



JUNE/JULY 2016

**From the Executive Director**

The 2016 Annual QOVF Conference was an event for the history books. With strong support from Original Sewing & Quilt Expo, attendees spent time listening, learning, talking, and doing. Board of Directors members Marianne Fons and June Moore explained the responsibilities of their positions; members of the Executive Staff followed with information about their roles in the organization.



*Ann Rehbein,  
Executive Director*

A big treat on the opening day of the conference was a private screening of "Quilts of Valor II," with Iowa Public Television producers Andrea Coyle and Tyler Brinegar there to answer questions. Over the course of the conference, we were also honored to have Mary Fons (quilter, writer and funny girl) and Tony Jacobson (quilt designer extraordinaire) give presentations and trunk shows.

Each day we enjoyed breakout sessions for longarm quilters, toppers, state coordinators, and group leaders, as well as on membership and social media. All-conference presentations were given about the Under Our Wings program, our financial status, and the new QOVF Quilt Shop Program. Summaries of each session will soon be available in the member's section of the QOVF website. A highlight each morning was awards of QOVs to local veterans.

Outside activities included an optional bus trip to Winterset, Iowa,

home of John Wayne and the brand new Iowa Quilt Museum (IQM). Our group was the museum's inaugural bus tour! IQM is a beautiful facility you won't want to miss when you're in the area. Dinner at the famous Northside Café, where *The Bridges of Madison County* was filmed, and stops at the Piece Works Quilt Shop and Ben Franklin Store rounded out the trip.

After our conference, "America Quilts EXPO in support of Quilts of Valor" opened. Each morning, QOVs were awarded, setting the tone for the day. Members of the ES staffed the official QOVF booth, while other QOVF volunteers worked on the four QOV assembly lines, helping to piece quilt tops. QOVF longarmers transformed the

tops into QOVs. A big thanks to all of you that helped in that process.

Many thanks go to America Quilts EXPO for displaying the quilts sent for awarding from more than 40 states and for giving us space for the Celebrity Small Quilt Auction with all funds going to QOVF. This auction brought in more than \$7,100. A huge thank-you to the winning bidders.

Now that 2016 is in the files, it's time to think of where we will meet in 2017. The top two choices west of the Missouri River were Colorado and Nebraska. If you have ideas for conference activities or locations send them to me soon, as site planning will begin in a few weeks.

As always, quilt with peace and happiness knowing you are making a difference.



*In the exhibit hall, the QOVF booth, provided gratis by OSQE, is all set up and beautiful, ready for staff and show-goers to arrive. Volunteers signed up new members all three days.*

## SERVICE COIN AWARDS AT MAY QOVF CONFERENCE

By Marianne Fons

Several years ago, founder Catherine Roberts expressed a wish for a tangible token of thanks for individuals who go beyond the call of duty on behalf of QOVF. QOVF Service Coins were awarded for the first time at the 2015 QOVF conference in Paducah, KY, fulfilling Catherine's wish.

QOVF Service Coins are distinct from "challenge coins," which can be purchased for \$10 and used for simple, everyday tokens of thanks or camaraderie. Recipients of the special service coins must be nominated and their nomination approved by the QOVF Board of Directors.

Four service coins were awarded during the recent 2016 QOVF conference in Iowa. Two recipients, Joan Wobbleton and Jim Wobbleton, were present and received their coins in person. The other awardees are Joyce Lundrigan and Betsy Podriznik, whose coins were mailed to them. What follows are brief recaps of each recipient's extraordinary contributions.

- In 2011, after involvement as a topper and longarmer, Joyce Lundrigan accepted the job of QOVF Treasurer, serving for three years. In 2014, two months after her retirement, she returned to the position when all attempts to replace her failed. Displaying tremendous dedication, she saw the organization through the challenging transition to membership, then continued to work with new treasurer Michelle Leonard last year to hire and train the foundation's first and only employee, its bookkeeper.
- Before a job description for special events coordinator existed, in 2013 Betsy Podriznik helped plan QOVF's first ever leadership meeting in Nebraska City, NE. In 2014, she created National Sew Day, now an annual event the first Saturday in February during which thousands sew together across the nation, creating hundreds of QOVFs on one designated day. In 2015, Betsy created opening and closing ceremonies at the National Quilt



*Jim and Joan Wobbleton were presented their service coin awards by QOVF board members Marianne Fons and June Moore at the 2016 annual QOVF Conference.*

Museum in Paducah, KY, that will never be forgotten.

