



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Lori Thompson

It's hard to believe the end of the year and the holidays are here! My family and I are looking forward to another Colorado Christmas at home. As the colder weather settles in, we're hoping for Christmas snow and planning a relaxing Christmas.



Lori Thompson
Executive Director

It's almost time to make toffee to share with friends and family and to host our annual neighbors' Christmas party. We're blessed to share the season with many good friends and family!

During this busy time, I usually take some time and reflect on what has happened each year. As I think about this past year with QOVF, I realize it has been a busy, incredible milestone year! We all accomplished and celebrated so much. QOVF hosted the 20th Anniversary Conference in Paducah, Kentucky, earlier this fall, which was the first QOVF conference in four years. Many members made the lovely 20 Stars for 20 Years quilt in the Block of the Month quilt-along hosted by the Outreach Committee. We awarded the 350,000 QOV this summer. QOVF's membership increased to over 11,000, and over 50 new QOVF groups were formed. We are on track to award over 30,000 Quilts of Valor® for the third year in a row.

We've all had a hand in achieving these amazing results! I want to encourage us all to celebrate these milestones. In a meeting last week, I observed some of our committee members feeling like they haven't accomplished enough this year. I asked them to try two things:

1. Make a list of what they have accomplished and what great QOVF moments they have experienced. I invited them to share their lists with me and each other.
2. Revisit their list when they feel like their efforts are not enough and say, "I've done my level best and it's more than enough."

As we chatted about this request, it was clear that we had accomplished more than we initially thought.

Sometimes when you have a big mission, it is easy to get discouraged by what hasn't been done yet. It's important to take stock of what has been done and celebrate. If we've wrapped a service member or veteran in a Quilt of Valor, we have succeeded in our goal of offering comfort and healing to that recipient in the moment. Quilt by quilt, award by award, we fulfill our mission and touch lives. Please take time to remember what has been done and what the impact is. Please remember we have all done our level best and it's been more than enough.

It's been a joy to see QOVF's impact over the past two years that I have served as the Executive Director! I am proud of what our membership and organization

have accomplished! As most of you know, I will be transitioning out of the Executive Director role at the end of this month to pursue another opportunity. It was not an easy decision as it has been a privilege to serve you all in this role. I was new to QOVF when I started in the fall of 2021. What started out as a job has become an important community to me. Next year, I'll shift gears and become a QOVF volunteer. I'm excited to see what's next!

Thank you for all you have done to support me in the Executive Director position and all you have done to ensure Quilts of Valor have been awarded to service members and veterans! Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

SAVE THE DATE FOR QOVF TAKE 5 2024!

Join us as we will run, walk, and quilt block again on **May 18, 2024**, the official day of Armed Forces Day. Registration is now open. Register [here](#). For more information on QOVF Take 5 and to start preparing click [here](#).



QOVF MEMBER RECOGNIZED FOR VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Submitted by Kelly McKeehan

Lewis & Clark QOV group, Lewiston, Idaho

Emotions ran high on October 6 at the Clarkston, Washington, VFW Hall as three veterans were awarded their Quilts of Valor.

The veterans were surrounded by family and friends as their military details were read and the quilts were draped around their shoulders. Their years of service totaled 33, in the U.S. Navy and Army.

Following these three awards, QOVF member Sharon Ledbetter was presented with a Congressional letter from United States Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers. Sharon had been nominated for the Congressional award by VFW Commander Chuck Whitman for her valuable and continued volunteer efforts for the Quilts of Valor Foundation. She began making QOVs in 2005 and started the Lewis & Clark Quilts of Valor group in 2009. She served as group leader and as the Idaho state coordinator. She also served as the QOVF Assistant Executive Director under Susan Gordon. At this time, she is a very active QOV-maker and promoter.

After reading the letter, Representative McMorris Rodgers spoke about her belief in supporting veterans and making sure those who defended our nation be honored for "protecting the freedoms that we often take for granted." In regard to the quiltmakers, McMorris Rodgers stated "People make the difference."



ARE YOU FOLLOWING QOVF?

Submitted by QOVF Marketing

QOVF is on many platforms, and we welcome all of you to follow us and tag us on social media.

