

# UMBT Honors Veterans

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Tonight, we are also here to recognize another hero, Vanessa Schieber. At 18 years of age, Vanessa came to the U.S. having been born and raised in Germany. The reason she came to the U.S. was because of the opportunities the United States could offer for those looking for a better tomorrow. She knew she had a higher purpose and enlisted in the U.S. Army to defend our freedom. Vanessa served as a Staff Sergeant and was awarded two purple hearts during her time in the Army.

In 2008, Vanessa was awarded her first purple heart for her service in Iraq. While serving in Iraq, the supply convoy she was on was ambushed, she was shot and left for dead. Due to friendly Iraqis who were glad U.S. troops were there, pulled her to safety and helped bandage her up. The U.S. Army told her she could be medically discharged at that point, but as she told me when we first met, "I wanted to stay with my brothers and sisters in the military." She gave birth to her beautiful boy Elijah in 2009 and then was soon off to defend our freedom again going to Afghanistan.

In December of 2016, she was injured by an improvised explosive device and she suffered nine broken vertebrae which took her over a year to learn to walk again. In 2022, she was awarded a second purple heart. When I asked her about her time in the military, she said she loved it and would do it all again if asked. If that is not the definition of a hero, I do not know what is.

While Vanessa served in Afghanistan, she was in charge of protecting Afghan children who wanted to go to school there. Young girls are prohibited from going to school in Afghanistan and Vanessa made sure for those girls who did want to go to school were safe and not attacked or killed.

When Vanessa was medically discharged/honorably discharged and came back to the U.S. she became a teacher and continues to teach today. She recognized from serving that U.S. children have the opportunity to go to school where many children in the world do not have that same opportunity. One of her missions after the military is to help and teach those children who do not believe they have what it takes to get them into college that they can do it. Vanessa gives them the confidence and the determination to get into college and she has already helped many young kids go off to college.

Vanessa is currently starting a non-profit organization called Vets Innovations which will help children who are living in battlefield zones and her organization will go into these war zone countries and support the children there while protecting them as they try to educate and better themselves.

Our Veterans are men and women and we owe a duty to them to recognize both men and women veterans for their service. Women in the military have a 28% higher suicide rate than men in the military. We have a lot of male veterans who are heroes but we also have a lot of female veterans who are heroes and one of them stands before us today. Vanessa please come accept this Upper Mount Bethel Resolution recognizing your service to our country.

Vanessa you are our hero for your service in Iraq and Afghanistan and you are our hero after your time in the military for not forgetting about children overseas who want to go to school but live in dangerous areas. I am proud just to know you and honored to call you a friend.

Veteran Toni Lynch came to the stage to share his words on honoring Veterans and the Slate Belt Veterans Assoc. Project.

He started with a moment of silence for WWII veteran Donald Jones who past away this year just after his 101 birthday.

Donald was the first donor to the Slate Belt Veterans Association housing project for veterans and their families. Donald was a great community leader and will be missed by all of us. Along with remembrance of Donald Jones I would like to mention some other local veterans that I know and grew up with, Mike Kovalevitch, George Rice, James, Wheeler, Joseph Jelink, Elroy Rutt, Larry Fields, Buddy Fields, Terry Brodt, John Ponnnett, Tom Fable, and the many others from our community.

After sharing the story of his good friend and Veteran Terry Brodt Lynch said that experience led him to be apart of the Slate Belt Veterans Assoc. and be the project mgr. for the 32 unit housing project for disabled veterans and their families.

The complex that will be built with state-of-the-art components located on 4th st. in Bangor, it will be sound proof, fire proof and powered by Solar. If anyone would like to donate to the project please contact Toni Lynch at Slate Belt Veterans Association 169 Johnsonville Road, Bangor Pa. 18013, 610-509-4296 E-mail - info@sbva.org Website - sbva.org.

"Thank you Veterans. Thank you Donald Jones and Vanessa Schieber, thank you John Post, thank you to those from the American Legion, VFW and all veterans in attendance, thank you to all of you. You each have your own story and each story is different but what you all have in common is one word, HERO! Thank you and God Bless our Veterans and the United States of America!" said Birmingham.



L-R Donald Jones Makes, Michael Ortoski, Donald Jones Makes the first donation to the Slate Belt Veterans housing project of \$1000 at the ground breaking ceremony in 2022

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