

The Highground NEWSLETTER

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

September 2021



The Highground 37th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour Raises over \$57K

2021 is the "Come Back Year". In its 37th year, The Highground Heroes Ride Bike Tour took place Jul. 30–Aug. 1, with 114 riders completing over 700 miles and raising over \$57,000!

With The Highground as their final destination, a few of the riders from the Northern Route began their journey from Chili to Hayward on Wednesday, July 28. The remaining 29 riders with the Northern Route were led out of Hayward by Mike and Kathy Gleisner, covering 170 miles. The other three routes began their journey on Friday, July 30. Cole Peterson and Jerry Simon led 47 riders with the Western Route out of New Richmond, completing 165 miles. Traveling from the east for 155 miles, Jim and Curt Braatz led 17 riders with the Eastern Route from Appleton. Kathy Heit and Mary Boortz led the way from Cottage Grove for the Southern Route, covering 182 miles with 14 riders. Terri Stott, the leader of the Southwestern Route from La Crosse, was unable to ride this year; however, she is making plans for 2022 and joined The Highground on Sunday, Aug. 1 to welcome her fellow routes to the Park.

ARTICLE CONT. PAGE 2

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

IN MEMORY OF

George Asher
Mr. Becker
Leonard Buchanan
Phil Cler
Bruce Crockett
William (Bill) Fenrich
Arnold Gafner
Jerry Galston
Leon Genz
Frank Gittins

Rick J. Grueneberg
Harlan Heimke
Darwin Johnson
Verland Kasten
Carl Koss
Albert Kunze
Bernie Laabs
Charles Mueller
John Mueller
Gladys & CL O'Kelly's
wedding anniversary

Tom Pflieger
Herman Preuse
Snick Quicker
Lloyd Rectenwald
Gordon Schuster
Paul Sepulveda
Herbert Simon
Shawn Starck
Joseph Vargo
Allen Zimmermann

IN HONOR OF

Dick Jones
Mike Moran's 80th birthday
Paul M. Stevenson
Harold "Pappy" Doe
VFW Auxiliary Post #8834
from Hartford

37TH ANNUAL HEROES RIDE RECAP (cont.)

After the two and a half day trip, every route was met by family, friends and guests cheering them on as they rode down past The Highground Liberty Bell. The riders enjoyed a filling meal which was followed by the traditional ceremony. As the riders and SAG personnel packed up their bikes, said their goodbyes and headed home, it became abundantly clear that it's never about one person, one event, one success or one failure; it's about **WHY**—for our Veterans. Every one of the 37 bike tours has supported The Highground's efforts to provide Veterans and Veteran families support and resources to help them heal from the wounds of war through post-traumatic stress (PTS) programs, Veteran retreats, and most of all through the tranquility of being at The Highground and Camp Victory at no cost.

"The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remain as your legacy." – Kalu NDukwe Kalu



To all the Heroes who rode previous years and this year, everyone with The Highground is truly grateful and looks forward to seeing them in 2022.

The Highground also thanks the event sponsors, past and present, whose support has helped make this event a success: Central Wisconsin Broadcasting, Neillsville; Falls Meats Services, Pigeon Falls; JBC Screenprinting & Embroidery LLC, Neillsville; The Sports Den, Marshfield; Edward Jones-Joe Mueting, McFarland; Doar Drill and Skow, Woodbury; VFW Post #1037, King/Waupaca; Oak Avenue Community Center, Marshfield; American Legion Lorretta/Draper Post #394, Draper; Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, Ladysmith; American Legion Post #268, Bruce; Bruce Kiwanis, Bruce; VFW Post #9464, Cornell; Kwik Trip; American Legion Post #118, Cornell; WWIS Radio, Inc., Black River Falls; J & L Auto Repair, Menomonie; Skyward, Stevens Point; American Legion Bohlman Grimes Post #1904, Fond du Lac; American Legion Post #301, Woodville; American Legion; VFW Post #6550, Eleva/Strum; American Legion Post #324 & VFW Post #8514, Osseo; Lowe Advertising, New Richmond; and all the individuals who sponsored a rider or route.

*'Tis the
Season
Giving^{of}*

The Season of Giving will be here before we know it. Please, consider The Highground 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; the Gift Shop and Museum hours are 10am-5pm (10am-4pm in the winter).

2021 International Day of Peace SEPT 21

The Highground will recognize the International Day of Peace on September 21 at the Dove Mound tribute. We invite poets and musicians who would like to participate to contact us now. Call Theresa at 715-743-5224 or email museum@thehighground.us.

