

# NEWSLETTER

### Honor Educate Heal... A place for all

March 2019



On March 9th, The Highground finalized the biggest gift in it's history, a 300 acre camp. The camp brings the total acres of The Highground to 460 acres overall and adds a huge amount of new opportunities to provide services and programming for Veterans and their families. Currently the camp, known as Wisconsin Adventure on Wheels, has been utilized for hunts for Veterans and Veterans with disabilities. The camp took 16 years to build to the level that it is currently. It includes not only hunting opportunities, but electric campsites, a lodge, a stocked pond, roads throughout the park, trails and much more. The Highground has been holding Veterans Retreats at the location for the last few years, this year with its first Female Veterans Retreat.

When Al and Kay came to the Board of Directors with the idea of turning over Wisconsin Adventures on Wheels to The Highground the board was stunned. Jon Weiler, Executive Director at The Highground, said,

"This just goes to show you the true generosity once again of our community and the support that they provide." Kay Anason, Donations Coordinator, "I just shook my head in awe, I've been here for 10 years, and it still strikes me when a gift like this comes along. Someone just offered this organization a 300-acre camp, at no place but The Highground would that kind of goodwill happen."

A new committee has already been put in place to see what is next for the grounds and how to best utilize it to help in the mission of Honoring, Educating and Healing. Gary Karczewski is leading the committee as the chair and will make recommendations back to the Board of Directors regarding the strategic plans that will be needed to make the camp a long term success for the organization. "This is a great gift, but we have to make sure that we do this right," said Gary. The committee has decided that they will continue the running of the camp at this time as it was under the

previous leadership but will start to examine how the camp can be utilized moving forward. The committee is made up of board members, as well as veterans and community members. Director Jon Weiler said, "This committee provides a partnership between The Highground and the community on how to best support its efforts and provide new opportunities for individuals to get involved with our organization."

Al will continue to work on the maintenance of the camp until a long-term plan has been identified. However, scheduling will now run through the Events Coordinator, Theresa Hebert. "The possibilities are just endless; the camp is going to provide so many more resources for us to reach out to Veterans and their families." added Jon.

Al and Kay would like to thank the many volunteers and donors, who over the years, made this donation to support veterans at The Highground possible.

#### Thank you donors for a gift to remember lost loved ones or to honor those still among us.

#### In Memory Of:

Reuben Schaetzel
Harold "Ted" Scanlon
Victor Schwartz
Paul (Sons of AMVETS
Squadron)
Donald Corcoran
Milford Tesmer
Ralph Helm
Ray Kukanich
Donald Koch
Max Allen
William DeBock

Harold Bizer
Hazel Novotny
Fred Schrell
Jim Bigler
Arthur LaPage
Joan Noah
Gary Stanford
Ron Ziegler
Rusty Harris
George Byrne
Fred Seelow
Larry Riesen
Brent Vroman

Orville Jake
Henry Nowobielski
Rusty Harris
Edna Ehlert Krohn
Gene Ehlert
Drew Chesebro
Oscar Felsch-Dad
Terri Johnson
Bruce Peterson
Richard Sowinski
Terry Frey
Ron Bellemare
Paul Nelson

Robert Sippel John Jelich Charles Mueller

#### In Honor of:

Bob Brandt Ralph Blauvelt Luke Schulte---"Celebrate 160" Gordy & Kathy Hansen Thomas Haley Jay Livermore

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS UPDATES

#### 2019 Calendar of Events

Saturday April 13 Maggie Mae Benefit Concert, Pittsville

**Saturday April 27** Legacy Stone Placement

Wed-Sat May 8-11 Spring Work Week

Saturday May 18 Helicopter, Military & Memorial Vehicle Expo, Legacy Stone Placement, Vietnam Reunion/Education Afternoon

**Monday May 27** Honor Ride Motorcycle Ride, Memorial Day Ceremony

**Saturday June 15** Flag Day Ceremony and MWD Honor Stone Placement, Veterans Business Art Expo & Exhibit, Legacy Stone Placement

Saturday June 22 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, WAW

Saturday June 29 Concert and Fireworks @ Dusk

Thursday July 4 Independence Day Celebration 10am

Fri-Sun July 12-14 3rd Annual Summer Men's Veterans Weekend

July 20-Aug 4 2019 Heroes Ride

Saturday July 20 Persian Gulf Stone, Legacy Stone Placements, Desert Storm to Present Reunion Education Afternoon.

Saturday August 3 Legacy Stone Placement

Fri-Sun August 2-4 35th Annual Bicycle Tour/Celebration picnic

Saturday Aug 17 19th Annual Ride to Remember<sup>TM</sup>

**Saturday Aug 24** Re-Dedication of the Gold Star & Dedication of Benches

Saturday Sept 6-7 Women's Veterans Retreat

Fri-Sun Sept 13-15 Fall Men's Weekend Retreat

Saturday September 21 Korea Stones, Legacy Stone Placement, Korean War Reunion/Education

**Tues-Friday October 1-4** Highground Education Days

**Saturday October 5** Legacy Stone Placements

Fri-Sat October 9-12 Fall Clean Up Days

Monday November 11 Veterans Day Celebration,

2019 Honoring Our Veterans Raffle Drawing Following Ceremony

Saturday December 21 Annual Quilt Raffle Drawing

#### **Museum and Learning Center Exhibits**

March 17-May 9 War Comes Home Exhibit

May 10-May 31 Lao Hmong

June 2 - July 31 Multiply by Six Million

Aug 2 - Sept 30 Gold Star & ROF Exhibit

October 2 - November 1 Our Midwest and the Civil War

November 2 - January 30 The Forgotten War Korea

**December 1-30** Honor Tree and Quilt Display/Raffle

#### **Maggie Mae Tickets going fast!**

With the addition of LeRoy "Elvis" Peterson, to the already stacked lineup of Maggie Mae and the Heartland Country Band, tickets are going fast! There are only a limited amount of tickets left! Get yours reserved today by calling Theresa at 715-743-4224, or emailing her at events@thehighground.us

#### **Spring Work Week May 8-11**

It's time to get The Highground ready for SUMMER!

