

# The Highground

# NEWSLETTER

HONOR, EDUCATE, AND HEAL... A PLACE FOR ALL

June 2020



## Memorial Day Honor Ride

The Highground welcomed riders from across the state on Memorial Day.

With a different look and feeling of reverence, The Highground welcomed riders from across the state to pay tribute to the Fallen on this Memorial Day. The pandemic meant no ceremony, no speeches, no dedications, and no lunch stop at the legion for Honor Ride participants this year. For the riders, what the day stands for seemed to be more important.

An automated reading of the names of those missing in action or killed in action were played over the plaza speakers throughout the day and the ringing of the replica Liberty Bell echoed across the grounds. Adding to the

reverence of the day, Bill McInnes played the bagpipes from different tributes throughout the day and Randy Bjerke played "Taps" for all who gathered after the moment of silence. As riders made their way past the flag lined entrance, the rumble of the bikes and echo of the bell resounded in everyone's hearts.

Beginning 10 years ago, with only one route from Hudson, The Honor Ride was established to commemorate the Fallen and as a charity event for The Highground, one of several that allows us to continue our mission to Honor, Educate and Heal. The family and friends of The Highground are forever grateful for the route

leaders; Bill Flegal, Mark Dawson, Dominic Anderson, Dean Hommel, Wade Hartung, and Del Scanlon, and all who participated for their dedication and commitment. This year, the Ride raised \$5,513 through registrations, Honor Ride product sales, and donations. For contributing \$370, we thank The Throttle Crue immensely. Thank you to the devoted volunteers for giving their time. Recognizing and reflecting on the sacrifices that our brave men and women have made for our country will continue to be an important part of The Honor Ride. They will never be forgotten.

**Contributors: Thank you for a gift to remember lost loved ones or to honor those still with us.**

### IN MEMORY OF:

Clifford Andrea  
William Becker  
Robert Beyer  
Sharon Borchardt  
Lawrance Carlson  
James Corcoran  
Larry Cuff, VN Vet  
Carl Gerold  
Ted Gottwein  
Thomas Hoffman  
Marc Huennkent  
Charles Isensee

Art Jungwirth  
David Knouse  
Bob Ladd  
Delores Lang  
Harold Mayer  
Norma McDermott  
William Molin  
Lila Oelhafen  
James Pelegrin  
Donald P Rank  
Walter Rueger  
Robin Warner  
Peggy Wucenski

### IN HONOR OF:

Dennis Hofstetter  
Victor Schwartz



**Special Note:** It is with a heavy heart that we tell those of you who have followed The Highground news for any length of time that Beth Martin moved onto her eternal life this past February. We would like to express our condolences and let everyone know that two stones will be placed in Beth's honor on Saturday, July 18 at 1pm—one from her family and one from The Highground Board of Directors. Many of you may remember her as a long-time volunteer, staff member, or as a member of the Board. Beth was the Board Chair in 2009 and was instrumental in starting the practice of having the Board Chair write articles for this newsletter. We will share more of Beth's contributions at The Highground in the next newsletter. All are welcome to attend her stone dedication in July.

# Veterans Organization Open House a Success

The Highground hosted their first ever Veterans Organization Open House under beautiful blue skies on Saturday, June 6, 2020. Among the many guests welcomed to the Park were Wes Porter with the Veterans Center in LaCrosse, John Howell with the Veterans Center in Madison, representatives from the Marine Corps League, and multiple VFW and American Legion posts from across Wisconsin. Volunteers and supporters from the community made the event complete. Executive Director Chris Pettis mingled with visitors to share experiences and discuss new opportunities including more ways to come together to better serve the Veteran community. Theresa Hebert, Museum Coordinator, was available to provide tours of the Park. With onsite and outreach initiatives, The Highground looks forward to networking with Veterans organizations—to maintain those important relationships as well as create new connections. The Highground staff extends a big thank you to all the volunteers who assisted with planning and to Sweet Retreat, based in Loyal, for delivering the treats.



**Don't forget to register or sign up to sponsor the 36th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour at [thehighgroundheroesride.com](http://thehighgroundheroesride.com)**

## Featured supporters and sponsors—Thank you all!



Thank you to Dave Droste from Hardee's and Kevin & Joyce Witt for your continued support in helping to make our fireworks display possible.



# EVENT UPDATES

While we have had to cancel several events and postpone others, we do have some updates for you. For the most current information, visit our website at [thehighground.us](http://thehighground.us). The Gift Shop and Museum are open again, 10-5 daily!

## Persian Gulf, MWD, and Legacy Stone Ceremonies July 18

Persian Gulf Veterans, Canine Veterans and Handlers will be honored at 10am. The Legacy Honor Stone ceremony will begin at 1pm. The public is invited to attend. To purchase a stone for your Veterans organization, please contact Kay at [donations@thehighground.us](mailto:donations@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224.

## 36th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour July 31-August 2

Starting in Hayward, New Richmond, Appleton, La Crosse, and Madison on July 31, bikers kick off our 36th Annual Bike Tour to support our Veterans and The Highground's mission. The dedicated riders will follow their routes leading to The Highground, with overnight stays and meals provided by Veteran supporting organizations. All routes will converge at The Highground on Sunday where there will be a short ceremony followed by lunch.

## Legacy Stone Ceremonies August 1

The Legacy Honor Stone ceremonies are at 11am and 2pm. Note, there are a limited number of openings. To purchase a stone for your loved one or a Veterans organization, please contact Kay at [donations@thehighground.us](mailto:donations@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224.

## Camp Victory Open House and Raffle

Camp Victory will host an Open House and First Annual Raffle on Saturday, August 8, 2020. **Raffle Tickets** are \$5 each or 3 for \$10. Among the many prizes that were generously donated are a custom quilt, 100 pounds of ground hamburger, and a Winchester SXP 20 gauge shotgun. For ticket information, call 715-743-4224. Visit [thehighground.us/events/camp-victory-open-house](http://thehighground.us/events/camp-victory-open-house) for more information about the open house and a complete list of prizes. See page 6 for Camp Victory news.