Fall Bake Sale OCT 2

Eating for a "Cause"! The "Sweet Platoon" will have tasty fall sweets, breads and more for sale. Proceeds will help to provide and improve The Highground Veterans programs and experiences. Don't miss out! If you would like to contribute, email Bonnie at events@thehighground.us.

The Highground Education Days OCT 5-8

The Highground comes to life for Education Days from 9:30am to 2:30pm Oct. 5-8! Students in grades 5 through 9 are invited to tour the Park with a knowledgeable guide to discover the history and unexpected stories about The Highground, the Tributes and our Veterans military service.

Bowling for The Highground OCT 9

It's official—There will be a bowling fundraiser for The Highground at Strike Time Lanes in Neillsville! More information will be available on our website Calendar of Events at thehighground.us/calendar.

Veterans Day Ceremony NOV 11

In honor of our Veterans from all eras, all are invited to attend The Highground's Annual Veterans Day Ceremony beginning at 3pm. The length and onsite activities will be determined by the weather.

2021 Calendar of Events

2022 Event Calendar Coming Soon!

JAN 31 8th Annual Winter Bowl
APR or MAY Maggie Mae Benefit Concert **CANCELED**
MAY 12-15 Spring Work Week
MAY 22 Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Vietnam Reunion; Spring Bake Sale
MAY 31 The Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony; "Lost 74" Dedication
JUNE 5 Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
JUNE 12 Korean and Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Korean War Reunion
JUNE 26 Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk
JULY 9-11 5th Annual Men's Veterans Retreat
JULY 17 Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
JULY 30-Aug 1 37th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (ceremony Aug 1)
JULY 31 Legacy Stone Ceremonies
AUG 20-21 Veterans Freedom Fest **CANCELED**
AUG 21 21st Annual Ride to Remember™ Motorcycle Ride & Rally
SEPT 10-12 3rd Annual Women's Veterans Retreat
SEPT 18 Military Working Dog and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
SEPT 21 The Highground International Day of Peace Event
OCT 2 Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Fall Bake Sale
OCT 5-8 The Highground Education Days
OCT 9 Bowling for The Highground
OCT 15-16 Fall Cleanup Days
NOV 11 Veterans Day Ceremony; Honoring Our Veterans Raffle Drawing
NOV 15, 2021-MAR 1, 2022 The Highground Holiday Lights
NOV 30 Season of Giving – Pledge your support for The Highground
DEC 4 The Highground Christmas Concert **CANCELED**
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 24 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

To volunteer, visit thehighground.us/about-us/get-involved

A MESSAGE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

To date, we have raised \$1.2 million toward our official goal of \$4 million. In order to proceed with final building plans for the new Welcome Center, we need a minimum of \$2.5 million or double what has been pledged up to now. We are coming up against a critical date, that being the October 8th board meeting at which time a decision needs to be made regarding final architectural plans and proceeding with a December bid process. Without sufficient pledges, we shall have to postpone the building until 2023 while we attempt to raise more funds.



We continue to search for companies, foundations, organizations and individuals who may have an interest in Veterans organizations. To say the least, it has been slow going, especially the farther afield we go from Neillsville. We will need your help to bring this campaign to a successful conclusion.

I will ask two things of you: (1) If you have not supported the campaign with a contribution or pledge, please consider doing so prior to October 1st. You will find a pledge form on The Highground Rising campaign website at **campaign.thehighground.us**. (2) If you know of a business or organization that is Veteran friendly, please ask them if we can present them with information about The Highground and Camp Victory which may lead to them supporting us financially. We cannot count on other people to simply step forward and fund our dreams. We need every Veteran with a connection to The Highground to pick up the mantle and advocate for the future of our organization.

On a brighter note, I have never seen a larger crowd for a legacy stone ceremony than on the morning of July 31st. If you do not think The Highground has an impact on the lives of Veterans and their families, you should have been there. Tears, cheers and memories made are the best way to describe it.

We are preparing to once again host school children in October during Education Days. In 2019, prior to COVID, we hosted 1200 children over a four-day period. Since the destruction of history and historical narratives is now in vogue, it is more important than ever that we educate our children about their forefather's bravery, sacrifice and service.

Won't you help us keep these vital programs moving forward through either your contribution of time or money?

Gary Weirauch, Board Chair
"Veterans still serving America"



21ST ANNUAL RIDE TO REMEMBER RECAP

On Saturday, Aug. 21, approximately 111 riders gathered for the 21st Annual Ride to Remember® at the American Legion in Neillsville. Throughout the day, riders enjoyed scenic rides around Clark and Jackson County backroads and even some on the ATV trails. As the majority of the riders took the traditional parade route through Neillsville, several stopped at Strike Time Restaurant & Lanes where they were welcomed by Veterans organization Every Third Saturday's event guests. The band Home Free dedicated a patriotic song for their efforts in supporting Veterans.



