

# NEWSLETTER

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

thehighground.us — 715.743.4224



Construction on the expansion kicked off in December. Above, concrete is poured in early February.

## The Highground Officially Breaks Ground on the Building Expansion

**This phase marks the beginning of a new chapter in the organization's history. It's been exciting to see the daily progress over the last few months as Marawood continues to take advantage of the mild Wisconsin winter and "early spring."**

The milestone symbolizes our commitment to create a space that honors our past, educates its present and inspires its future. The expanded space will allow us to increase our capacity to serve the Veteran community. As work on the project continues, please know that continued support will be invaluable to the organization, the ongoing mission and those we serve. The Highground Rising capital campaign is an ongoing effort and we invite everyone who supports the organization to consider contributing to this important cause. Whether through financial contributions, donations of time and expertise, or by simply sharing the mission with others, continued and expanded involvement is needed to bring the vision to life. **See page 12 for a collection of early construction photos. For more information about the expansion project, visit our campaign website at [campaign.thehighground.us](https://campaign.thehighground.us)**



## Winter Veterans Retreat Recap

**What happens when a Winter Retreat is scheduled and winter forgets to show up?!** With the help of many community members and volunteers plus a few adaptations to the itinerary, The Highground's third annual Winter Retreat was still a wonderful success!

**Read more on page 4**

### What's inside

#### 05. WDVA Grant

The Highground received a grant for the 2024 Veterans Program

#### 06. Featured Veteran

Tom Miller: Vietnam Veteran, Artist and Founder of The Highground

#### 10. Winter Bowl Recap

The 11th Annual Winter Bowl was held in Eau Claire for the second year

# Honor Stones, Memorials & Honorariums

## Honoring Your Special Veteran, Service-Hearted Loved One and Even Their Beloved Patriot K9.

Our scheduled stone ceremonies offer guests an opportunity to share their appreciation for a special Veteran or service-hearted loved one in their life and often inspire never-before-told stories to be shared. Consider gifting an Honor Stone and gather your friends and family for one of the available ceremony dates listed below.

- May 18: 11am and 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony
- June 15: 11 am and 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony
- July 13: 11am Persian Gulf Stone Ceremony
- July 13: 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony
- August 3: 11am and 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony
- September 21: 11am Legacy Stone and MWD Ceremony
- September 21: 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony
- October 5: 11am and 2pm Legacy Stone Ceremony

For more information about the Honor Stones, please contact Bonnie at [donations@thehighground.org](mailto:donations@thehighground.org), call 715-743-4224 or visit [thehighground.us/honor-stones](http://thehighground.us/honor-stones) **Note: The complete list of Honor Stones placed in 2023 can be found on our website.**

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



Summer 2023 Military Working Dog Ceremony



### IN MEMORY OF

Thomas Bednarek  
Ralph Leigh Blauvelt  
Phillip Cayo  
Gerald Chipman  
Kim Dary  
Michael P. Esser  
David P. Esser  
Clifford Hanson

Lee Isaacson  
Clifford Jantz  
Dale Karpenske  
Angela Kissinger  
Vilas & Vernice Kraft  
Kenneth Kraft  
James McDonald  
John McDonald  
David Meyer

Leroy "Moose" Meyer  
Virginia Montgomery  
Jim Palmer  
Norman Poppe  
John Raine  
Jay M. Ruesch  
Timothy Springer  
Allen Stange  
Sgt. Andy Stevens

Dan Stoneberg  
Tom Stubblefield  
Brent T. Vroman  
Todd F. Wagner  
William A. Becker  
Kenneth Wry

### IN HONOR OF

Cecil Berlin  
James Henrichs  
Luke Holm  
Lloyd R. Kalepp  
Pete Kern  
John Schmidt & his family  
Fred Winkler



# Event Highlights

## Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

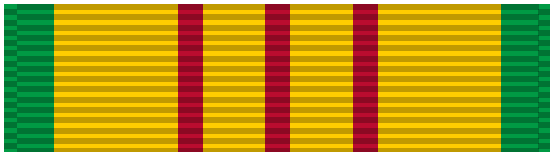
Mark your calendar and join us for the Volunteer-Porch Greeter Appreciation Picnic on May 11 from noon-3pm. New volunteers are welcome!

## Spring Work Week

Save the date for May 8-11 and help us get the Park ready for summer! Please RSVP by May 1 to [ops@thehighground.org](mailto:ops@thehighground.org) or call 715-743-4224.

## Spring Bake Sale

Make a note to stop by The Highground for some sweet treats during our annual spring bake sale on Saturday, May 18 from 10am-3pm!



## Vietnam Veterans Reunion Sunday, August 4

The Highground will host its annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion on August 4, combining Vietnam exhibits and an opportunity to meet fellow Vietnam Veterans. There are usually 100 or more Vietnam Veterans who come together for the lunch!

**Lunch will be provided at no cost to Vietnam Veterans who RSVP (one guest allowed) prior to July 31. To RSVP, send an email to [Theresa.museum@thehighground.org](mailto:Theresa.museum@thehighground.org) or call 715-743-4224.**

We are accepting sponsors for the Vietnam Veterans Reunion and Lunch. Contact Theresa if you or your organization would like to be a sponsor.

