

NEWSLETTER

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

thehighground.us — 715.743.4224



Hundreds of Students Learn About The Highground and Much More

One of the highlights of The Highground's year is the annual Education Days event

This event, which began decades ago, has evolved throughout the years while keeping its goal of sharing the history, purpose and importance of The Highground; letting the students know that this is also THEIR place and they will be the next generation of caretakers of The Highground; and providing fun and informative presentations on our nation's history.

This year, Education Days went back to its roots by providing two days of "5th Grade Days" and one day of High School / adult level workshops. The 5th Grade Days event gave area schools a half-day experience of presentations at The Highground tributes and museum along with an incredible Flag Retirement ceremony and Flag history / etiquette lesson given by the Ah Da Wah Gam chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

We have received many handmade "thank you's" from the students. These notes add to the joy of the event for the volunteers and staff that make this event possible! **Read more on page 4.**



Amazing Female Veterans Retreat

Even though Vietnam Veteran Nurse Sarah Blum was only at The Highground for four days, she was able to help Veterans from across the region in ways that will last a long time, perhaps a lifetime. **Read more about this special retreat on page 10.**

What's inside

03. Event Calendar

Look inside for the list of events scheduled for 2023

08. Featured Veteran

Farewell James "Al" Jenkins

13. Dear Reader

"I'm A Marine" by
Charlotte M. Ayers

Honor Stones Placed August–October, 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 August, September and October Honor Stone Ceremonies. Please continue to send information, stories and pictures of your loved one to be included in our Registry Books.

John S. Ames
Robert J. Ames
Gene R. Anderson
Frank R. Arch
Shawn D. Arch
Chad R. Arch
Lanny A. Auberg
Floyd W. Babcock
Eugene Balcerak
James H. Bartels
Roger K. Bartels
H. Kenneth Bartels
Robert A. Beaver
Lester G. Brennand
Dennis M. Bueger
Henry F. Burant
William J. Burns
William A. Caflisch
Jerry A. Campbell Sr
Ryan J. Cantafio
Dale L. Carr
Leo J. DeGroote
Allen G. Denninger
Richard A. Detert
Douglas D. Deuel
Peter L. Drahn
Norman M. Ehler
Samuel E. Erickson
Christopher P. Estebo
"Keracomani!"
Lee E. Franz
Ronald L. Franz
Alvin M. Frederick
Paul E. Gerlach
David K. Gibson
Ronald A. Gilberg
David A. Girtman
Gabriel R. Gliniecki
Caitlin E. Gliniecki
Amanda J. Gliniecki

Richard 'Dick' A. Goessl
William Guetschow
Ronald B. Halama
Lynn Henderson
Leonard P. Hoefferle
Robert J. Hoffman
Robert J. Hoffman Jr.
Frederick L. Hoffman
Michael P. Hoffman
Patrick A. Hoffman
Timothy L. Hoffman
Dennis J. Hoffman
Richard F. Hoffmann
Terry L. Holub
Michael J. Howard
LeRoy S. Hutkowski
Ray C. Jackson
Kenneth W. Jagodzinski
William F. Jagodzinski
David A. Jagodzinski
Gary A. Jagodzinski, DDS
Thomas C. Jakel
Mary B. Jakel
Anthony C. Jarocki
Vilas R. Johnson
Wayne K. Johnson
Kenneth E. Juza
Walter F. Karczewski
Michael E. Karczewski
Gary A. Karczewski
Steven W. Katka
Nancy L. Kedrowski
Frank L. Kinjerski Sr.
Donald M. Kirn
Kenneth W. Kirn
Robert F. Kohler
Gary R. Kohler
Thomas F. Kopp
Randy A. Kosnopfal
Joseph Krzyzanski

Stephen E. Kunich
Morris L. Laessig
Ben E. Lang
Ralph W. Lang
Claude 'Frenchy' Lapalme
Claude JC Lapalme
Leopoldine Lapalme
Raymond J. Lapalme
James R. Laski
John R. Laude
Jeffrey L. Lenz
Clarence D. Litton
Kevin L. Litton
David Martin
Kenny E. McCadney
Frederick A. Mecha
Dennis Meyer
Myron L. Mleziva
Marvin E. Mohr
James 'Jim' N. Griepentrog
Gary K. Notbush
Michael A. Patoka
Ronald R. Poppe
Richard D. Poppe
Derrick R. Poppe
Donald 'Bud' R. Poppe
H. Orson Powers
Ivan R. Powers
Phil E. Powers
Donald A. Powers
Marvin O. Powers
James A. Powers
Zachary A. Powers
Bradley W. Quicker
Arnold A. Raddatz
Christopher H. Rand
Norbert J. Rauen
Donald J. Rauen
Gary S. Rauen
Willis "Bill" A. Rauen

Dennis R. Redetzke
Donovan A. Redetzke
Dale E. Redetzke
Emil H. Remus
Junior "Robbie" Robertson
Robert T. Rohan
Russell Schalow Jr
Rufus J. Schmaltz
Daniel A. Schmidt
Gary W. Schmidt
Allen G. Schorbahn
Glenn A. Schmidt
Edward Schultz
Terence L. Schuster
Allan J. Slezak
Kenneth A. Slezak
Robert A. Snortheim
Ervin M. Stangl
Christian J. Stemler
Joseph A. Stemler
Laurel M. Sternhagen
Charles J. Suda
William O. Sypek
Sharon L. Sypek
Harold J. Utne
Daniel L. Vick
Jack F. Wallace
Robin R. Warden
Brennan R. Wegener
Gary R. Weirauch
Frank A. Wierman
Siewert E. Wierman
Frank S. Wierman
Linus M. Wittman
James E. Wood
Frank A. Zagar
Larry J. Zastrow
Henry J. Zeichert
Norb J. Zelewske

