

NEWSLETTER

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

thehighground.us — 715.743.4224



Veterans and visitors who attended the Veterans Day gathering enjoyed a sneak peek of the new Welcome Center

When Will the New Building Be Open?

This is the \$4 million dollar question this year. Since the fall of 2023, Marawood Construction has collaborated diligently with contractors to complete The Highground's new Welcome Center.

As with all events and projects, there have been many challenges and changes, all met with resolutions and compromises.

We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding while we have awaited the "All clear" to begin the official move-in process. The last element of the construction that has prevented our opening to the public was the installation of the outside ramp handrails. On Oct 28, the handrails were installed. This means we can officially begin to move in which is what our museum coordinator has been chomping at the bit for. Once we have moved in, Theresa will be able to begin setting up the "Back In The World" exhibit which she has been meticulously preparing. So, we ask for just a little bit more patience.

While we have made boundless progress in this mission, there is still much to accomplish and we are confident that by the time you read this, the Welcome Center will be open. **(cont. on page 12)**



The Stories

We have assisted in placing over 6,300 Honor Stones since 1995. For every one of the stones, we maintain a "Registry" and encourage the individuals being honored, families, and friends to share photos, letters and more from their time in service and even after service. The Registry Books are on public display and have provided identifying information that has brought brothers in arms back together years after their service. Our "Featured Veteran" comes to you from the pages of the Registry Books: Harry Hintz whose Legacy Stone was placed several years ago.

Read his story on pg 6

What's inside

06. Featured Veteran

See how the family of Harry Hintz remembers him at The Highground

07. WDMA Grant Award

Read about the grant award that will support our Veterans Programs

10. Ride to Remember

Revisit the Ride to Remember coming home to The Highground

Honor Stones, Memorials & Honorariums

Consider Gifting an Honor Stone and Gather Your Friends and Family for one of the available ceremony dates in 2025.

Our scheduled stone ceremonies offer guests an opportunity to share their appreciation for a special Veteran or service-hearted loved one and often inspire never-before-told stories to be shared. But the story doesn't stop there. The Highground maintains public "Registry Books" that contain information on each Honor Stone. Families and friends are encouraged to share photos, news articles, letters and much more as a fluid archive for generations to come. Soon, we will be digitizing the Registry Books to make viewing and submitting items even easier. Families and loved ones from around the world will be able to view this unique trove of information.

Don't wait to get your stones. On January 1, 2025, the price of the gray granite Legacy Stones will increase from \$495 to \$520 to offset the supplier's increase. All other Honor Stone prices will remain the same.

2025 Honor Stone Ceremony Dates:

May 17: 11am & 2pm Legacy Stones

June 14: 11 am Korean Stones

June 14: 2pm Legacy Stones

July 12: 11am Persian Gulf Stones

July 12: 2pm Legacy Stones

August 2: 11am & 2pm Legacy Stones

September 20: 11am Legacy & Military Working Dog Stones

September 20: 2pm Legacy Stones

Oct 4: 11am & 2pm Legacy Stones



For more information about the Honor Stones, please email **Bonnie** at donations@thehighground.org, call 715-743-4224 or visit thehighground.us/honor-stones

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

See the complete list of Honor Stones placed onsite through November, 2024 on our website at thehighground.us/honor-stones

IN MEMORY OF

Jim Brady

Verland Kasten

Michael Kemp

Bernard Kunze

Helen Limberg

Mark Onan

Greta Ross

Kenderick Schunke

Wayne Slade

James Watts Smith

Kathy Stetzer

Lucinda Zimmer

IN HONOR OF

Edwin Borke

Bradley L. Kies Sr.

Tom Miller

Ron Sweet

Gary Wiegel



Confidential chat at 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

Event Highlights



12TH ANNUAL WINTER BOWL

TO SUPPORT OUR WINTER VETERANS RETREAT

JAN 26 2025 NOON-3PM

AT BOWL WINKLES IN EAU CLAIRE, WI

The Highground

\$40 PER PERSON | UP TO 4 PER LANE
BALLS, LANE, SHOES & PIZZA INCLUDED | RAFFLES

LIMITED LANES AVAILABLE—RESERVE YOURS TODAY!
TO REGISTER, EMAIL BOWLWINKLESBOWLING@GMAIL.COM OR CALL 715-743-4224

Invitation to Veteran Artists!

