



NEW YEAR, A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

by Kryste Wallen

The start of a new year offers a rare and powerful moment: a chance to pause, reflect, and recommit—to our goals, our values, and most importantly, to one another. As we step into this year together, we do so not simply as individuals, but as members of a shared community built on collaboration, purpose, and mutual support.



Kryste Wallen
Executive Director

Our organization exists because of you. Each member brings unique experiences, insights, and energy that strengthen our collective impact. Over the past year, we've seen how connection and engagement can drive progress, even in times of uncertainty. Whether through participation in events, contributions to discussions, volunteer efforts, or quiet behind-the-scenes support, your involvement continues to shape who we are and what we can achieve.

A new year is not just about resolutions, it's about intention. This year, we invite you to be intentional in how you engage with the organization and with fellow members. Attend a meeting you've never joined before. Reach out to someone new. Share your ideas, your expertise, and your perspective. Growth happens when participation turns into connection, and connection turns into collaboration.

We also recognize that the strength of a membership organization lies in its ability to evolve. As we move forward, we remain committed to listening, learning, and adapting to better serve our members. Your feedback and involvement are essential in shaping programs, initiatives, and opportunities that are relevant, meaningful, and impactful. Together, we can ensure that our organization not only meets the needs of today but is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

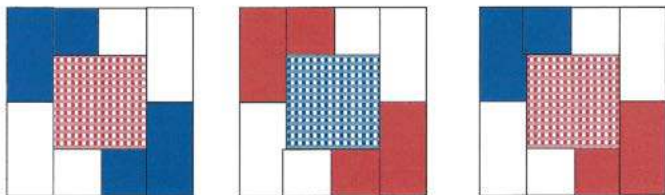
This year will bring new initiatives, renewed focus, and opportunities for members to engage more deeply than ever before. Whether you are a long-time member or someone who recently joined, your voice matters. Your participation helps define our direction and strengthens the sense of belonging that makes this organization thrive.

As we begin this new chapter, let us move forward with optimism and purpose. Let us support one another, celebrate our shared successes, and remain open to new ideas and perspectives. Together, we can continue building a community that is resilient, inclusive, and driven by a shared commitment to excellence.

Thank you for being part of this organization and for all that you contribute. We look forward to another year of connection, growth, and collective achievement - together.

2026 BLOCK OF THE YEAR

Echoes was selected as the 2026 Block of the Year, designed and written by Nancy Cann. For instructions, color requirements, and an Echoes Tutorial, [click here](#). In addition to the Echoes Block Instructions, six quilt patterns are available to help you create your Echoes quilts.



QOV AWARD

Submitted by Robert St. John,
member of Team Tennessee

On Saturday, December 20, 2025, a Quilt of Valor award ceremony was held at the Picture This Store honoring U.S. Navy veteran LTJG Phil. At 92 years old, Phil is a renowned Nashville artist who continues to create artwork capturing the Nashville scene.



The Quilt of Valor presented to Phil was made by Louise C.

PARTNERS CORNER

MerryStockings Military Bears Kit Series

Celebrate service with the [MerryStockings Military Bears Kit Collection](#), featuring:

Navy, Coast Guard, Space Force, Marine, Army, and Air Force Bears. Each kit includes a stamped felt pattern, 5 mm cupped sequins, beads, DMC embroidery floss, needles, and full-color instructions. When finished, each bear stands 5" tall. You can even personalize your bear by adding a soldier's name to the back.



Thank-You Cards by Deborah Fisher

This set of four thank-you cards, designed by artist Deborah Fisher, celebrates the 2024 QOVF Block of the Year—the Ohio Star—and features messages of gratitude on the front. Each set includes one of each design.

[Purchase your set today.](#)

Purchase Quilts of Valor Thread Sets and Quilt Kits from Connecting Threads

[Quilts of Valor Thread Set](#)

[MasterPiece 5 Spool Set - Quilts of Valor](#)

[So Fine! 5 Spool Set - Quilts of Valor](#)

[Basics Traverse QOV Red White Blue Cotton Quilt Kit](#)



Keystone Carving offers Hard Maple and Solid Cherry American-made wooden Quilters Clappers. If you're interested in purchasing a QOV Clapper for your QOV Group or your own sewing room, [click here](#).