American Gold Star Mothers Of Colfax, WI
American Legion 333, Sun Prairie, WI
American Legion Riders Of Wisconsin District 6
Evansville Vfw Memorial Post 6905
Nam Knights Motorcycle Club Brew City Chapter
Oregon Brooklyn, WI VFW Post 10272
Russell Toyen Legion Aux Post 131, Colfax, WI
Russell Toyen Legion Post 131 Colfax, WI
VFW Post 9202, Germantown WI
VVA Chapter 767 Racine & Kenosha, WI
VVA Dane County Chapter 220
Women's Veterans Retreat Attendees 2022

K9 Count; Handler: Willard K. Hillmann
K9 Hobo; Handler: Kim T. Michalowski
K9 King; Handler: Leo Wessel
K9 Missy; Handler: Heidi Klotzsky
K9 Pepper; Handler: Tim P. Simington
K9 Prince; Handler: Charles Ott
K9 Satan; Handler: Michael Voorhees
K9 Silver; Handler: David Booth

K9 Spot; Handler: Jason Somers
K9 Thunder; Handler: Larry McRae
Rachel Reed, Author Of "K9 Korea"
The K9 Friends Of The SCI Veterans Wing

Please note: The Legacy Honor Stone price will increase to \$495 for 2023 due to a supplier cost increase.

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

The Highground



2023 Calendar of Events

NOTE: Honor Stone dates are firm; all Veterans Retreats and Vets & Guitars are TBD; the PTS Peer Support Group will meet monthly. All other event and exhibit dates are subject to change depending on construction.

- Jan 29** 10th Annual Winter Bowl (Eau Claire)
- May 10-13** Spring Work Week
- May 13** Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- May 14** Hmong Lao Day Ceremony
- May 20** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Spring Bake Sale
- May 29** 13th Annual Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony
- June 10** Korean and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- June 24** Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk
- July 15** Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 4-6** 39th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (Ceremony Aug 6)
- Aug 5** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 19** 23rd Annual Ride to Remember® Motorcycle Ride & Rally
- Sept 16** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Military Working Dog Ceremony
- Sept 21** The Highground Day of Peace Community Event
- Oct 3-6** The Highground Education Days
- Oct 7** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Fall Bake Sale
- Oct 13-14** Fall Cleanup Days
- Oct 21** Bowling for The Highground (TBD)
- Nov 11** Veterans Day Ceremony; Honor Our Veterans Raffle Drawing
- Nov 13-Mar 1, 2024** The Highground Holiday Lights
- Nov 28** Season of Giving – Pledge your support for The Highground
- Dec 9** Patriotic Quilt Raffle Drawing (Quilts displayed during Dec.)

Museum Exhibits

On display through mid-Feb 2023 "History of The Highground" Exhibit and "Wisconsin Remembers: A Face for Every Name" (Vietnam Memorial) Exhibit

Visit thehighground.us for more information

10TH ANNUAL WINTER BOWL

TO SUPPORT OUR VETERANS RETREATS
JAN 29 2023 NOON-3PM
AT BOWL WINKLES IN EAU CLAIRE, WI

The Highground
 Veterans Memorial Park

\$40 PER PERSON | UP TO 6 PER GROUP
BALLS, LANE, SHOES & PIZZA INCLUDED | RAFFLES

ONLY 24 LANES AVAILABLE—RESERVE YOURS TODAY!
PLEASE REGISTER—CALL BONNIE AT 715-743-4224 OR EMAIL EVENTS@THEHIGHGROUND.US

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SPONSOR WINTERBOWL, CALL BONNIE AT 715-743-4224
 715-743-4224 • W7031 RIDGE RD, NEILLSVILLE, WI 54456 • THEHIGHGROUND.US

HOLIDAY Lights

NOVEMBER 14, 2022–MARCH 1, 2023

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

For more information, call 715-743-4224 or visit thehighground.us

The Highground
 Veterans Memorial Park

715-743-4224 • W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456 • thehighground.us

Education Days Recap, cont.

The event requires the assistance of many volunteers for the multiple day event. Volunteers, staff and several Highground Board members learn and give the presentations; ensure the safety of the students by conducting traffic control; and to care for fellow volunteers by preparing food and doing continuous overall “checks” on school groups and volunteers.

This year Education Days offered a full day of High School / adult level workshops. High School students attended in-depth presentations with interactive elements on WWII – Pacific Theater, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the recent U.S. combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the struggles of refugees as they must leave their homes and seek new lives.

