The Cobbler’s Children Have No Shoes or I Have More Excuses Than You!

You know the storyline - Professional meets and exceeds standards at work but fails with a capital “F” at home. Case in point...myself.

Over seven years, I have made on average of at least 10 Quilts of Valor (QOVs) per year. I figured 10 was a reasonable number, especially since I burned the midnight oil imploring (and getting) help from the “piecing elves”.

UNTIL THIS YEAR...

Wanna hear some of my excuses for why I hadn’t sewn a generic stitch, much less a QOV stitch? Here we go: 1. House purchase which meant another stressful move, 2. defending and fending our site/intellectual property with lawyers and programmers, 3. Bulldog/Jack Russell canine drama, 4. post-menopausal life awakening dramas, 5. Visitors, family graduations, babysitting grandchildren, 6. QOVF growth spurts and changes...As far as I could tell, my stress index was through the roof and orbiting in a galaxy far, far away.

Even though I didn’t know it, I needed a break. More importantly, I needed to sew. I’ll admit to you...I am a lone-sewer. Yet, my group of ‘me, myself and I’ just wasn’t inspiring and getting the job done. In fact, they seemed to conspire against anything related to a needle and thread. Fortunately, June sensed I needed a sewing break and invited me to her house along with Lori for a relaxing QOV ‘retreat-weekend’. I also needed to do some filming so June assured me I would sew plus do some filming. I packed up my Prius with clothes and a ton of video equipment and headed over the Cascades to eastern Washington.

Got to June’s house HOURS before Lori. June and I headed to her to-die-for sewing/quilting studio. The idea was for me to complete one top that week-end. I thought, “No sweat.” I picked out a lovely but do-able pattern, selected fabric and smiled like the Cheshire cat. “Easy as pie.”

So far this retreat seemed to be ok with none of that touchy-feely-talking stuff plus no real sewing-accountability. I got tripped off editing film when Lori came in. Balancing her sewing machine, ironing board/iron, fabric in one hand, and exuding an attitude that said “Get out of my way, there’s work to be done!” In the other hand, she held a delicious salad, certainly big enough to feed 10.

Up to her arrival, and to MY credit, I had assembled ONE block which I proudly showed to her. (Admittedly, June had precut all my pieces so all I had to do was sit at the machine and sew.) “Great! Keep at it.” Lori said smiling. Seeing how ahead I was, I felt confident that I would easily finish my one top while she was getting settled into her sewing spot with all her sewing paraphernalia and can-do attitude.
ENTER QOV BOOT-CAMP...

I don’t know how or when it happened, but before I knew it, I had entered the QOV-Boot Camp for those who think they don’t have time or that their admin work is waaaaaay more important than the basics. Lori was my very own QOV-Drill Sergeant.

When I realized this, was I scared? Let’s just say I didn’t know enough to be scared. I was still full of great excuses—like filming, doing interviews, eating, talking to them, to Mike, to the dogs...

Lori smiled. What she wanted and expected from me, was sewing action which would lead to QOV tops getting done! How do you ask? Focusing on the task at hand augmented by stream-line assembly line sewing. A light bulb went off in my head! For someone like myself who June has described as a ‘fart in a skillet’, Lori’s stern and loving guidance was just what I needed to focus. She also had a definite expectation of a finished top, made by yours truly. It’s amazing what real accountability and a deadline will do for you. Not to mention assembly line sewing, who knew?

By the time I left June’s house mid Sunday, I had completed one QOV top plus done my interviews and shopped at a local quilt/yarn shop. More importantly, I learned the importance of attending to the basics. Basics before Admin.

Oh, and...FYI, Lori completed 3 tops to my 1. But I’m sure you all expect this from a Drill Sergeant!

QOVs Needed in DE

A Call to Action from Lenny Truitt and Social Worker Laurel Braunstein. They are asking for the QOVF Community’s help in covering service members who work at the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary.

YOUR help is needed.

Each service member working in the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary receives a much deserved Quilt of Valor at the end of their rotation. These very special people who deal with the fallen and their families on a daily basis. To say it is a stressful job is an understatement.

With 3 weeks notice, we recently were able to provide 42 Quilts of Valor for the last rotation but this has depleted our supply of QOVs. We are frantically piecing tops in order to meet their future needs. Another 15 QOVs will be needed by the middle of October and again in November as there is a continuous rotation of personnel due to the stressful nature of the job.

Please consider making a QOV or several 12 inch blocks in two colors—either red and white or blue and white. The tops and blocks should be sent to:

QOVF, P.O. Box 1003, Seaford, DE 19973

Thank you for any help you are able to provide. It is greatly appreciated.

Journal Guru

Journal writing can be fun...but where to start? How about with picking out paper. You can use loose leaf notebook paper, an actual journal (something that they could continue writing in), fun colorful paper from a stationary store that reflects you and your personality, or just plain white computer paper. Once you have the paper, you’re ready to go!