- As co-Longarm Coordinators, Joan Wobbleton and Jim Wobbleton (see photo above) established two special groups to assist with the foundation's transition to membership—the National Longarmers and the National Toppers—so individuals who were not part of a local group could easily join. In 2014, Joan and Jim initiated a relationship with a group of Vietnam veterans that each month washes "The Wall" in Washington, D.C. So powerful was the early morning QOV award ceremony at the wall on the National Mall, it became the final story in the new Iowa Public Television documentary, "Quilts of Valor II."

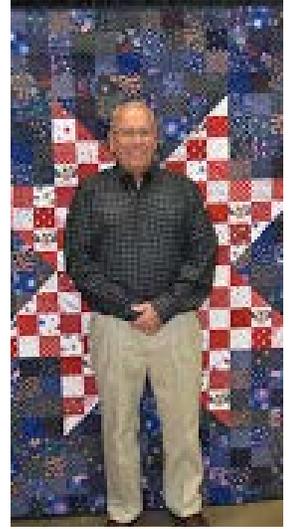
Service Coin nominations can be made by letter to the QOVF Executive Director, who presents the nomination to the Board of Directors for approval. The nominator must state in a few paragraphs why she or he feels the nominee should receive this recognition.

*(About the author: Marianne Fons serves on the QOVF Board of Directors. Her passion for QOVF and the mission we serve is evident in her writings and her actions. Contact Marianne at [Marianne.fons@qovf.org](mailto:Marianne.fons@qovf.org).)*

## IOWA CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM

The annual QOVF Conference was held May 24-25, 2016 in Des Moines, Iowa. A fun and informative event, attendees had the opportunity to learn more about QOVF and to see sights in the surrounding area. Turn to page 3 for a photo recap of many highlights from the event.





## MILITARY WORKING DOG HONORED VIA HIS HANDLER'S QOV

Information provided by Pam Leese, Florida State Coordinator

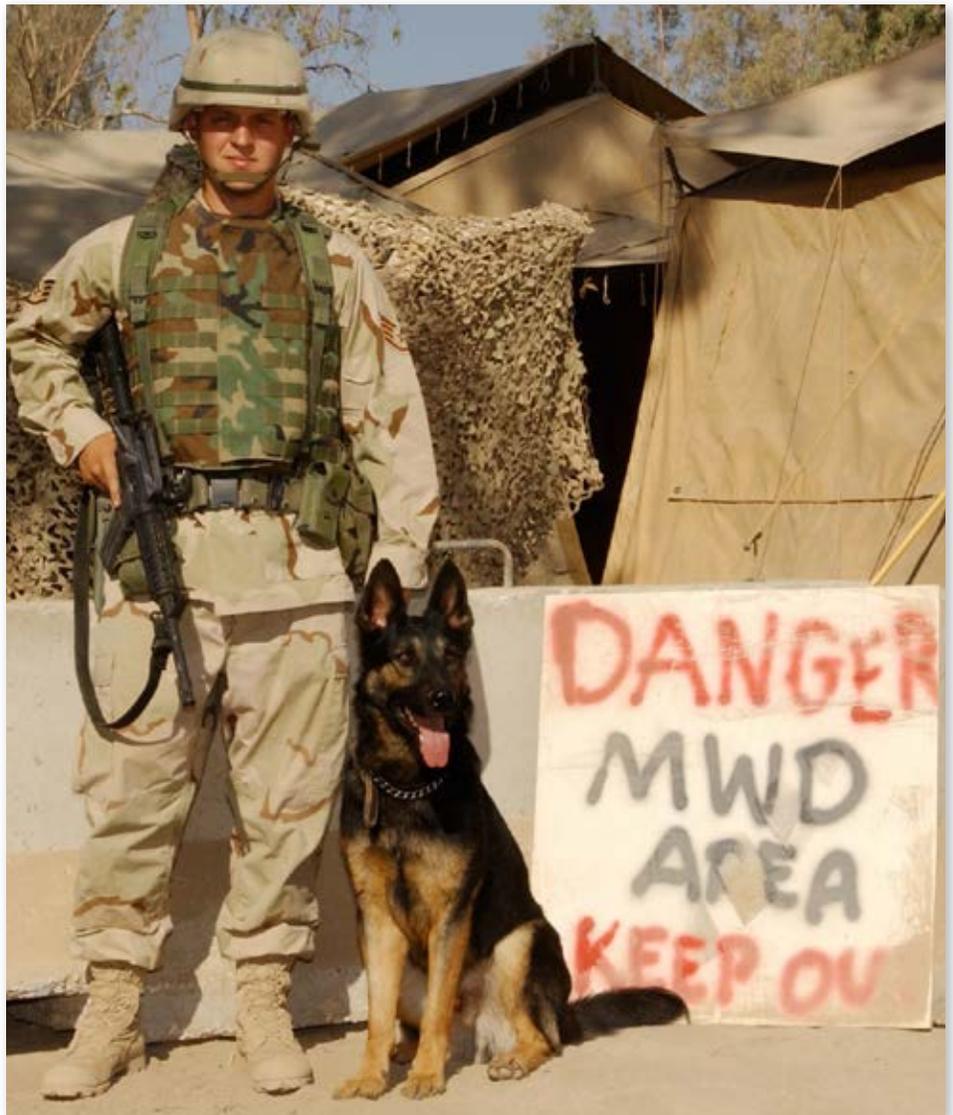
Eunice Hartley, the mother of an Air Force veteran, was stopped in her tracks when she saw a QOV on display at a quilt show—the quilt featured a fabric panel honoring military service dogs. Eunice's son Dan Hartley had served as a Military Working Dog (MWD) Handler in Iraq in 2003.

