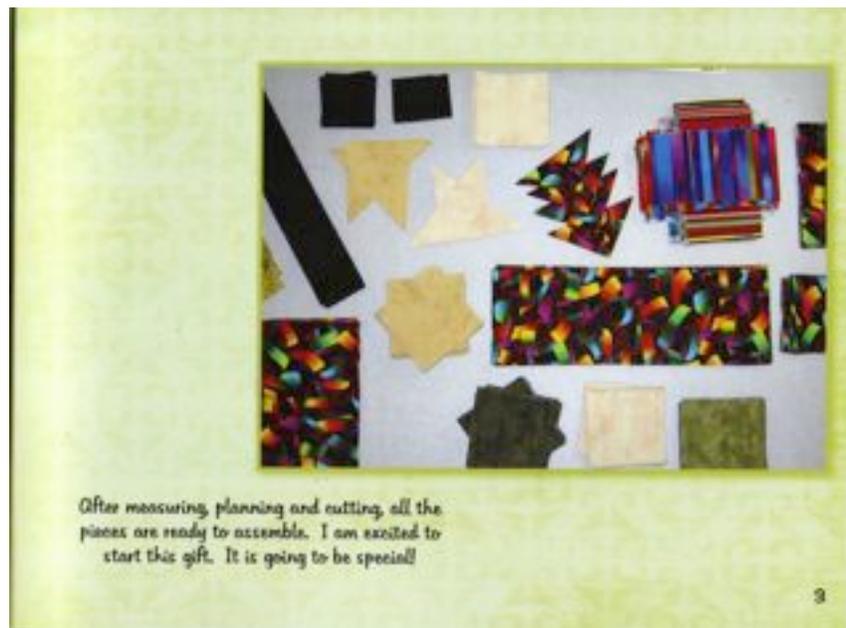


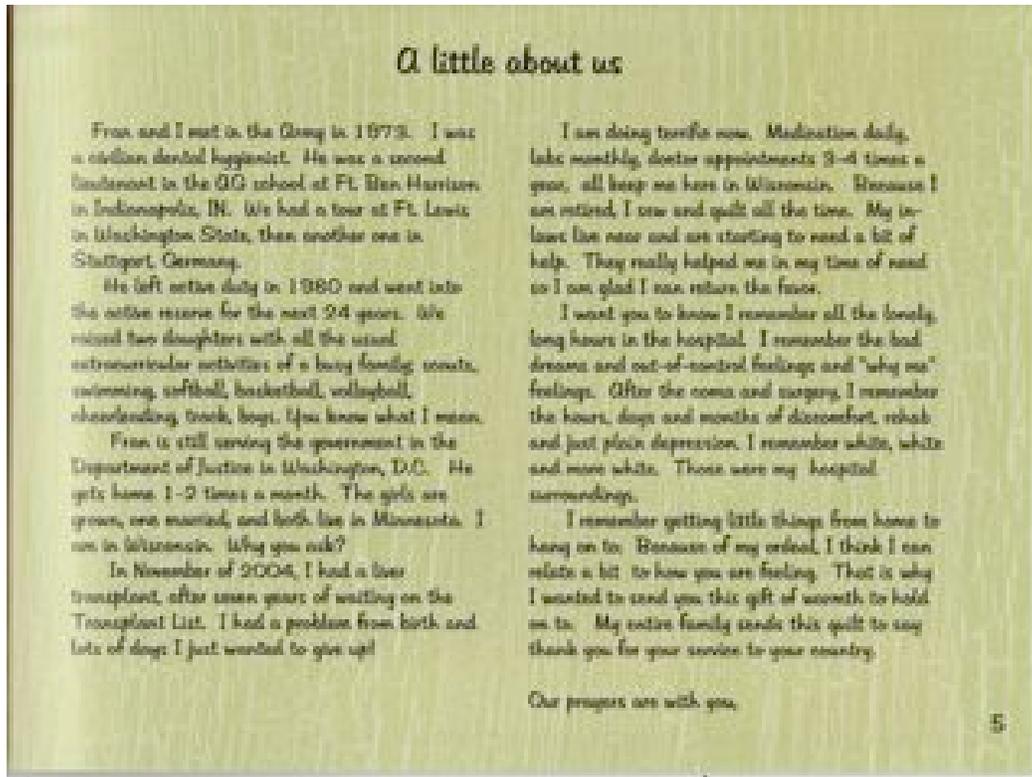


In the beginning, it looked like this. I searched for just the right fabric. It is chosen for quality and meaning, only the best for you.

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After measuring, planning and cutting, all the pieces are ready to assemble. I am excited to start this gift. It is going to be special!





