

The Highground NEWSLETTER

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

October 2020



The Heroes Ride Bike Tour, now in its 36th year, is The Highground's largest single annual fundraiser. Whether it was riding their normal routes or completing routes around their hometowns, the pandemic didn't stop riders from across Wisconsin as they joined together on Sunday, August 2, to complete the tour. Three routes began their journey to The Highground days earlier from several locations throughout Wisconsin. Along the way, the riders collected pledges and donations from individuals and corporate sponsors. The Western Route, consisting of 36 riders and led by Jerry Simon and Randy Meyer, started in New Richmond. Six riders for the Eastern Route started their ride in Appleton, led by Jim and Curt Braatz. Four riders joined the Southwestern Route out of La Crosse, led by Terri Stott.

cont. page 4



The Ride to Remember™, now in its 20th year, is one of The Highground's largest annual fundraisers. On Saturday, August 15th, dedicated motorcycle and dirt bike enthusiasts gathered at the Neillsville American Legion Post #73 for scenic rides and great camaraderie. Whether they were Veterans, active military members or supporters, they remembered the MIA's, KIA's or POW's. Riders raised \$7,100 in support of The Highground's continuing mission to Honor, Educate and Heal our Veterans and their families. The amazing Kokosz sisters, Mary and Sue, never disappoint with their creative raffle bundles, raising over \$3,000 for the day. As the roar of motorcycles echoed across the valley, the riders arrived at the Park to the ringing of The Highground Liberty Bell.

cont. page 5

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

IN MEMORY OF

Raymond H. Arndt
Norman Berget
Alfred (Soapy)
Blume
Michael Bord
David Christenson
Harold Christenson
James I Coatts

Marliss Collinson
Keith Durham
Orville Evanson
Kurt Frederickson
Bruce Hokenson
Joseph W Howard
Chuck Isensee
Art Jungwirth
Robert R Kinderman

Jack Lenz
Billie M Lidik
Theodore Meyer
Lila Oelhafen
Chan & Gladys
O'Kelly's wedding
anniversary
Daniel Polum
Herman Preuss

Richard Rennhack
Marion Rusk
George St. John
Alvin Schultz
Mel Shea
Barbara Siebert
Scott Tews
Raymond Woita

IN HONOR OF

Doug & Sharon
Bjerke
Sharon Borchardt
Brigitte Klejeski's
Birthday
Jerome Zastrow

CHALLENGE COINS, RAFFLE AND HOLIDAY LIGHTS

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park Challenge Coin Program!



Sign up for a yearly contribution and get the Welcome Coin and the latest minted coin!

Take the Pledge

Show your support with a monthly donation of \$20 or a yearly contribution of \$240!

The Highground Challenge Coin Program is a way to show your support for our continuing mission to Honor, Educate and Heal our Veterans, their families and all who visit. Coins are released that reflect our history as an organization, and they feature significant items that have helped make The Highground what it is today; examples include tributes, exhibits, events and other programs. Take the pledge and you will receive a coin each time a new one is minted as long as your program membership is active. The Highground is much more than just a park, it is a place where Veterans can come together, where our dedicated staff can help when needed, and where programming for Veterans causes is at the forefront. Take the challenge today!

Sign up online at thehighground.us. For more information, call 715-743-4224 or email store@thehighground.us

WIN A NEW ATV!

2020 ATV Raffle
Honoring our Veterans



\$20 each or 3 for \$50

Only 1500 tickets will be sold! Drawing at 1pm on December 19, 2020 at The Highground Museum

Buy tickets at The Highground Veterans Memorial Park, Call 715-743-4224 or email donations@thehighground.us

1st Place: 2020 Polaris Sportsman 570 (value \$6899)
2nd Place: \$1000 Cash
3rd Place: \$500 Cash

Over \$8,000 in prizes!

SPONSORED IN PART BY:



EAU CLAIRE • CHIPPEWA FALLS • CADOTT
www.CHILSONMOTORS.com



W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456 • thehighground.us

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park

Holiday LIGHTS



NOVEMBER 16, 2020 – MARCH 1, 2021

Purchase an Honor Star to be lit in memory of a loved one or for your businesses to show support for our Veterans!

Call 715-743-4224 for more information
thehighground.us
W7031 Ridge Rd Neillsville WI 54456

The Highground is proud to announce that The Highground Holiday Lights are back! The Highground Holiday Lights is a group of "Honor Stars" that will be lit on the Plaza from November 16, 2020 through March 1, 2021. The stars are lit with 25 LED lights that are integrated into the star. An 8" x 9" placard is placed on the star so loved ones can be honored on the star. The stars are \$125 to sponsor the memorial each season.