We are excited to be a host site for the 15th Annual “Spring Into The Arts” Tour in Clark County April 25-26!

We invite military Veteran artists / craftspeople to display and sell their works at The Highground Welcome Center during this exciting Central Wisconsin event.

For information on showcasing your art at The Highground, please email Theresa at museum@thehighground.org or call 715-743-4224. For information on the county-wide event, visit their website at clarkcountywi.org/visit-clark-county



2025 Calendar of Events

For updates on Veterans programs, including Vets & Guitars, support groups and special presentations, visit our website, follow us on Facebook and subscribe to the newsletter.

Events

- Jan 26** 12th Annual Winter Bowl (Eau Claire)
- Jan 31–Feb 2** Winter Veterans Retreat
- Apr 25–26** Spring Into The Arts Tour (Host Site)
- May 7–10** Spring Work Week
- May 10** Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- May 17** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Spring Bake Sale
- May 26** 15th Annual Honor Ride; Memorial Day Ceremony
- June 13–15** Female Veterans PTSD/MST-Focused Retreat
- June 14** Korean and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- June 20–22** Female Veterans Outdoor Adventures Retreat
- June 28** Freedom Celebration Fireworks at Dusk
- July 12** Persian Gulf and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 1–3** 41st Annual Heroes Ride Bike Tour (Ceremony Aug 3)
- Aug 2** Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Aug 3** Vietnam Veterans Reunion; Heroes Ride Welcome
- Aug 16** 25th Annual Ride to Remember® Motorcycle Ride & Rally
- Sept 20** Military Working Dog and Legacy Stone Ceremonies
- Sept 30–Oct 3** Education Days
- Oct 4** Legacy Stone Ceremonies; Fall Bake Sale
- Oct 9–10** Fall Cleanup Days
- Oct 17–19** “Operation Re-Connect” Military Couples Retreat
- Nov 3–Mar 31, 2026** Holiday Lights “Honor Stars” on the Plaza
- Nov 11** Veterans Day Gathering; ATV Raffle Drawing
- Dec 2** Giving Tuesday— Pledge your support for The Highground
- Dec 3** Quilt Raffle Drawing (quilts displayed prior to drawing)

Museum Exhibits

The Museum will be showing exhibits that reflect the “Human Cost of War” throughout 2025. Exhibit details are not available at this time. We invite you to follow us on Facebook for updates.

Visit thehighground.us for more information

Mission Recap

The Highground Winter Veterans Retreat Jan 31-Feb 2, 2025



Veterans ice fishing during the 2024 winter retreat

Choose Either a 3-Day Getaway or Simply a Day of Ice Fishing

Shake the Winter Blues & Discover A New Appreciation for Winter in the company of fellow veterans. The colder and shorter days of Winter present challenges for many individuals and even more so for Veterans managing Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS). This 3-day retreat welcomes both male and female Veterans to experience indoor & outdoor therapeutic recreational activities to put the enjoyment back into winter and to better help manage PTS.

The scheduled retreat activities include ice fishing, snowshoeing, PTS Growth workshops, art instruction, good food and camaraderie! Outdoor activities will be dependent on weather conditions. The retreat will take place at The Highground and surrounding area.

Veterans who are registered for the 3-day retreat will have lodging arrangements made as part of your reservation at a local motel. **Retreat registration is required by Jan. 17, 2025. A \$50 "Save My Space" fee is required which will be reimbursed to the veteran when they attend the retreat.** Veterans that cannot attend the entire 3-Day retreat are invited to join us for just the ice fishing activity on Saturday, Feb 1. **Registration is required by Jan. 17 (no "save my space" fee).** There will be a limit on how many Veterans we can accommodate who do not have their own equipment, etc. so register early! Veterans who are experienced at ice fishing and who have their own equipment are still asked to register for location information and lunch planning.

Veterans will need to have a valid Wisconsin fishing license to participate in ice fishing. **To register for the 3-Day Veterans Winter Retreat or for just the ice fishing activity contact Theresa museum@thehighground.org or 715-743-4224 before Jan. 17, 2025. Sponsors of the 2025 Veterans Winter Retreat are the WDVA and Borton Construction.**



Bonds were Strengthened During the 2024 Military Couples Retreat

The Highground facilitated a memorable military couples retreat on October 18-20, 2024. Operation Re-Connect invites veterans and their spouses or partners to get away from their daily routines to enjoy each other while they explore their relationship, strengthen their friendship, increase affection and improve communication. This peaceful yet purposeful weekend is at no cost to them except for transportation to and from the retreat. A generous sponsorship from the Marshfield Elks Lodge 665 in 2023 helped make the 2024 retreat a success.

