



FEBRUARY 2020

From the Executive Director

By Tammany McDaniel

I'm so pleased to report the completion and award of 33,375 QOVs in 2019. At the close of 2019, we had awarded a total of 242,485 QOVs in the history of our organization. Wonderful work! Thank you to everyone who made this a reality.



Tammany McDaniel
Executive Director

On January 14, 2020, at The National Quilt Museum in Paducah, KY, the "50 State Salute" exhibit closed with a ceremony that awarded QOVs to more than 20 veterans. Members and museum visitors attended a respectful event designed to send the collection into the deserving hands of our veterans. Later in January, a rousing round of "God Bless America" was led by a barbershop quartet at the QOV Retreat in Toccoa, GA. Fran Randolph awarded three QOVs, including one to a QOVF member who is also a veteran. Our National Sew Day was well attended with more than 4,300 individuals and groups celebrating on February 1st. There are 17 QOVF members registered for the Regional Leadership Symposium in Duluth, GA, on March 14, 2020. Please consider joining us for a day of fun and discussion.

Many of you continue to ask, "Why is QOVF so interested in cruises?" Hopefully my explanation can help

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MY JOURNEY TO A QOV

by Jim C. Simons, Captain (Ret.),
U.S. Army Reserve

My journey began on January 2, 1972, as I kissed Eloise (my wife of six years) goodbye and boarded an airplane bound for Vietnam. I was 27 years old, a First Lieutenant, and the father of two small children, ages five years and six months. I was not quite two years on active duty. I told my wife not to worry, that nothing was going to happen to me. I would be back home in a year, all in one piece. I assumed my life and hers would not be much different than they had been since we had married, except we would be apart. She would be in California and I would be in Vietnam. That is why a nation sends young men to war—with thoughts that they are invincible.

I had recently graduated first in my class from the Cargo Officer Course

at Fort Eustis, VA, and had been told I could choose my duty assignment in Vietnam. I selected a port job, rather than a job running convoys, and was assigned to the river port in Saigon. I thought it would be about as safe as anywhere. Little did I know there really are no safe places in a combat zone. I went on to serve as Port Operations Officer at Long Bin and as Port Commander in Vung Tau. Relatively speaking, I was better off than many other service members who were in more dangerous places in Vietnam. I did and saw things that I did not speak of for nearly 40 years following my return.

Eight months into my tour, I met Eloise in Hawaii for a two week R&R, then went back to Vietnam. When I came back home from Vietnam, my wife

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Deeply touched by his own QOV award, Jim Simons made QOV Award ceremonies a part of his company's annual activities at the Milwaukee Machine Quilters Show. Photo used courtesy of Jessica Drake (formerly Jessica Darke Photography).

clarify the foundation's goal. Quite simply, we intend to raise funds for batting for our national volunteer longarmers. The cruises provide a small financial return (approximately \$2,500 per event). In turn, that donation by the Nu-Blu band goes to support our national longarmers. See page 4 for more information on an upcoming cruise. If you're interested in helping with national QOVF nominations and

aren't able to cruise for that cause, remember that we always need longarm support and batting donations, too!

We've separated, color-coded, and cut the 1,014 yards of fabric donated by Missouri Star Quilt Company (MSQC). Just over half of those yards have been distributed to State/District Coordinators and 20 to 22 groups that make and award QOVs in Missouri and Kansas. We have an additional 459 yards of fabric currently being packaged for mail. Watch your email

for an announcement about how to request fabric for your group. MSQC agreed that QOVF would send a portion to support local MO/KS groups and a portion to support groups in other parts of the country who need fabric. Please note, at the donor's request, there will be a form requiring pictures of volunteers using the fabric and awards that result from the donation.

Thank you for your work to change the lives of our service members and veterans touched by war.

My Journey continued from page 1

and I met in San Francisco. I was told to change into civilian cloths before I went into the city, but I stupidly wore my uniform. I was spit on by people who disliked what I was, a soldier. Eloise prevented me from doing something that day I would have regretted. I was home in a country torn apart by an unpopular war. People hated me just because I was a soldier. I spent four more years in the service, mostly in Germany, before I returned to civilian life.

Do I regret my service? No! I think everyone should serve his or her country in some manner. Years after I left the service, my wife finally told me how she had been treated as the wife of an Army officer while I was in Vietnam. It was not good. Eloise had been treated as if I was a criminal, sometimes asked how she could stay married to a baby killer. She had lived the year we were apart in a small rural town in California. Who would have suspected?

In 1997, I purchased Quilter's Rule, a notions and supplies distributor. Four years later, I attended Machine Quilter's Showcase in Springfield, IL, and for the first time I saw QOVs being prepared for an awards presentation. For the next nine years I donated to QOVF almost every time I saw a jar on a table at a quilt show. In 2010, my company managed the Milwaukee Machine Quilters Show and we named QOVF as our charity. We arranged for the local QOV group to award several QOVs at one of our evening events.

My own QOV award presentation

on that 2010 evening was kept a total secret from members of my family and me. Frankly, I broke down and cried when I received my QOV. That night was the first time anyone had thanked me for my service. My only regret is Eloise was not there when I received the quilt. The effects on me following that award were profound. I began seeking out other Vietnam veterans to speak with them. I became a visible supporter of QOVF. I finally began to talk about my own Vietnam experience.

