Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project Inc

The Highground

W7031 Ridge Rd.
Neillsville, WI 54456
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Press 1
Vet Center: 608-782-4403
LaCrosse, WI

Our Promise

In 2003, The Highground made a pledge soon after the Iraq war started that we would not let those from Wisconsin who died in this war go in silence. At all events at The Highground, we read these names and ring the Liberty Bell for all whom have died from Wisconsin.

Kevin Calloway	Michael A. McGlothin	Matthew R. Kading	Tyler J. Kritz	Chad D. Coleman
Rocky Nelson	Charles Kiser	Benjamin A. Smith	Patrick L. Wade	Adam Novak
Lance Monsen	Stephen Martin	Anthony Alexander	Matthew R. Zindars	Matthew J. West
Scott Schroeder	Adrian Soltau	"Alex" Gaunky	Alun R. Howells	Daniel J. Johnson
Brian Scott	Andrew Halverson	Andy A. Stevens	Derek A. Dobogai	Justin Cain
William Strehlow	Daniel R. Wyatt	Adam J. VanAlstine	Rachael L. Hugo	Scott T. Nagorski
Michael Fitz	Shane K. O'Donnell	Nicholas R. Anderson	Anthony R. Wasielewski	Jacob A. Gassen
Cheryl LaBeau-O'Brien	Robert P. Warns II	Eric A. Palmisano	Joshua C. Brennan	Richard J. Kemp
Daniel Joel	Todd R. Cornell	Nathan J. Vacho	Louis A. Griese	Daren M. Hidalgo
Patrick Wanke	Brian R. Prening	Eric D. Clark	Tracy Alger	Justin Ross
Paul Buege	Isaiah R. Hunt	Grant Allen Dampier	James McDonald	Paul J. Atim
Carl Zabel	Benjamin C. Edinger	Jamie Jaenke	Jason F. Lemke	Matthew D. Hermanson
Jeremy Bird	Ryan J. Cantafio	Patrick L. Lybert	Timothy R. Hanson	Ryan J. Larson
Daniel Busch	Brent T. Vroman	Stephen Castner	Matthew I. Pionk	Tyler R Kreinz
Ryan P. Long	Richard D. Warner	Ryan Jopek	Keith E. Lloyd	Michael C. Nolen
Kirk Allen Straseskie	Todd Olson	Adam P. Servais	Christopher S. Frost	Garrick L. Eppinger, Jr.
Matthew E. Schram	Travis M. Wichlicz	Shaun A. Novak	Richard J. Nelson	Jakob Roelli
Dan H. Gabrielson	Donald W. Eacho	Kenneth Cross	Dean D. Opicka	Joseph J. Altmann
Paul J. Sturino	Andrew L. Bossert	Merideth Howard	Steven J. Christofferson	David A. Johnson
Rachel K. Bosveld	Mark A. Maida	Luke J. Zimmerman	Jeremy D. Vrooman	Jesse J. Grindey
Warren S. Hansen	Joshua Michael Scott	Rhett W. Schiller	Nick A. Dewhirst	Benjamin H. Neal
Jeremy L. Wolfe	Kyle M. Hemauer	Jesse D. Tillery	Daniel Thompson	Jeremiah Collins, Jr
Eugene A. Uhl III	Eric J. Poelman	Kevin M. Kryst	Steven T. Drees	Heidi Ruh
Christopher J. Splinter	John J. Mattek, Jr.	Evan A. Bixler	Brian Naseman	Matthew I Leggett
Robert J. Cook	Charles Kaufman	Joshua M. Schmitz	Earl D. Werner	Carson Holmquist
Nicole M. Frye	John Tollefson	Matthew T. Grimm	Robert M Rieckhoff	Quinn Johnson-Harris
Bert Edward Hoyer	Ben Jansky	Andrew G. Matus	Ryan C. Adams	Matthew Thompson
John F. "Hans" Kurth	Chad J. Simon	Jon B. St. John II	Nickolas Mueller	
Sean M. Schneider	Trevor J. Diesing	Harry H. Timberman	Amy Krueger	
Jessie L. Thiry	Ryan J. Nass	Robert J. Basham	Russell Seager	
Ryan M. Jerabek	Michael Wendling	Nicholas Riehl	Jacob A Meinert	
Michelle M. Witmer	Andrew Wallace	Jesse B. Albrecht	Paul R. Bartz	

LET THEM NOT GO IN SILENCE

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park

February 2017 — **a place for all of us.**

Wrapping up 2016 — Looking forward to 2017 Welcome to 2017!!

How do you wrap-up a whole year (2016) in a word? **Challenging!**
How do you explain the anticipation of next year (2017)? **Exciting!**

The newsletters, website and Facebook have tried to keep you informed of all our activities at The Highground. But let's see what 2016 did to bring us into 2017.

1. July 2016 was a great week for the "Operation Persian Gulf Welcome Home" event, which jump-started the request for a Veterans Retreat for ALL veterans of all wars. Your support is needed for this—again time, talents and financial. July 7-9, 2017 is being planned—let us know if you are interested or have a workshop you would like to see here. *See page 10*
2. Stones: WOW!—2016 had an awesome turnout and the addition of a professional photographer was well received bringing additional funds. We will be inviting Augie back next year. (All proceeds come to The Highground.)
3. We are revamping the website! A new designer, Ike, is helping us move forward. Watch for the announcement of a new site! *See page 13*
4. 2016 wrapped up the development of the "My War" exhibit, created by Marissa Roth and June (Berg) Abrahamson. It had its premier showing and is now ready to travel in 2017. Give June a call if you would like to book the exhibit in your area. *See page 7*
5. 2016 brought the Military Working Dog Tribute to The Highground to be dedicated in 2017. See page 11
6. Veteran suicides are occurring at a rate of 22 per day. We continue to bring more awareness to this issue. How does a 22-mile bicycle ride sound? Anyone willing to help with this? Call us with ANY ideas?
7. The financial support has been wonderful, but 2017 will need even more dedication from our contributors and volunteers. *See pages 2-3*
8. Email blast: we love sending you these newsletters via mail (more personal). This mailing is over 13,000 newsletters. Would you prefer to have it via email and not think it impersonal? We will need your email address. Once we are capable of emailing the newsletter, we will stop mailing a printed copy. ("Paperless" I think its called—or "going green".) *See page 4*
9. 2016 brought many donations of quilts and afghans which will be displayed in the Learning Center the month of December with a raffle on December 31, 2017. *See page 5*
10. Reaching out beyond the 155 acres of the Park, 2016 had many requests for The Highground information to be at outside events. Thanks to volunteers, booths at fairs distributed Highground information. 2017 will now include more Highground traveling exhibits. *See pages 6-7*
11. 2016 allowed visitors to experience the lower park without making the trip to the plaza for restroom facilities. Because of the new facilities, we will be seeing more groups utilizing this area in 2017. (A group from MN is looking forward to coming.)
12. **Thank you to everyone who made 2016 a memorable year. Whether it be with your time, talents or financial support—2016 jump-started new programs and needs for 2017!**

Thank you, donors, for gifts to remember lost loved ones or to honor those still among us!

