

Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center

Finding aid for
Richard Souhrada

Date Range:1941-1945
Bulk dates: 1941-1945

Finding Aid created by Debbie Ritzinger 2021
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Creator: Richard Souhrada

Extent: 1 box (One and one half liner feet)

Abstract: Includes military records and correspondence.

Call number: Range B, Unit 2, Shelf B

Language: The material is in English

Acquisition Information: These records came to the Center from Loren Leslie, nephew of Richard Souhrada

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research.

Copyright: Copyright belongs to the Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center.

Cite as: [item], folder, box, Richard Souharda papers, Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center

History:, Richard Souharda received a certificate from Fillmore County Schools of Minnesota July 10, 1935 and a diploma from Lime Springs Iowa Public school May 29, 1939. Richard enlisted in the Army Air Corps shortly after Pearl Harbor. After Induction at Fort Des Moines, he was sent to Sheppard field, Texas as an Air Cadet. He was sent to Flight School at San Angelo and Wichita Falls, Texas. He received advanced flight training. He flew and was combat qualified in the P-38, P-51 and P-37 aircraft. He was deployed to the South Pacific in the summer of 1944 and was engaged in flight operations in New Guinea and later in the invasion of the Philippines, serving with the 5th Air force 8th Fighter group, 80th Fighter Squadron. He flew combat against the Japanese Air force over Leyte, Mindanao and Mindoro Islands. He shot down by a Japanese Zero. On January 2, 1945 he set out on a mission to bomb Japanese shipping in the Lingayen Gulf. Developing engine trouble, he jettisoned his bombs and wing tanks attempting to return to the airfield. His plane crashed short of the runway and he was killed. Richard attained the rank of Lieutenant. He received the Purple Heart posthumously. He also had the Aerial Gunner's medal.

Loren Leslie, nephew of Richard Souharda was a n Aviation Medical Officer. He attended the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute and served as Commanding Officer of the 3rd Marine Corps Wing Reserve Medical Unit. In 1990 he was recalled to active duty to command Navy Fleet Hospital 15, a combat zone 500 bed field hospital. Deployed to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during the 1st Gulf War I support of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and Air Wing. He is the recipient of the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious service Medal with a gold star.

Scope and Content: The Richard Souhrada papers includes military records and paperwork, correspondence, photographs, postcards, and various ephemera. The strength of the collection is found with the letters as they provide an insight to his family life, whereabouts and level of involvement with the Air Force during World War II. This series give a historical overview of Richard Souhrada's military career and what he valued most during his service.

The *correspondence* series ranges from 1941 – 1945 and includes correspondence from his mother Olga, his nephew Loren Leslie, his girlfriend Margaret, and numerous pilots he flew with.

Subjects:

- World War II
- Army Air Forces
- P-38
- Richard Bong
- Pacific Theater of Operation
- Navy Medical Personnel
- Captain Loren Leslie MC USNR
- Fleet Hospital 15

Folder # Description

Record Box Series

BOX 1

Military History

Folder 1	Letters from Viola, his sister
Folder 2	Letters from Richard most from July to September, 1944 and letters from Loren 1941-1942
Folder 3	Letters and post cards December 1941- July 1942
Folder 4	Letters from July 9, 1942 - September 1942
Folder 5	Letters from Sept, 1942 - February 1943

- Folder 6 Letters from April 24, 1943 - December 11,1943
- Folder 7 Letters from February 17, 1942 – April 19, 1943
- Folder 8 Letters from December 6, 1943 – July 22, 1944
- Folder 9 Letters from July 26, 1944 – January 12, 1945
- Folder 10 Letters from December 1941 – March 1942
- Folder 11 Letters from April 20, 1942 – 1945 to Richard from his family
(2011.039.006)
- Folder 12 Letters from Madie, (a friend) 2011.039 1-19
- Folder 13 letters from pilots to Olga after Richard’s death.
- Folder 14 Letters from Olga, Richard’s mom to Cadet Souhrada
- Folder 15 Post cards to Loren, Mrs. Carl Leslie, Military papers including
official credit report for ”destruction of Enemy Aircraft by
Fighter Pilots” .Included is Richard Bong and his 2 combat
Victories as well As Richard’s one Combat Victory
- Folder 16 Loren Leslie’s Fleet Hospital reports, Certificate of
Commendation, from 1990-1991 desert Storm/ Desert Shield
Proof of Loren’s book “ So the War Goes On” about Richard Souhrada.

Correspondence series ranges from 1941- 1945

Subjects: WW II

Army Air Force 5th Air force

Pacific Theater of Operations

P-38

Richard Bong

Loren Leslie

Navy Medical Personnel

Fleet Hospital 15

Desert Shield/ Desert Storm