The three-day weekend consisted of guided relationship-enhancing exercises from peer support facilitators and a topic expert. Cathleen Holm, a licensed psychotherapist experienced with military couples counseling, guided two of the couple's relationship-enhancing exercises. With her incredibly supportive, light-hearted, and yet, no-nonsense style, Cathleen validated struggles, provided antidotes to relationship saboteurs and allowed the couples to tackle serious discussions from a different perspective. With the mixture of couples who have been together through the veteran's active duty/deployments and couples who united after duty/deployments, the after-dinner conversations were memorable. Providing a supportive environment for which veterans could share their military stories and spouses/partners could share their experiences and feelings contributed to viewing their relationships from different perspectives.

With overwhelmingly positive reviews from the participants, The Highground is looking ahead to the next Operation Re-Connect scheduled for October 17-19, 2025. For more information regarding The Highground's Veterans Programs, call Bonnie or Theresa at 715-743-4224 or send an email to donations@thehighground.org or museum@thehighground.org.

Mission Recap

Spring Vets & Guitars

The 2025 Spring “Vets & Guitars” 10-week session will begin Thursday, March 13, 2025, at The Highground Welcome Center. This program is offered to military veterans free of charge. Art and music programs have been found to be helpful to many veterans who are managing post-traumatic stress. The Highground’s “Vets & Guitars” classes are a great experience to share with other veterans.

Beginning Acoustic Guitar class will be held from 5pm – 6pm. Continuing Guitar, for veterans who have already completed The Highground “Vets & Guitars” Beginning Guitar course, will be held from 6pm – 7pm. For those who have experience playing guitar, but who have not taken our beginner course, please contact Theresa to see which course would suit you best.



Veterans with Vets & Guitars Instructor Victoria in 2024

The 10-session course will be held on Thursday evenings. **To register and for more information, email Theresa at The Highground at museum@thehighground.org or call 715-743-4224. Sponsors for this Veterans’ program are the WDVA, Joyce Bates and Pat Engen.**

Male Veterans Retreat Recap



Archery workshop during the 2024 men's retreat

This year’s men’s retreat was an inspiring gathering filled with connection, camaraderie, and personal growth. None of it would have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors, to whom we owe our deepest gratitude.

We extend a special thanks to those who donated in memory of Deb Klabor, whose legacy lives on through these gatherings. We are also profoundly grateful to the National Society of the Dames of the Court of Honor, Harold Schmitt, the Military Order of the Purple Heart Viola Chapter 162, and the American Legion Dreier-Bushee-Vanderboom Post 156. Your contributions allowed us to create a truly memorable experience that offered all attendees a much-needed space to reflect and recharge.

A huge thank you goes to Bonnie Hennen, who provided nourishing and delicious meals, bringing a true sense of warmth to the weekend. We’re also deeply appreciative of Pete Kitzhaber for leading a Dutch oven workshop, teaching us new skills and creating a taste of the outdoors for everyone. And finally, our gratitude goes to Bobbi Jo Marion for hosting the archery workshop, where attendees found both skill and focus in learning this art.

To each sponsor, volunteer, and participant: thank you for making this men’s retreat such a powerful and transformative experience. Your support is truly the heart of our mission.



For more information about our 2025 Veterans Retreats and other program offerings, visit our website and follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial

Featured Veteran - Harry J. Hintz

The Family of Harry J. Hintz Shares Their Memories in The Highground Registry Books



Harry John Hintz was born in Appleton, Wisconsin, on February 27, 1921, the first child of Louis and Ruth Hintz. The family would eventually grow to two daughters and three sons, including Jim, our father and grandfather.

Outside of the War years, Harry lived his entire life in or near Appleton. As a child, Harry was extremely bright, talented and athletic. He was a straight-A student, and Dad said that getting the good grades was easy for him. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout, something that Dad was always very proud to talk about in his memories of his brother.