In Memory					*In Honor:*
Gene Andrews	Jo Anne Clark	Ken Hasenhrl	LeRoy Laflex	Marlin Schmitz	Robert Brandt
Fritz Bauermeister	Tom Davies	William Hesse	Thomas Merkt	Howard Sherpe	Marcus Radloff
George Bores	Clinton Drake	Harold Hillert	Herb Nemitz	Robert Sippel	Cal Schattschneider
George Brenner	David Eisentraut	Stan Hutter	Patrick Patoka	Robert Sickinger	Gerold Scott
	Walter Friant	Robert Kinderman	Gordon Peaslee	Hershel Teter	
	Robert Geiger	Chet Krause	Ray Rakers		

We have established a Visionaries and Immortals Endowment Fund at The Highground.
We would appreciate your consideration in your future financial planning.

Persian Gulf Veteran Rodney Kerksieck, Featured Veteran, by Victoria Roder

The Highground in Neillsville, Wisconsin is a Veterans Memorial Park. It is a location for the public, veterans and their families to heal. It is a place to remember those who have fallen, and to honor all who have served. It is a sanctuary to seek peace. On Saturday, July 23rd, the Persian Gulf Tribute, "*The Bootprint*," was dedicated. Jersey and Texas Barriers, along with the Honor Stones form a symbolic shape of a military boot print in the sand. This memorial represents military personnel from Desert Shield to those presently serving in the Persian Gulf.

I had the privilege of interviewing one of our local veterans being honored with a Honor Stone presented from his fellow troops and his family. I would like to introduce you to Staff Sargent Rodney Kerksieck, USANG (Ret.)

VR: Can you share with us, why you joined the service and how old you were?
RK: *I joined the National Guard when I was 17 years old because I wanted to do something good for my country.*
VR: You served in Desert Storm, can you share with us where you were located and how long you were deployed?
RK: *During Desert Storm I was stationed in Northern Iraq for six months.*
VR: How soon after arriving were you in combat?
RK: *Within 72 hours after landing in Saudi Arabia, we (212th brigade Field Artillery from Ft. Sill Oklahoma) arrived in the combat zone.*
VR: What was your job during Desert Storm?
RK: *I was a Gunner on an eight inch Howitzer.*
VR: What was the hardest part of receiving your deployment notice?
RK: *Leaving my wife Billee, my new born son Eric and our oldest daughter Stephanie behind. I'm grateful I returned home so we were able to add my youngest daughter Cassy to the family.*
VR: Without today's luxury of cell phones, how did you keep in contact with your loved ones?
RK: *I was able to call them once a month. My family couldn't call me, but they sent letters.*
VR: In total how long did you serve the United States of America?
RK: *Ten years active duty and ten years National Guards Reserves.*
VR: Knowing the personal sacrifices you made to serve your country, as a seventeen-year-old boy, would you sign on that dotted line again with the National Guard?
RK: *I would be the first in line to do it again. I'm so proud to be able to call myself a soldier.*
VR: Your last statement gave me goosebumps. I for one and I'm sure the rest of my fellow Americans, thank you for your service.

What those who serve in our military do, and the sacrifices they make, insures safety and freedoms for the rest of us. John 15:13 says it better than I can. "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." That is exactly what the men and women of our military pledge to do for each of us when they sign on that dotted line.

Take the time to visit The Highground in Neillsville, Wisconsin, the memorials dedicated to our military are a sight to behold. It is a place of peace to reflect on the sacrifices others have made for us, a place of gratitude for our freedoms and a place to bestow well-deserved honor and respect to our service men and women. Thank you all who have, who do, and who will serve to protect us.

—Victoria Roder

On January 21, 2017 Staff Sargent Rodney Kerksieck, USANG, (Ret.) received the highest award given by the US Army Field Artillery Forces. The Honorable Order of Saint Barbara recognizes individuals who have demonstrated the highest standards of integrity and moral character, displayed outstanding professional competence, served with selflessness and contributed to the promotion of the Field Artillery.

(Photo Rodney Kerksieck and wife Billee at award ceremony)

Wish Lists — Donations Needed—Can you help?

-Tablet and a Camera: $250/each
-Leaf Rakes: 6 @ $25/each
-Duct & Gorilla tape: Lots
-PTSD Books: *Thanks for your support!* It is helping!! (Over 1000 books have been handed out in the last two years!)
-Trunks/Footlockers for traveling exhibit (Authentic would be wonderful but not necessary.)
-Partner with us to build the Welcome Center $50 to $10,000 Call Kirk for projections
-Casket flags for Native American Tribute (5'x8'): *Thanks*
-Plans for walking ramp to the Persian Gulf Tribute road: $1200
-1 or 2 more used/new 4 or 6 passenger golf carts for visitors
-Persian Gulf Tribute grass preparation: $1360 Think Spring!
-Pathway Bollards to Persian Gulf Tribute: 6 @ $1000/each
-Endowment Fund Donors: Goal: $5 million
-Memorials: Honor your loved ones
-Learning Center Exhibit Funds
-Persian Gulf Tribute Jersey Barriers: 10 more @ $4000/each
-Highway road sign needs solar charger or digital sign: $2600
-Sprinkler System for Gold Star: $3980
-Persian Gulf big map to sign: $650 still needed- *Thanks for $350*
-New Roof & Base for 2-picnic shelters: $3570 each
-Partners to pave road to Persian Gulf Tribute: $3600
-Tape measure, Laser level and Command Strips for exhibits
-21" (or larger) self-propelled walk behind mower w/ mulcher: $400
-New Riding lawnmower: ***THANK YOU**-spring will be easier*
-Fill project: Buy a truck load: $55/each
-Patriotic Quilts needed for the December display and raffle
-Lights for Native American Tribute: 4 @ $79/each
-1st Annual Newsletter subscription drive: $25
-Small 12V Screwdriver for crafts: $50

Mail Truck Burns

We received notice that a mail truck heading this way was in an accident and the contents were burned. If you sent us a donation or correspondence in 2016 and have not received an acknowledgement/thank you from The Highground, please contact us—either your contribution burned or our thank you burned. Let's get it fixed.