Eleanor Frick, who happened to be staffing the display, got Eunice's contact information, and soon had located the special panel in a vendor's booth so she could make Dan a QOV that recognized his unique type of service.

After receiving his quilt, Dan wrote to Eleanor, "I cannot begin to tell you how honored and blessed I feel that you made this for me. Your letter says you've been making QOVs for thirteen years, and I want to thank you for the difference you have surely made in many veterans' lives."

Dan went on to describe why his quilt was so special to him. "The enormous contributions of our Military Working Dog partners can sometimes be overlooked. Cody, the handsome German shepherd I worked with, was a "dual purpose dog," meaning he was a patrol dog as well as an Explosive Detection Dog (EDD)." Dan explained that when you deploy as an MWD Handler, you do not go as part of a large unit. It is just you and the dog. His and Cody's main mission was to find Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED), basically car bombs.

"At the time Cody and I were in Baghdad, there was a shortage of EDDs. Cody and I would work our shifts at the USAF camps, then head over to the Army checkpoints to give them some peace of mind that while we were there



US Air Force SSgt (ret.) and MWD Handler Dan Hartley and his loyal partner Cody, spent time in Iraq on patrol missions to find explosives, primarily car bombs.

no VBIED would make it to them, or past them. Cody would work, and work, and work. In August, temperatures reached almost 140 degrees. Cody got sunburns on the bottom of his paws from walking, but he and the other MWDs would continue without complaint, their only reward a pat on the head and a toy to play with."

In closing, Dan wrote, "These individual dogs will only be remembered by the handlers who worked with them. The beautiful quilt you made, in my mind, is just as much for Cody as it is for me. When I see this quilt, I see Cody. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart."

## NEW FACES ON QOVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

By Marianne Fons

**Sue Reich** of Connecticut began making quilts as a child, instructed by her grandmother. She was a young mother

when the quilting revival associated with the 1976 American Bicentennial began. A participant in the Connecticut Quilt Search Project, Sue served on the board of directors and was instrumental in the writing and publication of *Quilts and Quiltmakers Covering Connecticut*. From



Sue Reich

Continued on page 5

2004–2010, Sue served on the board of directors of American Quilt Study Group, her last two years as its president.

Many will recognize Sue as a national lecturer and author of quilting books, particularly on the subject of wartime quilts. Sue is the mother of three children and grandmother to five. She is also a Gold Star Mother; her son, US Army Major Stephen Reich was killed on a rescue mission in Afghanistan in 2005. Sue’s professional career was as a registered nurse.

