

NEWSLETTER

Honor, Educate and Heal... A Place for All

thehighground.us — 715.743.4224



Activities, Food, Fun & Camaraderie Planned for Male Veterans Retreat

Veterans from any era and branch of service can attend the 3-day event scheduled for July 8-10

Many Veterans are looking for solutions to issues such as PTSD, that are making it difficult for them to achieve the quality of life and relationships that they seek. The goal of The Highground Veterans Weekend Retreats is to offer new ideas, workshops and information to Veterans in an atmosphere of camaraderie, peace, relaxation and a bit of fun. Veterans will be introduced to many things that they can continue with in their lives AFTER the weekend concludes that will help realize the goals of peace and fulfillment that they may be seeking. They will leave with actual items related to the workshops and new-found camaraderie from friendships formed with other veterans. Space is limited and registration plus a \$30 reservation fee (refunded in full upon arrival) is required. At this time, lodging is planned to be at the Moraine Motel adjacent to The Highground. **To register, please send an email to Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224. Additional sponsors are needed to continue to offer these amazing retreats to our Veterans. Please contact Theresa if you would like to become a sponsor.**



Female Veterans Retreat Presenter

Sarah Blum, Vietnam nurse, author and advocates for Veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma will be the main presenter at the 2022 Female Veterans Retreat September 9-11. **Read more on page 5.** Sarah is also our Featured Veteran. Read more about her story on page 8.

What's inside

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Facilitating Family PTS Support Group Meetings.

08. Featured Veteran

Sarah Blum, decorated Nurse Vietnam Veteran and Author

13. Dear Reader

Do you have questions or a story to share? We want to hear from you.

Honor Stones Placed May 2022

The Highground is proud to recognize these recipients. Some are still with us and some have passed. All of them were remembered and honored during the May Honor Stone Ceremonies. Please continue to send information, stories and pictures of your loved one to be included in our Registry Books.

LEGION POST 477 & AUXILIARY UNIT 477

ROBERT G JACKAN
CLIFF R BRESEMAN
JOHN J BROWNSON
RICHARD CRAYCRAFT
HERMAN J GAGAS JR
RICK HARDER
NEIL CUB JIRSICHELE
BRIAN DILLINGER
DAVID KONRARDY
PAUL J KONRARDY
MYRON J KUHN
MATTHEW A MONSON
MCKENZIE L KATZMARK
KENNETH KREJCI
JOSEPH C LAFAYETTE
JAMES MAGGIE MEGELLAS
LOUIS P PAGEL JR & HELEN E PAGEL
DVC CHARITIES THANKS LTCOL DAVID MCCARTHY

DELMAR POPP, TOM GLAESER, MIKE POPP

GENE GORDON QUICKER
JAMES WAYNE QUICKER
MERLE E ROSS
ARNOLD LEE STRANGFELD
RICHARD SLOBODNIK
STEVE CHRISTOPHERSEN
THOMAS N DANHOF
JAMES P BERNING
BREEZYRICHARD*BRZESKI
SSGT LOUIS W CHERNEY
PAUL EDWARD EAMES SR
RONALD A GILBERG
CLARK LEE GOODWIN
DUANE W GWIAZDA
AMES HOLEN
WAYNE MACDONALD

ED MATA CZYNSKI

MIKE PERGOLSKI
LARRY POESCHL
DALE W SEIDLITZ
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ALLAN HEBREW SELVIG
JOSEPH PENK
FRANK HALIDA PFC
STANLEY HALIDA
JOHN J DUCHAC
CYRIL M SPANGLER

In Memory Of

Tracy Algers
Carol Anason
Florian Bradfish
Norman Bradfish
Jim Brady
Joshua Brennan
Harold Collinson
Walter Fries
Kathy Hansen
Bernard Holman
John D. Horton
Clark R. Hribal Cpl. USMC

Tom Jakel
Peter A. Jecevicus
Ryan Jopek
John Juedes
The Klinkes
Ambrose (Tom) Martin
John McIntosh
James Meeks
Leroy "Moose" Meyer (We sincerely apologize for not including "Moose" in the March newsletter)
Rocky Nelson

Bob O'Kelly
Dean D. Opicka (We sincerely apologize for the error in the March newsletter)
Ray Richardson
Mel Shea
John Southworth
James Yost
Thomas Zmuda
Ken Weis
Don Bohy
In Honor Of
Bill Lobeck

*Honor Stone applications are available on our website,
on the "Honor Stone" page, at thehighground.us/honor-stones.
Apply online or print the application and mail it to:
The Highground PO Box 457, Neillsville, WI 54456*



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

THE HIGHGROUND NEEDS VOLUNTEER GREETERS!

JOIN US IN GREETING THE MOTORCYCLE AND
BICYCLE RIDERS WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR TIME
IN SUPPORT OF THE HIGHGROUND'S MISSION.

INTERESTED? WANT TO LEARN MORE?

EMAIL EVENTS@THEHIGHGROUND.US
OR CALL BONNIE AT 715-743-4224



**Thank you to our
Honor Ride Sponsors!**



American Legion Post #73



SCHEELS



The
Highground

2022 Calendar of Events

- Jan 30** 9th Annual Winter Bowl (Marshfield)
- May 11-14** Spring Work Week
- May 21** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Vietnam Reunion; Spring Bake Sale
- May 30** The 12th Annual Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony
- June 4** Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- June 11** Korean and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- June 25** Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk
- July 8-10** 6th Annual Veteran Retreat for Men
- July 16** Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 5-7** 38th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (Ceremony Aug 7)
- Aug 6** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 20** 22nd Annual Ride to Remember® Motorcycle Ride & Rally
- Sept 9-11** 4th Annual Veteran Retreat for Women
- Sept 17** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- TBD** Military Working Dog Ceremony
- Sept 21** The Highground Day of Peace Community Event
- Oct 1** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Fall Bake Sale
- Oct 4-7** The Highground Education Days
- Oct 8** Bowling for The Highground (Neillsville)
- Oct 14-15** Fall Cleanup Days
- Nov 11** Veterans Day Ceremony; Honor Our Veterans Raffle Drawing
- Nov 14-Mar 1, 2023** The Highground Holiday Lights
- Nov 30** Season of Giving – Pledge your support for The Highground
- Dec 13** Patriotic Quilt Raffle Drawing (Quilts displayed during Dec.)