As the riders arrived at The Highground, they were greeted by the ringing of The Highground Liberty Bell and served BBQ pork and fixings, which was followed by a short ceremony. Chris Pettis, Executive Director, reminded all present of the tremendous sacrifices made by those who “put on the uniform and took the oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic.” **Through registrations, donations, raffles and sponsorships, the event raised \$6,662. These funds will help support the Veterans programs The Highground offers to Veterans and their families at no cost.**

Thank you Missy and Paul Hubing of Neillsville, Bill Flemal with VFW 7th Dist. Riders and Ray Gjerdahl with Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 for leading the rides; all the volunteers; Celia Sturzl, Taps; Sarah Baldrige, National Anthem; Skip Klabon, Invocation; American Legion Post #324 and Sons of American Legion Squad #324, Osseo; Mavis Burkhalter, Cummins Filtration, Neillsville; Redline Design and Sign, Osseo; Riverside Auto Sales & Riverside Rentals, Black River Falls; Theisen's Home-Farm-Auto, Black River Falls; Bar BK Leather, Thorp; Cannabis Cultivators of Clark County LLC, Neillsville; Marks Made 4 U Furniture and more, Neillsville; American Legion Post #73; the Neillsville Police Dept; Falls Meat Services, Inc., Pigeon Falls; Central Wisconsin Broadcasting; Close Up Apparel, Eau Claire; WWIS; and all the past and present riders.

Mark your calendar for August 20, 2022 for the 22nd Ride to Remember!

MEMORIAL DAY/"LOST 74" TRIBUTE RECAP



On Monday, May 31st, guests gathered for the Memorial Day Ceremony and dedication of the “Lost 74” tribute.

In 2020, this new memorial was placed in the shade of a tree in The Highground Meditation Garden to pay tribute to all 74 sailors, and more specifically the three Wisconsin sailors; James R. Cmeyla, 24, of Luxemburg; Michael A. Orlikowski, 28, Milwaukee; and Jon W. Thomas, 22, of Delavan, who died at sea June 3, 1969 aboard the USS Frank E. Evans when it collided with the HMAS Melbourne, an Australian carrier, during a training exercise. Due to COVID, the dedication was postponed until this year.

During this year's ceremony, in the tranquil setting of the Meditation Garden, The Highground hosted USS Frank E. Edwards survivors and the family members of James, Michael and Jon as the memorial stone was unveiled. Terri Vjere, a USS Frank E. Edwards survivor, states “We are so pleased with the placement of this memorial.”

The Highground is honored to work with the USS Frank E. Evans Association (DD 754) and to have USS Frank E. Evans survivors and family members present for the dedication of the stone on Memorial Day.

EXPLORING PTSD EXHIBIT

On display through Sept. 28, 2021

This important exhibition seeks to provide education about PTSD – the history and current thoughts on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – along with the primary goal of offering ideas and workshops to Veterans and families that may help them with their personal post-traumatic stress journeys.

Healing through art has been established as an effective means of allowing a Veteran (or civilian) to express their thoughts and experiences through a creative process, thus encouraging them to be more open to sharing their experiences with fellow Veterans and loved ones. Healing through art also allows the viewer, even civilian viewers, to better see and understand the complex depths of thought and emotion that Veterans managing post-traumatic stress are experiencing.

Creative arts are almost limitless in their variety and composition. To be able to transfer memories and thoughts to objects made by hand, freeform art, words written in a journal, and an endless number of other expressive activities can start the healing process, allow the person to focus on the creation, and build a sense of direction along with a sense of release and freedom.

Together, The Highground and Veteran Artist Shawn Ganther have created this “Healing Through Art” exhibit as a central part of the “Exploring PTSD” exhibition. It’s an incredible collection of items created by several Veteran artists from across the United States. These items, accompanied by the artist’s biography and vision of how finding art has helped them and others through hard times, invite the viewer to realize the power of what is possible through art.

Veterans and loved ones are also invited to visit a workshop space in The Highground Museum to sample and experience art projects they can work on there or take home.

The “Exploring PTSD” exhibition will also feature interactive space for Veterans and families affected by PTSD to leave written messages – to share their own struggles and to support others who are struggling. It has been said that loneliness can be the greatest struggle of PTSD. For them to see that they are not alone may help them more than we realize.