**More information about the reunion including presenters and exhibits will be available on our website and Facebook page ([facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial](https://facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial)) and provided to those who RSVP with an email address.**

## 2024 Event Calendar

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

### All Events

- Jan 28** 11th Annual Winter Bowl (Eau Claire)
- Feb 2-4** Winter Veterans Retreat
- May 8-11** Spring Work Week
- May 11** Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- May 14** Hmong-Lao Veterans Day Ceremony
- May 18** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Spring Bake Sale
- May 27** 14th Annual Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony
- June 15** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- June 29** Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk
- July 13** Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 2-4** 40th Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (Ceremony Aug 4)
- Aug 3** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 4** Vietnam Veterans Reunion
- Aug 17** 24th Annual Ride to Remember® Motorcycle Ride & Rally
- Sept 21** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Military Working Dog Ceremony
- Sept 21** Day of Peace Community Event
- Oct 1-4** Education Days
- Oct 5** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Fall Bake Sale
- Oct 11-12** Fall Cleanup Days
- Oct 18-20** Couples Retreat
- Nov 11** Veterans Day Ceremony; Honor Our Veterans Raffle Drawing
- Nov 4-Mar 31, 2024** Holiday Lights "Honor Stars" on the Plaza
- Nov 28** Season of Giving – Pledge your support for The Highground
- Dec 3** Patriotic Quilt Raffle Drawing (quilts displayed prior to drawing)

### Museum Exhibits

The Museum will be showing exhibits that reflect the "Human Cost of War" throughout 2024. Due to construction and potential closures, exhibit details are not available. We invite you to follow us on Facebook for current updates.

**Visit [thehighground.us](https://thehighground.us)  
for more information**

# Mission Recap

## Third Annual Winter Veterans Retreat (cont. from page 1)

As many people can experience increased struggles with mental health issues, isolation, and lack of physical activity during the winter months, The Highground Winter Retreat is an especially welcome event for male and female Veterans! This event combined outdoor and indoor workshops which were selected to introduce and encourage winter activities and to offer post-traumatic stress (PTS) management techniques for Veterans seeking this information. Veterans enjoyed exploring The Highground, hiking the trails (snowshoeing was originally planned!), and getting to know each other and the retreat staff throughout the weekend.

The retreat began on the afternoon of Friday, February 2 with orientation and a woodworking workshop led by Chris Pettis. Supper followed, prepared by longtime volunteer Bonnie Hennen, who prepared most of the meals at The Highground during this retreat.



*Mealtime at Paul and Melissa Borsheim's house*



*Veterans showing off their catch of the day!*

The main event of the Winter Retreat was a morning of ice fishing on Lake Arbutus, approximately 13 miles from The Highground. When planning the retreat months earlier, retreat coordinator Theresa Hebert reached out to the Lake Arbutus Association via Facebook for assistance in putting together a Veteran's ice fishing workshop. Very quickly, via conversations with the Association, she received offers of help from fishermen Mike Prindle and Paul Borsheim. A meeting was quickly planned, and two more avid fishermen, Eugene Bertrang and Josh Olson joined the ice fishing guide group, and the workshop was pulled together. On the day of the event, Veterans were also assisted by fishing guides Matthew Borsheim, Tim Helgerson, Joe Schwartz, Eric Kramer, and Randy Hauge. "There is no way we could have organized and offered this big activity to our retreat Veterans without the help of all the guides and Melissa (Paul's wife)," said Theresa, "They guided the entire planning process, created the equipment list, and did all the behind the scenes work of setting up the event! Going into the

last 2 weeks, it seemed very up in the air with the warm temperatures if we would even be able to get out on the ice. These guys were giving us constant updates so we could plan accordingly and keep our Veterans informed. On the day of the ice fishing event, Paul and Melissa Borsheim opened their beautiful home to our big group and served us a phenomenal breakfast and lunch. The Ice Fishing experience and the delicious meals were made possible by Borton Construction's sponsorship. The Veterans had a great time, remarking on how they were helped every step of the way by the guides, with lots of laughs as well as several fish caught! The Highground and the Veterans that attended this retreat are hoping to work with this great group on future fishing events!

Due to a complete lack of snow, the snowshoeing event became an "at will" hiking event through The Highground's 4.5 miles of wooded trails. The Veterans were able to take home a set of hiking poles that are convertible to several different terrain types. We hope they continue exploring trails in their home areas.

The Veterans had a busy day on Saturday. After returning from Lake Arbutus, woodcarver Henry Smith gave a presentation on hand-carved wood walking sticks. Veterans were introduced to a unique freeform art, Neurographic Art, which helps the "artist" stay mindful and "in the present" while helping to release stressful emotions easily and with items that are generally on hand. PTS management conversations were an important part of the Winter Veterans Retreat. A PTS management workshop led by Mary Haupt of the Vet Center was a powerful introspective part of the retreat and concluded the day on Saturday.

Scott Schultz of The Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy and the Arts led a journaling workshop on Sunday morning about the ability of journaling to help heal, finding ways to think about things from a different perspective and working through problems. **Cont. on page 7**

# Mission Recap

## The Highground Veterans Program Receives Significant Grant Funding

The Highground received a \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) to support our 2024 Veterans Retreats, the Veteran & Family Post-traumatic Stress Peer Support Group and the Vets & Guitars and Ukuleles program. The following is an excerpt from the WDVA's official press release distributed on February 7, 2024:

### **WDVA Awards \$350,000 to Veteran Nonprofits**

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary-designee James Bond announced \$350,000 in grants were awarded to 12 nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families. "These grants directly fund the good work being done on the ground to assist veterans and their families," said Secretary-designee Bond. "Thousands of folks are working across our state to serve veterans right now, and they deserve our recognition and support. I'm pleased that WDVA can help these organizations achieve our shared goal of improving veterans' lives"



*These grants are from two programs: the Veteran Nonprofit Grant, available to all registered nonprofits that serve veterans, and the Veteran Entrepreneurship Grant, open to nonprofits that specifically provide entrepreneurship or technical, business, or other assistance to veteran entrepreneurs to improve employment outcomes."*

According to The Highground's Executive Director Chris Pettis, "Funding by this grant allows us to offer these experiences for Veterans in the best way we can. When we are able to create a safe and supportive environment in which to offer outdoor activities, PTSD management workshops, and many complementary programs, we see how the bonds of trust and friendship form quickly within the group of Veterans. We believe this camaraderie is the key to the healing and forward progress in PTSD management for the Veterans who attend our programs. Due to this funding, we are able to offer these programs at no cost to the Veteran."

