

Quilts of Valor

Quilting Honor and Comfort for our Wounded

A Monthly Newsletter

November 2006

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Open Source Wartime Quilting

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

Recently, I finished reading “Baby Jack” written by Frank Schaeffer in an afternoon. I reflected on how Marines put a lot of emphasis on being part of the Marine team. Their philosophy is simple: The brotherhood of the Marines is only as strong as your weakest member so you had better get to that member and toughen them up. In “Baby Jack”, the Drill Instructor (DI) was telling about a time when he was considering competing against a senior DI who he really admired. He told this DI he didn’t want to compete against him because he respected him so much. The admired DI looked at his younger counterpart and reprimanded him saying, “You’re not competing against me but for the Marine Corps to put the best Marines out there.”

After I read this, I realized that some of us belong to the QOV Community, some to American Hero Quilts, others to Brave Hero Quilts and/or individual groups. We, wartime quilters, have a common goal: To give tangible comfort to our combat warriors. Personally speaking, I would like

to think that our QOV community is one where we *want* to share our best with each other. And, maybe even let others refine and re-define our best to suit their needs. I call this sharing and re-shaping of our community’s assets “open source quilting” borrowing the term from open source software communities like Linux and Wikipedia. These communities have a philosophy which encourages people to contribute so everyone benefits. It may sound idealistic but it’s working and as a result, the products improve with this non-proprietary ethic. One might argue *why share?* To me, the answer was given by the Drill Instructor. We are not competing against each other but we are competing for our wounded combat warriors to give them the BEST when it comes to our fabric, our piecing, our longarm quilting, our journaling.

If you have a pattern or an idea that is yours and you think it would benefit our combat wounded, I encourage you to share it. Pick your “copyright” license with Creative Commons (www.creativecommons.org) and post your content to the website. (You can only add content if you register.)

Marines excel because they put the Corps first. I hope you see our QOV Community as *your* team. If you need something,

we will try and help get what you need. Covering our combat wounded with our best made quilts is not about what “I did”, but rather what we, as involved citizens, are doing for our volunteer military who put their best forward in harm's way 24/7. Can we do any less?

Still at war; still quilting,



Catherine Roberts, Founder and Director, QOVF

Statistics

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

11/22/06	Iraq	Afghanistan
Killed	2,867	350
Wounded	46,137	5,729

Date	QOVs Awarded
11/22/06	7,553

Houston Reflections

Nancy Parker is a quilter. She volunteered at the QOVF booth this year during the Houston International Quilt Festival.

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived at the QOV booth, but what I found was a group of energized quilters and longarmers ready to do whatever it took to let our wounded warriors know they are thought of and prayed for constantly. I was scheduled to work for two hours each morning. I don't know where the time went, nor did I really have a great desire to wander about afterwards. The excitement and the action was right there in the booth.

One morning a tub of quilts was brought in by Steve. There must have been 10 or so quilts in his bucket, all in various states of completion. Three or four only needed to be hemmed, so rather than just sitting in the back of the booth, several ladies just picked up a quilt and got to work. I think we completely hemmed all of them. It was like we had all known each other forever, and I can't tell you how many times we held up those quilts for the public to see.

Talking with the public, sharing our goal with all who willingly listened, seeing the look on someone's face once they knew, explaining our process for making the quilts to how our servicemen and women are awarded these wonderful quilts, and hopefully encouraging many more to join us in our endeavors, are experiences I will never forget.

We also had a wonderful surprise each day. We had a Marine or two

at our booth each afternoon - they all looked so sharp, and so young. It was awe inspiring to watch them! At first everything was "Yes Ma'am and Yes Sir." But as each afternoon progressed, they relaxed - just a little - and got right in there talking with the crowds, asking, "Do you know about the the work these ladies are doing for our combat wounded?" By day's end they knew our story as well as we did. They hugged and were hugged by many. They had connected, on a level we could not, with moms and dads who were worried about their own downrange sons and daughters - a gentle touch to one, a word of reassurance to another. They willingly had their pictures taken with all who asked. They were thanked many times over for their service. They were gracious and patient beyond measure with all the questions. They exemplified the best of our young men and women who are serving their country. My most memorable quotes from several of these Marine were, **"I can't wait to tell my buddies what you ladies - and men - are doing for us. You really do want to make a difference in helping our wounded!"** and "Our thanks to all who let us know we are not forgotten, thank you for all you are doing."