During his high school years, Harry became a very challenging child, leading to great frustration and near despair by his parents. But the onset of the War changed the picture. Harry saw with stark clarity the threat to his country and he enlisted in 1942 into the Army Air Corps. During his basic training, facing the harsh reality of what could happen to him in the War, Harry “grew up” and reflected upon the pain he had caused his family in those rebellious years. He wrote a letter to his parents apologizing for all he had done and telling them how much he loved and respected them. Dad said that the only time he ever saw his father cry was when he read that letter from Harry. Sadly, that special letter has been lost to the family.

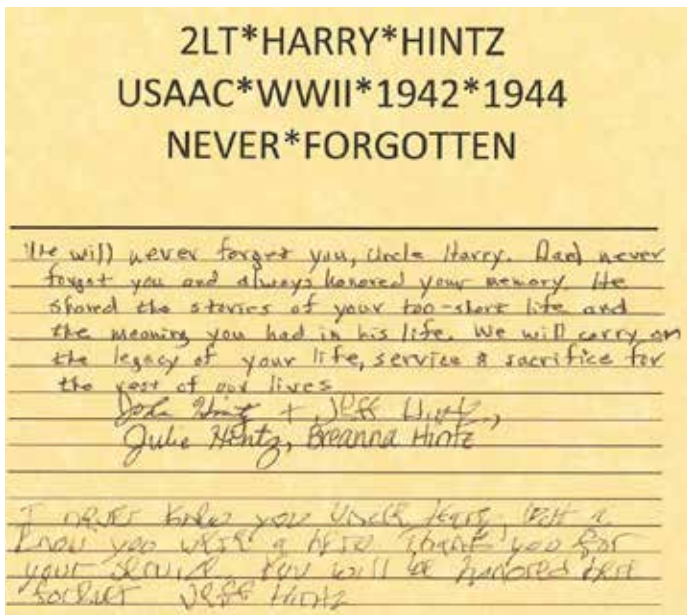
Harry was selected to become an officer and a bombardier in the Air Corps and attended bombardier school in Big Spring, Texas, graduating as a 2nd Lieutenant in October, 1943, with what was then the highest grade average ever achieved at the school. The family was always proud to tell the story that he had his flight wings pinned on by General of the Air Force Hap Arnold himself. In flight training, Harry rapidly gained high level attention for his skills as a bombardier. After the War, the family was told that he had been earmarked for several critical missions in the Pacific, including being on the early list of those who were being considered for one of the flights that were expected to drop the first atomic bombs on Japan.

Our Dad and Harry had a typical brotherly relationship, with all the mischief that goes with it. Dad always smiled when he told one of his favorite stories of Harry, namely how, when he got off the train in Appleton for what was supposed to be a final furlough home for both of them before heading overseas, Harry met him in his full dress officer’s uniform. Dad, the enlisted sailor in his Navy crackerjack “whites”, was required to salute any officer in uniform—so he had to drop his arms full of bags and Christmas gifts right there on the platform and snap a salute to his brother, after which Dad gave him quite an earful that you wouldn’t normally say to a superior officer!

That Christmas of 1943 was the last time Dad ever saw his brother alive. Harry had been assigned with seven other airmen to a B-24 Liberator bomber and he and the crew had been training intensively with their plane in Texas and at Muroc Airbase in California (now Edwards AFB). On the night of December 27, 1943, during their final training flight before heading overseas, the plane crashed three miles off the end of the runway. Two of the crew were seriously injured, including Harry. For the next several weeks, Harry fought for his life against serious internal injuries; by February his condition had improved considerably and he was expected to make a full recovery. But then he contracted an infection in his chest around his heart. The family was told that the situation was now critical and his mother was rushed to California to see him one last time. Ultimately, the doctors were unable to stop the infection from spreading and Harry died on February 14, Valentine’s Day, 1944.

In 2004, Dad was interviewed by the Appleton Post-Crescent before he left with Mom, grandson Andy, and I (son John) for Washington D.C. to attend the dedication of the long-overdue WWII Memorial. Dad spoke of the loss of his brother and the reporter took a photo of Dad holding Harry’s casket flag to his heart, which became a front page cover for the Memorial Day weekend. Later one of my cousins saw the picture and created his own tribute to Harry and Dad that became a treasured memento of their service and the very special bond between them.

Feature Veteran (cont.)



Honor Stone Registry Sheet for Harry J. Hintz

WDVA Grant Award

The Highground Receives \$25,000 Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs

The Highground is honored to receive a grant of \$25,000 from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs in support of the Veterans Programs that we are offering in 2025!

