

Purple Heart Quilts —Sue Troyan (From the January 2015 TQG Newsletter)

Recently, we received a letter from the mother of young Navy man who was given one of our Purple Heart quilts as he fought for his life in the ICU at LRMC in Germany last month. He had contracted a deadly strain of malaria while on duty "in Africa". His parents had rushed to his side as he was not expected to live.

As soon as they arrived, a nurse brought in a quilt made by Mary Lynn Slough and her sister, Nancy Wines. His dad used it for the next three days and nights at his son's bedside while the incredible staff worked tirelessly to save the young man's life, pulling him back from death's door. From Germany, he was sent to Walter Reed, and then home to the mid-west where he continues to recover.

His mother wanted us all to know how much they appreciated the quilt and the work we do to ease the stress and pain of the sick and wounded and their families, and to tell us how much they and their son treasure the quilt, not just for the memory of the comfort it gave during his crisis, but for all that it represented -- a tangible symbol of unconditional love. It is a lovely, thoughtful letter, the kind that is proof that what we do is worthwhile, and also a reminder that the men and women who put themselves between us and harm's way must contend not only with bombs and bullets, but deadly diseases as well. We're grateful to and for them, and for the letter!

You may have noticed the heading and reference to "Purple Heart Quilts". When we started making quilts for our wounded over 12 years ago, that's what we called the project. Later, when Quilts of Valor Foundation was formed, we aligned ourselves with Catherine Roberts' mission -- to provide quilts for the wounded of this war so that what happened to the Viet-Nam Vets never happens again. Since Catherine retired, there have been many changes in the way the Foundation operates. Recent changes now required of participants, which primarily have to do with mandatory funding, management of funds, and autonomy, have caused us to reconsider our alignment with the Foundation. We still consider it to be a worthy organization with an admirable mission, but believe we can continue our work on our own. To that end, we are reverting to our original name. Only the name has changed, not our mission to comfort the wounded of this war and, whenever possible, our veterans of earlier conflicts.

And just to let you know, all those little block kits you all have been taking home, making and returning are already being made into quilts! Seven, so far, and counting! They shortly will be added to six more waiting to be quilted. Currently, we have six already in the hands of our wonderful long arm quilters! Not bad, Ladies! We're not yet back up to our old average of 15 quilts a month, but we're on our way! Thank you for your continued support. You are doing your best work!