National Facebook: QOVFoundation—<https://www.facebook.com/QOVFoundation>

National YouTube: @quilts of valor foundation—<https://www.youtube.com/@quilts of valor foundation>

National Twitter: @QOVFoundation—<https://twitter.com/QOVFoundation>

National Instagram: @quilts of valor foundation—<https://www.instagram.com/quilts of valor foundation/>

National Pinterest: @qovf—<https://www.pinterest.com/qovf>

TOP GUN INSTRUCTOR AND SPOUSE AWARDED QOVs

*Submitted by Linda Heltz, Group Leader
Central Arkansas QOV*

On Friday October 12, 2023, the Central Arkansas Quilts of Valor had the privilege and honor of awarding QOVs to Randy and Sharon C. Randy is the first Ace pilot of the Vietnam War and flew the F4 Phantom II. Randy holds 19 Awards which include the Navy Cross, two Silver Stars, 15 Air Medals, the Navy Commendation Medal, a Purple Heart, and the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Star and Oak Leaf Cluster. Randy was shot down in North Vietnam in 1972. After Vietnam he served as an instructor at the U.S. Navy Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun) at Naval Air Station Miramar in San Diego.

The movie Top Gun is based on Randy's life in the military. With this being the 20th anniversary of the Quilts of Valor Foundation, I chose to award him our 20th anniversary QOV telling him this is his 20th award, a civilian award.

Sharon also served in the United States Navy from 1990 to 2014. Sharon



was the first female to be employed by NASA to train astronauts on weightless environment training. She received NASA's exceptional bravery medal. Having this ability, she trained actors

for the movie Armageddon. Both Sharon and Randy contribute a lot to their community and in serving others through the Pulaski County Republican Women organization.

QOV FILLS MY HEART

*Submitted by Sharon Hatch
Bonners Ferry, Idaho*

Quilts of Valor is not just a way to fill my time. It fills my heart.

Quilting is one activity I am capable of in spite of my difficulties. I don't remember when or where I first heard about Quilts of Valor. When I did learn about QOV, I looked on the website and found patterns I could sew. While I will always consider myself a novice, I was thrilled to find Quilts of Valor. The directions were easy to follow! I began making them for my wonderful son-in-law and his brother who are both Navy veterans. From there it was my neighbor's husband and her dad.

Then a lovely man who served the community in such huge ways was my most affirming recipient that touched my heart and gave me the biggest sign that my gesture was not only appreciated but mattered. John welcomed my husband

and I to our new community. He ran an auction house that was the center of community gatherings for so many. Regulars would come and sit and watch, enjoy coffee, biscuits and gravy, or donuts, while we visited. The items were new and old, just like those of us coming for a good buy or a place to sell all sorts of stuff. John had a sense of humor and quick wit. He was always fair and kept the fun moving along. Our near empty house was sprinkled with furniture, furnishings and decorations over the next three years. Friendships were made with our community we love.

John looked a bit ill the last time we saw him. He left the auction to go to the doctors. All of us were anxious for how he was doing as the shutdown had been lifted. It was a short time later he passed due to Covid. His family told me that when he knew he was going to the hospital he asked his loyal son to bring the quilt I made for him. I shared instant tears with his son and daughter when

they told me he was gone. The QOV was the one thing he was specific that he wanted with him. I still tear up just thinking about it, how much an impact he had on our life and how my simple lap quilt was the item he wanted. It was much more a gift to me, blessing me with feelings that I needed to continue this simple task.

It is not just me. The fabric store in town gives me a discount knowing that I am making these for our veterans. I don't know my total. When I meet a veteran, my thoughts go straight to whether I have one finished or do I drive to get specific fabric for the person. When I am making one for an unknown person, I think about how much they have done for me that I will never know. I don't have to know. I think the men and women who serve are members of a team whose result is a privileged life for me, made possible by their sacrifice. So, thank you to all of you who make QOV happen.

POCONO MOUNTAINS QOV

#88526

*Submitted by Kathleen McCarthy,
Co-Facilitator PMQOV #88526*

For our last sew-in of the year in September, we welcomed two new members. One came bearing a beautiful tribute quilt as a memorial for her brother, to be awarded at an upcoming ceremony in November. Welcoming new quilter and member Margaret R., who shared with our group the making and emotional story behind the making of her first quilt.