What Vietnam veterans endured when we returned home has made better the return of every other veteran since. Many of us have refused to talk about our experiences or how much guilt we carry around. We know our country did not appreciate at the time what we did when we answered the call to serve. But for those who have received a QOV, we know at least one person appreciates what we did. Because you can never stand in our shoes, you will never know how much you, as QOV makers, are appreciated! We thank you!



A veteran himself, Jim Simons' passion for supporting QOVF led him to award fellow QOV recipients. Photo courtesy of Jessica Drake (formerly Jessica Darke Photography).

KANSAS MIDDLE SCHOOLERS PRESENT QOVs

Information provided by Judy Moyer

As a part of the QOVF Under Our Wings (UOW) program, QOV member Judy Moyer is teaching 5th through 8th graders at Lakin Middle School, in Lakin, KS, how to sew. To date, she's taught 81 girls and boys how to make quilts. In May 2019, her class presented three QOVs to veterans who work at the school—a janitor, a para-professional, and a School Resource Officer. Judy feels the connection to these school employees gives the students an opportunity to create and sew beautiful quilts and give from the heart to veterans whom they have known for years. When the QOVs were awarded, the love and emotion poured from both the students and the recipients, which was a wonderful life lesson for all.

The UOW program at Lakin Middle School began with eight featherweight machines and some older sewing machines donated by friends and community members. Trail Piercers Quilt Guild donated the fabric, rotary cutters, mats, rulers, and thread. The UOW program grew quickly, and Judy had to rely on friends to volunteer to help her teach the students. After presenting the program before the local school board, the board in turn, bought eight new Janome machines for the students to use.

Judy's students learned the quilting process by taking a field trip to her "she-shed" and using her HandiQuilter longarm machine, learning to quilt the layers together. In May 2019, they completed another quilt that was raffled within the local community to fund more QOV fabric and supplies. This quilt garnered donations of \$1,556!

Judy says her students have learned a very valuable lifelong lesson, "If we work hard and create something beautiful, then give it away, it fills our hearts with joy. I love my job!"

On Veterans Day in November, 2019, Lakin Middle School students presented two more QOVs at a Veterans Day program. Their goal is to make two more QOVs to present at the end of the school year and sew another quilt to raffle so they can continue their quest in future school years with the hope to continue recognizing the veterans in Kearny County, KS. The program began as a way to show local veterans how much they are loved and appreciated. It is also teaching life skills to these students. They are building relationships within their community by showing empathy in regards to what our veterans have sacrificed.



Lakin Middle School students in Lakin, KS, participate in an Under Our Wings QOV program. In May 2019, they made and awarded QOVs to school staff members who were also veterans.

MEXICO



Carnival **Bluegrass & Blue Water Cruise**

QOV **QUILTS OF VALOR** **QOV** *Cruise and Quilt*

Mexico - March 15th, 2020

- Pricing starts at \$500 (Includes taxes and fees)
- 4 days aboard the Carnival Inspiration
- Sails from Long Beach, California
- 2 ports of call: Ensenada and Catalina Island!



Entertainment provided by: *Nu-Blu*

Quilting Class Packages are limited seating, so reserve your classroom space today!

Make a Quilts of Valor appropriate pattern while cruising the high seas! No need to stop sewing to cook dinner! Six teaching sessions will cover all you need to complete this project. Instruction for precision piecing and pattern included and is suitable for confident beginners and up.

Email Cruises@QOVF.org for more information!

SEW MUCH FUN

by Donald Dickens

When I joined QOVF, no one shared that my membership would lead to a fabric addiction. But in fact, that's just what has happened. I'm obsessed with buying fabric. I've sewn since I was a teen, learning so that I could add patches to my scout uniform. Prior to joining QOV, most of my sewing was limited to repairs and alterations, but never quilting. My dad always said, "if you can follow a plan and cut boards with a saw, you can follow a pattern and cut fabric with scissors and sew."

The first quilt I designed was for a close friend and Navy veteran. I made the quilt from start to finish, piecing, quilting, and binding it, in order to get the full experience. I've since taken a class in appliqué as well.

I like to design my own quilts using graph paper and colored pencils. Being one of only a few males in my QOV group, I have gotten plenty of good advice and assistance from all the members. I find it a great privilege to honor these veterans with QOVs.



QOV member Donald Dickens holds up an eagle's head block he made to learn appliqué techniques.

KUDOS & KIND WORDS

QOVF often receives thank-you notes from recipients reflecting on the personal significance of the award and their thanks to all who contributed. What follows is one such note.

I am MSgt. John Runfolo, Ret. and I received my QOV in September, 2017. As a participant with the Warriors In Saddles and a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force and Oklahoma National Guard for more than 21 years, I wrap up in my QOV each evening watching the evening news and to unwind. I wish that I had your talents. May God bless us each and every day. And may God bless your talents, energy, and patriotic enthusiasm.

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: 4,140

Total: 246,625

(from date of first recorded award
through 31 January, 2020)

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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