Part of The Highground’s ongoing mission is to assist Veterans and families managing PTSD. The “Exploring PTSD” exhibition was made possible by sponsors Skip and Debbie Klabon and the generosity of the Veteran artists. Individuals and businesses that would like to sponsor The Highground’s Veterans programs are encouraged to contact Theresa at 715-743-4224 or by email to museum@thehighground.us



LEAGUE OF WIVES EXHIBIT

On display through Sept. 28, 2021



Don't miss the opportunity to view the "League of Wives" exhibit, leaving The Highground Museum on Sept. 29! All the way from the Robert Dole Institute at the University of Kansas, The "League of Wives" exhibit is a multi-faceted exhibit on the intriguing and little-known story of how the wives of the American POWs during the Vietnam War took on society and the U.S. Government to bring their husbands home. This exhibit was curated by Heath Hardage Lee, author of "The League of Wives" (the movie rights to the book have already been purchased by actress and producer Reese Witherspoon). The exhibit is an amazing study about how the wives of these American POWs banded together to bring their husbands home, defying the U.S. government and cultural norms along the way; coalescing the nation behind them in their mission. The exhibit will only be at The Highground Museum until Sept. 28th and includes many original items from the women's lives and their courageous story.

WOMEN IN THE MILITARY EXHIBIT

Oct. 2 – Nov. 30, 2021

Coming soon!

If you are a female veteran, or if you have a female veteran past or present in your family, The Highground Museum would like to add "your story" to the upcoming Museum exhibit "Women in the Military"! It could be something as simple as a statement about when and where you (or female family member) served along with personal thoughts on the service, to a larger display of photographs and sharing more information on the time in service. The exhibit will show the evolution of women in the U.S. military through current times—how the country had to change its cultural and societal norms as the courage of pioneering women demanded it. The exhibit will share stories from a wide range of experiences, covering the achievements and positive gains from serving along with the serious issues and challenges, such as military sexual trauma and Post Traumatic Stress that some women in the military have faced.



The Highground Museum will also be hosting the Wisconsin Veterans Museum new banner display "I am not Invisible" stories of women in the military in this exhibition. To be a part of the exhibition or for more information, please contact Theresa by email to museum@thehighground.us or by calling 715-743-4224.

\$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 so many of the Park improvements that are identified every year! Will you help us continue the mission by pledging \$40?

PACIFIC THEATER EXHIBIT

Dec. 4 – Mar. 6, 2022

Coming soon!



Mark your calendar to visit The Highground Museum during the coming winter months! Beginning on Dec. 4, the Museum will be filled with exhibits, memorabilia, and personal stories from the military and civilian history of the Pacific Theater during WWII. The creation of this exhibit has centered around the outstanding donation by John and Mary Vedder of a family heirloom—a Japanese flag from an area near Kita in North Iwo Jima that was brought home from WWII by John's father, Dr. James Vedder. A large part of the exhibition will consist of fascinating "real person" exhibits from families that have donated memorabilia and documented stories to The Highground from family members who served in the

Pacific Theater during WWII. Additional exhibits will be created with the assistance of Carl Bogar from Historic Military Impressions and Troy Buddenhagen. To add to the military Pacific Theater exhibits will be two very unique exhibits focusing on the civilian costs to humanity during WWII. A printed exhibit from the Vancouver Island Military Museum in British Columbia, CA (vimms.ca) titled "Women Beyond the Wire" will also be on display. This exhibit tells the story of civilian POWs in the Pacific Theater in addition to the military POWs. A Smithsonian educational poster display "Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans & WWII" will also be part of the Pacific Theater WWII exhibition. This display tells the story of how the lives of Japanese Americans were uprooted and confined, losing much of what they had prior to WWII, and undergoing an extreme prejudice during this time of a nation at war with their ancestral home country.

To complete the exhibition, a very special collaboration with many volunteers throughout this past year, has resulted in over 1,000 handmade origami cranes that will be displayed (on special exhibit frames made by Skip Klabon) as a hope and testament to peace and as a way of honoring all the lives lost throughout the globe during WWII. For more information about our exhibits, contact Theresa by email to museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

SPRING BAKE SALE RECAP

Operation Sweet Tooth raises \$1,682! From pecan pies to homemade dog bones, the "Sweet Platoon" made sure there was a variety of baked goods to choose from at our annual Spring Bake Sale held on Sat., May 22. **The Highground is sincerely grateful for the returning Pittsville American Legion Auxiliary and Augusta American Legion Auxiliary bakers. Joining the Sweet Platoon this year were porch greeters, members of The Highground staff and many more individuals who displayed their goodies in creative containers—making them irresistible to the passerby.** All the proceeds from the bake sale have been designated for improving Veteran experiences through events and activities like the flight of the Vietnam Era Huey brought in on May 22 for the Vietnam Veterans Reunion. The pulse of the incoming Huey brings hope to Veterans as that sound meant support, rescue and evacuation.