There are many Spring projects to be completed – buildings to be cleaned, "yard work", trail work, picnic tables, benches and canopies to bring out and more. We look forward to your help. It's a good time to come together to make things happen. Ask your friends to come help as well! Work days are approx. 8am - 4:30pm. Please RSVP by May 1st by calling or emailing The Highground. Let us know which day(s) you will be here. We need to know how many hungry volunteers will be here for lunch! 715-743-4224 events@thehighground.us A listing of Neillsville lodging can be found at http://clarkcountywi.org/

#### Spring Bake Sale moved from April 27 to May 18

Contact Theresa if you are bringing baked items to The Highground. The Bake Sale raises money to land a helicopter at The Highground for the Military Vehicle Expo and other veteran events.

#### Helicopter, Military, & Memorial Vehicle Expo May 18

With a UH-1H Vietnam-Era Helicopter scheduled to land at 10am! To exhibit your military or memorial vehicle call Theresa at 715-743-4224 or email to events@thehighground.us

#### **Veterans Weekend Retreats**

We are taking reservations now for the 2019 Veterans Weekend Retreats. We will have two male retreats plus one female retreat. Details are being confirmed now. Watch for updates.

Ride to Remember™ August 17 Don't miss out on our 19th Annual Ride to Remember™ motorcycle rally, Saturday August 17th 2019. If you would like to volunteer to help support this group please contact Theresa for more information. Stay tuned for more information!

#### GOLD STAR RE-DEDICATION

Save the date for our Gold Star Re-Dedication Ceremony on Aug 24th! We would like to invite all Gold Star Families to join us! To find out more please contact Kay at donations@thehighground.us

For information on events and how you can volunteer or participate please contact Theresa at 715-743-4224 or by email at events@thehighground.us

### HONOR, HEAL, REMEMBER

### Memorial Day Events at The Highground



There will be many ways to honor those who have lost their lives in service to our country on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27th, at The Highground Veterans Memorial Park. Beginning at 11:30am, the names of all Wisconsin KIA/MIAs during the Korean War, Vietnam War, Desert Storm, OIF, OEF and through present day will be read. Volunteers are needed to help read these names. (Volunteers are also needed for many other jobs throughout the day, call the Highground if you would like to volunteer.)

At 2:00pm, the Memorial Day Honor Ride Motorcycle Rally will ride into The Highground. There are guided motorcycle routes starting in the morning that will be gathering together in Neillsville before riding as one Honor Ride into The Highground from Appleton, King/Waupaca, Neillsville, Eau Claire, Medford, Wisconsin Rapids, Tomah & Reedsburg. Please come to The Highground to welcome the riders!

The Highground Memorial Day Ceremony will begin at 3:00pm. Highground Executive Director, Jon Weiler, will lead the ceremony. Notable guest speakers including Gold Star parents and military veterans will be presenting their experiences. Music will be performed during the ceremony. The Loyal American Legion #175 will provide a Color Guard and Rifle Salute, followed by "Taps" performed live by Jonathan Lanctin on the Highground plaza. Details are subject to change depending on weather and other factors. Updates will be posted at thehighground.us and on the Highground Facebook page.

Check out our new website, TheHighgroundHonorRide.com, to Register for the Ride, Apply for Sponsorhip or Purchase your Memorial today!

# Freedom Celebration Day will be Rocking The Highground June 29th!!

Save the date for a wonderful evening filled with fireworks, music, and more! The Highground will be hosting its annual Freedom Celebration Day on June 29th, 2019. Performing on stage will be Red Higgins and the Freedom Train at 5pm with Boogie and the Yo-Yoz at 7pm. The famous Kokosz Family Raffle will also be there!





Food will be provided by Hardee's starting at 5pm. Hardees will be sponsoring the fireworks so stay tuned for Share Nights!



### Honor

Honor the Legacy, Sacrifice, and the Memory, of so many men and women who have served this nation to secure our freedom and have fought off tyranny from all oppressors.

### Educate

Educate the general public, civilians, community leaders, and others on the the history of those that we honor, never forgetting their stories, as well as our own.

### Heal

Help in the healing process for veterans, families, and friends who understand the sacrifice.

### **HEROES RIDE**

### Tom Kingsbury to ride over 1700 miles for The Highground!



Tom Kingsbury is a veteran (1972 – 1975) in the US Army. While serving, he was attached to a funeral detail and performed numerous military funerals, most for military members who had served in Vietnam. This experience changed Tom's life and has been a part of him since. This is Tom's 2nd time riding across Wisconsin to honor the more than 1700 WI men & women who have been KIA or MIA since the

start of the Vietnam War. He has been part of a number of military funerals and has seen the effects that the loss of a loved one serving their country has had on the families. The 2019 Heroes Ride will bring to focus and honor many aspects of the personal cost of military service. The goal of the Ride is to bring awareness of Veteran PTSD; the risk and fight against Veteran Suicide; and help everyone across WI become aware of The Highground Veterans Park and all it has to offer

Many veterans of all eras continue to struggle with varying degrees of PTSD. This struggle and the fear and frustration that accompany it affect not only the veteran, but all those who care about him or her. The

Heroes Ride will publicize awareness of PTSD; bringing with it information for veterans and families that wish to move forward and are looking for different avenues to try to achieve peace and enjoyment in their lives. PTSD is unique to each individual and there are many programs, workshops, and therapy choices available for veterans and families.

Veteran suicide is a heartbreaking fact that has happened in almost every community across the country. It has been approximated that an average of 21 veterans commit suicide each day in the US. These are veterans of any age, men and women. This is an issue that has no easy answer, but the more awareness that can be brought about the risk of veteran suicide and the help that is available for veterans and families to reach out at the first signs of troubling symptoms. The key may lie in awareness, attention, listening, and veterans keeping their "brothers and sisters" close with a feeling of community.