The Holiday Lights are an initiative to produce a beautiful and unique experience at The Highground during the winter months and to provide another way for visitors to honor and memorialize a loved one. The Park is stunning during the wintertime.

If you would like to sponsor a star, please visit thehighground.us, click on "Donate" and then scroll to "Holiday Lights". You can also contact Kay by calling 715-743-4224 or sending an email to donations@thehighground.us. Help us make the Park the most beautiful it can be this holiday season!



The Season of Giving is fast approaching beginning with "Giving Tuesday" on December 1st. Please keep us in your thoughts while making your contributions. If you are looking for ways to support our organization, visit the "donations" page on our website at thehighground.us/about-us/donate

EVENT UPDATES

For the most current information, be sure to visit our website at thehighground.us. The Park is open 24/7/365 and the Gift Shop and Museum are open 10am-5pm daily!

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic October 17

Join us for the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on Saturday, October 17 at noon in The Highground picnic area. We will be collecting non-perishable food items for the Clark County Department of Aging. We will also be hosting a silent auction, so please bring some items, e.g. pies, to be auctioned off! For more information or to RSVP, email Bonnie at events@thehighground.us or call her at 715-743-4224. Join us for Fall Cleanup Days before the picnic!

Veterans Day Ceremony November 11

Join The Highground for its annual Veterans Day Ceremony on Wednesday, November 11th, from 10am-1pm. Weather permitting, it will be an outdoor event. Starting the day at 10am, the names of the Wisconsin KIAs/MIAs from WWII to present day theater operations will be read and honored with the ringing of The Highground Liberty Bell. At 11:00am, the Thorp VFW Post #9057 will present Colors with a guest speaker (TBD) to follow. Veterans support and services will be present for continued resources. Coffee and cookies will be served.

The Highground "Virtual" Education Days

Highground Education Days, originally scheduled for October 6-9, had to be cancelled as an in-person event for schools. The Highground is currently working with presenters to put together a "Virtual Education Days" event! Education Days presenters and additional Highground videos will be made available via links placed on the "Education Days" webpage at thehighground.us. Filming for these videos was planned for the end of September. Once the videos are finished and available, we will announce it on our social media channels and get an email out to schools. To get the latest news, visit our website or sign up for our e-newsletter!

Patriotic Quilt Raffle December 19

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 as a gift for someone special. To purchase your tickets, or for more information about the raffle, call Kay at 715-743-4224 or send an email to donations@thehighground.us.

2021 Calendar of Events

- Jan 31** Winter Bowl Fundraiser (Rose Bowl Lanes, Marshfield)
April or May Maggie Mae Benefit Concert (Pittsville) **TENTATIVE**
May 12-15 Spring Work Week
May 22 Legacy Stone Placement; Vietnam Reunion/Education; Spring Bake Sale
May 31 The Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony and "Lost 74" dedication
June 5 Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
June 12 Korean & Legacy Stone Placements; Korean War Reunion
June 27 Freedom Celebration Fireworks at dusk
July 9-11 5th Annual Mens Veterans Weekend
July 17 Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Placements
July 30-Aug 1 37th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (ceremony on Aug 1)
July 31 Legacy Stone Placements
August 20-21 Veterans Freedom Fest
August 21 21st Annual Ride to Remember Motorcycle Ride & Rally
Sept 10-12 3rd Annual Womens Veterans Retreat
Sept 18 Military Working Dog (MWD) and Legacy Stone Placements
Oct 2 Legacy Stone Placements
Oct 5-8 The Highground Education Days
Oct 9 Bowling for The Highground (Strike Time Lanes, Neillsville)
Oct 15-16 Fall Cleanup Days
Nov 11 Veterans Day Recognition Ceremony and Raffle Honoring Our Veterans
Nov 16-Mar 1 The Highground Holiday Lights
Nov 30 Season of Giving Campaign: Pledge your support for The Highground
Dec 4 The Highground Christmas Concert **TENTATIVE**
Dec 18 Patriotic Quilt Raffle Drawing

Museum Exhibits

- Feb 6** Opening of "WWI" Museum Exhibit (exhibit: 2/6-3/29)
Apr 3 Opening of "POW/MIA & Memorial Day" Exhibit (exhibit: 4/3-7/15)
Jul 27 Opening of "PTSD" Exhibit (7/24-9/28)
Oct 2 Opening of "Women in the Military" Exhibit (10/2-11/30)
Dec 4 Opening of "Pacific Theater WWII" Exhibit (12/4-2/1/22)
Dec 1-31 Patriotic Quilt Display

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

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

For information about events and sponsorship opportunities, please call Bonnie at 715-743-4224 or send an email to events@thehighground.us

HEROES RIDE (continued from page 1)

With the extra challenge of COVID 19, the Northern and Southern Routes decided to complete their rides, equal to the miles of the original route, around their hometowns instead of making the trip to The Highground. Joan Cervenka led some of the riders from the Northern Route around Hayward, with Mike and Kathy Gleisner leading loops around Marshfield. This year, Chris Pettis, Executive Director at The Highground, joined the Gleisner group for 45 miles on Friday. Sunday morning, Chris joined the Western Route in Osseo to complete their last 40 miles to The Highground.