Wisconsin "BIG BUNDLE UP" Campaign

The Highground served as the collection site for the clothing drive. New and gently used coats, sweaters, hats, mittens and other warm clothing items were collected as part of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's "The Big Bundle Up" campaign. We are proud to say that through The Highground's generous donors, well over 1200 items were collected for homeless veteran families in need. All items donated here were given to homeless veterans in Chippewa Falls and Tomah.

Thanks to generous donors, The Highground Veterans Park is able to continue its mission of healing and education by offering books to those veterans and families that feel they are dealing with PTSD. With a handshake and promise, we would like to help you understand PTSD with a book.

Friends of The Highground

The Highground is a grass-roots, non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that does not receive any ongoing federal or state funding. We have a very small operating budget and only exist because of the hearts and hands of thousands of volunteers and contributors who continue to give generously of their time, talents and personal/financial resources.

Please accept my donation of $_____.
I would like the gift to be used for:

_____
And/or
Newsletter subscription: $25

The Highground, W7031 Ridge Rd,
Neillsville, WI 54456 715-743-4224 Feb 2017

Please send me information about:

____ Upcoming Events & Fundraising Calendar
____ Stones on The Highground
____ Add someone to the newsletter mailing list (please send name and address of whom you would like to give a gift subscription)
____ Endowment Fund
____ July 2017 Veterans Retreat
____ Booking "My War" exhibit or ROF exhibit
____ Volunteer opportunities on site
____ Please add me to the Work Week mailings (I am available to help)
____ Please add me to the "Sweet Ladies" mailings (I can bake for events/sales)
____ I would like your newsletter emailed

Name_____
Address_____
City_____ State____ Zip_____
Phone_____
Email_____
Questions or Comments: _____
_____
_____
_____

Counselor at The Highground

Vet Center Counselor, Todd Stage, is on-site the First Thursday of each month in The Learning Center for confidential, private or group sessions.

To schedule an appointment please contact:

Wausau Outstation at (715) 842-1724
La Crosse Vet Center at (608) 782-4403

Todd Stage (715) 842-1724

To schedule The Highground appts walk-ins also welcome!

Vet Center
Keeping the Promise

Spring in The Gift Shop

For those chilly spring days stay warm & cozy in one of our Baywatch hooded jackets with jersey lining & zippered pockets in Forest Green, Navy or Red, sizes S-4X, priced $67.95-$74.95

or a

Heavy blend "hoodie" in Antique Cherry Red, Military Green, Dark Heather sizes S-3XL Priced $33.95-$36.95

Enjoy your favorite "Irish" beverage in a Dark Green tulip or Bistro mug. $9.95 & $14.95 Wear your green in a Kelley Polo sizes S-3XL, $22.95 to $26.95

St. Patrick's Day

Gift certificates would also be welcome gifts. shipping available on most items. Check the Online shop for more items. Call 715-743-4224 for ordering information.

Remember the Special Mom in your Life—Music Boxes Mom & Grandma $19.95 - $25.95

Infinity scarves

Assorted designs from $10.95 -$13.95

A large display of bracelets and necklaces that are sure to please are priced at $6.95-$21.95

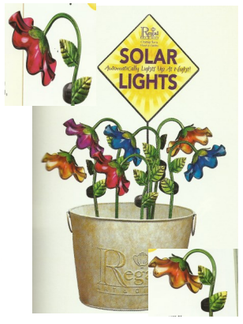
Willow Tree Angels: With My Grandmother, Mother & Son, Mother & Daughter (2 styles), $34.95 each

Special prints from Tom Miller Butterflies, Flowers and Eagles sell for $25.00 each.

Welcome Spring with a unique solar light to brighten your yard. Sale priced at **25% off** 6 color bubble lite features a butterfly, ladybug, hummingbird, frog, dragonfly or bee now $18.71

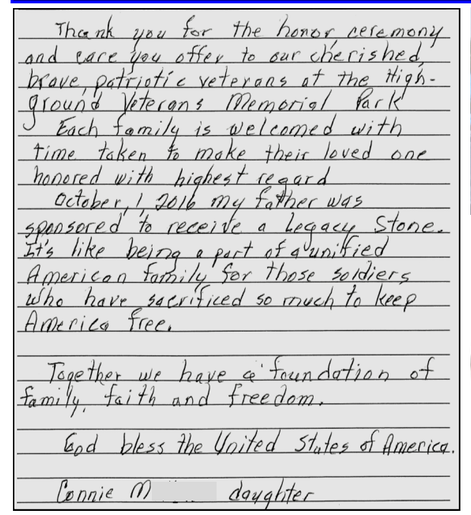
Mini pink or orange butterfly and green or blue dragonfly stakes and

Mini bell flower stakes in blue, pink, red, & yellow are **25% off** now $13.46



Honor Stones—Legacy, Korean, Meditation and Persian Gulf

Stones make a great gift for birthdays/Father's Day/Mother's Day/Just because You are You Day!
Dedication Ceremonies will begin April 22, 2017. (May is already full.)
Some dates are filling up fast—for largest date selections, call today.
For those having 12+ stones and interested in a private ceremony, please contact Kay for arrangements.
We would love to see more schools honoring their veterans—if interested in making this happen, give Kay a call.
Don't forget to come read the Registry Books! They are full of veteran stories and histories — a true legacy by telling the rest of the story!

