



Newsletter of the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center

Spring 2010

Capital Campaign's Lundberg Challenge a Huge Success

It was a timed, tuned and tenaciously championed capitol campaign. A campaign with the kind of colorful, creative challenges everyone who has ever had to raise a dime or a dollar for a cause that tugged at a heart, a purpose, or a purse string - dreams of. And, it had all the dynamics, drama and determination one would expect from the dangling of a six-digit, dollar-for-dollar carrot - to an over the top goal-matching, momentum-building monetary challenge which sent goal projections snowballing into reality.

There was a colossal cast of community contributors, a progressive board of directors tapping contacts and best of all-a determined corporate and community leader who had a decorated, retired colonel who served in Viet Nam as co-chair all teaming up to drive the message home.

The "\$100,000 in 100 Days" grassroots campaign to raise awareness, interaction and dollars for the new mission of the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center along Superior Bay came to a commendable and commanding time-metered finish with over \$225,000 raised, according to Superior's Judy Weber, chief executive officer of Inter City Oil Company. Chairpersons John Bremer and Weber agreed that finishing well ahead of the museum's goal was made possible due to of some real challenges that came in the way of huge pluses. "When you have community leaders and business people come forward to challenge others to match dollars that they commit - it's a win-win for everyone," Weber explained. "From that moment on a dollar is doubled and donations take on a whole new meaning, and every call, every envelope adds up to a winning amount," she added.

Weber was referring to the initial "Lundberg Family Challenge" that Bob, a longtime area businessman and WWII veteran made with his sons, Scott and Terry, and their respective families and community-focused businesses back in the early weeks of November 2009. *(continued page 2)*

LUNDBERG CHALLENGE SUCCESS

(continued from page 1)

“That \$100,000 pledge was remarkable as were the dollar amounts and matches that came from RJS & Affiliated Companies’ Todd Johnson and the seed monies of Rod Campbell of Campbell Lumber, the late Cal Miller’s family and others. “From there, other business leaders and community contributors worked diligently and embraced the cause to make certain we didn’t leave any money on the table. As a result we were able to capitalize on what turned out to be \$112,500 in matching dollars,” Bremer explained.

Weber added, “We had many families giving what they could and their donations seriously mattered as much as the next... as did their stories and reasons for giving which ranged from a grandson who wanted to pay tribute to his grandfather who had served during World War II to another who had a parent that had served in Korea to one who has a daughter serving in the Guard today.”

Terry Lundberg couldn’t have been more pleased with the community meeting the match. “Judy and John deserve a lot of credit. They advocate team work and community giving and like so many others obviously really care about our region, veterans and this center and it showed,” Lundberg praised. He also lauded the work of the many volunteers of the Bong. There were over 125 donations made in the campaign with monies generated to be used to expand exhibits, display artifacts which already number in the thousands, and to improve archiving along with tribute walls and memorials.

Over 20,000 veterans are represented in the museum which draws over 12,000 visitors annually and is named after the ace fighter pilot from Northern Wisconsin who was inspired to fly after seeing a mail plane buzz his backyard en route to President Calvin Coolidge’s summer White House Superior in 1928.

Many of Richard I. Bong’s family descendants, including his sisters Joyce Erickson and Gerry Fechtelkötter were active in this campaign.



*Above-Scott, Bob & Terry Lundberg at the P-38
Right-Bob Lundberg during World War II*



Thanks to Our Lundberg Challenge Donors!

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Gerald Will



Cold War Era Flight Suit Highlights General's Collection

Brigadier General Ray Klosowski's flight suit, which he wore during many of the 6000+ hours he logged aloft, is now part of the Center's collection. The General's donation gives our Cold War Era collecting a boost and should be an interesting part of a planned *Twin Ports in the Cold War* exhibit which will be based on information and material Ray has gathered and presented here at the Center.

In the meantime Curator Gina Sacchetti has installed the suit, including Ray's helmet and other accoutrements, in the New Acquisitions case in our lobby for the summer.

Ray, who serves on our board, was Commander of the 148th Fighter Wing, Commander of the Minnesota Air National Guard, Executive Director of Duluth International Airport and is an inductee to the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame. Now 'retired', Ray fills his time with his grandkids as well as serving on the Duluth Port authority. Oh yes, Ray will also be this year's 'Air Boss' at the Duluth Air Show!