Thank you goes out to all the consumers of the baked goodies for supporting The Highground and its mission to Honor, Educate and Heal. If you didn't make it to the Spring Bake Sale, no worries—our Fall Bake Sale is scheduled for **Saturday, Oct 2.**

MALE VETERANS RETREAT RECAP

From Bald Eagles to BBQ, the annual three-day Male Veterans Retreat was an exciting and healing event!

The Male Veterans Weekend Retreat, held July 9-11, was a great time with a gathering of a full camp of Veterans. After an evening tour of The Highground, the retreat was centered around the base location at Camp Victory. The three-day retreat weekend was filled with activities including a presentation by the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, MN; a Forest Walk by Healing Oak Nature Therapy; listening to guest speaker, Michael Orban (Vietnam Veteran, author and podcast journalist focusing on the realities of Post-Traumatic Stress management); Klabon's famous venison supper; music around the bonfire by Blaine Howard; and a workshop led by Scott Schultz of the Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy and the Arts.



Rounding out the weekend, was an amazing and tasty Sunday barbecue exhibition brought to the retreat by members of competitive BBQ teams! Mike and Nathan Schilling – (Smokin Highwaymen BBQ); Collin Arvey (Parrutheads Tact-I-Que); Dan Cehanovich (Squeal Team Six). The teams belong to “The Wisconsin BBQ Posse” (find them on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/438436589589624). The BBQ chefs educated the retreat attendees and staff on the full process of a successful BBQ; from meat selection, trimming, seasoning and, of course, the cooking. With the tempting smell of the cooking BBQ growing while the Veterans took part in other workshops throughout the morning, the group did not need instructions on the “eating” of the wide range of BBQ options that were served for lunch. What a great way to close a weekend of Veteran camaraderie at Camp Victory!



The Veterans Weekend Retreat is free for Veterans to attend because of the generosity of these sponsors: Alliance Bank, Gauger Ventures LLC, American Legion Post #354, Marshfield Professional Police Association, American Legion Phaneuf-Vanasse #111, Citizens State Bank of Loyal, Milwaukee Brewers, Cathy Lawrence – Scentsy, Festival Foods, Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, Central WI Broadcasting, WWIS, SCOPE Dept of Corrections, Marshfield Acupuncture & Precision Armament LLC, Green Bay Packers, The Vet Center, The Heartbeat Center for Arts & Literature. Skip &

Debbie Klabon, Bonnie Hennen, Michele Benson, Julie Diesing, Karen Habel, Hailey Lewan in memory of Don Marine, Larry & Judith Boyle, VFW Post 2490, Diane Vollrath in memory of Allen Zimmerman, United Vietnam Veterans, and the Moraine Motel.

The Highground's Male Veterans Weekend Retreats are open to any male Veteran of any age and service history. **The next three-day retreat with a focus on relaxation, PTS management information and a variety of accessible outdoor and creative activities will be held at Camp Victory July 8-10, 2022.** For information about becoming a retreat sponsor or attending the retreat, please contact Theresa by email to museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE CAMP VICTORY NEWS



EVENTS

On Friday, June 11, we were honored to have Major General (Retired) Robert Dees provide an inspirational presentation called "Supporting our Veterans with Resilience God Style!" at the 29 Pines in Chippewa Falls. We recognized and honored local Veterans and the businesses and organizations that support them!



On Saturday, June 12, Major General (Retired) Robert Dees spoke at Camp Victory. He spoke about his involvement with the National Centers for Healthy Veterans located in Altavista, Virginia that focuses on helping Veterans alleviate behavioral and mental health challenges. Their purpose is to "Return Healthy Veterans to America." Their mission goes hand-in-hand with the mission of Camp Victory and was a great resource to help us continue to heal Veterans and families at Camp Victory.

On Saturday, August 14, we held our 2nd Annual Open House. With beautiful weather, supporters gathered to tour the camp, enjoy food and fellowship, and experience the peaceful serenity of Camp Victory. We want to thank the volunteers and visitors who helped raise over \$14,000 through the purchase of raffle tickets and participation in a silent auction.