Left to right: Bernadette F., Rose K., Joanie F., Margaret R., Barbara VN, Ruth Ann H., Barbara R., Mary D., Sheri S., kneeling Laura L.

Standing (left to right): Margaret R. and Laura L.; Seated (left to right): Mary D. and Ruth Ann H.



MY FIRST QUILT TO HONOR MY BROTHER'S LIFE: A VETERAN AND 911 HERO

*by Margaret Rapp (loving sister),
Member Pocono Quilts of Valor 88526*

My brother, Bob (Robert K.), was the first son in my immediate family to go to Vietnam in 1966, being drafted and trained in the U. S. Army. In Vietnam, he was a door gunner on a helicopter. When he returned home, he was in terror all the time when fire sirens blared or any loud noises were heard—even diving under a bed! Eventually, he seemed to adjust, get married and father two sons. As an elevator mechanic, he was able to buy a home on Long Island, raise a family and provide well.

When 911 hit the Towers, Bob was there. His wife wrote: "My husband, Bobby K, and his partner, Joe F., were resident mechanics at #7 World Trade. They stayed behind to assist (Army training kicking in) when fleeing personnel were trapped in the elevators. They then accompanied building engineers and security to evacuate the building, only to become trapped themselves when it caught fire. They eventually escaped. Bobby barely outran falling debris when the North Tower collapsed. Sadly, he sustained back injuries and later suffered from



Margaret R. (left) & Laura L. (right) during 9/15/2023 Sew Day.

lung disease and was determined to be disabled."

Life after 911 was difficult. Robert had worked all his life and he struggled with his new limitations. His depression and the return of PTSD symptoms were evident. He was able, after a few beers, to describe the horror and atrocities used against the U.S. Troops. He would ramble and struggle with these memories. Sadly, almost four years after 911, his car hit a tree and he died. We will never really know if it was a true accident. With PTSD and the haunting memories that

overtook him, the feeling of hopelessness is overwhelming. Some of us saw his decline and truly tried to convince him to use Veterans Services. He died in his truck with the papers on the seat—it was too late.

With my new membership in the Pocono Mountain QOV and the making of my first quilt, I will have the opportunity to honor my brother's service and sacrifice abroad and on U.S. soil as I present this quilt to another Vietnam vet at a ceremony set to take place this November.

PRAYERS AND HEALING

Submitted by Marty Smith

Georgia Girl Group, Greensboro, NC

A year ago, a gentleman called me who was looking for someone involved in Quilts of Valor in the Greensboro area. He is part of a group of about 50 veterans who meet each month at the First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, and he asked me to meet with his group to discuss Quilts of Valor. I told him that I could just combine the discussion with an award ceremony, but he was adamant that I would come do a presentation. After several conversations, I realized that I was going to have to do things his way in order to meet his needs; I wouldn't be able to simply invite him to an award ceremony so he could see how I conduct them. It was a few months before he could get the presentation on the group's schedule, but we were finally able to make it happen in March of this year. In the meantime, though, he called me at least once a month to make sure that I still had the date on my calendar and would be there to do the presentation. After the presentation in March, because of schedules, summer vacations, etc., we scheduled the award ceremony for November 15 of this year. This would give us time to get each veteran's information and make sure we would have enough quilts for the group.

One Wednesday in October, I received a call from one of the associate pastors at that church who told me that one of the veterans in the group was in critical condition in the ICU at Cone Hospital. He said that the veteran may not still be with us by November and



that his family asked if I could go ahead and award his quilt in the hospital, as it meant a lot to him. When I asked for the name of the veteran, my heart skipped a beat as he said the name. It was the sweet, tenacious man who first called me over a year ago and followed up with me to ensure that his group would receive Quilts of Valor. I agreed to take his quilt to him in the hospital as I had finished it shortly before my presentation and planned to use it as a prop in the presentation. All it needed was a label.

The following Thursday, my husband and I met with the family and two pastors before the ceremony. The actual award was one of the hardest things I'll ever do because it was my friend who was receiving the quilt, and I knew how much it meant to him. He was on a ventilator and sedated but responded somewhat when I spoke to him during the ceremony. The pastor held his hand

on my back helping me get through the award without being totally overcome by my emotions and unable to talk. One of the things I said to the veteran during the ceremony was that I was expecting him to help me with the ceremony in November. I firmly believe that he heard me. After I made the award and spread the quilt over him, one of the pastors who was an Army Chaplain for 20 years, asked each of us to hold an edge of the quilt while he prayed—a sweeter prayer has never been prayed.