Harbor Tavern Patch Panel Goes On Regular Display

Unique Artifact Presented Opportunities & Challenges

One of the most interesting and historically unique artifacts held by the Bong Veterans Historical Center is the Harbor Tavern Patch Panel. Mounted on the panel are 95 WWII shoulder sleeve insignia along with signatures and unit or rating identification of the soldiers and sailors that wore them. These patches were worn by veterans from the Allouez neighborhood of Superior, WI. The Patch Panel was displayed with pride on the wall of the Harbor Tavern at 37th Avenue and East 2nd Street in Allouez which was owned Ben and June Hoppe.

The Panel came about in an informal way when Tavern patrons began sticking their service patches on the wall. After a short time, the patches were glued onto a board (the reverse side of a Coca-Cola poster) and signatures and affiliations entered. It was then placed behind glass inside a large wooden frame. The Panel hung on the wall for almost 50 years until the Tavern closed in 1990. After Ben's death in 1997, it was kept for several years by his daughter Elaine Johnson, who in 2003 donated the Panel to the Allouez Neighborhood Reunion. The panel was displayed at the Belgian Hall during the reunion and afterward deeded to the Bong Center to become a part of our permanent collection.

"The Patch Panel is really an early effort to do exactly what we do here at the Center-commemorate the service of our veterans," according to Ex. Dir. Bob Fuhrman. It was also a challenging artifact in several ways. First there was the need to research the people who placed patches on the panel-a task well handled by volunteer Jerry Sandvick. The next challenge was to devise a way to display the panel so that both sides were viewable-the Coca Cola poster on the reverse only came to light when Curator Gina Sacchetti de-framed the piece for conservation work. Jerry's research revealed it was from Coke's 1944 advertising campaign. It's pristine condition begged for exhibition too.

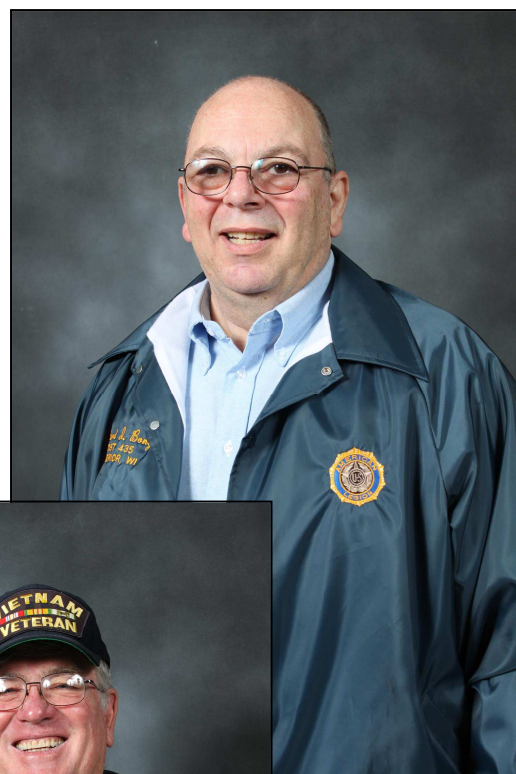
After much consideration it was decided to build a special mount for the artifact and the design you see her was executed by volunteers Stan and Dave Smith. "Showing both sides brings this wonderful bit of local veterans history to light and also gives us a chance to talk about the role of corporations like Coca-Cola during the war," said Fuhrman. "Bringing this artifact to regular display is a long awaited opportunity to share the history of over 90 veterans with our visitors."



Traveling Vietnam Portrait Exhibit Spurs Northland Vets to Share Their History

The “Back in the World” Vietnam portrait exhibit that visited the Center earlier this spring worked as the catalyst for the some of the first serious Vietnam-era donations to our collections.

Featuring portraits of vets interviewed for the joint Wisconsin Public TV-Wisconsin Veterans Museum oral history project, the exhibit allowed the Center the opportunity to bring in on loan the collection of Dave Smith which includes the weapons, uniforms and accoutrements of the average US infantryman of the period. Also featured are US Navy artifacts from Alan Ritzenger including his shore leave “dragon” stitched dress blues.



Dave Smith's collection of Vietnam War artifacts (above) adds tangible reminders of the infantryman's experiences to the Vietnam War exhibit. Center volunteers Ryan Jost (right) and Dan Knight (above right) are shown here in the portraits taken as part of our local efforts to honor our Vietnam Vets. Ryan, who served in Army Intelligence, interviews for our Oral History Project; Dan, who served in the 'Brown Water Navy' is a greeter and a member of the combined honor guard.