Challenges behind them, 46 riders and their support crew made their triumphant ride down the flag lined Ridge Road with the bell tolling their entrance. After a short ceremony, **The Highground presented Certificates of Appreciation to Jerry Simon, of the Western Route, and Jim Braatz, of the Eastern Route, for their 35 years of participation. The Highground also acknowledged Dave Sharretts from the Western Route for 30 years, and Kathy Heit, Mary Boortz and Jeff Berger from the Southern Route for 10 years. Amazing dedication for an amazing cause!**

For a year rife with uncertainty and obstacles, the over \$40,000 raised was a truly amazing gift. On behalf of all Veterans of all eras, their families and all who visit, The Highground extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this year a success. Without you, our Mission to Honor, Educate and Heal would not continue. **Mark your calendars for the 37th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour to be held July 30–August 1, 2021.** Event updates are available at thehighground.us/calendar.



Thank you to Jake Gundlach and the American Legion Weinsch Gilbert-Patten-Gillett Post #353 from Cornell for the \$500 donation towards this year's Heroes Ride Bike Tour. Jake stopped by the Park on September 2nd to present the check to Chris Pettis, Executive Director. Jake explained that in the past the Northern Route of the Heroes Ride would stop at the Legion for dinner. They would provide a meal and present them with a check to help with fundraising. Since the riders stayed local in Hayward this year, Jake wanted to make sure the check was delivered. Thank you Legion members—The Highground is very grateful for your continued dedication and support.

American Legion Post 75, American Legion Post 111, Beehive Botanicals, Bell International Labs, Central Wisconsin Broadcasting, Citizens State Bank of Loyal, Falls Meats Services, Fusion Metal Products, JBC Screenprinting & Embroidery LLC, J&L Auto Repair, Lakeside Foods, Lowe Advertising, Luke's Auto Repair, Marine Corps League 552, Moraine Motel LLC, Navy Club USA Ship 75, New Moon Bike & Ski (Hayward), Oshkosh Cyclery Inc., Skyward, Thrivent Financial, VFW Post 10808, VFW Post 1904, and VFW Ringle-Hatley Post 8342.

RIDE TO REMEMBER™ (continued from page 1)

The event concluded with the traditional ceremonial Color Guard presenting the colors, Pledge of Allegiance, National Anthem and The Reading of 100 of the 2,271 POW/MIA/KIA names. With the POW/MIA/KIAs present and accounted for, the riders broke bread with one another.

Sponsors, supporters and participants of this year's ride included the 112 riders, Bill Flemal, Missy and Paul Hubing, VFW Post #8514, American Legion and Sons of American Legion Post #13519, Randy Bjerke and our generous sponsors: Citizens State Bank of Loyal, Central Wisconsin Broadcasting, JBC Screen Printing & Embroidery, WWIS Radio, AgCountry Farm Credit Service, Neillsville American Legion #73, Office Outfitters, VFW Post #1037 Waupaca, Genesis Midwest, Thrivent, BarBK Leatherworks and Mary & Sue Kokosz. THANK YOU!

The Highground is forever grateful to all the incredible volunteers and supporters who dedicated their time to this important event. **Mark your calendars for August 21, 2021, when the rumble returns to Neillsville for the 21st Annual Ride to Remember.**



BOOK A TOUR OF THE HIGHGROUND!

The Highground offers guided tours. Please allow 2 hours minimum for a thorough guided tour of the Plaza and 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. 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. Please book your tour at least 2 weeks in advance, so we have enough guides onsite to provide the best tour for your group.

CAMP VICTORY NEWS

Open House and Raffle Highlights

The Highground's Camp Victory hosted a Grand Opening and Raffle on Saturday, August 8, 2020, supporting our mission to facilitate the emotional healing of disabled and wounded Veterans and their families. With beautiful weather, supporters gathered to tour and experience the peaceful serenity of Camp Victory. Dedication of the new flagpole, wishing well, bell and podium had great personal meaning to all who attended. Being a strong supporter of Veterans, Representative Tom Tiffany was present to talk with volunteers and Veterans, and see for himself what Camp Victory has to offer.



