The Wishing Place

Do you ever remember when you were a kid and you wished for something so hard you thought you’d burst wide open with the effort? Even though I am no longer a kid, I found myself in that ‘wishing place’ when it came to Quilts of Valor.

Since 2003, I have had many wishes but the one that was a constant was this...to have a QOVF fabric line. Why fabric line? Simple. This beautifully designed fabric in quilt shops would be that gentle reminder to quilters everywhere to perform an act of National Service by making a Quilt of Valor.

Years went by with the Foundation growing but no fabric. Then last year at the International Quilt Festival in Houston, Marianne Fons dropped by our booth. Now for any of you who don’t know or have not heard of Marianne Fons, please allow me a few lines to introduce her. In simple terms, Marianne Fons is an original Quilting Goddess. She has graced our world with her and Liz Porter’s “Love of Quilting” program on public television for many years, has written quilting books, and was founding editor of their quilt magazine, Love of Quilting. In spite of her fame, she is a very down-to-earth human being who has recently come to know our military. How, you ask? Her daughter, Mary, is married to Steve, who is an Army Reservist and will be deployed probably in 2013.

In Houston, Marianne asked what she could do for us. I said without missing a beat, a QOVF fabric line. The rest as they say, is history.

I now invite Marianne Fons to tell the rest of the story which made one of my QOVF dreams come true.

Catherine C. Roberts
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American Valor Fabrics and the Under Our Wings Program

HELLO, CATHERINE!

A few years ago when I was developing a lecture called “Why We Quilt,” Catherine provided some powerful images of wounded soldiers receiving Quilts of Valor. When we met in person last fall, I was on the brink of making a Quilt of Valor myself because my son-in-law had become an Army Reservist. When Catherine mentioned her dream of a special fabric line bearing the QOVF website information on the selvages, I knew I could help out. I felt I could surely convince a fabric company to do the line. When I took the idea to David Weinstein at Andover Fabrics in New York City last December, David said “It’s a great idea, but wouldn’t it be better if not just Andover participated? If several companies joined in, then every quilt shop in America would have some of this fabric on their shelves.”

ALL ARE INVITED, SEVERAL ATTEND

Thanks to David’s suggestion, I invited every single quilt industry fabric vendor to participate. I’m happy to report nine of the best said “YES” to the American Valor Fabrics project, an unprecedented cooperative effort in our industry. Those fine companies are Andover Fabrics, Clothworks, Marcus Brothers Fabrics, Moda Fabrics, P & B Textiles, Red Rooster Fabrics, Quilting Treasures, Timeless Treasures, and Windham Fabrics.

I SEARCH FOR (AND LAND ON) AN IDEA

Once I succeeded in convincing my fabric company friends to create a small collection of fabrics to sell “on paper” at Fall International Quilt Market and ship in spring 2011, I was really worried. I simply had to come up with a way to ensure success for the fabric collections at Quilt Market and to consumers in the quilt shops.

The more I thought about Quilts of Valor and the 33,000 (at that time) quilts presented to combat veterans, the more I began to realize all these thousands of quilts had been made by people who already knew how to quilt. One summer day I thought, “Surely, many people in America would make a Quilt of Valor if they just knew how. If we quilters could just take them under our wings and help them, they could experience national service in a special way.” My original idea was to launch Under Our Wings as a program to enable people in the military branches to make Quilts of Valor, but the program that has evolved with the QOVF is really much broader than that.

A LABOR DAY POW WOW IN VIRGINIA

As the fabric company artists were developing their fabric lines, Catherine and I had many conversations. When we needed a quilt shop to advise us on promoting Under Our Wings to quilt shops at Fall Quilt Market, QOVF then-Director Catherine Snyder suggested Holly Erdei-Zuber of What’s Your Stitch ‘n Stuff in Virginia Beach, VA.

Catherine Roberts, June Moore, Connie Kallerson, Holly and her team, and I pow-wowed on Labor Day weekend at Holly’s shop. During a full day of brainstorming, my vision for Under Our Wings took flight. I went home to Iowa armed with a long to-do list. Under Our Wings would launch with a bang at Fall Quilt Market.