Now here is a really sweet part of all of this. They were able to take him off the ventilator that Friday and he is doing much better. He still has a long way to go with relearning to swallow and is extremely weak from being on the ventilator in ICU for a week, but he is still with us AND we have every reason to hope that he will be here to help me with the presentation.

MISS UNITED STATES 2022

ASSISTS AT FAIR

Submitted by QOVF Marketing

This summer, Lily D., Miss United States 2022, from Memphis, Tennessee, was at the Arapahoe County Fair. Lily sewed a QOV quilt block at the fair and helped present veterans with Quilts of Valor at a ceremony.

To find a QOVF group near you and get involved in our community events, you can click [here](#). Need help if no groups are in your neighborhood or town, you can contact your [Regional and State Coordinators](#) for additional information.

New to sewing or interested in sewing a QOV for the new year, click [here](#) to learn how to make a Quilt of Valor.



THANK YOU FROM A VETERAN

Submitted by Clarice Grace, Pope County Patriot Stitchers

Our local Quilts of Valor chapter, Pope County Patriot Stitchers, Russellville, Arkansas (#51594), awarded several Quilts of Valor on November 10, 2023. A Veterans Day program was held at our local Russellville High School. One of the veterans wrote us a "thank you" note that was very "heartfelt."

Letter From a Vietnam Veteran
First of all, I want to thank you ladies who pieced these beautiful quilts for us veterans. As you took little bits and pieces of many fabrics and sewed them together, your patriotic stitches created these beautiful quilts providing warmth to our bodies and warm comfort to our SOULS!

Your group's title, "Patriot Stitchers" exemplifies your love and your appreciation of what ALL Vets have endured over the years. It's you ladies who have hearts of valor and I salute you!

I'm sure if Betsy Ross who lovingly stitched those very first stitches were alive today, she would be very proud of you ladies carrying on the work of the Red, White and Blue coming together now as beautiful quilts. I salute each member of the Pope County Patriot Stitchers!

Vietnam was a country threatened by Communist people to take away their freedom. I served in the mountain fields of Vietnam, building roads and pontoon bridges and protecting the mountain people. In their culture, New Years is a very important holiday and, in their culture, every 12 years it's a Very Big and Very Important celebration called TET. Well, in 1968 while I was serving in Nam it was a TET year. The enemy thought everyone would be celebrating to the extent of drunkenness and not alert or ready at arms to defend themselves. That's when the HORRIFIC TET Offensive took place. It not only wiped out many of the Vietnamese people but killed and crippled many of our G.I.s. This piece of history needs to be taught in our schools. It was a difficult time in our own country—BUT if we had not fought for them—Communism would have taken over and would not have stopped in Vietnam, but its icy fingers of greed would move on to strip other countries of their freedom! We lost many valiant soldiers in that era. Some were my buddies. Let me tell you, all veterans, whether Navy, Marine, Air Force or Army, are my buddies. I do not understand why I was spared that day, but I thank God He protected me. I came home to my family—not as many of my fallen buddies who came home in a flag-draped box.

Around town here in Russellville we see men wearing their caps or a vest or proudly wear that bracelet indicating their branch of service. One Vet immediately sees and recognizes him as a buddy and there is immediate empathy that only those two men can understand. There is a bond between us. We are a brotherhood like none other! During WWI the song, "My Buddy," became popular as many buddies never came home. Others came home wounded, not only in body, but in mind. We came home from Nam only to be scorned and spit upon as we disembarked. People did not understand the need of our mission and the threat of take-over by the evil monster of Communism. When Francis Scott Key wrote the words of our National Anthem, "O say can you see by the dawn's early light" those stars and stripes we proudly defend yet today.

I do not think of myself as a hero. It was those men who came home in flag-draped coffins who are the real heroes! So, in the heart of every vet, and in my own as well it's not TAPS we hear playing but REVEILLE. So yes Mr. Key, we still see the Stars and Stripes unfurled over our own Beautiful Country. God Bless each of you here today, God bless you ladies for these beautiful quilts and GOD BLESS AMERICA!