On behalf of The Highground and Camp Victory, we thank the volunteers, visitors and anonymous donors for their financial contribution of over \$11,800. These donations will be dedicated toward the Camp's expansion to accommodate a more comfortable and accessible sleeping environment, bathrooms and shower facility for Veterans retreats and hunts.



E.D. Chris Pettis, Rep. Tom Tiffany and Camp Founder Al Lamovec



Hmong Officers



Open House attendees



Veterans therapy walk rest area



Flagpole dedication



Camp Victory bluegill pond

As the leaves are changing colors, our Fall Veterans Hunts are being scheduled, giving Veterans the chance to heal through nature and camaraderie. We have also added 6 rest areas along our 4 miles of trails with custom wooden benches available for sponsorship. Our Fall Sportsman Raffle is currently underway. Prizes include 4 firearms, crossbow, binoculars, chainsaw and beef. For more information about Camp Victory and everything it has to offer, visit us at campvictorywi.com or contact The Highground Staff at 715-743-4224. We are eternally grateful for your continued generosity and support of our mission.

FEATURED VETERAN: BETH MARTIN



Remembering Beth

A quick glance around is all that is required to remind oneself how difficult it is to find, least of all exemplify good leadership. The days were many but entirely too fleeting during which we at The Highground had the opportunity both to enjoy and to appreciate the invaluable leadership Beth brought to the table. Whether or not we all agreed was of secondary importance to the mere fact that she brought people together in a civil and workable environment to consider, debate, air and listen respectfully to one another's points of view. That accomplished, she showed the way to compromise, acceptance and implementation of well-considered alternatives and helped decisions be made with which divergent factions could find commonality. She was more than just a friend, more than just a contributor. She personified the finest aspects of leadership and, always leading by example, was an invaluable asset to, and participating member of, both the Board of Directors and The Highground as an organization.

On a personal level, she and I were always best of adversaries, each with his or her own well-founded point of view and vision of how to do that which needed to be done. Her warmth, her genuine goodness, her intelligence and her bravery, good humor and exemplary character are all acknowledged and noted herein. To say that she is missed is to say the obvious. To say that she left her own indelible mark on all she touched is evident...all about us, each and every day. – Steve Maddox, *For the Board of Directors of The Highground Veterans Memorial Park*

Beth Martin, 1954-2020 (USAF 1975-1979)

Beth's history with The Highground goes back to when she was the newsletter editor. The first newsletter on file is dated 2001 (The Highground Magazine was discontinued due to costs of publishing). Beth was employed at The Highground in 2002 with the title of "Assistant". She was involved in growing the Honor Stone Program, the Registry Books, the Wisconsin United in Service Map, and the trail system of 4 miles.

As many of our visitors/readers know, being on staff with a job title requires that person to go above and beyond their title. Staff members do not grow in numbers even though the Park continues to expand in tributes, visitors and programs.



The following events happened during Beth's time at The Highground: 2002 – The *Highground Liberty Bell Shelter* is dedicated; 2003 – the trail system is extended and a long-range forest management plan including developmental forest is established; The *Wisconsin United in Service Tribute* was placed; 2005 – the accessible treehouse was completed and the first Meditation stone was placed on the shelter floor; 2006 – The *Meditation Garden, Ascension of Doves, Fountain of Tears* and *WASP Tributes* were dedicated; 2007 – the *Korean Tribute* was dedicated and the first stone was placed on the "Rice Paddies".

In 2007, Beth resigned as a staff member and became a member of The Highground Board of Directors which included holding the position of Chairperson. Being on the Board allowed Beth to continue her work at the Park with more dedications, activities and events. For health reasons, Beth's resignation to the Board was accepted in November 2018. In July 2020, Beth was honored at a Legacy Stone placement ceremony by her family along with the Board of Directors, who purchased a second stone to highlight her dedication and thank her for her contributions to The Highground Story. We miss you Beth Martin!

WE WERE THERE: KOREA

September 15–November 29, 2020

We Were There Phase One is complete! It has been an amazing journey to work on the *We Were There: Korea* project. The people we have met, the stories we have heard and the materials we have seen, have all given us a new understanding of how our Korean Veterans lived.

The Highground hosted a Grand Opening for *We Were There: Korea* on Saturday, September 19th. The opening started with a formal escort for the families of our Wisconsin Medal of Honor Recipients at noon. A ceremony

with Medal of Honor Recipient Einar Ingman's daughters, Mary and Karen, along with Medal of Honor Recipient Mitchell Red Cloud Jr's daughter, Annita Red Cloud, as our keynote speakers, was held at 12:30pm that day. Guests were treated to a lunch following the ceremony and then the doors to the Museum were opened for all to enjoy *We Were There: Korea*.

