What turned out as an offer to cover an entire marine battalion with wartime QOVs and travel across country collecting QOVs became a journey of discovery and renewal for me. I had so much fun going across country meeting you all. I loved being escorted by the American Legion Riders in NE and MO and the Rolling Thunder in NC. If you ever get a chance to be a part of their rides, do so. You’ll be covered in goose bumps and your heart will be filled with pride! I discovered dreams can and do come true in spite of all signs saying “no way”. We told our story from California to North Carolina. We listened to your stories and now want everyone to hear them. This can be done with this newsletter and by going to the blog where you can read our entries. But it’s mainly Gail’s entertaining and down-to-earth entries.

Besides stories from our trip across country including Vicki’s trip from New Hampshire to NC, the newsletter also has QOV Community News from West to East coast and from Canada and the UK. I love seeing involvement from kids, and in these particular cases, the Girl Scouts. The Tidewater Quilters Guild talks about reaching a new milestone. Congratulations! The QOV Quilters from Galesburg, IL picture of their wartime Quilts of Valor hanging on a clothesline is one that warms my heart. Their wartime QOVs come in all different patterns and colors. I see comfort and healing on that clothesline. Don’t you? Then we hear from Canada and the UK...Quilts of Valor. I am pleased our coalition warriors are being awarded their own QOVs and fashioned by their own quilters and their needs. The Quotable section is where the gold is. I encourage all of you to read them.

Finally, we send Mr. Belmont our best wishes for a speedy recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and the whole Belmont clan. Still at war; still quilting.

Catherine Roberts (8/10)
Executive Director/Founder, QOVF

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Thank you Quilts of Valor! Thank you for supporting the Marines and Corpsmen of 3rd Battalion 8th Marines. Your trip across America, your efforts to make sure that each member of the 3/8 received a QOV, simply amazing!

My husband Charlie and I just returned from an incredible adventure! For months, we, and a committee of 12 have been planning a reunion, a reunion of those Marines and Corpsmen who served with our nephew in 1st Battalion 8th Marines during their 2003 and 2004 deployments to Iraq. The families of those 1/8 Marines who lost their lives in Iraq were also invited to attend this, their first reunion since the 1/8 memorial service held at Camp Lejeune in March of 2005.

Anxiety, the anxiety of a committee whose members had never planned anything like this before. Anxiety, the anxiety of Marines and Corpsmen who were not sure what to expect, who were not sure how they would react to being together again. The anxiety of Marines and Corpsmen who had not seen the families of those who died for four years.

Anxiety, the anxiety of the families of those who died, would this reunion be too emotional for them to bear.

Success! The reunion exceeded our expectations. The reunion was more than we ever dreamed that it could be. There are simply no words to describe the incredible time had by all.

We held the reunion at a Holiday Inn in Arlington, Virginia from July 1 through July 5. We allowed the Marines and families as much free time as possible. July 2 found everyone at the Barracks at 8th and I in Washington, D.C. The Evening Parade, Marine Band, Marine Corps Silent Drill Team did not disappoint. July 3 found a number of reunion guests at the Washington Nationals vs. Atlanta Braves baseball game, complete with fireworks after the game. The Washington Nationals generously donated the tickets.

Saturday July 4 found all of us at the Holiday Inn for two very special events. The families of those who lost their lives in Iraq were presented personalized Honor and Remember Flags. This event, the speakers, the presentation of the flags, the standing room only audience, are indescribable. Please check out the Honor and Remember Flag website. You can help this organization by sending messages to your Congressmen and Senators encouraging them to vote “yes” when the bill to make the flag an official flag of the United States comes before them. You can help with donations. And you can help this organization present flags to the families of all who have given their lives in service to their country. (http://honorandremember.org/)

The Honor and Remember Flag presentation was followed by a lunch buffet that far surpassed our expectations!

The sights of Washington, DC, the fireworks, the visits to Arlington National Cemetery where four of our 1/8 Marines rest, the time together, amazing and wonderful. And we hope, healing.

No one wanted to leave, all are hoping that we will hold another reunion in 2 to 3 years. And we will. 1/8 2003/2004 is a family. Our belief that this is a family was reinforced a thousand times over during this reunion. So many hugs, some tears, but above all else love. The bond between the Marines, Corpsmen and families is forever, the commitment to supporting each other no matter what is forever, the love is forever.

Semper Fidelis: Always Faithful
Always faithful to each other, always faithful to those who died, always faithful to the Corps and to America. Always a family!

Karen Fredrickson
FROM DOWNRANGE
Our first Stop - Salt Lake City. We met with Diane Jaeger and Frank McCombs.

Frank wears 3 hats - VFW, Marine Corps League, and Quilts of Valor.

Diane is also a Veteran and loves Quilts of Valor.

We loaded 34 QOVs into the trailer.

The next morning we met Diane and Frank for breakfast and had the biggest, best pancakes.

Diane Jaeger and Frank McCombs.

Visit the QOV Road Trip Blog at http://quiltsofvalor.wordpress.com/

It is hard for me to believe our trip has come to an end. This mission is complete but our Quilts of Valor Mission will continue with more vigor and strength. We all have grown from this experience. I have learned ‘don’t wash your truck cuz it rains’. I've learned that we have the greatest quilters and supporters an organization can have and we all want the same thing - “Cover our combat warriors”. As your Operations Officer it has been an honor to represent you in this mission. I hope you felt as if you made the trip with us. Mom and Dad Belmont will always remember how good we were treated at our stops.

The following articles are from or about QOVers we met along the way. We wouldn’t have had a successful trip without them or without you - our dedicated Piecers and Longarmers. Thank you for all your efforts.

Gail - Virginia - Diane

Operations Officers
Quilt of Valor Foundation
As I followed the announcement of the Quilts of Valor Across America Road Trip in the February newsletter, I was not sure I wanted to get involved. I had just started a new job on base and was still trying to get quilts out to Iraq for QOV. I love my fellow Marines and thought that someone else will cover them; why not get more QOVs over to the Air Base where they are treated.

I returned from my trip to Victoria, Australia at the end of April and found that the route was set and locations were created for all the stops. I could not believe they were actually going to be right down the road. As POC here in the Utah, I decided it was my duty to get as many quilts as possible done and collected. I called Frank McCombs who had been asked to be the Trip POC in Salt Lake City. I thought great, a fellow QOVer!

I wrote e-mails and got on the phone with our 3 local News channels, thinking this is going to be great. So, I got to work and then found out the QOV Van was coming the same weekend as the Air Show and we most likely would not get coverage. Frank and I pressed on, being former military and VFW members. He and his wife received all the shipped QOV quilts while I spread the word at quilt groups and sent out blog site information.

As the day approached, the weather did not cooperate. It was unusually wet for Utah in June (it ended up wet most of the month). I could not wait to meet my fellow QOVers in Gail Belmont and her parents. I headed to Salt Lake City to meet them as they arrived at the hotel. I called all the local News channels again telling them what was happening and that they needed to be involved.

Being the “first stop” was nerve rattling. I was concerned that our small numbers weren’t going to be enough. I was relieved to pass over my precious cargo. I wished Gail and her parents the best of luck and hoped that they would collect enough QOVs on their trip.

I followed them everyday on the blog site and cried over every video clip and collage of pictures.

As one QOVer, I will be thrilled to do it again and cannot wait to find out what Catherine Roberts has up her sleeve next.