## The Spring "Vets & Guitars" Session Begins on Thursday, March 21

Art and music programs have been found to be helpful to many Veterans who are managing PTSD. The "Vets & Guitars" classes are a great experience to share with other Veterans.

This program is offered to military Veterans free of charge. This 10-session course will be held on Thursday evenings.

**Beginning Acoustic Guitar class will be held from 4:30-5:30pm. Continuing Guitar, for Veterans who have already completed the beginning guitar course, will be held from 6-7pm.**

**To register and for more information, please email Theresa at [museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org) or call 715-743-4224.**



*Veterans jammin' their guitars during the last Fall 2023 session*

**Now is a great time to become a volunteer at The Highground—Sign up to be a porch greeter, help during work week, support our events and more!**



# Featured Veteran—Thomas L. Miller



*"Check-point" color print by Thomas Miller*

## You may know Tom Miller as the original founder of the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project, Inc., but did you know he is one heck of an artist?

Tom dabbled in drawing during his school age years and after graduating high school, he attended Milwaukee Area Technical College part time before he was drafted into the United States Marine Corps. After being wounded in Vietnam, and “semi-recuperated,” Tom attended Whitewater State Teachers College with the intent to get his degree in Special Education and to teach art. After a weeklong visit that turned into a very short three days from his seven and eight-year-old niece and nephew, Tom “promptly gave up Special Ed and signed up for an Art degree. If I couldn’t handle these two kids, what would I do with a Special Ed class?” Whitewater State Teachers College became the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and Tom graduated with his bachelor’s degree in teaching.

Tom continued his art education at the University of Idaho where he graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Sculpture. Upon returning to Wisconsin, Tom entered some of his art pieces into several art shows, winning first place in painting in one of them.

Tom purchased a horse farm and raised Arabian horses and Doberman Pinschers and worked for the Zoning Department of Columbia County using his artistic skills to draw zoning maps. In the fall of 1982, Tom took a bus to Washington DC with over 40 Veteran Nurses and other Veterans for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. “Although it was fun, it was a long trip and I had time to think about just how far away the memorial was from Wisconsin. Voila! The idea of having a memorial in Wisconsin started,” states Tom. The rest of that story is history, or should we say, The Highground?

In 1987, Tom moved to New Jersey to help operate an electronic catalogue business that he co-owned. The memorial project was taken over by dedicated Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans. Tom went on to be commissioned for logo designs and was one of the influential artists behind the Wounded Warrior Project logo.

While continuing his education in 1997, Tom enjoyed the instruction of internationally known artist Arie Galles. At the time, Tom wanted to paint his experiences “but couldn’t get my head together to do it. It was the PTSD kicking in.” Galles recommended that Tom study Junasz Korczak, a Polish/Jewish educator who ran an orphanage in Poland during WWII. “After seeing and painting just what this man went through, I was able to do my Operation Harvest pieces.” He never finished the Operation Harvest series because in 2001, Tom was stirred by the 9/11 events and began his 9/11 Series which consists of 55 pieces so far, including sculptures, acrylic & watercolor paintings, graphite, and ink drawings.

While working on the 9/11 Series, Tom started the Flags of Our Conflicts Series which includes about 50 pieces. This series is about the various U.S. involved conflicts from the Revolutionary War to present day.

As Tom has attempted to keep all his series collections together, he is running out of room. Finding some peace in his creations,



*Eugene Canapi, a 30-year on the force detective, accepts a 9/11 series print from Tom Miller on behalf of the NYPD*

Tom has begun donating pieces to the New York Fire and Police Departments, the National Museum of the Marine Corps and local universities in the hopes that others will find peace as well. Tom continues to give various prints to Veterans and First Responders throughout the United States. There are even some local governments and private collectors, such as former Commandants of the Marine Corps, that are honored to have a Tom Miller piece.

Tom’s story is encouraging to others. Our Veteran Retreats and various other programs offer an introduction to art as a means to battle the demons within and find calmness and peace in creative ways. You can find several of Tom’s prints in our Gift Shop.

# Winter Retreat Recap

(cont. from page 4)

The opportunity for Veterans to gather to learn new skills and creative hobbies is important any time of the year. It is especially helpful to be active in the winter, both socially and physically, as struggles with mental health issues can become more intense due to seclusion and lack of sunlight.

The intent of this retreat was to offer a socially-interactive event for Veterans with guidance and skill-building instruction that they will be able to continue after the retreat. Veterans left the Winter Veterans Retreat with several items to help them continue with these new activities. Items included ice fishing gear, PTS management books for Veterans and families, a case of art supplies, a set of convertible hiking poles, journals and new friendships! Veterans are encouraged to stay in contact with each other and with The Highground. We hope to see these familiar faces at more of our 2024 Veterans events and personal visits at any time!

