
BONGVHC

#4

MAY/JUN/JUL

**BATTLE FOR THE
BONG CENTER**

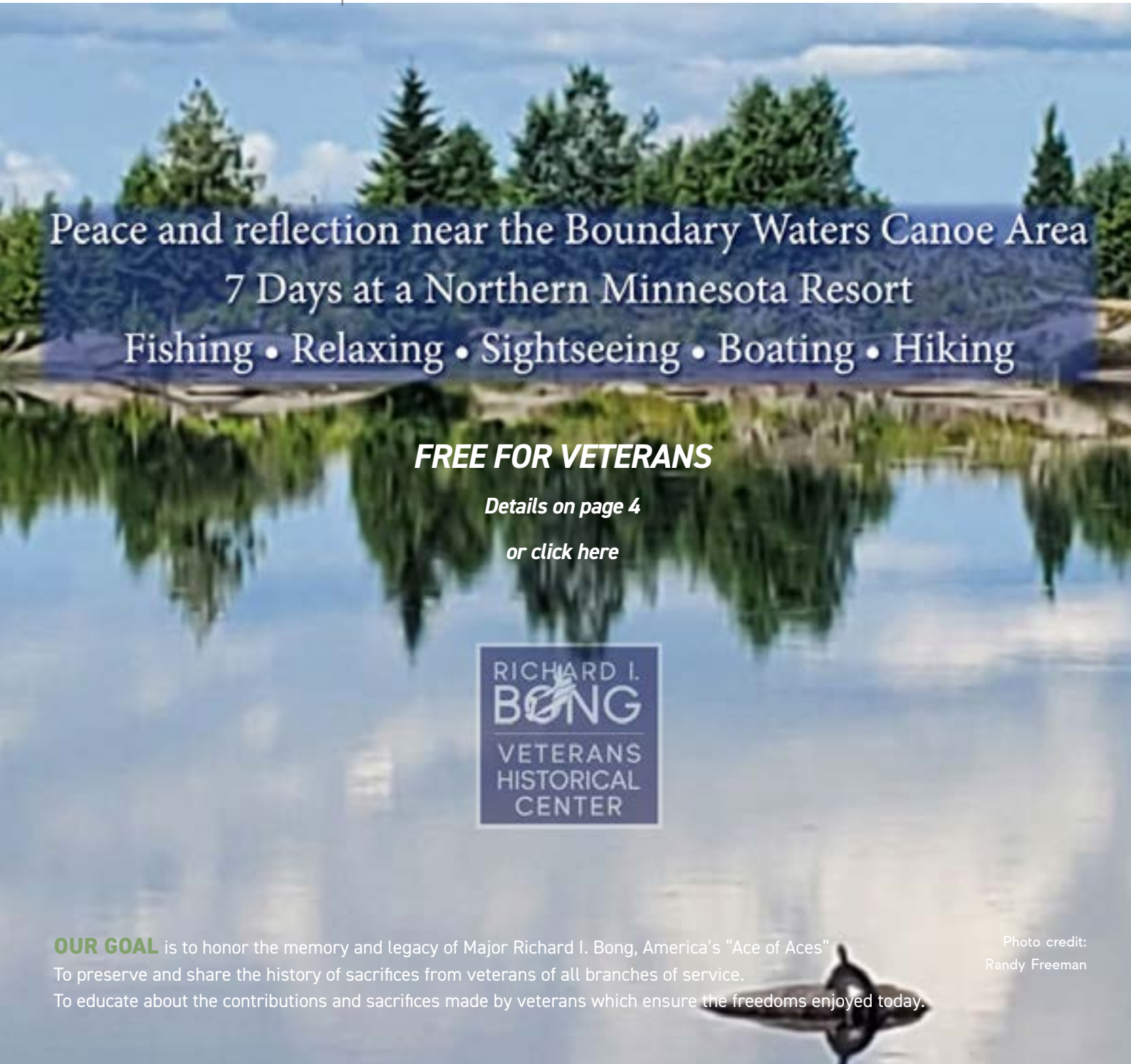
Former JR Curators
raise money &
awareness for us