## 20th Annual Ride to Remember™ Motorcycle Ride & Rally

The kick-off for this long-running event will be breakfast at 9am followed by one and two hour guided rides. During the rides, there will be concessions, vendors, activities, raffles, and more. A procession to The Highground will be at 3 pm with a ceremony to follow. For questions or more information, please contact Bonnie at [events@thehighground.us](mailto:events@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224.

## Maggie Mae & Heartland Country Band Sept 27

The Maggie Mae & Heartland Country Band concert, which we were forced to postpone due to the pandemic, has been tentatively rescheduled to Saturday, September 27. We will keep in touch with the Pittsville Auditorium in case something changes prior to that date. Once it's been officially confirmed, we'll get the word out. For questions and current updates, please contact Bonnie at [events@thehighground.us](mailto:events@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224.

## 2020 Calendar of Events

**June 27** Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk

**July 4** Independence Day Recognition

**July 18** Persian Gulf, Military Working Dog and Legacy Stone Ceremonies  
Desert Storm/ OIF/OEF Veterans Reunion (Museum)

**July 31-Aug 2** Heroes Ride Annual Bike Tour, Celebration Picnic (Aug 2)

**Aug 1** Legacy Stone Ceremonies

**Aug 8** Camp Victory Open House

**Aug 15** 20th Annual Ride to Remember™ Motorcycle Ride & Rally

**Sept 11-13** The Highground Fall Women's Veterans Retreat

**Sept 18-20** The Highground Fall Men's Veterans Retreat

**Sept 19** Korean and Legacy Stone Ceremonies, Korean War Reunion (Museum)

**Sept 27** Maggie Mae Benefit Concert (Pittsville) **TENTATIVE**

**Oct 3** Legacy Stone Ceremonies, Fall Bake Sale

**Oct 6-9** The Highground Education Days

**Oct 10** Bowling for The Highground (Neillsville) **TENTATIVE**

**Oct 14-16** The Highground Fall Work Week

**Oct 17** Military Care Package Kickoff

**Nov 11** Veterans Day Celebration, Honoring Our Veterans Raffle Drawing

**Nov 28-Feb 15** The Highgrounds Holiday Lights

**Dec 5** The Highground Christmas Concert **TENTATIVE**

**Dec 5** Season of Giving Campaign: Pledge your support for The Highground

**Dec 19** Patriotic Quilt Raffle Drawing (Museum)

## Museum Exhibits

**Feb 1-July 5** Vietnam Experience

**May 1-July 5** Remembrance

**June 3-Aug 2** Fur, Feathers & Fidelity:  
Military Mascots and our Animal Military Working Heroes

**Aug 8** Working Warriors Grand Opening

**Aug 5-Sept 12** Working Warriors: Military Jobs Supporting The Front Lines

**Sept 19** We Were There: Korean War Grand Opening

**Sept 15-Nov 29** We Were There: Korean War; Quilts displayed on arrival

**Dec 5** USO and Holidays in the Military Grand Opening

**Dec 2-Jan 31, 2021** USO and Holidays in the Military

Stay tuned for additional events at The Museum and Camp Victory.  
For timely updates, visit our website and sign up for our email newsletter!

*Note: All events, dates, and times are subject to change*

For information about events and sponsorship opportunities, please call 715-743-4224 and ask for Bonnie or send an email to [events@thehighground.us](mailto:events@thehighground.us)

# VETERANS WEEKEND RETREATS

The July 10-12 Male Veterans Weekend Retreat has been cancelled due to scheduling and programming affected by the COVID-19 situation.

We invite any Veterans who were thinking of joining the July retreat to please join the **Male Veterans Weekend Retreat September 18-20**. That retreat is still on schedule.

These retreats are planned with help from Vet Center counselors, who are often present during the retreats. These are not professional counseling retreats, though. With that in mind, the retreats have brought much healing to Veterans through their experiences such as new activities, healing programs with the Vet Center counselors, and the bonds of friendship that are formed with fellow Veterans. Lodging for the two nights for each September retreat will be at the Moraine Motel which is a short distance from The Highground. Note: The entire motel has been booked for each retreat, ensuring privacy

and comfortable sleeping as we follow social distancing guidelines for our retreat Veterans. The retreats will also have the entire camping and picnic areas in the Park at their disposal, so any Veteran who would like to camp overnight in their tent or trailer will be able to do so.

Attendees will experience a wide variety of outdoor activities and healing programs with Vet Center personnel. They will also be invited to give their input and participate in the creation of two of The Highground Museum exhibits ("PTSD" and "Women in the Military"), and much more! In addition to planned activities, Veterans will enjoy a tour of The Highground, free time to spend on 4 miles of trails in the wooded acres of the Park, great food, and nightly bonfires!

Both retreats are 3-day events for military Veterans of any age who are looking for new experiences, camaraderie and the opportunity to try new activities which may add a

healing aspect to their life after the retreat ends.

To register for a Veterans Weekend Retreat, call Theresa at 715-743-4224 or send an email to [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us).

## **September 11-12, 2020: Female Veterans Weekend Retreat**

The Female Veterans Weekend Retreat will run from Friday afternoon, Sept. 11 through Sunday afternoon, Sept 13.

A special activity during this retreat will be Horse Therapy at UpThere LLC near Medford, Wisconsin. Transportation to all activities will be provided by Retreat staff.

## **September 18-20, 2020: Male Veterans Weekend Retreat**

The Male Veterans Weekend Retreat will run from the afternoon of Friday, Sept. 18 through the afternoon on Sunday, Sept. 20. Various outdoor programming and other activities are still being confirmed for this retreat; please check our website for updates when items are set in place.

