

January 2005 Newsletter

Operation Iraqi Freedom: This Ain't Your "Band of Brothers" War

1/23/05

There's snow outside. It's cold as it gets here in DE. Perfect day to stay inside and tie up loose QOV administrative ends and then SEW!

First, I want to say 'thank you' to all of you who have stepped up to the plate and taken a few swings at this monstrous pitcher called *War*. In the fourteen months I have been doing *Quilts for Soldiers*, any thoughts I had this war was following any of the conventional rules the 101st Airborne's *Easy Company* from *Band of Brothers* followed have dissipated. I have heard from primary sources this war is like few others. Our troops are surviving at a higher rate because of better body armor but at a cost: More injuries. The Department of Defense updates their wounded numbers once to twice a month using criteria that only counts about one in three injuries. Today, the number of wounded is 10,371 with the actual number probably being closer to 35,000. On a comparative scale, how does one rate an injury acquired from a parasite or car crash in the Operational Theatre vs. an injury from shrapnel? Both may have chronic effects but one is more easily identifiable as a 'war' injury. As I have been adding to our Chaplain Contact list, I have gone over the program with the Newbie-Chaplains. One asked me if our QOVs were only being given to injuries sustained from enemy action. I said "No." ANY one sustaining an injury from this hellish war qualifies. He replied he was relieved we were not being "Pattonesque" in our approach. (He was referring to General Patton's slapping a soldier in a hospital for 'psych' problems during WW2. For those of you in the dark, I recommend the movie "Patton" with George C. Scott playing Patton.)

Numbers in General

Last week, Chaplain (CH) Killough from Brooke Army Medical Center (burn center) asked me to send him 'as many QOVs as possible.' When pressed for a number, he said "100." Since January 12th, you have sent 76 QOVs to him. That's 76 in 9 days!

Chaplains & Rumors

I have added more Chaplains to the list: 13 total; 12 Army and 1 Navy. The lone civilian on the list is our contact for vets. I am waiting call backs from Hawaii and Alaska. The list continues to grow as our wounded spread out from Walter Reed to the smaller army medical facilities. As we add these new Chaplains, please be patient with them. They are learning the 'QOV ropes' in addition to all their other duties. It took our Walter Reed and Brooke Chaplains some months and many QOVs before they really understood the importance of letting us know when our QOVs got there. If you don't hear from them in a timely fashion, email them.

Also, there was a rumor going round that no more quilts were need becuz Walter Reed and Bethesda were 'chock-a-block' full of everything, including quilts. Nope. The Chaplains at the smaller army medical facilities told me *their* soldiers haven't received

anything much less quilts! Because of you, this is now changing. Additionally, we have yet to really open the “veteran’s door” for wounded vets in the community.

Also, consider this. When we finally pull out of Iraq, many groups devoted to sending care packages to the troops will be able to fold up shop. We won’t because of the sheer number of wounded who haven’t been offered a quilt. I suspect this project will continue long after the Iraqi War headlines die down.

QOV People & Deliveries

Numbers: We have 243 quilt-toppers and 144 longarmers. Total number of QOVs since day one-approximately 343. Since Dec. 2004, 113. That’s 113 in less than two months!

General QOV Thoughts

Pixs of the Web

More of you have uploaded your pixs to a server like Webshots (www.webshots.com) so I can link to them from my site with your name on the photo’s page. If you haven’t done this becuz of computer and/or software timid-ness, you might ask for help. It really is easy albeit a bit time consuming to set it up. After that, it’s a snap.

QOV Patterns & Things

Several of you are designing your own QOV patterns. If you are willing to share them with the general public, I would be happy to provide a downloadable spot here on the site. If we got enough together, perhaps we can think about self-publishing a pattern book with patterns, designs and thoughts on wartime quilts. I found an old appliquéd quilt at a yard sale which I bought. I transferred the pattern and made templates which are surprisingly easy and fast to appliqué. Anyone interested?

Journaling

In all your wartime readings, do you remember anything written by the mothers and grandmothers of the troops? I don’t recall any. I believe journaling while we make these QOVs is valuable. Not only for us but for our intended soldier. One day, your wounded soldier will have enough comprehension and life experience to read *and* appreciate what you have written and made for him. So, please think about jotting down your thoughts on paper, computer and/or videotaping them. That keepsake pocket is begging for your thoughts along with washing instructions.

Donors & Businesses & Guilds Going the Extra Step

I am going to make a space on the website to acknowledge donors, businesses, guilds and quilt shops that have helped this effort. If you know of any, please let me know. If I haven’t posted them in a timely fashion, please remind me.

QOV Challenge

I hope you consider entering the challenge. I know no one here will enter it because of the prizes. You are doing this for the soldiers. BUT...there ARE some nice prizes and it is a way to publicize this cause. Marcia Stevens has been very gracious taking on this

cause as her way of saying 'thank you' after 21 years in the longarming arena. (For those of you quilt-toppers who don't know who she is, I have discovered she is one of the founding mothers, if not THE founding mother of longarming.) The fact we have both communities working together benefits us all...quilt-toppers, longarmers, and the quilting industry alike. We quilt-toppers are seeing magical transformations of our 'plain vanilla tops' with beautiful custom quilting that would normally cost an arm and a leg. Longarmers are able to get involved in this war effort doing what they love best...wrestling with that monster (my take on that machine). Suppliers get more orders for their products, etc etc. And, finally, the wounded service person gets a real American heirloom quality quilt for their very own.

If you have entered the challenge but haven't heard from Marcia, you can email her. The Chaplains have been told what to do with the Challenge postcards. But, let's remember that they are new to this QOV stuff. They'll eventually catch on. It'll all work out in the end.

Tartan Fabric

I still have some green and red tartan fabric for the asking.

QOV Presentations

Mom and I got to meet CH Perdue at Camp Pendleton last week. He showed us three QOVs that were in his office. The whole office was talking about how lovely they were and how great the quilting was. They actually 'discovered' hidden words and football players/balls in the quilting while we were there! I just wanted you all to know that these QOVs inspire ALL who come in contact with them.

QOV Sending Changes

I am sending a separate email with these slight changes. I want to make as sure as possible all read it. I think you will be pleased.

Conclusion

That's all for now. I am indebted to you all for not only talking the talk but chewing gum at the same time when it comes to making QOVs for our wounded. There are many good groups out there with the same goals. Carol Mitchell of southern Maryland deserves special mention in this category as she has facilitated the giving of over 1000 quilts.

Finally, here's to a quick ending of this war and to the bringing back of all our troops safe and sound of mind and body and soul.

God bless you all and may you find a fabulous fabric sale close to you and an empty suitcase to bring your buys home in.

Catheirne