

Quilts of Valor Foundation NEWSLETTER

Quilting to Honor & Comfort Our Wounded

A Monthly Newsletter

September 2010

Northern Quiltathon

Using the annual "Make A Difference Day" as their inspiration, QOVF is challenging our volunteer quilters in every part of the country to plan an event for Saturday, October 24, 2010.

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Please visit our Blog for more articles and Regional Information

QOVF.blogspot.com

To Be or Not to Be... Red, White and Blue

One thing I decided from the get-go when I started "Quilts for Soldiers" was this. There would be no restriction on what type of fabric to use other than being appropriate for an adult. As you know, I learned not everyone serving in the military is a SOLDIER. I learned what types of fabrics to use from my son, Nat who was my inspiration to start Quilts for Soldiers. Nat served his country honorably earning a Purple Heart topped with a good case of Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD). My son was not your typical soldier. He was and still is a rebel... marching to a drummer with a different beat. He never was uber-patriotic but very uber-protective of his fellow comrades. He left the 'wire' for his daily patrols in Iraq's suffocating heat as the gunner being ever vigilant and locked on to having his buddies backs. Give him his play-station games when not on patrol and he was a happy camper. But leave all the other stuff for someone else.

All of this translated into this. I don't want to be reminded of anything related to war. When I told him what I was doing, I asked



Catherine and her son Nathanael.

what kind of quilt he would want. Patriotic? "No thanks!" he replied. "Anything *but!*"

I learned a lesson early on about one size does not fit all. Having said this, I also have learned that **95% of our recipients prefer patriotic...**red, white, blue, patriotic themed fabrics.

So how does this translate into what we recommend in fabrics for Quilts of Valor? Simple. If unsure, do patriotic. If you're doing your first QOV, pick patriotic fabrics. If you are on your 10th QOV for this year, you have a wild card to pick whatever you feel like picking. You can't lose using patriotic fabrics. Plus, we are fortunate that there is such a wide

selection of quality patriotic fabrics ranging from modern to period patriotic. If you have a ton of floral fabrics, maybe you could do patriotic top and piece a lovely floral backing.

If in doubt, use patriotic fabrics.

You may be wondering what kind of QOV Nat received. Five years ago, Linda Thielholdt made his non-patriotic QOV which he adores. That quilt has become part of his life...a quilt that continues to give him comfort and healing. The key concept here is to MAKE a QOV, and if you want to use a non-patriotic fabric, that's okay. I do, however, invite you to read the "Thank You's" section and the "Patriotic vs. Florals" article both on page 4 of this month's newsletter, and bear them in mind when making fabric selections. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,

Catherine C. Roberts
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Northern Quiltathon

You can make a difference! Help us celebrate the 20th anniversary of Make a Difference Day.

Barbara Chojnacki is issuing a challenge to the quilters of New York and New England: she thinks they can make 1,000 Quilts of Valor between August 14 and Make a Difference Day, October 23, 2010. Please help her get the word out. Forward this to your local quilt shops, to your quilt guild, to your sewing buddies. Post on Facebook, tweet on Twitter, call your Grandma. Not from New York or New England? You can still participate.

Rev up those sewing machines and put the pedal to the metal!

Here's what you can do:

Stitchers: Piece quilt tops, alone or with friends.

Longarmers: Volunteer to quilt QOV's. You can sign up to be a longarmer on the QOV website

Quilt guilds and quilting groups: At your next meeting make QOV's. Or ask members to bring in blocks and put the blocks together.

Quilt shops: Have a QOV class/workshop day or days. Pick a simple pattern so all levels of stitchers can participate. Or invite customers to work on their own QOV's. Keep it free and easy- drop in for an hour or stay all day.

Ask participants to bring in their own fabrics- stick to red, white and blue, or go across the color spectrum (just a note from personal experience, be specific - people tend to bring in more medium and dark fabrics than very light ones). Ask for larger quantities for quilt backs.

Don't forget to make a presentation case for each quilt.

Don't forget to make a label.

Do refer to the QOV web site for specifics on how to make a QOV (sizes, materials, etc.). Do email with any questions. Barbara@QOVF.org

QOV Marathon 2010

Suzie Haas has organized two weekends of sewing and fun in Illinois and Missouri to honor our service members and veterans.

Quiltmakers - You are needed in Illinois!

Kick-off Party! September 9-10-11, 2010

Location: Drury Inn & Suites-O'Fallon 1118 Central Park Dr., O'Fallon, IL 62269

Time: 6am – 12 Midnight

Longarmers, you are wanted in Missouri!

Continued Party! September 16-17-18, 2010

Location: GAMMILL® QUILTING SYSTEMS

[Headquarters & Showroom] 1452 Gibson St., West Plains, MO 65775 Time: 7am – 6pm.