For now, I’m collecting QOV signature blocks from all over the world and look forward, over the next few months, to creating more QOVs for our warriors.

Ok I’m done. My hands can not take this pounding on a keyboard. I’m going back to touching soft fabric and creating my next QOV.

Hugs to one and all.

Diane Jaeger
Syracuse, Utah
Utah. I was looking to try out all the longarms to help me produce my quilts without the pain in my hand of pulling them on my Pfaff. That is where I met Marcia from MN. She was hosting the QOV booth that year and was a judge at the show. I was so thrilled to get involved and learn how I can do so much with this since I'm one with a very big giving heart.

The following year, 2008, I hosted the QOV booth as well as making 9 or 10 quilts that year for QOV. I figured out a way to take my VA disability money, purchase my longarm, and still give back to my fellow service members in harms way. A win win situation.

I never received a QOV but I cannot tell you how happy and pleased I am when I’m quilting. It has been the therapy I needed after war. I could never imagine my life without quilting if it was taken away from me due to my disability. So, I stay positive with one QOV at a time.

How thrilled I was to award 40 QOVs during the Flag Day ceremony to Veterans of World War 2 here in Utah. The Veterans of Foreign Wars named me Mr. VFW of 2008. Now I cannot wait to host the QOV booth next year at HMQS.

I have had a number of articles in local papers about my quilts in Iraq. In August 2008, I was finally retired from the USAF, but still have a job with the base helping the war efforts. I then come home and quilt into the late night.

I have been able to be a POC for QOV here in Utah and love spreading the word. It is natural to me now since speaking to so many troops during my career. I also organize QOV shipments over to Iraq at the air base medical unit.

In April 2009, I spent a month in Victoria, Australia attending their Naval passing out Parade (Graduation) and spreading the QOV message there with 4 quilt groups to see if they want to start something for their men and women in the armed forces. I then rushed back to Utah to help Frank McCombs, post commander of the base’s VFW, get ready for the Quilts of Valor Across America Road Trip.

Diane Jaeger
Syracuse, Utah

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**QOV Presented to the IQSC**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

“Quilts of Valor director Catherine Roberts and Director of Operations Gail Belmont presented the IQSC with the quilt you will view this month. It is an outstanding example of contemporary quiltmaking and will be cherished as a valued historical object of material culture from this part of the 21st century.”

Please enjoy this month’s offering and consider sharing the Quilt of the Month with a friend.

http://www.quiltstudy.org/discover/quilt_of_the_month.html
I’ve never met 2 women so full of energy and more energy as Gail and Catherine!! I met up with them at the motel, about 1 PM, I think … we had some confusion about a motel change, I took the scenic route to find them!! LOL

Anyway, we had to go back to the first motel to meet the Legion Riders, which was not a problem, it even stopped raining on our parade! Captain Chuck and 5 other riders gave us one great escort to the Quilt Study. We spent probably a 30 minutes visiting with the Riders, Catherine interviewed each, took lots of pictures. Even showed some quilts to some kids who came by wondering what we were doing!! Catherine and I took off before the escort, I had to pull off into a turning lane, to wait for them to catch up, so Catherine to shoot them with the camera, then we drove along side of them all the way down Cornhusker Hwy. which is on the north side of Lincoln; we managed to stay together until we got to 27th street, which is a big intersection. I was suppose to get up in front of the escort, but due traffic flow I could not .. once we got to 33rd street, I cut through a parking lot, hoping Chuck would slow them down so I could get in front, but those Riders were having too much fun … so we followed behind. There was a group outside waiting for us at the Quilt Study.

Sara and her group of Craft Ladies did a grand job having of displaying the quilts along the railing up to the 2nd floor where the reception was held. I’m going to guess and say about 50 people were there. I think
our local TV station channel 10 and NETV (public TV) interviewed Catherine and Gail.

Once the reception started Maureen introduced Sara, which she did a great job speaking, then Gail spoke. I think this is when they presented the QUILT to the director of the Quilt Study! Oh MY, what a beauty it is! I felt that Quilt Study reps, were very surprised and pleased with the presentation!!!! Our Legion Riders stayed and enjoyed the reception, they are a great bunch of veterans! We all just visited and did LOTS of public relations … one quilter was still finishing her quilt, sitting there hand stitching the binding. Another drove from Omaha with 5 quilts, along with 5 of her 9 kids her hubby is deployed. I’m still floating on cloud nine!! It was a wonderful Afternoon!! We all left the Quilt Study about 6 PM, 2 riders escorting Gail and Crew back to the motel. The escort will meet them again in the morning to escort to the NE border … I hope to be at the rally point in the morning to see them off!

Ladies, I’m just in total awe of what we have accomplished!! Thank you one and all!!!

Julia Schroeder
Lincoln, Nebraska

June 11, 2009

The DAY has come and gone. I finally got to meet Catherine after over 5 years of corresponding with her via the Internet. She is everything I expected and more. I don’t know if anyone can understand what it has meant to me to have the honor of being hugged by such a ball of energy. Well, maybe those of you who have come in contact with her do know what I am talking about. I also had the honor of being hugged by Gail and her mother and father. What a fantastic group of individuals it is my honor to be associated with.

This meeting came about because of the Quilts of Valor across America Road Trip. I learned about this activity through an e-mail I received from Catherine calling for 1200 QOVs needed for the 3/8 Marines returning from Afghanistan on June 15th. I had made QOVs for our wounded back

when Catherine was just beginning to get this group of all-volunteer piecers and quilters together. I made 32 QOV tops in my first two years of taking part with this fantastic group of people. People from all across the country made my tops come alive with their extraordinary skills in machine quilting. Some of these machine quilters were as far off as Alaska while others were as near as down the hall from my classroom. Sometimes I got my quilts back so I could bind them and other times the quilter bound and sent them off. I knew of only two individuals who had received my QOVs.

Bargello Quilts I learned quite a bit from reading requirements on the qovf.org web site. This time I was determined to get everything as close to the requirements as I could. Since time was an issue with me making my tops and getting them quilted, I decided I would make all my QOV’s Bargello quilts. Of course, being a former Marine, I had to
have Red, White and Blue material for my quilts. I had to have a proper label, a journal and a presentation case for each QOV.

Checking the planned itinerary for the road trip, I learned that the truck would be coming right through Kansas City on its way to Warrenton, MO. I begged for the group to make a short stop here in Kansas City so I could give them my 10 for the Marines. Gail said yes to stopping and I proceeded to work on the quilts, locating a transfer place, news coverage, and publicity to get the word out. I wasn’t certain I would be able to accomplish all that was needed to be done before the group arrived. But, I did it!

The hooking-up place to meet Catherine and Gail was Metro North Mall parking lot. I received a call from Gail when they left Lincoln, NE, at 8:20 Wednesday morning. I knew I only had about 3 ½ hours before they would be here. Gail called again when they passed by St. Joseph, MO. They were only about 50 minutes from me now. I was still working on getting the lunch I wanted to provide for them. The QOVs had been packed, lunch was nearly ready, but I hadn’t gotten myself ready to meet them yet. While cleaning myself up, the telephone kept ringing. I just stopped answering it.

I was in the van and on the way to the mall (3 ½ miles from my house) when Gail called me again. She thought they had arrived at the wrong location for I wasn’t anywhere in sight. I assured her they were in the right locale. I was just late.