Museum Exhibits

- Dec 4, 2021-Mar 6, 2022** "WWII – Pacific Theater"
- Mar 12-June 5** "Stories Within Our Walls" – The People and stories behind the amazing items in The Highground Museum collection
- June 11-Sept 18** "The U.S. Military in the Greater Middle East" – 1950 to Present Day
- Sept 24-Dec 4** "The Story of The Highground" – 1965 to the Future
- Dec 10-Mar 5, 2023** "In-Country Allies, Spies and Underground"

**Visit thehighground.us
for more information**

Family PTS Support Program

Support Group for Families/Loved Ones of Veterans Managing Post-Traumatic Stress



The Highground has received many “calls for help” from spouses, family members, friends of Veterans who are currently having difficulty managing post-traumatic stress. Their loved ones are seeking resources, a group to speak with, and most importantly a place to share their fears and learn from others who are going through a similar situation and from those who have “been there”.

The Highground is holding monthly Family PTS Support Program group meetings for people to get together and exchange ideas, experiences and resources as “peer support” along with special guest speakers. The upcoming support group meetings will be held at the Highground at 2pm on the following Sundays: June 26; July 17; and August 21. If you are interested in being a

part of the coordination of these events OR if you are that loved one of a Veteran with PTS and want to attend the events, please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.



Friends of The Highground Dinner

Thanks to generous donors, we are able to continue and improve the Veteran programs The Highground offers. Supporters from across the state and Illinois joined us to be recognized at the annual “Friends of The Highground” recognition dinner. The dinner was held on March 19, 2022 at El Norteno in Curtiss, Wisconsin where guests enjoyed a savory American/Mexican dinner and camaraderie. This event is a way to thank the generous donors who support The Highground through cumulative annual donations over \$1,000.

After a warm welcome by Chris Pettis, Executive Director, followed by an invocation by Bill Flemal, our longtime motorcycle route leader for the Honor Ride and Ride to Remember®, Wayne Guenther, Board Member, presented the “Missing Service Member Table”. Board Members Steve Maddox, Bob Barth, Don Quicker, Gary Weirauch and Michele Benson read off the names of 100 Wisconsin KIAs from the Global War on Terror, Korean War and Vietnam War. To begin the award ceremony, Skip Klabon, volunteer and contributor, provided a touching farewell retirement speech for Kay Anason, Donation Coordinator. We thank Kay for her 13 years of dedication to The Highground and wish her

happiness in her new adventure. Kay said a few words thanking everyone for all they do for The Highground, being part of raising her family, looking forward to their first summer vacation and ending with “I reached for a hand and you grabbed my heart. God Bless!”

This year, a record number of first year contributors joined the growing list to be recognized, of which only three have acquired all 18 plaques – Thank you, Central Wisconsin Broadcasting: WCCN/WKPG, Donald Quicker and Dr. John & Rebecca Scaletta! You have not missed one year of support to The Highground since implementation of this recognition. This year’s certificate depicted the peaceful Effigy Dove with its corresponding Challenge Coin. An exhibit of The Highground’s Veteran Programs offered along with glimpses into upcoming Museum exhibits as well as “The Little Boy” atomic bomb replica were on display.

To conclude the evening, the “Spirit of The Highground” awards were presented to and humbly accepted by the creators of “Little Boy” – Dale Hammel of Combat Parts, Inc. (Abbotsford) and Paul Erikson of Kulas Body Shop (Abbotsford) for taking The Highground’s idea and creating the exhibit piece in less

than 5 weeks! We also recognized, Randy Henchen of Henchen Electrical (Neillsville) for all his dedicated work on switching the Plaza lights to LED’s which has reduced that monthly expense to a third! John and Maryann Vedder were thanked, though they could not attend the event, for their dedication of our museum exhibits, providing many artifacts, information, and monetary support to enhance the exhibit experience. The recipients of this special award are nominated and voted upon by the staff of The Highground and represent those who have gone above and beyond the monetary works but also have the “Spirit” of The Highground in them. This is no easy task as there are so many volunteers, supporters and contributors that have the “Spirit of The Highground”.

The Highground staff is a very small group of eight that could not accomplish so much without the help of so many volunteers and contributors. For all of them we are eternally grateful!

Due to the record number of recipients, the Friends of The Highground awards list for 2021 can be viewed in the “News” section of our website (thehighground.us).



2022 Female Veterans Retreat, cont.

Sarah, a decorated Vietnam Veteran, earned the Army Commendation Medal while serving as an operating room nurse at the 12th Evacuation Hospital Cu Chi, Vietnam during the height of the fighting in 1967. She advocates for information, resources and action to recognize those who are survivors of MST and promotes education and activities that Veteran survivors can use in their personal lives to move forward in healing from MST and Post-Traumatic Stress. She is the author of “Women Under Fire” and will be bringing her experiences and healing information to the retreat. Veterans will be able to enjoy many other interesting and fun activities, all in the spirit of learning new skills to bring more joy to each day while managing PTS.

Programs will be held at The Highground and there will be lots of great food, nightly bonfires, relaxation and camaraderie. All facilities and activities are fully accessible.

The retreat is open to any female Veteran of any age and service history and free because of our generous sponsors. Registration is required and space is limited.

To register and/or for a detailed itinerary of events, send an email to Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

Are you part of The Highground Challenge Coin Program?