**The success of any Veterans Retreat relies on the support of organizations and individuals. The Highground was awarded a grant through the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs which funded this Winter Veterans Retreat and future 2024 Veterans Retreats. Generous donors supporting The Highground's Veterans Retreat program include Borton Construction, The National Society of the Dames of the Court of Honor, the Kokosz family, Michele Benson, Julie Diesing, Patricia and Michael Tatro, Linda Czaplinski, The Roper Trust, Beth Murray, Karen Kensel and Central Wisconsin Broadcasting. A very special "thank you" goes out to the Moraine Motel for helping our Veterans feel welcome and comfortable during the retreat.**

We have already started planning the 4th Annual Winter Retreat for January 31-February 2, 2025! If you are a business that specializes in winter outdoor activities and would like to be a part of next year's retreat or if you would like to make a donation to support the Veterans Retreats, please call 715-743-4224 or email Theresa at [museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org).



# Request Information

The Highground is a grassroots, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The private facility, which receives no ongoing federal or state funding, is supported by private donations and grants. It has a very small operating budget and exists because volunteers and contributors have given The Highground 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 the fundraising calendar
- Honor Stones
- Adding someone to the mailing list  
(please include the name and address of the person you want to send a gift subscription to)
- Capital Campaign
- Endowment Fund
- Booking details for "We Were There: Korean War" 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
- Honor Stone Ceremonies

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Mission Recap

## The Highground Will Offer Two Female Veterans Retreats This Summer

The Highground is offering two female Veterans retreats this summer and registration is open for both now! Female Veterans can take part in these retreats free of charge. (Transportation to and from the retreat weekend is the responsibility of the Veteran)

### The Highground Ice Age Trail Hike - Female Veterans Retreat May 30-June 2, 2024

The Highground Female Veterans Retreat hits Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail on its second annual hiking / camping retreat! Spending time in nature is one of the most effective and achievable ways to help heal and manage PTS and to reach goals of better mental health. Veterans will meet on the evening of Thursday, May 30th to hone and learn outdoor skills before setting out Friday. Female Veterans will have the opportunity to participate in meaningful PTS / MST workshops while hiking and camping on the Ice Age Trail Friday through Sunday morning. The intent of this retreat is to help Veterans become confident in hiking and camping skills while making strides in their healing and management of PTS/MST through group workshops along the trails.

The group will be hiking 5-8 miles daily on the rolling terrain of the Ice Age Trail. Veterans will be supplied with the basic equipment necessary for this adventurous weekend! The Highground can plan and conduct this Ice Age Trail retreat because of the guidance and assistance of the Ice Age Trail Alliance ([iceagetrail.org](http://iceagetrail.org)) and Veteran Peter Kitzhaber. We look forward to working together on this exciting venture!

### Female Veterans Retreat at The Highground June 21-23, 2024

The second retreat will be held June 21 – 23 and will be based at The Highground. Lodging for this retreat will be at a motel adjacent to The Highground. This retreat will have several workshops and activities for female Veterans that have been proven to be helpful in managing post-traumatic stress (PTS) and military sexual trauma survival (MST) all while enjoying nature and the camaraderie of other female Veterans. The activities will combine nature-based physical activities, creative arts, mindfulness, and PTS management workshops led by Vietnam Veteran nurse and PTS / MST advocate presenter Sarah Blum. This retreat will have activities that are accessible to most mobility-challenged Veterans. Information about confirmed presentations will be available soon and will be publicized on our website ([thehighground.us](http://thehighground.us)), our Facebook page ([facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial](https://facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial)) and central Wisconsin press releases.

**The major sponsor of both 2024 Female Veterans Retreats is the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). Generous donors supporting The Highground's Female Veterans Retreat program include The National Society of the Dames of the Court of Honor, the Kokosz family, Michele Benson, Julie Diesing, Patricia and Michael Tatro, Linda Czaplinski, The Roper Trust, Beth Murray and Karen Kensel.**

For more information or to register for one or both retreats, please email Theresa at [museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org) or call 715-743-4224.



*A photo of the Ice Age Trail near Holcombe*



*A photo of attendees taken at The Highground during the 2022 Female Retreat*



# Museum News

## The Highground Museum is Under Construction Due to the Expansion

The Museum will be closed to the public during the construction phases of the expansion. We are looking forward to being in our new facility and Museum space in just a few months. Meanwhile, we are working on The Highground History, the “We Were There: Vietnam War” Project, archiving and planning our exciting educational exhibits for mid-2024 and beyond!

**We have received many recent donations of artifacts and personal items of military service, as well as art by Veterans representing their military experiences and how serving in combat has affected them. We are thankful for the donations which will be added to our educational exhibits.** We do not take these donations lightly as they are more than “artifacts”, they are items honoring a loved one’s service, struggle and sacrifice. To archive and display them properly keeps the memory of these loved ones, and their true experiences, alive. The Highground Museum offers many unique educational experiences to the community and visitors. We will expand our educational events, exhibitions and presentations with the completion of our new construction project. The Museum will continue to create and host permanent exhibits as well as exhibits which will change every three-four months. We encourage visitors to return many times throughout the year to experience the new exhibitions!