I pulled into the mall parking lot and there they were! Meeting them was just like old home week. Hugs were exchanged, pictures taken, lunch transferred to their vehicle (so I wouldn’t forget to give it to them), and we were off to the Liberty Memorial. This memorial is the only National Memorial to Veterans from World War I. This Memorial was the perfect place to transfer my gifts of comfort for the returning Marines. This memorial had recently been renovated. It is magnificent.

We were given parking right in front of the curved drive by the monument honoring our fallen warriors from so long ago. I got goose bumps as I stopped my van. Hopping out of the van, I was ready to get the transfer going. I knew Catherine and her group needed to get on the road to be in Warrenton, MO, in time for their 4 PM arrival.

However, the curator for the Museum came out and graciously greeted all of us along with the Kansas City Star reporter and photographer. Questions were asked and answered. Photos were being taken. People began gathering to watch the goings on. It was awe-inspiring. Finally, it was time for the transfer. I had 11 to pass on to the trailer. But, before I had them take all away, I just had to show them my #10 Patriotic Bargello. Since Gail is retired Army and I am former Marine, the museum curator wanted a photo of us holding #10 with the memorial as the backdrop. That completed, I proceeded to show Catherine my journal I had placed in book form. I included photos of me making my quilt as well as information for the recipient on how to care for their gift. My presentation case has a pocket on front for the journal. I used an oversized safety pin to keep the journal from falling out of its place.

The transfer was completed. Photos were done. Interviews were over. Tour of the museum conducted. It was time for Catherine and Gail, Gail’s parents, the truck and trailer to head out. I escorted them all to the Kansas City Limits on I-70. They headed east while I headed home. I had completed my mission and it was a success! My thoughts turned to the group and the balance of their trip. I hoped they missed the rain that had been predicted to fall. I prayed they would be safe for the balance of their journey. I felt elated and down-hearted at the same time. The feelings were probably a result of the rush to get everything done in time.

Catherine had asked me to write about what had happened during their visit. She wanted me to write this last night (Wednesday). I couldn’t do as she had requested. I needed time and space to reflect on all that had gone on. Frankly, I was whipped. I could barely keep
my eyes open once I arrived home. As a matter of fact, I didn’t keep my eyes open. I fell asleep. Today I found the Kansas City Star printed my story about the transfer of my QOVs. I was elated. We got coverage of our group and its mission in the Heartland of America. I’m now rejuvenated to go on making my Bargello QOVs for our wounded.

Kate Kruse
Kansas City, MO

To Everyone that’s made a QUILT OF VALOR and to those who join us.

What a wild ride the first part of June was. First, we were the collection point for the midwest. Then the rush of Quilts of Valor Across America who came to Warrenton to pick up quilts, and I don't think Jean and I had time to get excited until Catherine and crew came down the road to the American Legion. WOW! We finally get to meet Catherine and Gail, and her parents.

Jean and I flew to Jacksonville, North Carolina, on Friday. A true set of quilters, the first thing we did was check out the Quilt Shops. After the crew got in, we had a busy schedule meeting with General Osterman, then an overview by Lt. Col. Odom of what a Battalion does in Afghanistan. Very interesting and informative sessions. Our day also included a tour of Camp Lejeune and eating our evening meal in the "mess hall". Somewhere along the way we were surrounded by Freedom Riders and went to a Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedication.

Sunday was the HOT day. North Carolina was HOT. Do you know what a pile of over 1300 quilts looks like!!! I do hope they got that on film. With the help of 33 young marines in training, and a group of ladies from the town of Jacksonville, we went through all the quilts, first to tag them with a QUILT OF VALOR tag and then to sort them. Ladies, Marines do not like pink. It was wonderful to have their help because we also learned what they do like--mostly patriotic, but also plaid, outdoor themes, sports of any kind and Eagles. Basically men's quilts. And even my socks were sweated wet when we completed the task.

Then came Monday the 15th. I think I went through every emotion in the book. The ceremony and giving of the Purple Hearts was --------, there is no word that comes close to describing. Tears YES! Then while Catherine and Gail gave the Purple Heart recipients their quilts we started Thanking our young men and giving them their quilts. Again, shaking hands with these young set of men, all sorts of thoughts go through your mind--"these guys could be my nephews", "this young man is some body’s baby boy". Any number of times I had to "suck it up" as the military would say. I truly wish I could share with you and let you see the smiles and thank yous we received. You would be moved.

Believe me when I say these men were very impressed with your gift to them as individuals. Jean had a tough time when one of the Platoon Leaders told us he was going home to see his new son, he'd not yet seen, and he was going to wrap the baby and himself in the quilt and enjoy the moment. I

THOUGHTS FROM JACKIE HEGGEMANN, WARRENTON, MO
The quilts poured into Knoxville on June 11, 2009. The final count was 86. The trailer was so full by the time Catherine and Gail got here, that they wondered where everything was going to go. The cameras from three television stations were rolling, the reporters had their mics turned on. The city and country mayors declared Thursday, “Quilts of Valor Day”. Catherine got to ride in the first humvee in their escort by the 278th. (Her son had ridden in a similar vehicle in Iraq.) Before all the events were over, they had presented three Quilts of Valor on Thursday and one on Friday in Tellico Village. It was some of the best media coverage they received during the entire trip, including at Camp Lejeune.

Helping to hand out the quilts to 1200 members of the 3/8 was a thrill to us: my husband, Gene (USN Retired), and me. A special thanks goes to Laurens Tullock, and Cornerstone Foundation, who paid for the Ackermann Public Relations Firm to work on the project, Mike Cohen of Ackermann PR and Kyleleen Casteel, Manager of Comfort Inn and Suites at Cedar Bluff. On the military side, thanks go to Commander Pontier, commanding officer of the Naval Operations Center in Knoxville, Major Murray with the 278th Tennessee National Guard, and Captain Easterling, commanding officer of the Marines Recruiting and Reserve Center in Knoxville. Without all of these wonderful people, the entire event would have been like just a small pebble dropped in a huge lake. Instead, we made a big splash in Tennessee.

More thanks go to those of you for all you did to make this possible. The quilters in McMinn, Bradley, Polk, Monroe and Meigs County, paid for the hotel rooms. The members of Smoky Mountain Quilt Guild in Western NC paid for the meeting room. A special thanks to Carlie Nichols, Janet Yuse and Regina Tullock for their help on Thursday.

I won’t tell you all the details, but I do want to share three short clips.

The moment that helped me understand how important these quilts are to the men and women who receive them: Captain Easterling lost three men, who were serving with the 3/8 in Afghanistan. He has been to Iraq two times. His schedule did not allow time for a QOV to be awarded to him, yet he rescheduled his Graduate Record exam so that he could receive a very special quilt presented to him by the President of the Tellico Village Quilters.

Jean Jaeger
Warrenton, MO
The moment that helped me totally understand why we are doing this: A Vietnam vet visited with us on Thursday afternoon. He had attended a convention of Vietnam vets in Washington recently and had received a quilt (Not a QOV) during that convention. It was black and white and listed a people from the Jacksonville, NC area, who had been killed during Vietnam. It was my understanding that he currently works on projects assisting widows of the Vietnam war. We do not want another generation of warriors to suffer what our Vietnam vets have suffered. In many ways, our present day warriors are suffering. The suicide rate is at its highest, threatening to claim more victims than the war itself. Our quilts can ease some of that suffering and its something we must do.