We look forward to continuing this format of Education Days in 2023! 5th Grade Days will October 3–4, 2023. High School / Adult Days will be October 5–6, 2023. Schools, home-schooled students and adults can sign up now for the 2023 event by contacting Theresa at TheHighgroundmuseum@thehighground.us 715-743-4224

In addition to The Highground volunteers, staff and Board members who gave presentations, we were able to enlist many specialized presenters to join the High School / Adult Day. Ward Zischke, Command Historian, 88th Readiness Division of Ft McCoy, gave an interactive outdoor presentation on the Korean War. Pete Kern, Operations Manager at The Highground and a Veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, gave a presentation on the U.S. military in the Middle East. Carl Bogar Jr., Veteran and owner of Historic Military Impressions (hmihistory.com), presented on WWII – Pacific Theater. Khalil Dokhanchi, UW-Superior Professor of Political Science and advocate for education on the refugee situation around the world, gave an interactive presentation on the complexities of being a refugee. To learn more about a very special book program for refugees, “Refugee Books”, please visit www.facebook.com/groups/1080501129453730 Fifteen schools – over 700 students - attended the 2022 Education Days. We were able to expand the depth of presentations of Education Days due to the generous support of John and Donna Koutre. We hope that their sponsorship will inspire others to support this important event in order to strengthen the connection and education that we can offer to students and adults.



IN MEMORY OF

Clifford Andrae
Jeff Andrae
Alfred Blume
Joshua Brennan
Glenn Crook
Ted Fetting
Charlie Frey
Terry Frey
Skip Hornick
Mave Huennekens
Norton Huennekens
Tom Jakel

James Allyn ‘Al’ Jenkins
Ronald Kimball
Frank Kinjerski Sr.
Allen Kleinschmidt
Dennis Knudtson
Howard Knudtson
Ronald Wayne Koth
David John Noland
Lila Oelhafen
Melvin Olson
Dean Opicka
Herb Simon
John Southworth

Marsha VanGorden
Kenny Ven Rooy
Richard H. Wrensch
William F. Young III
Thomas L. Zmuda

IN HONOR OF

Ken Juza
Tom Miller
Darren Opicka
Duane & Lynnette Pupp
Kirk & Nancy Rodman
Norb Zelewski



Volunteer Picnic Update

Volunteer Picnic – May 13, 2023

For 2023, we are combining the Porch Greeter Lunch and Volunteer Picnic, so that our “winter birds” and Spring Work Week volunteers have the opportunity to join us. To all 2022 volunteers and those who would like to become a volunteer, please mark your calendar for Saturday, May 13, from noon–2pm and let The Highground staff show our appreciation for all the support you give us and the Veterans we serve.

THANK YOU!

Neillsville 9-Pin Tap Sponsors

Cutting Edge (Neillsville)

Perfect 10 Outdoors (Neillsville)

Love and Flour Bakery (Neillsville)

Schmittys on Main (Neillsville)

Sport and Spine (Greenwood)

Pizza Hut (Neillsville)

A&W Restaurant (Neillsville)

Up Town Coffee (Marshfield)

Scotty's Pizza (Marshfield)

Nasonville Dairy (Marshfield)

2 1/2 Cups Cupcakery & Bakeshop (Marshfield)

Casa Amigos Restaurant (Marshfield)

Hewitt's Meats (Marshfield)

Mary & Sue Kokosz, “The Basket Babes”

Strike Time Lanes (Neillsville)

Cindy Simpson

Karen Workenaour

Chatty Belle (Neillsville)



Post-traumatic Stress (PTS) Peer Support Group

The Highground holds a monthly peer support group for not only veterans who are managing post-traumatic stress (PTS), but also for the family and loved ones of veterans with PTS. There are very limited resources in the way of peer support, places to talk to other spouses, family members, loved ones that are the caregivers and support system for veterans. As with caregivers and families of people struggling with other physical and mental challenges, the role of caregiver and/or friend comes with its own stress and hardships. Many caregivers and friends end up struggling with their own depression, stress, and fears due to their dedication to helping their loved one with PTS. The Highground PTS Peer Support Group welcomes these family members and friends!

The Peer Support Group offers a confidential and casual gathering to learn from others and get support from those who are “in your shoes”; listen to speakers on topics chosen by the group; and obtain resources. Families and veteran supporters do not need to attend with a Veteran.

Veterans who are struggling with PTS are invited to attend to gain additional skills, information and tools that others have found helpful in managing PTS. This is not a clinical, counseling group, but there are presentations and information available from professionals in PTS management.

The PTS Peer Support Groups are generally held at The Highground every third Sunday of the month at 2pm. Changes to the schedule do happen, so please confirm the meeting date by checking The Highground website (thehighground.us), emailing Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or calling 715-743-4224. RSVPs are not necessary, but are helpful in making sure we have enough resource material and refreshments.

The scheduled upcoming PTS Peer Support Groups are December 18, January 15, February 19 and March 19.

The Highground PTS Peer Support Group program is supported by a grant from the Charles E. Kubly Foundation.



The Highground Current Exhibits

“History of The Highground” The initial phase of the larger History of The Highground Project

The Highground truly began on a battlefield in Vietnam on December 18, 1965. On this day, the U.S. Marines’ hard-fought battle in Operation Harvest Moon resulted in the death of Marine Jack Swender. Marine Tom Miller held Jack in his arms as he died. Tom never forgot and vowed that he would create a park so that all those who perished in Vietnam would not be forgotten. It took the efforts of many Vietnam Veterans, community members and diehard individuals to make the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project, Inc.—now known as The Highground—a reality.

Decades of blood, sweat and tears confronted those who dedicated themselves to the cause of creating The Highground. It has continued to fulfill its mission of offering a place to be honored and a place to heal for all who have served, all who never returned and the families / loved ones of both. The efforts of so many supporters, through times that seemed insurmountable, and times of incredible joy, have resulted in a place that is hard to describe—what it does best can only be experienced. The story of The Highground is complex, wonderful, spiritual, and is still happening, evolving and looking forward to the next chapter!

