



REFLECTIONS & RESOLUTIONS

By Cynthia Chaffee

As a year ends, the news media reviews the old year's celebrity deaths, catastrophic events, sports highlights, and weather records, exhorting us to make resolutions, eat healthy, get fit, and organize ourselves.

As I reflect on 2013, I remember different events, and make my own personal resolutions. Here are my recollections:

- LTC Todd C. (a college classmate of my son) and two others killed in Afghanistan. Todd, on his fourth deployment and previously wounded in Iraq, leaves behind his wife, two young children, his parents, extended family members, college friends, and Army colleagues who cherish his memory.
 - Jennifer, wounded in combat, and a victim of MST (military sexual trauma). Suffering from severe PTSD, she rose from her wheelchair, hobbled forward, and stood at attention to receive her Quilt of Valor. She was still a soldier. Wrapped in her quilt, she said, "Ma'am, this means more to me than when the General pinned the Purple Heart on me."
 - A Thank You note I received in October from staff at the Military Medical Unit in Afghanistan: *Cynthia, your quilt was awarded to a beautiful and brave Army soldier and nurse, 23 years old, killed in action on October 6, 2013, in an IED blast. We laid her quilt on her for her final trip home and for her family to cherish.*
- A warrior who asked if I'd like to see the QOV she received during PTSD/MST treatment in Houston. It was tiny, maybe 36 × 36, and threadbare, the label too faded to read. When I offered a new one, she became tense until she understood she would keep both, that we'd be honored if she would accept another Quilt of Valor. Patsy's smile told me her replacement will become threadbare also!
 - The young soldier who committed suicide in his barracks at Ft. Hood on Christmas Eve. What battles was he fighting that made him surrender?
 - The Navy nurse at a Returning Warrior Weekend event who tried to give his QOV back to me. "I can't accept this," he said. "Not all of the wounded I treated in Afghanistan got QOVs because we ran out." I renewed my commitment that day, and when I promised him I'd continue to send as many quilts overseas as I could he accepted his quilt. (Since then, with the war winding down and one medical facility now closed, our contacts in Afghanistan tell us they have enough quilts and encourage us to honor returning service personnel with QOVs as they reach stateside.)

These remembrances and others help me focus on my New Year's resolutions.

I resolve to continue volunteering my time, my sewing skills, and my resources to honor my son, an active duty Army pilot, for his service, and to honor all the sons and daughters of America who have



A US Navy nurse receives his QOV and his hug.



Combat veterans receive quilts and thanks at a Returning Warrior Weekend event.

volunteered to protect the freedoms of our nation.

(About the author: Cynthia Chaffee is Texas State Coordinator. She lives in Houston. Contact Cynthia at cynthia.chaffee@QOVF.org)

NATIONAL SEW DAY KICKS OFF THIS MONTH

By Betsy Podrznik

The countdown to National Sew Day on February 1st continues!

Since the announcement in November of National Sew Day, Quilts of Valor quilters have been thinking of blocks and patterns for their quilts, deciding how much chocolate to have on hand, and looking forward to a great day of friends coming together to make more quilts in one day than ever before. Each top completed gets us closer to our 100,000th.

State Coordinators (SC) have received an electronic kit of materials to share with local groups, shops, and guilds. The kit contains tips on getting the word out, staying organized, and having fun. Our SCs are excited about making National Sew Day a success.

To measure that success we are registering the quilters who plan to participate and counting the tops as they are completed, so it's important to



Smiling faces and busy hands at "sew day" a little earlier in America's history.

register to sew NOW by emailing me at betsy.podrznik@QOVF.org with the following information:

1. Name, address, city, state, and zip
2. Phone number (so I can contact you during the day)
3. Who you are sewing with (self, group or shop)

Throughout the day our Executive Director Susan Gordon and I will be pulling names from the list of registrants and calling the winning participants with prizes and gifts that have been donated. You could be the winner of the grand prize, a Janome Artistic AQ18dx Midarm Quilting Machine or other great gifts.

Once you complete your top, email me again, attaching a photo of you and your top. We'll be posting photos on Facebook all day, <https://www.facebook.com/quiltsofvalorfoundation>

If you would like your own electronic kit of materials or information about registering, or have questions, contact me! My phone number and email address are below.