To paraphrase Catherine: We are “still at war” and we should “still be quilting”. We have not only this generation of warriors to cover, but once they are covered, we have a multitude of vets from other wars to cover. We hope you will make every effort to help.

Beth Sizemore
Knoxville, TN
Thanks to you all for “listening” … this was a day to remember. More than 200 people from the area viewed the quilts between 2 and 4 pm. The quantity and quality of the quilts was awe inspireing. Concerning Catherine and Gail … you really need to meet them as words cannot describe the warmth, enthusiasm, intelligence and determination of these women.

MJ Sepples
Loudon, TN

About 6:15 Wednesday morning Dick & I pulled out of our driveway in a northern suburb of Milwaukee and lead-footed it to St. Louis to hand over 17 Quilts of Valor. Anyone who knows me knows that I don’t do mornings – at least not that early, nor do I usually drive for 6+ straight hours. Obviously the excitement of participating in the Quilts of Valor Across America trip had me psyched!

We arrived in Collinsville, IL two hours before check in, so we lunched at Waffle House (Dick’s on-the-road favorite) and then headed for Sweet Annie’s Quilt Shop in Troy, IL. The ladies at Sweet Annie’s were very welcoming. The husband of one of the staff members is a former Marine. They didn’t know about Quilts of Valor but they do now and have the postcards at the front desk! Dick immediately headed for the red, white, and blue fabrics, he’s got a great eye for color and layout – he does all the layouts and suggests patterns; (he’s three or four quilts ahead of me – I can’t sew as fast as he designs). After doing his part for the local economy, we headed to The Quilted Garden in Edwardsville, IL. Delightful & welcoming owner (husband is former Navy), interested customers, and another round of Dick’s economic stimulus package. None of them knew about Quilts of Valor, but they do now and we left information and postcards to help spread the word.

We returned to our motel, rested, and turned on the local news. We found the local NBC affiliate coverage of the quilt group in Warrenton and their support of Quilts of Valor. We kept in contact with Gail as they headed to St. Louis and into Illinois.

They arrived at their motel in Caseyville just moments after we did. It was WONDERFUL to watch the van pull up – it just emanates excitement and joy! Catherine was the first to tumble out, quickly followed by Gail, Virginia, and Bob. Hugs and introductions and more hugs. I had met Catherine and Gail in Houston in 2007 and it was sew good to see them again! Their energy is contagious! We were delighted add 17 QOVs to the van. One quilt was from a guild in western Iowa; nine from the members of the Scrappy Quilters Guild in Williams Bay, WI; and seven that Dick and I had created. We had the four of them sign quilt blocks that we will incorporate into future quilts.

Thursday morning we enjoyed breakfast with Tamara Boots, the regional Gammill representative. She has been involved in QOV (her husband is Air Force) and was happy to share ideas for getting others involved in this wonderful project. We look forward to keeping in touch and seeing her again at the large shows in the Chicago – Madison, WI area.

After breakfast we stopped at a nearby Starbucks (my on-the-road favorite). I was wearing a new QOV tee shirt, which led to a conversation with one of the baristas. I told her all about QOV, and left her with postcards and summary sheets. She was going to dust off her sewing machine after a visit to Sweet Annie’s! She is our latest recruit to the QOV cause!
Thursday, June 11, 2009

The car is packed…about 80 QOVs have been put into SpaceBags©. Thank God for technology. To be on the safe side, I went to Sears and bought a car top carrier that should help us get even more quilts into the car, if necessary.

4:30p – Thursday, June 11, 2009. Well, we’re on our way. About 80 QOVs have been put into SpaceBags© – thank God for technology! We’ve filled the entire back of our SUV in addition to filling the car top carrier. I guess I could have packed lighter, but since today has been so raw, I’m not sure what the weather will be like in NC. Because of my husband, Brian’s, recent hip surgery, he’s acting as navigator instead of pilot, which is his usual job. We’ll see how his nerves hold up when we hit traffic.

Midnight – Pouring rain in PA. Traffic is difficult, what with the rain and many, many 18-wheelers on the highway. Brian’s sleeping (again). I’m not sure if it’s really needed or just a defense mechanism. I’m so excited I don’t think I’d be able to sleep if we stopped right now.

2:00a – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Arrived in Hagerstown MD (our target stop for the evening). Luckily, we find a hotel close to the highway with rooms available on the first floor. Since driving for 8 hours straight, it’s hard to unwind. You don’t realize how tight you grip the steering wheel until you stop for a little while. Oh, well. I think this feeling of movement must be close to the same as when you’re sailing the seven seas….

5:30a – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Alarm goes off. Hoping to get an early start. Shower, dress and in the car by 6:30a. (Who said women take a lot of time to get ready??!!) Heading toward Falls Church VA (right outside of Washington DC).

7:30a – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Oh, my. Nothing like getting the blood pumping this early in the morning. A simple 4-lane highway has suddenly morphed into the racetrack from hell with 14 lanes and everyone trying to outrun each other. I discovered a very interesting fact. In NH, if we want to get into the passing lane, we (okay, some of us) put on our directional signals. We then wait to make sure the car behind our (hoped for) new spot sees us, then we pull into that lane. In this area, the directional signal is used as a kind of warning system. Blink, I’m pulling in front of you so deal with it!

It is such an honor to be part of Quilts of Valor. Our son, Jon, served with the Marines in Operation Phantom Fury (Fallujah – 2004-2005). We create these quilts to honor all those who serve, and in memory of the 48 Marines we lost during that deployment. We wish we could have traveled East with Catherine, Gail, Virginia, and Bob and been part of the preparations this weekend and the presentation on Monday. We will be following on the blog, checking the internet for media coverage, and be with them in spirit. Their dedication and enthusiasm are an inspiration to all of us.

Thanks for the opportunity and the memories.

Tink and Dick Linhart
from: Caseyville, IL
I’m sure my vehicle blends in. I’m sitting in traffic looking around. There are folks in nice suits and dresses and even some “business casual” outfits. Due to our next stop, I’ve taken a little more care with the traveling attire than usual. So I know my clothing won’t be a give-away. Wait a minute…maybe it’s my license plate (from NH) or the car top carrier on top of my car. Or maybe it was the white-knuckled grip on my steering wheel. Whatever it was, cars tended to stay away from me. And no, it wasn’t because of any bad driving on my part. I try to be as courteous as possible, so maybe it was me using my directional and then waiting to make sure there was indeed enough room for me to pull over into the passing lane. Or maybe it was me saying (or making polite gestures) of thank you. That was probably it.

8:30a – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Found Jackie’s cousin’s house right outside of Washington DC. I put my theory of the directional signals to her…and she agreed. Wow, I’m feeling smart today.

1p – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Frantically watching the clock. Yesterday, we tried to figure out how long it might take us to get from Hagerstown MD to Falls Church VA, then from Falls Church to Pamplin City VA for another quilt pickup. This one was very special. Not only did they have a lot of quilts for us, but they also made sit-down lunch for us. Brian was in his glory…what with the women taking care of getting his plate and refreshment glass filled up. Oops, I guess that was my job, huh? But I was too busy talking with Connie and crew. What a wonderful group of women. After lunch, we talked to each other about everything under the sun, from quilting and QOV, to grandchildren and NASCAR. (It’s very nice to know that my husband is not the only NASCAR widower in the world.) Some of us also talked about health issues, aging and of course, the weather! (Yesterday afternoon when we left NH, I was wearing jeans, a sweater and jean shirt over it. Today, I’m wearing a button down shirt and khaki skirt…and still sweating!) Every one of these ladies looked like they just stepped out of the beauty parlor. I kept hoping my deodorant would hold up. Luckily, I think it did. After a wonderful meal and social time, it was time to put their QOVs into the car. I didn’t think we could fit one more piece of paper in there, never mind 14 more quilts. But as I reminded my husband about the story of the fish and loaves of bread, God came through again and made sure there was enough room to get all of the quilts in.