The exhibit will remain on display at The Highground Museum through the end of November. We hope you can make plans

to visit The Highground and experience "a-day-in-the-life" of the 79 Korean Veterans who shared their experiences with us. Stay tuned for photos and highlights from the opening in your next newsletter and on our website at thehighground.us.

Anyone who is interested in contributing materials for the other phases (WWII, Vietnam and GWOT) or would like to make a donation to help support the project, can contact June at WeWereThere@thehighground.us.



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.

HOLIDAY & THE WARTIME HOME FRONT

December 5, 2020–January 31, 2021

The Highground Museum exhibition will give visitors the story of how holidays were celebrated throughout the year during our country's war time history; both on the front lines and the home front. The exhibit will reveal real stories of our service men & women along with the struggles and support that were taking place on the home front. The Highground will also be taking donations of

non-perishable items and winter clothing (new socks, new or very gently used winter outerwear, disposable hand warmers, sleeping bags) to distribute to homeless veterans and veterans in need. We are also taking financial donations to purchase additional items that are needed by the veterans we serve. The collection site will be at the Museum. Join us on Saturday, Dec. 5th at 1pm for the Grand Opening!



Photo credit: "Christmas Dinner at Camp Doniphan, OK"; National Archives, US Army Center of Military History

We will also be hosting a Collection Drive for homeless Veterans and Veterans in need

VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION

October 3, 2020



A Vietnam Veterans Reunion will be held at The Highground on Saturday, October 3rd at noon. Vietnam Veterans and spouses are invited to join the informal gathering. In addition to providing an opportunity for Vietnam Veterans to meet and share stories, there will also be a Vietnam War UH-1H Huey helicopter landing at the Park (weather permitting, and landing time TBA), a trailered UH-1H onsite courtesy of VVA 331, and a Veteran's lunch.

Our special guest will be author BJ Prior. BJ worked as a flight attendant with Continental Airlines for 40 years. She flew MAC Operations, transporting soldiers during the Vietnam War. During the reunion, she will share her stories,

compassion, and connections with those she considers her "men of valor" during the Vietnam War, which she wrote about in her book, "Behind My Wings."

While at the Park, visitors can enjoy the beautiful fall colors of the 500,000 forested-acres from the Plaza; tour the tributes; explore the new exhibit *We Were There: Korea*; all in the company and camaraderie of fellow Vietnam Veterans. Social distancing will be practiced outdoors and face coverings are required inside The Highground Gift Shop and Museum. Please RSVP to Theresa by emailing her at museum@thehighground.us or by calling her at 715-743-4224.

The Season of Giving will be here soon, starting with "Giving Tuesday" on December 1st. Please keep us in your thoughts while making your contributions. If you are looking for ways to support our organization, visit donations page at thehighground.us/about-us/donate

*The
Season
of
Giving*

HONOR STONES

2020 Wrap-up and 2021 Information

2020 proved to be interesting for the stone program. With some purchasers and honorees keeping their early summer date selection for one reason or another to the new purchasers and those delaying their dedication to the last ceremony of the year in October, the program helped maintain The Highground and keep “the lights on”.

Proceeds from the stone sales support the Park’s ongoing maintenance projects and help pay the bills so the doors remain open for visitors. This program is a wonderful way to honor and celebrate loved ones who are still with us as well as those who have passed away. The stones make a great gift for those who are hard to buy for or seem to have everything. We celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, “remembering you”, Christmas, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, “just because” and “we love you”. Once in granite and with the creation of the Registry Book, a true legacy is formed for future generations to learn what we did the day of the ceremony and beyond that. Registry Books continue to grow as the honoree’s life unfolds. Have you submitted an update to your book? Registry Books are for those with stones placed in their honor.



We already have stone placement ceremonies scheduled for 2021. Some are the ones who couldn’t come this year due to the pandemic, some for other health reasons or life changes, and some are new purchases from those looking for a special gift for an upcoming occasion. There is a limited number of stones that can be placed at each ceremony. Some people are making plans now, so they do not lose out on a special date. To secure your date, call Kay at 715-743-4224 or send an email to donations@thehighground.us with your request and payment. Wording on the stone does not have to be finalized until six weeks prior to the ceremony date as payment will guarantee your date of choice. Applications are available on our website, on the “Honor Stone” page, at thehighground.us/honor-stones. We are looking forward to an exciting and busy year!

You can apply online or print the application and mail it to:
The Highground, PO Box 457, Neillsville, WI 54456.

\$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 would 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?