(About the Author: Betsy Podrznik is Coordinator of Special Events for the Quilts of Valor Foundation. She lives in Lawrenceville, GA. Contact Betsy at 770-841-3572, betsy.podrznik@QOVF.org.)

2014 LAPEL PIN AVAILABLE NOW!

By Susan Gordon



Our gorgeous 2014 lapel pin designed by artist Emily Sheeder is a limited edition.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is pleased to announce a 2014 "official" Quilts of Valor lapel pin. The message on the pin is "Stitching Beyond the 100,000th

QOV" because we expect to award the 100,000th Quilt of Valor within the first few months of the new year.

We know quilters love to memorialize places and events by collecting beautiful pins. The Executive Staff wanted a way to commemorate this amazing accomplishment, so for the first time in several years we have designed an official QOVF pin. Many thanks to our passionate and dedicated Quilts of Valor quilters—toppers and machine quilters.

Get your own limited edition 2014 QOVF pin for a donation of \$5 by contacting your State Coordinator, or by sending an email to pins@QOVF.org. Look for a new collector's pin each year as we celebrate our achievements and set our goals for 2015 and beyond.

FROM THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE: INFORMATION DESK COORDINATOR

By Julia Schroeder

As the person behind the QOVF electronic "Information Desk," I function as the welcoming committee for new people registering with QOVF, the fielder of questions about anything related to QOVs, and the conduit between individuals and groups within our organization. Each of these functions is critical to our ongoing mission.

After receiving an on-line registration, I contact new members or groups and greet them with a Welcome Letter. The letter contains contact information for the person's State Coordinator (SC) and information about signing up for the newsletter. I encourage "newbies" to contact their coordinator to be added to the State Coordinator's communication list. Since September I have welcomed over 80 new individuals and over 40 groups, and those numbers go up daily. The days following NBC story on QOVF resulted in increased registrations, more questions to answer, and of course, more requests for QOVs.

Answering questions from the info@qovf.org email address can be easy, challenging, or just plain interesting.

Questions range from inquiries about QOVs themselves—size, reason for presentation cases, and labeling—to inquiries one might

not anticipate. I have fielded donation offers of a quilting frame and a sewing machine. Such would-be donors are referred to their SCs. The friend of a fallen soldier inquired about getting a quilt for his friend's family. I directed him to Home of the Brave Quilt Project, a provider of quilts for families of our fallen heroes, www.homeofthebravequilts.com. The most fun email was from a Girl Scout who needed information on QOV to earn her Gold Award, so I directed her to Hannah Bailey, our Youth Liaison.

As QOVF moves forward, I hope the Information Desk can be helpful to all—the Board of Directors, State Coordinators, local volunteers, and the general public. Suggestions are always welcome; just contact me at info@qovf.org

(About the Author: Julia Schroeder is the QOVF Information Desk Coordinator for the QOVF. She lives in Lincoln, NE. Contact Julia at julia.schroeder@QOVF.org.)



HOW MANY BLOCKS WILL YOU BRING TO THE SHOW?

By Marianne Elliott

Two block challenges for one great cause!

Janet-Lee Santeusano, founder of MQX (Machine Quilters Exposition), hopes block challenges at her New England MQX show in Manchester, NH, in April and her Midwest show in Springfield, IL, in September will produce a combined total of 1,250 blocks for the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

Last spring's inaugural effort at the New England event collected over 300 blocks according to Janet, an avid supporter of QOVF.



Anvil

Buzz Saw

Mississippi

Three challenge blocks selected from patterns by Marcia Hohn of Quilter's Cache can be stitched in two color paths, patriotic or modern grays. There are prizes for the three top contributors.

Drop off challenge blocks at either of the festivals. Can't attend? Mail your blocks.

Go to <http://www.mqxshow.com/QOVBlockDrive> for more information and details.

WW II VETS WRAPPED IN COMFORT ON VETERANS DAY

By Marianne Elliott

On a crisp November day, under clear, blue skies, Quilts of Valor Foundation honored two World War II veterans, John Lahm, Marine Corps, and Charlie Scott, US Navy, at the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. QOVF partnered with the Scottish-American Military Society (SAMS), Post #2, "Post of the Potomac," which supported the award ceremony that took place after the two men laid the Marine Corps and the SAMS memorial wreaths at the Freedom Wall of the open-air memorial.