According to Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) press release dated October 21, 2024, WDVA Secretary-designee James Bond announced \$550,000 in grants were awarded to 15 nonprofit organizations that provide financial assistance, entrepreneurship training, or other services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.

“I am thrilled that WDVA can help these nonprofits with their innovative work on behalf of our state’s veterans,” said Secretary-designee Bond. “These grants will help provide mental healthcare, basic amenities, job training, assist veteran entrepreneurs, and more. Wisconsin is lucky to have so many folks stepping up for those who have served in the armed forces.”

We look forward with excitement and gratitude to fulfill our mission with helping veterans and families through our programs which include: several Veterans Retreats, mental health and veterans’ issues presentations and workshops, the Vets & Guitars program, and more.

Request Information

The Highground Veterans Memorial Park 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” and “My War” exhibits

I would also like to volunteer for the following events and activities. Please reach out to me!

- _____ Porch Greeter
- _____ Spring Work Week / Fall Cleanup Days
- _____ Heroes Ride Annual Bike Tour
- _____ Honor Ride/Memorial Day
- _____ Ride to Remember®

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Questions or Comments _____

Museum News

Hundreds of Students Attend The Highground's Education Days



Over 800 Central Wisconsin students from 15 schools plus several homeschooling families from across the state traveled to The Highground for Education Days October 1-4. This annual event invites students and the public to attend to learn more about the history and sacrifices of our military members and families, details about The Highground and special stories about global cultures that have been affected by war.

Education Days requires the dedication of a team of volunteer presenters and staff members from The Highground. During the October 1 and 2 “5th Grade Days” part of Education Days, fifth graders received a presentation at each of The Highground tributes. The presenters gave their 10-minute talks continuously throughout the day as groups of approximately 25 students rotated to each of the tributes. Local presenters were: **Mary Cichosz, Scott Schultz, Henry Smith, Pete Kern, Jim Henchen, Skip Klabon, Gary Weirauch, Billy Buss, Mike Kesling, Heidi Bower and Theresa Hebert.**

Fifth grade students attended from these schools: Loyal, Thorp, Stanley-Boyd, Maple Grove (WI), Athens, Colby, Red Creek (Black River Falls), Lincoln (Alma Center, Merrilan, Humbird), Auburndale, Neillsville, Owen-Withee, Holy Rosary, St Mary’s (Marathon), St Anthony’s (Loyal), Lake Holcombe and Gilmanton. There were also over 80 homeschooled students that attended the 5th Grade Days portion of Education Days.

Many schools make The Highground Education Days an annual part of their calendar. One teacher shared, “This has been a great event, we look forward to coming every year!”

The Daughters of the American Revolution Ah-Da-Wah-Gam Chapter were present for both days of the 5th Grade Days portion to give presentations on the history of the U.S. flag and perform a flag retirement ceremony.

Education Days on Friday, October 4 was geared toward high school students and adults. The Highground welcomed high school students from Neillsville and adult visitors. Presenters who gave 30-minute presentations throughout the day were: **Skip Klabon with a slide presentation about his service in-country during the Vietnam War; Command Historian of the 88th Readiness Division at Fort McCoy Ward Zischke and Dave Harris with a presentation on the Korean War that included a great deal of artifacts; Troy Buddenhagen who gave a presentation on D-Day during WWII; Sarwat Najib who presented on her experience as an Afghanistan woman who had to leave Afghanistan as a refugee after the fall of Kabul, and the realities of current life in Afghanistan for women; Fred Beseler told the exciting history of the WWII Women AirForce Service Pilots (the WASPs); and Gary Foster presented on the weaponry involved in WWI.**

Education Days are made possible because of the dedication of volunteers, presenters and donations of financial support. The 2024 Education Days event was sponsored by John and Donna Koutre and the Optimist Club of Neillsville.



Museum News

A Heartfelt Donation with a "Highground" Backstory

In October, The Highground was the recipient of an amazing donation which had personal ties to the very beginning of the park.