**These retreats are free for Veterans to attend because of the generosity of sponsors and supporters of The Highground Veterans Weekend Retreats.**

**"Start by Doing What's Necessary  
Then Do What's Possible  
and Suddenly You Are Doing  
the Impossible"  
~St Francis of Assisi**

UpThere LLC  
Nicolet National Bank  
The Vet Center  
The Moraine Motel  
Michele Benson

Chili Implement  
Hardee's  
Festival Foods  
CART Center  
Skip & Debbie Klabon

Marshfield Clinic/Security Health  
Loyal American Legion #175  
Henry Smith  
Citizens State Bank of Loyal

# VOLUNTEER NEWS

## Porch Greeters

Porch Greeting has begun. All Porch Greeters should have received the 2020 Greeting Calendar either by email or postal mail. If you are a Porch Greeter that did not receive the calendar OR if you are interested in becoming a Porch Greeter, please get in touch with Theresa. Her contact information is to the right.

Porch Greeting is possibly the most important “job” at The Highground. Our greeters volunteer April–October, typically one day a month from 10am–3pm. Volunteers are Veterans and non-veterans of all ages. They help visitors in many different ways in addition to listening to what brought them to The Highground. The greeter offers information on Museum exhibits; volunteer opportunities; history of The

Highground; upcoming events; local areas of interest and restaurants; helps visitors with power scooters, and more.

## Tour Guides

The Highground is seeking more volunteer Tour Guides. Tours of The Highground are given to many groups throughout the year.

Tour Guides are given a tour script as a base to learn and then are welcome to add to it as they learn more about The Highground! Golf carts and power scooters are available for tour guides to use, so don't let mobility issues keep you from becoming a tour guide!

Training to be a tour guide will also include tagging along with a seasoned tour guide a few times. Tour guides can be Veterans or non-veterans.

## The Flowers Need You!

The Highground is looking for a volunteer, group or family,

to water the pots of flowers and new plantings once a week starting immediately until the fall. The watering takes about 2 hours and the volunteer(s) will have the use of a golf cart with a pull behind water tank to get to all the beautiful flowering pots on the Plaza and around The Highground.

This would make a great family activity or group project for the summer, and possibly a wonderful way to show kids the benefits of volunteering and seeing the flowers fill the pots as summer progresses.

**To learn more about all of these opportunities, please call Theresa at 715-743-4224 or send an email to [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us)**





# CAMP VICTORY NEWS

## Spring cleaning, quilt presentation, and Open House Announcement

Camp Victory received some TLC by hard working volunteers. From clean-up to painting to maintenance and many more were tackled on the to-do list. Camp Victory is prepared for visitors, more projects and to be enjoyed. We just need the social distancing and restrictions to be lifted.



## OPEN HOUSE AND FIRST ANNUAL RAFFLE

The Highground and Camp Victory will host an Open House and First Annual Raffle on Saturday, August 8, 2020. Raffle Tickets: At \$5 each or 3 for \$10, the raffle tickets are expected to sell fast. Purchase yours today by calling The Highground Gift Shop at 715-743-4224. Among the many prizes that were generously donated are a custom quilt (valued at \$1,000), 100 pounds of ground hamburger, and a Winchester SXP 20 gauge shotgun. More information and a complete list of prizes can be found on The Highground website at [thehighground.us/events/camp-victory-open-house](http://thehighground.us/events/camp-victory-open-house). Information about Camp Victory is available on their website at [campvictorywi.com](http://campvictorywi.com).

### Camp Victory receives a custom quilt for their first annual raffle

Lawana Perez of Longarm Lady Studios donates a custom quilt to Camp Victory Manager, Al Lamovec, for Camp Victory's Open House to be held on Saturday, August 8. (photo of actual quilt and similar wishing well).

#### WISH LIST ITEMS FOR THE CAMP:

- AED machines
- Mobile first aid kits
- Fire extinguishers



(L-R): Al Lamovec, Dan Perez, Lawana Perez, Chris Pettis

## BOOK A TOUR OF THE HIGHGROUND!

The Highground is ready to give groups guided tours. Please allow 2 hours minimum for a thorough guided tour of the Plaza & Museum. There are ample picnic tables and shelter areas available to reserve. In addition, indoor use of the Museum garage, electricity, etc. may be available and can be discussed at the time of booking. To book your guided tour and/or shelter building, please contact Theresa at The Highground at 715-743-4224 or send an email to [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us). Please book your tour at least 2 weeks in advance, so we have enough guides onsite to provide the best tour for your group.

## FEATURED VETERAN: ROGER ELLISON



Roger Ellison had a legacy stone placed at The Highground June 6, 2020. Roger's children purchased the stone in the summer of 2019 and kept it a surprise until he read an article in the newspaper. Surprise Dad!!! It was hard keeping it a secret all this time while trying to learn more about his military career. To gather information without blowing the surprise, we even had one of his younger grandkids, Forrest, tell him that he was doing a school project about family members that were in the military. Well it was a project, just not a school project, and Forrest is thankful that he got to learn so much about his Grandpa. The information gathered is included in Registry Books at The Highground Museum Library.

Roger grew up on a farm in Loyal. Prior to purchasing his own farm in Loyal he served in the military. Roger's values of hard work, persistence, dedication, loyalty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, courage, and helping others in need made him a great candidate for the military.

Roger joined the U.S. Army on January 4, 1962 and discharged on October 28, 1964. He was a private first class in the 82nd Airborne Division. Roger joined the military to support his country, to make money, and have a place to live. He also liked adventure.

When Roger enlisted in the US Army, he made \$98/month, received free housing and food. With a portion of his monthly income he had to buy stripes for his uniform and shoe polish. He had to keep things "spic and span."

He went into jump school there were about 300 other men in the school. Jump school required a lot of running and other hard physical exercises. By the time he completed the course, only 78 people remained. He said most people dropped out within the first week.