FAMILY FUN DAY

May 24th starts
summer & Memorial
Day Memories

NAVY WEEK

July 1st & 4th
Special Performance
and Appearances



Peace and reflection near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area
7 Days at a Northern Minnesota Resort
Fishing • Relaxing • Sightseeing • Boating • Hiking

FREE FOR VETERANS

Details on page 4

or click here



OUR GOAL is to honor the memory and legacy of Major Richard I. Bong, America's "Ace of Aces"
To preserve and share the history of sacrifices from veterans of all branches of service.
To educate about the contributions and sacrifices made by veterans which ensure the freedoms enjoyed today.

Photo credit:
Randy Freeman

BATTLE FOR THE BONG CENTER

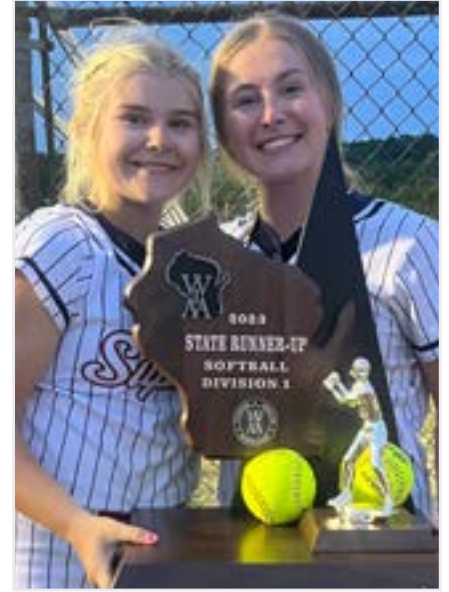
Former Junior Curators thoughtful & fun project

We are proud and grateful to be the focus of a heartfelt senior project by former Junior Curators here at the Bong Veterans Historical Center, Superior High School softball players Paige Johnson (#10) and Ari Robillard (#3). For their senior year project, our former JR Curators decided to give back to veterans, these thoughtful student/athletes created "Battle for the Bong Center" — a special softball game and fundraiser!

Please come out, support the athletes, and our American Legion Honor Guard will present the colors, and each player will walk out with a veteran.

Monday, May 19 at Superior High School • 262 Spartan Rd, Superior, WI.
Superior vs. Northwestern – First pitch at 4 PM

Food, softball fun, and fundraising: Bid on baskets, buy a t-shirt, and support the athletes!



MAY 24TH FAMILY FUN DAY AT THE BONG

Memories, music, & more

Family Fun Day on Saturday, May 24, 2025, live music, bouncy house, food trucks, K9, treats, sidewalk chalk art contest, and featuring the public debut of our brand-new flight simulator, generously awarded by Students in Aviation.

This fun-filled day will raise funds for the Flora Oveson Female in Aviation Scholarship, which supports female students at the Lake Superior College School of Aviation. The scholarship honors Flora Oveson, passionate pilot and founder of the Bong Book Club.

Please visit the important traveling display we will have open: Wisconsin Remembers, honoring Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans in our museum, admission is included in the donation due to the generous sponsorship of WPR, and the VSSO.

Suggested Donation: Just \$1 for a "Fun Pass", good for all activities (not valid at food trucks) and helps launch a future female aviator's journey!

Live Music: Dance Attic, 12 PM – 2 PM, sponsored by Siggy's PorchFest Superior

Memorial Weekend Kickoff

FAMILY FUN DAY

\$1 FUN PASS

BONG CENTER ENTRY PLUS!

- NEW FLIGHT SIMULATOR FOR STUDENTS
- DANCE ATTIC NOON -2PM
- WISCONSIN REMEMBERS: VIETNAM
- K-9 DEMONSTRATIONS
- HUMANE SOCIETY W ADOPTABLE PETS
- MUNICIPAL VEHICLES DISPLAY
- FUN & GAMES W BORDER TOWN BETTIES
- ALL AGES SIDEWALK CHALK CONTEST
- BOUNCY HOUSE
- TANK TOURS
- FOOD TRUCKS ONSITE

305 Harborview Drive
Superior WI • 715.392.7151

**RICHARD I
BONG**

**VETERANS
HISTORICAL
CENTER**

**DANCE
ATTIC**

NOON-2PM

SATURDAY

MAY 24

12-4PM

SIA

STUDENTS IN AVIATION

Tom's Taste of Chicago

HUMANE SOCIETY

OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, INC.