CENTER ACTIVITIES

FREE PROGRAM Sept. 11 at 10 AM

***C.S.I. Pacific:
Technical Air Intelligence Units and the 5th
Air Force 1942-45***

Jim Hencinski provides another of his fascinating programs on little-known aspects of military history, this time focusing on the Technical Air Intelligence Units-South West Pacific Area (TAIU) which located and salvaged wrecked Japanese aircraft from the jungles of New Guinea and other islands for testing and evaluation.

It was the TAIU that provided confirming evidence that Dick Bong had broken WWI fighter pilot Eddie Rickenbacker's record of 26 victories when it located the wreckage of Bong's 27th victory in April 1944. The TAIU-SWPA rebuilt and test flew more than 30 different examples of Japanese aircraft to learn their strengths and weaknesses. The TAIU also developed the simple system of identifying Japanese aircraft by using common names like 'Betty', 'Val' or 'Tony.' This free program will be presented in the Center's classroom.



Bong Book Club

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the Center's classroom at 2 PM. Informal discussion of group-selected books related to military history. Free and open to the public.

If You're Looking for Something Interesting to do...

Why Not Try the Veterans Historical Center's Volunteer Program?

Center volunteers assist with numerous tasks:

- ❖ Greeters welcome the public at the museum and direct them to ticketing, staff or programs.
- ❖ Gift Shop attendants work the cash register, answer the telephone.
- ❖ Docents work with group tours presenting our hands-on collection and guiding students through Squad Training tours.
- ❖ Collections volunteers are trained to handle artifacts and work under curatorial supervision documenting collections and assisting with exhibition work.

Volunteer Qualifications

**Regular Time Commitment
Enjoy Working with People**

**Interest in History
A Sense of Humor**

If you would like to explore volunteering at the Center please feel free to contact Donna OKash at (715) 392-7151.

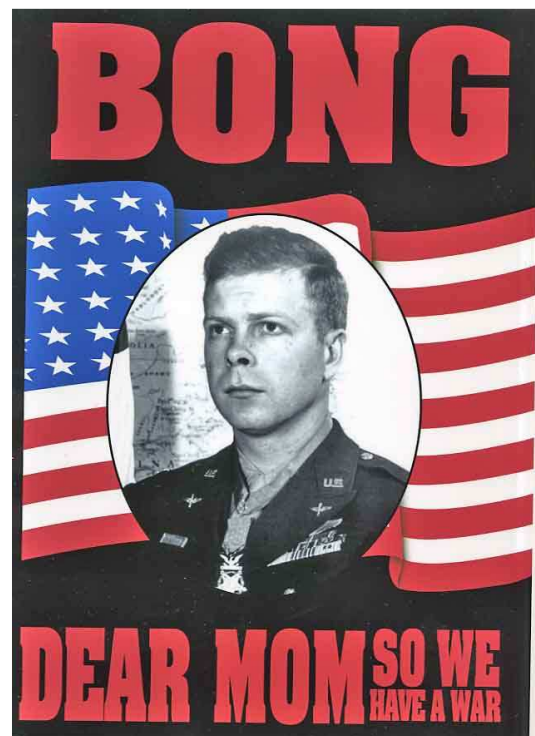
DEAR MOM Reprinted!

“If you want to know Dick, you have to read his letters.”-Joyce Bong Erickson

Now you can take advantage of Joyce’s oft-repeated advice as the Center, in cooperation with author **Carl Bong**, has published a re-print of Carl’s superb presentation of Dick’s letters home, *Dear Mom-So We have a War*. Carl provides background to Dick’s life and experiences and, through his own research and interviews, adds detail and insights into the war-time experiences of America’s Ace of Aces.

Dear Mom features numerous photographs and maps, a transcript of Dick’s Military Flight Record, his Log Book covering the time period June 1941 to November 1943, a complete listing of his 40 confirmed victories and Lockheed’s investigation of the P-80 crash that took Dick’s life. There is no better single source on Dick’s career than the nearly 600 pages of *Dear Mom*.

Dear Mom is available at the Center’s Gift Shop for \$36.00 plus postage. It may also be purchased through our web site, www.bvhcenter.org.



Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center
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