A LITTLE ABOUT US

Fran and I met in the Army in 1973. I was a civilian dental hygienist. He was a second lieutenant in the AG school at Ft. Ben Harrison in Indianapolis, IN. We had a tour at Ft. Lewis in Washington State, then another one in Stuttgart, Germany.

He left active duty in 1980 and went into the active reserve for the next 24 years. We raised two daughters with all the usual extracurricular activities of a busy family; scouts, swimming, softball, basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, track, boys. you know what I mean.

Fran is still serving the government in the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. He gets home 1-2 times a month. The girls are grown, one married, and both live in Minnesota. I am in Wisconsin. Why you ask?

In November of 2004, I had a liver transplant, after 7 years of waiting on the Transplant list. I had a problem from birth and lots of days I just wanted to give up!

I am doing terrific now. Medication daily, labs monthly, doctor appointments 3-4 times a year, all keep me here in Wisconsin. Because I am retired, I sew and quilt all the time. My in-laws live near and are starting to need a bit of help. They really helped me in my time of need so I am glad I can return the favor.

I want you to know I remember all the lonely, long hours in the hospital. I remember the bad dreams and out-of-control feelings and "why me" feelings. After the coma and surgery, I remember the hours, days and months of discomfort, rehab and just plain depression. I remember white, white and more white. Those were my hospital surroundings.

I remember getting little things from home to hang on to. Because of my ordeal, I think I can relate a bit to how you are feeling. That is why I wanted to send you this gift of warmth to hold on to. My entire family sends this quilt to say thank you for your service to your country.

Our prayers are with you.

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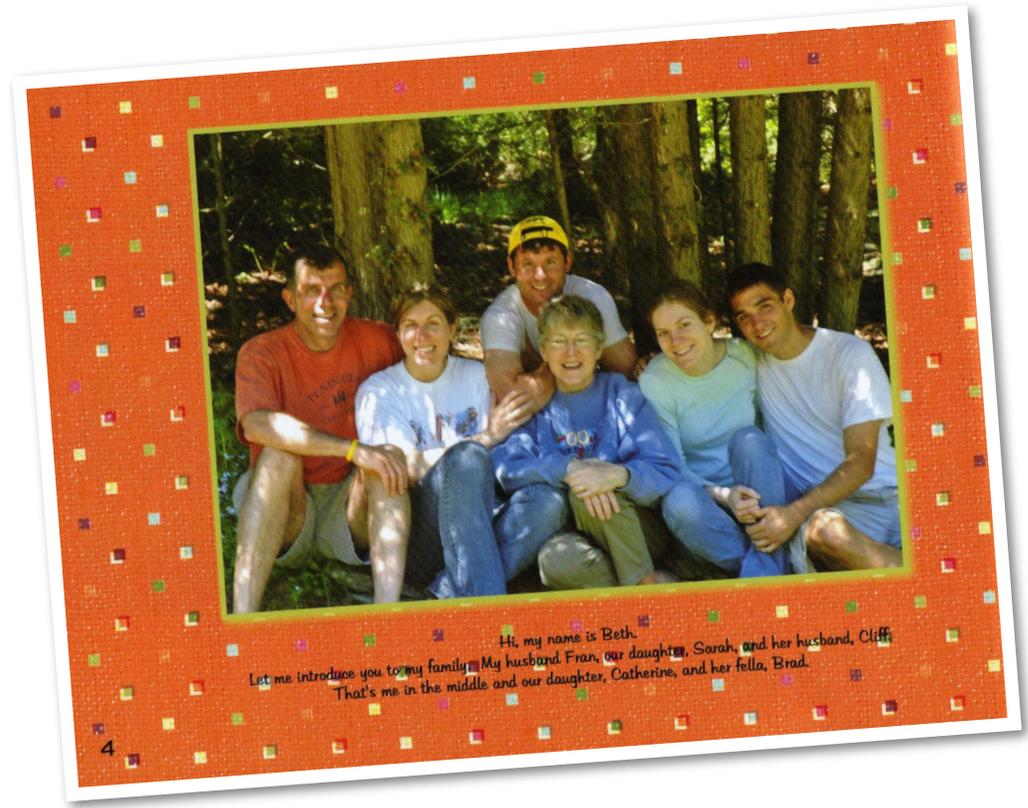
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Hi, my name is Beth.

Let me introduce you to my family. My husband, Fran, our daughter Sarah and her husband, Cliff. That's me in the middle and our daughter, Catherine, and her fella Brad.



The stars and stripes that make the blocks represent your ribbons of combat and Fatigues for all kinds of work you do.