*Photos of Elmer D. Jackson from WWI*



*From Herbert Burdick Korean War KIA donation*



*Shadowbox honoring Loren Ray Millard Vietnam War KIA*

## Patriotic Chainsaw Carvings Donated to The Highground

USMC Veteran, Luke Worth, was commissioned by the Ottum family to create two outstanding wood chainsaw sculptures for The Highground. These sculptures are now in a place of honor bordering the entrance to the Timberframe Gift Shop, greeting every visitor to The Highground! More information on Luke and his unique artwork can be found on the Facebook page for his business Meadowlark Chainsaw Carving LLC. Meadowlark Chainsaw Carving is located in Sheboygan Falls, WI.



*Sculptures arrive at The Highground*



*The Ottum family with Luke and his soldier sculpture*



*Luke with his eagle chainsaw sculpture*

# Event Recaps

## The Highground's Annual ATV Raffle Raised \$11,215

After months of selling ATV raffle tickets (980 of the 1,000 ordered, to be exact), on Veterans Day, November 11, 2023 at 3pm the first, second and third prize winning tickets were drawn for The Highground's 5th Annual ATV Raffle Honoring our Veterans. **Kris Monson of Strum, WI was excited after getting the phone call that he won the green 2023 Polaris Sportsman 570. James Gauerke of Kronenwetter, WI was the second prize winner of \$1,000 and Deanna Rotar, of Marshfield, WI won the \$500 third place prize.**



*Kris Monson with his new ATV*

This raffle is one of several fundraisers that supports The Highground and it's mission to Honor, Educate and Heal our Veterans, their families and all who visit. **On behalf of our Veterans Program participants, The Highground staff along with this year's lucky winners are grateful to everyone who purchased tickets. A special THANK YOU goes out to Chilson Motors for sponsoring this raffle and to Ralph Ottum for this stalwart ticket sales! Supporters are invited to keep an eye out in the coming months for information regarding tickets for this year's ATV Raffle which will available for purchase at the Gift Shop up until the raffle drawing on Veterans Day, November 11, 2024.**

## The Highground's Annual Quilt Raffle Raised \$1,900

Twenty-eight beautiful quilts went home with raffle winners at The Highground's Annual Quilt Raffle on Saturday, December 9. Over 580 tickets were sold and the funds raised will be used for various necessities that assist The Highground in accomplishing its mission of Honoring, Healing and Education for Veterans, families and the community. "A favorite part of our year is when we get to display these wonderful quilts during the Fall months and then share in the fun of them going to their new homes to be enjoyed during the colder months. We are always in awe of the creative patterns, amazing workmanship, and the generosity of the quilters!", said Theresa Hebert of The Highground.

This Quilt Raffle was only made possible due to the talents and generosity of several quilters that donated their patriotic-themed quilts to the raffle. **The quilts were created and donated by: Bev Bryan, Joanne Hanson, Laura Culver, Dorothy Kremm, Louise Wagner, Delia Chy, Barb Schneider, Joan & Doug Vande Castle, Helping Hands Quilt Group, Cyndie Schultz, Prentice 1st Lutheran Church, Mary Thums, Beverly Hora, Audrey Tesch, Bonnie Uhren, Beth Laatsch, Linda Johnston, Joan Garlick, Connie Soppa, Terri Stiner, Strum American Legion Aux, Strum VFW Aux 6550, Kristin Bishopp, Deb Berg, Cheri Case, Amy Schneider, Delores Madsen, Linda Berg, Cheri Back, The Sunshine Group, Sue Guenther, Elaine Iattoni, Marge Rohland, Nancy Brown, Mary Lou Kirchner and Paula Makela.**

## The Annual Winter Bowl Raised \$2,362 for our Veterans Retreats

On Sunday, January 28, 2024, The Highground hosted its 11th Annual Winter Bowl fundraiser at Bowl Winkle's in Eau Claire.

Bowlers of all ages took to the lanes at noon for a fun day of bowling, a chance at 19 amazing raffle baskets and a Super Bowl Party grand prize package. There were a lot of laughs thanks to Emcee Scott Schultz of the Heartbeat Center for Writing, Literacy, and the Arts. The funds raised by this event will help fund The Highground's 2024 Veterans Retreats.

"We had so much fun today, and The Highground is a wonderful place. We are so glad we can help," said one of the bowlers. **The Highground is truly grateful to Bowl Winkle's and staff, everyone who participated in this year's Winter Bowl, and to the event sponsors for making the event successful: Carol Shea, Helynn Schufletowski, Deanna Rotar, Sand Creek Brewing Co. - Black River Falls, Lions Club - Neillsville, Curt Manufacturing - Eau Claire, Caribou Coffee in the West Clairemont Festival Foods, WWIS FM105.3 | FM99.7, Central Wisconsin Broadcasting and the Eau Claire Leader Telegram.**



*Bowlers, volunteers and raffle participants during Winter Bowl 2024*





# 40th Annual THE HIGHGROUND BICYCLE TOUR

AUGUST 2-4, 2024

2024 marks the 40th year for The Highground Bike Tour, the organization's largest and longest-running fundraiser. Starting in five locations across Wisconsin, the two-three, 170+ day ride ends at The Highground. This vital fundraiser bolsters the organization's efforts to provide much-needed support, programs and resources to Veterans and their families.