Roger was a paratrooper. His days in the military consisted of a lot of training and marching. He trained in Field combat and specialized in auxiliary. His job in auxiliary was to calculate the number of feet they wanted the mortar shells to go, then figure out how much powder to put in the shells. He also worked in communications and strung wire so people could talk on phone. He learned how to climb poles. He ran radio.

He explained his experience of training for an air strike in a jump zone, "We didn't have a target, no trees, they would come down so close to the Jeep you could feel heat from the blast of the jet coming down." He was carried by aircraft while sitting in the Jeep and then the Jeep was airlifted and relocated. Roger completed 27 jumps. The first time he jumped out of a plane he was the last jumper; the second time, he jumped first. He also jumped out of helicopters.

Roger's jumping career ended abruptly after he was in a car accident. He was hospitalized for 9 months because of injuries sustained in the crash. Later in life he had a brain tumor that the doctors thought could have been a result of a brain injury that he sustained in that car accident. This tumor was removed, and he is mostly healthy today. During his hospitalization he recalled getting a lot of visitors for the first 2.5 months. Then in March, all of his friends went to Vietnam and he never saw them again.

Roger began his military career at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, transferring to Fort Sill Oklahoma; Fort Benning Georgia; and lastly stationed in Fort Bragg North Carolina for 2.5 years. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, they were put on high alert, given ammunition and flew to Florida. They stayed in pup tents for 3 weeks, until after the missiles were removed.

Roger recalled having a short leave scheduled so he could come back home to Loyal for deer hunting but the day he was scheduled to go home President Kennedy was shot. The leave was cancelled, as the 82nd Airborne is usually the first division to be deployed but no military attack ever materialized, so he was able to come home for a visit 3 weeks later.

Another recollection was when he was sent to Mississippi for riot control due to a black student being accepted to go to college during segregation. He also recalled a time five guys were chosen to go to Campbell Kentucky for a demonstration jump. He was one of the five guys chosen and jumped four out of the five days there.

Roger liked the military food he was served. He said he was thankful for all the meals he got but he did have some favorite and least favorite foods that were served. His favorite was hamburger in cream sauce on toast (most of us have a recipe title for this but we won't mention it here). His least favorite was lima beans. Roger said that on Sunday's military personal weren't on duty, they didn't have to wake up early and could skip breakfast if they chose to but said he always wanted to get up early on Sunday's because they made eggs how you wanted them, and they were really good.

Roger is proud that he had the opportunity to serve our country. He said it taught him how to be in life and learn how to take orders. He said he met a lot of good people. In the service he learned that you could have friends no matter where you are and it's always best to get along with others the best you can. Roger said he was always stubborn. His philosophy was that "if someone else can do it, then I can do it too." This philosophy was definitely passed down to his children as they were all taught that you can do whatever you set your mind to do. We thank you for serving our country and honor you by having your name placed at The Highground. "Thank you, Dad, for showing us the value of patriotism."





## Vietnam Experience

On display until July 5, 2020 due to high interest

This exhibit, on loan from Carl Bogar Jr of Historic Military Impressions, is an amazing collection of items from the Vietnam War. The hundreds of items range from weaponry, everyday items that accompanied our service personnel, photographs, uniforms, and much more.

The "Vietnam Experience" has been the perfect chance for Vietnam Veterans to bring their families and be able to explain what the items are and how they were used. It has also been a very bonding experience for



Veterans to visit together and have those conversations that they might not have with non-Veterans.

Even though the exhibit is an expansive exhibit of Vietnam War items, it is still "family friendly" and appropriate for all to view – Veterans, non-Veterans, military history buffs of all ages.

The "Vietnam Experience" exhibit has been held over and will be on display at The Highground Museum until July 5th. The Museum is open daily from 10am – 5pm.

**Thank you Citizens State Bank of Loyal for sponsoring this exhibit!**

## Remembrance

On display until July 5, 2020

"Remembrance" is also on loan from Carl Bogar Jr. and Historic Military Impressions (HMI). Because the "Vietnam Experience" exhibit was held over (due to popular demand by groups that were unable to visit when we were closed March-May), the "Remembrance" display is a smaller representation than what is usually displayed from HMI.

This unique exhibit is a "Field" representation of the Missing Man Table. In any of its forms, the Missing Man Table is a very moving and

meaningful tribute to those who never returned from their service. The "Remembrance" Missing Man Table is created from military field items, items that would have been found "in the field" with our service men and women while they were in combat situations. The table is set up with these items ranging from WWI through present day. This exhibit will be on display at The Highground until July 5th.



## Remembering Our Fallen From Wisconsin (current)

Available to other organizations and communities



The Highground is honored to be the current "home base" of the "Remembering Our Fallen from Wisconsin" exhibit which consists of four large displays holding the photographs of our men and women—from the military and back home—who have been killed while serving since 9/11.

The exhibit is very close to all our hearts at The Highground. We think of the loss of all Gold Star families—and many Gold Star families of the fallen on the panels

are a large part of The Highground's past and present. We invite everyone to visit this exhibit to honor our fallen men and women.

This exhibit is available for other organizations and communities to display. For more information on how you can have "Remembering Our Fallen From Wisconsin" on display in your community, contact Theresa at 715-743-4224 or by email to [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us).

**Thank you Citizens State Bank of Loyal for sponsoring this exhibit!**



## Fur, Feather & Fidelity: Military Mascots (current)

June 20–August 2, 2020

### *Pet Food/Pet Toy Donation Drive to help Homeless Veterans & Families in Need Care for Their Pets*

This exhibit is centered around the traveling exhibit “Fur, Feathers, & Fidelity” on loan from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. The exhibit features the history and stories of animals that comforted the troops in service and supported the morale, including during combat.

Although the exhibit focuses more on the non-working military animals, the companion animals, the military working animals are also represented.