You don't need to come to both parties or even for all three days to each event. Every little bit helps.

Flyer and Registration Form can be obtained at:

www.amazinggracefulstitches.com

Please send in your registration forms **SOON!** Or give me a call (618-228-9038) or send an e-mail suzie.haas@yahoo.com

We look forward to seeing you there!

Pellon Batting

If you are a registered local group who makes and awards 30 or more QOVs per year, or a longarmer who has completed the Volunteer to Longarm form on the website and regularly quilts 2 or more QOVs per month, you qualify to purchase Pellon's Legacy 80/20 batting at the special QOVF price of \$66 plus distributor's shipping cost.

If you qualify, send your information to june@QOVF.org to be put on the list to receive authorization letters to present to the distributor. The authorizations and distributor contact information will be sent by email the last week in September. The batting is a 60yd roll of 60 inch wide

Journal Guru

Connecting the threads between Quilters and QOV Recipients is submitted by Susan C. Slaninka

It's hard to believe it is Labor Day weekend and another summer is almost over. I don't know about you, but summer is definitely my favorite season of the year. I live at the beach and the shore communities are filled with special activities during this time of year to attract the tourist population. As I started to think about how things would be winding down soon, I thought of how hard it must be for our military personnel who leave their homes to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan leaving all of their usual activities behind. So many of those serving crave letters and newspapers from home and look forward to reading about the normal activities at home.

The next time you are writing your journal for your Quilt of Valor, consider that military person at the other end looking forward to hearing about your life and all that you are doing while you are quilting their Quilt of Valor with such love. Share a piece of "home" with them... the U.S.A. Thanks once again to all of you for your support of our troops. It is an honor to be a small part of the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

QOVF Blog

The next time you have a few extra minutes to surf the web, check out the QOVF Blog at www.QOVF.blogspot.com

You will find additional articles with information from your regional coordinators, articles about topics you care about like "How Does Your State Measure Up?" and longer articles printed in their entirety for you to read and enjoy.

The blog also has pictures, is a great place for us to recognize outstanding QOVers, share links to QOVF stories in the news and even has a function for you to leave comments. We look forward to seeing you there!

Quality Quilts for Quilts of Valor

Laurel Braunstein has written an article for this month's newsletter on the process she uses when making a QOV. To read her article in its entirety, please go to www.QOVF.blogspot.com.

Overview: Use 100% Cotton Fabric. Minimum size 55x65 no larger than 72x90. Backing at least 3 inches larger on all sides than the top. MUST have a label. MUST have a presentation cast. Suggested to include a journal.

There is nothing I like better than quilts – I like choosing the pattern and planning the layout. I like selecting (another word for shopping) the fabric. Notice I am not saying I like cutting out the pieces. What I would like is to have an elf come in the night and cut out all the pieces for me, like the one in the shoemaker fairy tale. I like sewing all the pieces together whether it be by hand (yes, I do hand piece some QOVs) or by machine. For me it's like putting a puzzle together and getting a beautiful picture when done. I like the feeling of accomplishment when the quilt is completed. (continued at www.QOVF.blogspot.com)



POC's Communication

Ellen Patton, Destination Coordinator

Many have asked that I try to get our Points of Contact (POC) to acknowledge that quilts have arrived. I have done that and continue to stress the importance of that with each new POC we get. Hopefully it is making a difference and you are hearing that your quilts have made it to the various hospitals and VA centers that we send to.

Now it's time for me to let you, the quilters, know what feedback I am getting from our POCs. To that end I have asked a couple of them to write articles about the importance of following "the rules" that I include on each of the destination letters I send to you. In addition to what Alycia and Roberta have written, I would like to also address a couple other items that are not really rules but are common sense when you stop to think about them.

When sending a package to a destination it is a good thing to include your mailing address or email for the POC. I cannot tell you how many times a quilter has said that they did not hear that their quilt arrived yet when asked they did not include that information. Well, how in the world would the POC know how to let you know? They truly aren't mind readers! While some of them have gone to the return label I don't think they should have to go through all that trouble. How hard is it to include your information on a separate card or piece of paper?

Size is another area that I have heard about. Please be aware of our minimum size. A lot of places have mentioned that if the quilt is too small they do not give it out because it is NOT a QOV. Our quilts are known by reputation and one of the things we are known for is a good size throw. Please, pay attention to the requirements so a quilt you are making for a servicemember goes to a servicemember.