23rd VETERAN

BONG

BOOK CLUB

WVM

WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL PARTICIPANTS



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN GIDLEY

Dear Friends of the Bong Center,

As we welcome spring/summer we're proud and excited to share fantastic updates!

The past few months have been a whirlwind of progress, with major projects launched, implemented, and/or completed—all aimed at enhancing our space and strengthening our mission.

In March, our Solar for Good project went fully operational, harvesting clean, renewable energy. We're proud to reduce our environmental footprint, (watch our output on our monitor in the foyer.)

We're also thrilled to announce installation of a new humidification system in our Collections Room. A significant step forward in preserving and protecting our valuable collection of documents and artifacts. This project is on track to be completed by the end of summer.

The installation of UV and sun-protection film on the Museum's south windows will begin this month. Not to be overlooked, (or underfilled) plans are underway to newly pave our parking lot, as well as an upgrade of our existing highway sign in front of the building.

We are also planning for a few exciting events this spring. Monday May 19th, Superior High School will host Northwestern High School in the "Battle for the Bong Center". A high school women's fastpitch softball game honoring vets and all proceeds raised will go to the Bong Center to support veteran causes.

On Saturday May 24th will see our kickoff to summer, Labor Day weekend event. This Saturday includes a traveling display honoring Wisconsin's Vietnam Veterans, K-9 training exhibition, the Humane Society, a bounce house for the kids, municipal vehicles, sweet treats, a sidewalk mural contests, music from Dance Attic and much, much more! So, join us from noon to 4:00 PM and get in on the fun!

Thank you for your continued support of the Bong Center. Warm regards,

John Gidley, Executive Director
Richard I Bong Veterans Historical Center
gidley@bongcenter.org

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DAYS OF NOTE

- May 24 FAMILY FUN DAY at the Bong Center**
- May 30 MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVATIONS**
- June 6 D-DAY**
- June 14 FLAG DAY**
- July 1 FREE CONCERT 1:00 PM: Fair Wind Navy Band**
- July 4 FREE Noon-2PM Navy Sailors at the Bong**
- July 17 FREE SPEAKER SERIES; Mark Van Ells**
- July 27 National Korean War Vet Armistice Day**
- July 28 - Aug 3rd FREE Veterans Lakeside Trip**
- Aug 12 Annual Bong Book Club Picnic at Mascarenas'**

VETERANS LAKESIDE RETREAT

FREE 7 DAYS FOR VETS AT NORTHERN MN RESORT

July 28th – August 3rd, Free Trip for Veterans

An opportunity to unplug, recharge, and reconnect with yourself and fellow veterans in the tranquility of Northern Minnesota.

What to Expect:

(Mix & Match the following activities as you'd like)

Boating: Glide through the calm and crystal-clear waters of the BWCA, exploring its secluded waterways and breathtaking landscapes.

Fishing: Cast your line into the abundant waters, rich with local fish species. Whether a seasoned angler or a novice, the serenity provides the perfect backdrop for fishing.

Lodge Life: Enjoy yourself in the tranquility of the lake. Sleep in the lodge, surrounded by the soothing sounds of nature, and wake up to the crisp, fresh air each morning.

Hiking & Scenic Tours: Hike the unspoiled BWCA lakes or choose to walk the charming towns in the area, there are museums, shopping, art, and more!

Campfires & Relaxation: Disconnect and unwind. Soak in peace, find solace, and enjoy the chance to reflect and rejuvenate.



This trip is not just about exploring the great up-north; it's an opportunity to connect with fellow veterans, share stories, and build camaraderie in a setting that honors your service and sacrifices.

How to Prepare: No previous experience needed. Participants will receive a comprehensive guide on what to bring and how to prepare for the trip.