**To join a route, contact a route leader or visit [thehighgroundheroesride.com](http://thehighgroundheroesride.com) today!**

### THE NORTHERN ROUTE

**Route Leaders**  
Mike & Kathy Gleisner: 715-937-6786  
[mike.gleisner@hotmail.com](mailto:mike.gleisner@hotmail.com)

### THE WESTERN ROUTE

**Route Leaders**  
Cole: 651-895-9622  
[colepeterson70@gmail.com](mailto:colepeterson70@gmail.com)  
Jerry: 715-246-5370  
[simonsez1484@gmail.com](mailto:simonsez1484@gmail.com)

### THE EASTERN ROUTE

**Route Leader**  
Curt: 920-539-5148  
[curtbraatz84@gmail.com](mailto:curtbraatz84@gmail.com)

### THE SOUTHWESTERN ROUTE

**Route Leader**  
Terry: 608-350-6105  
[aliveinhope03@gmail.com](mailto:aliveinhope03@gmail.com)

### THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

**Route Leader**  
Kathy: 608-669-5129  
[kathyheit16@gmail.com](mailto:kathyheit16@gmail.com)



715.743.4224 | [THEHIGHGROUND.US](http://THEHIGHGROUND.US) | W7031 RIDGE RD., NEILLSVILLE, WI 54456



# 14TH ANNUAL HONOR RIDE

[thehighgroundhonorride.com](http://thehighgroundhonorride.com)



## HONOR THE FALLEN ON MEMORIAL DAY MAY 27/2024

### NEILLSVILLE ROUTE

CONTACT Dennis 715-203-6518  
[d.dabar@gmail.com](mailto:d.dabar@gmail.com)  
REGISTER 7:15AM BP Station Neillsville  
DEPART 8:15AM

### MINOCQUA ROUTE

CONTACT Kenneth by email to  
[kenneth548@gmail.com](mailto:kenneth548@gmail.com)  
MEET 7:15AM Kwik Trip #159 at Hwy 70 West  
and 51 North. DEPART 7:30AM

### WISCONSIN RAPIDS ROUTE

Contact Bill 715-281-4068  
[bill.fitema@gmail.com](mailto:bill.fitema@gmail.com)  
REGISTER 10AM  
West Side Kwik Trip  
DEPART 10:55AM

### APPLETON/ KING-WAUPACA ROUTE

CONTACT Bill 715-281-4068  
[bill.fitema@gmail.com](mailto:bill.fitema@gmail.com)  
Appleton: REGISTER 7AM Harley Davidson  
DEPART 7:30AM  
King-Waupaca: REGISTER 8:15AM  
Kwik Trip on 54 (by truckstop)  
DEPART 8:45AM

### WAUSAU ROUTE

CONTACT John 715-573-4566  
[hriderr100th@gmail.com](mailto:hriderr100th@gmail.com)  
MEET 9AM  
The Store 2409 N Mountain Rd  
in Wausau (corner of 39051)  
DEPART 10AM One stop Stratford

### EAU CLAIRE ROUTE

Contact Wade 715-379-5143  
REGISTER 7:15AM 400 Club Altoona  
DEPART 8:15AM

### MADISON/MILWAUKEE ROUTE

CONTACT Chad 920-723-6618  
[tazmanianbiker69@gmail.com](mailto:tazmanianbiker69@gmail.com)  
REGISTER 7:30AM Watertown Kwik Trip  
DEPART 7AM

### ONALASKA ROUTE

CONTACT Eric 715-309-3783  
[ej-taz@msn.com](mailto:ej-taz@msn.com)  
Registration and route details  
will be available online soon!

DeForest Kwik Trip: MEET 8AM; DEPART 8:30AM  
Reedsburg Kwik Trip: MEET 9:00AM; DEPART 10AM  
Cashion: MEET 11AM; DEPART 12:00AM  
Melrose: MEET 12:00PM; DEPART 12:40PM

### JOIN A ROUTE NEAR YOU!

ALL ROUTES END AT THE AMERICAN LEGION IN NEILLSVILLE

**\$25 PER RIDER / \$45 RIDER PLUS PASSENGER**  
VETERANS WITHOUT BIKES ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE NEILLSVILLE PARADE

715-743-4224 • W7031 RIDGE ROAD, NEILLSVILLE, WI 54456



# The Highground Building Expansion

Thank you for helping us get here! For updates and photos, follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial](https://facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial)



**Veterans  
Crisis Line**  
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net)  
or text to **838255**

**Vet Center – La Crosse**  
910 2nd Avenue  
Onalaska, WI 54650  
Direct line:  
608-782-4403

**Vet Center – Madison**  
1291 North Sherman Ave  
Madison, WI 53704  
Direct line:  
608-264-5342

**Vet Center – Green Bay**  
1600 South Ashland Avenue  
Green Bay, WI 54304  
Direct line:  
920-435-5650

**Vet Center – Milwaukee**  
7910 North 76th Street, Ste 100  
Milwaukee, WI 53223-3916  
Direct line:  
414-902-5561



# Veterans Programs

## **Veteran & Family PTSD Peer Support Group 2024**

Meets the 3rd Sunday of every month  
at 2pm.

For info, email [museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org)

## **Vets & Guitars 2024**

Meets every Thursday for 10 weeks  
starting March 21.