The 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. For more information, call 715-743-4224 or send an email to store@thehighground.us

MEMBERSHIP ONLY OFFER

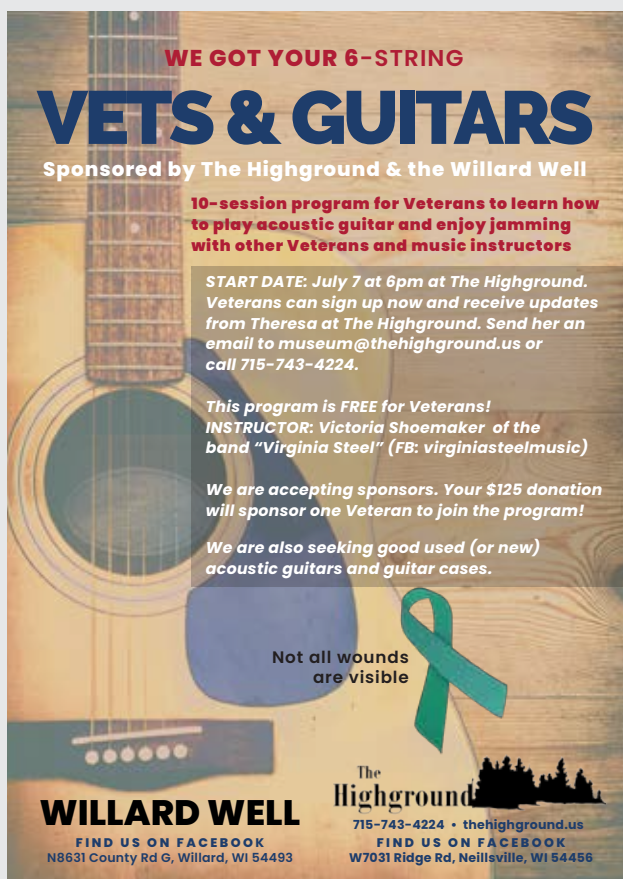
Purchase the Welcome & Fragments coins for \$39.95 each!



Museum Exhibits and Vets & Guitars Program

“U.S. Military in the Greater Middle East Exhibition (June 18 – Sept 18, 2022)”

This exhibit will cover the history of U.S. military involvement in the Greater Middle East region from the 1950's through present day. There is a great deal to be learned and remembered from the history and lessons in that important region of our world. Thousands of young lives of American troops have been lost in combat during the last several decades and, in their honor, we present this educational exhibit to the public. Within the exhibit, we will have a memorial remembering the Wisconsin lives lost due to service in the time period of Desert Storm through current day. This memorial will also include lives lost due to the effects of post-traumatic stress and Veteran suicide along with deaths during combat or active service-related deaths. Families that have lost loved ones due to the effects of PTS and/or Veteran suicide are invited to contact Theresa to have their loved ones remembered. Gold Star families from outside Wisconsin are also invited to have their loved one included in the Memorial. For more information on the exhibition, please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224. *(This exhibition was originally due to open on June 11, but was rescheduled for June 18 so we could honor several Korean War Veteran groups with a special showing of The Highground's "We Were There - Korean War" exhibit.)*



WE GOT YOUR 6-STRING

VETS & GUITARS

Sponsored by The Highground & the Willard Well

10-session program for Veterans to learn how to play acoustic guitar and enjoy jamming with other Veterans and music instructors

START DATE: July 7 at 6pm at The Highground. Veterans can sign up now and receive updates from Theresa at The Highground. Send her an email to museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

This program is FREE for Veterans!
INSTRUCTOR: Victoria Shoemaker of the band "Virginia Steel" (FB: [virginiasteelmusic](https://www.facebook.com/virginiasteelmusic))

We are accepting sponsors. Your \$125 donation will sponsor one Veteran to join the program!

We are also seeking good used (or new) acoustic guitars and guitar cases.

Not all wounds are visible

WILLARD WELL
FIND US ON FACEBOOK
N8631 County Rd G, Willard, WI 54493

The Highground
715-743-4224 • thehighground.us
FIND US ON FACEBOOK
W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456

“We Were There: Korean War” Traveling Exhibit Information

Thank you for asking about the Highground's traveling exhibits! The “We Were There - Korean War” exhibit is a banner display of 24 banners that are 8' H x 3' W. They are printed on both sides. The banners tell the many varied stories of those who served in the Korean War...personal stories and a wide variety of service and experience categories. The banners are on a fabric sleeve that fits over a metal frame. The metal frame is in 8 pieces that snap together. The loan fee for the “We Were There - Korean War” banner exhibit is \$200/month, \$275/2 months, \$325/3 months. Longer display times can be discussed. There will be an additional mileage cost of .50/mile if The Highground is needed to deliver and/or pick up the banners from your location. Shipping could be made available, but as the banners are heavy, the shipping & handling cost may be greater than personal mileage costs. Since we recommend showing you how the banners are assembled, it would be best if someone picked them up from The Highground or if we deliver them to you personally. For more information, please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.



Museum Exhibits

Thank you to our visitors for a very well-received exhibition!

“Wisconsin Remembers – A Face for Every Name” and “Stories Within Our Walls” The last exhibit in The Highground Museum honored the service of men and women throughout the 20th and 21st Century with memorials and specific displays created around the personal artifacts and stories of several service personnel, the “Stories Within Our Walls”. The Highground Museum was honored to host “Wisconsin Remembers – A Face for Every Name” Memorial of Wisconsin troops that were KIA/MIA during the Vietnam War. This exhibit was courtesy of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. Special exhibits were present honoring the lives and service of many military personnel including: Army SFC Trevor Diesing, who was killed in action on August 25, 2005 in Iraq; Francis Mezera, who served in the U.S. Navy during WWII; WWII U.S. Navy radioman Paul Stevenson; 32D Red Arrow Div WWII Veteran, Herb Smith; Maurice Proctor, crewman on B-29 fire bombing missions over Japan in 1945; B-17 waist gunner and armorer, Gerald Hoefert, who was a crew member on bombing missions in Europe; an Imperial Japanese flag collected from Kita, Iwo Jima by combat surgeon, John Vedder, who served with the 27th Marines during the historic battle of Iwo Jima; a collection of Nazi political party artifacts that were collected by WWII Veteran, Earl Williams during his service; a display of Leo Foster, WWI bugler, with photographs, artifacts and stories; as well as items from Melvin Shea, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1962-1965.