Janome 3160 Quilts of Valor edition sewing machine!

This fantastic machine comes with a quilting attachment kit that includes both a free-motion quilting foot and a walking foot. Take advantage of this great option for your quilting projects!

[Click here](#) to purchase a 3160QOV edition sewing machine.



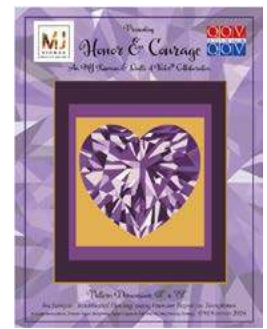
Purchase Your 12 Quilts of Valor Pack Made by Villa Rosa Designs!

Villa Rosa Designs created a pack of 12 patterns that perfectly align with the Quilts of Valor standards, making your creations not just beautiful, but also meaningful. The pack of patterns can be purchased through the QOVF Shop [on our website](#).

MEMBER ONLY SPECIALS

MJ Kinman – Honor & Courage Pattern

Over the past year, QOVF members enjoyed a 20% discount on MJ Kinman's *Honor & Courage* pattern, originally set to expire on December 31, 2025. We are pleased to announce that the coupon code expiration is extended through December 31, 2027.



This collaboration with MJ Kinman, creator of the *Honor & Courage* pattern, pays tribute to the many men and women awarded the Purple Heart. Originally introduced as Annie, in honor of the first woman to receive a Purple Heart, the pattern was later resized to meet Quilts of Valor® requirements.

The discount code is available in the Member-Only Specials section of the Member Dashboard.

Fons & Porter – Love of Quilting

Through our partnership with Fons & Porter, QOVF members can subscribe to *Love of Quilting* magazine for just \$15, a 75% savings off the cover price. Discount link available in Member-Only Specials on the Member Dashboard

Superior Threads

Special pricing on Superior Threads products is available to QOVF members year-round. Access via the Superior Threads QOVF Program in the Member-Only Specials section of the Member Dashboard

Foust Textiles

Foust Textiles offers special QOV pricing with specific ordering instructions. Details available on the Member Dashboard under Member Information

Legit Kits – Land of the Free

QOVF members receive an exclusive 10% discount on Legit Kits' *Land of the Free* Kit, Pattern, and Fabric Packs. Coupon code expiration: December 31, 2026 and is available in Member-Only Specials on the Member Dashboard



Marshall Dry Goods

Marshall Dry Goods provides special pricing for QOV members. Ordering instructions and price lists are available on the Member Dashboard under Member Information

Pellon

Pellon offers discounted pricing on fabric and batting, allowing Group Leaders to use available Group Funds for purchases. Ordering documents are available under Member Information on the Member Dashboard.

START PLANNING AND REGISTER TODAY FOR THE 2026 ORIGINAL SEWING & QUILT EXPO

Photographs from the October 2025 Original Sewing & Quilt Expo in Lebanon, Tennessee were submitted by Ginger Fondren, Tennessee State Coordinator and Group Leader of Team Tennessee.

Sgt. Heath of the Nashville Metropolitan Police Department hosts an annual event honoring officers who are veterans. During the October 2025 Original Sewing & Quilt Expo in Lebanon, TN, Sgt. Heath and his two sons joined attendees in sewing blocks for Quilts of Valor and making pillowcases for Cases for a Cause, sponsored by Poppy Cotton Fabrics (pictured).



Janice Lynn, author of *Wrapped Up in Christmas* series, stopped by the booth for a quick visit.

Participants created enough blocks to assemble three Quilts of Valor quilt tops and the pillowcases will be delivered to Vanderbilt Children's Hospital in Nashville, TN. Both sewing activities were offered at every Original Sewing & Quilt Expo show in 2025 and each one was a huge success.

Start planning and register today for the [2026 Original Sewing & Quilt Expo](#).



QUILTS OF VALOR EXHIBIT TO CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

All five shows of the 2026 American Quilters Society QuiltWeek will feature a special Quilts of Valor exhibit celebrating America's 250th birthday. The exhibit will showcase quilts created by Quilts of Valor groups using the QOVF / Northcott Semiquincentennial Quilt Panel.