What should you write? Write about things that are important to you. A journal is “your world” while you’re making the QOV, it can be anything you want it to be. Write about things that you would want to know - if you struggle with what to write, then just write everything - you can always edit later. Some questions that might help get you started: Why did you decide to make a QOV? Do you have family members in the services? Why did you choose the fabric in the QOV? What are your thoughts on patriotism? What are your wishes for the servicemember who receives this quilt?

Try to keep your journal handy so you can jot down thoughts and ideas as they come to you. Some find that these letters are more personal if handwritten, but if it’s more comfortable for you to type, then by all means, go for it. What’s key, is just that you take the time to do it. It really can be more important than you realize to the person on the receiving end.

He Will Be Missed...

The QOVF Community lost one of its most inspiring and prolific icons last month when Al Lind, WWII veteran and POW, died at his home at the age of 92.

Al’s dedication to making Quilts of Valor and reaching across the generations to offer honor, comfort and healing is a model for us all. He will be telling us to “Get off your duff and make a Quilt of Valor” until every wounded warrior is covered.
QOV Marathon News

Suzie Haas organized two weekends of sewing and fun in Illinois and Missouri to honor our service members and veterans. The events were tremendous successes, exceeding expectations and goals.

We are Quilters…Here we Go! Give Us Fabric, More to SEW! Yes… we sang our Quilters Cadence song and laughed and clapped to the rhythm of our own beat! We cheered Miss Katherine N., of 89 years from New Athens, Il… on as she rang the cow bell up and down the hall in honor of meeting our goal of 100 quilt tops! By the end of our third sewing day at the Drury Inn we exceeded our goal and made 155 tops! Awesome!

A Big Thank You, to everyone who helped with the Quilts of Valor Marathon. Absolutely wonderful! Touching! Overwhelming! Grateful! These are just a few of the words to describe the Quilts of Valor Marathon held this past September 9-11 & 16-18, 2010 in Illinois/ Missouri.

The three days spent at the Drury Inn in O’Fallon, Ill. was enjoyed by all. We had the whole 6th floor with open doors through out the floor. Everyone was excited and having a ball. We had the wonderful presence of Catherine Roberts, founder of QOVF and Deb and Duane Granger, Regional Directors to enjoy sewing at the Marathon. The early risers and night owls sewed until their hearts content….

The following week-end at the Gammill Quilting Systems in West Plains, Mo. was just as much fun……Michael Hinton had the place decorated and waiting for us to arrive! He was outstanding and everyone at Gammill bent over backwards to help us with our every need. Each day we had 7-8 longarm quilters, quilting for 11 hours! June Moore from WA. Joyce L. of NH. and her sister Janice C. from NH., Kathie H. from Mo. Millie S. from Mo. Linda O. from Mo. Rhonda L from Ill. And myself. We quilted 37 quilts! Fantastic! Several people came from Arkansas, Missouri and Illinois to help cut batting, sew on and hand stitch bindings.

The crowning glory was a ceremony given at each facility to honor and award 7 service members QOV quilts! This is totally what it is was all about. Saying Thank You, to our service members who have served our country!

The quilt tops are still coming. I have received several tops since I have returned home from the Marathon!

Quilts have been sent from all across the country. Just to name a few, Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Missouri and Illinois.

Several local service members have requested quilts and will receive their QOV’s soon! Quilts will also be given to other sources.

Thank you all again very much for an outstanding turn-out and all of your hard work!
How you can Help in Kandahar

Here is an opportunity to get your whole family and community involved - even if they don’t sew.

Last month, the Quilts of Valor Foundation received an email from a woman in our community whose husband is deployed to Kandahar. The following are excerpts taken from her email. After reading this, we know that the QOVF community will band together and see that these overseas servicemembers are not only covered with Quilts of Valor, but with clean clothing and sheets, and the knowledge that we back home are listening, and that we care.

Good Morning, My name is Karan Hancock, I have done several Quilts Of Valor. My husband is a Navy Seabee that is presently deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan. Recently, his unit Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 18 (NMCB18) found out something disturbing that I think you could help with.

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 18 (NMCB 18) is a reserve Navy Seabee unit that has been deployed to Afghanistan. The base where they are living is also the place where wounded Army personnel are brought for treatment. These are the service members that are not urgent enough to be transported to Germany, but are too injured to go back to their unit. The wounded warriors can be at this camp for a couple of days or a couple of weeks. It all depends on how fast the Army can get orders for them to go home or to go back to their unit. During this time the wounded warriors are given a cot in a huge tent. All they have are the clothes on their backs which are often dirty, bloody and cut open from getting medical treatment. As a result, many stay in their tents, in their battered clothing, with nothing to do.

When NMCB 18 saw this, they jumped into action to help. They built shelves, chairs, and a deck and requested that the folks back home send toiletries.

Here is a list of things that are needed: soap, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste; blankets; bedding; small towels; socks; Crocs (footwear men’s sizes 9-11); t-shirts; underwear; sweat pants; sweat shirts; and books. They request clothing sizes to vary in sizes from Medium on up. The colder it gets the more important the warm clothing will become. Try to keep things unisex in color.