There were several displays honoring those who served in the Vietnam War. One exhibit was created from the personal items brought back from the Vietnam War by Veteran Jonathan Kostreva that were donated to be displayed in honor of his friend, Bill Roeglin, who was KIA on Nov 3, 1969 near Pleiku, Vietnam. Another very special display were items that were left after a mother of a man killed in Vietnam passed away. These items were donated to The Highground and chronicle the parent’s notification of the death of their son, PFC Dwight F. Babel, in Vietnam on Sept 5, 1969. The exhibit honored not only PFC Babel, but the love of his family and how the loss of Dwight was part of their lives every day. The educational exhibit on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August, 1945 was on display with the full-scale replica of the Little Boy atomic bomb (the Hiroshima bombing) which was created for The Highground by Abbotsford businesses Combat Parts Inc. and Kulas Body Shop. When items are donated to The Highground Museum, we realize that these are not just artifacts, they are memories and stories of loved ones that will continue to be cared for and remembered. The Museum will continue to create exhibits around the personal items in our collection and include special exhibitions such as this one.

A photo album for this exhibit is available on our Facebook page @TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial

Thank you, Germantown VFW 9202 for becoming a top level sponsor of “We Were There: Vietnam War”

“We Were There: The Vietnam War” Gathering the Personal Stories of the Vietnam War



**The Highground is announcing the creation of
We Were There: The Vietnam War
an exhibition project documenting the personal stories of
those whose lives were affected by the Vietnam War:
those who served in-country; those who served elsewhere;
the families and friends waiting back home.**

This extensive exhibition will consist of several types of media, making it easily available for the public to view and, importantly, keeping the exhibition stories & photographs carefully preserved, easily updated as formats change, and allows for additional info to be added to the exhibition whenever necessary.

If you are a Vietnam Veteran (in-country or not in-country) or if you have family or friends who served and would like to contribute stories, photographs, film, etc. to this incredibly important exhibition, please contact Theresa Hebert 715-743-4224 museum@thehighground.us

SPONSOR INFORMATION: A project of this scope also needs the financial help of those who believe in documenting and preserving stories via current digital formats. Many opportunities are available for individuals and businesses that would like to become a sponsor of “We Were There: Vietnam War”. To become a sponsor, contact Theresa Hebert 715-743-4224 museum@thehighground.us

Many Vietnam Veterans and families of those who are no longer with us have submitted photographs & stories and have been participating in interviews for the “We Were There: Vietnam War” project. To join the project, please send an email to Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

Featured Veteran



Sarah Blum Decorated Nurse, Vietnam Veteran, Author

Sarah L. Blum, ARNP is a decorated Nurse Vietnam Veteran, retired nurse psychotherapist and Author of *Women Under Fire: Abuse in the Military*. Sarah's new book, *Warrior Nurse: PTSD and Healing*, is ready for publication.

The first thing that hit me when I arrived in Vietnam in January 1967, was the incredible heat and the smells. I was one of a couple hundred nurses arriving at Bien Hoa Air Base searching among the 200 identical looking olive drab duffle bags for mine, as the sweat penetrated my uniform, rolled down my face and into my eyes. After that ordeal I was taken on an army bus with heavy criss-cross metal grills over the windows, to the 90th replacement battalion. I learned that the window covering was to prevent grenades from coming through. For three days we learned how to receive and send mail, what the Vietnamese money was and how to get it and get paid. We also learned a bit about the culture and areas where we had hospitals. Finally, we were all assigned to hospitals and sent on our way. I went to the 12th Evacuation Hospital at Cu Chi.

The night before I left, I met my drill sergeant from basic training, who asked me where

I would be sent. When I told him, his face drained of color and he said, "Get it changed. You don't want to go there. That is the worst place to be; it is where all the fighting is and it is not safe." I told him, "I can't change it now because I switched with a young nurse who had the same MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). She was scared and crying because she did not want to go to Cu Chi. I had been assigned to the 67th Evacuation Hospital at Qui Nhon and offered to switch with her, because I wanted to be where the action was. The chief nurse agreed because of the severe emotional distress of the other young nurse. I don't care where I am stationed as long as I can help our soldiers." He was not happy about it at all and told me to keep my head down and stay safe.

My footlocker and duffle bag were taken by truck and I was put on a Huey helicopter to go to the 12th Evacuation Hospital. My first helicopter ride was scary because they do not have doors. I felt very vulnerable sitting in a canvas seat in the wide-open space while flying in a war zone, and if you think that was frightening the landing was worse. When they arrived at the hospital, the helicopter crew would not land the helicopter. They told me I had to jump out onto the helipad. The helicopter is very loud and it is hard to be heard over the sounds of the rotor blades. I kept pointing down with my arm and finger, "put this thing down" and they kept shaking their heads and saying, "jump." They hovered the helicopter about six feet over the helipad but would not land it and I had to jump. I guess that was my initiation. Or was it? Next I was saluting our very strict executive officer to find out where to report. He looked starched and professional and did not like my answer to his question, "What is that?" pointing to my ukulele case. I brought a baritone ukulele with me so that I had an instrument to play while there. My answer was a joke to lighten up the situation, "It is a machine gun; I thought I might need it over here." That was the wrong thing to say to him and for the next twenty minutes he yelled at me for being disrespectful to an officer and finally told me where to report.