This fall, Camp Victory will host four, four-day guided archery deer hunts for the following groups:

- Vietnam Veterans: Oct. 20-23, 2021
- Purple Heart Recipients: Oct. 27-30, 2021
- WI Combat Veterans: Nov. 3-6, 2021
- Persian Gulf and Desert Storm Veterans: Nov. 10-13, 2021

These hunts provide an opportunity for our veterans to continue to heal through nature and camaraderie. Please contact Al Lamovec at 715-225-0154 to check for availability.



IMPROVEMENTS

Through generous donations, the campground restroom is now complete. It has a wheelchair-accessible women's and men's bathroom and a shower area.

FROM THE DIRECTOR Chris Pettis



I attended a speaking engagement last month presented by Major General (Retired) Robert Dees. His presentation was extremely informative and I benefited greatly from it. There were a couple of topics that really resonated with me that I will share with you. The first is Resilience. Are you a tennis ball or an egg? As many of us are faced with different obstacles and or adversity in our lives, how do we handle them? Do you bounce back from them or do you focus so much on them that it negatively affects your life and others around you, leaving you feeling broken and to never be put back together again?

The other topic was bitterness. He asked an attendee to eat a wedge of lemon. A distinguished, yet not so dapper Veteran volunteered and happily ate the lemon and with minimal, and I mean minimal, pressure, ate the rind also. I'm sure you can imagine the bitterness that he tasted. When asked if he wanted that taste to remain in his mouth all day, all week, all month or all year, the answer was NO every time. I'm sure there aren't many out there who would respond any other way. How do we get past the anger, unhappiness or resentment for something that happened in the past? This is not just a question to think about for Veterans, but for everyone.

I wish I had been more open to these simple concepts earlier in my life. I am sure if I had, I would have made better decisions, dealt with situations differently, and even maintained relationships. I know I can't go back to yesterday and change it; however, I can improve on today and every day after. Holding grudges, resentment or anger towards something or someone now seems meaningless and it only prolongs an internal and maybe even an external resolution.

So do we take corrective action? Unlike most animals, (as I have seen some pretty cunning critters) humans have the ability to reason and communicate through the "Effective" use of words and "Active" listening. Although we may have to agree to disagree with the other person's point of view, an understanding can still be met. In my opinion, how you convey your message, your choice of words, your demeanor and your willingness to listen decides conflict or resolution. Words are like a bullet, once they leave the chamber you can't take them back.

A background image for the newsletter sign-up section showing a close-up of a person in a military uniform, including a helmet and tactical gear, with a blurred background of trees.

**DO YOU KNOW A VETERAN WHO WE COULD
FEATURE IN AN UPCOMING NEWSLETTER?**

VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION RECAP

Over 80 Vietnam Veterans, families and friends gathered for an exciting Vietnam Veterans Reunion at The Highground on May 22, 2021. The day kicked off with The Annual Spring Big Bake Sale and the landing onsite of a UH-1H Huey helicopter which flew during the Vietnam War, piloted by Dave Schmitz, Sam Hammarback and crew. Military vehicles were brought in by Don Anibas and Troy Buddenhagen. Troy also brought with him an entire Vietnam War Living History group!



Erin Miller, author of “Wisconsin’s 37: The Lives of Those Missing in Action in the Vietnam War” was present for a book signing and was the guest speaker during the outdoor lunch. Taking advantage of the beautiful day, The Highground’s Big Map of the Vietnam War was brought out and was signed by several Vietnam Veterans and families of Vietnam veterans that are no longer with us. Many of the reunion attendees visited The Highground Museum and viewed the incredible story of the actions and resilience of the wives of American POWs during the Vietnam War, “The League of Wives” (this exhibit is covered in more detail in the “Museum exhibit

article” elsewhere in this newsletter). Other exhibits on display were the Reedsburg Area Historical Society’s banner exhibit on the POW camps which were in Wisconsin during WWII; the Wisconsin Veterans Museum’s “A Face For Every Name” banner display showing the photograph and name of every Wisconsin KIA during the Vietnam War; and The Highground’s special display of the men who still remain MIA from Wisconsin from the Vietnam War. Throughout the reunion, the tables were loud with conversation and laughter as Vietnam Veterans reconnected with old friends, made new friendships and shared the bond unique to Vietnam Veterans.

The 2022 Highground Vietnam Veterans Reunion will be scheduled in May / June, 2022. More information on the 2022 event will be listed on thehighground.us and in future newsletters and e-news (sign up for e-news now so you don’t miss any upcoming event information!)

PATRIOTIC QUILT RAFFLE

Calling all Quilters! We need your patriotic quilted creations for the 5th Annual Quilt Display and Raffle. 23 very happy winners ended 2020 on a cozy note. The quilts will be on display, as room allows in the Museum, starting December 1. Creations can be any size—wall hanging or lap size to king size. We ask that all projects be quilted and patriotic-themed to honor our Veterans.