This History of The Highground Exhibit is on display now in The Highground Museum...BUT, it is not finished. This exhibit will continue to be researched with new displays created as we comb through the stories and photographs – documenting the history to remember where The Highground has come from to better guide us as The Highground moves forward.

The “Wisconsin Remembers – A Face for Every Name” exhibit honoring all those from Wisconsin who were lost in the Vietnam War is on exhibit now in The Highground Museum. It will remain on display into February 2023.



“We Were There: Korean War” Traveling Exhibit Information

“We Were There - Korean War” is a banner display of 24 free-standing, double-sided fabric banners that are 8’ H x 3’ W. 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 fabric sleeves that fit over metal frames and the metal frames are in 8 pieces that snap together. This is an indoor-only display. **For booking and information, email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.**



“We Were There – Vietnam War” Update

The “We Were There – Vietnam War” Project...

is moving forward steadily with the submission of photographs, written stories, and interviews of several Vietnam veterans. We are compiling the experiences of Vietnam veterans – combat and non-combat – and family members of those who served during the Vietnam War. The families of those who never returned home are also a very important part of the project. Some veterans that were unsure of how to proceed with their experiences have used a question “guide” from the project to help put their thoughts on to paper. We will begin processing the items that have been submitted in December to create one portion of the project, a permanent banner exhibit. Veterans and families are invited to join the project as there is still time to be included! We will also create an ongoing digital exhibit to include veterans and families who we may not have even met yet.

Special “Thank You’s” go out to Scott Schultz of The Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy and the Arts (theheartbeat.us) for his dedication to interviewing the veterans for this project and to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (wisvetsmuseum.com) for allowing us to conduct an interview with a veteran at their facility.

If you would like to be included in the project, please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.

Thank you to sponsors VFW Germantown Memorial Post #9202, Gary Koenigs, Judy Hutter, Scott Schultz and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.



Images above courtesy of David Jagodzinski collection.

“The U.S. Military in the Greater Middle East”

Recapping the Exhibit

“The U.S. Military in the Greater Middle East – Post WWII to Present Day” exhibit was very well-received during the several months that it was on display at The Highground Museum. Over 400 military boots were on display from the “Being There – Reaching Out” organization. Each boot was dedicated with a photograph and information on a military man or woman who was lost from 9/11 to present day. The boots honor those who were killed while serving and also those who were lost due to their service through the effects of post-traumatic stress.

Special “thank you’s” go out to Ward Zischke & Pete Kern for contributing many of the items that are in this exhibit and the family of Trevor Diesing, KIA Aug 25, 2005 in Iraq, for sharing many of Trevor’s personal military items, his story, along with his folded flag and medals, to remind us of the many Gold Star families who are both proud of their loved one for serving and have experienced the profound grief of losing them due to their service.



Featured Veteran



Remembering James “Al” Jenkins, Founding Member of The Highground

Farewell

Unquestionably, without Tom Miller’s pledge to his dying friend, Jack Swender, made on a war-ravaged field in Vietnam, there would have been no founding inspiration for The Highground, but it took the heroic efforts of a small, dedicated, visionary and resourceful group of veterans who accepted Tom’s challenge, embraced his dream and translated it from concept into physical reality, to plant and nurture the seeds of the magnificent memorial we treasure and enjoy today. While this remembrance article tips its hat to each of those vital founding members of The Highground, it will make no attempt to tell each of their stories.

Meet James Allyn Jenkins (“AJ”), not simply another member of that elite group but indeed a highly influential, moving force behind the creation of our beloved memorial park. 6,183 Legacy Stones pave the graceful expanse of The Highground’s central plaza. AJ’s stone is in row 71. It is neither remarkable nor particularly different from those with which it shares honored space but his story is, in many ways, the story of The Highground itself.

Fellow veterans,

Ask not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for James Allyn Jenkins (1947-2022), a brother veteran whom you likely never knew but to whom each of us owes a debt of gratitude. He was instrumental in the founding of both the Eau Claire Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America and The Highground Veterans Memorial Park on whose board he served (1985–2003), four of those years as chairman. With grateful hearts, The Highground staff and board members send heartfelt condolences to all who knew and loved our fallen brother.

— Steve Maddox

To better appreciate the contribution of this remarkable veteran, one must learn something of his background. Although the term “renaissance man” has become almost cliché, when applied to James Allyn Jenkins, it is both fitting and appropriately descriptive, for he was a man of enormous intellectual capacity and creative talent.

While his military service in Vietnam (1967-68) was as unremarkable as it was honorable, it became the emotional backdrop and underpinning for his post-service accomplishments. Equally influential and just as near his heart were a number of native American values to which he ascribed, acting ever as a steward of the land, a friend of the environment, a humble and grateful recipient of nature’s myriad gifts and a man who held in due respect both elders and deserving fellow men and women. Post-Vietnam, Al went on to achieve mastery of both philosophy and journalism at UW-Stevens Point before moving to Eau Claire where he established what was to become his own successful advertising agency.