Meanwhile, my contacts at Iowa Public Television where “Fons & Porter’s Love of Quilting” is produced were also inspired. Andrea Coyle, who directs LOQ, suggested a documentary film about Quilts of Valor for use as a “pledge special.” All of a sudden I became a co-producer, pledging to write the “treatment” for the film and raise money for IPTV’s out-of-pocket expenses.

HOUSTON, WE HAVE LIFT OFF

At International Quilt Market just last month, Quilts of Valor/Under Our Wings presented two knock-out Schoolhouse sessions. “Schoolhouse” is a day of presentations to independent quilt shop owners which takes place the day before Quilt Market opens. Shop owners go from “classroom” to “classroom” to learn about new products.

Catherine Roberts and I were the primary speakers at our two 30-minute Schoolhouse sessions. IPTV was there with a director and a videographer, capturing it all on tape. Holly and two members from her staff were also there, having spent hours loading 400 Under Our Wings (UOW) tote bags with bottles of water, pin-on UOW buttons, American flags, and informational brochures. Dressed in UOW logo embellished chambray shirts, Holly and her team waved signs with slogans like “Serve Your Country - Make a Quilt” and “Patchwork is Patriotic.”

On hand was my husband’s brother Major General Walter Davis, Walt came all the way to Houston from the Pentagon to speak to our audiences that day. In his uniform with two stars on his shoulders, Walt told assembled shop owners “There is no better way to say Thank You to a combat veteran than with a quilt.” Many in our audience dabbed their eyes as General Davis spoke.

Also in the audience were representatives from each of the nine American Valor Fabrics companies, who stood to be recognized. When I announced each had made a financial contribution to Quilts of Valor, they were applauded.

Marianne Fons

PITCHING IN THE EXHIBIT HALL

During the three days of Quilt Market that followed, our team stood in the Quilts of Valor/Under Our Wings booth in the George Brown Convention Center, explaining Under Our Wings to a steady stream of shop owners as a very simple program that only asks shop owners to buy some of the American Valor Fabrics and hold UOW workshops in their stores. Under Our Wings’ shops simply ask their customers to each find one person who would like to make a Quilt of Valor; someone who doesn’t know how; and help that person make a QOV.
During the workshop the quilter, or Coach, brings their sewing machine and their tools. They teach their Rookie how to sew an accurate 1/4” seam. All day, the Coach does the cutting, pinning, and pressing. The Rookie just sews simple patchwork blocks.

Shop owners at first listened to us out of politeness. Within minutes, though, they understood the beautiful simplicity of Under Our Wings. “Ah-ha!” happened every time, as shop owners realized their own customers would be bringing them new customers, that people who had never made a quilt before could do so “under the wings” of their dedicated customers.

Quilt Market was abuzz with excitement about American Valor Fabrics and Under Our Wings. Each time I bumped into my contacts from the nine participating companies, they were smiling broadly. Shop owners were enthusiastically ordering their patriotic fabric lines!

AN EAGLET SPREADS ITS YOUNG WINGS

Hello! My name is Judie Yates. I am thrilled and honored to be a part of the Quilts of Valor Foundation team.

I have been a sewer since I was 13 when I bugged my mother to teach me to sew. I quickly advanced beyond what Mom knew and enrolled in my school’s Home Economics class. (That tells you a little bit about how old I am!) When I became a mother of two beautiful children, I continued to sew for my little ones but it wasn’t too long before they didn’t want “homemade” clothes so it was then that I got into quilting. At the time, we lived in a small town in the high desert of Southern California with one grocery store and a TG&Y (another reference to my age). Eleanor Burns came to town and gave a lecture at the junior college and I was hooked! With her log cabin book and my red, white and blue fabrics from the dime store, I taught myself by making two quilts for my son’s bunk beds. He’s 35 years old now and still owns one of those quilts today so I must have done something right.

In 2007, I bought my longarm machine and shortly thereafter volunteered with QOV and have loved every minute of it. The stories that have been shared along with the quilts that have been donated have touched me deeply. I can’t imagine not being involved with those who have given so much for me, my family and our country.