Sue was elected Chair of the QOVF Board of Directors at the group’s face-to-

face meeting in Des Moines last month. Sue Reich’s email address is [sue.reich@QOVF.org](mailto:sue.reich@QOVF.org).

**Renelda Peldunas-Harter** of Virginia is also an avid quilter, starting in 1982 with a Simplicity pattern for a Log Cabin quilt. She is a veteran, serving over 27 years on active duty and as a reservist. Her sewing machine and fabric collection, she reports, moved with her many times during her career in the US Army.

Renelda has designed patterns and is the author of the book, *From Ensign’s Bars to Colonel’s Stars: Honoring Those Who Serve*. She is a docent at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of

Natural History in Washington, DC, and serves as treasurer of the Loudoun Breast Health Network, a 501(c)(3) non-profit that assists women with breast cancer in Loudoun County, VA. Renelda and her husband Bill, also a retired military officer, have two grown sons. Renelda Peldunas-Harter’s email address is [renelda.peldunas@QOVF.org](mailto:renelda.peldunas@QOVF.org).



Renelda Peldunas-Harter

Please join QOVF in welcoming these two estimable ladies to the QOVF Board of Directors.

*The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.*

### QOVF Core Values

Treating people with respect • Promoting excellence • Valuing service over self • Being accountable



**QOVF Founder and Board Member Emeritus**  
Catherine Roberts

**Board of Directors**  
Sue Reich, Chair  
June Moore, Secretary/Historian  
Michelle Leonard, Treasurer  
Marianne Fons, Quilting Industry  
Walt Davis, VP and Military Affairs  
Renelda Peldunas-Harter, Member  
Eric McCarty, Member

**Executive Staff**  
Ann Rehbein, Executive Director  
[ann.rehbein@QOVF.org](mailto:ann.rehbein@QOVF.org)

Ginger Fondren, Assistant Executive Director  
[ginger.fondren@QOVF.org](mailto:ginger.fondren@QOVF.org)

Jackie Dudek, Director of Membership  
[jackie.dudek@QOVF.org](mailto:jackie.dudek@QOVF.org)

Elayne Gassett, Longarm Coordinator  
[elayne.gassett@QOVF.org](mailto:elayne.gassett@QOVF.org)

Deanna Bryce, Destination Coordinator  
[deanna.bryce@QOVF.org](mailto:deanna.bryce@QOVF.org)

Debra Coppa, Coordinator of Individual Requests  
[debra.coppa@QOVF.org](mailto:debra.coppa@QOVF.org)

Jeff Thorne, Director of Donor Relations  
[jeff.thorne@QOVF.org](mailto:jeff.thorne@QOVF.org)

Suzanne DiCarlo, Information Desk Coordinator  
[suzanne.dicarlo@QOVF.org](mailto:suzanne.dicarlo@QOVF.org)

Debra Kaldenberg, Special Events Coordinator  
[debra.kaldenberg@QOVF.org](mailto:debra.kaldenberg@QOVF.org)

Jennifer Keltner, Managing Editor  
[jennifer.keltner@QOVF.org](mailto:jennifer.keltner@QOVF.org)

Myra Coddens, Coordinator of Quilt Shop Relationship Development  
[myra.coddens@QOVF.org](mailto:myra.coddens@QOVF.org)

Dawn Gifford, IT Director  
[dawn.gifford@QOVF.org](mailto:dawn.gifford@QOVF.org)

Ginger Fondren, Director of Software Management  
[ginger.fondren@QOVF.org](mailto:ginger.fondren@QOVF.org)

Under Our Wings Program Coordinator  
**Position Open**

Mailing Address:  
Quilts of Valor Foundation  
PO Box 191  
Winterset, IA 50273

For more information about QOVF, see [www.QOVF.org](http://www.QOVF.org)  
For more information about the BOD, the QOVF staff, and how to contact your State Coordinator (SCs) go to <http://www.qovf.org/content/about-us.html>.



Photos that appear in *Threads* are either used with permission or are public domain images. The editorial team makes every effort to credit photographers.

### Newsletter

Ann Rehbein, *Editorial Director*  
Jennifer Keltner, *Managing Editor*  
Tony Jacobson, *Graphic Designer*