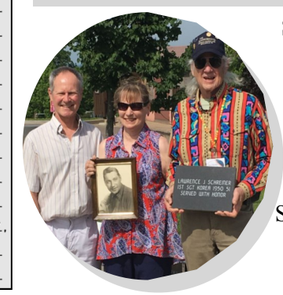


Thank you for the honor ceremony and care you offer to our cherished brave, patriotic veterans at the High-ground Veterans Memorial Park. Each family is welcomed with time taken to make their loved one honored with highest regard. October 1 2016 my father was sponsored to receive a legacy Stone. It's like being a part of a unified American family for those soldiers who have sacrificed so much to keep America free.

Together we have a foundation of family, faith and freedom.

God bless the United States of America.

Connie M... daughter

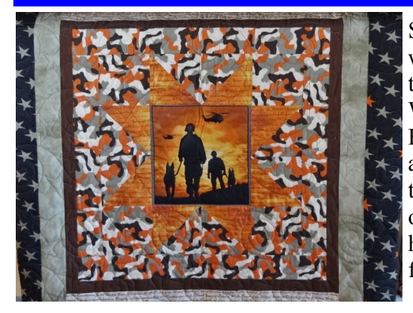


Stone Ceremonies bring families together to honor, remember and enjoy the day together. Whether a Legacy, a Persian Gulf, a Korean or Meditation Honor Stone—each ceremony is special, emotional and designed for YOU!

Quilt Raffle and Show

Attention Quilters: This is the year!! We are so excited to see what you are creating! Are you working on that patriotic quilt for The Highground? Quilt your favorite pattern in patriotic fabric during the year, then donate it before December 2017. The Learning Center will be ready December 1, 2017 to display all the beautiful quilts and afghans that are donated for our first quilt show and raffle. Some beautiful items have been brought in already and we will be displaying them around the area before the December show. Please remember to put your personal label on your quilt so winners know who created their choice item! The drawing is December 31, 2017 to end the year on a warm and cozy note. Raffle tickets available soon.

2017 Honoring Veterans Annual Raffle



Starting soon: The 2017 Honoring Our Veterans Raffle! Tickets available soon! We will have a gorgeous quilt many of you have seen in the Timberframe that was made to honor the Military Working Dog Tribute; a $100 Highground Gift Certificate; a beautifully painted and textured eagles with the flag on live edge Ash Wood; and hand painted eagle with flag flying over awesome scenery.

Message from CW King, Board Chair

It happened to me again; I'm walking downtown mostly minding my own business when someone comes up to me and says "I was just at The Highground and it is the most wonderful place". They go on to tell me about their recent visit and how they came away feeling a sense of healing and hope. The stories are always different, but they all carry the theme of healing and hope following their visit. They always comment on how good the place looks, no matter the time of year, and how helpful and friendly the staff was to them during their visit. They always want to be sure that I understand how special a place it is, and wonder if it will always be there. I assure them that that the Board of Directors shares that concern and is constantly struggling with how we can ensure the future of The Highground. As a governing board, we do constant fundraising and planning to try to ensure that The Highground will live. During this year, we will be increasing efforts to acquire more long term gifts with property and gifts left to The Highground as longtime supporters pass on. It is a constant struggle, and I hope that more of you reading this message will consider The Highground in your will. I want to thank all of you who have given to The Highground in both time and money. The Highground could not continue to exist without your support. —CW

Message from Kirk Rodman, Volunteer General Manager

How would you do it?

How can we make it easier to upgrade a will or put our desires into a logical order? I am going on a mission to work with our partners who need this service. For the rest of you out there that receive the newsletter, I would appreciate your feedback. How did you do it? What should we offer to our people who need this service when it is not readily available to them? Can we do it with a canned form or do we need a one-on-one program for the most basic service? Have you done this or has it been one of those things that you put off because it seemed too difficult to do.

The board and I have struggled with the idea that as we get, hopefully, farther and farther away from the period of wars and sending our people to foreign lands, our donations may, unfortunately, decrease. We probably need to make more of an effort to build our endowment, so our children and their children can still utilize The Highground with financial help from a fund that we have endowed by our generous donors.

Would you please call me so we can put together some ideas on how to do this without reinventing the wheel. —Kirk

Newsletter—It's that time….

We knew it was coming but didn't want to admit it. We need your help. The donations for the newsletter are lagging behind our costs. So those of you who are already helping with donations for the newsletter, you can go to the next article. We have grown beyond our expectations. We have to make a decision about "grow" or "cut back" with the newsletter. The choices are continuing on with five newsletters per year or cut back to four per year as we were doing several years ago. We are very proud of our plan to not require a subscription, but going with those that support the newsletter hoping to pay the way. So today we are going to try an in-between program.

We are asking you (who can afford to) annually on the first published newsletter of the year, to send in a gift to offset the cost of the printing and mailing. This will give us an option to do budgeting of the newsletter with our donations. Call and let us know what you think. Thank you for all that you continue to do for The Highground and our Veterans. —Kirk

Now find us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial
Website: *www.thehighground.org*

For More Information Contact

W7031 Ridge Rd.
PO Box 457
Neillsville, WI 54456

Phone: 715-743-4224
Fax: 715-743-4228
Email: highgrnd@tds.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial
Web: www.thehighground.org
On US Hwy 10, 4 miles west of Neillsville, WI
Or 30 miles east of Osseo from the junction of I-94 and US Hwy 10

The Highground Staff

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Volunteer Gift Shop Mgr	Nancy Rodman
Event/Volunteer Coord	Theresa Sojka
Donation Coordinator	Kay Anason
Learning Center	June Abrahamson
Maintenance	Mike Purgett
Gift Shop	Deb Roedel
Gift Shop	Julie Dallman
Gift Shop	Mae Bautch

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Additional Dates to add to your calendar

33rd ANNUAL
HIGHGROUND BIKE TOUR
August 4—6, 2017
4 ROUTES—3 DAYS—2 NIGHTS—1 GOAL!

