

Quilts of Valor

Quilting Honor and Comfort for our Wounded

A Monthly Newsletter

June 2007

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Sheep, Wool and Old Jalopies...

Catherine Roberts is the Founder and Director of the Quilts of Valor Foundation (QOVF). cath@qovf.org

I was driving down to town on our old dual-highway and saw this old jalopy ahead of me. His bumper sticker said “Honk if you see parts falling off.” I had to laugh because it was funny but I also felt a kinship with the car.

I am an old jalopy too (especially in the eyes of the younger generation). But I love being this old jalopy. I still am young enough to ask lots of questions and willing to try new things. Talking about new things, last month Lenny, my friend took two of us to the Sheep and Wool Festival in Howard County MD. I had never seen anything like that in all my life. I was an example of “walking amazement”. And, all of it had to do with fiber. It started with the sheep and darling little lambies. They were in their stalls either sacked out or look-

ing at the on-lookers looking at them. Placards told about their breed and what type of wool they produced. At the end of the enormous barns, they were shearing some of the sheep. And, the sheep were NOT happy campers.

We then went into the exhibitors hall. You wouldn't believe what was there. There were bags and bags and bags and bags of carded wool, hanks of cotton and flat squares of silk. The wools, cottons and silks were colors Crayola hasn't even thought of. There were beautifully-made, graceful spinning wheels that conjured up good feelings like a warm fire on a cold autumn day. This idyllic dream came tumbling down when I saw the prices. How about starting with \$350 and no accessories! Then I saw a plethora of intimidating looking weaving looms followed by booths with kits for buttery soft cashmere lace shawls. One of the funniest and least intimidating products I looked at were the felted items. Wool just as cotton fabric invites you to create.

When I got home, my mind was busy trying to sort through everything I had seen. There were more young people at the show than I have seen at quilt shows. There seemed to be a tinge of the 'wild west' among this group. Their world is fascinating. And the great thing is we belong to it too! I just didn't know it.

Have a great month! This month, I am going to take about a week's vacation with my husband. I am not doing anything QOV related to avoid burn-out (well, that's the plan). Please keep our combat wounded in the forefront but then take time to touch the wool or cotton or silk.

Still at war; still quilting, and now with two kits for lace knitted shawls (oy vey).



Catherine Roberts, Founder and Director, QOVF

“Quotables”

This month’s “Quotable” comes to us from a quilter in Wenatchee, Washington.

The most amazing thing happened today and I just had to share it with you.

I got a phone call from a recipient of one of my quilts! His name is Sgt. Ron Buckles and he received the quilt at the VA hospital in Los Angeles. I have received letters from the hospitals acknowledging the arrival of my quilts but had never heard from a recipient. It was awesome! It was so thoughtful and kind of him to call and share with me how he felt when he received the QOV and how important it is to him. He called it a treasure.

It was so nice to hear how well his recovery is coming along. He also shared his pride in serving our country and how he had been a Marine for several years and served in the first gulf war and now is in the Army and proud to continue to serve our country and do the job to protect our freedom. I can't put into words how wonderful it was to spend a few minutes sharing the QOV experience. I am so pleased and proud to be part of this, it has touched my life in so many ways. It is so rewarding to be part of something so much greater than ones self. It is so heart warming to know first hand how much these quilts truly mean to our warriors.

I have done lots of volunteering in my time, I have been a chapter chairman for March of Dimes, done Habitat for Humanity, Participated in Make a Difference Day, Volunteered for the Red Cross, I have even donated my hair to Locks of Love but being part of Quilts of Valor has by far been the most rewarding, far reaching and life changing.

Thank you for putting your idea into action.

Best regards

Lori Kutch

Wenatchee, WA

Postings from the QOV Community

I Spy or Conversation Quilts: Another Tool in Recovery

By Susan C. Slaninka and Karen Zimmerman

Karen’s inspiration (the teacher)

“I watched the Bob Woodruff special on television last night and was very moved by the extent of his injuries and others that he interviewed. The stories of the soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with significant wounds are not being told. The war has been sanitized. Finally, those wounded heroes will have a voice. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), which Mr. Woodruff suffered, as the result of a roadside bomb, is especially disturbing.

While watching Mr. Woodruff journalize on film his slow and arduous steps to recovery, I noticed one of the tools used by the staff to help him regain his vocabulary was the use of flash-cards. The black image of a pair of scissors on stark white cardstock seemed so sterile to me. My immediate response was, “I will make a colorful Quilt of Valor using conversation fabrics, specifically for a soldier with TBI. The fabric will have an assortment of images including *flowers, cows, fish, a parrot, and monkeys* all incorporated into a quilt that will not only serve as a body and soul comforter, but a learning tool as well.”

Susan’s inspiration (the student)

“At about the same time as Karen was watching the television special on Bob Woodruff, I had seen him and his wife, Lee, on a number of talk shows including Oprah Winfrey and Tim Russert. I was struck by how important these interviews were to “put a face” with all the numbers that we see related to the war. One almost becomes numb from hearing every day, “Twenty-eight injured as bomb goes off in Iraq.” “Car bomb kills eight American soldiers.” “Fifteen injured in blast from bomb in Afghanistan.” Each of these numbers has a face and a family and a story to be told, but instead we are bombarded with just numbers!