With bagpipes playing and friends and family following, the SAMS contingent escorted John and Charlie to the Pacific Gate of the memorial. In front of the fountains symbolic of the Pacific theater in which both John and Charlie fought, the SAMS color guard stood at attention as citations were read and the Quilts of Valor awarded and wrapped around their shoulders.

John's quilt, *Stars and Stripes*, was made by Liz Fong of Mother Seton Parish Quilting Angels in Maryland. The design was created by Mark Lipinski and was featured in *Love of Quilting* magazine. This quilt was selected to honor John's service as a Marine with hopes it reminds him of John Philip Sousa conducting the Marine Corps Band playing "The Stars and Stripes Forever."



At the WWII Pacific Gate Charlie Scott (left) warmed by his quilt, *Anchors Aweigh*, made by Marianne Fons using *Island Batiks' Quilted in Honor fabrics*, and John Lahm (right) comforted by his quilt, *Stars and Stripes*, made by Liz Fong.

Charlie's quilt, *Anchors Aweigh*, is an updated version of a 1942 Alice Brooks WWII pattern, which cost 11 cents the year it was published. This quilt was perfect for a WWII US Navy veteran sailor who is also the 23rd member of the SAMS organization that honored him.

Ending the award ceremony on a musical note, the bagpipes played the traditional military songs, the "Marines' Hymn" and "Anchors Aweigh," to honor veterans touched by war and thank them for their service.

NEW THREADS EDITOR: MEET MARIANNE ELLIOTT

By Susan Gordon

Her love of writing makes Marianne Elliott perfect for her new role at QOVF. After she submitted articles for publication, another Marianne, Marianne Fons, suggested we invite her to get more involved. I am happy to introduce Marianne Elliott as our new *Threads* Managing Editor. (BTW, I call her "Elliott" to distinguish her from that other Marianne, who I now call "Fons.")



Marianne Elliott

Following Elliott's career in the Navy, she worked for universities, government agencies, the Army, and the Navy, addressing issues of ethics associated with research on humans. She now has her own consulting business.

Marianne Elliott's first QOV experience was a 12-hour quilting marathon by the Southern Tier QOV group in central New York one Veteran's Day. After that, she decided to devote as much energy as possible to making quilts for those touched by war.

Elliott says, "In addition to information sharing, my goal in *Threads* is to help tell the story of our foundation by introducing the people dedicated to making QOVs and those to whom they are awarded."

Marianne describes her husband Bill, who also served in the Navy, as the right-hand guy who supports her in all her QOVF-related projects. Marianne and Bill live in Frederick, MD, have a grown son and daughter, and are active in the Scottish-American Military Association, which combines Bill's Scottish heritage and their military backgrounds.

When asked what she'd like to say to our volunteer community, Marianne offered her own invitation:

Tell YOUR QOV story in *Threads*. It is easy!

- Share your thoughts in your own words. Write from your heart. We will edit.
- Send what you want to say via email or as an attached document.
- Keep to about 300 words. Most writing programs count them for you as type.
- Include 2-3 photos with your story. They are truly worth a thousand words!
- Contact Marianne Elliott at Marianne.elliott@qovf.gov



I WANT YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL SEW DAY!

Support our National QOV Sew Day on Saturday, February 1, 2014. **Join thousands of quilters stitching toward our 100,000th Quilt of Valor.** Sew with a group, sew at a quilt shop, or sew in your own sewing room, but be sure to register so we can count how many of our QOV nation are at their sewing machines on February 1st, and how many tops are completed. Support QOVF and sew, sew. To register, email Betsy Podriznik at betsy.podriznik@QOVF.org

STATISTICS

Iraq
Killed: 4,489
Wounded: Many

Afghanistan
Killed: 2,302
Wounded: Many

Suicides to Date:
Statistics Unknown

Total QOVs Awarded as of 12/16/14
95,600



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

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

Newsletter

Susan Gordon, *Editorial Director*
Marianne Elliott, *Managing Editor*
Tony Jacobson, *Graphic Designer*

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