From the Executive Director
By Tammany McDaniel

During National Volunteer Week this past April, QOVF thanked our volunteer members for their dedication and support. During that same time, generosity was in action throughout our membership as groups rallied to support one another by helping decrease backlogs, cutting kits for conference sessions, and co-hosting events where geographic areas overlapped. Our membership is a giving and caring group of individuals; thank you. Did you know that all but three of QOVF’s full-time staff are volunteers? We are so grateful for your tremendous level of support for national initiatives.

Though the precise issue date is still undetermined, the next Keepsake Quilting catalogue should contain a full-page ad for Quilts of Valor and include a request for giving. We'll share a free pattern with the catalogue’s readership and include a notation on select patterns and fabrics within the catalogue to denote “Quilts of Valor appropriate.”

I was fortunate to see the three Porsche Indy vehicles with the QOVF logo on the passenger front panel (just below the windshield and hood intersection). They look great! Again, thank you to our friend, John “Rowdy” Oxley. He is working in the pits at various races to promote awareness of QOVF and our great work. While in Birmingham, AL, I was honored to personally award a QOV to a veteran. The entire pit crew came out to celebrate with their colleague and one veteran said those very special words, “Thanks, buddy, and welcome home.”

Memorial Day is a day to honor the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. We’re often asked if a QOV can be awarded posthumously. A QOV continues to be a civilian award to a living soldier or veteran. As we approach Memorial Day, please join together to continue thanking and awarding our living soldiers.

When you’re traveling this summer, please visit the Iowa Quilt Museum in Winterset, IA. The museum is hosting sixteen QOVs (replicated) from the book Quilts of Valor: A 50 State Salute. Mary Kerr’s “Old Glory” quilt exhibit is also on display. It is a beautiful representation of our spirit and respect for freedom.

Thank you to our dedicated State Coordinators who have been connecting with me to discuss mutual support and organizational growth. More of you have called to schedule discussions in early May and I am eager to hear more about your work. During many of our conversations, I’ve heard an oft repeated sentiment—more fabric and free fabric. You’ve been heard! We are acting to increase access or reduce costs. More news to follow later in the summer.

I’d like to close this article with respectful, quiet gratitude for soldiers who died in service. I also want to continue our work of showing gratefulness for those who made it back home. Freedom isn’t free, and QOVF exists to create a visual and lasting expression of gratitude to soldiers and veterans who returned home to their families and communities. Thank you.

INSPIRING AND MOTIVATING:
ONE MARINE’S IMPACT
By Renelda Peldunas-Harter

Gunnery sergeant Isaac Gallegos received his QOV at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, VA, adjacent to Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA. A Marine Corps themed quilt was crafted specifically for GySgt Gallegos by two Pentagon dental technicians (and sisters), Nancy Rowe and Jane Tehan. The sisters got to know the Marine while treating and caring for him.

GySgt Gallegos was a high school and college athlete before enlisting in the Marine Corps almost fourteen years ago. While deployed in Iraq, the vehicle he was traveling in ran over a pressure-plate improvised explosive device. GySgt Gallegos suffered life-threatening injuries and burns over most of his body as a result.

After six years at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio and more than 160 surgical procedures the Marine Corps tried to medically retire him, but the Gunny would have none of it. He trained until he could exceed the physical fitness test requirements and participated in the Bataan Death March Memorial Marathon—a 25-mile hike with an 80-pound pack through the desert in Arizona.

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Tom Donohue was awarded his QOV on December 27, 2018, surrounded by family, in a special award ceremony aboard the USS Intrepid aircraft carrier, the very ship where he served. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Donohue trained as a Radarman. He volunteered for service in Vietnam, serving in spotter planes and riverboats in 1970 and 1971. On his next assignment, Donohue served aboard the USS Intrepid from 1971 to 1973, stationed in Quonset Point, RI. The Intrepid sailed to Europe for NATO exercises during his time on board.