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park
17TH ANNUAL
RIDE TO REMEMBER
MOTORCYCLE RALLY
August 18 & 19, 2017
The 2017 Ride will Honor the U.S. Coast Guard

Flag Day honored during the Korean Honor Stone Ceremony—June 10
Freedom Celebration Day—June 24
Independence Day Ceremony—July 4
Diversity Days—Sept 26 & 27
5th Grade Education Days—Oct 3 & 4
Fall Fest—October 7

Our Newsletter

Have you ever wondered who prints The Highground newsletter? For the past few years Johnson Litho Graphics has earned this right. They have been lower than other printers' discounted prices each year. The personal attention and the help we receive from Nikki (sales rep) and the whole processing team is appreciated by Kay (editor) and the whole Highground Staff. More than once they have come through to get you the newsletter on shorter notice than originally agreed upon. Or waited for one more event to be completed to add into the newsletter. **Thank you** Nikki and JLG for all you have done to support veterans.

Johnson Litho Graphics

Do you work here?

New grants are available to assist with new projects at The Highground. Your help is needed to identify the businesses. For instance, Walmart has a matching hours grant for its employees, Land's End also gives to those employees volunteering at The Highground.

Question: Does your company have a match or volunteer program to tap into? Do you work for Land's End, Walmart, Bemis, Exelon, Nationwide, Liberty Mutual, to name just a few that we have seen gifts being given from on the employees behalf! These funds help tremendously and you are already doing the work here—help us make your efforts go further to fulfill the mission of healing and education at The Highground Veterans Memorial Park.

Coming Soon! A new website!!

Watch for some awesome website changes in 2017! We are re-vamping and re-configuring the website with the help of IJR Designs. Jess, a young veteran and her husband Ike, approached The Highground regarding updating our website. (Getting us into this new century of smart phones and tablets.) They have diligently worked and obtained all the necessary information to provide us a new site!! We hope you like the site and will refer to it often and let us know how you like it.

We will have special intricacies throughout the site that you need to explore including a special volunteer area for those needing to reach others for porch greeting, car parking, etc.

Spread the word you will soon find us at:
www.thehighground.us

IJR Designs
Graphics • Websites
Photography • Non Profit Resources

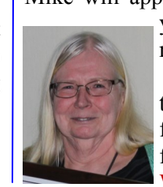
Thank you

Jessica Purgett, Girl Scout, received the highest designation in scouting with her project on veterans. Jessica was at Diversity Days giving presentations and she has now completed her book.

It's a beautiful book that is on display for all to read in the Learning Center.

Thank you Jessica for a great job!
We know you learned a lot about our veterans.

Thirty-five acres are mowed each week (sometimes twice) by Mike the Mainenance Man. Thanks to Julie Diesing, his ride became smoother and more even with the **new** lawnmower that she purchased. This helps a lot and Mike will appreciate it more this year when his hip is replaced in March.



Now Julie didn't forget about the inside staff—for them she purchased many items with the last being a folding machine to fold our brochures and posters for mailing! Julie—thank you!

We enjoy your porch greeting here each month too!

Winter Bowl—Successful Fundraiser for The Highground Veterans Retreat!

Approximately $8,400 of cash donations and raffle items were donated by generous business sponsors, veterans posts and individuals.

Over $7,000 was raised during The 2017 Winter Bowl. Rose Bowl Lanes was packed full of veterans and those that support veterans, enjoying an afternoon of bowling, raffles, door prizes and fun! Proceeds go towards The Highground Veterans Retreat (July 7-9, 2017). The fundraiser, held Sunday, January 29th at Rose Bowl Lanes in Marshfield, will go a long way towards bringing a meaningful weekend of veterans workshops, speakers and programs all in an atmosphere of camaraderie, healing and education.

These sponsors include:

Central WI Broadcasting: WCCN / WPKG
Hardee's of Colby, Medford & Neillsville
Ho-Chunk Gaming of Black River Falls
Rose Bowl Lanes
American Legion Post #354 of Ettrick
Weiler Convenience Stores
Trollhaugen Ski
Milwaukee Brewers
Milwaukee Bucks
Metropolis Resort/Action City
Summerfest
Wisconsin Timber Rattlers
BP Drescher Oil
Target Stores
Rogers Cinema Theatres
Lands' End
Al Voskuil
Wheeler Chevrolet
Forward Financial Bank
Festival Foods
Green Bay Packers
John Buetzberger
VA #479
DAV #31 Rib River
OtterBox
Carquest
Weber's Farm Store
Strictly Country
Northern Safari Army Navy store
Lake of the Torches Resort Casino
Muldoon's Menswear
Hiller's True Value Hardware

Shane Abrahamson won the main raffle item, a 55" VIZIO LED TV, donated by Hardee's (Colby, Neillsville and Medford). Pictured with wife June Abrahamson. (Shane not present)

The Highground sends out a big "Thank you!" to those who sponsored the event, those who participated, and everyone who helped make the fundraiser an exciting success.

"through the eyes" — On display through March

"through the eyes" is a HUGE collection of photographs, memorabilia, weapons, equipment and other objects from Vietnam. This exhibition consists of so many photos and pieces of memorabilia that we are rotating the content on a regular basis. This is an exhibition you will need to visit multiple times if you want to see it ALL.

The photographs were all taken by John Hosier after he lost six of the eleven men in his recon unit and was badly injured himself. Instead of being sent to a desk job in Okinawa, the Army sent him back to Nam. But because of his injuries, he couldn't get combat duty. He was made into company clerk, not unlike Radar O'Reilly of MASH. That's when they handed him a 35mm camera, Hosier said. He "had never seen one in his life". He went back to the field, as a combat photographer.

Hosier captured hundreds of images of all kinds of units performing all kinds of duties during the war and they're on display with captions. Over the years John has collected thousands of items that now make up this amazing exhibition. And it all came about as finding a way to deal with his PTSD.

Be sure to make time to come see this educational and eye opening exhibition.

This would make a great field trip for students of middle and high school ages so please share this with your area schools.

Anyone interested in setting up a group visit please contact June at 715-743-4224 or highgrnd@tds.net

Lao Hmong Exhibit—May 2017

From 1964 to 1973, the U.S. dropped more than two million tons of ordnance on Laos during 580,000 bombing missions—equal to a planeload of bombs every 8 minutes, 24-hours a day, for 9 years – making Laos the most heavily bombed country per capita in history. The bombings were part of the U.S. Secret War in Laos to support the Royal Lao Government against the Pathet Lao and to interdict traffic along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The bombings destroyed many villages and displaced hundreds of thousands of Lao civilians during the nine-year period.