To adequately appreciate Al’s contributions to the creation and nurturing of The Highground, one must know something of his history, the profound trials he had to overcome en route to becoming the stalwart, upright and laudable man he willed himself to be. His was not a “Beaver Cleaver” youth but a formative cauldron of daily abuse and neglect suffered at the hand

of the same alcoholic father that terrorized his mother and eventually drove him into the uncaring world, on his own before his fifteenth birthday. Appreciate, if you can, all he endured and the extremes to which he was forced merely to survive. It was that very survival instinct that ultimately drove Al to the “Catch22” choice he was compelled to make between incarceration and military enlistment with Vietnam looming on the immediate horizon. Driven by desperation and the prospects of a dismal if not disastrous future, Al joined the Army, became Spec 4 James A. Jenkins and went to serve his country in Vietnam’s I-Corps as a member of the 589th Engineer Battalion (1967-68).

Upon completion of his combat tour, Al threw himself into formal education, graduating in 1974 with high honors from UW-Stevens Point where he excelled in his study of philosophy while learning journalism as a rabble-rouser staff member of the university newspaper. He eventually relocated to the Eau Claire area where he cut his organizational teeth helping found one of the country’s first chapters of Vietnam Veterans of America, thereby affording himself both voice in and influence on veterans affairs. Once he had successfully established his own advertising agency, he began to emerge as a major innovator and active participant in the local arts community, turning his writing skills to varied outlets, contributing poems, essays and book reviews to a number of well-respected publications and earning a national award for

magazine editing. His hands-on approach to civic activity led him to the co-founding of a writers workshop and on-going involvement in the education of area youth.

His stellar achievement, however, was his pivotal involvement in the creation of The Highground Veterans Memorial Park. He served faithfully as a board member during the search and primary construction phases



(1985-1990) of the project, this including four years as board chairman (1987-1990) followed by a subsequent second term as board member (2001-2003). His leadership and organizational skills helped clarify and define The Highground's mission, insured adequate fiscal support and created the functional framework which allowed it to thrive. His efforts helped galvanize the organization as well as attract the leadership it would require to grow, prosper and survive as a non-profit. Without his vision, example, discipline, guidance and esprit, all the valiant efforts which provided The Highground first a foothold and then a solid foundation might well have been for naught.

Next time you walk the quiet plaza, listen closely to the stillness and heed the unspoken voices on the breeze that stirs the wind chimes beneath the metallic poncho of "Fragments", the Vietnam memorial sculpture. The spirits of all who have come there seeking balm, respite, fellowship, sanctuary and safety will whisper to you and affirm that there they have found the home, the peace they deserve. Tarry among the artifacts, tributes and memories, and tip your hat to Al Jenkins. He'll understand.

— Steve Maddox

From the Director, Chris Pettis

As I reminisce on this year's events, ceremonies, and interactions over the past year, I can't help but feel several different emotions and I am perplexed as to how to put them into words. I've experienced the joy of honoring a Veteran for his or her proud service. I've seen the love, pride and admiration of family



and friends honoring their Veteran. I've witnessed the sadness of the loss of a friend or family member, and the hope from seeing progress in the recovery from physical injury, addiction, or mental health. In life there are many daily emotional highs and lows and how we respond to them today reveals our character and has a tremendous effect on how we deal with tomorrow.

In many of The Highground historical documents and in some present day literature, I've come across the statement "The purpose for the (Highground) project is to bring healing, hope and peace to all who visit." I cannot say for certain that "ALL who visit" have felt healed, hope or peace upon their visit, but many have visibly been affected by their time spent here. There's been that spark of hope and conversations, and that's just the beginning of their growth. The Highground continues to work toward that purpose (mission) every day, every event, every retreat, every support group meeting. As we embark on the future, The Highground asks you to be an integral part of the mission: Veterans who are willing to serve on the Board of Directors guiding the organization into the future; Volunteers to assist with different projects, events, and porch greeting throughout the year; Gifts in support of Retreats, PTS programs, future projects, and the Welcome Center, which are all the building blocks of the mission. From the conception of The Highground, the sacrifice of time and money of thousands of supporters who have believed in the mission has helped The Highground become not only a beautiful and spiritual place to visit, but has also helped provide Veterans and their families the support and resources to handle the many daily emotional highs and lows.

I wish everyone all the best through the rest of 2022. Enjoy your families and make the holidays memorable. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank you for your contribution of time, talent and treasures in the support of The Highground. It is truly humbling to see the difference that you make in the lives our Veterans.

Female Veterans Retreat Recap, cont.

Sarah, a decorated Vietnam veteran nurse who earned the Army Commendation Medal serving as an operating room nurse at the 12th Evacuation Hospital Cu Chi, Vietnam during the height of the fighting in 1967, has dedicated herself to serving veterans, especially those struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or military sexual trauma (MST). She is also an accomplished author, with her book “Women Under Fire” currently available at womenunderfire.net.

On Sept 8th, Sarah led an afternoon presentation at The Highground for the general public on her military service experience as a nurse during the Vietnam War. The Highground Museum garage was filled to capacity! The 90-minute presentation was followed by a Q & A session with Sarah, which lasted well into the evening. Sarah’s main objective in traveling from her Auburn, WA home to Neillsville was to be a main presenter for The Highground’s Annual Female Veterans Weekend Retreat, Sept 9–11. The retreat weekend was a combination of invigorating activities and workshops based on proven therapeutic value for PTSD, MST, and general mental and physical well-being, all in a beautiful setting. The several opportunities for “talking circles” among the group of veterans led to this retreat standing apart from others in the depth of trust, healing and camaraderie among the large group of veterans. Ranging in ages from the mid-20’s to 80’s. The weekend kicked off with an experience that brought back old memories for some as Dave Schmitz and Barry Hammarback provided aerial tours in their 1962 UH-1 Huey. For the several Vietnam War nurses that were present, it was an alleviative experience. “The sound of a Huey meant wounded were being brought in to us...not a welcoming sound. Today helped me “leave” that trauma here”, a Vietnam nurse shared upon leaving the airport. The first of many “talking circles” led by Sarah Blum on Friday afternoon brought the veterans together creating an environment of safety and trust that allowed bonds of friendship, support and individual healing from PTSD and/or MST to begin. Several veterans stated that “this is the first time I feel like I can talk about this”. Many of the veterans shared statements of anger that “this abuse and problems have been going on with women in the military for decades and it is still happening”. The age range elicited many expressions of gratitude for the older generations of women that paved the way for advancement and recognition that is now possible for women in the military.