Beginning Guitar Course: 4:30-5:30pm  
Continuing Guitar Course: 6-7pm

For info, email [museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org)

## **Spouses & Partners of Veterans Support Group 2024**

Meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month  
from 5-6pm *in person and virtually*

**AND**

Meets every 4th Wednesday of the month  
from 5-6pm *virtually only*

For info, email [donations@thehighground.org](mailto:donations@thehighground.org)

## Board of Directors

**Chairman–Gary Weirauch**  
Neillsville, WI

**Vice Chair–Gary Karczewski**  
LeRoy, IL

**Treasurer–Don Quicker**  
Neillsville, WI

**Secretary–Scott Schultz**  
Osseo, WI

Steve Maddox–Director Emeritus

Scott Kissinger–Director Emeritus

Bob Barth–Neillsville, WI

Leonard Frye–Richland Center, WI

Daniel Curran–Director Emeritus

Michele Benson–Ripon, WI

Wayne Guenther–Strum, WI

Jim Hennen–Neillsville, WI

Lawrence A. Gorton Jr.–Eau Claire, WI

Carl Bogar Jr.–Kenosha, WI

Pam Graham–Osseo, WI

### **Executive Director**

Chris Pettis  
[director@thehighground.org](mailto:director@thehighground.org)

### **Operations Manager**

Pete Kern  
[ops@thehighground.org](mailto:ops@thehighground.org)

### **Donations & Stones Coordinator**

Bonnie Pettis  
[donations@thehighground.org](mailto:donations@thehighground.org)

### **Museum & Veterans Programs**

Theresa Hebert  
[museum@thehighground.org](mailto:museum@thehighground.org)

### **Marketing Coordinator**

Liz Hamilton  
[marketing@thehighground.org](mailto:marketing@thehighground.org)

### **Events Coordinator**

OPEN  
[events@thehighground.org](mailto:events@thehighground.org)

### **Gift Shop Coordinator**

Rhonda Miller  
[store@thehighground.org](mailto:store@thehighground.org)

### **Maintenance**

Mike Purgett  
**Gift Shop Staff**  
Roxane Purgett  
Judy Quicker

*Do good all year long. Please keep us in your thoughts while making your contributions. If you are looking for ways to support our organization, visit the "donations" webpage at [thehighground.us/about-us/donate](http://thehighground.us/about-us/donate)*



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# FEATURED ITEMS

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

**GIFT SHOP HOURS: SUMMER 10-5 M-F; 9-5 SAT & SUN • WINTER: 10-4**

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



MARCH - MAY 2024



**Garden Flags** 5038  
**\$11.95-15.95**

A variety of garden flags to replace your worn flags. Size: 12"x18"



**Plaques** 5206  
**\$14.95-31.95**

A variety of plaques for your home in different sizes. Pictured "Gratitude" plaque has twine accents, an easel and a metal hanger.



**Youth T-shirts** 1145  
**\$14.95**

The Highground logo youth size t-shirt. Available in maroon, blue and green. Small (6-8) to large (18-20) sizes.



**Silver & Tan Bracelet** BR6739  
**\$13.95**

Beautiful silver & tan bracelet with a pearl in the middle. Magnetic closure.



**Cribbage Boards** 699  
**\$44.95**

Cribbage boards available in different designs. This board includes The Highground logo.



**HG Gift Card**  
The perfect gift for anyone and any occasion. Available in any amount.

**Call us 715-743-4224**

Email: [store@thehighground.org](mailto:store@thehighground.org)  
[thehighground.shop](http://thehighground.shop)  
W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456



# Wish List

## We are in need of the following specific items:

- Tour guide volunteers that can give tours during the week and on weekends during the “on-season.”
- Volunteers for events and porch greeting
- New and exciting raffle baskets/raffle items for Honor Ride (May 27)
- Sponsors/donations for the Vietnam Reunion (any help appreciated!)

## We are in need of funding for the following:

- \$25,000 for the expansion of the Korean Tribute Rice Paddies for future Korean Honor Stones
- \$500 for additional specific Museum archiving containers
- \$2,200 for 2,000-2,500 lbs of fertilizer and 2,500 lbs of lime
- \$700 for mulch
- \$300 for fuel for lawn care equipment (spring-fall)
- \$80 for wood and metal drill bits for maintenance use

**Thank you for the donations that covered the purchase of the mule cab enclosure, the donated snowmelt salt, funds for outdoor replacement flags, Winter Bowl raffle baskets and the Winter Veterans Retreat sponsorships!**

## Gifting opportunities to consider:

**Employee Matching Gift Program:** Some employers offer gift matching programs for qualified 501(c)3 nonprofits such as The Highground. This means your employer will match the amount of your donation or volunteer hours up to a certain amount, increasing your direct gift. Refer to your Human Resource Dept. or search [charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org) to see if your employer has such a program. If not, consider making the suggestion to your employer.

**Gifts of Stock & Securities:** The Highground does accept gifts of stock & other appreciated assets. These may be excellent options to consider gifting to The Highground as they can potentially result in savings for your reported income & capital gains taxes. Please consult your financial advisor for more information.

**To support any of these initiatives, please send a check to the address included to the right or submit your donation online at: [thehighgroundpark.givingfuel.com/general-donation-page](http://thehighgroundpark.givingfuel.com/general-donation-page). If you have any questions, email [donations@thehighground.org](mailto:donations@thehighground.org) or call us at 715-743-4224.**

Find us somewhere on Social Media!



## Newsletter Subscription

To help reduce the cost of our printed newsletter, please consider receiving the email newsletter. The signup form is located at the bottom of our website homepage ([thehighground.us](http://thehighground.us)). Please know that The Highground does not sell its lists or your information to anyone. If you would like to continue receiving a printed newsletter, a small donation of \$25 per year would help us cover the printing and mailing costs.

# THE BENEFITS OF A CHARITABLE BEQUEST

*Each year, the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project (dba The Highground) receives bequests that help us meet our current funding needs, expand Veterans programs and plan for the future.*

A charitable bequest is an amazing way for you to support the work of The Highground and its continuing mission. Here are some of the reasons why you may consider bequest giving:

- Making a bequest today will cost you nothing.
- You can make a gift of any amount while retaining control of your assets during your lifetime.
- Bequests can be modified at any point in time.
- An outright gift from your estate is entirely free from federal estate taxes, permitting The Highground to utilize the full amount of your gift. Bequests made to individuals, in contrast, are usually heavily taxed.
- Enjoy the satisfaction of creating a legacy and having a lasting impact on the long-term health and recovery of our Veterans.

