



**From the Executive Director**

“Believe” is a sentiment you often see in glittery letters sprinkled on holiday cards. You are allowed to interpret what the word means to you personally. “Belief” is not something tangible you can touch, but a feeling. The cards suggest you should believe in the secular magic of Christmas, or in Santa Claus, or in the more traditional religious beliefs. I have always loved the word “believe.” To me it carries an aura of hope, of well being, of better days to come.



*Ann Rehbein,  
Executive Director*

I firmly believe in the mission of Quilts of Valor, to honor and comfort those touched by war. I believe that those of you who are working the mission do so with pride and integrity, and I certainly believe those that receive a Quilt of Valor are honored and comforted by what you do, every day across our nation. You are the glitter of QOVF, out in the forefront and your efforts are very much appreciated.

I hope for each of you that you have a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year. May all your beliefs come true, and may you be blessed in the year ahead.

**QUILTS OF VALOR  
HUGS AND KISSES**

*Information provided by Barb Crossler*

Since retirement, Idahoan Barb Crossler has devoted time to the historical society in her hometown of Troy, to volunteer work with the local Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapter, and to making and awarding Quilts of Valor. She took part in more than twenty award ceremonies in 2017.

“I’ve been so touched by the stories and reactions of our recipients, I decided to make quilts for my son and daughter. Both were on active duty

during 9/11, and my daughter still serves in the Air Force.”

Barb put a Statue of Liberty panel at the center of both kids’ quilts, surrounding the dramatic panel with a series of borders. The quilts were awarded at the Troy Historical Society when son Jay and daughter Jaime were in town for a family reunion.

Barb commented, “My husband Jim, the kids’ dad, served in the Army in Vietnam, and their grandfather was career Air Force. Seven of my uncles, all brothers, served in WWII. I’m sure they would have been proud to see these kids carrying on their family military tradition.”



*Mom and QOV-quilt maker Barb Crossler receives return love from QOV recipients— her son Jay and daughter Jaime. Jay served in the US Air Force from 1999–2005. Jaime is a US Air Force C-130 pilot. (Photo by Jack Hilliard, used with permission.)*



**February 3, 2018**  
Plan ahead and mark your calendars! Find the latest information on the QOVF [blog](#) page.

## “SEW22” SUICIDE AWARENESS SEW-IN

Information provided by Roberta Samuels and Dawn Wilcox

In September, QOV quilters in Tennessee created a special sewing event to bring attention to the high suicide rate among military veterans—according to a recent US Department of Veterans Affairs study, 22 veterans per day take their lives, one every 65 minutes. Organizers of the event were the Quilting in Clarksville QOV group.

Hosted by quilt shop proprietor Cinde Jones, “SEW22,” a 22-hour QOV sewing marathon, took place at Absolutely Fun Sewing in Clarksville. Work began in the wee hours—at 12:22 am September 22, and ended at 10:22 pm the next night. At one time, over 30 participants were simultaneously at work. One sewing machine in particular was designated for constant use, with a different volunteer rotating in each hour.

Another machine—an idle one—was set up as a memorial, paralleling military functions where a place at the table is set to honor a fallen soldier. Alongside the machine were thimbles and a measuring tape, representing the people a service member leaves behind and the miles he or she travels in military duty, according to participant Roberta Samuels.



Twenty-two veterans were awarded QOVs during the “Sew for 22” event in Clarksville, TN. (Photo courtesy Clarksville Online. Used with permission.)

At a 2:22 p.m. ceremony on Saturday, 22 QOVs were awarded. Guest speaker Steve Zuercher, US Army, retired, urged veterans who are struggling to forget their pride, “overcome fear, and get help.” Awardee Bernice Herndon said, “It’s a wonderful thing for these ladies to honor veterans and encourage us to do as well as we can with what we have to deal with.”

Group Leader Dawn Wilcox commented, “We wanted to make sure

the veterans who were awarded know their quilts can be the beginning of the healing process, but the support we provide at the award never ends. We are always there to reach out and help.”

At the time of the sew-in, the Clarksville group had awarded 100 QOVs so far in 2017. In 2016, they awarded 178. The quilts made during the “SEW22” event were destined for a Veterans Day award ceremony at Clarksville’s Tennessee Veterans Home.



Awardee Bernice Herndon displays her quilt and Award Certificate. (Photo courtesy Clarksville Online. Used with permission.)



An idle machine and table were set up to honor the fallen, similar to a table set at a military event. (Photo courtesy Clarksville Online. Used with permission.)

## OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

Looking for a way to give back to Quilts of Valor Foundation? Rhode Island and Louisiana need State Coordinators. Job descriptions can be found in the [Policies and Procedures](#). Contact Ginger Fondren at [ginger.fondren@QOVF.org](mailto:ginger.fondren@QOVF.org) if you are interested.