There have been so many (what I call) God moments in this endeavor. God moments are when you see or hear something related to what you’re doing that seem totally out of the blue but when you see or hear it, it becomes perfectly clear that there’s a much higher power working His magic with us.

9p – Friday, June 12, 2009 – Just got off the phone with Gail Belmont. They’re still about two hours out of Jacksonville and will be staying downtown. I’m only about a ½ hour from Jacksonville and will meet up with them on Sunday. They’re going to take a tour of Camp Lejeune tomorrow.

As I was driving today (second 500+ mile day in a row) and got tense with traffic, I just thought back to what we’re doing and why we’re doing it and that made it all bearable.

5p – Sunday, June 14, 2009 – Finally got to meet Catherine, Gail and crew. Hugs all around. The energy in the hotel room was incredible. We met up with a GySgt who led the vehicle caravan from the hotel to the American Legion hall where we sorted through all of the quilts. There were some young Marines who acted as runners…unloading the quilts onto the tables, helping us sort them and generally being wonderful helpers. There was no air conditioning in the building and I think we all lost a few pounds in good old fashioned sweat. We worked hard but had a wonderful time. Everyone was working for a common cause and the camaraderie and cooperation was unsurpassed.
Three East Hampton High School Seniors, their high school principal, Cheryl Edholm, traveled to North Carolina over the weekend to deliver 50 hand-sewn quilts that students have been working on for over a year to a battalion of marines returning from Afghanistan. The only high school students to participate in the ceremony, they were part of a group of quilters from seven states who made the trip, including Catherine Roberts and Gail Belmont, the founders of the Quilts of Valor Foundation.

“Being there was really emotional, to see that what we did made a difference,” said Rebecca Rubenstein, who took a flight to North Carolina on Sunday along with Stefania Monsalve and Hyatt Tortorella to hand deliver the quilts. “I’ve been working on it for over a year and put a lot of work into it, and now it’s all paying off.”

East Hampton students became involved in the effort in April of 2008, when Dr. Edholm heard about a program that promised to provide every soldier wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan with a handmade quilt. (Since then the project has morphed into an effort to cover every soldier, wounded or not.) As a quilter whose son is a marine, she was immediately interested.

Last year, over 200 students and faculty members participated in a quilting lock-in, where the quilt tops were produced in a massive sewing effort that transformed the school gymnasium into a temporary quilt factory and campground. Students worked through the night as others slept in sleeping bags on the floor, and one by one, as the quilt tops were finished, bursts of applause erupted throughout the night.

“It just kind of really grew from there, it started as a simple lockdown for the school, and it turned into a huge community service project,” said Rebecca.

Since then, the well-traveled quilt tops have been sent around the country to “longarmers,” quilters with special machines that stuff the quilts with batting and add backs to the students’ work. They were returned to East Hampton High School,
where members of the student association put the finishing touches on their work. The project has continued, and Rebecca said that while 50 finished quilts from East Hampton were delivered on Monday, at least another 50 are in various phases of completion.

After a moving Purple Heart ceremony, the students were able to meet with the marines and bestow them with quilts and handwritten notes. “We talked to a bunch of marines, they seemed all hard on the exterior, but they’re really sensitive guys,” said Rebecca, who added that she would like to start a Quilts of Valor group when she gets to college at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., in the fall.

The foundation was so impressed with the students that all three girls were interviewed for a documentary being produced for the project, parts of which can be seen on the organization’s Web site. The Purple Heart Association also gave the girls commemorative coins for their efforts.

Dr. Edholm has been following the foundation’s activities on its Web site, qovf.org, and was able to secure the money from the school district so the girls could take the trip.

“About two months ago, they called for 1,200 quilts, and it happened,” she said. Initially, the foundation had planned to distribute quilts to the 30 Purple Heart recipients in the Third Battalion, Eighth Marine Regiment when they returned from Afghanistan. They later decided to distribute quilts to the entire battalion.

In total, 1,304 quilts made the trip to Camp Lejeune. Ms. Roberts made the trip with a caravan of quilters, stopping at multiple destinations on a cross-country trip from California to pick up more quilts.

“It was beyond powerful,” said Dr. Edholm. “It was incredible. I think we were all affected after we got back.”

QOVF Community News

**GIRL SCOUTS PRESENT QUILTS TOHeroes**

From May 2008 to October 2008, Girl Scouts from Troop 9349 in Enterprise, Alabama worked on a special service project. The girls chose the Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF) for their service project. The twelve girls in the Troop, ranging in age from 9 to 13 saw the project through from start to finish. Belinda Jellison, Troop leader and a full-time counselor at the Lyster Army Health Clinic Department (LAHC) Department of Behavioral Medicine learned about the QOVF from co-worker Liz Petty.
As soon as Ms. Jellison presented with the project to the Girl Scouts they were eager to begin working on their quilts. “We first began with learning about the Quilts of Valor Foundation. Then Liz, who mentored these girls through this whole process, worked with them to select their fabrics and their patterns.” Each girl pieced her own quilt together and did all the sewing. The girls then took a field trip to The Front Porch Quilt Shoppe in Ozark, Alabama where Melanie Simpson and Alisa Danner explained the process of longarming and gave a live demonstration with one of the Scout’s QOVs on their Gammill Statler. Once their quilts were back from the longarmers, the girls completed the sewing and binding by hand. To finish off the quilt, each girl chose an image and a quote for their label. Marsha Day from Madison, Alabama donated pillow cases with “Quilt of Valor” embroidered on the front of each pillow case for the girls’ quilts. The girls also had custom cards printed with their picture, the Troop picture and a handwritten note to their Soldier.

Dr. Mac Petty, LAHC Department of Behavioral Medicine Psychologist gave a presentation to the Troop about the physical and psychological effects of war. Dr. Petty explained Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) to the girls.

“Not only did the girls learn about quilting and sewing, the knowledge they gained about their country and about those serving their country increased greatly,” Belinda Jellison said. “Their sense of patriotism grew as well as their compassion for the American Soldier.”

On October 6, 2008 the Girl Scouts presented 14 Fort Rucker, Alabama Soldiers with quilts during a ceremony held at LAHC. The ceremony began with a flag ceremony presented entirely by the girls. The girls also led the large crowd in The Pledge of Allegiance. Colonel Yolanda Ruiz-Isales, LAHC Commander started the ceremony with words of thanks to the Soldiers and words of encouragement and thanks to the Girl Scouts. “You could’ve selected any project, but you chose to do this and honor the Soldiers,” Colonel Ruiz-Isales said to the Girl Scouts. “We really appreciate your effort and so do they (the Soldiers). Continue with your great work.”

After each Girl Scout read a short biography about their Soldier, Family Life Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Doug Wooten helped the girls present the quilts. “I’m honored to participate and it’s a real privilege to present our Soldiers with these quilts,” he said. “These young ladies demonstrated a wonderful act of love, kindness and concern, and made this ceremony very special.”