These quilts will travel with the exhibit to the following QuiltWeek locations:

- Daytona Beach, FL: February 18-21, 2026
- New England: April 8-11, 2026
- Paducah, KY: April 22-25, 2026
- Grand Rapids, MI: August 19-22, 2026
- Columbus, OH: September 23-26, 2026

This nationwide exhibit highlights the creativity of QOVF members while honoring our nation's veterans during this historic milestone year.

Here are videos you can watch of the award ceremonies and Quilts of Valor presentations from the 2025 AQS QuiltWeek:

[Daytona](#)
[Branson](#)
[Paducah](#)

[Learn more about 2026 shows.](#)



AMERICA'S 250TH ITEMS

Our Spoonflower Shop now offers America's 250th labels, perfect for adding a commemorative touch to your quilts, along with coordinating panels and fabric yardage. [Visit the QOVF Spoonflower Shop.](#)

AMERICA'S 250TH ITEMS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

- An America's 250th Award Certificate is available on the Members Dashboard throughout 2026 for use during your Quilts of Valor presentations.
- In honor of America's 250th Birthday, there are 11 member-only quilt patterns added to the Members Only Patterns section of the Member Dashboard. These patterns were featured in the National Quilt Museum's "Countdown to America 250" exhibition, on display from October-December 2025.

We hope 2026 will be filled with award ceremonies that wrap our nation's veterans and active-duty service members.

VETERANS' DAY REQUEST

Submitted by Bonnie Camp, member of Wisconsin Quilts of Valor

When we make quilts we usually know the person, their hobbies, favorite colors, and the relationship we share. Making Quilts of Valor is different. There is no personal relationship, no sense of who the veteran is beyond the branch of the service, years of duty, and perhaps where they served. We form a brief relationship leading up to the moment we award the QOV. And yet, that moment is always positive and joyful.

On November 11th, I had a very unusual request. My coordinator contacted me to ask if I had a completed QOV available to award as soon as possible. "Yes I do," was my automatic reply, and she sent the information to me. I phoned the contact person, his brother, and we arranged for him to pick up the quilt on his way home from work.

I immediately began preparing the label and certificate and had just finished when the brother arrived at our home. This would not be the usual direct visit. It was an outside-the-box situation in which human need was greater than policy and procedures. The veteran was a Marine who had experienced extended exposure to burn pits during his deployment. He was living with his mother and receiving hospice care. Providing his quilt without a visit was the only possible way to show our care and respect for his service. Was this the right thing to do? Absolutely!

A few days later, thank-you notes arrived from his mother, expressing how grateful the entire family was for his quilt and how meaningful it was that he received his QOV on Veterans Day. I was grateful not only for her note, but also for the opportunity to serve him as well as possible.

A few days before Christmas, I received a forwarded message from my coordinator letting me know that our veteran had passed away earlier that day.

When the brother had come to our home to pick up the Quilt of Valor, I gently shared that several years ago a friend from my quilt guild had attended the visitation of a veteran who had received a quilt I had awarded. The family had used the quilt as part of a display of memorabilia about his service time. I told him that if his family was planning something similar in the future, it would be appropriate.

IOWA VETERANS HOME PRESENTATIONS

Submitted by Marvis L. Drew, member of Central Iowa Quilt Sew-ciety

The Central Iowa Quilt Sew-ciety (CIQS) began its Quilts of Valor journey with a simple idea: make a few star blocks and see where they might lead. At the time, the guild had no recipient in mind, just a desire to create something meaningful.

About a year later, the director of the Marshalltown mall invited the guild to host a quilt show in the center court. After a few planning meetings, CIQS decided to finish the quilt and award it during the show. What happened next changed the guild forever.

The members rallied together and completed 16 Quilts of Valor, all of which were awarded during that first event. The impact on the recipients, and on the guild, was profound. Seeing firsthand how deeply these quilts touched the veterans who received them, CIQS knew this would become more than a one-time effort.