Kristine Boon of Christy Country Quilts of Neillsville assisted with a Fun and unique quilt project with the Veterans printing personal Photos and messages on fabric blocks, which Kristine will create Into the 1st retreat quilt. Linda Imler of AKF Martial Arts Academy got the veterans up and moving Saturday morning with a morning stretch and introduction to Tai Chi, which is an accessible form of physical activity that has been proven to reduce stress and promote good mental and physical health. After a workshop by Sarah Blum, the veterans attended workshops on Archery led by Heidi Bower and Guided Forest Therapy led by Tina Wagner of Healing Oaks.

Both the archery and forest therapy activities introduced veterans to outdoor promote mental centering, stress reduction and physical movement in the outdoors. Let’s not forget the traditional Venison Steak Supper provided by Skip & Debbie Klabon of Colby, a veteran talking circle, and music by Blaine Howard and his wife at the bonfire. Sunday consisted of a “veteran check-in” workshop by Sarah, followed by a very special Stone ceremony with the female Veterans dedicating an Honor Stone to all women who have served (and those who will serve) in the U.S. military. The retreat participants provided the Color Guard, invocation and speaking. The inscription on the Honor Stone reads “*Warriors - Friends - Courageous - Inspiring - Sisters in Arms*”. The ceremony was filled with honor and emotion as the group paid homage to the women who served decades ago who broke down many barriers and with honor to all those who followed in their footsteps. **See page 12 for a photo of the female Veterans taken during the ceremony.**

Theresa Hebert led a Sculpey clay art workshop providing an inexpensive resource which fosters creativity. Scott Schultz of The Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy and the Arts closed the retreat with a presentation on journaling and expressing thoughts to work through challenging times and to promote releasing ideas and bringing joy into life.

Due to the overwhelming response to this female retreat weekend, The Highground will be developing several programs for female Veterans to gather for one to three-day events.

The Highground is sincerely grateful to the 9th Annual Winter Bowl sponsors and participants as well as the retreat sponsors who are the fundamental reason Veterans retreats are such a success. Sponors for the 2022 Veterans Weekend Retreats are: Sarah Blum; Marshfield Clinic, Security Health; Wiley Sparks; Ameriprise Financial (D Meyer); Chips of Marshfield LLC; Foreign Automotive Inc.; Loraine Prue; Maureen Hornung; Starbucks; Timber Rattlers; Weber’s Farm Store; Gypsie Hollow; Merle Norman-The Day Spa; Reigel Plumbing & Heating; Bigby Coffee; Lumberyard Bar & Grill; VVA #479; DAV Rib River Chap 31; Hardees – Neillsville, Colby, Medford; Thomas & Fay Liner; Dorothy & Dean Evensen; Hartford VFW Post 8834; Richard & Kristine Karl; Bonnie Henchen; Richard Ottum; Rolling Thunder Chapter 2; Fred & Kim Berg; Simplicity Credit Union; Central WI Broadcasting; Holly Hoppe; Marshfield Professional Police Assoc.; Deanna Rotar; American Legion Sylvan Post #44; Vickie Davis; Hansen’s IGA; BP Drescher Oil; Linda Imler – AKF Martial Arts; Heidi Bower; The Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy & the Arts; Skip & Debbie Klabon; Hiller’s True Value; Julie Diesing; Moraine Motel; Blaine Howard; Christie Country Quilts; Healing Oaks; WWIS; Betty Nemitz; Jeff Schultz; and Michele Benson.

Fall Work Week Recap

Fall Cleanup Days was a bit frosty this year. As dedicated volunteers began to arrive, so did the snow. By re-prioritizing, The Highground was readied for the winter months. Many of the "Honey Do List" items (raking leaves as well as storing picnic tables, benches and pavilion canopies) were accomplished with haste. The Blue Bird Trail bridge was finished with the determined assistance of Hemp Machine LLC, Bob Barth, Sav-Rite, Wes Waterman and his skid steer, and the hard work from many volunteers. The Highground is sincerely grateful for the hard work of all the volunteers!



Winter Veterans Retreat 2023

The Highground's 2nd Annual Winter Veterans Retreat is scheduled for Feb 3-5, 2023. The retreat will include ice fishing at Mead Lake; art workshops, post-traumatic stress management presentations; a chocolate workshop; snowshoeing; bonfires; great conversations and more! This retreat is open to any veteran, male or female. Lodging will be at an area motel near The Highground.

There is no charge for Veterans to attend the retreat (except for a \$30 booking fee which will be returned to the Veteran upon arrival at the retreat) and all physical items needed for the ice fishing, snowshoeing and all workshops will be provided. Veterans will have to bring a valid WI fishing license with them to the retreat. Fishing licenses can be purchased online at <https://gowild.wi.gov/>.