Vietnam Veteran Hubert "Hub" Joski of Green Bay had enlisted in the US Marine Corps and served in Vietnam from July 26, 1967 – February 5, 1969. He received a Purple Heart and his unit was honored with the Presidential Unit Citation for their bravery during the 77-day siege at Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive. During his service, Hub was exposed to Agent Orange, which became a major contributor to his health complications later in life. He was a proud veteran, involving himself with many local groups and events such as the VVA Chapter 224, AmVets, and the Bikeathon. He drove his '67 Kaiser Jeep in parades to honor Vietnam Veterans. In 1988, he was a part of the groundbreaking at The Highground Veteran's Memorial Park in Neillsville, WI, and following he was also instrumental in the placing of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial at the Neville Museum in Green Bay.

Hub passed away at the age of 71 on December 14, 2019, willing his '67 Kaiser and trailer to the VVA Chapter 224. When VVA members received the vehicle, they found several decades-old Highground brochures and a program from the 1990 dedication of The Highground's Dove Effigy Mound Tribute which Hub had volunteered to help create. **After finding these items and knowing of Hub's love for and history with The Highground, the VVA 224 contacted Highground Exec. Director Chris Pettis and plans were made to donate the '67 Kaiser and trailer to The Highground. We are honored to receive this donation, and we will keep Hub's generous spirit alive by continuing the vehicle's service in an educational capacity (with perhaps some more parades in its future)!**



Welcome Center News

At the end of October, we were able to start transferring museum items over to the new Welcome Center. At the time of this writing, there are still some construction items that need to be completed prior to us obtaining full use of the building. We look forward with great excitement to being able to offer expanded educational, community, and Veterans programs in the near future.

We will keep you updated regarding our progress and let you know when we will be able to "open" via our website, Facebook page, Instagram (@highgroundmuseum), our email newsletter and printed press releases.



Event News

The 24th Annual Ride to Remember® Comes Home



The Ride to Remember was based entirely at The Highground this year, which contributed to the overall spirit of the event. “I’m so glad you had the rides here this year! It felt like coming home,” a veteran and rider shared. The Highground greatly appreciates the many years the Neillsville American Legion Post 73 in Neillsville has provided their post as the venue for this event.

Celebrating the honor and valor of past and present military service men and women is the number one intent of this annual event, with fundraising for The Highground and its veteran programming being the ultimate benefit. **Each of the three rides and parade were successful and enjoyable with the dedicated support of Bill Flemal and Doug Mauritz of the VFW Riders District 7, Chad Garcia and Theo Williams of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association 45, and Tim Harris of the Rolling Thunder Inc WI Chapter 2.**

The Neillsville Police Department, Clark County Sheriff’s Department and Neillsville Volunteer Fire Department were instrumental in the safety of the riders throughout the day providing safe intersection support. Their continued support of The Highground and its events that take its veterans and other supporters on the road is invaluable.

While the Hillbilly Fever Band served up classic country music for riders to enjoy between the rides, Sue and Mary Kokosz were in full raffle basket mode. As promised, the “Basket Babes” prepared a wide range of themed raffle baskets enticing the event attendees to raise \$1,955. Sue and Mary’s passion for The Highground and veterans goes unmatched as they donated all the proceeds to The Highground.

The Highground is tremendously grateful for this year’s supporters of the Ride to Remember that helped to raise over \$8,000: Neillsville Police Department, Clark County Sheriff’s Department, Neillsville Volunteer Fire Department, VFW Riders District 7, Department of WI VFW Riders, CVMA 45-6, Rolling Thunder Inc. WI Chapter 2, Springbrook VFW Post 10568, Dairyland Originals Women on Wheels, “Basket Babes” Raffle, Woodfield Inn and Suites, Lumberyard Bar and Grill, Whitmore Ace Hardware, Hansen’s IGA, Chippewa Falls Harley Davidson, Central Wisconsin Broadcasting, WWIS Radio, AgCountry Farm Credit Services, Bonnie Hennen and Ruth Novak.

Information about next year’s 25th Annual Ride to Remember will be available on The Highground’s website later this year.

Thank You

Save the date! The 25th Annual Ride to Remember will be on August 16. For updates, visit our website and follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/TheHighgroundVeteransMemorial

Event News

The Highground Fall Bake Sale Raises \$1,040 to Support the Military Couples "Operation Re-Connect" Retreat

The last Honor Stone Ceremonies for 2024 and the annual Fall Bake Sale brought hundreds of guests to The Highground on Saturday, October 5. The Highground's Sweet Platoon provided temptations for everyone's sweet tooth with baked goods ranging from miniature pies to the traditional chocolate chip cookies.