RONALD G.H., U. S. Army veteran

UNIQUE QOV FUNDRAISER

Submitted by Phyllis Schoenholz, Nebraska South Central Coordinator

Eleven members of Nebraska Piecemakers QOV Sewing Group carried with them sewing machines, rotary cutting mats and other sewing tools to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) building in Geneva, Nebraska, on September 21, 2023. A request to repair tattered American flags came from the American Legion, Sons of Legion, and VFW in Geneva after taking down the flags after Memorial Day.

Working in teams, the ladies cut off ragged ends, pinned a new hem and sewed three rows of stitching to secure the new hem on the 100+ flags. Other flags that had holes were repaired using fabric from retired flags. The proficient quilters worked from 9:00 AM to early afternoon to complete the daunting task.



The VFW supplied lunch for the ladies. The three organizations gave a generous donation to Piecemakers. The September event supplied a unique way

of raising funds to purchase fabric and other supplies to make more Quilts of Valor to thank and honor our American heroes.

QUILT BUSINESS MEMBERS:

WHO'S IN MY AREA

Submitted by QOVF Marketing

Midwest

Love It Sew



Overview:

Love It Sew is a quilt shop with a variety of fabrics, top of the line Bernina Sewing Machines, Longarm services, and classes for all skill levels.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Love It Sew

Contact Info

7270 E US Hwy 36, Suite 104
Avon, IN 46123

Northeast

Sassy Pants Quilt Shop

Overview: Sassy Pants Quilt Shop is full of fabric, notions, patterns, long-arm services, and has their own Block of the Month club to check out for their patriotic quilts.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Sassy Pants Quilt Shop.

Contact Info

439 Ramsey Ave
Chambersburg, PA 17201



Midwest

Sweet Stitches Quilt Shop

Overview:

Sweet Stitches Quilt Shop is a destination for fabrics, notions and all things quilting. They carry a wide variety of brights, batiks, and reproduction fabrics as well as notions, patterns, books and Accuquilt cutting systems. They are also an authorized Janome and Elna sewing machine dealer and have a sewing machine repair shop on site.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Sweet Stitches Quilt Shop.



Contact Info

1575 South Calumet Road
Chesterton, IN 46304

West

West Valley Quilting

Overview: West Valley Quilting is a small quilting business that is an online retailer of quilt fabric, notions, patterns, and longarm quilting services.

Click [here](#) to learn more about West Valley Quilting.

Contact Info

5511 N 190th Dr
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340



West

Easy Quilting Corner

Overview:

Easy Quilting Corner specializes in long arm quilting and designer fabrics and is a quilt shop with a wide selection of high-quality fabrics, patterns, and quilting supplies.



Click [here](#) to learn more about Easy Quilting Corner.

Contact Info

1860 Chicago Avenue, Suite G-15
Riverside, CA 92507

QOVF Quilt Business Members listed on our website are from every region, some offering QOVF discounts, classes, a wide range of quilting supplies and services. Click [here](#) to view the list of our Quilt Business Members.

Are you interested in being a QOVF Quilt Business member? Click [here](#) to learn more about how to register to become a QOVF Quilt Business Member.

SAVE THE DATE FOR QOVF NATIONAL SEW DAY 2024!

Join us on **February 3, 2024**, for QOVF National Sew Day. Stay tuned for more information on the 2024 Block.

In the meantime, report your 2023 Split Back Star blocks to BlockDrive@qovf.org. For more information on our National Block Drive, click [here](#).





Quilts Reported

2012: 6,169

2013: 12,314

2014: 17,373

2015: 18,772

2016: 19,051

2017: 24,123

2018: 30,745

2019: 33,375

2020: 23,356

2021: 30,428

2022: 30,978

2023: 33,636

Total: 369,697

(from date of first recorded award through
30 November 2023)



*The mission of the Quilts of Valor® Foundation is to cover service members and veterans
touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.*

QOVF Core Values

Treating people with respect • Promoting excellence • Valuing service over self • Being accountable



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For more information about QOVF,
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For more information about the BOD,
the QOVF staff, and how to contact your
State Coordinator go to
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