The wounds of war are not only felt in Laos. When the Americans withdrew from Laos in 1973, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the country, and many of them ultimately resettled in the United States.

May 1 - May 31, 2017 The Wisconsin Lao Veterans Of America, Inc will exhibit pictures from their Hmong - Lao Veterans History in the Learning Center. This includes photos from the past 41 years to present. The US. CIA Secret War in Lao supported the Vietnam War 1961 - 1975.

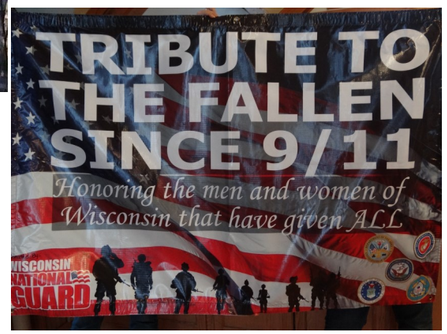
Traveling Exhibits

"REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN" & "TRIBUTE TO THE FALLEN"
Traveling Photo Memorials of Wisconsin's Fallen

"We must remember these American Heroes and speak their names when we see their family members. We can never forget those who sacrificed everything for our freedom," said Bill Williams, co-creator of the memorial. *"While this memorial is about those who have died, it was created for the living…to help the families in their grief, while reminding the rest of us of the terrible price paid for our freedom by our current generation of military."*

A very emotional memorial, ***"Remembering Our Fallen"***, (***ROF***) is a stark reminder of the ultimate sacrifice made by 132 service men and women from Wisconsin killed in The War on Terror while wearing our country's uniform in a war zone. The photo memorial, which includes military and personal photos of each of Wisconsin's Fallen, is traveling throughout the state and is available to come to your town.

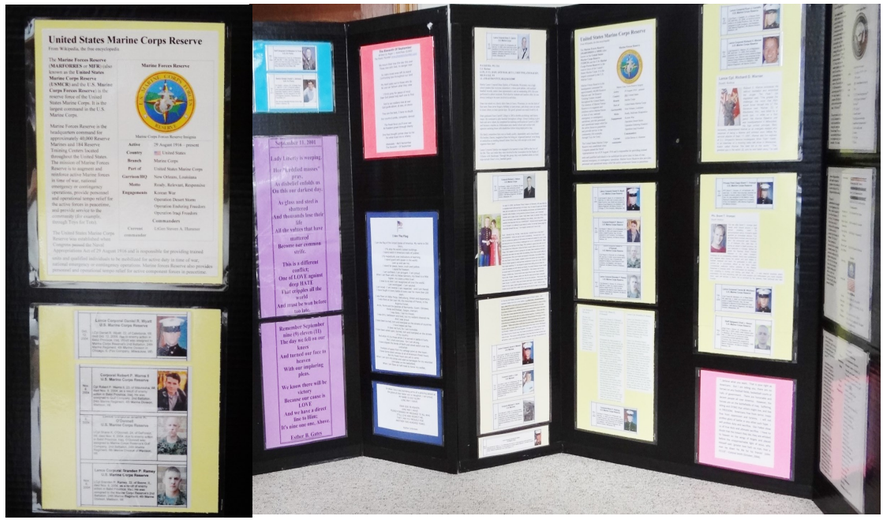
"Remembering Our Fallen" consists of (4) 10'x10' separate wall forms with (34) 2'x2' panels with the photos of (4) KIA's per panel, (2) flags on poles, (1) vertically extendable title wall, (4) table sitting 8"x10" photos of KIA's without a completed panel, along with other materials and message cards. Available at a rental of $700.



If your venue does not have adequate space to display ***ROF*** a smaller exhibit entitled ***"Tribute to the Fallen"*** may be just right for you.

"Tribute to the Fallen" is a tribute created by David and Bonnie Wick, it consists of (9) tri-fold display boards that are covered with photos, obituaries and information about each of Wisconsin's Persian Gulf KIA's, a framed patriotic puzzle collage that sits on an easel, a 4'x6' banner and other educational materials. This is a display that sits atop tables/countertops.

It requires (6)--six foot tables or the countertop space of that equivalent to display. Available at a rental fee of $250.



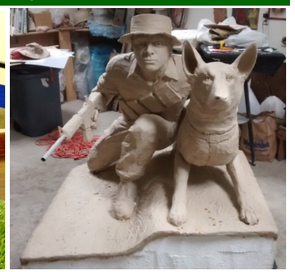
For more information on how to host the
"Remembering Our Fallen"
or
"Tribute to the Fallen"
exhibits: please contact June at 715-743-4224 or highgrnd@tds.net

Military Working Dog Tribute — design to delivery

1. Proposed sketch winner

2. Clay model prepared

3. Marquette



4. Full sized model

5. Arrival via Sav-Rite truck

6. It is here waiting for it's final location for all to see
(Pictured here with Dave Backstrom, Committee Chair)

Like so many other Tributes at The Highground, it started in Vietnam when a young soldier was killed during duty a little more than two months after his arrival. A thought became a mission fulfilling a goal to honor our four-legged veterans. In turn fulfilling the mission of The Highground: to educate about the cost of things—the human cost of war. (In this case the K9 costs and the bond between handler and friend.)

Watch future information regarding location, site work and dedication. The Committee worked hard to provide a tribute to be proud of and to show the bond between handler and dog. Many hours of planning, fundraising and work produced a beautiful Military Working Dog Tribute.

Mission:

Memorial to all working military dogs (scout, sentry and tracker) and their handlers for their sacrifice and service in protecting the liberties of the United States of America.

Goal:

Our (committee) goal being to honor all Military personnel and their dogs who have served in Vietnam and other conflicts past, present, and continuing. We would like to provide a place of healing for those affected by these wars, and educate others regarding the effects of these wars on everyone.

2017 Honor Trees

Honor, Love & Respect shines brightly here at The Highground for the veterans. Family and friends sponsor **Honor Trees,** as a way of showing their love and gratitude to their veterans. Each tree is illuminated and adorned with a plaque recognizing the honoree and the sponsor.

Honor Trees are again available for sponsorship for 2107. The following is a list of dates the trees will be illuminated. You may sponsor a tree for the whole year for $100 or one session for $25.