My husband and best friend for 31 years is my biggest supporter and, with his help, I hope to not only cover my family with love through my quilting but also to, in some small way, repay a portion of the sacrifices our soldiers and their families have made on our behalf.

Deadline for articles to be submitted to the Newsletter for the December 2010 Issue: Dec. 10th

Newsletter@QOVF.ORG
Six degrees from Kevin Bacon or let’s make Stone Soup….
The Quilts of Valor Foundation needs your help!

Lori Kutch is the Deputy Director of the QOV Foundation lor@QOVF.org.

Has it ever happened to you that you have been having a conversation with someone and you find out through some quirky circumstance that they know someone you know or need to know? That conversation is usually followed by a comment like “small world isn’t it” or “Six degrees from Kevin Bacon”.

Have you ever found that at times a task seems overwhelming when you consider tackling it by yourself but when you invite a few friends to help out it turns out not to be so difficult at all….If everyone puts in a little time and effort pretty soon you get a steaming caldron of stone soup!

In the past few years The Quilts of Valor Foundation has grown substantially! Because of this we have had to take a look at how we communicate and how we do business. We have improved our website to be more user friendly. We have improved the forms for applying for a long arm quilter and final destinations. We have shortened the newsletter but made it more frequent and timely. We have updated the local group registration system and have encouraged groups and individuals to register. We have expanded our social networking to include a Face book page and a blog. We have a Chat group on Yahoo. We have a couple great sources for mystery quilt patterns. Also there are now Regional Coordinators in place to help you with questions, concerns, and encouragement.

So in the next phase of growth here is what we need from you….ACTIVE INPUT! We are interested in who you know and what you know. We are interested in your goals and objectives for our organization.

We are all in this together. We are all Volunteers for the same cause. We all have the same mission…To cover our wounded with honor and comfort; one quilt at a time.

Let’s start sharing and communicating, let’s build a stone soup!

Expanding our resources and fund raising:

Some of the future plans we have been discussing are for fund raising on a corporate level. We want to find some sponsors who will help take the financial burden of off you. So, we need your input and ideas of who you think would be willing to help out. We want to think outside the box a bit. Who do you know that would be willing to help? We want to know if you know of someone in the advertising or promotional business that might help us draft some letters of proposal for corporate sponsors. We are also looking for some one with experience in writing applications for grants. Send input to Lori@qovf.org.

Sharing skills and experience:

We want to hear from you and what you do at a local level. We want to be able to share those ideas with other local groups so that they can get benefit from your experiences. We want to know what has worked what has not. We want to know how you arrange for a meeting space, communicate with your volunteers, supply materials, get donations of money, cover postage, and acquire fabric. What do you do with donations that are not suitable for your needs? How do you acknowledge donations, receipts, thank you notes? Do you have your own website; use other net working and social media. How do you advertise your events? We want to know successes and failures in planning sew days, presentations or other events. We want to know your goals and objectives wants and needs. We want to make a stone soup of suggestions. So that the entire QOV community can share in your knowledge and experience of how you are getting things done. Send in put to Marcella@qovf.org.

Expansion of Regional Coordinators:

We have discovered that trying to keep track of what is going on and what the needs are in several states at one time is a little overwhelming to say the least. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to take on some areas. We are taking applications for more Regional Coordinators. We are also interested in what your suggestions are for the duties of Regional Coordinators. Do you communicate with your Regional Coordinator? Do you find them accessible? Do you get information in a timely manner? This is your opportunity to tell us what you need from them. What kind of guidance, help and encouragement you need. If you are interested being a Regional Coordinator or have suggestions of what needs might be met please share your interest and in put with us. Send in put to Lori@qovf.org.

Thank You’s

Please know that the work you do making these Quilts of Valor is worthwhile and very much appreciated.

Ladies of Briarwood Baptist Church:

I just wanted to send you a note to say thank you for the fantastic quilt you made for a wounded warrior.

I was injured in an IED strike in Afghanistan on May 21st. The day I arrived in the hospital I was given the quilt that you made. It has been with me every day since keeping me warm and reminding me of the folks back home who care about us.