The Highground Museum will hold a pet food and toy donation drive in conjunction with this exhibit! These items will be donated to homeless Veterans and people in need who are struggling to care for not only themselves but also their pets.

There has been plenty of studies that show how valuable the service and company of companion pets is to those who find themselves without a home or are experiencing difficult financial or emotional times. This is one way that WE, as a caring community, can help them care for their pets and move forward with their personal healing.

## Working Warriors: Military Support Roles and the Homefront Efforts (upcoming)

August 8–September 15, 2020

This exhibit includes and builds upon the traveling exhibit “Working Warriors: Beyond Combat”, on loan from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. This exhibit focuses on the military personnel doing what it takes “behind the scenes” to support the front line military missions. In addition to the military support positions, there will

be exhibits on the Homefront Effort to support our military men and women throughout the history of the United States.

As with all of The Highground Museum exhibits, we love to include personal stories, photographs, and items! If you have any of these that you would like to loan or donate to the Museum to be included in this

display, please contact Theresa at 715-743-4224 or send an email to [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us)

A very special Grand Opening of the “Working Warriors” exhibit will be held at the Museum on Saturday, August 8, 2020 at 1pm. Please join us for an amazing story, some light refreshments, and an interesting afternoon at The Highground.

## The USO & Holidays in the Military (upcoming)

December 5, 2020–January 31, 2021

### *Non-Perishables and Winter Clothing for Homeless Veterans and Families in Need Dec 5, 2020 – Jan 31, 2021*

Join us for stories and exhibits of how the U.S. military and those in service spent the holidays year-round throughout our history with a VERY special history of the USO. This will also kick off The Highground Annual Donation Drive for non-perishable food and winter clothing for homeless Veterans and families in need. Let's fill the donation trailer and get items to the needy before the real winter weather hits. Thank you USO, for supporting our exhibit!

## VETERANS REUNIONS

### **GWOT—Desert Storm/OIF/OEF through Present Day**

#### **Veterans Reunion—July 18, 2020**

Noon–2pm or as long as the conversations continue

An informal gathering of Global War on Terror (GWOT–Desert Storm/OIF/OEF through present day) Veterans will be held on Saturday, July 18 at The Highground Museum. Veterans will be able to meet fellow GWOT Veterans in a casual setting. It's a time to share stories and experiences, and make new friendships. RSVP to Theresa at [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224. Good Food will be served!

#### **Vietnam Veterans Reunion—Saturday, October 3, 2020**

2pm–4pm or as long as conversations continue

An informal gathering of Vietnam War Veterans will be held on Saturday, October 3 at the Highground Museum. Veterans will be able to meet fellow Vietnam Veterans in a casual setting, with an opportunity to share stories, experiences, and make new friendships. Please RSVP to Theresa at [museum@thehighground.us](mailto:museum@thehighground.us) or by calling 715-743-4224.

# Korean War: Forgotten No More (upcoming)

September 15–November 29, 2020

This is an exciting first installment of the “We Were There” traveling exhibit series of veterans stories and photographs created by June Abrahamson, past Museum curator at The Highground. The response to the “We Were There: Korea” project far exceeded expectations. Over 50 Veterans and families submitted items for the exhibit. The collections of photographs, letters, drawings, journal entries, news print, and other memorabilia we have received is amazing.

This will be a must-see exhibit for everyone; Veterans, families, history buffs, and school groups alike. The history and stories that will be displayed in this exhibit will create

an unforgettable visit and wonderful learning experience.

The exhibit will go on display September 15, 2020, with the Grand Opening Ceremony on September 19, 2020 at 12:30pm. We will also be incorporating our Korean Reunion into the festivities.

Heartfelt thanks go out to all the Veterans and their families for sharing these materials with us and our visitors; not to mention all the visitors around the United States who will be able to experience it.

“We Were There: Korea” will be available for loan to other venues around the country beginning December 2020. If you or your organization would be interested in

reserving a booking date, contact The Highground at 715-743-4224.

“We Were There: Korea” was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council and other generous donors. We hope everyone can set time aside to visit this very personal exhibit.

If you are interested in supporting the building of these exhibits, please consider a donation. Call 715-743-4224 or donate online at [thehighground.us](http://thehighground.us) by clicking the “Donate” button and selecting the “We Were There” box.

**Thank you Wisconsin Humanities Council, for sponsoring, in part, the creation of this exhibit!**



*Funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Wisconsin Humanities Council supports and creates programs that use history, culture, and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin.*

## Honor Stones

### Surprise Stone Placement for Featured Veteran

Our featured Veteran, Roger Ellison, received a surprise honor stone from his children and grandchildren, and yes—he was surprised by finding out in a newspaper announcement!

Kay talked to Roger after the ceremony to ask what he thought of the gift. Roger expressed, “I always had hoped I would some day be able to have a stone at The Highground but figured it wouldn’t happen until I died. It sure was wonderful to be here to celebrate with my family. I’m glad they did not wait!”



Roger was chosen to mix the earth at the start of the ceremony. He had many family and friends to hear his stories. Congratulations Roger, it was a good day. See Roger’s story on page 7.

### Order Information

Honor stones are being dedicated each month. Sales have been slower this year due to the pandemic but some ceremonies have been full. If you would like to purchase a stone, there is still time in 2020. Korean stones will be placed September 19, 2020 at 10am. Openings for Legacy honor stones are available for October 3, 2020. If the ceremony is keeping you away, call Kay to arrange private placements with just YOUR family. 715-743-4224 or [donations@thehighground.us](mailto:donations@thehighground.us).

**\$40**  
gift is all it takes

**The Highground Newsletter is sent to over 18,000 households four times a year. If half of all households donate \$40, we would be able to fund every one of the park improvement projects that were identified for 2020! Will you help us continue the mission by pledging \$40?**



# PLANNING FOR THE HIGHGROUND'S EXPANSION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BEGINS

In an effort to respond to the growth of The Highground Veterans Memorial Park, which now includes Camp Victory, the Board of Directors is embarking on a \$4M expansion campaign to address multiple improvements. The campaign's goals were further solidified during the Campaign Readiness Study and Summit held in 2019, which were outlined in the last newsletter.