While some of the Girl Scouts chose to recognize their fathers and grandfathers, others honored military policemen, instructor-pilots and crew chiefs with patriotic quilts. One recipient had been deployed five times and said he was humbled to receive his Quilt of Valor. He said he was only doing his job and never expected to be honored in this way.

Another quilt recipient, CW5 Terry Malone, a Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course instructor, said receiving the quilt from his daughter, Selina, was special. His daughter, April, is also part of the troop. “As a recipient, I’m not so sure I’m worthy to receive this quilt, but I sure am proud of both of them,” he said smiling.

Girl Scout Megan Matthews said she had fun working on this project. “It was hard work, especially when we started school, but it was worth it,” she said. “I tried to work on my quilt for an hour or two after school.”

Elyssa Bende said she was glad Belinda Jellison thought of the project. “It was exciting and fun,” she said.

For their efforts, five of the girls received the Bronze Award, the highest award for Junior Girl Scouts and three earned the Silver Award, which is the highest for the Cadet Girl Scouts.

Liz & Mac Petty
Enterprise, AL
FORT RUCKER NEWS

The Lyster Army Health Clinic (LAHC) at Fort Rucker continues to hold quarterly Quilt of Valor Ceremonies. Twenty-four Quilts of Valor were presented to Fort Rucker Soldiers on April 10, 2009.

One of the quilts was presented to a Soldier who is now assigned to the 98th Army Band at Fort Rucker. The quilt was longarmed by Jonnie Grimm of Lavonia, Georgia. Jonnie knew the quilt would be presented to a band member so she quilted band instruments on the quilt with her Gammill Statler. The Soldier was overwhelmed with her quilt.

Another quilt, longarmed by Miriam Foshee and Norma Williamson of Andalusia, Alabama, had Blackhawk helicopters and jeeps quilted on it. That quilt was presented to a Blackhawk pilot who was awed by the longarming and deeply touched by the sentiment.

The last recipient during that ceremony was 90-year-old Veteran, Colonel Max McCullar who joined the Army as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1941. He served in the Korean War and Vietnam. Colonel McCullar also served as the U.S. Army Safety Center’s Commander at Fort Rucker from 1970 to 1974. Brigadier General Wolf, the current Commander of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, helped present Colonel McCullar’s Quilt of Valor. The standing-room only crowd gave Colonel McCullar a standing ovation.

 Colonel Yolanda Ruiz-Isales, LAHC Commander and Brigadier General Wolf both presented Marsha Day and Liz Petty with military coins for their part in the LAHC Quilt of Valor Program. Marsha made 15 of the quilts that were presented in April. She continues to donate quilts that she not only sews, but also longarms.

LAHC maintains a quilt closet for wounded Soldiers at Fort Rucker. We are very appreciative of everyone who has donated beautiful quilts to the quilt closet. The Soldiers at Fort Rucker are extremely thankful and honored when they are presented with a Quilt of Valor.

The most recent Quilt of Valor ceremony was held on June 12th at 1:00 pm in the Lyster Army Health Clinic Conference Room. A group of ladies from Montgomery, Alabama presented 15 quilts made by the group to Fort Rucker Soldiers.

Liz Petty
Enterprise, AL

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH IN PENSACOLA

QOVF had a busy Military Appreciation Month in Pensacola, beginning May 1st with an awards ceremony at Naval Hospital Pensacola. USN-themed quilts were presented to two Fleet Marine Force corpsmen who had been wounded in Iraq.

The following week, QOVF was invited to exhibit at a symposium (“Hidden Casualties of War”) jointly sponsored by the University of West Florida and Naval Hospital Pensacola. Over 300 mental health professionals attended the two-day event. My USN-themed quilt was given a prominent display spot in the exhibit room and drew many participants to stop and talk about the QOV mission. In addition, I was able to develop networking connections with a dozen other nonprofit organizations that provide support services to the military.

I have also been networking with the Independence Fund on its wounded warriors bicycle rally that was held May 16th at the Veterans Memorial Park in Pensacola Bay. The event brought in over 130 severely injured servicemembers to participate
in a 25-mile ride on specialized bicycles. The event included a generous public participation with run/walk and bicycle/motorcycle events. The Indy Fund provides tools such as specialized bicycles and robotic wheelchairs and therapy which help restore independent living and a renewed confidence for these vets. QOV had a quilt on display at the pre-event party as well as a tent display at the park where I was able to talk with many of the veterans plus general public. Six of these veterans told me that they had never received quilts so I promised them branch-of-service, personalized quilts.

Robert Speh
Pensacola

Piecers for Peace
Wichita, KS

We are a group of 15 quilters - some beginners, some long-time quilters and a retired Colonel USAF. When Linda Stowe, our fearless leader, learned of the call of 1,200 quilts to be sent to Camp Lejune with the Quilts of Valor cross America Road Trip, we felt this would be a very worthy endeavor for us to contribute. Within a month, we produced fourteen quilts. Some in our group have been involved in QOV projects previously. For a couple in our group, it was the first quilt they have made. Our project drew the attention of friends and organizations and they contributed fabric, batting and funds to be a part of this wonderful program. We enclosed a letter with each quilt, sharing a little about each of our military connections and appreciation for the soldier’s service and sacrifice. We are planning for another group quilt-a-thon in the fall, and many of our members are already working on individual quilts. We hope to have even more next time.

We can be contacted at piecersforpeacewichita@yahoo.com

Elaine Harvill
LORIN COUNTY PIECEMAKERS

Lorain County Piecemakers Quilt Guild gathered on May 8th, 2009 for a “sew day” of community service at the Nordson Depot in Amherst, Ohio. We had 16 volunteers show up and worked together to create 10 tops for QOV. Five of those tops are finished and will be mailed out this week to Sue W. When I get the others quilted and finished, those will be shipped.

I was hoping for 3 or 4 tops from the day of community service and was overwhelmed by the generosity of time and talent by fellow guild members. All of us appreciate what our servicemen and women give so that we may enjoy our continued freedom.

A worthwhile endeavor to be sure!

Kaye Koler

TIDEWATER QUILTERS GUILD

On June 19th at the end of the school year “Multi-Bridging Ceremony”, the four troops comprising the Girl Scouts of Aragona Service Unit of the Colonial Coast, Virginia Beach, presented the Tidewater Quilters Guild (TQG) of Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Chesapeake, Virginia QOVs Coordinator with a check for $50. TQG member, Mrs. Susan Jacobs, leader for three of the troops in the unit, suggested QOVs when the girls wanted some of the proceeds from the annual Girl Scout cookie sales to be donated to a community service project. After the bridging ceremony, many of the girl scouts then signed QOV Star Blocks designed by Persimmon Quilts in Claremore, OK for future QOVs.

Mary Lynn Slough

TQG QOV Coordinator
TIDEWATER QUILTERS GUILD REACHES QOV MILESTONE

Four and a half years ago the 485-member Tide-water Quilters Guild, located in the Norfolk/Virginia Beach/Chesapeake, Virginia area, approved Quilts of Valor as an ongoing community service project, and the rest as they say is history. QOVs is fully self-supporting through donations of money, fabric, finished quilts, and longarm quilting services. Kits to make our “Virginia Star” blocks are available at guild meetings and have been met with great enthusiasm. Fifty-eight “Virginia Star” quilts have been completed and many more are under construction.