Fast forward now to my year there, which included creating a space for me in the hooch; a bed, a closet I made from a large equipment box, my footlocker and some shelves I made from wood and Masonite. I could not stand the smell of the sheets that the mama san's washed, so I took some new green operating room sheets, used them all year and washed them myself in an extra-large aluminum bowl for washing clothes. Once I completed my personal space I started working.

We had two Quonset huts for our operating rooms. The main one was called Arizona and in it we had five different partitioned areas that counted as a room. Each area had an operating room (OR) table, equipment for giving anesthesia, a large stainless-steel table I would use for instruments and sterile supplies for each case, an over the table stand that we used during the operation to hold instruments and supplies like suture material and extra instruments. We had one shift only and that was from 9 AM until we were done with scheduled cases for the day and then all the cases generated by the war. We often worked around the clock, but the average was about 16 hours a day. I was on call four nights a week.

We had soldiers with wounds all over their bodies or only parts of their body. Often they lost arms, legs, eyes, or they had shrapnel that tore through major organs in their bodies, which we had to repair. I definitely saw the worst of war and what war does to the land and human beings on it. Yes we were targets and were mortared often. Fortunately, I was never hit and the worst hit to our hospital occurred the month after I left. After I had been there about six months I had a major emotional experience. A young red headed soldier was hit by American artillery and had the lower half of his body blasted severely. From his hipbones down he was black, charred and bleeding. We had four surgeons look at him to decide what they could save and what they could do for him.

I was standing in his blood for hours as we worked on him and what was left. At the end there were some large skin flaps to cover the remainder of his pelvis. He was literally half a man. I was OK during the surgery because I learned to be numb to it all— but then on his day three, the day he came into the OR for the closure of his skin flaps, I snapped. He was at one end of the Quonset hut on a stretcher and I came in from the opposite end. As I walked toward him I saw the flat sheet covering the stretcher and half the length of it was flat because there was nothing there. Finally, my eyes saw the bump that was his bandaged hips and then his torso covered with the sheet and finally his face and eyes. My eyes followed all that up to his face and when I saw his red hair and blue eyes something inside me snapped and I ran out the doors at his end. There were some assault helicopters flying overhead at that moment and I shouted as loudly as I could through my rage and tears at the choppers, “Kill, Kill, Kill—that is all you know how to do! I hate this war!” I have no memory of what I did or how long I was going around the hospital yelling at the sky but I ended up in front of my chief nurse telling her, “You have got to get me out of the OR I can’t take it anymore. Put me on the malaria ward or something.” She shook her head and said, I cannot do that; you just need a rest. Take a few days and go down to the beach at Vung Tau and get yourself together.”

I drank beer, ate pineapples, had great food and talked with the Aussie’s. They were the guys who ran the phones in Vietnam and they were my lifeline. I could talk to them late at night after working 16-18 hours and be able to relax and sleep. In Vung Tau, knowing I had to go back for more horrors of war, I put a strong wall around my heart to be able to do it. Once back home in order to heal, I had to take that wall down and it was not easy.

I left Vietnam where I came in, Bien Hoa Air Base. There were a couple hundred of us lined up on the tarmac in the 110° heat waiting for what we called the ‘freedom bird;’ the plane that would take us home. We all felt like sitting ducks because the airbase was hit with mortars very frequently, especially when soldiers were waiting to go

home. I was terrified that I had lived through that year of hell and would be killed as I was waiting to leave. I know I was not the only one who thought and felt that. When the plane came it was pink and orange, the color of Southwest Airlines. Everyone was tense until the moment the plane actually lifted off the tarmac. At that point I could hear everyone taking in, a much needed, deep breath. It was a collective loud intake of air and relief, “We made it out alive.”

I came into Travis Air Force Base and had to get to San Francisco, International to get a plane to LA. I felt like I was in a fog. They kept us on the plane at Travis for two hours before they let us deplane. They said it was for our safety and told us not to wear our uniforms. They had waited until there were very few people in the airport to let us off. Apparently American Uniformed Service Members were being harassed and attacked by anti-war protestors so we were cautioned not to be in uniform for our own wellbeing. My mind could not fathom what I was being told. “You mean I spent a hellish year in the midst of a war, caring for my brother soldier’s wounds, and now I am home safe but I am at risk here because of my service?”

I took a red and silver bus from Travis AFB to SF International Airport and it was raining. I remember looking out the window of the bus at nothing but the raindrops on the window and finding myself feeling like I was inside the raindrop. The rain seemed friendlier than anything else in that moment.

I was heading for LA to see my nurse friends I worked with before going to Vietnam. It was late at night and I was so glad to finally have someone glad to see me. The next day I had my first experience of culture shock when I was on the way to the hospital to visit my friend Bea and an ambulance went by with the siren blaring. I instinctively dove into the foot-well of the car, as though expecting an attack. My friend Ellie, was shocked by my reaction and so was I. Later we went into a supermarket and when I stepped onto the pad in front of the door and the door suddenly flew open, I jumped back. It took me awhile to acclimate back into society.

I did much better when I finally arrived at Madigan General Hospital (MGH) and stepped into my role as head nurse of the orthopedic ward to take care of “my brother soldiers.” I was glad to be out of the operating room and be able to listen to and talk with them. I received them when they came back from Vietnam, often through a hospital in Guam or Japan, check their wounds and let the doctor know. I got them settled, arranged for a special meal of their choosing and brought the portable phone to their bedside, if they were bedridden, so they could call family members. I loved my job in 1968 as the head nurse of ward 6 and I felt great physically, mentally and emotionally. That was when I first started to understand the impact of the war on my brother soldier’s bodies, mind and spirit. Their physical wounds often would not heal quickly enough and I knew intuitively that it was because their mind and emotions were struggling. That was the beginning of me searching to understand what we now know is PTSD.