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Chris Pettis



I was challenged to participate in the 36th Annual Bike Tour, by Mr. Mike Gleisner, about a month before the ride. Being a Marine, I accepted. I purchased a used bike, new riding and safety equipment, and then it all sat in my garage until the day of the ride. My butt had about 20 seconds in the seat and the new tires were not even dirty. Never in my life had I ridden more than a few miles at a time, let alone 40-60 miles in a day. My wife said I was an idiot to even try it. Day 1: I had two mechanical difficulties, one was a quick fix in the parking lot, the other was about eight miles into the ride, leaving me walking instead of riding. Luckily, after a few minutes, I was picked up by a passing vehicle, conveniently a Navy Vietnam Veteran, (never thought I would be getting a ride from the Navy again). I was able to make it to the Sports Den in Marshfield, get the bike repaired, and then meet back up with the riders to painfully complete that day's route.

Day 2: I did not ride as there were two stone ceremonies at The Highground. Day 3: I rode with the Western route, and oh did it hurt! And do you know what? I would do it all over again. Here's why: As I'm peddling my butt off to keep up with the experienced riders (which was all of them) my legs were on fire, my bottom was beyond sore from that stupid bike seat, and low and behold a hill...or in my case a mountain. Struggling to climb that mountain, I started to get passed by another rider, she starts talking to me, asking questions, I'm answering them and the next thing I know I am at the top of this hill, coasting down the other side and she takes off ahead of me. A half mile later another darn mountain, the pain in my legs is almost unbearable, my bottom feels like I was sitting on a corn cob, and all I want to do is give up. Another rider starts to pass, he strikes up a conversation with me and again, I made it to the top and coasted down the hill. Every hill continues to be a larger, harder hill to climb, filled with unbelievable pain in my legs, bottom and chest. I thought several times I should just give up and quit, yet there was always someone there to get me to the top and finish the ride.

I'm going to take you on a different type of bike ride on roads named PTSD, TBI, and Military Sexual Trauma. These roads have hills named depression, nightmares, anger, sleeplessness, feelings of hopelessness, isolation, anxiety, stress, loss of interest in life. These are just some of the many mountains on this ride.

22 service members a day across this country, either during service or after service, commit suicide. Others fall to alcohol and drugs to help deal with their symptoms. Some overdose, some make bad decisions and are incarcerated, sometimes up to life. Others have difficulty adjusting, unable to maintain a job or become homeless with little to no desire to make a change in their life. Couples divorce and families are torn apart, only compounding these symptoms. All of this is preventable!

The vision of The Highground and Camp Victory is that prevention—to assist Veterans in overcoming those mountains in life with not only hunts and Veterans retreats, but by adding couples and family retreats. With the help of mental health professionals, we will provide them with the tools needed to help overcome their adversity, provide continued support and make lifetime friends. Couples or families can get away from the stressors of life and focus on what's important, each other, and start the process of healing. The goal is to provide a place where they can build a bond with others who have the same struggles and provide each other with a strong support system. Will you help us help them climb those mountains? – Chris

Board of Directors

Past 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, WI

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

Lisa Smith

Rayle Winegarden

Abby Meshnick

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Highground is planning a \$4M Expansion Campaign called *The Highground Rising*. Check out our Campaign logo below!

Campaign goals will improve services and facilities for Veterans and their families by providing the following:

- Increased financial stability and long-term sustainability with the pay-off of the \$450,000 mortgage
- Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring access to the entire park and all memorial sites for disabled Veterans and visitors
- A new 12,000 square-foot Welcome and Visitor Center, with space for larger events, meetings, and programs, as well as mental health services
- Improved parking, allowing for safer access to memorials and the Welcome and Visitor Center

We are sharing what is called our Case Statement or rationale for the project with supporters soon. If you are interested in reading this document, we'd love your feedback. If you would like to help, send an email to Bonnie at admin@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224. Then, we'll share the Case Statement, FAQ document and a short questionnaire with you so you can provide your input.



And one more thing! Can you help introduce The Highground to your friends, neighbors and fellow Veterans -- anyone who you think would be interested in learning about our mission? Please email or call Bonnie at the number above. Huge thanks to our dedicated campaign committee volunteers to-date. We are so thankful for your expertise!

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.

WISH LIST

Museum and Education Programming:

- Funding for archival quality storage items (\$1,500)
- New or good quality black or natural wood picture frames (size: 8 x 10 or larger up to poster size).
- Funding for "Women in the Military" Exhibit. This exhibit is being created as a collaboration with a diverse group of female Veterans as a healing project and educational public exhibit. As part of the exhibition, the women are creating a quilt communicating their personal military service experiences and honoring all female Veterans. Funding is required to cover the costs of the quilting materials (\$1,000)
- Funding for a Winter Veterans Retreat which would combine PTSD therapeutic workshops with winter outdoor activities. (\$2,000)

Miscellaneous items:

- Mannequin Heads
- Camp Chairs for Retreats
- Funding for stain for the Liberty Bell frame, Gift Shop and trail benches
- Gravel for the Pavilion area

To support any of these initiatives, email Kay at donations@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.