All of our quilts are sent to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, Intensive Care Unit where military nurses present them to patients before they board Air Force C-17 aircraft for their trip back to the United States for further medical treatment. The quilts come in handy for added warmth on the long, cold flights.

In June the guild reached a major milestone of 800 QOVs sent to Landstuhl.

America is still at war -- the Tidewater Quilters Guild is still quilting.

Mary Lynn Slough
TQG QOV Coordinator

VA GREATER LOS ANGELES HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

QOV has been supporting the over 7,000 Iraqi veterans that are served by the VA GLA over the last few years, placing well over 1,000 quilts (we only have 6,000 to go…). This summer the VA will be sponsoring 5 separate “Welcome Home” events for our veterans, 2 in July, 2 in August, and one in September to make sure they know that they are remembered, appreciated and have all the information they need to take advantage of their VA benefits. The VA GLA has a catchment area that covers three counties, 12 facilities, and a footprint the size of the State of Connecticut, so we have to cover a lot of ground to make sure we make contact with everybody. We intend to place QOVs as long as the supply last with these deserving veterans…this is a great example of activities that are going on during this “Summer of Service” that our President is advocating we all observe. Great job, QOV!

Marianne Davis
Chief, Voluntary Service
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System
VA Puget Sound Fisher House and “Our” Norma

Norma made a quilt for our QOV group about a year ago, and it was taken to our VFW contact person "Frosty" at the VFW Wa State Office here in Fife with the other quilts we had ready to deliver.

When Frosty saw the quilt Norma had made, he said "that quilt would make a very nice wall quilt at the new Fisher House in Seattle" and he wondered if we’d mind having it go there. We were thrilled to think of the quilt on the wall, so Norma put a hanging sleeve on the quilt, and this last June, Frosty took 4 of us gals to Seattle to deliver the quilt!

While we were there, we were given a tour of the New Fisher House, and what an amazing warm house it is!

For those who don't know what the Fisher Houses are, think of the Ronald McDonald houses where family members can stay while their loved one is in the hospital near by. In this case, it's next to the VA Hospital in Seattle.

Needless to say, our group is Proud of Norma and her Quilt!

Check out the website of Fisher House in Wa, it's called the VA Puget Sound Fisher House, and see pictures of the house, and watch for Norma's Quilt on a wall!

http://www.fisherhousevaps.org/

Connie Frick
QOV Quilters at VFW Post 1949, Enumclaw, WA

Trinity Transport Honors Their Troops

I would like everyone to know how we honor OUR troops here at Trinity Transport, Inc., where I am kind of the resident military “guru”.

In our lobby at Trinity Transport Inc. we have a rather impressive display honoring our troops past and present.

Dan Dobson
Trinity Transport, Inc
Seaford, DE

Top of display is the original dedicated flag from our memorial flag garden at the outside entrance; the center piece is a copy of the inscription from the stone that is placed in the garden.

There are 6 Medallions representing the 5 branches of the US Military Regular and Reserve and 1 for the National Guard.

The center displays the plaque of honor reserved for Trinity employees/agents, past and present, who have served (in some cases are still serving in the Guard and Reserve forces.)

The lower display is a constantly scrolling LCD frame with the names and other significant information of employees, family of employees and friends who we honor for their service and, in several cases, their sacrifice in battle either resulting in their death or wounding.
I want to share with everyone a story about one of my Quilt Angels, that was written by the Retirement Living Center where she lives. Martina Foundation lives at Point Defiance Village in Tacoma WA and started sewing for QOV in October 2008 after I came and spoke to them about QOV and what we do. When I told Martina that we presented one of her quilts to a young man who is going to South Korea at the end of July, she was so tickled and excited that one of her quilts was given out. Martina and another Angel, Judy, have made around 50 quilts for our project at the VA Hospital in Lakewood, WA. I am so proud of both of them. At this time we have 87 of 100 quilt tops needed for our VA Hospital Nursing Home and we are still working on getting them quilted. This Nursing home opens March 2010. There is also an article about Sam Bufalini, who lives at Point Defiance Village, who received a quilt from us in Oct 2008.

I have been asked by the VFW of Washington State Committee Chairperson for Veterans and Family Services to find out where there are QOV groups and Longarmers in Washington State and any of their wants and needs. This information will be going on quarterly reports that will be sent to VFW in Washington State. So if you have a group that meets, I would like to know Name of the Group or longarmer, contact information and Contact Person and any wants and needs. Please e-mail me at stitchingsheryl@yahoo.com and I will make a report to the Chairperson. This is an on going project so please keep me updated.

On May 12th we presented a quilt to Jeff Bounds. Jeff survived with MANY injuries when his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb killing the other 3 guys that were with him. Jeff was overwhelmed to have received a quilt and, to-date, he has gone through many surgeries and is getting stronger by the day.

Update on John Kaiser (March 08 newsletter) I saw John in May (he recommended Jeff to get a quilt) and then again in June at the VFW Convention. He always has a hug for me and still thanks us for the quilt he received.

On June 25th at the Washington State VFW Convention I was honored to speak about QOV and present a quilt to Andy Martin. Andy is a POW who survived the Bataan Death March. Andy was very moved to be honored with his quilt, as well as all that witnessed the event, too. The quilt was made by Chelsey and Carol in Everett. The longarmer was Tamara in Bremerton.

After the presentation, a National VFW Officer's wife (sorry I do not have her name I lost her card somewhere between the convention hall and the hotel) came to me and wanted information on QOVF to take back to her Auxiliary in Montana. So ladies, if you have a group in Montana, get your group registered on the QOVF website, so when she looks on line for a group in her area she will know who to contact.
**QOV Quilters of Galesburg, IL**

The month of June was *Fundraiser Month* for the QOV Quilters of Galesburg, IL.

We set up booths at several community festivals offering raffle tickets for a beautiful quilt, Quilt of Valor information, and signature blocks.

The month ended with a wonderful Outdoor Quilt Show in the beautiful back yard of one of our members on Saturday, June 27th. Visitors were able to stroll through the yard and admire nearly 50 Quilts of Valor which were hung on clotheslines or nibble cookies and drink cooling lemonade while chatting with members and learning about Quilts of Valor. All monies received will be used for postage to mail our quilts. The community was extremely generous and our hard work was rewarded with donations far exceeding our expectations.

We owe a huge thank you to the brother of our hostess who called telling us that weather radar was showing a bad storm heading our way about 30 minutes out. We were able to get all of the quilts down and everything put away before we were hit with high winds and driving rain.

*Jane Smith*
*Galesburg, IL*

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**Quilts of Valour - Canada Society**

Quilts of Valour - Canada Society (the official name) has been incorporated under the laws of Canada as a “not for profit” organization. QoV Canada will proudly continue to ensure that our quilters’ special quilted hugs are delivered to our wounded soldiers. We have initially set the Society up to get the quilts to wounded soldiers recovering in Canada.

Our new website can be found at [www.quiltsofvalour.ca](http://www.quiltsofvalour.ca).

Drop by! And, if there are any questions, please contact [QoV@QuiltsOfValour.ca](mailto:QoV@QuiltsOfValour.ca).

*Lezley Zwaal*
*Founder*
Do we take family for granted?

For most of us being part of a family is such a normal part of life that we can not imagine being without it. It provides an anchor, a reference point, a sense of origin and when needed a place of comfort. When, in 1999 I was diagnosed with leukemia, I had family around me who helped me through a traumatic period in my life.