One afternoon Laurie's son called from Iraq. After a chat with his mom, she held up her phone so that he could hear all of us saying, "We love you," "You are in our prayers," "God's speed on your return." And all to soon the call ended. It was so emotional, I still well up with tears. I had just met Laurie, but her son belonged to all of us in that

moment. I could write so much more, but I will sum it all up by saying this is the most inspiring thing I have ever seen and I am so grateful that I had an opportunity to be a part of all of it. God's blessing and God's speed to all our servicemen and women for a safe return. (cont. on page 4)

Calendar of Events

February 22-25

Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival/
Hampton Roads Convention Center, Greater Williamsburg, Hampton Virginia.

Future Events

If you know of an event that would be of interest to the QOV community, please contact Jacquie at jacquie@qovf.org to have it posted online and in our newsletter.

Going Grassroots

Inspired by the September All Points Bulletin Newsletter, a member of the QOV community appealed to their local American Legion for financial support. This member told the Legion of the costs of batting and postage and was very happy to receive a \$200 check towards supplies. That will buy batting for a lot more quilts!!! This member also approached their quilt guild (about 150 members) to inspire others to volunteer as quilt-toppers.

"Quotables"

The following is an excerpt from an email sent from David J. Grupy in Durham, North Carolina

The first [QOV] award just happened, it was amazing, and the vet-

eran almost verbatim quoted things from the website. He said it was worth more to him than anything he has on his chest for twenty years. Thank all of you for the wonderful program, I can not wait to do the next one! I made my own certificate worded like a military award and had it enclosed in a hospital award folder. **Thank you so much for what you do!!**

David J. Grupy, NCC(SW) USN
*Administrative Assistant,
 Volunteer Services*

Postings from the QOV Community

Inmates create heirloom quality quilts to send to our wounded Service-members

Nancy Bettler, Janet LaRochelle and Sue Arnholt, are volunteer teachers at a federal prison. We learn of their project through a letter submitted by Nancy Bettler, excerpts of which follow.

A number of lap size quilts were hand pieced and hand quilted by a group of ladies inmates at a federal prison from January until June of 2006. Three volunteer "outsiders", Janet LaRochelle, Nancy Bettler and Sue Arnholt were there to guide them through the process of learning how to make a quilt.

For this project, most of the women inmates were beginners, never having made a quilt before. The volunteers supplied donated fabrics and the patterns for each sampler block. Since scissors are not allowed in the prison, the fabrics had to be precut. The inmates chose the fabrics for their block, threaded their needles and went to work. They moaned and groaned a little at



One of the beautiful quilts made by the Inmate Volunteer Group for the QOV project.

the beginning, but as the months went by, frustration turn into pride. The women helped each other and encouraged each other. They saw the magic of creating something beautiful out of those little pieces of fabric nobody wanted. They came to love their projects. A great deal of individuality went into these quilts. In prison, individuality is a precious gift.

From the beginning, the gals knew that they would not be able to keep the quilts, nor send them to family members. Several suggestions were offered, but they unanimously voted to send their quilts to military personnel because of what they sacrificed for this country. These inmates truly understand what a valiant and selfless choice was made to defend this country. They just wanted to say "thank you".

Perhaps the inmates realize, more than most, the value of freedom and not to take it for granted.

Looking For Local QOV Group in New York

Victoria Bolton in Western New York (Rochester vicinity) is looking for a a local QOV quilting group in her area. If you have information about a current group or would like to create one, please email newsletter@qovf.org.

Yellow Ribbon Quilt (444 Project)

Some of you will recall the hostages taken at the American Embassy in Iran 25 years ago and the yellow ribbons that graced our nation until they came home. One of these soldier's daughter has been trying to get quilts made to honor the military hostages and let them know they haven't been forgotten. Unfortunately, the response nationwide has not been there, and as she and her family are going through some major trials and tribulations, she has all but given up. There are 17 military hostages still living and she has enough quilts for 9. In talking with her the other night, she is giving up on the hopes of honoring these veterans as it seems no one cares. Here is my plea: If anyone is interested in honoring a veteran of the first act of terrorism against the U.S. with a lap-sized quilt (and it does NOT have to be a complicated pattern), please let me know. As the 25th year comes to an end, once

again these American heroes fade into oblivion. Let's see if we can get some lap-sized quilts done and help this woman honor those who served alongside her father in their 444 days of torture and despair. If you are interested, please contact Ann at ahjones@inetvisions.net.

