



L-R -Cindy Beck, Brad Kennedy, Terry DeGroot, Linda Perin, Lisa Perin, Toni E. Lynch, Tegwyn Hughes, Senator Mario Scavello
Leon Vanderpool



Veteran Complex

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They – and I know you do as well because you are here as well – care deeply that our disabled veterans have an opportunity for safe, accessible, and affordable housing for themselves and their families. It is a true honor for me to be involved in this project and serve on the Slate Belt Veterans Association Board.” He added. “The Slate Belt disabled veterans housing complex, thanks to the generous donation from Brian Perin, and the endless efforts of Mike Kovalevich as well as the Slate Belt Veterans Association Board will bring great honor and value to Bangor and the Slate Belt area at large.” He added.

Lynch recognized several dignitaries in the audience. He also recognized, Donald Jones, who turned 100 on September 5, 2022. He is a WWII veteran serving three years overseas. Mr. Jones has received national citations for seventy-five years helping veterans each from VFW and American Legion. He is a lifelong Bangor resident. He was escorted by his good friend Michael Ortoski owner of the Blue Valley Times, Jones has written a column in his paper weekly for over 10 years.

He is a slate belt Bangor historian and a poet publishing three books. Mr. Jones has made numerous donations to Bangor for improvements and has served thousands of hours donating his time. One of his dreams for veterans in the slate belt is housing. Mr. Jones made a check presentation to the Slate Belt Veterans Association at the event to also show his financial support for the project.

Leon Vanderpool, Slate Belt Veteran Association Board President, then came up to say a few words. “The Slate Belt Veterans Association (SBVA) is a 503c3 not-for-profit foundation based out of Bangor, PA. The SBVA all volunteer Board is mostly made up of veterans, including those with service-connected disabilities.” He said. “The current members of the Board are Leon Vanderpool, President; Tegwyn Hughes, Vice President; Toni E. Lynch, Treasurer; Terry DeGroot, Civil Engineer; Brad Kennedy, Financial Adviser, and Cindy Beck, Secretary.”

“The primary purpose of the SBVA is to honor those who have served and to support and assist those who have returned home, especially those who returned with service-connected disabilities. SBVA has purchased the property situated at 428 Market Street (4th and Market) in Bangor, Pennsylvania for the future project. The project is in large part possible due to the generosity of Brian Perin. Brian passed away in 2017, and his generous gift is the cornerstone to move the project forward. Brian was co-owner of Grand Central Sanitation.” Vanderpool added.

“The late Michael Kovalevich, a veteran himself had proposed the construction of housing for veterans with disabilities. He had seen firsthand how difficult it was for injured veterans to find affordable, ADA-

compliant accommodations. “The intent is to build at our cost,” Kovalevich had said. “Any excess funds will be restricted

for future Veterans’ needs.” The motion was put on the floor for a vote and the SBVA Board unanimously approved the motion to proceed with the project. We are thrilled to see so many of you here supporting this project and look forward to your continue support as we move forward.”

The headline speaker for the event was Staff Sergeant Ryan M. Pitts, U.S. Army Veteran and Medal of Honor Recipient. Born in 1985, he distinguished himself by extraordinary acts of heroism at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. He was awarded the Medal of Honor in a Ceremony at the White House by President of the United States for his actions on July 13, 2008, during the Battle of Wanat in Afghanistan. He was serving as a Forward Observer in 2d Platoon, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade. A video recounting his heroic actions while severely wounded after having been shot by the Taliban produced by the U.S. Army was shown. As he told the story of his battalion’s fearless actions on that day and the sacrifice they made with their lives, it reminded those there of our veterans valor and sacrifice the made for the Freedom U.S. citizens enjoy every day. He congratulated the SBVA board for their efforts and addressed how projects designed to support veterans’ needs, especially those with disabilities, is a win-win for veterans and for communities.

In addition to Mr. Jones check presentation to the Board, the Slate Belt Veterans Association were presented with Proclamations for their commitment to the veterans project and the community. Other veterans, local dignitaries, community, and business leaders also expressed in unison - through their speeches - total support for the project, our veterans, and the benefits to the community having veterans as neighbors. In addition to Toni Lynch, Leon Vanderpool, and Medal of Honor Recipient Ryan Pitts, speakers included.

- The Honorable Leonard R. Zito, retired as Northampton County Senior Judge and is a lifelong resident of Bangor. He is a U.S. A veteran who served in the U.S. Navy 1960-1964.
- Judge Edward Smith, currently serves as district judge of U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of PA. Now a retired U. S. Navy Captain who was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for service in Iraq. He is a 27-year veteran of the US Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps and holds the rank of Captain. Judge Smith served as Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Justice School.
- State Senator Mario Scavello, for Pennsylvania’s 40th district. an avid supporter of Veterans. He represents portions of Monroe and Northampton County.
- State Senator Lisa Boscola Office (Kurt Derr), she represents the 18th Senate District, serving parts of Lehigh and Northampton
- State Representative Joseph Emrick, representing the 137th Legislative District, serving parts of Northampton County.
- State Representative Ann Flood, representing the 138th Legislative District, serving parts of Northampton County
- Linda Perin, Parkhill Realty, Inc., Broker/Owner, and Broker, Appraiser, (sister-in-law of the late Brian Perin, whose

generous donation is the foundation moving project forward)

- Peter Reisen, President of the American Legion, Veteran. Peter was stationed in Korea served in U.S. Army for most of 1960s.

- Lou Pektor - Ashley Development Corporation, Developer, Founder Ashley Development, Acquisitions and Development Specialist for PennCap, and Vice President of ALT Realty.

- The Slate Belt Veterans Association presented a Certificate of Recognition in memory of Veteran L. Brodt Sr. to his son, Terry Brodt, Jr. Terry then thanked the board on behalf of his father and himself. He shared a brief story in context with his dad’s service in Vietnam and his love this his town, Pennsylvania, and his country. Terry authored a poem entitled “This Land” specifically for this occasion, a verse from the poem stated, “... Some may believe that land is like this wherever one may go.

Make no mistake, I sternly say, this notion isn’t so.

The ground on which we stand is far more special than is shown.

It’s unlike the land of any nation found upon this globe.”

- Brad Kennedy, decorated combat Veteran of the Vietnam war, author of the book “Betrayal, Will Stone in Vietnam.” In 2019, the PBS National Memorial Day Concert, played tribute to Brad Kennedy and Ernest “Pete” Peterson in the portion of the program on the Valor and Brotherhood, the story of two soldiers. Brad’s story was re-enacted by actor Joe Mantegna and a video was shown on his story. Brad serves as Slate Belt Veterans Association’s Financial Advisor.

Anyone wishing to donate to the project are encouraged to visit www.sbva.org. Your donation will help provide ADA housing for combat warriors with disabilities and their families! The Slate Belt Veterans Administration is a 501c3, your donation is 100% tax deductible. Your generosity will go right to work on the completion of this special project.

Video Links

U.S. Army Animated Rendition of Medal of Honor Recipient Ryan Pitts

Video before Ryan Pitts speaks

<https://youtu.be/CWJYn0Q1j2A>

Video before Veteran Brad Kennedy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GouMZKEpFEw>

About the Slate Belt Veterans Association - The Slate Belt Veterans Association (SBVA) is a 503c3 not-for-profit foundation based out of Bangor, PA. The SBVA all volunteer Board is mostly made up of veterans, including those with service-connected disabilities. The mission of the SBVA is to honor those who have served and to support and assist those who have returned home, especially those who returned with service-connected disabilities. The immediate goal is to develop and build a housing facility for veterans with service-connected, combat-related disabilities.