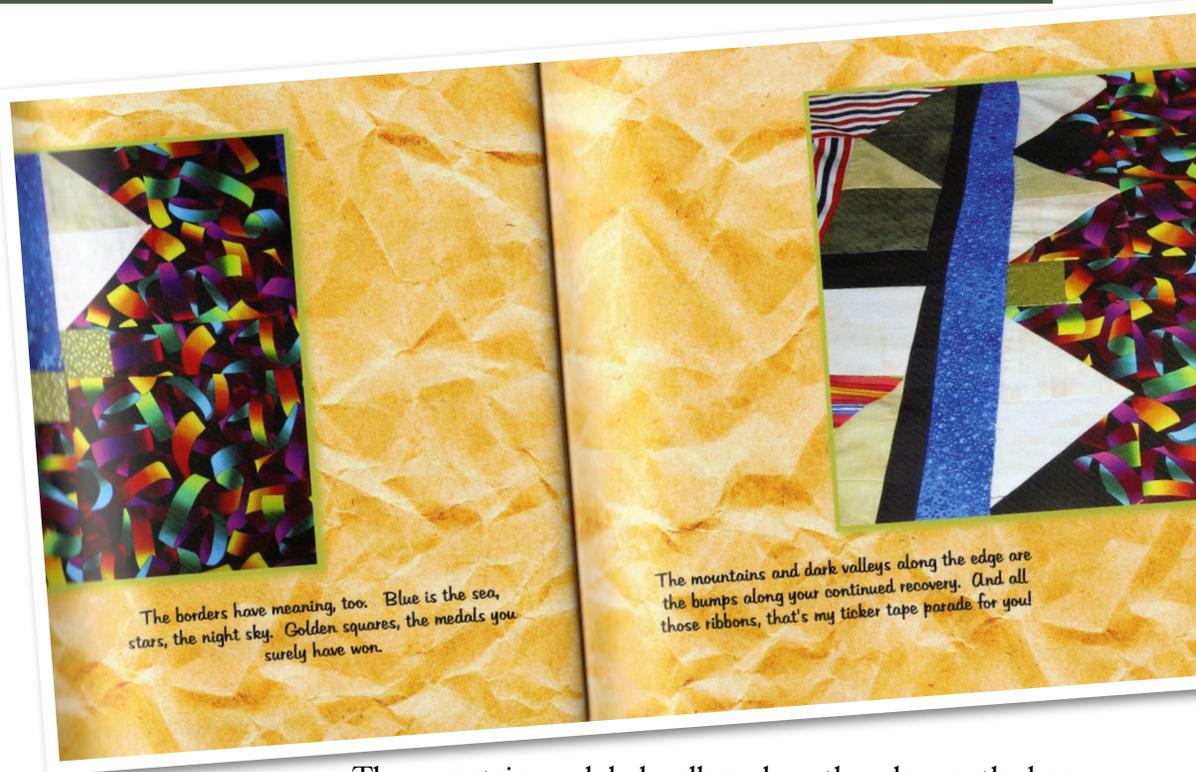


The black is for your boots. Once we add the rest of the support, your friends and comrades, the whole is stronger than the pieces.

The stars and stripes that make the blocks represent your ribbons of combat and Fatigues for all kinds of work you do.

The black is for your boots. Once we add the rest of the support, your friends and comrades, the whole is stronger than the pieces.

The borders  
have meaning too.  
Blue is the sea, stars  
and night sky.  
Golden squares, the  
medals you surely  
have won.



The borders have meaning, too. Blue is the sea, stars, the night sky. Golden squares, the medals you surely have won.

The mountains and dark valleys along the edge are the bumps along your continued recovery. And all those ribbons, that's my ticker tape parade for you!

The mountains and dark valleys along the edge are the bumps along your continued recovery. And all those ribbons, that's my ticker tape parade for you!



All Your Colors, your Quilt of Valor, is yours now. May this gift of gratitude bring you comfort, healing, strength and peace. Thank you again for your service to our country and for being our Guardian. You are in our prayers daily.

Love, The Schmitz Family and Beth  
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin,  
August, 2007

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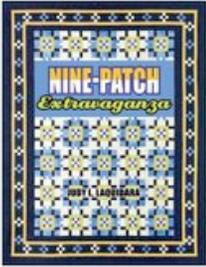
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Love, The Schmitz Family and Beth

## FROM THE QOV COMMUNITY

## JUDY LAQUIDARA'S FIRST BOOK



NINE PATCH EXTRAVAGANZA (published by American Quilter's Society) is out! The book contains 12 patterns - all nine patches. The quilts have pieced sashings or unique colorations of the blocks so that they look more difficult than you would expect from traditional nine patch blocks. Each Quilt has a different pieced border, and borders could easily be adapted to work any top design. Visit Amazon <http://tinyurl.com/yp6zj9>, the American Quilter's Society <http://www.americanquilter.com> or ask your local quilt shop to order your book today and let the extravaganza begin!!