All the items can be shipped to:
UCCM Ralph Hancock,
NMCB 18 Main Body,
FPO AA 34099-1701.

He will make sure that all the items reach the wounded warriors. If you use the “large Flat Rate Box for APO/FPO addresses” the post office will give you a discounted rate for shipping, only $12.50. You will also be required to fill out a customs form.

If you have questions please feel free to contact Karan Hancock, NMCB 18’s Family Readiness Group president at nmcb18ain@aol.com or by phone at 503-524-5648 (Pacific Time).


Please, help the Navy to help the Army’s Wounded Warriors.

Thank You’s

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

Yesterday it was my honor and privilege to meet up with Capt. P. H., a US Navy ICU nurse stationed at Role Three Hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and present her with a Quilt of Valor. She was home on a two week leave and will return there on Thursday for an extension of her third tour of duty.

She was so gracious in her praise of all those who make and send quilts. She couldn’t say enough about what the quilts mean to our wounded warriors. She loves to present the Quilts of Valor and represent all of us in the process.

When I asked her questions about what she needed, she mentioned the LOVE of the red, white and blue quilts. It was always her honor to wrap a soldier in the “colors of his/her country”.

I also asked her about the presentation cases. She liked the use of pillowcases and found that a wounded soldier’s medical records could travel safely with the QOV in its pillowcase. The pillowcase then would sit flat on the machinery and breathing apparatus that travel with the wounded.

After a wonderful and emotional afternoon, I left feeling drained but very proud to be “one of the ladies in America who is making these wonderful quilts for our soldiers and Marines.”

P will be leaving the ICU due to burnout but definitely wanted to continue distributing Quilts of Valor in Kandahar. She wants you all to continue making those fabulous red, white and blue Quilts of Valor.

Nancy Rogers
Massachusetts

All,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this Quilt of Valor program! It is so worthwhile and such a blessing to our Soldiers. We conducted a Quilt of Valor ceremony last Friday at the U.S. Army Aeromedical Center at Fort Rucker, AL. Three Soldiers received the honorable Quilt of Valor: Maj. K was so moved he could not read the note I gave him. Chaplain read it for him. I know this was a rushed ceremony, but MAJ B was retiring and leaving the area. Thank you for helping me to make it happen.

I want to especially thank a special friend, Cathy Fancher, a USAAMC employee, who came to my rescue with a number of Quilts of Valor from the Enterprise Quilters Guild, Enterprise, AL. Thank you, Cathy! I also want to thank COL Patrick Dennan, USAAMC Commander and Chaplain Alex Brown for making the ceremony special by your kind words and prayers.

To Bonnie, Allen and David, thank you for your service to our Nation. If not for your sacrifice, we wouldn’t have the freedoms we have today. God bless you and Godspeed.

Respectfully,
Paula, Fort Ruckers QOV Representative
Quilts of Valor Foundation


Statistics

Iraq Statistics
Killed - 4,424
Wounded - Many

Afghanistan Statistics
Killed - 1,315
Wounded - Many

QOV Statistics
Total QOVs Awarded - 32,851
Awarded this week - 24
Awarded this month - 64

We need significantly MORE QOVs.

Reminders

1. Don’t forget to report quilts you or your group have awarded. Just fill out the “Report Local Awarded QOVs”. The button is in the upper left menu on the QOVF website homepage.

2. Send those blog items and pictures to newsletter@QOVF.org whenever you hold an event, or have a story to share.

3. The deadline for submitting articles for next month’s newsletter is Oct. 1.

Trivia Question

Which needles have big eyes, and sharp points? *

Answer:
c. The Chenille needle has a large eye for ease of threading, yet a very sharp point. The tapestry needle has a large eye with a dull point, and a quilting needle tends to be quite small with a small eye and sharp point.

http://www.bellaonline.com/site/Quilting

This Month’s Trivia:

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

If you are new to QOVF or are a new QOVF group, or even if you’ve been around for years, we need you to register your information on the website under “register your group.”

www.qovf.org/index.php?page=localqov

Please note that you can also register as an individual. It will only take a few minutes and is an important way to get and share information.

http://www.qovf.org/req-volunteer-long.html

Still deciding if a group is right for you? Why not register and see what happens? You might be surprised by the benefits you receive!

*The answer to this month’s trivia question will be posted in next month’s Newsletter. If you have a great idea for a trivia question, please email it to newsletter@qovf.org.
QOVF STAFF

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 www.qovf.org/index.php?page=cmspage&id=63

For more information regarding QOVF Structure and Volunteers, please visit:
http://www.qovf.org/content/about-us.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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Contact Us

Do you have comments, questions, concerns about an article you’ve read in a QOVF newsletter? Please feel free to contact us at newsletter@QOVF.org. We welcome your input and thoughts regarding the topics that matter to you most.

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