The Highground is truly grateful for the fabulous guests, volunteer bakers and volunteers who worked the bake sale. The funds raised during this year's Fall Bake Sale supported this year's Military Couples Retreat held October 18-20. Operation Re-Connect is structured to provide a calm and supportive environment where couples feel safe to share their experiences and help their relationships grow through interactive and insightful activities. The retreat is free for couples; however, participants are responsible for their travel expenses.



The Highground recognizes the Sweet Platoon™ Bakers: Bonnie Hennen, Helynn Schufletowski, Sue Budik, Patty Schwoch, Roxane Purgett, and Julie Siemek.

Thank you, bakers, for your continued support!

Fall Cleanup Recap



A huge thank you to everyone who helped during Fall Work Week at The Highground! Your hard work has prepared the park for winter, and we couldn't have done it without you.

A special shoutout to Bonnie Hennen for cooking up delicious lunches that kept us all going, and to Wes Waterman for bringing his skid steer and helping tackle the big tasks!

We appreciate all of your time, energy, and commitment to making The Highground a beautiful space for everyone.

Thank you for your support!

Sponsor an "Honor Star" in honor or memory of a loved one. The stars will light the plaza November 4-March 31, 2025. For more information, visit our website or call 715-743-4224

Donations and More Updates



When Will the New Building Be Open (cont. from page 1)

We are excited to report that our very own Theresa Hebert prepared a most compelling project grant request to the Wisconsin Non-State DOA Grant Program and The Highground's expansion project is one of fifty state projects to be accepted.

But that's not the end of the story. With the support we have received to date, we have crossed the halfway point in covering the project expenses. Now that the Welcome Center is reality, your steadfast contributions are just as important now as ever and will directly impact on the success of our mission, the Veterans and their families, and the local communities that we are here to support. **Stay tuned for the Grand Opening in 2025!**

Read the press release from the State of Wisconsin at:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/3babccd>



A special thanks to The Highground for their support of Volk Field's 2024 Northern Lightning exercises, which is a two-week joint training exercise held annually at the Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center.



Thank you to Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association WI Chapter 45-6 for the generous donation! Members Chad and Rhonnie Garcia visited the park and presented a check to Executive Director Chris Pettis.

Governor Tony Evers Visits The Highground on Veterans Day

The Highground has been awarded an \$800,000 from the State of WI through the Non-State Grant for Local Projects program to be utilized for construction costs of The Highground Visitor Center.

The Governor visited The Highground on Veterans Day to tour the new Welcome Center and discuss with staff how the expanded facility will enhance what The Highground offers. We will be able to hold indoor events, presentations and workshops year round. These activities will include community mental health presentations, counseling areas, cultural and educational presentations and exhibits, as well as overall expansion of our veterans' programs.



Governor Evers is pictured with Operations Manager Pete Kern (left) and Executive Director Chris Pettis (right)

Veterans Programs

Spring Vets & Guitars Classes 2025 (Beginning & Continuing Guitar)

Preregistration Preferred
Beginning Thursday, March 13 classes
meet every Thursday for 10 wks

Beginning Guitar Class: 5-6pm
Continuing Guitar Class: 6-7pm

**For information and to register, call Theresa
at 715-743-4224 or send an email to
museum@thehighground.org**

Spouses & Partners of Veterans Support Group 2025

Meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month
from 5:30-6:30pm *in person and virtually*

**For information, call Bonnie at 715-743-4224 or
email donations@thehighground.org**

Please note the time change on the support group

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 Henchen–Neillsville, WI

Lawrence A. Gorton Jr–Eau Claire, WI

Carl Bogar Jr–Kenosha, WI

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*The Season of Giving is here! If you would like to help
support The Highground's mission, we invite you to
visit our website at 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: WINTER: 10-4 • SUMMER 10-5 M-F; 9-5 SAT & SUN

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



15%
OFF YOUR
FIRST ONLINE
PURCHASE

DECEMBER 2024 - FEBRUARY 2025



Metallic Angel Decor **4036-02**
\$27.95

Beautiful gold angel holding heart, 12" tall. 8" tall angel also available.



Gnome Coasters **3013**
\$12.95

Set of four gnome coasters, each with a different design. Measures 4" x 4". Pictured: "Chillin' with my Gnomies"



Holiday Gnome **5243**
\$9.95

Add some holiday cheer with one, or all three, of these cheery gnomes. They are all dressed up and filled with the spirit of the holidays!



