

BOOK REVIEW

"Home of the Brave"

by Donna Bryson

Chronos Books

ISBN 978 1 78535 636 0

Review by Greg Forest

"*Home of the Brave*" is a book about heroism. In the violent vistas of war, military casualties are a major portion of the price the U.S. pays to maintain and expand its global reach.

America has real enemies in the global war on terror and we count on our military to keep the wolves at bay. Unlike the reception received by our Vietnam veterans, our returning soldiers are garnering a bit of the respect they deserve.

But there is talking the talk and walking the walk. "Thank you for your service," may be a sincere and heart felt gesture that, although appreciated, does little or nothing to improve the lifestyle and the issues of a wounded vet in the real world.

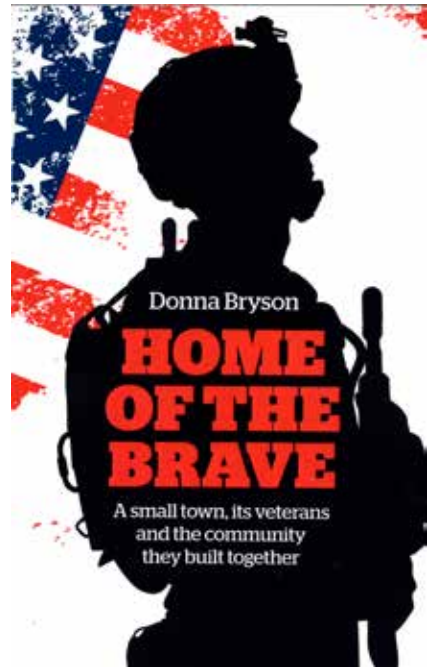
This book is about Melanie Kline, a true hero who brought an entire community together to create the Welcome Home Montrose project to address the issues of disabled veterans from a new and community-wide perspective.

Montrose, Colorado describes itself as, "Friendly. Patriotic. Independent. Embracing. Welcoming."

Like other small rural communities, the economic recovery from the 2008 bust has yet to find its way to Montrose. The U.S. census found almost 20% of the community living under the poverty line.

All across the West you can find similar communities. Montrose is a played out mining town that saw its population decreasing over the years and, even though it was in close proximity to a number of ski resorts, white water rafting areas and other big tourist draws, the local economy didn't see any new economic growth.

Kline, through pure force of will, brought people from across the political and economic spectrum together to make Montrose not just disabled vet friendly but to turn the town into a vacation destination for our wounded vets.



Bryson also gives us a look into how Kline's vision made believers of other players, such as the VA, expert disabled athletes who were initially skeptical of her Welcome Back Montrose program. They quickly became believers and active participants in developing the program.

"You can't do it because you feel sorry for them. You've got to do it because you respect them."

Each veteran has their own story, From the aging vets of WWII, the retiring vets of the Vietnam era to the new generation of Middle Eastern casualties. Each also has their own path to recovery.

With a bit of grit, guts and grants the town was able to tame the Uncompahgre river and transform it into a water park with a white water run that is easily accessed by the disabled and landscaped grounds with walking trails.

"*Home of the Brave*" is available on Amazon in both print and Kindle editions and at fine bookstores everywhere.