Earlier this year I was delivering ten QOVs to our local barracks and was invited by the Welfare Officer to meet some of the men who were to receive them. After the brief ceremony of presentation, I was able to chat to each of them. They had various injuries mainly blast related with some eager to recover in order to return to their units. Others were facing longer periods of rehabilitation and may not return to front line duties. Most were able to talk about their families and/or parents who were also affected by their injuries and who were supporting them.

One soldier (I’ll call him Allan), struggling on two crutches, who received a QOV was an exception. When I asked about his home he said “The Barracks”. I said “I mean where is home for you? Where do you come from?” He told me that he came originally from London and so I asked “Is that where your family lives?” His reply left me struggling for words. He said “I have no family, I live here with my buddies!”

I was to learn later from the Welfare Officer that Allan was using his quilt and it was on display on his bed in the accommodation block.

There is a very evident bond between soldiers. It exists even though they serve in different units and in different theatres of war and I have no doubt that they can and do create a feeling of family between them.

There was a parade through the town in May when the regiment returned from their tour of duty in Afghanistan and I, along with the rest of the townsfolk, turned out to cheer them. The parade passed a group of injured soldiers and among them I saw Allan. I spoke to him later and found he was progressing well and was able to get around with only a walking stick. Allan had an air of confidence around him and I am sure that he will make further progress in his recovery. His parting words were “Thanks for the quilt, it means a lot to me to know that there are people who care for what we are doing!”

The news of QOV-UK is spreading and QOVs have been awarded to UK soldiers based in Northern Ireland, Wales, England and even in Cyprus. Scotland has not been forgotten -- I'm just awaiting confirmation of the number required.

Jean Morris

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**Mother Seton Quilting Angels**

Germantown, Maryland

We recently had a blessing of quilts on June 27th. We have 15 more soldier quilts ready for delivery. We also sent 42 children’s quilts to the Candle-lighter’s group (a group that supports families who have kids with cancer).

We also had a special quilt blessed for a Vietnam vet who now suffers from Parkinson’s disease. His friend told one of our members about him and she made him a special quilt. The family participated in the blessing ceremony.

We will continue to quilt through the summer. We have received many donations this past spring including a large amount of fabric from a woman’s family. She had run a quilt shop before she had become ill and passed away. The family wanted to donate the fabric to someone they knew would put it to good use. All we had to do is pick it up!! We have also received a couple of working sewing
To: Belmont Quilts
To all of the men and women with Quilts of Valor:
"On behalf of 3/8 Kilo Company Second Platoon, Thank you so much for this amazing gesture. Words cannot express our gratitude for all of the hard work you all have put into these beautiful quilts that we received just today. I had never heard of your organization until recently, and not only us Marines and Sailors are simply amazed with the compassion demonstrated, but our families and friends also. This truly means to us more than I can write. So once more, thank you so much for our Quilts of Valor, I am truly humbled and more than thankful."
Sincerely,
From a LCpl Marine and the Marines and Sailors of 3/8 Kilo Co. 2nd Plt.

To: Belmont Quilts
“Hi, My name is Sgt ‘……’ I am with 3rd Btn 8th Marines. I would like to take this time an thank you for the quilt you made for me. I really appreciate the support that we’ve receive while we were deployed an now home.”
Thank You So Much, Sgt ‘……’ Marine

To: Jean Jaeger
Hello Jean, My name is Andrew Carpenter I am a LCpl. in the United States Marine Corps with 3rd battalion 8th Marines. I wanted to let you know that the quilt you worked on was given to me and i wanted to let you know that i speak for all the marines in my platoon when i say we are very appreciative for the work you and your friends put into these amazing quilts. As you walk through the barracks your quilts and hundreds more like it are lining the racks of the marines in 3rd battalion 8th marines. We can’t tell you how much it means that you dedicate your time in order to show appreciation for us. I hope this letter shows you the appreciation we have for you.
Sincerely, A. Carpenter

Dear Quilts of Valor,
“You are all wonderful human beings! God Bless you all for the time and efforts you provide for our marines and sailors. 3/8 had a very difficult deployment, I know that they were all very humbled and honored to be a recipient of your quilts. God knows they earned them. Keep up your wonderful work and thank you from a Mom of a former 3/2 Marine.
THANK YOU ALL! I am so impressed by your patriotism!”
Patty, Founder/President, moms4marines.org

Good evening Sue Bennett,
“I just wanted to say thank you for the quilts. I’m with 3d Bn 8th Marines, we just got back from Afghanistan. We all appreciate the hard work you put into making these quilts, it’s people like you who make us feel good about what we do and keep us going. Thank you again, hope you have a wonderful day.”
Javier Ramirez
GET YOUR “ROAD TRIP”
POLO SHIRTS
(LIMITED TIME OFFER)

You have seen them from Coast to Coast as they made their way to Camp Lejeune. Now, for a limited time, you can purchase your own “Quilts of Valor Across America” Special Edition T-Shirts.

Special Pre-order for the Polo Shirts:
Price - $36.95

We will take orders until 8/10/09 and then the vault will be shut – and no orders or shirts will be available. Orders will be shipped some time in late August after all pre-orders and monies have been received. Visit the QOVF Shop to place your order, (www.QOVF.org)

Joyce

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QOVF Sponsor

Statistics

These are the latest statistics as of 6/29/2009. It is difficult to get an accurate wounded number as it is for quilts awarded. We do know the two hallmark injuries of this war are post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Total QOVs awarded .................. 23,227
*Iraq/killed (US) ......................... 4,321
*Afghanistan/killed (US) ............... 719
*Wounded .................................. Many
*http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx
**Podcasts**

Do you have a story to tell to our QOV community? If you do, please contact Catherine Roberts to arrange an interview.

**QOV Podcast Interview with Steve Wilson**
Steve Wilson is retired Army. He now works in the eastern Pennsylvania VAMC as a patient transition advocate. He talks about his background, his warrior patients and how working as a Point of Contact (POC) for Quilts of Valor has impacted warriors, families and his work.

**QOV Podcast Interview with MB of Thangles**
I have the pleasure of interviewing MB of Thangles. If you don't know what Thangles are, stay tuned. They are sold worldwide and have made sewing half-square triangles easy as pie. MB has also created a QOV pattern using Thangles which you can find on our site or hers.

**QOV Podcast Interview with Rev Liz Wold**
Join me for my interview with Rev Liz Wold. She is an interfaith minister, chaplain, red cross volunteer and most importantly, a Gold and Blue star aunt. You will be uplifted and inspired by her. You will also feel your heartstrings being tugged.

http://quiltsofvalor.libsyn.com/

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**Newsletter**

This is our first issue using a new publishing program and your feedback is very important. Please send your comments, suggestions, etc. to newsletter@qovf.org.

The next issue of the QOVF Newsletter will be September 2009.

If you prefer, you can send articles earlier to newsletter@qovf.org and we will hold them until September.

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**This and That**

From: Melanie Rupp

This wall piece was made by my oldest son as a Mother’s Day gift. I love it! It hangs above our TV, so I look at it often. Hope you like it too.

From: Melanie Rupp

I saw the license plate in a recent newsletter and liked it so much, I received it as an anniversary gift.

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**Contact Us**

Your feedback is important, both positive and negative.

*Editor*