As Bob and Lee Woodruff described their journey through the experience of dealing with Traumatic Brain Injury, it put a “face” on the problems encountered by so many of our military. Woodruff talked about the problems of “finding the words” and it occurred to me that I might do an I Spy quilt for those with TBI to aid in their neurological recovery. I was just about to write Karen about this idea when I received an email from her that she had the same idea. Talk about our energy fields connecting from St. Croix in the Virgin Islands to Somers Point, New Jersey! She had obviously taught me well and we have both now completed one quilt that will be targeted for a service member with TBI and have included pictures of them for this newsletter.”

Bob and Lee Woodruff book and foundation

On another note, I purchased the book by Bob and Lee Woodruff, *In an Instant*, and have loved every minute of

reading their story. Both gifted writers, they have a way of making you feel like you are looking through a window at their experience. I especially like the way they have included journals from Bob and then from Lee of the same time period. I would definitely encourage you to read their book. I want to include just a few quotes from the Woodruff book to illustrate the frustration with TBI. Bob says, "The doctor would hold up black and white line drawings of objects like *eyeglasses* or *brushes*, a *screwdriver* or a *paper clip*. I could describe what they did in many cases, but I couldn't say the names. For some reason paper clip was one of my biggest challenges, and we had a few chuckles about that." Lee indicates at that same point, "The neurologist held up cards with pictures of objects, and as I watched I realized that Bob could not come up with the words for *bird* or *tree*. For *broom*, for example, he would say, "It sweeps stuff on the floor." Bob shares at another point, "If my body was healing rapidly, my brain was lagging, still processing what had happened and adjusting to the new speed with which it functioned. Little by little, I became more aware of those moments when I couldn't remember a word or when I found the wrong one. There was no question that things inside my brain were now very different." Lee explains Bob's frustration at some point when trying to communicate about the two sets of feelings he was having, "One side of his brain contains the love he feels for his family and the gratitude he has for being alive; the other side was the horrible raging fear and disorientation that lived in his brain right now, as he tried to make sense of his new world."

In addition to writing the book, the Woodruff's felt driven to make something positive from this negative event in their lives. They have established the Bob Woodruff Family Fund for Traumatic Brain Injury, administered by the Brain Injury Association of America. This organization is dedicated to research, information, advocacy, and support for this issue. Catherine Roberts and the Quilts of Valor have also tried to make something positive come out of a negative experience. The statistics in this war of those service members impacted by TBI is huge. Hopefully, some of you will decide to make some of your quilts this year either "conversation quilts" or "I Spy Quilts" and target them to this population.

Connecting the threads between QOV quilters and recipients: Notes from the Journal Guru

By Susan C. Slaninka

Hello everyone. Catherine announced in the last newsletter that QOV has reached the 10,000 mark and what an accomplishment that is! Thanks to everyone who has helped to achieve this goal. A fairly new aspect of the QOV process is the addition of a journal to the service member in addition to the quilt and the letter. I am hoping that you all are taking the time to include a journal and would love to hear from you. Please send examples of your journal entries to me and I'll be glad to publish them in the QOV newsletter. Your journal ideas might be helpful to someone else who is struggling with this part of the process. Last month's column included the idea of a travel journal. I would love to hear about where you have gone on your travels. Please send

your ideas to me at scsvu@juno.com

This month's idea is a gratitude journal. There is nothing more helpful to write on a bad day than a gratitude journal. I know that in one of my journals I found myself complaining about my "bad day" and then quickly realized that my "bad day" was nothing in comparison to what these service members probably experience most every day while serving in Iraq. I can't imagine what that must be like. I try to write at least five things for which I am grateful every day, and most days I quickly realize that my life is very good. The gratitude journal has helped me to put a "bad day" in perspective rather quickly.

A friend of mine in doing a gratitude journal used a technique that I thought might be fun to try. She tried to find something to be grateful about using the alphabet starting with A and going all the way to Z, so one day I tried that and this is what showed up in my journal. Hope you will give it a try too.

- A my sister Angela, a positive attitude, art work, acceptance
- B My condo at the beach
- C my daughter Chris, my grandson Carlo, my sister Claudia
- D Dad, oh how I wish he was still here, dolphins
- E lots of energy and enthusiasm, everyone who adds to my life
- F family and friends, flowers, especially in the spring, my faith
- G gratitude for my life
- H health, humor, hope, happiness
- I my college roommate Irene, intelligence
- J Joy
- K my sister Kathy

- L Love and laughter
- M MOM, my sister Mary Lynn, and my dog Mickey
- N Novels, I love to read! Wonderful neighbors
- O the ocean and opera
- P My son Paul, my painting classes, pasta, passion for living
- Q Quality of life, quilting
- R My daughter in law Rosalie, semi-retirement
- S serenity, spring and summer; all my students
- T Travel and the theater, my daughter's boyfriend Todd, trees
- U usefulness
- V Villanova
- W Walks on the beach
- X Excellent people in my life
- Y yellow roses, no more yard work
- Z zest for living

Give this a try and see how many things you can come up with in your life. We have so much to be grateful for and writing a gratitude list allows us to see that more clearly. Have a wonderful month....