To date, six pre-campaign planning volunteer groups are being formed consisting of the Building, Case Statement, Communications, Leadership, Prospect and Steering Committees to help lay a solid foundation for the capital campaign before solicitation begins.

"I am overwhelmed by the initial support and excitement I have seen so far," says Chris Pettis, Executive Director. "The energy that volunteers are providing and the emotion around their efforts is encouraging as The Highground turns the corner toward constructing an improved facility for future generations."

## Benefits of the expansion

The Highground will be improved by the expansion, moving the organization to the next level of service and growth for our Veterans and their families. Although the complete conceptual design is still in the planning stages, the campaign will fund the following key items which were identified by the individuals who shared their ideas and insights during the Campaign Readiness Study:

- Paying off the \$450,000 mortgage to increase financial stability and long-term sustainability
- Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure disabled veterans and the 225,000 annual visitors will be able to access all memorial tribute sites and other areas of the Park
- Construction of a larger Visitor Center to house meetings, the Museum, exhibits and programming space
- Improved parking to allow for safer access

## Formal PTSD and mental health programs and services

"The Board of Directors recently completed a Strategic Planning process, which will be incorporated into the final plans for the organization including the campaign," said Gary Weirauch, Vice Chair for the board.

"We anticipate an exciting and fun campaign with much involvement from those who love The Highground and what it stands for. We are confident the campaign will be a success as we grow in response to better serve veterans and their families. The Highground is determined more than ever to Honor, Educate and Heal. We want your input as the campaign process moves forward. Watch for more information in coming newsletters to voice your thoughts and feedback," adds Weirauch.

Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC, has been hired to manage the campaign and has successfully managed 40 campaigns over the past 20 plus years. The company's four advisors will support campaign volunteers and staff during the course of the 18-month process.

For more information about the pre-campaign planning or to serve in any capacity, contact Chris Pettis at 715-743-4224.

## Board of Directors

**Chairman - CW King**  
Chippewa Falls, WI

**Vice Chair - Gary Weirauch**  
Neillsville, WI

**Secretary - Scott Kissinger**  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI

**Treasurer- Don Quicker**  
Neillsville, WI

Bob Barth-Neillsville, WI

Leonard Frye-Richland Center, WI

Al Lamovec-Chippewa Falls, WI

Bill Lobeck-Viola, WI

Steve Maddox-Chippewa Falls, WI

Daniel Curran-Dodgeville, WI

Greg Foye-Wausau, WI

Michele Benson-Ripon, WI

Gary Karczewski-LeRoy, IL

Ron "Bulldog" Perry-Augusta, WI

Dominic Anderson-Richland Center

### Executive Director

Chris Pettis  
director@thehighground.us

### Donations Coordinator

Kay Anason  
donations@thehighground.us

### Museum Coordinator

Theresa Hebert  
museum@thehighground.us

### Marketing & Social Media Coordinator

Liz Hamilton  
marketing@thehighground.us

### Events Coordinator

Bonnie Pettis  
events@thehighground.us

### Gift Shop Coordinator

Rhonda Miller  
store@thehighground.us

### We Were There Series Coordinator

June Abrahamson  
wewerethere@thehighground.us

### Maintenance

Mike Purgett

### Gift Shop Staff

Roxane Purgett

Judy Quicker

Isabella Kapusta

Lisa Smith

Rayle Winegarden

Abby Meshnick

## FROM THE CHAIR

### CW King

In spite of everything going on in the world, it looks like summer has finally arrived at The Highground. It has been a long and difficult time for both The Highground and me. I have had some health issues which forced me to take some time off and the virus has contributed to my staying close to home. I am trying to get back to work with The



Highground. Enough whining about me though; the important issue is The Highground. The virus, as with many of you, has caused some concern and distress with how things get done at the Park. The staff and many volunteers have done a great job of keeping things on track as much as possible. We are about to get started on our capital campaign as well as complete a five year strategic plan that

would complete the integration of Camp Victory. In many ways, the timing is difficult. I know the virus has affected many of our volunteers and donors, but I also know that they will be there to ensure its future. Our group of supporters are some of the finest and most loyal folks in the world, and in these very difficult times they will help to work everything out for the best. It will be a difficult time for a while but I have no doubt that together we will achieve a positive outcome out of a very challenging situation. Looking Forward. —cw

## Quilt Raffle

**Tickets** for the December 19, 2020 raffle are on sale for \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

**Attention Quilters:** The Highground is looking for your patriotic quilting projects! Pick your favorite pattern and material, and donate it prior to December 1st to be included in the December quilt show. This year we ask that the projects be 50"x60" or larger, quilted, and with a patriotic design. End 2020 on a warm and cozy note for yourself or a beautiful gift for someone special.



## Newsletter Subscription Request

We continue to update our records and need your help! The newsletter is a big project to organize and we want to make sure people continue to receive it as well as other important updates. Please visit our website and look for the "I support The Highground" box located on the home page. Click on it and then update your information by completing the form. We can mail you a printed newsletter or send a digital copy; we just need to know what you prefer. If you provide us with your information, we can also send you our email newsletter which will include updates as they happen. Or, make sure you don't miss an issue—Cut off the form to the right, fill it out, and send it with your donation in the included envelope. Please rest assured that The Highground does not sell its lists or your information to anyone.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Chris Pettis

It has been a tremendous privilege to be a part of the special events that happen here at The Highground. With the pandemic restrictions, our time honored events have been scaled back, however, the dedication of the event's participants



leaves me speechless. I have been blessed to be able to hear the stories from veterans, family members and or friends of a veteran that have passed. Knowing that those veterans' memories will live on and that they as well as their friends and family have a place of solace to reflect on their loved ones is the ultimate reward.