Your quilt has travelled in Afghanistan, (Kabul and Baghram), Landstuhl, Germany, Bethesda, Maryland, and has finally arrived in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The quilt is beautiful - so colorful and warm.

My wife is a long time quilter, and we both know quality work, made with care, when we see it. This one is special.

Thank you for taking the time to make it, thank you for keeping me and my men in your thoughts and your prayers. Thank you for reminding me of why our nation is so special.

May God continue to bless you and your church family. Semper Fi.

Respectfully,
K.D.B Major U.S.M.C.

Please share the notes and cards and Thank you’s that you receive with the rest of the QOVF community, we’d love to share them in the next newsletter. Submit items by emailing Newsletter@QOVF.org.
Notes from Down Range
by Karen Fredrickson

Down Range, the words refer to those military men and women serving in a geographic area of conflict, a combat zone. I have asked three amazing women to write the Down Range columns the summer QOVF newsletters. I hope that these columns will inform, educate, and personalize the experiences of military families.

Marine Corp Ball Speech 2010
By: Cpl Blake M. Benson

First I would like to say thank you for letting me speak to you all tonight. This is by far one of the greatest honors ever in my life, Thank you!

Joining the Marine Corp has always been a dream of mine. This is thanks to my grandfather Sgt. Earl G. Piper United States Marine Corps. Shortly after the Korean War had ended, my grandfather left the Marine Corps to work for Ford in Michigan where he retired. Even though my grandfather left the active fleet Marine Corps, he could never forget what they had taught him and continued to live his life with honor, courage and commitment. He would always be a Marine and uphold the values the come along with that title. This was my only experience with the Marine Corps throughout my childhood and it would have the greatest impact in my life still to this day. After joining the Marine Corps in his honor after his death I realized a lot of things that I had no clue about before.

The Marine Corps is not just an elite fighting force, it is a brotherhood based on tradition and loyalty to each other. Being a Marine is not something you can just turn on and off at will. It is who you are until the lord sees fit to bring you home. Being a Marine is representing more than just yourself but representing your country and every man and woman that is or has worn that Eagle Globe and Anchor. The Marine Corps is one place that everyone is equal no matter where you are from, your religion, ethnicity or your past. All of what makes you who you are before boot camp is slowly destroyed, so they can make you into the truly honorable people everyone sees today in these uniforms. As General Krulak once said, “For over 235 years our Corps has done two things for this great nation. We make Marines and we win battles.”

A great example of what the honorable General Krulak said can be seen with the Second Battle of Fallujah in 2004. I had the honor to serve in this battle with some of the most amazing men I have ever met. Men like Sgt. Wells, Cpl. Marku, LCpl. Holmes, and LCpl. Lucero just to name a few, may God bless them all, lord knows how myself and the rest of my fellow marines miss them. During the Battle of Fallujah my battalion lost 23 marines and had even more wounded, but we still managed to move forward and win the worst battle ever seen by an American force in Iraq. I was in Fallujah with the battalion from November 8th (when the battle kicked off) until November 25th (Thanksgiving Day). I was forced out of the city on Thanksgiving Day due to injuries I received after I and four other marines were ambushed. Even after I left the city the battle continued well in to the month of December. As one marine that served with me once said, “If Fallujah is not hell then it’s the next worse place imaginable.” This rings true still to this day in my opinion.

After leaving Iraq and going to Bethesda National Naval Medical Center I experienced things that would fill me with pride and things that would give most people nightmares. Seeing Marines missing arms and legs truly brings a new point of view on life. With the fresh memories of Fallujah on my mind I could not help but to want to go back and finish the fight with my guys. Unfortunately this was not in the cards for me to do. This fact that I would not see my brothers again til they got home made life even harder on me. This is where I owe my thanks to organizations like the Wounded Warrior Project. This organization did everything they could to welcome the wounded home and made sure we didn’t need anything with the help of other organizations and private donors. This was all surprising to us Marines seeing as how the only news we heard while overseas was how everyone opposed the war and the military involved in it. To know that people actually care about you and what you have done really made things easier on us all. I would like to take a moment and thank the Wounded Warrior Project for everything. Please keep up the amazing work you all have done.