Accompanying Tom with the Heroes Ride will be a Highground outreach. As unique as the The Highground is and as powerful the healing can be for veterans and families that visit, it is the unfortunate fact that many WI citizens do not even know that it exists! The Heroes Ride will be bringing information about The Highground and its mission of Honoring, Healing & Education to veterans and veteran supporters across the state. For more information on how you can support the Heroes Ride, go to:

www.thehighgroundheroesride.com

# **HIGHGROUND VETERANS RETREATS**Register to attend, two male retreats, one female retreat!

The Highground, partnering with the Vet Center, will hold 3 Veterans Weekend Retreats this year for veterans that are interested in experiencing fun activities, learning new skills, and meeting fellow veterans all in a relaxed outdoor environment. There is an abundance of camaraderie, fun and great food in the 3-day weekend retreats; and even though these are not professional counseling events, many veterans have found that a great amount of healing with PTSD and other service-related issues has taken place during the retreats. The bond between veterans of any era is strong and many lasting friendships have been formed at the weekend retreats.

The Highground Veterans Weekend Retreats are open to veterans of any era, combat and non-combat. There are 2 weekend retreats for male veterans – July 12-14 and Sept 13-15. The weekend retreat for female veterans will be held Sept 6-8.

The "base" and overnight lodging for all weekend retreats is at The Highground Camp (Wisconsin Adventures on Wheels) which is a 300+ acre wooded property with fully handicap accessible lodge & outbuildings. The facilities have full modern amenities; campground with electricity; over 4 miles of well-maintained forest trails for hiking or use with golf carts / wheelchairs.

Activities are subject to change due to weather and other unforeseeable circumstances, but the following are scheduled for these weekend retreats:

Male Veterans Weekend Retreat July 12-14 – archery, guided forest walk, Veterans healing Thru Art @ CART in Neillsville, Heartbeat Center Workshop, Highground evening tour, and more. Active outdoor experiences and speakers are being planned. Evenings will be filled with bonfires and music; the days will be filled with lots of great food!

Both the Female and Male Weekend Retreats in September will have many of the same activities to include: archery, evening Highground tour, guided forest walk, Veterans Healing Thru Art (a) the CART in Neillsville, either a Huey helicopter experience or a fishing trip – subject to Huey availability. More activities and speakers/workshops are being planned. Music will be a big part of these September retreats – see below.

A VERY SPECIAL program during both September retreats will be a large workshop presented by Warrior Songs. Warrior Songs is a PTSD therapy program led by musician Jason Moon, Wisconsin native and Iraq Veteran. The program is a music program in which veterans are invited – with help from Jason – to set their thoughts and experiences to music; creating their own songs. This program has been

incredibly meaningful and successful for scores of veterans. More about the program can be found at warriorsongs.org

The Highground Veterans Weekend Retreats are free for veterans to attend, but a \$30 deposit – refunded to the veteran upon arrival at the retreat – and registration is required to secure a space. Any veteran wishing to attend a retreat that cannot afford the \$30 deposit should contact The Highground to inquire about receiving a sponsorship.

The Highground Veterans Weekend Retreats are made possible by generous sponsors. Sponsors of the 3 2019 Veterans Weekend Retreats are: Marshfield Clinic; Security Health; Simplicity Credit Union; Ho-Chunk Gaming Black River Falls; Hardee's; Loyal American Legion #175; Fred & Kim Berg; Nicolet National Bank; Scheels; Henry Smith; After All Inc.; Deanna Rotar; VFW #7308; VFW #7308 Aux.; VFW #7308 Riders Group.

More sponsors are needed and invited to join this amazing program! Contact Theresa at The Highground for information on becoming a sponsor.

Highground Veterans Weekend Retreat updates will be posted on The Highground website and social media. Veterans that want to Register for a Weekend Retreat or wish to receive updates by mail or email should contact Theresa at events@thehighground.us or 715-743-4224

## **Annual Bike Tour Growing Stronger in 35th Year!**



The Annual Highground Bike Tour is a very unique bicycling event with a long history. 2019 marks the 35th Anniversary of the Bike Tour. The event began as one man, Highground founder, Tom Miller, pedalled 1,244 miles roughly circling the state of Wisconsin, in 1984. His ride was to raise funding and awareness of the need for a Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial...The Highground.

Tom's Bike Tour was repeated in 1985, this time joined by a few other hardy bicyclists with the goal of developing the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial close to their hearts. The WI Vietnam Veterans Memorial was officially titled The Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project, Inc. Through the years, it has become fondly known, and for all purposes officially renamed, The Highground.

The Highground Bike Tour has been held for an unbroken 35 years! A large accomplishment for any event, much less an event that encompasses several routes across Wisconsin in a multi-day Tour! The event is THE largest single annual fundraiser for The Highground, currently bringing in an average of \$45,000 annually in funding from sponsors, bicyclist registration and donations that the riders gather from businesses and individuals. The ride includes over 150 Riders and we are looking for more ways to grow the ride, so if you are interested in putting a route together contact Theresa! It is a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of The Highground. grassroots raising of funds by the bicyclists, and a wonderful gathering of old friends with a warm welcome to new riders! For more information. route contact information. news information about the ride go to www.thehighground.us or call at 715-743-4224

#### Milwaukee Bike Expo Sale at the State Fair Park April 4-7

The Highground will be represented April 4-7th at the Bike Expo Sale. The expo is held in the Wisconsin State Fair Park Exposition Center in Milwaukee. We will be promoting the Annual Bike Tour as well as this years upcoming Heroes Ride. The event runs on Thursday 5pm-9pm, Friday 12pm-9pm, Saturday 10am-8pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. Admission is free. This is the largest bike sale in the nation with over 3,000 bikes and a selection of 1,000s of accessories ready to take home.



### **6TH ANNUAL WINTER BOWL**

### a Successful Fundraiser for The Highground Veterans Retreats!

Over \$11,000 was raised during The 2019 Winter Bowl, with proceeds going to the three Highground Veterans Retreats to be held later this year. The fundraiser took place Sunday, January 27th, at Rose Bowl Lanes in Marshfield. The funds raised will go a long way towards providing the healing, meaningful events of veterans workshops, speakers, programs all in an atmosphere of camaraderie, healing and education.