For more information and to reserve your space at the retreat, email Theresa at museum@thehighground.us or call 715-743-4224.



The Highground Annual Clothing Drive is here!

The Highground is collecting items for Veterans and families in need. Items most needed are disposable hand warmers and foot warmers, hats, gloves and new socks. Warm winter jackets and snowsuits, scarves, mittens and boots are also being accepted.



Items can be dropped off now through Jan. 1, 2023 at the Museum and will go to Every Third Saturday, the Veterans Assistance Foundation in Tomah and Chippewa Falls and the Clark County Department of Aging.

We are taking a break from Vets & Guitars over the winter due to unknown weather and road conditions.

A poster for the Fall Vets & Guitars program. It features a background image of a guitar and a maple leaf. The text reads: "Fall VETS & GUITARS", "Sponsored by The Highground & the Willard Well", "WE GOT YOUR 6-STRING", "Stay Tuned (pun intended) for the Spring Vets & Guitars program!", "This program is FREE for Veterans! INSTRUCTOR: Victoria Shoemaker of the band 'Virginia Steel' (FB: virginiasteelmusic)", "We are accepting sponsors—your \$125 donation will sponsor one Veteran to join—and we are also looking for good used or new acoustic guitars and guitar cases.", "Not all wounds are visible" with a teal ribbon symbol, "The Highground", "WILLARD WELL", "FIND US ON FACEBOOK", "N8631 County Rd G, Willard, WI 54493", "715-743-4224 • thehighground.us", "FIND US ON FACEBOOK", "W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456".

Fall VETS & GUITARS
Sponsored by The Highground & the Willard Well
WE GOT YOUR 6-STRING

Stay Tuned (pun intended) for the Spring Vets & Guitars program!

This program is **FREE** for Veterans!
INSTRUCTOR: Victoria Shoemaker of the band "Virginia Steel" (FB: virginiasteelmusic)

We are accepting sponsors—your \$125 donation will sponsor one Veteran to join—and we are also looking for good used or new acoustic guitars and guitar cases.

Not all wounds are visible

The Highground

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

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

Dear B-R-T

“I Am A Marine” by Charlotte M. Ayers



Headed South when I turned eighteen
To Parris Island to become a Marine!

Boot Camp on the Depot was my destination
Two months of training was not a vacation.

They issued us uniforms, skirts below the knee
Cause that was the '50's fashion, don't you see.

We learned new words to replace the old.
Made up our bunks with a hospital fold.

Instead of the bathroom, you went to the Head.
Where you slept was named a Bunk, not a bed.

Don't go into the kitchen, it's now the Messhall,
And the word Bulkhead replaced the wall.

What we ate in the Messhall, now is called Chow,
And going there meant we were going to Chow now.

We wore not a hat, we called it a Cover.
It sits straight on your head or you will sure suffer.

We shined shoes and boots with a rag and our spit,
So shiny and bright you could see your face in it!

So much to learn, days sitting in classes;
We were ready to be really smart lasses.

Marine Corps history, laws and traditions,
How to salute, and lead a platoon on a mission.

In uniform we stood, straight and felt proud.
And knew that anywhere, we'd stand out in a crowd.

For drilling we wore Utilities and black shiny boots,
For physical training, we wore "Peanut Suits."

From barracks to classroom, even to chow
We marched to cadence, our D.I. showed us how.

When Field Day came, it was not held outside.
It meant that the barracks must be cleaned inside.

We dusted, we mopped, we buffed decks to perfection,
We polished and cleaned Heads, for white-glove inspection.

To greet all those ranks above us "Boots"
We practiced daily lots of snappy hand salutes!

Then came the day, our training's complete!
In spite of the sand-fleas and P.I.'s so hot heat!

I stood at attention, sorta nervous inside.
Shoulders back, I felt such great pride!

I raised my hand, swore to protect and defend
The Constitution, our Country, our Flag to the end.

I will be loyal, committed, and always be strong.
Serve my Country and never doing it wrong.

I loved the challenge, the discipline, the drill.
The friends I made, I think of still.

Those weeks were special, never had a regret
For that decision to serve, now I am a Vet.

Yes, I came South when I was eighteen
And proudly earned the title of U.S. Marine!

Semper Fi,
Charlotte M. Ayers
Sgt, USMC, 1952-1957



Honor Stone dedication during the Female Veterans Retreat.

Dear Reader

Dear Ms. Charlotte,

It was a delight to receive your letter and to share your poem with The Highground staff! We gladly included your "I'm A Marine" poem for all to read. Thank you for service and we wish you well.

Sincerely,

Bravo-Romeo-Tango

Dear Highground,

Thank you for letting me take a trip there. I really liked the flag folding because the people folding were respectful to America. I really liked the museum because all the military people's boots were in the museum. I also like the Military Dog Tribute because it was interesting that the military people left their dogs behind, and they went home. I like that people left coins behind they have trained with them or in war with them. I loved the Highground and I want to visit again. Thanks for letting me come.

Sincerely,

Jace

Reminder: "Dear Bravo-Romeo-Tango" is your place to ask questions or 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.