The guild began hosting annual award ceremonies at the mall, continuing the tradition until the mall closed and the audience outgrew the space. Ten years and more than 650 recipients later, CIQS now holds multiple presentations each year across a two-county area, including private ceremonies in veterans' homes.

One of the guild's most meaningful commitments is its annual presentation at the Iowa Veterans Home (IVH) in Marshalltown. Many CIQS members are active participants in the Fabric and Thread division of the Iowa State Fair, and through that connection, the division director and several guild members developed a special QOV class. The first-place quilt receives a \$200 award, and every quilt submitted is donated to CIQS for presentation to IVH residents. Makers are invited to attend the ceremony and witness their quilts being awarded.

These events are planned with great care. Recipients receive formal invitations, and family and friends gather with printed programs in hand. The local Honor Guard opens the ceremony in full dress, presenting the Iowa and American flags. A pastor offers an invocation, and special musical groups, including the IVH resident chorus, perform patriotic selections. The commandant shares remarks, and then guild members present each veteran with their quilt and certificate. As each honoree comes forward, a brief biography of their service and life after returning home is read aloud.

In addition to their ceremonies, CIQS maintains a Quilts of Valor display at the Kalona Textile Museum in the Kalona Historical Village, helping share the mission and impact of QOVF with a wider audience.



HONORING KEN S., SR. WITH A QUILT OF VALOR

Submitted by Karen Trombley, Georgia State Coordinator and NEGA Group Leader

On December 20, 2025, Judy Purdy of the NEGA QOV group presented a Quilt of Valor to Ken S, Sr., a 103-year-old World War II veteran and Pearl Harbor survivor. Judy first learned about Ken from her brother-in-law in Colorado, who had seen a news segment about him. Knowing Judy also lived in Clarkesville and was active in Quilts of Valor, he reached out to her.

When Judy discovered that Ken had never received a Quilt of Valor, she immediately took action. She shared Ken's story with her twin sister Jeanne in Indiana, who was eager to participate in the tribute. Jeanne overnighted a quilt top to Judy, who then contacted me to longarm it. Judy finished the quilt by attaching the binding and label, ensuring that the quilt was ready for Ken's special day.



JEFFERSON CITY QUILTERS – A BIT OF HISTORY

Submitted by Helen Bailey, member of Jefferson City Quilters

Jefferson City Quilts began in 2013 with just six dedicated members, and in that year, they awarded six Quilts of Valor to local veterans. Since then, the group has grown in both size and impact, awarding 1,811 quilts throughout the Lakeway Area. Their membership is wonderfully diverse, including youth participants from 4-H and two male quilters who contribute their talents to the mission.

Throughout the year, the group presents quilts to veterans following their monthly meetings. Each November, they also honor veterans at schools across the county during Veterans Day programs, ensuring students witness and participate in the celebration service.



Photo is from just one of the schools where veterans are honored in November

MORE THAN "JUST" A VOLUNTEER

Submitted by Barbara Vonada, QOVF Administrative Assistant

A persistent misconception lingers in many organizations - the idea that because someone serves as a volunteer, expectations should be lower, standards more flexible, and accountability optional. Yet anyone who has truly volunteered knows the opposite is true. When you give your time freely and step into a role because the mission matters to you, the expectations don't diminish. They rise.

Not long ago, a fellow volunteer and dear friend said to me, "Why do you let that bother you? You're just a volunteer." The comment was meant kindly, but it stayed with me. Just a volunteer. As though the absence of a paycheck somehow lessens our responsibility, our commitment, or the pride we take in our work.

I'll admit. I was venting that day, overwhelmed because I had taken on a responsibility and, due to my own poor time management, was struggling to meet it. But even in that moment, one truth remained: I had made a commitment. And commitments matter, regardless of whether the role is paid or unpaid.

Words matter, too. Being reduced to "just" anything, especially "just a volunteer", undercuts the very essence of volunteerism. Volunteers are not the fallback option or the afterthought. We are the driving force behind countless missions, organizations, and communities. We are the ones who say, "this matters enough for me to give my time, my energy, my skills, and my heart."