The 6th Annual Winter Bowl had sold out all of the reserved lanes well before the event. Rose Bowl Lanes was packed full of veterans and those that support veterans, enjoying an afternoon of bowling, raffles, door prizes and fun! Longtime participant and supporter of the Winter Bowl, John Buetzberger won the Weber Q1200 Tabletop Gas Grill door prize, donated by Festival Foods. The main raffle item, a 50" VIZIO LED TV, donated by Hardee's (Colby, Neillsville and Medford) was won by Paula Voskuil, also a longtime Winter Bowl attendee! A 50/50 drawing was won by Fritz Miller, who turned his winnings back to The Highground's Veterans Retreats!

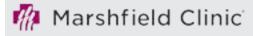
Cash sponsorships and raffle items were donated by MANY generous businesses, veterans posts and individuals. These sponsors include: Hardee's (Colby, Medford and Neillsville); Ho-Chunk Gaming of Black River Falls; Marshfield Clinic; Security Health; Simplicity Credit Union; Nicolet National Bank; Knights of Columbus #1799; VVA #479; DAV #31 Rib River; Loyal American Legion #175; Rose Bowl Lanes; Milwaukee Brewers;, Metropolis Resort / Action City; Wisconsin Timber Rattlers; BP Drescher Oil; Forward Financial Bank; Festival Foods; Green Bay Packers; After All Inc.; Deanna Rotar; Woodfield Inn; Team Schierl; Fred & Kim Berg; John Buetzberger; Weber's Farm Store; Lake of the Torches Resort Casino; Hiller's True Value Hardware; Stanley Correctional SCOPES Program; Holiday Inn; and Centuries on Main.

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!



For your continued support!





SecurityHealth Plan













Fred & Kim Berg



Stanley SCOPES Program

#### November 11, 2018 - Veterans Day

The Highground recognized Veterans Day throughout the day on November 11th. In the morning, the names of the 1,244 Wisconsin KIAs/MIAs in the Vietnam War and 877 names of the Wisconsin KIAs/MIAs in the Korean War were read and honored with the tolling of the Liberty Bell. A special recognition of those who served during WWI was held outdoors with several minutes of silence and ringing the Liberty Bell. A family honored their ancestor's service by placing a wreath at the WWI Doughboy tribute.

The 1:00pm ceremony was held in The Learning Center. Gary Foster spoke on his grandfather's service in WWI, Steve Maddox emceed and was also a speaker at the ceremony. The Neillsville High School Choir performed the music for the ceremony.





## Tom Hoffman, a joyful soul will be missed.

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Thomas Hoffman (Army-Korean Veteran) who passed away March 9, 2019. Tom and Joyce should have been at the Friends of The Highground Recognition Dinner, March 9, 2019 receiving their 8th plaque. Unfortunately, Tom was not able to come from hospice. We will be forever grateful for all the ways he and Joyce supported The Highground over the years. He will be missed, especially by his lovely wife of 65 years. Tom became known to the Donation Coordinator as the first person to qualify for the Friends Dinner every year. Tom, again we say thank you for your service and all you have done for the veterans of The Highground.





#### "Fragments" Challenge Coin Ordered for Release; Next Up, Heroes Ride!

The list has been pulled, and the coins have been ordered! We have placed the order for the coin and will be receiving it soon. Once we get the coin, we will get them shipped out to all of our generous donors who continue to support our pledge program. If you haven't signed up, that's fine, go to our website and sign up right from the home page so you don't miss out on further coins!

# New Honor Stone Area Available! United In Service (UIS) Honor Stones

Is your veterans organization looking to be part of The Highground History? There is an area around the Wisconsin state map on the plaza that will be filled with stones honoring veteran organizations. Over the next two years, these stones will be available for YOUR organization, showing support for The Highground and your pride in your organization. These stones are gray granite, similar to the Legacy Stones, and will be placed in the center walkway around the map. The map is located directly in front of the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Tribute



"Fragments". The map was dedicated in 2004 on the plaza with the dedication of the statue. 15 years later, this is the first time that this opportunity has been available in the history of The Highground and is only for those select organizations affiliated with Veterans. If your organization is interested please contact Kay at donations@thehighground.us for specific details about this program. Placement ceremonies will be scheduled as determined with the organization. Looking for all VVAs, VFWs, American Legions, DAVs, and all other military based organizations. We hope you will support each other in getting all Wisconsin organizations represented in this special area.

### **DECEMBER 22, 2018 QUILT RAFFLE WINNERS**

Thank you to EVERYONE who participated by buying tickets and to the wonderful people who donated quilts! We had 24 winners and are looking forward to having another quilt display and raffle in December 2019. So, quilters, get out those pieces, needles, and threads---let's see what you can create in 2019!! Quilts can be ANY size---Wall hangings to King size. This year we will be donating the tied blankets to the homeless veterans with the clothing drive. The requirement, be patriotic with your color choice and design, not crocheted or knitted! See you in December!!

Congratulations to:
Lorie Spantikaw
June Abrahamson
Deb Marriek
Judee Kline
Lori Mills
Audrey Berger

Dawn Moczinski Gary Weirauch Craig & Donna Marvin John Fury

John Fury Alan Voskuil Ken & Linda Smith Amanda Schuebel Debbie Klingenwater Ranee Ellefson Jones Robert Icherd

Robert Icherd Mark Kramer Tom McNamara Walter Tomczak John Reitzel Bill Hennes

Michael & Kathleen Gleisner

Mary Berg Jon Weiler Carol Monal Kathleen Schaaf Michael Katers

### FRIENDS OF THE HIGHGROUND DINNER

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park Holds Friends of The Highground Recognition Banquet



Highground donors were invited and honored at the annual "Friends of The Highground" recognition dinner that was held March 9, 2019 at the American Legion Post 73 in Neillsville, WI. The weather turned wicked but those in attendance enjoyed a wonderful meal, camaraderie and a "quick" program. Many were unable to attend due to the weather and those in attendance returned safely home. This annual dinner is a way of thanking those generous donors who support The Highground Veterans Park through cumulative annual donations in excess of \$1,000. Displays were set up for attendees to see what has and will be happening at The Highground. A warm welcome was given by Jon Weiler, Executive Director, and an invocation by Bob Solberg of Neillsville, WI. Many Board Members were in attendance to thank the donors as each donor

was presented with a beautiful plaque depicting "Fragments" with the original logo and the 30th Anniversary logo. This is the fifteenth year The Highground has presented plaques to those meeting the \$1,000 minimum donation.