For More Information, Contact 715-743-4224

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

Find us somewhere on Social Media!



The Highground Newsletter is published by the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project Inc. P.O. Box 457 Neillsville, WI 54456. Printed in the USA. Entire contents copyright 2020. All rights reserved. Reproduction of materials herein is prohibited except by written permission of The Highground. Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material. Publisher reserves the right to publish, in whole or part, all letters received. Opinions expressed in The Highground Newsletter are not necessarily those held by the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project Inc.

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.

I would like more information about:

- _____ Upcoming Events and Fundraising Calendar
- _____ Honor Stones
- _____ 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/Memorial Day
- _____ Ride to Remember™
- _____ The Highground Museum
- _____ Camp Victory
- _____ Legacy Honor Stone Ceremonies
- _____ Military Working Dog Honor Stone Ceremonies
- _____ Korean War Honor Stone Ceremonies
- _____ Persian Gulf Honor Stone Ceremonies

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Questions or Comments _____

DONATION HIGHLIGHTS – THANK YOU!



Thanks to Carol Shea (in memory of her late husband Mel) – there is no longer a leak in the pond! While walking through the Meditation Garden, Carol noted the Fountain of Tears was not flowing. In memory of Mel, Carol made a financial contribution to get it fixed. **Thank you to Guy Metals, Kulas Body Shop and Jakel Plumbing** too (all located in Abbotsford) for creating the base of the pond to look so natural and not be noticeable as a fake bottom.

Thank you to the Listeman Foundation for approving a grant to keep the grounds looking great. A big issue was identified at the Persian Gulf Tribute. Originally designed to have flowers between the barriers, a necessary foundation was not installed prior to adding more stones. With the heavy rainfall this year, the “toe” of the footprint has been washing away. The Grounds Committee, headed by Board Member Bob Barth, has taken on the task of reinforcing the area.

Thank you to the American Legion Riders Association of WI District 11 (Eagle River) for the \$200 donation and for supporting The Highground for over ten years. On August 16, they stopped by to present us with this most recent donation. We challenge all American Legion Riders to join them in helping us continue our mission to Honor, Educate and Heal our Veterans, their families and visitors.



Dave Droste, owner of Hardee's in Neillsville, Colby and Meford, is a strong supporter of The Highground. For ten years, Dave has arranged “Share Nights” at his restaurants to raise funds for The Highground fireworks display. Hardee's was closed this year due to the pandemic. That prevented Dave from organizing the three share nights he normally does. Upon reopening, and with people taking advantage of the drive-thru, Dave planned an all-day event to help raise funds that totalled \$580! Dave has often said, “I so appreciate everything our military has done for this country; this is a way, even though small, that I can say thank you.” Thank you Dave—we value your dedicated commitment and support.

We are very grateful to Roy and Ginny Franz for continuing to help with our printing needs, especially during this challenging year. With the large newsletter mailings and the need for the small donation envelopes, Roy has taken it upon himself to provide them to us—not with a check but by physically printing roughly 18,000 (per mailing) from his basement! Roy and Ginny have also found a way to spread the word by adding the extra messaging to the outside of the envelope. Thank you!

Thank you to the Veterans Center of Menomonie for their generous donation of \$10,000. The Center was forced to shut its doors, as many have this year, leaving a sum of funds in their account. After coming to The Highground for a tour and liking what the organization is doing to support our Veterans and their families, the proprietors surprised Chris Pettis, Executive Director, with a \$10,000 check as their way of saying they appreciate the mission to Honor, Educate and Heal. In this year of uncertainty, we are thankful it hasn't dampened the hearts of our generous visitors.



Some very special visitors, 17 members from the Beaches Corner Tractor Club, traveled to The Highground on August 21 to make a donation... on their tractors! Charles Larson from the club said it was a beautiful day for a drive. The group is from the Trempealeau area and tries to make the trip once a year. Thank you all!

Thank you to the Wisconsin Rapids 32nd Red Arrow Club for their donation of \$250. The Highground would like to recognize the support provided over the years by the Wisconsin Rapids area and specifically the Red Arrow Club.



