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## Stoneridge Outdoor Living donates deck to active-duty soldier

By BRIAN BREHM The Winchester Star

May 7, 2026

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Stoneridge Outdoor Living of Winchester recently donated a deck to the family of an active-duty Army soldier from Frederick County. Shown at February's reveal are, from left, Ben Bednarczyk of TimberTech, soldier Ryan Bateman, Madison Bateman, wife Jessica Bateman, and John Willingham and Adielle Rivera of Stoneridge Outdoor Living.

Stoneridge Outdoor Living of Winchester is continuing its practice of building two free decks per year for veterans or active-duty military personnel.

The latest deck was installed in February at the Frederick County home of Ryan and Jessica Bateman and their daughter, Madison. Ryan Bateman is serving in the U.S. Army and recently returned home after a yearlong deployment to the Middle East.

John Willingham, owner of Stoneridge Outdoor Living at 118 Creekside Lane, said his firm is building two free decks per year — one in the Winchester area, the other in the Richmond area where it has satellite offices — as a way of thanking those who put their lives on the line to protect the United States, as well as "the families that make these sacrifices with them as well."

Adielle Rivera, marketing assistant at Stoneridge Outdoor Living, said she had a first-hand opportunity to see how Ryan Bateman's recent deployment affected his wife and daughter.

"This gave me a new perspective on what veteran families go through," Rivera said, "and I'm grateful Stoneridge cares and was able to give back through something meaningful for this family who has sacrificed so much."

Willingham said Stoneridge started building free decks for current and former personnel in 2023 after hearing about another company that was doing the same thing.

"We thought it was a great idea," Willingham said. "We had several military veterans that worked for us, and we sell to a lot of military veterans."

The Bateman family was chosen for this year's Winchester-area deck because Stoneridge Outdoor Living "wanted to do something fun and unique" as a thank you for their service and sacrifice, Willingham said.

Stoneridge started building the deck while Ryan Bateman was on deployment, using composite decking materials donated by [TimberTech](#) of Chicago and Stoneridge Outdoor Living itself. TimberTech's wood-alternative decking products are similar to those manufactured by [Trex Co. Inc.](#) in Winchester.

"TimberTech found out about our program and they enthusiastically wanted to participate," Willingham said. "As a Winchester-based company, we like working with Trex as well and we hope to do future projects with them."

Willingham noted that Trex composite timbers were used in a previous deck build for a military veteran.

The Bateman deck project, starting with the issuance of building permits and ending with the deck's completion, took about 60 days. The goal was to surprise Ryan Bateman when he returned home from the Middle East, Willingham said, "but he got back before we were fully finished."

Even though the surprise factor went out the window, the Bateman family's joy for having a new deck valued in excess of \$40,000 was unabated.

"It brings us joy and happiness to be able to provide that to their family and other people that will be selected in the future," Willingham said.

Stoneridge Outdoor Living's selection process for its free decking program is a combination of people nominating veterans and active-duty personnel, and recommendations from military-related organizations like the [American Legion](#) and [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) (VFW).

Winchester-area recipients can include veterans and active-duty personnel living in outlying communities including Loudoun County and Martinsburg, West Virginia, Willingham said. The selection of next year's local deck recipient will get underway later this year.

"This is a small thank you to them and their families for the sacrifices they have made," Willingham said.

To learn more about Stoneridge Outdoor Living, visit [stoneridgeoutdoor.com](http://stoneridgeoutdoor.com).

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