## QOV MAKING FOR THE TIME PRESSED

Do you want to be part of making a QOV, but don't have the time to piece together a whole top? Judy has the solution for you. Anyone wanting to make a string of blocks can sew them together and then send them to her. Using these strings, Judy will put the top together and quilt them into a QOV. Here's how it will work - make as many string blocks as you can using the guidelines at <http://heartstringsquiltproject.com/guidelines.html>. DO NOT TRIM YOUR BLOCKS BEFORE SENDING THEM. Judy will trim them. She will then put them together to make QOVs. Pictures will be posted on <http://www.judylaquidara.blogspot.com> as they're completed and we will include in the newsletter the number of blocks that have been received and how many tops have been completed. If you want to participate please e-mail [Judy@QOVF.org](mailto:Judy@QOVF.org).

## DONATE YOUR FREQUENT FLYER MILES

Barbara Winkler, a QOV member in California, is looking for frequent flier miles to be donated to [www.snowballexpress.org](http://www.snowballexpress.org). SnowBall Express is a program working to create "a network of hope for the families of our fallen heroes". Why donate your hard earned frequent flyers? So that between Nov 30-Dec 3, SnowBall Express will be able to bring families of the fallen soldiers out to Disney for some fun. This is a nice way to say thanks to the widows/widowers and children who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Snowball Express is also looking for donations of gifts for about 1000 kids, and will welcome any suggestions. Sewers could make pillowcases, pencil cases, simple tote bags, hair scrunchies, and non-sewers can provide store bought toys or school supplies. Please visit their website to participate.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR QOVs?

Do you have a great grassroots idea to share? A pattern that worked well for a QOV? A way to improve something in the program? A letter from a soldier or a story about your guild? Do you know another QOV community member who goes out of their way to cover our combat wounded? Send us an email and tell us all about it. Write to [newsletter@govf.org](mailto:newsletter@govf.org) and share your thoughts and stories with the entire QOV community.

VOLUNTEER STAFF

CATHERINE - Founder/Director of the QOV Foundation. [cath@qovf.org](mailto:cath@qovf.org)

JUNE - Longarm Coordinator. [june@qovf.org](mailto:june@qovf.org)

MICHELE - Newsletter editor. [michele@qovf.org](mailto:michele@qovf.org) or [newsletter@qovf.org](mailto:newsletter@qovf.org)

DONNA - Handles the books answers tax donation questions. [donna@qovf.org](mailto:donna@qovf.org)

LEZLEY - Coordinates QOVF efforts in Canada. [lezley@qovf.org](mailto:lezley@qovf.org)

KATY - Coordinator of Local/Regional QOVF groups. [katy@qovf.org](mailto:katy@qovf.org)

ERIC - In charge of raffle numbers for QOVs sent between April 2007 and April 2008. [ej@qovf.org](mailto:ej@qovf.org)

*Please Feel Free to Contact Your Volunteer Staff With Your Questions/Comments/Concerns.*

HOW TO DONATE



Since the QOV Foundation started out in November of 2003 as Quilts for Soldiers, we have run on a shoe string budget. Staff members work on a voluntary basis. The monies we received are directed back into the Foundation and used to increase our visibility. (If you would like a copy of the QOVF's 5 year plan, please email Catherine). This is paramount if we are to reach all our combat wounded with the message that they have a QOV waiting for them.

The thousands of members in this group give of their time and money. To date, we have collectively spent over \$1.26 million dollars in making QOVs.

When you make a monetary tax deductible donation, you can request where it should go. The various choices are: administrative, fabric, shipping and printing handout literature.

You also can contribute fabric, sewing machines, batting and quilting threads. if you would like to go this route, please email [Catherine](mailto:Catherine@qovf.org) at [cath@qovf.org](mailto:cath@qovf.org) or call 302 236-0230.

Please help us keep this project alive and well with your **tax exempt** donation, visit [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org)

OUR MISSION

The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover ALL combat wounded service-members whether physical or psychological with wartime quilts called Quilts of Valor (QOVs). The wounded service-members from the War on Terror or Long War are to be considered first and foremost. The second mission is to teach our children how to sew QOVs. This skill will teach sewing skills in addition to encouraging civic involvement and volunteering for the betterment of our nation. A natural extension of our mission will be to link up with our coalition countries and see that their combat wounded are also covered.

When all is said and done what we are doing is providing a means by which our combat wounded can have a better life. This foundation will do whatever it takes to reach this goal.