Along the size line there is the appropriateness of the fabric. I am not saying that all quilts need to be red, white, or blue. There are wonderful quilts that have themes other than patriotic that have been loved by the recipient—woodland themes cherished by the hunter, fishing themes cherished by the fisherman, flowers by the gardener. But when one makes a quilt with a panel of a teddy bear that is really meant for a child, it just doesn't work as a QOV. Please think about your fabric selection a bit more. I know we all love a deal, but just because something is on sale doesn't mean it is right for a QOV.

Really, I think all of you make the most fantastic quilts. I hope that all of you continue to do so as we are still in much need as the wars continue on. Our men and women are constantly amazed that we are doing this for them. If we all just pay attention to these few things, as well as those that Alycia and Roberta point out, I think I'll be hearing even more great things from our POCs!

NOTES FROM DOWN RANGE

BY KAREN FREDRICKSON

Down Range, the words refer to those military men and women serving in a geographic area of conflict, a combat zone. I have asked three amazing women to write the Down Range columns the summer QOV newsletters. I hope that these columns will inform, educate, and personalize the experiences of military families.

SURVIVOR: BATTLE FOR FALLUJAH

by Kimberly Ekholm

I have something to say. I know I'm only a spouse/wife, but I'm a survivor too. Unless you are a military spouse who has waited night and day to see if your husband would call after a great battle or if it would be the Chaplain and another soldier coming to your door you can't possibly know what I survived, what all of us survive as a military spouse.

As far as spouses go, well...military spouses are a different breed, especially if we survive. I'm referring to a military spouse that spends more Holidays and Anniversaries alone or without her husband because he is deployed. I'm talking about a spouse who has sent her husband away for longer than a fortnight and doesn't expect to speak to him even with our advanced technology. I'm talking about a grunt's wife and a spouse who made it through the battle for Fallujah!

Have you ever sat at the end of your street because you were too frightened to see if the military was in your driveway?? For a military spouse this is the ultimate scare. And, that's what happens when a Marine dies. The military sends a Chaplain and another military member to your house to tell you in person that your Marine died. I am sorry for those women and families and admire their strength, their sacrifice and their valor. I can't imagine their pain. My focus is on us, the ones that survive with their families intact, the ones that live to face it all again while we wait at home.

Anguish, heart-wrenching pain from the bottom of your gut could not explain what it's like to wait while a battle rages and the world stops. At least, for me, it stopped. While the Marines saw heavy artillery dropped in the building next door and crossed streets as insurgents lobbed bullets and grenades at them....well, we've all seen the pictures and watched the news. But, I'll never forget the battle I fought for 14 days. The battle that crawled in my door and raged right here in my heart and home.

(continued on QOVF Blog www.QOVF.blogspot.com)

Thank You's

Please know that the work you do making these Quilts of Valor is worthwhile and very much appreciated.

My Dear Mrs. G,

The worst day for our nurses was yesterday. Not because of the casualties we saw, the usual sadness that comes with each serviceman wounded, or the long grueling hours spent saving the lives of everyone who got to us but... we ran out of quilts to give them. I cannot express to you what it is like to wrap a young man up and hand him to the Air Force doctors and nurses to fly him to Germany without the colors of his flag draping him. We were heartsick.

But today, like a gift from an angel above, your box of gorgeous, gorgeous patriotic quilts arrived and we are, in not temporarily, restocked! Words cannot describe how precious these pieces of fabric lovingly sewn together, have become to our staff of young nurses, doctors and corpsmen.

As you know, the fight is here in Kandahar and we need quilts more than ever before. Unfortunately, some women are making quilts I cannot place on any serviceman. They are beautiful but are colors of yellows and lavenders and are not true "Quilts Of Valor". So they sit on my shelf. If at all possible, can I implore you to contact the program managers to ask them to remind everyone these quilts are for our warriors.

I am so grateful for your quilts. The nurses looked over each one and there was a great deal of "oooooooo" and "ahhhh" as they touched them. Thank you knowing exactly what a quilt of valor should look like. I will write soon I fear, and tell you when the blankets are distributed.

Most Sincerely,
Capt PH.
Nurse Corps, United States Navy
Intensive Care Unit

Patriotic vs. Florals

If you are going to address the patriotic vs floral issues, here are some of my observations for you to consider. I don't know how other people award the quilts, but I believe I have told you that I let the soldiers choose their own. I line them up on the cart so that the soldiers can get an idea of what they look like and I proceed to show them as many as they want. They usually take the first one they look at.

This past week, I had quite a few quilts with floral fabrics and a smaller number of patriotic quilts. Most of the floral ones have been on the cart for a number of weeks as they are usually not chosen. I had one quilt that was neither patriotic nor floral...just lots of solid colors and that was chosen, but the floral ones are usually left behind if they have a choice. That generally goes for the women as well as the men. As a matter of fact, the last soldier I saw last week was a woman and there were no more patriotic quilts on the cart. She did take a floral one (the only floral one given out that day), but wanted a patriotic one. The recent floral ones seems to have all come from a group whose work was more advanced than the patriotic quilts, but still they were not preferred. Also, at Walter Reed, most of the soldiers I see are male. I have the most luck giving the ones that are not patriotic to women who are in the outpatient psychiatric ward as that is generally where I will see more women.

