

## Ashley White Stumpf Memorial Scholarship fund is established



**Pictured Above are Ashley White Stumpf's  
Parents Deborah and Robert White**

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First Lt. Ashley White Stumpf was always helping someone else.

As a student at Kent State University, White Stumpf helped a handicapped friend in a wheelchair get from class to class. When she was serving with Army Rangers in Afghanistan, she took great joy in making popcorn or fresh bread for her fellow soldiers. When her family visited White Stumpf and her husband Jason at their North Carolina home before her deployment, she

had homemade pizza awaiting them when they arrived late at night and fresh-baked cinnamon rolls ready for breakfast in the morning. Every morning before her husband went to work, White Stumpf made him lunch.

"She could find the goodness in people that maybe we didn't see," said White Stumpf's father, Robert White, of Marlboro Township.

"Everyone was Ashley's friend," her mother, Deborah White, added. "It didn't matter who you were or where you came from."

White Stumpf died on Oct. 22 while serving in Afghanistan of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked her unit with an improvised explosive device. In an effort to keep White Stumpf's memory alive, her parents have established a scholarship in her name at Marlinton High School. The White family has been taking donations for the scholarship since White Stumpf's services in October.

"The community has just been so supportive," Robert said.

The Ashley White Stumpf Memorial Scholarship will go to a female athlete at Marlinton, according to her parents. The family will begin accepting applications in March, and plan to award the first scholarship at the end of the school year. The Whites hope to award at least \$500 each year. The family and some of White Stumpf's friends are discussing the possibility of charity runs and other fundraisers to help raise funds to continue the scholarship into the future.



"We hope to help support somebody that is passionate in running," Robert said.

"Hopefully, we can help other people -- that's what she (White Stumpf) would want."

Since White Stumpf spent her life helping and reaching out to other people, the Whites believe the scholarship is a fitting tribute to their daughter. They speak of the many qualities that made White Stumpf unique. White Stumpf was the quietest of the White siblings, and often served as the peacekeeper between her twin sister, Brittany, and their older brother, Josh.

"She was so quiet," Robert said. "Sometimes I would say, 'Ash, are you still with us?'"

Although White Stumpf dedicated a lot of her time to running and practicing for cross country and track meets, she was never one to expect accolades or awards.

"The highlight of her (athletic) career was to get to go to state with someone else -- that meant so much to just get to go," Robert said.

"If she loved doing it, she didn't care," Deborah said. "Her thought was that she was a part of that team."

"That's why the military was such a good fit for her," Robert added.

White Stumpf was also modest about her military awards. She never talked about her many accolades, and in one instance turned down a combat badge, her parents said. Her awards and decorations include the Parachutist Badge, the Ohio Faithful Service Ribbon, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal,

the Army Reserve Achievement Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. She was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Combat Action Badge.

The Whites explained that White Stumpf attended Kent State University and joined the Army ROTC the second semester of her freshman year. As a participant in the ROTC program, White Stumpf was required to begin conditioning at 5 a.m. each day. Her physical fitness scores were always higher than anyone else's, and she surprised the Army Rangers when she began working with them.

"Three of four times she beat the Rangers," Robert said.

Robert recalls talking to White Stumpf on the Sunday before she died. She told him that she was training for a marathon, running the military compound 17 times in addition to running 10 miles on the treadmill each day. Before she deployed to Afghanistan, White Stumpf ran 10 miles every morning with her Husky, Gunner, at Fort Bragg.

"She was always training, whether it was for the military or for herself," Deborah said.

"There was a challenge every day and she thrived on that part," Robert said.

During her time in the military, White Stumpf was a member of a number of different National Guard units, including the Youngstown National Guard, ROTC and Medical Service Corps. Each summer, she traveled to a different location for training. After marrying Jason Stumpf in May, White



Stumpf decided to attend Cultural Support Team (CST) training to get her deployment out of the way.

"She kept getting more involved -- she loved the challenge of it," Robert said.

The Whites knew very little about what their daughter was doing in Afghanistan until she died and they then learned that she had been working with women and children. When she was on duty with the Rangers, White Stumpf was often the only female soldier involved in the operation.

"She felt she was making a difference and that's what Ashley was all about," Robert said.

White Stumpf was given a nickname by the Rangers.

"They called her 'Muffin' because she was sweet on the inside and hard on the outside," Deborah said.

During White Stumpf's deployment, the Whites always looked forward to Sundays, as that's when they received their weekly phone call from their daughter. Though she

couldn't tell them much about her days, she always asked about family members and friends at home.

The Whites were looking forward to spending Easter at White Stumpf's home, as she was expected to return from Afghanistan by then. They looked forward to seeing her start a family with her husband and work as an athletic trainer at Fort Bragg. Deborah, who likes to bake, had talked to White Stumpf, a coffee enthusiast, about opening their own coffee shop someday.

"God had different plans, I guess," Deborah said.

"At this point, all we can do is honor the person she was," Robert said.

Anyone wishing to make a donation to the Ashley White Stumpf Memorial Scholarship should send checks to the following address: Marlinton Local Schools, Attn: Sandra Moeglin, Treasurer, c/o Ashley White Stumpf Memorial Scholarship, 10320 Moulin Ave., Alliance, Ohio 44601.