## Here are the many ways you can make a bequest:

- Make a gift of cash, securities or property.
- Give a specific dollar amount or asset.
- Specify a percentage on your estate.
- Specify a gift from the balance of your estate.
- Designate the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project as a beneficiary of your IRA, retirement account or insurance policy.\*

*\*To designate the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project as the beneficiary (whole or part) of your life insurance policy/policies, you can request a beneficiary change form from your insurance company.*

## Our information:

The Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project  
W7031 Ridge Rd  
PO Box 457  
Neillsville, WI 54456  
Phone: 715-743-4224  
EIN/Federal Tax ID#: 39-1512902

**To learn more about bequest giving, please send an email to Chris Pettis at [director@thehighground.org](mailto:director@thehighground.org) or call 715-743-4224.**

# The Highground

W7031 Ridge Road, PO Box 457, Neillsville, Wisconsin 54456  
715-743-4224 | thehighground.us



**Are you following our expansion plan updates?** The new building will help us increase our capacity to serve our Veteran community and fulfill our mission. One of the many things the new facility will do is free up another building on the grounds, creating an opportunity for even greater expansion of our products and services. Together, we are forging a legacy that will resonate for generations to come. Will you join us? Visit our campaign website at [campaign.thehighground.us](http://campaign.thehighground.us) for details.

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**PAID**

Eau Claire WI  
Permit No 366

## 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.

### Korean War

Leon Norton  
Donald W. Novacek  
Edward D. Nowaczyk  
Leo Peter Nowicki  
Erwin R. Nussbaumer  
Ronald Robert Oakley  
Russell M. Odberg  
William Thomas OHara  
Otto August Ohme  
Richard C. OKeefe  
Darrell Olds  
Arnold Eugene Olson  
Charles M. Olson  
Richard O. Olson  
Robert A. Olson  
Charles M. Ostrander  
Albert Ostrowski  
Clifford L. Otis  
Glen R. Owen  
Michael H. Paczocha, Jr.  
Joseph T. Pahle  
Robert Gene Pallesen  
James A. Panosh  
Darrell J. Parsons  
William D. Partin  
Alfred R. Paschelke  
Edwin E. Patten  
Wayne H. Paulsen  
Robert J. Paun  
Jacob Louis Pawer, Jr.  
Bruce Walter Payton  
Duane N. Peaschek

Richard E. Pease  
Rudolph Pellegrini  
John Riely Pentecost, Jr.  
Louis Charles Pepera  
Clarence D. Perrin  
Clifford A. Persons  
George W. Peterburner  
Russell F. Peters  
Bruce A. Peterson  
Dean V. Peterson

### Vietnam War

Curtis Steven Woods  
Durel S Woods  
Theodore R Woods Jr  
Randall Woolcott  
Randall Alan Woolcott  
Larry Roger Woolridge  
James Kenneth Wozniak  
David James Woznicki  
Vincent Wright  
Richard Thomas Wucinski  
Clinton Carl Wusterbarth  
Glen Harry Young  
John E Young  
Michael Edward Young  
William Francis Zahn Jr  
Thaddeus Zajac  
Thomas Howard Zehner  
Henry James Zeichert  
James George Zeimet  
Robert Edward Zeske  
Robert George Zink

Steven Lynn Zobel  
Dennis James Zwirchitz  
Frank Zydzik Jr  
David Lee Zywickie  
John Leon Abrams  
Roger Carl Henry Ackerman  
Clarence Clifton Adams  
Lee Chester Adams  
Dennis James Adamski  
Timothy Charles Agard  
David W Agnew  
Vincent James Aguis  
James John Ahrens  
Terry Lee Albright  
Michael John Allard  
Donald William Allen Jr.  
Merlin Raye Allen  
Robert Roger Allmers  
Roscoe Ammerman  
Dale Edward Anderson  
Erling Alton Anderson  
Gerald Robert Anderson

### Gulf Wars–GWOT–Present Day

Ryan C. Adams  
Jesse B. Albrecht  
Tracy Lynn Alger  
Joseph J. Altmann  
Nicholas R. Anderson  
Paul J. Atim  
Paul R. Bartz  
Robert J. Basham

Jeremy Bird  
Evan A. Bixler  
Andrew L. Bossert  
Rachel K. Bosveld  
Joshua C. Brennan  
Paul Buege  
Daniel Busch  
Justin J. Cain  
Kevin Calloway  
Ryan J. Cantafio  
Stephen Castner  
Steven J. Christofferson  
Eric D. Clark  
Chad D. Coleman  
Eugene A. Uhl, III  
Nathan J. Vacho  
Adam J. VanAlstine  
Brent T. Vroman  
Jeremy D. Vrooman  
Patrick L. Wade  
Andrew P. Wallace  
Patrick Wanke  
Richard D. Warner  
Robert P. Warns, II

Anthony R. Wasielewski  
Michael J. Wendling  
Earl D. Werner  
Matthew J. West  
Travis M. Wichlacz  
Michelle M. Witmer  
Jeremy L. Wolfe  
Daniel R. Wyatt  
Carl Zabel  
Luke J. Zimmerman  
Matthew R. Zindars