Besides floral, once in a while we get quilts that have more of an American theme that is not necessarily red white and blue and they seem to be well-liked. For instance, one person recently sent a number of quilts that used a blue and brown Norman Rockwell pattern. One time I had a quilt that had John Deere tractors on it and the soldier who chose that one and his wife were both ecstatic over it, and another time I had one that was very colorful with a lot of purple. It was identified as being made for a female soldier and after weeks of being on the cart, it was chosen by a male soldier from Jamaica who said it reminded him of Jamaica.

So, I know there are those who do like the other quilts, but the floral ones are the ones that stay on the cart the longest. About a year ago, someone sent quilts that were pieced on both sides. They were all patriotic and were taken immediately.

I hope this is helpful information. I know that so much work and dedication goes into these and don't want anyone to feel that their quilts are not appreciated. Some are just more popular.

-Jane C. Bockel



Quilts of Valor Foundation

News from National. Editor's Corner. General Info. Keeping you in the Know.

Statistics



Iraq Statistics

Killed - 4,414
Wounded - Many

Afghanistan Statistics

Killed - 1,226
Wounded - Many

QOV Statistics

Total QOVs Awarded - 31,082
Awarded this week - 50
Awarded this month - 1414

We need significantly MORE QOVs. Please keep up the good work and we'll keep covering our nation's war wounded.

Reminders



1. Reminder from your longarm volunteers: Please do not send batting unless it is okayed by your longarmer. Most of us supply the batting that works best for our machines.
2. Please use the form for quilts awarded only for quilts that **have already been sent** to destinations or awarded. Do not include quilts you plan to award sometime in the future. The purpose of the form is to make the total QOVs awarded number more reflective of reality.
3. The deadline for submitting articles for next month's newsletter is Oct. 1.

Longarmers Needed



We are in need of more longarm volunteers who can sign up to quilt a particular number of QOVs each month. Some of our volunteers in states with active local groups are swamped all the time; other volunteers in states where fewer toppers request longarmers, are willing to quilt, but burdened by having to pay postage to ship large numbers of quilts across the country. Check this blog post : <http://qovf.blogspot.com/2010/08/how-does-your-state-measure-up.html> to learn about the needs in your state/region.

Register Your Group



If you are new to QOVF or are a new QOVF group, or even if you've been around for years, we need you to register your information on the website under "register your group." www.qovf.org/index.php?page=localgov

Please note that you can also register as an individual. It will only take a few minutes and is an important way to get and share information.

Still deciding if a group is right for you? Why not register and see what happens? You might be surprised by the benefits you receive!

Trivia Question



Quilting is a tradition that has been around for a long time, and has been popular all over the world.

Which country is the oldest known quilt from?*

Answer:
a. Egypt

This Month's Trivia:

Which needles have big eyes, and sharp points?

- a. Tapestry needle
- b. quilting needle or
- c. chenille needle?

*The answer to this month's trivia question will be posted in next month's Newsletter. If you have a great idea for a trivia question, please email it to newsletter@qovf.org.

QOVF STAFF

Let us know how we can help you...

Catherine Roberts

Is the Executive Director and Founder of the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

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Catherine Snyder

Is the Director of the Quilts of Valor Foundation and also in charge of General Operations. (Currently on Hiatus)

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Regional Coordinators

RCs 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 RC assigned to your state. A full list can be found at www.qovf.org/index.php?page=cmspage&id=63

For more information regarding QOVF Structure and Volunteers, please visit:

<http://www.qovf.org/content/about-us.html>

Mission Statement

The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover ALL those service members and veterans touched by war with wartime quilts called Quilts of Valor (QOVs). This Foundation is not about politics. It is about people.



Please Remember...

All images and articles sent to Quilts of Valor Foundation become property of Quilts of Valor Foundation. We are not responsible for the return of items. Quilts of Valor Foundation does not necessarily share the opinions and views shared in the articles and images in this newsletter. Quilts of Valor Foundation reserves the right to edit and or delete submissions to the newsletter. By submitting to this newsletter you agree to these terms.

Contact Us

Do you have comments, questions, concerns about an article you've read in a QOVF newsletter? Please feel free to contact us at newsletter@QOVF.org. We welcome your input and thoughts regarding the topics that matter to you most.

Donations

Please visit our website www.qovf.org/index.php?page=donate for more information regarding Monetary and/or Fabric donations.