Intrepid was decommissioned in 1974 and today is berthed in New York City as the centerpiece of the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. The Intrepid staff was welcoming in honoring Donohue as a former crew member, commenting that they believed this was the first time a QOV was presented aboard the ship. The staff provided Donohue’s family with a guided tour of the ship, as well as a walk through the submarine. All in all, it was a very memorable day.

QOV AWARDED ABOARD USS INTREPID

GySgt Gallegos is currently the Enlisted Advisor assigned to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. He is also a motivational speaker and his eloquent words left an indelible impact on those who attended his QOV Award Ceremony. He was inspiring and motivating, indeed.

The journey from GySgt Gallegos’ injury to inspiration is highlighted in a Marine Corps documentary that starts with his thoughts about taking for granted the simple things in life and continues through his impact on his fellow Marines.

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Marianne Elliott, QOVF BOD member (left) and Nancy Rowe (right) award GySgt Gallegos his QOV in the atrium of the Marine Corps Museum, Triangle, VA. (Photo courtesy of Jeff Thorne.)

[Image of GySgt Gallegos receiving his QOV]

Tom Donohue stands next to his QOV, made by family members using the aptly chosen “Anchors Aweigh” pattern by Fons & Porter.

Family members of Tom Donohue (fourth, from left) coordinated the details of his QOV award ceremony with Intrepid museum staff members to commemorate Tom’s prior service aboard the USS Intrepid.

[Image of Tom Donohue and family members]

[Image of GySgt Gallegos and family members]
REMEMBER: YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Information provided by Sheila Gordon, Arkansas State Coordinator

National Sew Day in February, 2019, was abuzz with activities. And while there is so much activity and excitement surrounding the day, it’s a good reminder to all of us to reflect on the impact our volunteer efforts have on individual recipients. In Arkansas, we had that opportunity during a National Sew Day event when one of our visitors, Sheryl Mulberry, asked to address the group. What follows was her message to our group that day:

My husband, Larry, was privileged to receive a quilt from Quilts of Valor in February, 2018. He was very grateful for this honor but questioned why he, in his early 50s, should receive such a gift while other older veterans had not yet received one. Nevertheless he humbly accepted his quilt and treasured all the work that had been put into it.

The timing of his presentation was providential because just one month later Larry was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He very much appreciated his QOV and the warmth it provided as he went through chemo treatments. He kept the quilt on his recliner and used it pretty much every day.

In November, 2018, the doctors took Larry off chemo as it was having no effect. The following month Larry decided to go into home hospice care. Even during this time, Larry benefited from the warmth of his QOV.

On December 19, 2018, Larry left us and went to heaven. When the personnel from the funeral home came to take his body from our home, per their protocol, they started to cover him with a white sheet, leaving our coverings on the bed.

I couldn’t bear to see my husband of 31 years leave our home stripped down to nothing but a cold, sterile, white sheet. I insisted that they replace the white sheet with his Quilt Of Valor.

It gave me great comfort to see him leave our home wrapped in his quilt. It’s as if every piece of fabric and every stitch represented thousands of individuals who were united in their love and gratitude for him. Instead of leaving our home cold and alone, he left surrounded by love and gratitude.

Thank you all for investing in our veterans. Your quilts are such beautiful pictures of your very intimate story. Yet, she wanted all the volunteers to know just how important this work of QOVF is and how meaningful it is to the veterans and their families. My hope is that sharing her story with each of you will touch you, as it did us on that day. As well, I hope that her words will serve as encouragement and an ongoing reminder of why we do what we do on behalf of QOVF.

In February, 2018, Larry Mulberry (deceased) was honored to be wrapped in his QOV with his wife, Sheryl Mulberry, at his side.

QOVF Florida state coordinator, Terry Burtchell, was honored as a community leader on social media by US Representative Michael Waltz of Florida’s sixth congressional district. Congratulations, Terry! It’s nice to see your outstanding service to QOVF recognized.
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

Quilts Reported

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Total: 216,869
(from date of first recorded award through 30 April 2019)

For more information about QOVF, see www.QOVF.org

For more information about the BOD, the QOVF staff, and how to contact your State Coordinator (SC) go to www.qovf.org/meet-us/

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