Je t'aime Figurine **9021**
\$32.95

WillowTree Je t'aime (I love you) decorative figurine holding heart.



Angel Daisies Figurine **4300**
\$21.95

Angel holding a bouquet of daisies with "You Are Loved" sentiment (pictured on the left).



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

Call us 715-743-4224

Email: store@thehighground.org
thehighground.shop
W7031 Ridge Rd, Neillsville, WI 54456

Wish List

We are in need of:

- Tour guide volunteers who can give tours during the week and on weekends during the “on-season.”
- Volunteers for events and porch greeting

We are in need of funding for the following:

- \$12,000 for the completed Korean Honor Stone Expansion
- \$360 industrial entry rugs for the new building
- \$350 Shark Vertex Pro Lightweight Cordless Stick Vacuum
- \$40 O-Cedar EasyWring Microfiber Spin Mop/Bucket System
- \$1,300 for Stihl Kombi-System attachments for park maintenance
- \$210 Dewalt 60V Reciprocating Saw
- \$170 Dewalt 60V Grinder

Thank you to the generous sponsors of our September Newsletter wish list items.

Gifting opportunities to consider:

Qualified Charitable Distributions: If you are 70.5 or older, you may consider contributing to The Highground from your 2024 IRA Required Minimum Distribution-RMD, which will reduce your 2024 Adjusted Gross Income. Please contact your IRA administrator to assist you in making a QCD directly to The Highground before December 31, 2024. The Highground EIN is 39-1512902. You may email the donations coordinator at donations@thehighground.org if you would like your contribution used for a specific purpose.

Gifts of Stock & Securities: The Highground does accept gifts of stock and 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 and capital gains taxes. Please consult your financial advisor for more information.

To support any these initiatives, please send a check to the address to the right or submit your donation on our website at: thehighgroundpark.givingfuel.com/general-donation-page.

If you have any questions, email 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). 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 or call 715-743-4224.



Beginning in October, we started moving items into the new Welcome Center. The new building will allow us to increase our capacity to serve our Veteran community and help us continue to fulfill our mission. With your continued support, we are forging a legacy that will resonate for generations to come. Will you join the mission? For information, visit our website at campaign.thehighground.us

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

Glenn E. Kohn
Edward Kokot
Harvey A. Kolberg
Jack Korakian
Leonard Joseph Koscielak
Donald Kosmecki
Chester F. Kotowicz
Daniel Benjamin Kott
Jerome W. Kottmer
Stanley F. Kountney
Clarence E. Krei
Eugene Kressin
Walter B. Kretlow, Jr.
George A. Krizan
Wayne Allen Krueger
Stanley S. Krukowski
Janis Krumins
Jerome M. Krumpos
Raymond Krzyzaniak
Roland W. Kubinek
Harvey Earl Kudick
Melvin L. Kuehl
Wayne A. Kuehn
Roger Ray Kuhlmann
Adrian Kurowski
John Ellis Laborg
Robert L. Lafave
Robert Joseph Lahey

Howard J Landry
Lee W. Langeberg
Lyle M. Langlitz
James M. Lansing
John H. Lantry

Vietnam War

Mario Robert Leon
Richard James Leonard
Donald Chester Lepak
Raymond Roy Lewis
Michael Edward Lex
William Bertram Libersky
Kenneth George Liebhaber
James Terry Liebnitz
James Jerome Lind
Theodore Paul Linski
Lee Roy Edward Linton
Jerome Walter Litke
Gary Loduha
Robert O. Long
Kent William Longmire
Manuel Torres Lopez
Terry Wayne Lorenz
James Richard Loy
Jerome Deane Lubeno
Lawrence Anthony Luciani
Leo John Ludvigsen Jr
John Albert Luke

Terry Bruce Lund
Eugene Kenneth Luce
Clayton J. Luther
Robert Steven Lutz
Michael Jon Lutzke
James E. Lynn
Patrick Nicholas Lyons
David Thornton Maddux
Thomas Vernon Madison
Vincent Leo Mager
Lin Albert Mahner
Ronald J. Mahoney

Gulf Wars–GWOT– Present Day

Christopher J. Splinter
Jon B. St. John II
Andy A. Stevens
Kirk Allen Straseskie
William Strehlow
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
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