This year, donors and Board Members from all around the state were able to join us at the banquet. Only three have acquired all 15 plaques—Thank you, Central WI Broadcasting: WCCN/WKPG, Donald Quicker and Dr. John Scaletta! You have not missed one year of support to The Highground Veterans Memorial Park since implementation of this recognition.

Jon Weiler ended the evening talking about the great 2018 that The Highground experienced with the dedication of the Military Working Dog; and the 30th Anniversary Celebration of "Fragments" and the park. He then proceeded to give an overview of what to look forward to in 2019. The staff is a very small group (9-mostly part-time) and could not do what they do without the volunteers and contributors! To all of these—the staff says THANK YOU!! Events expanded 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.

From the 2018 donor calculations, the following received recognition for their continued awesome support of The Highground Veterans Memorial Park:



Quickner 15 years

#### 15th Year Recognition

Central WI Broadcasting Don Quicker Dr. John & Rebecca Scaletta

**14th Year Recognition**Joan Jungwirth

13th Year Recognition

Leon Meidam Randy Meyer Jerry Simon Jerry & Alice Smith

### **12th Year Recognition**Joan Cervenka

Marjorie Short

#### 11th Year Recognition

Listeman Foundation Walter Tollefson Tom & Anita Werthman

#### **10th Year Recognition**

City of Neillsville
Jim & Susan Fox
Jakel Plumbing,
Heating & Electrical
Gary Karczewski
Mar-Lin VFW Post #10203

#### **9th Year Recognition**

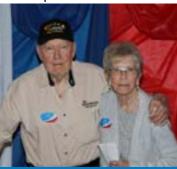
Jim Braatz
Hardee's Cougar
Enterprise
Michael & Joyce Huebsch
Andy Rueth
VVA Chapter 639
Wes Waterman

#### **8th Year Recognition**

Dennis & Sharon Herzberg Joyce & Thomas Hoffman Steve & Karen Maddox Dave Sharretts Robert & Caryl Solberg

#### 7th Year Recognition

Citizens State Bank of Loyal Michael & Kathy Gleisner Maggie Mae & Roger Hilliard David Kemp CW & Mary Ann King Skip & Deb Klabon



Werthman 11 years

Donald & Noreen Schmidt Steve Swanson Gary & Kay Weirauch

#### **6th Year Recognition**

Braatz Family Robert Brandt Doris Dux Bill & Kathy Flemal
Kathy & Bernie Heit
LeRoy Johnson
Verla Lysy
Cole Peterson
Joel & Marla Raine BP Drescher Oil
Andy & Nikki Smith

#### **5th Year Recognition**

Michele Benson
Chilson Subaru
Julie Diesing
Kimberly Knudsen
Paul Kokosz
Nick & Janet Lesar
Lorraine Short
Karen & Steve Swader
Thrivent Financial

#### 4th Year Recognition

Tom Babbitt
John Blank
Mike & Amy Bodoh
James Feneli
Roy & Ginny Franz
Gross Motors, Inc.
Bonnie Henchen
Beth Martin

Pat Watts Dave Week Russ Wohlrabe

#### **3rd Year Recognition**

Fred & Kim Berg George & Betty Blauvelt Bohl Associates, Inc. Tim & Julie Dallman Mark & Lori Dawson **Exelon Corporation** Joel & Heidi Hazzard lim Henchen Ho-Chunk Gaming-Black River Falls Dean Hommel Tom Kingsbury **Kokosz Family** Neillsville Dept of Public Works Jim Ottman Joel Paplham Misty Peterson Augie Stark Photography Terrence Stein

State of Wisconsin Stanley

VFW Lakeland Post #7898

**Correctional Institute** 

**Walmart Foundation** 



Scaletta 15 years

# **2nd Year Recognition**Vernon & Gwendolyn Beloat Mary Boortz Ron Comer



Karczewski 10 year

DAV Chapter 65
Scott & Lori Daentl
Jay Froh
Shane Gurney
Al & Kay Lamovec
Neillsville Kwik Trip
Elaine Pringel Jess Rebout
Dave & Ellen Schmitz
Duane Schwab
Tanner Smith
Bonnie Wiater
WI Dept of Veterans Affairs

#### **1st Year Recognition**

Advanced Disposal Inc. American Heroes Café of Portage Cty. Amer Leg Phaneuf-Vanasse Post #111 Amer Leg Ryan Larson Post #65 Renee Bernard Bernatello's Pizza, Inc. Jeffrey & Cherie Bignell Donald Bonack Jim Brandt & Calendar Girls Tom Christian Paul & Tammy Corcoran Larry & Pat Dessner Dawn Ensweiler Barry Hammerback Randy Henchen Phil Hiller & Hiller's True Value

Kathy Houzner
Joyce Jansen
Hardee's of Oshkosh
Samantha Kleifgan
John & Donna Koutre
Leathernecks Motorcycle Club
Steve & Mary Jane Mabie
Marie M Muller, Estate
Marine Corp League McCullen
-Kimpel Detatchment #552
Nam Knights-Tundra Chaoter

Nam Knights-Tundra Chapter Neillsville Chamber of Commerce Neillsville Pizza Hut Neillsville School District Sheila Nyberg, CCEDC Rick Daley, Clark County Fairgrounds

Terry Pezl, WSAU Radio Elaine Quast Delmar Scanlon



Leatherneck Motorcycle Club 1 year

Wendi Schmidt
Ellie Seymour
SII Investments, Inc.
Simplicity Credit Union
The Buzzed Bus
Gregory Sromek
Adel Thiede
Joan Vande Castle
Shannon Wachuta



Tom Kingsbury 3 year, and family

#### Spirit of The Highground Award Presented to:

A special award that is determined by the staff of The Highground is the "Spirit of The Highground" award. This award is presented to someone that has gone above and beyond monetary works but also has the "Spirit" of The Highground in them. This year, the award was humbly accepted by the Kokosz Family of Joliet and Hanover Park, IL; Col. Donald Harris and his daughter, Joely Harris-Walter both of Neillsville, WI of the American Legion Post 73.