From 1968-1970 I was a student at Seattle University and exposed to the Black Panthers and the protests against the war with me being a target. I stopped telling anyone that I was a nurse who served in Vietnam. In 1970 I married another Vietnam Veteran and we had two children. Twelve years later I was part of the very first women veteran’s group at the Seattle Vet Center for 16 weeks, and then did another 16 weeks after that to deal with my PTSD symptoms. That was not enough and by 1984 I was doing therapy with a trauma specialist until 1987. From then on I have worked with veterans and civilians to help them heal their PTSD. Now today, 2021, my book *Warrior Nurse: PTSD and Healing* is being considered for publication.

In 2006 I began interviewing women veterans and did that for six years. With guidance from an editor I hired to help me, I changed the focus from women veteran stories to the culture of abuse toward women in the military. My book: *Women Under Fire: Abuse in the Military* was published in 2013. The website is: www.womenunderfire.net

Firebase Victory – Vietnam War Reenactment

Firebase Victory – Vietnam – 1956-1973

And a special invitation for Vietnam Helicopter Pilots
Saturday, July 16 – Sunday, July 17

By Troy Buddenhagen & Theresa Hebert

Step back in time 54 years to the Summer of 1968. The first “Big Mac” goes on sale in McDonalds costing 49¢. The hourly minimum wage is \$1.60/hr. The cost of a gallon of gas is 34¢. Lyndon B. Johnson is President. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Bobby Kennedy are assassinated. U.S. troop numbers peak at 549,500.

Artillery Fire Support Bases played a critical role in the conduct of operations during the Vietnam War. They served to lay down high-volume fire on enemy firing sites, supported friendly infantry operations and executed harassing fire missions. Firebases, themselves, housed a range of other facilities such as troop shelters, surveillance radars and command centers. All had to be defended against ground attack and, as a result, became home to many young troops – a place to work, eat, sleep and form friendships.

Step back in time as you tour Firebase Victory. See the daily life of the Vietnam War troops who manned firebases as they not only patrolled and defended, but relaxed with a meal from the chow line or read a letter after mail call.

Firebase Victory – Vietnam War Living History / Reenactment

will be open to the public on Saturday, July 16 from 9am to 4pm with a full day of operations and a “Vietnam Experience” exhibition by Historic Military Impressions. A static display of a Vietnam War UH-1H helicopter, courtesy of VVA 331, will be at the event both days. Weather permitting, a flying UH-1H helicopter will be part of the reenactment event on Saturday, from 10am to 2pm. The event will also be open on Sunday, July 17 from 9am to 3pm with the exhibition and possibly a more limited Living History.

Firebase Victory will be held at Camp Victory (N9839 Sterling Ave., Greenwood, WI 54437) and admission is free.

As part of Firebase Victory, there will be a special gathering of Vietnam Helicopter Pilots on Saturday, July 16. Pilots are invited to meet at Camp Victory for a lunch at noon, to tour the firebase and exhibition with fellow pilots, and to be a part of The Highground’s “We Were There – Vietnam War” project. From 2pm–4pm, there will be a recorded roundtable gathering of pilots with the opportunity to share stories to be included in the historical “We Were There – Vietnam War” project. This large, ongoing project is preserving the experiences, photographs and items of those who served in the Vietnam War. The project will result in a permanent physical exhibit and an online continuing exhibit.

For more information on Firebase Victory and/or the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots gathering, please call Theresa at 715-743-4224 or send an email to museum@thehighground.us



The Highground History Project

The Highground History Project is well underway! We are collecting and cataloging stories, documents, photographs and memorabilia to help us tell this important story. Funding is needed for digitizing equipment. If you would like to help or if you have stories/items to share, **please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.**

Spring Into The Arts Recap

The 2022 “Spring Into The Arts” Showcased Veteran art at The Highground

The Highground was a host site for the 2022 “Spring Into the Arts” Tour in Clark County the weekend of April 23-24.

Several military Veteran artists / craftspeople displayed their works. These included: jewelry & art by Ashley Spangberg of Patriot Beads and Brass (patriotbeadsandbrass.com); Merle Retzlaff (bright and quirky wood birdhouses!); Bill Scheve, (outdoor banners honoring Veterans - foreverveterans.us); pottery by Dave Lyons (New Pittsville Pottery Facebook page); wood artwork (Patriot Pallet Studio) by Jerry Kirchman; poetry by Steve Maddox; and art prints by Tom Miller, founder of The Highground.

The Highground recognizes that creation of artworks of many forms – painting, writing, music, and more – can be a key activity to lessen depression, provide fulfillment in life, and has been shown to be a positive tool in the prevention of Veteran and civilian suicide.

As part of The Highground’s mission of Healing, and with the support of donors and volunteers, we will continue to host art events and Veteran programs at no charge for Veterans and families that are working their way through PTSD and other mental health issues. There is no “wrong way” to be an artist and the road to healing might start with one small creative step!

If you are a Veteran artist / crafter and would like to be a part of the 2023 Clark County “Spring Into the Arts” April 29 - 30, 2023, please contact Theresa at the Highground 715-743-4224 museum@thehighground.us More information can also be found at <https://clarkcountymi.org/visit-clark-county/special-events/> or by calling the Clark County Economic Development Corporation & Tourism Bureau at (715) 255-9100.



The Highground will offer two different programs to enhance our educational mission

The Highground will hold its annual Education Days October 4–7, 2022.