Secure Your Spot: Spaces are limited to maintain an intimate and supportive group experience.

Apply now

Please encourage your veteran to apply.

*This summer is a more relaxed,
less physically taxing, week.*

*IF you want to fish and hike
it is still available.*

Click to go to our website & application

THE SAILORS WILL BE IN TOWN!

NAVY WEEK • JULY 1ST & 4TH

Special performances and appearances at the Bong Center

Navy Week in our area is scheduled to take place from June 30 to July 6, 2025. This community outreach event will feature 50-75 Sailors engaging in a variety of activities, including performances, educational events, and service projects.

The Bong Center will feature two free events for Navy week:

Navy Band of the Great Lakes Woodwind Quintet
1:00 PM on July 1st. *Fair Winds* is a versatile woodwind ensemble with repertoire consisting of a variety of styles including Classical, Military Marches,

and Patriotic compositions.

This small chamber group performs for military engagements, public concerts, recitals, and educational clinics and performs for audiences throughout the Midwest supporting Navy and Navy Recruiting missions

Sailors at the Bong Center, July 4th after the parade roughly 1:00 PM for tabling/socializing with visitors. This is an opportunity to meet/socialize/share stories with U.S. Navy Sailors. As of publication there were no further details available.



★ VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: ★ CLINT MATTSON

Clint Mattson, shown here with wife Roxy, is a proud and decorated

Vietnam veteran. He has been an indispensable part of the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center for the past 12 years. Known for his unwavering dedication and can-do spirit, Clint is the backbone of our field trip program, having participated in hundreds of educational and outreach events.

Always ready to lend a hand wherever needed, Clint and his wife Roxy even stepped up to manage our "Victory Garden" exhibit—one of the grittier volunteer jobs at the Center. His commitment, humility, and passion for sharing history with younger generations make him an irreplaceable member of our team and a truly deserving Volunteer of the Year. Congratulations Clint and THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!



SCAN TO WATCH A
2-MINUTE VIDEO OF
THE INTERIOR OF THE
TANK!



CHECK OUT OUR AWESOME TANK

Tour inside our tank on YouTube!

We now have a QR code mounted on a sign with our tank so folks who wish can get a tour of the interior with our own Randy Freeman.

SOLAR FOR GOOD

Powering History with Sunshine

We proudly announced the completion of our new solar array and hosted a public ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

Thanks to a Solar for Good grant awarded in Fall 2023, we completed installation of a 20-kilowatt ground-mounted solar array. The project includes a donation covering half of the 20 solar panels valued at over \$5,000.

Originally designed as a rooftop system, our plans changed after concerns about wind exposure. The array was successfully redesigned as a ground-mounted system. Installation began in November 2024 and

overcame initial delays due to the unexpected discovery of buried concrete. Our system officially went live on January 29, 2025.

The array represents Phase I of a long-term project that could provide up to 80% of our electricity needs, significantly reducing utility costs and allowing us to reinvest more resources directly into our mission.

"This project demonstrates our commitment to environmental responsibility and careful management of our operating costs," said Executive Director John Gidley. "By cutting



energy costs, we can put more resources into what really matters: honoring veterans and sharing their stories. We work to make our museum more accessible, meaningful, and sustainable for our community. We want this place to be a living tribute and a lasting resource—something everyone can benefit from, now and into the future."

The ribbon cutting included remarks from local officials and partners who supported the project including Carlson Electric and the City of Superior.

LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS

Murder Mystery fundraiser sells out!

April 12th at 6:00PM 40 guests enjoyed an EXCLUSIVE Murder Mystery Dinner. The evening followed a brand new mystery written exclusively for us by author Gary C. Banker and performed by actors from Murder Mystery Inc.

Our guests enjoyed the high jinks around their three course meal in our mezzanine. The clues lead them on a wild path through the WWII themed mystery. Truly a night to remember!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY • RECAP



Our volunteers are the heart of the Bong Center. They give their time, their wisdom, and their warmth—and they shape the experience of every person who walks through our doors.

April 22nd, in our theater we had a celebration thanking our volunteers and gave out awards.