Tickets are available for \$5 each or 5 for \$20. The drawing will be in The Highground Museum at noon on Saturday, December 18, 2021.



FEATURED ITEMS

GIFT SHOP SUMMER HOURS ARE 10AM TO 5PM DAILY
NEW CUSTOMERS: GET 15% OFF YOUR FIRST ONLINE PURCHASE!

We carry a variety of products for all, designed with those you love in mind. Check out our hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, jewelry, home decor and more in-store and online.

THEHIGHGROUND.SHOP

The store that supports the mission.



GET
15%
 OFF YOUR
 FIRST ONLINE
 PURCHASE

SEPT - NOV 2021



Sunflower Stake

1525

Spinning sunflower stake – add motion to flowerbeds or use as a walkway border.

\$8.95



Hot Air Balloon Stake

1526

SPatriotic sparkle hot air balloon stake makes a fun addition to flowerbeds.

\$19.95



Gift Card

N/A

Give your loved one a gift card from The Highground, perfect for any special occasion.

\$9.95



Flamingo Rain Gauge

4076

Bright pink flamingo rain gauge stake will look great in a back yard or garden.

\$27.95



Coloring Diamond Kite

799

SPatriotic sparkle hot air balloon stake makes a fun addition to flowerbeds.

\$5.95



Kids T-shirt

1141/1142

Green kids t-shirt with "My mommy/daddy wears combat boots" saying.

\$19.95

Call us at 715-743-4224

Email: store@thehighground.us

thehighground.shop

W7031 Ridge Road, Neillsville, WI 54456

Board of Directors

Chairman–Gary Weirauch
Neillsville, WI

Vice Chair–Gary Karczewski
LeRoy, IL

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

Michele Benson–Ripon, WI

Dominic Anderson–Richland Center, WI

Wayne Guenther–Strum, WI

Jim Hennen–Neillsville, WI

Executive Director

Chris Pettis
director@thehighground.us

Operations Manager

Randy Buchholz
ops@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

Maintenance

Mike Purgett

Gift Shop Staff

Roxane Purgett
Judy Quicker
Rayle Winegarden
Myrisa Pettis

THRIVENT CHOICE®

We're proud to be a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization. Through Thrivent's programs, we are eligible to receive grant dollars, fee-free donations, and support from Thrivent Action Team service projects. We have seen firsthand how much of an impact Thrivent's clients can make on our organization.

To date we have received thousands of dollars through this program, but it only works when you request Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project, Inc. dba The Highground as your choice. We appreciate how you have supported our organization with your Thrivent benefits and hope you consider us in the future.

To learn more about Thrivent's membership benefits and generosity programs visit **thrivent.com/generosity**

ATV RAFFLE

Did you try to purchase an ATV this year only to find out they're backordered? The Highground did. **We finally secured a 2021 Polaris Sportsman 450 H.O.**

ATV though and it's now on-site. After our annual Veteran's Day Ceremony on Nov. 11, one happy ATV winner will be drawn

along with the winners of the two cash prizes! **Tickets are \$20 each or 3 for \$50;** and the best part is we increased your chance of winning by only allowing 1500 tickets to be sold. **Get yours at The Highground Gift Shop or by calling 715-743-4224.**



The Highground Newsletter is published by the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project Inc. at P.O. Box 457 Neillsville, WI 54456. Printed in the USA. Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Reproduction of materials herein is prohibited except by written permission of The Highground. The publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited material and 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.

WISH LIST

- Skid Steer Broom
- Items for Oct 2nd bake sale (Call Bonnie)
- Wire welder
- Cordless drill with screw & drill bits
- Funds for Registry materials
- Funds for archival quality storage items
- Funding for Veterans Retreat – PTSD outdoor and therapeutic workshops
- Funding for male/female styrofoam “heads”
- Display mannequin heads for Gift Shop
- Volunteers who are willing to weed areas in the park 1-2 times a month from Apr-Oct
- Volunteers to sign up for our 2022 Events Committee (Call Bonnie)
- Received Digital camera *Thank you!*
- Received leaf vacuum for lawn mower *Thank you!*

Gifting opportunities

- Honor a lost loved one with a Memorial gift
- Honor a loved one with an Honorarium
- Include The Highground Endowment Fund in your Will
- Sponsor a Persian Gulf Tribute barrier for \$4K (together with family, community, employer, etc.)

To support these initiatives, call 715-743-4224 or email Kay at 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!



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. Want to 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.