### WAR COMES HOME EXHIBIT

## March 17-May 9



"I'm coming home! I'm looking forward to seeing you again...but I'm in no hurry to see the expressions on your faces when you see me." - Private Al Puntasecca, letter to his family, 1953.

For veterans, returning home from war can be both an exhilarating and challenging experience. Through private correspondence from almost every major conflict in U.S. history, War Comes Home offers insight into the thoughts and emotions of veterans and their families upon their homecoming. These intimate perspectives – from the

Civil War era through the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq – reveal how war can shape a life, a family, and a community. This exhibition aims to raise awareness of and promote greater understanding of our veterans and explore the impact of war on our communities. Within each section, the exhibition pairs an historic letter with a contemporary letter or email to demonstrate the range of experiences military members face as they transition from deployment to home. Showcasing veterans and their families adjusting to civilian life together – or facing the long-term costs of war – these powerful letters explore feelings of grief, joy, doubt, and love, bringing the real experiences of war home to all of us.

#### The exhibition is divided into five sections:

The War Experience: PERCEPTION VS REALITY Far From Home: WARTIME SEPARATION A New Normal: ADJUSTING TO LIFE AT HOME Enduring Loss: THE COSTS OF WAR Reflections: BEFORE AND AFTER A New Mission: COMING HOME







### **MUSEUM COMMITTEE BEING ASSEMBLED**

Have an interest in History? We are looking for volunteers to help us take the museum to the next level. Some of the projects that the committee will be looking at are Museum Tourism; starting the process to becoming a member of the American Alliance of Museums; exhibits planning; marketing and more! Contact Julie to get involved today at learningcenter@thehighground.us or at 715-743-4224

### **LAO HMONG EXHIBIT**

## May 10 - May 30th

May 10th through May 30th The Highground Learning Center will be Hosting an Exhibit from the Hmong community. Included in this exhibit will be pictures, traditional clothing, examples of embroidery, etc. The Hmong are an ethnic group from the highlands of Laos.

During the Vietnam War, the CIA recruited the Hmong. The agency sent a few agents into the Laotian highlands to train and organize the Hmong guerrilla forces. The U.S.

government supplied the Royal Laos Army with training, weapons, food, ammunition and asked them to wage a guerrilla war against the Pathet Lao as well as any Vietnamese communists operating in Laos.

The consequences of the Vietnam war were devastating for the Hmong people. Some of the Hmong immigrated to the United States after the war. There are now Hmong immigrant communities in a number of Midwestern cities.

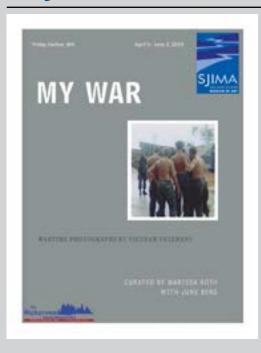




### Multiply by Six Million June 2 - July 31

The "Multiply by Six Million: Portraits and Stories of Holocaust Survivors" traveling exhibition includes 37 dramatic black-and-white gelatin silver portraits by noted photographer Evvy Eisen, accompanied by stories of the subject's experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust.

### "My War" Goes To San Juan Islands!



MY WAR will be on display at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art in Friday Harbor, WA from April 5 - June 3, 2019. The exhibit can be viewed Thursday - Monday 11 am - 5pm.

This is very exciting as My War was put together with the painstaking percision of Marissa Roth and June Berg back in 2012. A collection of Wartime Photographs By Vietnam Veterans is a touching portrayal of life in Vietnam during the War.

It is one of the four exhibits that The Highground has to offer for loan to communities!

**Exhibits Available by Request** 

My War: Wartime Photography By Vietnam Veterans

Mini My War: Condensed version of My War

**Remember Our Fallen** 

Flag Display: A Historical Guide to the American Flag

To request these exhibits please contact Julie Dallman at learningcenter@thehighground.us or by phone at 715-743-4224

### **Board of Directors**

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### **CW KING** Chairman of the Board

Addition of Wisconsin Adventure on Wheels comes with great opportunity and great responsibility.

Well, the final papers have been signed, and The Highground is now the owner of the property known as Wisconsin Adventures on Wheels. Located north of The Highground and east of Willard, this property, developed for Veterans, by the Wisconsin Adventure on Wheels family, is by far the largest gift ever given to The Highground and I can not adequately express my appreciation. This opens up numerous ways for The Highground to expand its mission and provide more and new services to Veterans. Your Board of Directors discussed the positives and negatives of going in this direction. They decided that the long term potential is too great to not accept the gift. In the short term little will change. WAW will run much as it has in the past as will The Highground. We will be

working to develop new opportunities for Veterans to receive more PTSD treatment, more opportunities for Veterans and other nonprofit groups to have retreats, and other services to help Veterans. The opportunities are many, and we invite your



feedback on what we can do to make things better for our Veterans. Our Mission remains to Honor, Educate, and Heal, and we want to continue to be a place for all. Please feel free to provide your thoughts on how we can continue our mission. - CW



## Alicia Elgersma added as new Administrative Assistant

Alicia Elgersma has started as our new Administrative Assistant! Alicia started in the Gift Shop in September 2017 and has now begun her new role. She currently attends NTC online, studying for Administrative Professional Degree. Her work includes administrative duties in our office and providing support to the staff. While she does not come from a military background, she enjoys talking with our veterans and listening to their stories. She is looking forward to her new role here and would love for you to stop and say "Hi" the next time you visit!

#### June Abrahamson added as Exhibits Coordinator

June joined The Highground in June of 2010 as a clerk in the Gift Shop. When the Learning Center was complete, she took on the position of Learning Center Coordinator. June maintained this position until May 2016, at which time she took an 18 month leave to move & get settled in Nevada with her husband Shane. They are blessed to share 6 children & 5 grandchildren. June returned to work for The Highground in September 2018 as the Exhibit Coordinator. June also partnered with Marissa Roth on a 2 ½ year project to create The Highground's traveling exhibit entitled MY WAR: Wartime Photographs by Vietnam Veterans. MY WAR debuted in 2016 and is currently on tour around the United States. June is very proud and honored to be from a large military family, though not a veteran herself, members of her family come from all branches of service and have served in all the conflicts from the Civil War to present day. Through this family connection & working with all the Veterans and their family members at The Highground, she has developed a real knowledge and insight for coordinating educational and meaningful exhibits for our Learning Center.

