

## Quilts of Valour - Canada

### History

#### A quilter's story.

How do you explain what happens when you meet someone who has lost both his legs just so you can stay free? And he feels lucky he didn't lose his hearing or his sight or his voice or his life.

How do you explain how you feel when a proud mom gives you a very tearful and very strong hug because we have made a quilt especially for her son who now has difficulty comprehending the world around him - just so you can stay free?

I delivered three QoV quilts for soldiers to our local hospital in February 2006. I was able to meet two of the three Canadian soldiers wounded in a suicide bomb attack in Kandahar, Afghanistan in January 2006. I met the family of the third. If you are not at all sure whether to make quilts or squares for quilts for those who are ensuring your countries are remaining free - please take the time to meet a soldier - and his or her family. Take an hour of your life to meet someone whose life will never be the same because in keeping our world free to quilt, chat, read, work, play, vote, go where and when we want, eat where and what we want, a life has been altered by a split second. And he or she is proud to have been there.

When one of the soldiers took his quilt and had it put beside the hospital bed, I thought perhaps he didn't really want it or perhaps he had received others and was being polite. During our conversation, I noted that the quilt could perhaps be enjoyed by his young son, and the response just made my day... "Are you kidding! This one is MI NE!".

Let me backtrack.

Back in January 2006 when three Canadian soldiers were injured in a land far from my imagination, I watched the news cast interview with another soldier recovering from a prior incident and noticed no quilt for comfort in sight. My first reaction - "Where are the quilts for Canadian soldiers?"

I thought about it, stewed about it and knowing about an American based comfort quilt project I finally made a decision to act on my query and contacted the coordinator of a North American organization called Quilts of Valor Foundation (QoVF), a woman named Catherine Roberts.

Five quilts later - three from Diane in Calgary, two from my own studio, several e-mails and one phone call later with Catherine Roberts - the Canadian "branch" of QoV - Quilts of Valour was underway! As of March 2008 almost 100 quilts have been delivered to the armed forces members. Quilts of Valour are quilts made for injured military personnel. It started in the U.S. (via the internet) and now has quilters involved from around the world. Up to this point in time, the organization has sent the quilts only to U.S. military. As of March 20, 2006 six quilts were on their way from quilters in the U.S. to Edmonton's Military Family Resource Center so that they could be given to other injured Canadian soldiers.

### Military Connections

We have set up a contact for all of western Canada through the base in Edmonton. Quilts can be delivered to a base near you, and then they can forward them on to the warrant officer at G1 Human Resources, 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Headquarters. For eastern Canada, contact Lezley directly. As we continue to grow, our contacts change and become more established.

### A New Society

As the Canadian coordinator for Quilts of Valour, and with the help of several local women - including the spouse of the soldier who so carefully guards his quilt, we are pleased to be in the process of creating a new society. As soon as we cross all those t's and dot all the i's and get signatures and pay fees, we will be a formal entity. But we are not waiting on those formalities.

Contacts are being made across the country for distribution of quilts. We have quilts going out to B.C., Alberta and Newfoundland at the moment! We have long arm quilters in B.C. and Alberta, and hopefully soon one in Ontario.

In order to support the Quilts of Valour, we are in need of some funding. Promotional information will go a long way, but we would like to find a sponsor for a web site - so we can set up [www.QoV.ca](http://www.QoV.ca) or [www.QuiltsOfValour.ca](http://www.QuiltsOfValour.ca) or something similar. The creation of a society will also give some formality and accountability to our cause.

### From Here

Quilts are needed for our wounded. We do not have a number but the quilts will find homes quickly

Financial support is also needed.

For more information, the U.S. site [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org) (Quilts of Valour Foundation) does have information on the U.S. expectations. Our Canadian requirements are pretty much the same - with a Canadian patriotic theme of course! Our quilt requirements are available on a separate page.

I'm looking forward to being able to support our Canadian servicemen and women.

Quilt details will soon be available on the internet - 2008.

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Maker of quilts.

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## Quilts of Valour ~ Canada



### **Quilt Details**

General information about Quilts of Valour:

- 1) The preferred minimum size for Quilts of Valour is 50" by 60"; the maximum is twin sized, usually 72" by 96". They should be large enough to provide comfort, but small enough for the longarm volunteers to schedule in between their customers' quilts if you are not quilting it yourself.
- 2) The fabrics should be of good quality 100% cotton. Canadianna theme (especially the maple leaf) would be a natural selection. The red/white or traditional looking patterns always work but are not a must.
- 3) There are many simple, but effective patterns available and as designers and sites become available for us, they will be posted.
- 4) The preferred backing fabric is a print or mottled effect which coordinates with the top. It should be of good quality fabric, either woven or flannel, cut straight and, if seamed, the selvage edge trimmed from the seam. Wide backing fabrics are available and are often more economical to use. If you are sending the quilt out to a longarm quilter to be quilted remember the backing should be 6 to 8 inches wider and 6 to 8 inches longer than the top. This allows for the "drawing up" of the quilting process and gives the longarm quilter something to which the side clamps can be attached.
- 5) When your top is completed, pressed, and you have the backing ready too, you can contact Lezley direction at [QoV@AutomatedQuill.com](mailto:QoV@AutomatedQuill.com) . She will connect you with a long arm quilter and an email will be sent to the two of you so that you may work out the details.

Generally the expectations are that the longarm quilter will supply the batting and thread and do the quilting. \* Please note that the quilter with whom you are matched is not committed to do all of your future QoVs. Not every quilter is able to volunteer whenever a quilt top is ready, so you may get a different quilter the next time you have a top ready. If you have two tops ready at the same time

please check with the longarm quilter to see if it is possible to place them both with the same quilter.

6) Although not necessary, it is encouraged to make a pillow case for storing and shipping the quilt in. The pillow case can match the quilt or can be made with Canadian flag or even maple leaf fabric.

7) Which ever of you agrees to do the binding, labeling, washing and shipping should then contact Lezley (QoV@AutomatedQuill.com). Lezley Zwaal, the founder and director of the Quilts of Valour Canada, will notify you where to send the quilt(s).

8) It is suggested that you include a journal or letter to the recipient. If you also include a self addressed, stamped postcard with the message "Quilt received", the recipient can easily let you know your quilt(s) arrived.

If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to contact Lezley.

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Quilts of Valour

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