We are creating more well-rounded education days to reach out with two days of programs for students in Middle & High School with a more focused, exciting experience while retaining two days for the traditional “5th Grade Tour of The Highground.” October 4 and 5 will be our “5th Grade Days”. Students will receive a guided tour of the Park with complimentary presentations on different cultures, important moments in history and a Flag Retirement Ceremony. The 5th Grade Tour will be a half day presentation. Schools need to pick the day and either the AM (9:30am – 12:15pm) or PM (11:30am – 2:15pm) session. There is not a scheduled lunch break; however, students are welcome to bring a sack lunch to eat before or after their session. The programs on Oct 6 and 7 will be for a 9th -12th Grade level of understanding and maturity. October 6 and 7 will feature more indepth programs with insight into the U.S. military experience in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Global War on Terror accompanied by presentations on other nations and cultures involved in these wars. This will not include a tour of the entire Park and it will not be a repeat of what students may have received if they attended a prior Education Days. Schools need to pick which day to attend. Both days will run a full day from 9:30am–2pm. A lunch break is included from 11:30am–noon. Teachers are welcome to contact Theresa with questions if they would like to coordinate a lesson plan with the “5th Grade Days” tour or the Oct 6 and 7 “9th -12th Grade” event. **“The History of The Highground” exhibit will be in The Highground Museum in October and will have a large component about the Vietnam War.** The Highground is able to offer this annual event because of the support and generosity of donors volunteers. **A very special thank you to John and Donna Koutre for their amazing support of our 2022 Education Days.** Please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224 for more information.

From the Chair, Gary Weirauch

Spark the Fire – Fuel the Flame



As of the end of the first quarter, our capital campaign has raised \$1.535 Million toward our goal. We will receive \$250,000 from a California estate later this summer and will receive a payment of \$250,000 from the separation of Camp Victory into its own nonprofit corporation. With these additions, we shall surpass \$2 Million toward the goal of building the new Welcome Center. The original budget for the center was \$2.5 million but with rampant inflation and supply chain issues, the cost will now escalate to \$3 million. At the time of bidding, we shall ask the successful bidders of various components to donate a portion of their bid as payment-in-kind to lower the overall out of pocket cost. We sparked this fire a little over a year ago with a campaign kick-off event at The Condensery in Osseo, Wisconsin and continue to make incremental progress toward our goal. Donors have been faced with various dilemmas in choosing the amount of their donation including Covid-19, excessive inflation eroding the value of their nest egg, and a war in Ukraine with as yet unknown long term consequences. We continue to reach out to potential donors in an effort to fuel the flame and finish the project. Our veterans deserve a place to gather in honor of their service and with your past support and future donations, we will make our Veterans Park and Museum a destination visit and not a side trip.

To continue the mission, we are in need of directors who are willing to give of their time and expertise in driving this organization to the next level. Many of our directors are aging and a change in life circumstances may arise at any time. As you read this message, I am asking you to consider what you may be able to contribute by drawing on your professional and life experiences and consider volunteering as a director of The Highground. If you are interested in helping us complete our mission of Honoring, Educating and Healing, please let me know and I will forward all the information required for you to consider being a director. We currently have four openings due to job relocations and retirements. Two of these openings may be filled by non-Veterans with an interest in serving the Veteran community. If you or someone you know may have an interest in serving, may we hear from you?

WIN A NEW ATV!

2022 ATV Raffle

**Honoring our
Veterans**

November 11, 2022
at The Highground



**\$20 each or 3 for \$50
Over \$9,400 in prizes!**

**Purchase tickets at The Highground Gift Shop,
call 715-743-4224 or email donations@thehighground.us
We only have 1500 tickets, so get yours today!**

1st Place: 2022 Polaris
Sportsman 450 H.O.*
(value \$7988)

2nd Place: \$1000 Cash
3rd Place: \$500 Cash

*Note, winner is responsible for tax and title

The drawing will be held after the 3pm Veterans Day Ceremony.

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

6th Annual Patriotic Quilt Raffle

Attention Quilters

The Highground is looking for those patriotic quilts: lap size or larger! Quilts will be displayed in the museum & online from Dec 1 to Dec 13.

Tickets

\$5 ea

5 for \$20

15 for \$40

**Drawing at
The Highground Museum
Dec 13, 2022 at Noon**

As many winners as there are quilts

Pick your 1st, 2nd, & 3rd choices from our website,
thehighground.us & note it on your ticket. Quilts can be
mailed at winner's expense (\$15-\$20).



The Highground
Veterans Memorial Park

Dear Reader

Did you or do you still receive the printed newspaper every Sunday? There was a section called “Dear Abby” that I loved to read. Each week a reader asked “Abby’s” advice on their situation.

Well, my friends, “**Dear Bravo-Romeo-Tango**” is your place to ask your questions or ask advice about The Highground, Veteran resources/programs and events. We invite you to provide your story as a Veteran or as a Veteran’s family that you feel may help others. Send us your letters by email to store@thehighground.us or by mail to:

The Highground
c/o Dear B-R-T
P.O. Box 457
Neillsville, WI 54456

One of three staff members (can you guess who?) will read your submission and send you a response and collaboratively select a few letters to appear here in the next scheduled newsletter. Please note that not all letters will appear and we will not publish anything political, religious or negative as we are a Veteran’s non-profit organization and our mission is to Honor, Educate and Heal.

Best Wishes,
The Bravo of B-R-T

B-R-T question (March 13, 2022), From Ann B-C email

“What procedure does a person have to follow to get a Vietnam Veteran on the Freedom Honor Flight?”

To get a Veteran on an Honor Flight:

Go to the Honor Flight Network site at honorflight.org or call 937-521-2400

Select the state where the Veteran lives to find the “Honor Flight Hub”. There are several nonprofit honor flight organizations under the Honor Flight umbrella.

In Wisconsin, there are five listed: Badger Honor Flight, Freedom Honor Flight, Never Forgotten Honor Flight, Old Glory Honor Flight, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight

Ann specifically asked about the Freedom Honor Flight. There is an application link and information on their website at freedomhonorflight.org

Pick the closest one, look at their website(s)

The Honor Flights are for those who served anywhere during these specific conflict years: WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War.