#### For More Information Contact

W7031 Ridge Rd P.O. Box 457 Neillsville, WI 54456 Phone: 715-743-4224

Find us on the Following Social Media Platforms



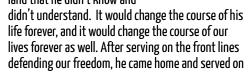
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### JON WEILER Executive Director

Welcome to The Highground and welcome spring time. It is so nice to see the grass, even if only spots, hear the birds of spring, and see more people visiting the tributes. Winter has been WAY TOO LONG and we all need it to end very soon.

One of the few unfortunate things that comes with what I do as the Executive Director is to attend the funerals of the aging Veterans and Volunteers that I have had the pleasure of getting to know

over my short tenure here at The Highground. I recently attended one such funeral. He was one of our many wonderful Veteran Volunteers. While I was listening to the Priest that officiated the funeral. I began to think about the many lives that we lead, and the chapters of our lives that define us. This gentleman was a Korean War Veteran who at a young age was whisked away to a foreign land that he didn't know and



a second front. This new front was no less important and it continued to define him as the person God meant him to be. He was a Veteran, he was a Husband, he was a Father, and he was a Community Member.

It occurred to me while thinking about this that we are at the point in time where this type of life event sadly is becoming all to frequent. At recent gatherings we have missed some of the smiling faces

that have displayed so much dedication to serve one another and have brought so much joy to our lives. Those smiling faces are the people that have dedicated so much of their lives ensuring that they are serving those less fortunate than themselves and they will be deeply missed.

These special people will always be with me and are now a huge part of this chapter of my life. Getting to know them has changed the course of my life and, I believe, has guided me onto the path that has been chosen for me.

Lives are changed every day here at The Highground and it is the thing that separates us from other parks around the state dedicated to Veterans. This hallowed ground, was designed by the relationships of many people from across the state. It was built by Veterans for Veterans and I can't think of a better place to be, or better people to be with.

Right now, there are a lot of changes happening at The Highground. Staff changes over the course of the last couple of years mean that we are in the process of rebuilding many of these relationships from the ground up. While we know many by their face or voice, it's those small moments in time shared in laughter, joy, tears, and sorrow that really stand out when thinking about our relationships with each other. It is easy to potentially overlook those that we do not have a one on one connection with in an organization such as ours. However, the more time I spend here, I see that the thing that really matters is the relationships that we build with each other, from the Staff. to the Board of Directors. to the Donors. to the Volunteers. Our goal is to always make sure that everyone that walks through our doors knows that there is always a place for them at The Highground and always a place in our hearts.

It is through these relationships that everything is possible.

I look forward to continuing to build upon these very special relationships in 2019 and beyond. See you all soon!

God Bless, Jon Weiler

### **Ike Rebout becomes Program Development Coordinator**



Ike Rebout has been hired on as a contractor to work with The Highground. Ike will be handling his previous duties of Social Media and Digital Marketing, handling the website as well as strategies to get

our message out further into the community. "We're taking huge strides just in the last 30-60 days," said Rebout. "We have already launched two new sites since I have come on board, one for the Honor Ride and one for the Heroes Ride happening this summer, but we have a ways to go. We will be launching a Ride to Remember<sup>TM</sup> site, a Bike Tour Site, and a new Museum site along with our store all sometime in the next 60 days. The pace that we are at is crazy right now. Typically one site can take 30-60 days"

The strategy with the new websites is to utilize

audience targeting to the market by obtaining the customer in a variety of different ways. The sites are no additional cost other than the development time to get completed, but offer a much greater impact to the customer looking for specific information.

Ike had been working with The Highground for the last two years first as a volunteer and then as a part time contractor, but the Board decided in January that they would move forward in hiring him full time. "It's truly an honor. To be working with this organization, and the staff that is here is amazing with everything that they do. You can tell it's about the mission and the people." Ike was previously working at Fort McCoy as a SharePoint contractor helping support the 88th Readiness Command. He will be graduating this spring from Western Technical College with a degree in Business Analyst. "It seemed like a good fit. Working with the military over the course of the last four years, being married to a veteran, and with the education and background, it just felt natural." Ike will be helping to work with staff, committees, board members and more to help facilitate some of the long-term strategies that The Highground is currently debating.

His biggest concern is that the organization is behind the curve on some of the planning, "In the next 3-4 years we are doing what should take 8-10 years. It is now an uphill climb, and it is a huge commitment, but it's exciting at the same time to be able to be part of all of the growth that is happening here, need to be careful and plan accordingly. We have to maintain a responsibility to our donors."

Ike added that he feels that there are a lot of great opportunities that this organization has right now to make sure that it sustains itself for the next 40-50 years. He pointed out that there are new challenges with donors, volunteers, and changing age demographics as well as fundraising strategies with new technologies. "We must really consider and think strategically about the goals that we set and how the organization will meet those goals. It will be critical to our long term success and I'm looking forward to our next goals as the Board sets them. Something tells me that this will be exciting based on the current requirments being gathered."

### **Check out our new Items at the Store and Online!**



New Pedestal Crosses in memory of our loved ones \$19.95

Remember Everyone Deployed T-Shirt \$24.95

Highground Aerial Print \$49.95

THE HIGHGROUND

Highground Helicopter T-Shirt \$24.95



7" Dragonfly rain gauges \$26.95



"Honor Their Sacrifice" Long Sleeve T-shirt \$20.95-23.95



Loyal Car Show Presents Check for \$750! The Loyal Car show stopped in with another act of genorosity supporting our efforts and donated this check for \$750! We want to thank them for their support!