I thank the visitors, events participants and staff for their dedication to making The Highground's mission to Honor, Educate and Heal possible. I genuinely look forward to many more shared days and events. —Chris

## Wish List

**Benches:** To complete the Meditation Garden Shelter, there will be benches around the outside.

**Floor:** The stones need to be pulled up and recemented.

**Museum:**

- Funding for archival quality storage items (\$2,000)
  - New or good quality black or natural wood picture frames.
- Size: 8 x 10 or larger up to poster size.

To support any of these initiatives, please contact Kay at 715-743-4224 or to [donations@thehighground.us](mailto:donations@thehighground.us)

**For More Information Contact 715-743-4224**

W7031 Ridge Rd P.O. Box 457, Neillsville, WI 54456

**Find us somewhere on Social Media!**



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## 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 the Newsletter subscription \$25

Please mail to: The Highground  
P.O. Box 457 Neillsville, WI 54456  
or call 715-743-4224 to make a donation.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Upcoming Events & Fundraising Calendar
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honor Stones on The Highground
- \_\_\_\_\_ Add someone to the mailing list  
(please include the name and address of the person you want to send a gift subscription to)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Endowment Fund
- \_\_\_\_\_ Booking information for "My War", "We Were There" or "Remembering Our Fallen" exhibits

## I would also like to volunteer for the following events and activities. Please reach out to me!

- \_\_\_\_\_ Porch Greeter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work Week
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heroes Ride Annual Bike Tour
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honor Ride
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ride to Remember
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Highground Museum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Camp Victory
- \_\_\_\_\_ Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Military Working Dog Stone Ceremonies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Korean War Stone Ceremonies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Persian Gulf Stone Ceremonies

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Questions or Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# READER SUBMISSION

## Letter, Poems, and Donations

2020

13 May

The Highground,

While sitting at home during this Pandemic shutdown, I was reading the Highground Newsletter in a little more detail than I usually do. Having retired from the Navy and growing up in Neillsville, I have a fond place in my heart for the Highground and those who have served in the military. Reading the articles brought out many thoughts and memories from my military service and the military experiences that were shared with me over the years. In my retirement (Military and civilian) I have been writing some poetry. So, I put together a little poem and thought I might share it with the Highground.

Please see the attached copy of the poem.

V/R



Paul J. Bertz

### *The Veteran*

*We came from every walk of life, from the city to country land  
We came because of the trouble out there, to lend a helping hand  
We came as Soldiers, Sailors and Marines, the services we did span  
We came to stop the enemy hordes, for freedom we do stand*

*We fought them in the deserts; we fought them in the seas  
We fought them in the jungles; we fought them on our knees  
We fought them as our enemy; we fought for victory  
We fought them anywhere they were; we fought to make men free*

*The battles were very costly; friends were lost along the way  
Our courage was not shaken; our bravery was on display  
We fought as hard as we could; the fighting we did not delay  
We knew we had to win this war, to have that victory day*

*Our loved ones we left behind, to be there all alone  
It's hard to leave them all behind, to be there on their own  
We know we have a duty to do, to return it is not known  
To do the job we signed up for, to them it must be shown*

*Our battles are not always over, in our minds they do play on  
Our dreams turn in to nightmares, from Korea to Teheran  
The scars are not always visible, when we are looked upon  
But, our hearts are strong as ever, as warriors our lives go on*

*We don't ask for recognition, for a medal or an award  
We look for peace upon the land, to be on one accord  
The price we paid was very high, too steep for one to afford  
A land for everyone to be free, to us is our reward*

PJ Bertz

### *War Horse*

*He tugs the grass  
Just this side of sagging barbed wire*

*rusted weathered the color  
of his coat and scars*

*Lifts his head from time to time  
gazes at what he once believed*

*to be so far beyond his reach  
that he would rear up high and  
kick the sky with both front feet*

*Now he bows his head  
tastes dew upon the grass  
and doubts he'll ever again  
find time for war.  
Of that he's had surcease.  
And with the universe at last  
has made his peace.*

©2020 gary Bergstrom

### *I Am the Flag*

I am the flag of the United States of America.

My name is Old Glory.  
I fly atop some of the world's tallest buildings.  
I stand watch in America's halls of justice.  
I fly majestically over institutions of learning.  
I stand guard with power in the world.  
Look up and see me.

I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice.  
I stand for freedom. I am confident.  
When I am flown with my fellow banners,  
My head is a little higher,  
My colors a little truer.  
I bow to no one!  
I am recognized all over the world.

I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years.  
I was flown at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Shiloh and Appomattox.  
I was there at San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, in the Argonne Forest, Anzio,  
Rome and the beaches of Normandy.  
Guam, Okinawa, Korea and KheSan, De Nang, Saigon, Vietnam know me.  
I was there in Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Afghanistan. I led my troops.  
I was dirty, battle worn and tired,  
but my soldiers cheered me and I was proud.

I have been burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries  
I have helped set free. It does not hurt for I am invincible.  
I have been soiled upon, burned, torn and trampled in the streets of my own country.  
But I shall overcome - for I am strong.  
I have slipped the bonds of earth and  
stood watch over the uncharted frontiers of space from my vantage point on the moon.  
I have born silent witness to all of America's finest hours and her worst days.  
I am torn into strips and used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the battle field,  
I am flown at half-mast to honor my fallen warrior,  
I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent at the grave of their fallen son or daughter.

I am proud.  
I am the Flag of The United States of America

## MEMORABLE DONATIONS-THANK YOU

Don and Charlene N. sent us a \$240 check that represents \$10 for each note in "Taps".

We received a donation and note from an inmate at Redgranite Correctional Institute:

"I hope this donation helps in some small way." To James: There is no donation that The Highground considers small as it all adds up to make huge changes one way or another!