So what does it truly mean to volunteer? It means stepping forward when no one is required to. It means showing up because you believe in something larger than yourself. It means holding yourself to a standard because your integrity calls for it.

Organizations powered by volunteers rely on trust—trust that commitments will be honored, that the mission will be upheld, and that the work will be done with care and excellence. That is not "less than." That is exceptional.

I want to be known as reliable, committed, and capable. I hope my fellow volunteers feel the same pride in their service. And I hope we collectively reject the idea that volunteer work is somehow a lesser contribution. In many ways, it is one of the most meaningful forms of service we can offer.

As volunteers, we should take on responsibilities that align with our passion, our skills, and the time we can genuinely give. When we contribute, we do so wholeheartedly. That is not "just" anything.

It's time to reclaim our power. To remove the word "just" from the language of volunteerism. To remind others, and ourselves, that volunteers are not the supporting cast. We are the backbone.

We are not "just" volunteers. We are volunteers. And that is something to honor and celebrate.

VETERANS HONORED AT COLUMBINE QUILT GUILD QUILT OF VALOR CEREMONY

Submitted by Peg Rogers, Group Leader of Columbine Quilt Guild

The Columbine Quilt Guild in Arvada, Colorado held an award ceremony on January 10, 2026 for five veterans. These veterans served with distinction and we were honored to recognize them and their service with a quilt. It was gratifying to see the room packed with family and friends to support each of veterans. When a person serves in the military, their family serves alongside them and these ceremonies are for them as well.

SFC Stephanie H. retired from the Army after 24 years of service and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal upon her retirement. Sgt. Patrick P. served four years in the Marine Corps as a Huey helicopter crew chief and gunner. PO3 Larry C. served in the Navy during Vietnam and was assigned to the Brown Water Navy during his time in country. Cpl. Brian E., is a proud Marine, also served four years as a Huey helicopter crew. Col. Benjamin C. graduated from the Air Force Academy and spent his 24-year career as a rescue helicopter pilot, deploying six times, including to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Two of the quilts presented were made from fabric donated by a family who had recently lost their mother, Laurie B., an avid quilter. With family members who served in both the Marines and Army, Laurie was a strong supporter of Quilts of Valor. Before her passing, she asked her family to donate her patriotic fabric to a QOV group, and the Columbine Quilt Guild was the beneficiary of that request.

For one quilt, the guild used blocks Laurie had already pieced but not yet assembled into a top. For the second, they created a log cabin design using strips she had cut from her yardage along with a white jelly roll from her stash.

Laurie's daughter, Kristen, and her husband, John, attended the ceremony and took pictures for Laurie's other daughter, Grace, who was unable to attend. Kristen and John were able to meet and speak with the two veterans who received the quilts made from their mother's fabric.



Group Photo from L to R: Sgt. Patrick P.; PO3 Larry C.; Cpl. Brian E.; Col. Benjamin C.; and SFC Stephanie H.



LONGARM FUNDRAISER T-SHIRTS

Short-sleeve black v-neck t-shirts are now available for this one-time-only order. The back features "Quilts of Valor Believes in Heroes," while the front displays the QOV logo and phrase "One Nation. One Mission." All proceeds will support our Longarm Program by offsetting material costs.

Shirt Details: Bella+Canvas (100% cotton) or Next Level brand, minimal shrinkage, and unisex sizing (see measurements on [order form](#)).

Pricing & Ordering:

- \$35.00 per t-shirt (shipping included)
- Mail-in orders only – [use order form only](#) – please mail your order form and payment directly to Cindy using the address on the order form
- No credit cards, Venmo, or PayPal accepted
- **Postmark deadline: February 28, 2026 and orders will ship mid-April**

Questions? Please email, Cindy Grunert, Wisconsin District Coordinator, at cindy.grunert@qovf.org.





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: 22,775 ★ ★ ★
	2021: 29,302 ★ ★ ★
	2022: 31,707 ★ ★ ★
	2023: 37,063 ★ ★ ★
	2024: 38,029
	2025: 35,068
	Total: 436,429
	<i>(from date of first recorded award through December 31, 2025)</i>

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 the Board of Directors and how to contact your State Coordinator go to qovf.org/about-qovf/meet-us

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