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 the “My War” and “We Were There” 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 _____



The Meditation Garden is a visually stunning area in the Park that includes a shelter with honor stones, the Ascension of Doves tribute, the Fountain of Tears and the WASP tribute. The "Lost 74" tribute, installed in 2020 and dedicated on Memorial Day 2021, is the newest addition to this area of peace and reflection. A beautiful, weather-resistant walkway was also installed in 2020.

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

Robert C. Duffy
 Urho R. Frasa
 Fred Grant
 Stance Cuski
 Donald C. Hanson
 Henry Harvey
 Herbert A. Heglund
 Russell D. Hirsch
 Hallard J. Holm
 Alex F. Houle
 Eugene F. Hurley
 Irwin R. Jackson
 Andrew T. Johanik
 Floyd A. Johnson
 Joseph L. Johnson Jr.
 Robert W. Kennedy
 Joseph F. Kohn
 Leo E. Korppas
 Eino J. Kosola
 Mertz W. Lampella
 Donald E. Liebman
 Arthur Maki
 Martin V. Maki
 Thomas P. McClarnon
 T. J. Meschievitz
 Philip E. Nelson
 Henry A. Olsen
 Lloyd R. Olson
 Frank R. Pavlinsky
 Eino H. Peltonen
 Harold O. Reiten
 James K. Saunders

Carl A. Sauvola
 John P. Swansen
 Kenneth E. Van Slyke

Korean War

Dean V. Peterson
 Gordon Alfred Peterson
 John W. Pettit
 Ralph R. Pfeiffer
 Allen Lee Phillips
 Desmond Pierce
 Frederick E. Pierce
 Leon Piwoni
 Robert J. Pocekaj
 Robert Ervine Polzine
 Robert L. Poppe
 Myron Laverne Potter
 Harold Lloyd Powell
 Edward John Pratt
 Merritt Leroy Pratt
 William Ellis Pulliam II
 Leonard V. Purkapile
 William H. Quale
 Robert Quiroz
 Myron F. E. Radank
 Robert P. Raess
 James D. Ramel
 Robert M. Rauen
 Gerald L. Ray
 Mitchell Redcloud, Jr.
 Richard Gene Reese
 Norm Reichenberger
 Edward Leroy Reick

Frances R. Reiswitz
 Donald G. Renstrom
 Leander J. Rettler
 Eugene C. Rhode
 Eugene E. Rhyner
 Harold P. Rice
 Clarence E. Rickl

Vietnam War

William John Stedl
 James Alvin Steger
 Philip Clarence Stein
 Richard William Stein
 George Charles Steinberg
 Terry Michael Steiner
 Merlin Clarence Stelpflug
 Arthur Charle Stephens Jr
 Vernon Gene Stich
 Steven Michael Sticks
 Richard William Stindl
 Herbert J. Stober
 Gregory William Stoddart
 James Arnold Stoeberl
 Gordon Wayne Stoflet
 Michael Howard Stoflet
 Donald Robert Stoltz
 Dennis M. Stoppleworth
 Gerald Stanley Stozek
 John Gregory Strachota
 Ronald John Streckert
 Kenneth Leroy Strittmater
 Frank J. Strnad
 Gridley B. Strong

William Harold Stroud
 Howard Dale Strouse
 Thomas John Sturgal
 Frederic Clarence Styer
 Frederick V. Suchomel
 Clarence Myron Suchon
 Donald Albert Sudbrink
 Stanley Joseph Sukowatey
 John Francis Sullivan
 Mikal James Sullivan
 Terrence Lee Sund

Desert Storm, OIF, OEF – To Present Day

Patrick Wanke
 Carl Zabel
 Ryan C. Adams
 Jesse B. Albrecht
 Tracy Lynn Alger
 Joseph J. Altmann
 Nicholas R. Anderson
 Paul J. Atim
 Kyle M. Hemauer
 Matthew D. Hermanson
 Daren M. Hidalgo
 Merideth Howard
 Alun R. Howells
 Bert Edward Hoyer
 Rachael L. Hugo
 Isaiah R. Hunt
 Jamie Jaenke
 Ben D. Jansky

Ryan M. Jerabek
 Daniel J. Johnson
 David A. Johnson
 Quinn Johnson-Harris
 Ryan D. Jopek
 Matthew R. Kading
 Charles A. Kaufman
 Charles A. Kiser
 Tyler R. Kreinz
 Tyler J. Kritz
 Kevin M. Kryst
 John F. "Hans" Kurth
 Ryan J. Larson
 Matthew I. Leggett
 Jason F. Lemke
 Keith E. Lloyd
 Ryan P. Long