## WILDLIFE QOV FINDS COLORADO AWARDEE

By *Marianne Elliott*

“Every quilt finds its recipient,” is an often-heard phrase amongst QOVF quilters. While the majority of QOVs are made of red, white, blue, and gold fabrics, not all are, and patriotic colors are not a requirement.

At a surprise ceremony arranged by his wife Arlene, Marine Sergeant Richard Harrington was awarded a quilt made from “wildlife” print fabrics—a QOV specifically selected by Arlene. Out in Colorado, our daughter Katherine and her new husband Sean Smeltzer conducted the award—their third award ceremony together—and used Facetime to share the presentation.

Richard Harrington is a Vietnam veteran who served as a reconnaissance scout sniper with the 5th Marines. During an early 1969 major battle in A

## SAVE THE DATE FOR 2018



Plan ahead and mark your calendars now! Save the dates—May 19 & 20—for the 2018 Annual QOVF Conference! Next year’s conference will be held at the Bay Watch Resort and Conference Center in North Myrtle Beach, SC. Details and reservation information to come as soon as everything is confirmed, but for now, keep the dates open. It’s an event you won’t want to miss!

Shua Valley, his unit experienced intense fighting and heavy casualties. He was speechless after being wrapped in his quilt, but later commented to Sean and Katherine, who know him as “Papa,” that he accepted it on behalf of those who did not make it home.

Richard’s quilt started as a smaller sized top donated to the Southern Tier Quilts of Valor group of Corning, NY, from an unknown donor, along with extra “wildlife” fabric. Our group’s philosophy is to accept all quilt donations, no matter the fabric or pattern, then find the right recipient. Adding borders that matched the backing brought the quilt to QOVF standards of excellence. Les Page of the Not Forgotten QOV group in Virginia Beach, VA, a fellow Marine and Vietnam combat veteran, did the quilting.

## 2018 BLOCK DRIVE



The 2018 Quilts of Valor Block Drive features a beginner-friendly Friendship Star with a pinwheel center. The purpose of the national Block Drive is to give individuals or groups who wish to make just a few blocks, but not assemble a quilt, to have their block(s) made into QOVs across the nation. These blocks can be assembled many ways into a QOV. Our hope is to assist State Coordinators with blocks to help fill requests not covered by local groups.

Once completed, please send your finished Friendship Star blocks to the Block Drive Coordinator for distribution nationwide. Blocks received by May 1, 2018, will be distributed at QOVF National Conference to State Coordinators based on the number of blocks received from their states. If you wish to keep the blocks you make in your group, you may do so. Please report the total number of blocks your group makes to [suzanne.dicarlo@QOVF.org](mailto:suzanne.dicarlo@QOVF.org) so a final tally can be shared at the conclusion of the National Conference in May 2018.

Ready to get started? Instructions and mailing information can be found [here](#).



*In a surprise ceremony arranged by his wife Arlene, Richard Harrington (right) was awarded his Quilt of Valor by Katherine Smeltzer (left) and Sean Smeltzer (center). (Photo by David and Susan Smeltzer, used with permission.)*



## NEED A LAST-MINUTE GIFT?

Are you looking for a last-minute gift? A donation to QOVF in someone’s honor is a great gift, and monetary donations are tax deductible! Just click on the blue [Donate](#) button at QOVF.org to make it happen. If you’re shopping online, Amazon Smile returns a small portion to QOVF. You can access that opportunity [here](#).

## QOVF Certified Quilt Shop Program

By Myra Coddens

Welcome aboard to our newest members of the Certified Quilt Shop Program. The following shops completed certification this month:

MNM Creations & Quilt Shop	El Dorado, AR
Sewing Machine.com	West Point, GA
Rossville Quilts & Bernina	Rossville, IN
The Old Creamery Fabrics & Quilting	Ellisburg, NY

The last shop listed is QOVF's first New York shop to register! Our program now has 81 shops representing 34 states.

(Myra Coddens is the QOVF Certified Quilt Shop Program Coordinator. Contact Myra at [myra.coddens@qovf.org](mailto:myra.coddens@qovf.org).)

## Quilts Reported

**2012:** 6,169

**2013:** 12,314

**2014:** 17,373

**2015:** 18,772

**2016:** 19,051

**2017:** 22,229

**Total: 176, 585**

(as of 30 Nov. 2017)

*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, see [www.QOVF.org](http://www.QOVF.org)  
For more information about the BOD, the QOVF staff, and how to contact your State Coordinator (SCs) go to <https://www.qovf.org/meet-us/>

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### Newsletter

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