After about a year and a half in the hospital it was decided I could not stay in the Marine Corps and I was medically retired with an Honorable Discharge at this point. This was extremely hard for me to take. I fought with the Marine Corps every step of the way, I called Generals, I offered to change my MOS to a non combat job, I even offered to go reservist. Nothing worked in my favor, so I left the Marine Corps on June 28th 2006. Now I had no job and no idea what I wanted to do with my life. The one thing I wanted to be didn’t want me anymore, I was damaged goods. (continued on QOVF Blog www.QOVF.blogspot.com)

National Service Sidebar

Serve Your Country, Make a Quilt

National service can be as complicated as giving your life for your country or as simple as making a Quilt of Valor and presenting it to a combat veteran.

Following the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said “Let us... care for him who shall have borne the battle.” More recently Defense Secretary Robert Gates, speaking at Duke University said, “We must spare no expense to compensate or care for those who have served and suffered on the battlefield. That is our sacred obligation.

Did You Know:
Currently fewer than one percent of Americans serve in the military, and we are engaged in the longest protracted conflict since the Revolutionary War.

Do You Believe:
In the past, Americans failed to support veterans returning from previous wars, such as Korea, the forgotten war, and Viet Nam, the unpopular war.

Are You Aware:
Armed service members undergo tremendous stress to leave family, friends, career and country when they are deployed, stress that is beyond civilian capacity to comprehend.

Are You a Quilter?
Then you a comforting quilt can say “Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and valor” in a way nothing else can. Join Quilts of Valor or any service project that honors brave Americans. Take a non-quilter under your wings and serve your country.
Quilts of Valor Foundation


Iraq Statistics
Killed - 4,424
Wounded - Many

Afghanistan Statistics
Killed - 1,315
Wounded - Many

QOV Statistics
Total QOVs Awarded - 34,495
Awarded this week - 31
Awarded this month - 655

We need significantly MORE QOVs.

Please keep up the good work and we’ll keep covering our nation’s war wounded.

Remember the R’s
REGISTER as a member of the QOV community
http://www.qovf.org/localqov-list.html

REPORT quilts awarded directly by you or your group
http://www.qovf.org/quilts-awarded-report.html

RECRUIT friends, family and locate organizations to donate time, talent and/or funds. We will need Coaches, Rookies, Local Quilt Shops to cover ALL the war wounded.

READ this newsletter, our web and blog and pass it on!

Last month we ran a story about Wounded Warriors needing supplies in Kandahar. Since then, the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 18 has received an outpouring of QOVF support. Keep up the good work! Items may be shipped until December 20th to:

UCCM Ralph Hancock, NMCB 18 Main Body, FPO AA 34099-1701.

For more information, please visit our blog:

Three-day weekend workshops called Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW), are held by and for USMC and Navy personnel to offer support to returning service-members.

The RWW coordinators have been awarding QOVs at their Honor Banquets, which creates the need for 80-100 QOVs at one time!

There are 3 RWW for Marines scheduled for the winter of 2011, the first of which will be held in Pensacola, FL.

For more information on how to help please visit our blog:
www.qovf.blogspot.com

In Colonial America, pieced or patchwork quilting was used as a way to use up scrap fabric. True or False?

Answer:
False. This is a common myth about the quilting tradition in Colonial America. Women in that time made their own clothes and also had to spin and weave the fabric. Since fabric was so precious, it was all used for clothing or for patching clothing. It wasn’t until the 1850s when commercial fabric was available that quilting became popular, and then it was only among the middle classes who could afford to purchase the fabric.

~ Submitted by Catherine Synder

Trivia Question
Quilts of Valor Foundation

Let us know how we can help you...

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Regional Coordinators
RCs are here to assist you establish new groups, help fundraise, establish new points of contact and to maintain QOVF standards. If you have any questions or need guidance, please contact the RC assigned to your state. A full list can be found at http://www.qovf.org/content/regional-coordinators.html

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

Please Remember...
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