There are four (4) sessions a year:

Memorial Day May 15- June 13
Independence Day June 24- July 23
Veterans Day November 1-30
Christmas Dec 15 – January 13

Please contact June at 715-743-4224 or highgrnd@tds.net to sponsor your tree. We currently only have 16 trees left for sponsorship in 2017, so contact us today to reserve yours.

2016 Christmas Honor Tree Recipients

Jim Fitzl
Ken Smith
Jerry Barker
Brenda Evans
Loucks Men
Dale D Pringel
Drew Chesebro
Zoey Johansen
Thomas Bednarek
Manny Firnstahl
Lewis Deegan
Noel Schelling
Spirit of Mingo
Terry McGivern
John McGivern
Ron Lindgren
Hershel Teter
Don, Bill & Jim Buss
Glen "Pete" Johnson
Schmidt & Fry Veterans

Roshier "Bill" Watts, Jr.
Ken & Linda Smith Veterans
Roy, Donald & Gerald Schmidt
LCPL Roberto Sanchez, KIA 5-2-68
John, Hazel, Belinda & Kyrie Novotny

2017 Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

The 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic will be held at Noon on Saturday, June 3rd at The Highground. There will be a picnic lunch and volunteer awards will be given out. Bring your favorite dessert to pass, if you wish, and a non–perishable item to donate to the local food pantry. Items are appreciated for the Crazy Auction, as well!

Friends, family and new volunteers are encouraged to attend!

Please RSVP by Monday, May 22nd by calling or emailing The Highground.

Veterans Retreat July 7 - 9th

As Operation Persian Gulf Welcome Home was wrapping up in July 2016, many veterans asked "when will you do this again?" The event brought a lot of information and healing to veterans and families. We are going to keep moving forward and help veterans that are looking for solutions to some issues that they and their families are having due to their service. The goal of The Highground Veterans Retreat is to offer new ideas, workshops and information to veterans in an atmosphere of camaraderie, peace, relaxation and a bit of fun.

We are working with long-standing successful local programs including Trinity Equestrian, The Heartbeat Center, the Vet Center and Franciscan Retreat leaders Fr. Conrad Targonski (22 yrs service with US Navy and US Marine Corp including 7th Marine Regiment as supervisory chaplain in Operation Phantom Fury, Fallujah, Iraq 2004-2005; currently chaplain at Viterbo University) and Rev. Dr. Bill Reese (Chair of Religious Studies /Philosophy Dept at Viterbo University; Bill is a decorated Vietnam War veteran). In addition to workshops and presentations there will be time for veterans to relax at The Highground and at the outdoor lodge (just North of The Highground), music, entertainment and great food!

The Veterans Retreat will be made available for veterans to attend free of charge due to the generosity of sponsors such as Central WI Broadcasting WCCN / WPKG, Ho Chunk Gaming Black River Falls and Hardee's.

More sponsors (individual, veterans posts, businesses) are needed – contact The Highground to become a sponsor.

If you would like more information on attending The Highground 2017 Veterans Retreat and/or to register, please contact Theresa at The Highground.

Memorial Day Motorcycle Honor Ride — May 29, 2017

8 Scenic Routes starting in Appleton, Boscobel, Eau Claire, Medford, Minneapolis, Neillsville, Tomah, King / Waupaca

Ending at THE HIGHGROUND, W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville

7th ANNUAL!

APPLETON Route— Joins with Waupaca Route—Contact TBA, 715-743-4224
Reg. at 7am-depart at 7:15am –Appleton Harley Davidson

BOSCOBEL Route—Contact TBA—715-743-4224

EAU CLAIRE Route— Contact Shane 715-559-0646 shanelgurney@yahoo.com

NEILLSVILLE Route—Contact Mark 715-937-2326 clubberman35@yahoo.com
Reg. at 7:15am—depart at 8:15am—BP Station in Neillsville

KING / WAUPACA Route — Contact Russ 715-281-9653 red-olfusa17@yahoo.com
Reg. at 7am at Chain O' Lakes Bar & Grill, King—Departure & stops TBA

MEDFORD Route—Contact Dean 715-785-8025 hommelsd@tds.net
Reg. 6:00-6:45am at Hardee's parking lot next to VFW on Hwy 13, Medford.

MINNEAPOLIS Route—Contact Bob for info. rmfz@prodigy.net start at 8:30am
4 pick up spots in Twin Cities, 1 in Eau Claire, WI

TOMAH Route—Contact Bill 715-281-4068 bill.flemal@gmail.com
Reg. at 7:15am— depart at 8:00am—Kwik Trip (South side Tomah) 1504 Superior Ave, Tomah (NOT THE TRUCK STOP)

$25 per person (driver)/ $15 per passenger
Includes Patch or Year Rocker & Lunch at The Highground after Ride

MORE ROUTES MAY BE ADDED——CONTACT THE HIGHGROUND IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEADING A ROUTE

PLEASE CONTACT ROUTE LEADER FOR DETAILS OR CHECK AT www.thehighground.org 715-743-4224 highgrnd@tds.net

My War: Wartime Photographs by Vietnam Veterans — Available for Loan

MY WAR- Now available in Three Formats

The Original Full Version is for loan to Museums, VA's, Major Hospitals, State Capitals, State Parks and Historical Societies and consists of:

63- Black Frames Containing 72 Photographs – (34) 16" x 20", (29) 14" x 18"; (6) Silver Gelatin Fiber Photographs, (66) Archival Chromogenic Photographs (**Requires: +/- 115 LINEAR FEET of space for display.)**

- **63- Individual Wall Labels-** Captions and ID's for Photographs
- **12- Gray Frames Containing Text-** (11) 14" x 18", (1) 16" x 20"
- **1 - Title Wall Panel-** (1) 24" x 30"
- **1 – Video DVD & 1- Audio CD**
- **1 – Visitor Comment Journal**

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL:

LECTURES: By Veterans & Curator(s): upon request and availability
APPEARANCES: By Veterans & Curator(s): upon request and availability

ANCILLARY PRODUCTS:

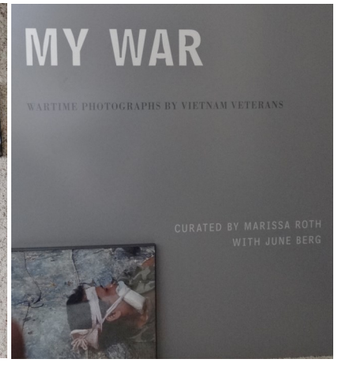
POSTER: 11" X 17" limited edition poster (customized for each venue)
LICENSING: Institutions may license images for additional use such as: t-shirts, postcards, mousepads, etc.
Catalog: Venue may purchase as many as would like at $20 each for resale at SRP of $25

For more information on booking ***MY WAR*** please contact June at 715-743-4224 or highgrnd@tds.net

1/3 & 1/2 Size Exhibits are for loan to Schools, Libraries, Smaller Hospitals and Veterans groups

1/3 Size: Consists of (12) 8" x 10" framed prints from the collection, along with HG info, Curators Bios, Acknowledgments, (3) poems and (1) Intro panel. Venue may purchase as many as would like at $20 each for resale at SRP of $25

1/2 Size: Consists of (22) 8" x 10" framed prints (one from each veteran), along with Highground information, Curators Bios, Acknowledgments, (6) poems and (1) Introduction panel. Venue may purchase as many as would like at $20 each for resale at SRP of $25



Save the Dates — In March, April and May

Porch Greeters Luncheon—March 21, 2017

Lunch at NOON at Apple Valley Bar & Restaurant! (415 W US Hwy 10 Neillsville)—just east of The Highground on Hwy 10

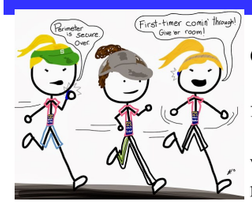
Discuss the exciting events that are planned for 2017, meet Jeff Anderson from the WI Dept of Tourism, enjoy a delicious lunch together and fill out the 2017 Porch Greeter Calendar. If you are a returning greeter and know which days you would like in 2017, please call us so we can post it on the calendar.

It is our goal to have a Porch Greeter at The Highground every day, from April through October, to greet park visitors. We would like to have volunteers greet from 10am to 3pm on their scheduled days. Days of events and honor stone ceremonies may have an earlier start time for greeters and these days will be noted on the calendar.

Newcomers are always welcome! Please extend an invitation to anyone who may be interested in becoming a Porch Greeter.

PLEASE R.S.V.P. BY MARCH 11TH!

"Half is Good Enough for Me"—Half Marathon & 5K—March 25, 2017



On Saturday, March 25, 2017 runners will be enjoying the start of the Spring running season as they take part in the "Half is Good Enough for Me" ½ Marathon & 5K at The Highground near Neillsville.

The money raised from this event will go towards The Highground's mission of Healing and Education for veterans, their families and all who visit.

The race will begin at 8:30AM, starting and finishing at The Highground, W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville WI. There are many ways to register for the races. Runners can contact The Highground at 715-743-4224 or visit www.thehighground.org. Online registration can be done at https://www.webscorer.com/members/myracedetails?raceid=86575. Registrations will also be taken from 7:00 – 8:15am on race day at The Highground. Registration fees are $11 for the 5K Walk/Run and $21 for the Half Marathon Run.

Maggie Mae—April 8, 2017

Maggie Mae & Heartland Country Band will be performing at the Pittsville School District Auditorium on Saturday, April 8, 2017 at 2 PM. Maggie Mae is featured regularly on the RFD TV station. She is from Oxford, WI but tours throughout the country. She and members of Heartland Country Band have been loyal supporters of The Highground Veterans Memorial Park for years, most notably by performing an annual concert to raise funds for The Highground. The mix of Maggie's vocals and Heartland Country Band's fiddles, guitars, piano, drums and steel guitars create a pure country experience! The show includes traditional country, fun-loving high tempo music and a show-stopping patriotic performance.

Maggie Mae dedicates her show to our military veterans and all who support them. She brings this from the heart as her daughter, a military veteran, received two purple hearts during her service.

Tickets for this high-energy country concert, sponsored by Hardee's are $25/$30. Seating is reserved seating only. The 3rd Annual Couch Potato raffle tickets will also be available for $5 a chance (winners get seating for 2 on stage). Concert and raffle tickets can be purchased by calling The Highground at 715-743-4224.

2016 Couch potatoes

Vietnam Reunion / Education Gathering — April 22, 2017

The 2017 Vietnam Reunion/Education Gathering is set for April 22 at 2:00pm at The Highground Learning Center. Don't forget to mark your calendar and to tell your Vietnam Brothers and Sisters. This gathering is also open to the public. If you would like to learn more about your area veterans and their time in service feel free to attend April 22nd. Please RSVP at 715-743-4224 or highgrnd@tds.net by April 15th.

Spring Work Week —Wednesday, April 26 - Saturday April 29th!

What is your Specialty?

There will be Painting, Staining
Cleaning
Eating Delicious Food
Cleaning Tributes
Getting Planters Ready
Seeing Old Friends & Making New Ones
Trail work
Working on projects for 5th Grade Days
Eating More Delicious Food
Lighting the Honor Trees
Putting canopies on the Pavilion…& More!

WORKING SIDE-BY-SIDE FOR THE HIGHGROUND!

Plus…You will be Well Fed each day by local restaurants and our Sweet Ladies! (Did we mention *Eating Delicious Food*?)

Call Now to Let Us Know Which Day(s) You Will Be Here!?? We want to make sure we have your project and enough delicious food for all!

APPLE VALLEY BAR & RESTAURANT
DONNA'S COZY KITCHEN
BP DRESCHER OIL

Hansen's IGA · Pizza Hut · SUBWAY · Hardee's Charbroiled Thickburgers · Mayville's Market · Hot Stuff Pizza · Schmitty's

Helicopter & Military Vehicle Expo

Helicopter & Military Vehicle Expo!

FREE ADMISSION!!

May 13, 2017
10am - 4pm

Hardee's Here for the Expo!

More Military Vehicles are Welcome to Join!

Contact The Highground for more information.

Events expand and are added each year due to the increased interest in The Highground Veterans Memorial Park activities.

Events and Learning Center Exhibits are open to the public free of charge because of *Friends* like YOU.

With this increased visitor and activities, we are in need of leaders for various events/routes—could you help? Give us a call or let Theresa know you are interested in being part of this year's great Veterans Park happenings.