Note: It is also listed on several Honor Flight sites that any Veteran is eligible for an Honor Flight due to recent changes. Also, Honor Flights will be offered to terminally ill Veterans of any era through their TLC “Their Last Chance” program.

Thank you for your question, Ann!

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FEATURED ITEMS

GIFT SHOP SUMMER HOURS ARE 10AM TO 5PM DAILY

ARE YOU A NEW CUSTOMER? GET 15% OFF YOUR FIRST ONLINE ORDER!

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

THEHIGHGROUND.SHOP

The store that supports the mission



HG Tumbler

17 oz, double-walled insulated travel mug.

877

\$21.95



String Flag Art

Patriotic star "flag" made with string and adhered to a wooden board.

5230

\$44.95



HG Gift Card

The perfect gift for anyone and any occasion. Available in any amount.

N/A

N/A



Patriotic Purse

Crossbody bag with a faded finish and a stars and stripes design.

1057

\$18.95



HG Liberty Bell Puzzle

1000 piece puzzle, 20" x 26", featuring a photo of The Highground Liberty Bell.

11001

\$29.95



Patriotic T-shirt

V-neck t-shirt with a stars and stripes heart-shaped design. Available in blue and grey.

1017

\$25.95

Call us at 715-743-4224

Email: store@thehighground.us

thehighground.shop

W7031 Ridge Road, Neillsville, WI 54456

JUNE - AUGUST 2022

Wish List

The Highground Wist List:

- Skid Steer Broom (item or funding for)
- Funding for Epson scanner for digitizing history/registry
- Funding for male/female Styrofoam “heads”
(Veterans Retreat Workshops)
- New 32GB USB drives (thank you for those received so far)
- Display mannequin heads for Gift Shop (item or funding for)
- Funding for a laptop for the Museum
- Volunteers for 2022 Events Committee (call Bonnie)
- Volunteers for 2022 Honor Stone Ceremony Crew:
Color Guards, Rifle Squads, Parking cars, guiding visitors, bell ringers,
pinning red ribbons on Veterans, singers for the National Anthem,
photographers (not your cameras) and more! Many volunteers are
needed to make the ceremony memorable for the honorees and
their families (call Bonnie)
- Small portable air compressor – Received, thank you

Gifting opportunities to consider:

- Honor a lost loved one with a Memorial gift
- Honor a loved one with an Honorarium
- Contribute to The Highground Endowment Fund
- Sponsor one of four Persian Gulf Tribute barriers for \$4K
(together with family community, employer, etc.)
- Veterans service organizations can honor the families and
communities of our Veterans with a United in Service Stone

To support any of these initiatives, call 715-743-4224 or send
an email to 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

What you can do to help us... If you would like to receive the Email Newsletter to help reduce printing and postage costs, please contact us and we can make that happen. There is also an email signup form at the bottom of our website homepage. If you receive more than one issue of each newsletter, please let us know. If you would like to continue receiving a hard copy newsletter, a small monetary assistance of \$25 per year would help cover the cost associated with the printing and mailing. Your assistance with this project is greatly appreciated. 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 grassroots, 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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 printed 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 Liberty Bell Education Foundation was founded in 1976 with the goal to share the inspiring true story of the founding of our Nation and the principals of freedom upon which it was built. An exact replica of the original Liberty Bell was cast in France, mounted on a trailer and taken to thousands of schools across the US to educate over a million children in 36 states on this symbol of freedom. When the tour director passed away, the Foundation stopped giving public presentations. After consideration, they decided that The Highground was the best place for the replica Liberty Bell to continue its patriotic mission. The Highground Liberty Bell is housed in a timber frame shelter crafted by Master Timber Framer Lyle Lindholm and volunteers in May 2002.

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.

Vietnam War

Bruno W. Damata
Thomas William Damm
Lee Roger Danielson
David Brian Dann
Charles Leon Davidson
Michael John Davidson
Robert John Davies
Richard Lloyd Davis
Clyde Duane Dawson
Thomas Francis Dazey Jr.
Albert Dean
Glenn Fredrick Dean
John Albert Debock
Allan Decker
Robert Hugh Decker
Elliott Leo Decora
Franklin D. Defenbaugh
Jerome Anthony Degalley
Jerry Frederick Degray
David William Delaat
Jack Peter Delange
Adrian Leroy Delcamp
Jerald Steven Delong
Bruno Walter Demata
Vasilios Demetris
Raymond Roger Demoe
Arthur Gerald Denton
Paul David Derby
William J. Deuster Jr.
Charles Frank Deuel

Korean War

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
Charles R. Diulio
Richard F. Dodmead
James Kenneth Doran
Charles Drengberg
Robert Lyle Droysen
Thomas W Duffy
Kenneth Ronald Duhr
Donald J. Dulac
Donald L. Dupont
Lyle R. Dupont
Kenneth Edward Dvorak
Milton Francis Dvorak
James Keyser Eagan

Persian Gulf

Eric A. Palmisano
Eric J. Poelman
Matthew I. Pionk
Brian P. Prening
Robert M. Rieckhoff
Nickolas E. Riehl
Jakob Roelli
Justin D. Ross
Rhett W. Schiller
Joshua M. Schmitz
Sean M. Schneider
Matthew E. Schram
Joshua Michael Scott
Adam P. Servais
Chad J. Simon
Benjamin A. Smith
Adrian V. Soltau
Christopher J. Splinter
Jon B. St. John II
Andy A. Stevens
Kirk Allen Straseskie
Paul J. Sturino
Jesse L. Thiry
Daniel J. Thompson
Matthew Thompson
Jesse D. Tillery
Harry H. Timberman
John O. Tollefson
Eugene A. Uhl, III
Nathan J. Vacho

Adam J. Vanalstine
Brent T. Vroman
Jeremy D. Vrooman
Patrick L. Wade
Andrew P. Wallace
Richard D. Warner
Robert P. Warns, II
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