Please email your letters to store@thehighground.us or mail them to:

The Highground

c/o Dear B-R-T

P.O. Box 457

Neillsville, WI 54456



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FEATURED ITEMS

GIFT SHOP HOURS ARE 10AM TO 4PM 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

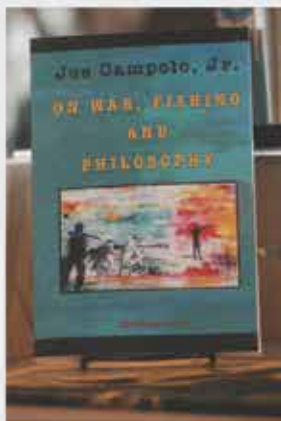
The store that supports the mission



Metal Art Sign 5326

Decorative sign with candle image and "In loving memory" saying.

\$19.95



Books

Check out our selection of books including the title above by Joe Campolo, Jr.

6133

\$19.95



The Highground T-shirt 1145

The Highground t-shirt is available in maroon, navy blue and green. Kids sizes small (6-8) to XL (18-20).

\$14.95



Deerskin Gloves

10002

Durable winter glove made of suede split deerskin leather. Features a Heatlok™ U-100 lining, elastic wristband for extra warmth and a rolled leather cuff hem.

\$20.00



Abalone Necklace

2680

Polished abalone shell adorned with silver 9mm primer slice and clear or paradise shine crystal on a 26" chain. Leaf or shell-shape.

\$23.95



HG Gift Card

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

Call us at 715-743-4224

Email: store@thehighground.us

thehighground.shop

W7031 Ridge Road, Neillsville, WI 54456

DECEMBER 2022 - FEBRUARY 2023

Wish List

Items or funding:

- New 32GB USB drives (thank you for those we've received so far)
- 25 new 2" three-ring binders in a solid color for photo storage and retreats (no photo albums please)
- Rubbermaid Roughneck, Rubbermaid Brute or Sterilite brand larger totes and underbed totes—no wheels: HDX totes (black/yellow) These brands only, please, because they are made of archival-suitable materials. Other brands made with PVC will harm items.
- Display mannequin heads for the Gift Shop
- Volunteers to be part of the 2023 Events Committee (call Bonnie)
- Volunteers to be part of the 2023 Honor Stone Ceremony Crew: Color Guards, Rifle Squads, car parkers, miscellaneous tasks. It takes many volunteers to make the ceremony memorable for the honorees and their families (call Haley)
- A volunteer professional photographer willing to dedicate one day a month to offer guests professional group photos during Honor Stone ceremonies.
- Volunteers willing to weed areas one-two times a month (April–Oct.)
- Volunteer professional printer to produce The Highground letterhead and envelopes

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 "We Were There-Korea" exhibit

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
- _____ 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 _____



One of the many memorable things about The Highground is how beautiful the tributes are no matter what time of year it is. We hope you have the opportunity to experience the stillness and tranquility of the Park during the winter season.

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

John Roy Knorr
 David Walter Knouse
 Bruce Neal Knox
 James Richard Knox
 Earl William Knutson Jr..
 Felix D Knutson
 Darryl Jay Koch
 Brian Robert Koehn
 John M Koenig
 Terrence Eugene Kohlbeck
 Victor Joseph Kohlbeck
 Nick Kokalis
 Roger Joseph Kopke
 David Stanley Kossowski
 Roger Joseph Kostka
 Marvin David Kostroski
 William Max Kotnik
 Douglas Lee Kramer
 John Thomas Krebs Jr.
 John William Kreckel
 Richard W Krenz
 Joseph Kresic Jr.
 Robert Alan Kreuziger
 Eugene Richard Kritz
 Dennis John Kromrey
 Gerald Kropidlowski
 Charles William Krueger
 Dean Wilbur Krueger
 Duncan Frederick Krueger
 Wayne Dale Krueger
 Raymond Henry Krug Jr.

Leo Frederick Krumbine
 John Edward Krzmarcik
 Joseph Bernard Kube
 Roy Robert Kubley
 William Robert Kuczewski
 Paul David Kuehl
 Gerald Loren Kuhnly
 James Peter Kurth
 Sidney Allen Kurz

Korean War

Ronald P. Ruka
 Robert A. Ryan
 William Harvey Ryman
 Richard D. Salvatore
 Floyd A. Sandlin
 Neil M. Sather
 Gerald H. Saxton
 Paul R. Schanhofer
 Douglas F. Schauf
 Vernon Schermerhorn
 Raymond Franklin Schmidt
 Alphonse R. Schmitt
 Andrew Schneider
 Arley B. Schneider
 John C. Schneider
 William G. Scholze
 Richard L. Schott
 Floyd M. Schroeder
 Gordon T. Schroeder
 Maynard R. Schroeder
 Clair C. Schuknecht

Bertram E. Schultz
 Richard Joseph Schultz
 John Schwed Jr.
 Harold G. Schwemer
 Eugene C. Schwend
 Lawrence H. Scott
 Bernard E. Scovell
 Raymond W. Seegert
 Phillip White Seeley
 Robert W. Seidel
 Maynard Arthur Selvog
 Deloy G. Semingson
 Charles H. Senz
 Donald H. Shaw
 James H. Sheldon
 Charles Shifflett
 Thomas W. Short Jr.
 Colin Shultz
 Ernest V. Simonson
 Gerald T. Sinz

Persian Gulf

Adam J. Novak
 Shane K. O'Donnell
 Todd D. Olson
 Dean D. Opicka
 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
 Anthony R. Wasielewski
 Michael J. Wendling
 Earl D. Werner