### **WISH LIST**

# Donations needed - can you help?

- **Handicap Tables \$325** (we need 3 more). Thanks to our supporters who have helped provide the funding for two of them already!
- -Donation Trailer \$3500 We are going to become a donation location for the Veterans Assistance Foundation to help homeless veterans, this trailer will help us store and move those donations to the VAF
- -Male mannequins \$200 With all of the amazing uniforms that have been donated over the years, we are looking to display more of them during exhibits. However, currently we are only able to display a couple.
- -Spring Fertilizer and Lime \$1700 to ensure that the grounds stay gorgeous and plush
- -Merchandise Display Racks \$2000 We will be expanding the store to the upstairs of the Timberframe soon, and with that, we wil need more display racks to display all of our amazing selections!
- -Cordless Circular Saw \$200 With many of the construction projects happening at the park
- -Roku enabled TV for Admin Building \$450 As we move into the administration building, we will be holding more conferences in meetings within this facility. This will allow us to display powerpoints, connect to the internet, and laptops for presentations.
- -Roku enabled TV for Museum \$375 This TV will allow us to move all of our video content to digital and then display at the Museum. We can fit our entire DVD and VHS collection on one hard drive and have it connected to the TV saving valuable space, and allowing us quicker access to the content.
- -Conversion of all VCR tapes to Digital \$600 With our massive collection of VHS tapes, it is getting more difficult to find VCRs. The cost to find a quality VCR is about the same as if we converted to digital. This will save us space, and maintain the quality of the content so as not to wear and be lost forever.
- -Adobe Creative Suite \$240 Have you noticed changes to our newsletter and posters? This is based on some of the graphic design software that we are currently utilizing. However, we only have the software on one computer, which makes editing and change requests difficult. We would like to purchase more liscenses so that more staff has accessibility to help make updates to the content in a timely manner.

#### **Interested in Donating?**

If you are interested in donating to the items on this list, or have other items that you believe would be helpful to complete our mission to Honor, Educate, and Heal, please contact

Kay at 715-743-4224 or

by email at donations@thehighgrough.us

#### **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	
Please mail to: The Highground,	
P.O. Box 457 Neillsville, WI 54456	
or call to donate at 715-743-4224	
Upcoming Events & Fundraising Calendar	
Honor Stones on The Highground	
Add someone to the mailing list	
(please include name and address of whom you	u would
like to send a gift subscription)	
Endowment Fund	
Booking information for "My War" exhibits or	
"Remembering Our Fallen" exhibit	
and I would like to volunteer for the follow	ving
activities, please reach out to me!	
Volunteer as a Porch Greeter	
Volunteer for Work Week	
Volunteer for Annual Bike Tour	
Volunteer for Honor Ride	
Volunteer for Ride to Remember	
Volunteer to help in the Learning Center/Museum	l
Volunteer for Legacy Stone Ceremonies	ninc
Volunteer for Military Working Dog Stone Ceremon Volunteer for Korean War Stone Ceremonies	IIE2
Volunteer for Persian Gulf Stone Ceremonies	
volunteer for recision dail stone ceremonies	
Name	
Email	
Phone	
Address	
City State Zip	
Questions or Comments	



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Eau Claire, WI PERMIT No. 366



RSVP Now for work week May 8-11

### Let Them Not Go In Silence

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park staff, visitors, and all supporters remember and honor all who have served, in times of combat and times of peace. All veterans of every era, at one point in their life, have written a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount up to and including their life. As we recognize those among us who are veterans, we recognize that they and their families have in many different ways been affected by their service. Many positive qualities and sometimes, hardships, result from signing that blank check. Over 26,000 Wisconsin men and women have given their lives in service to our country. As a tangible reminder of ALL of them, we will remember a selection of names that will change for each future ceremony and newsletter. This is not a list of ALL that have given their lives in these combat areas.

Let us remember and honor those who perished during their service and let them not go in silence. We ring the liberty bell in their honor at each ceremony. We hope you will ring it every time that you are here.

#### WWII

Norman L Moody Homer D McGettigan John G McGlynn Kenneth McWilliams Ernest Nielson Henry E O'Brien Charles A O'Neil Olin H Paulson Dean K Peacock

#### KOREAN WAR

Mannie L Loshaw Robert C Luedtke Kenneth Lundberg Gerald D Madel Stanley W Maedke Andrew W Mahon Richard W Mahr Arthur Majeske Jr Frank M Malczewski Robert D Malkiewicz Jerome M Mangner Gilbert P Mantey Bernard H Marquardt Frank O Mars Harold L Marsh Odvin A Martinson Robert L Mastin

Henry E Matton Jr Harley D May Carl E McClaflin James L McClenathan Michael W McClone Robert G McCormick Thomas C McCullen Donn A McFarlane James C McGuire William M McGuire Murdock McKay

#### Vietnam War

Ted S Ferguson
David B Fitzgerald
Roger J Flynn
Thomas H Foley
Joseph P Foran
Paul R Frazier
William Fuchs Jr
Larry F Geiger
Randall H Geis
Francis G Gercz Jr
James A Gerou
Alexander Giejc
Michael E Giese
Ricky M Gilbertson
Frank Gomez
Wilfredo L Gonzalez
Glenn R Gradecki

Donald L Greiger
Michael A Gruber
James F Hackett Jr
Peter O Hajman
Michael A Harvey
Patrick J Hayes
Carl W Heiden
Duane A Helmick
Joseph J Hernandez Jr
Donald A Hierlmeier
Alfred J Holtz Jr
Ruben L Horton
Larry S Jensen
Randolph L Johnson
Ross A Johnson Jr
Timothy H Johnson
Randall W Kelpine

#### DESERT STORM, OIF, OEF – TO PRESENT DAY

Jeremy L Wolfe
Eugene A Uhl III
Christopher J Splinter
Robert J Cook
Nichole M Frye
Bert E Hoyer
John F Kurth
Sean M Schneider
Jesse L Thiry

Ryan M Jerabek Michelle M Witmer Michael A McGlothin **Charles A Kiser** Stephen G Martin Adrian V Soltau Andrew Halverson **Daniel R Wyatt** Shane K O'Donnell Robert P Warns II Todd R Cornell Brian P Prening Isaiah R Hunt Benjamin C Edinger Ryan J Cantafio Brent T Vroman Richard D Warner Todd D Olson Travis M Wichlasz **Donald W Eacho** Andrew L Bossert Mark A Maida Joshua M Scott Kyle M Hemauer Eric J Poelman John J Mattek Jr Charles A Kaufman John O Tollefson Ben D Jansky Chad J Simon Trevor J Diesing