We wanted to tell you about the special donation we received from June and Bill Warren. June has crocheted several “warming stars” lap blankets for use by Veterans in wheelchairs as well as other beautiful items. She also donated the replica Revolutionary War military overcoat she made which will have a good home in our Museum. During our conversation, we were pleasantly surprised to learn that Bill, a Vietnam Veteran, was part of the original crew that constructed The Highground Plaza, working with the 724th Eng. Battalion. Thank you both!

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
styles
online



\$36.95

Two-tone Full Zip Sweatshirt
Perfect for those cool summer nights
More styles available in-store and online



\$22.95

Support Our Troops
Windsocks



\$18.00

Ride to Remember™ Challenge Coin
Marking the 20th anniversary of the Ride



Gift cards are
always available!



\$27.95

Solar Stake Watering Can
Add a little evening sparkle to your yard with one of
our solar stake watering cans. Available in four styles.



\$22.95

Garden-size Chimes
The perfect addition to your flower
garden or yard ("family" or "hope")

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020

CALL US AT 1-715-743-4224

web: THEHIGHGROUND.SHOP | **Email:** store@thehighground.us

Shop online anytime at thehighground.shop

15



2020 marks the 25th Anniversary of the National Native American Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It is the first national memorial to come to The Highground. This bronze sculpture, designed by Madison sculptor and WWII Veteran Harry Whitehorse, was dedicated in 1995.

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

Harold R Anderson
 John A Anderson
 Helmer O Baland
 Russell L Barton
 John L Berg
 Truman A Bernard
 William R Block
 Charles G Bong
 Bjarne Bratten
 Donald R Bridwell
 Rolland G Bullion
 Gordon W Cape
 Warren E Crowther
 Howard G Daniel
 Raymond L Darnell
 Leonard N De Nucci
 Robert C Dean
 John R Delaney
 Lorenz W Dorn
 James L Du Bois
 Wilburt J Dunn
 Vernon W Eastman
 Edwin Elliott
 Leo R Wschan
 Earl E Evans
 Robert W Field
 John R Firch
 Alfred B Ford
 William C Fredrick
 Berman W Callion
 Thomas M Crohman
 Jacob Habendott
 Russell P Hansen
 Donald W Hayes
 James E Held
 Eugene J Heroux

Wallace A Hofmann
 Gordon J Howard
 Harold H Jessen
 Donald Johnston
 John C Jollimore
 William D Jordan
 Joseph J Kalafut

Korean War

Earl Gerald Bumpas
 Herbert H Burdick
 Joseph S Burzynski
 Richard Bruce Caldwell
 Thomas Tomaw Caldwell
 Thomas Cannizzaro
 Henry B Carlson
 Stanley Joseph Checki
 Thomas John Cherf
 Antonino Chiarello
 Boris Robert Christ
 Stanley Reuben Christianson
 Donald Gene Christophersen
 Everell V Clanin
 John Powell Clark
 Edward H Collins
 Victor J Condroski
 Stanley Conhartoski
 Michael Everett Cooley
 Clarence Adell Cooper
 Frederick A Corbine
 Lamoine V Cornican
 Bobby Doster Correll
 Robert A Couey
 Reginald J Coutant
 Clare E Cowee
 Eugene R Creuziger
 Dominik Cupryniak

Harold J Dagnon
 Delford M Dalberg
 George Guy Damico
 Louis T Damitz
 Earl Leroy Dansberry
 Richard Dansberry
 James D Delaney
 Denton Keith Delong
 Leslie James Deluca
 Frederick J Dempcy
 Philip V Deragon
 Billy R Devoll
 John F Dewey
 Charles A Dickman
 Jack L Dinkel

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

Jesse B Albrecht
 Tracy Lynn Alger
 Robert J Basham
 Evan A Bixler
 Andrew L Bossert
 Ryan J Cantafio
 Stephen Castner
 Steven J Christofferson
 Eric D Clark
 Todd R Cornell
 Kenneth M Cross
 Grant Allen Dampier
 Trevor J Diesing
 Derek A Dobogai
 Donald W Eacho
 Benjamin C Edinger
 Christopher S Frost
 Anthony "Alex" Gaunky
 Louis A Griesse
 Matthew T Grimm
 Timothy R Hanson
 Alun R Howells
 Rachael L Hugo
 Isaiah R Hunt
 Jamie Jaenke
 Ben D Jansky
 Ryan D Jopek

Matthew R Kading
 Charles A Kaufman
 Tyler J Kritz
 Kevin M Kryst
 Jason F Lemke
 Keith E Lloyd
 Mark A Maida
 John J Mattek
 Andrew G Matus
 James McDonald
 Brian K Naseman
 Richard J Nelson
 Cheryl LaBeau-O'Brien
 Carl Zabel
 Robert J Cook
 Matthew D Hermanson