“Real Women Quilt” Miss November: Catherine Roberts

The Following is an excerpt from “Real Women Quilt” November newsletter featuring QOVF Director and Founder Catherine Roberts.

Learning about Catherine and her tireless devotion to covering each of our combat wounded soldiers with a quilt has had a profound impact on me this month. I am so completely impressed with Catherine's efforts and response to this high calling. I pray that we Quilty Girls will overwhelm the Quilts of Valor organization with thousands (yes, I said thousands!) of soldier quilts! I can't wait for you to learn more about Catherine and this ministry of love.

Says Catherine “My passion is to cover all our combat wounded with quilts. I invite everyone to get involved. I want to share with your readers that we are a nation at war and we must get involved. With only 5% of our nation emotionally involved with someone in harm's way, it leaves 95% un-involved. It's a sorry state of affairs. So, I implore each of you to contact every quilter you know to get involved with comforting our wounded. It doesn't have to be through my organization. You can

do it on your own or with another group. But it should be done or else we'll be facing another generation of veterans like those from Vietnam. Remember talk is very cheap and plentiful...”

To read this interview in its entirety, please visit the Real Women Quilt website:

<http://realwomenquilt.com/monthlynewsletter.html>

Houston Reflections (cont. from pg. 2)

Gail Belmont is a quilter and veteran. She volunteered at the QOVF booth this year during the Houston International Quilt Festival.

The Houston QOV experience is something I'll never forget. I was so honored to be a part of such a caring organization. Most of us in the booth had never met and we were from all parts of the United States, but we came together as one unit. I'm a veteran myself of the Vietnam era and know what its like to be forgotten, and it was apparent to me that everyone in the QOV booth will not let our vets of today be forgotten. The volunteers stood for hours, telling our stories to recruit Toppers and longarmers and of course donations. No one complained and everyone gave there all. We argued over who should have the aprons and t-shirts because we were all so proud of what we do as part of the QOVF and want to show it. I will miss the new friends we made at our QOV booth until the next show.

If you are interested in purchasing an apron or t-shirt or new QOV car magnet, please visit the online QOV shop at www.qovf.org. Also, QOV Brochures are available for the price of shipping, contact Catherine at cath@qovf.org.

Final Thought

I want to wish you, your family and loved ones a most blessed Thanksgiving Holiday. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I want to share this well-known poem with you.

Catherine

It is the VETERAN, not the preacher,
who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the VETERAN, not the reporter,
who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the VETERAN, not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the VETERAN, not the campus organizer,
who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the VETERAN, not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the VETERAN, not the politician,
Who has given us the right to vote.



Volunteer Staff

Let us know how we can help you...

Catherine
cath@govf.org

Catherine is the founder/director of the QOV program.

June
june@govf.org

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

Barb
barb@govf.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.

Nedra
nedra@govf.org

Nedra has taken on the much needed and appreciated position of QOV Administrative Assistant. Please contact her if you are having difficulties getting in touch with Catherine.

Donna Dickinson
donna@govf.org

Donna handles the books and talks to the QOVF accountant. If

you have any questions about tax stuff, donations, etc, contact Donna.

Lezley
lezley@govf.org

Lezley is in charge of coordinating efforts in Canada.

Michele
michele@govf.org
newsletter@govf.org

Michele joins the staff as the newsletter editor. Please send any information that you would like included in the newsletter to her. We ask that you have all

submissions in by the first of the month in order to make that month's issue.

Jacquie
jacquie@govf.org

Jacquie is our Event Coordinator. She will be in charge of receiving and organizing information regarding any QOV event that needs national/regional attention.

Andrew
andy@govf.org

Andy will serve as the QOVF web support person.

Judy Laquidara and Nancy Miller

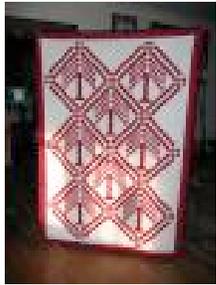
Lots of you know our QOV Mystery Queens. They are both very talented and inspire others to make QOVs.

More Volunteer Staff Members Needed!

QOV Book Editor.

This position requires someone who has editing experience in the real world of publishing and who would like to do this voluntarily.

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 \$900,000 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 at cath@govf.org or call 302 236-0230.

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