# The Highground

Veterans Memorial Park

**Check Out**  
OUR ONLINE STORE  
FOR ALL OUR LATEST ITEMS!

**15%**  
**off your**  
first online purchase

GIFT SHOP HOURS ARE 10AM TO 5PM DAILY  
GET THE GEAR THAT SUPPORTS THE MISSION

PRODUCTS FOR EVERYONE



More options online

**\$11.95-29.95**

#### T-shirts

You can never have enough t-shirts.  
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Check out our variety of garden flags.  
(Stands available for sale)



**\$22.95-\$159.95**

#### Wind Chimes

Fill the air with the sound of a beautiful wind chime  
(Stands available for sale)

JULY - AUGUST 2020



**\$11.95**

#### Gremlin Bells

Protect you and your bike from the "bad road spirits" with one of our Gremlin Bells.



**\$4.95**

#### Americana Rocks

Add one (or all) of our Americana Rocks to a garden or a walkway border.



Gift cards are always available!

**CALL US AT 1-715-743-4224**

web: [THEHIGHGROUND.SHOP](http://THEHIGHGROUND.SHOP) | Email: [store@thehighground.us](mailto:store@thehighground.us)

Shop online anytime at [thehighground.shop](http://thehighground.shop)



Note the Gift Shop and Museum are open again with social distancing guidelines in place for the safety of all. Please ring the bell when you visit—to honor those who fought for our freedom, those who keep us safe, and those who work tirelessly during these unprecedented times.

## Let Them Not Go In Silence

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park staff, visitors, and supporters remember and honor all who have served in times of combat and in times of peace. All Veterans of any era have, at one point in their life, written a blank check made payable to "The United States of America", for an amount up to and including their life. 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 gave their lives during combat (KIA) service to our country. As a tangible reminder for us all, a different selection of KIA names will be printed for each future ceremony and newsletter. Again, this is not the complete list but a selection of names from each war who gave their lives in combat areas.**

Let us remember and honor all those who perished during their service and let them not go in silence. We ring our replica Liberty Bell in their honor at each ceremony. We hope you will ring it whenever you are here.

### WWII

Otho M Shank  
 Kenneth T Slattery  
 Roy T Sloat  
 Berngard A Spielvogel  
 Richard W Stone  
 Joseph M Sungaila  
 Lloyd C Tatroe  
 Francis J Teehan  
 John A Weissenfluh  
 Joseph C Werle  
 Albert J Wilsey Jr  
 Ralph W Wittenmyer  
 Lewis A Wolf  
 Shigeo Yoshioka  
 Phil P Yuson  
 John W Zinck

### Korean War

Robert R Blair  
 Theodore W Blaisdell  
 Paul J Blasczyk  
 Paul J Blasczyk  
 Ferdina T Blechinger  
 Wilbert G Block  
 Russell R Blodgett  
 Robert F Blohowiak  
 John T Blume  
 Roy S Boach  
 Howard J Bogenschield

Marcus H Bongard  
 Maxmilli Borkowski  
 Loren C Bortz  
 Lloyd J Bosben  
 Richard L Bower  
 Ronald L Boyce  
 Carroll G Brandt  
 Lyle H Brandt  
 Morris W Breezee  
 Edward W Breutzmann  
 Donald Philip Bringe  
 John C Brossard  
 Doris F Brown  
 Jessie Brown  
 Juelynn O Brown  
 Raymond H Brown  
 Jack L Brushert  
 David Bruzelius Jr  
 Edward J Bucholtz  
 Buddy E Buckmaster  
 Leroy M Buechel  
 Wayne F Bullis

### Vietnam War

John D Morris  
 Carl P Morrison  
 Edward A Morrison  
 Cecil J Moser  
 Larry C Mosher  
 Wayne C Mousel  
 Robert J Muellenbach

Joseph B Mueller  
 Marco F Mueller  
 Randy R Mueller  
 Robert G Mueller  
 Tom R Mueller  
 Michael L Mulcahy  
 Russell W Mulder  
 Francis T Mulvey  
 Thomas J Murphy  
 Timothy Joseph Murphy  
 Timothy James Murphy  
 William H Murphy III  
 George T Murray  
 Chester A Myers Jr  
 Gordon L Nagel  
 Nicholas L Natzke  
 Randall K Nauertz  
 Orlan M Nelson

### Desert Storm, OIF, OEF – To Present Day

Jakob Roelli  
 Joseph J. Altmann  
 David A. Johnson  
 Jesse J. Grindey  
 Benjamin H. Neal  
 Jeremiah Collins, Jr  
 Matthew I. Leggett  
 Quinn Johnson-Harris  
 Matthew Thompson

Amy Krueger  
 Russell Seager  
 Daniel Busch  
 Jeremy Bird  
 Heidi Ruh  
 Carson Holmquist  
 Richard J. Kemp  
 Paul Buege  
 Kevin Calloway  
 Michael Fitz  
 Daniel Joel  
 Cheryl LaBeau-O'Brien  
 Lance Monsen  
 Rocky Nelson  
 PFC Scott Schroeder  
 William Strehlow  
 Brian Scott  
 Patrick Wanke  
 Carl Zabel  
 Ryan P. Long  
 Kirk Allen Straseskie  
 Matthew E. Schram  
 Dan H. Gabrielson  
 Paul J. Sturino  
 Rachel K. Bosveld  
 Warren S. Hansen  
 Jeremy L. Wolfe  
 Eugene A. Uhl III  
 Paul Buege  
 Kevin Calloway  
 Michael Fitz  
 Daniel Joel

Cheryl LaBeau-O'Brien  
 Lance Monsen  
 Rocky Nelson  
 PFC Scott Schroeder  
 William Strehlow  
 Brian Scott  
 Patrick Wanke  
 Carl Zabel  
 Ryan P. Long  
 Kirk Allen Straseskie