General Business

Website Upgrade...again.

I could write a book on dealing with the web, web stuff, web-related-people and website. What starts out as a simple concept ends up as a beast that has to be managed by trained people who charge a pretty penny. The shop is closed for now. The shopping cart is broken, etc. So you say to me, why all the problems? Well, this is where that book I could write would come in. :(

2nd Generation Grocery Bags!

We have our second-generation war-time QOV grocery bags! They are purple and beautiful! I take mine everywhere. Use them and our magnets for your fundraisers. Your purchase cost is minimal allowing you to make money for your local needs. Contact us for more information.

QOV Magnets-2nd Edition

Our first edition QOV Magnets are almost history (meaning collectible). We are offering you an opportunity to design our 2nd edition QOV Magnet. Deadline for design--June 30th!

QOV Book

The QOV Book is closer to becoming reality. I will keep you posted.

New QOV DVD for 2007!

Our production company "Cover'em Productions" is proud to announce three new selections for 2007. The first release is entitled "Times of War: Warriors & Quilts". This is what you would show to people to inform them about what we do and why. Doug Coppi's inspired music accompanies images that will keep you spellbound. The second release will be an updated slide show with music to use at a show. You simply put it in the dvd player and it will play "forever". The last release will be a compilation of my podcast shows.

Calendar of Events

Gettysburg Trip

Email will be forthcoming firming up field trip for Sept. .

What Are You Doing?

Do you have a great grassroots idea to share? A pattern that worked well for a QOV? A way to improve something in the program? A letter from a soldier or a story about your guild? Do you know another QOV community member who goes out of their way to cover our combat wounded? Send us an email and tell us all about it. Write to newsletter@qovf.org and share your thoughts and stories with the entire QOV community.

Final Thought

Marian Wright Edelman:

"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."

Col. John Boyd, USAF

"If your boss asks for loyalty, give him integrity. If he asks for integrity, then give him loyalty."

Statistics

6/25/07	Iraq	Afghanistan
Killed	3,567	407
Wounded	52,571	7,106

Date	QOVs Awarded
6/27/07	10,748

For much more information regarding the statistics from Iraq and Afghanistan, go to [The Iraqi Coalition Casualty Count](#).

Volunteer Staff

Let us know how we can help you...

Catherine
cath@qovf.org

Catherine is the founder/director of the QOV program.

June
june@qovf.org

June is our longarm coordinator and has been onboard for over two years.

Donna Dickinson
donna@qovf.org

Donna handles the books and talks to the QOVF accountant. If you have any questions about tax stuff, donations, etc, contact Donna.

Michele
michele@qovf.org
newsletter@qovf.org

Please send any information that you would like included in the

newsletter to Michele. We ask that you have all submissions in by the first of the month in order to make that month's issue.

Lezley
lezley@qovf.org

Lezley is in charge of coordinating efforts in Canada.

Andrew
andy@qovf.org

Andy will serve as the QOVF web support person.

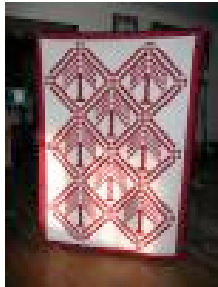
Barb
barb@qovf.org

Barb is our kid's coordinator. Barb is a resource for those who have questions and/or projects with children. If you want your kid's project on the web, email Barb and she will get it ready.

Eric (EJ)
ej@qovf.org

Contact Eric to get your raffle numbers for QOVs sent between April 2007 and April 2008.

How to Donate...



Since the QOV Foundation started out in November of 2003 as Quilts for Soldiers, we have run on a shoe string budget. Staff members work on a voluntary basis. The monies we received are directed back into the Foundation and used to increase our visibility. (If you would like a copy of the QOVF's 5 year plan, please email Catherine). This is paramount if we are to reach all our combat wounded with the message that they have a QOV waiting for them.

The thousands of members in this group give of their time and money. To date, we have collectively spent over \$1.26 million dollars in making QOVs.

When you make a monetary tax deductible donation, you can request where it should go. The various choices are: administrative, fabric, shipping and printing handout literature.

You also can contribute fabric, sewing machines, batting and quilting threads. if you would like to go this route, please email [Catherine](mailto:Catherine@qovf.org) at cath@qovf.org or call 302 236-0230.

Please help us keep this project alive and well with your **tax exempt** donation, visit www.qovf.org.

Our Mission

The mission of the QOV Foundation is to cover ALL combat wounded service-members whether physical or psychological with wartime quilts called Quilts of Valor (QOVs). The wounded service-members from the War on Terror or Long War are to be considered first and foremost.

The second mission is to teach our children how to sew QOVs. This skill will teach sewing skills in addition to encouraging civic involvement and volunteering for the betterment of our nation.

A natural extension of our mission will be to link up with our coalition countries and see that their combat wounded are also covered.

When all is said and done what we are doing is providing a means by which our combat wounded can have a better life. This foundation will do whatever it takes to reach this goal.