All volunteers with over 2 years of service received an engraved commemorative Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center dog tag with their name and years of service..

Tom Canon, top photos in Brewers blue, recieved a lifetime of gratitude award marking his 23 years of volunteering with us.



BOOK CLUB SUMMER READS!

May
The Myth of Hitler's Pope
Author: David O. Dahlin

June
Three Ordinary Girls:
Dutch teens WWII Heroes
Author: Tim Brady

July
Sgt. Reckless
Author: Robin Hutton



AMERICAN LEGION POST 435

Meetings for both Legion & Auxiliary on second Tuesdays every month at 7:00PM at Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center. **NEXT MEETINGS:** June 10 • July 8 • Aug. 12 always 7:00PM **New folks always welcome!**

AMERICAN LEGION • NOTES • CALENDAR

Memorial Day coming up. On Wednesday May 21, the post will pick up flags for the grave sites at 7 cemeteries in Superior. We will start by placing flags on Wednesday afternoon at 1PM at Soldiers Circle and than Soldiers Square. Wednesday Evening we will place flags at St. Francis and Nemadji Cemeteries at 6PM with help. On Thursday morning, we will start at Greenwood and the other cemeteries at 9AM with help. Friday is a rain day for placing flags. Sunday evening we are hosting a dinner for the Canadians who come down for the Memorial Service on Monday. On Memorial Day, we will be doing the Ceremonies at Greenwood which starts at 10:30AM. The following Wednesday, we pick up the flags at all the cemeteries with help.

May 2025

Wednesday, May 21st, Memorial Day preparation:

10:30AM - Pick up flags for placing at grave sites.

1PM – Post places flags: Soldiers Circle & Square at Greenwood Cemetery.

6 PM – Place flags at St. Francis and Nemadji Cemetery with help.

Thursday, May 22nd: Place flags at remainder of Cemeteries with help starting at 9AM.

Friday, May 23rd : Rain date for placing of flags.

Monday, May 26th Memorial Day:

Post picks up items for Memorial Day Service and sets up for service which begins at 10:30AM. Post has Flag Detail for mass at Calvary.

Wednesday, May 28th: Post picks up flags at all cemeteries with help starting at 9AM

Thursday, May 29th is rain date.

June 2025

Sunday, June 14th: Flag Day Event at Bong Veterans Center. Times TBD

July 2025

July, 4th: Post starts Parade with rifle volley and has vehicles in parade.



2nd Annual Georgia Peaches Sale



**AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY
UNIT 435**

Pre-order your delicious Georgia Cling peaches:
juicy, sweet, thin skin, non-GMO & pop-out pit.

All proceeds go to our LOCAL Veterans

Pre-order your Peaches!



\$40 per flat: 27-29 peaches

Cash, Check, Paypal and Venmo accepted

Use email or Facebook: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 435 (QR to Facebook)

Pick up 2nd week of July (Actual date TBD)
at Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center 305 Harbor View Parkway, Superior WI 54880



email: americanlegionaux1@gmail.com

Support our American Legion Auxiliary, local veterans causes, AND enjoy delicious Georgia Peaches!
Pre-order now until the 2nd week of June (don't wait that long, you know you'll enjoy them!)

COMMENTS FROM OUR CURRATOR: INTERNS

Briana Fiandt

The Bong Center and UMD's Museum Studies program have a long and beneficial partnership, with the museum hosting college students almost every semester. The interns receive hands-on education and experience in their chosen career field and we receive assistance with special projects. The students bring in new ideas and fresh energy that make benefit our exhibits and collections area. In spring 2025, we hosted three interns from UMD who each accomplished a huge amount this spring; Grace Cunnen, Aydan DeCoursey, and Mitchell Trantow. Here's a look at a couple of the projects they worked on:



Mitchell spent a large part of his time creating a Richard Bong timeline that is now available on our website. This interactive timeline, which we will continue to add content to, highlights the major dates in Bong's life. It documents each of the 40 planes that he shot down, along with a link to the digitized after action report put together by Bong. We have already sent researchers and students to this great new resource!

Aydan researched information about our M60 tank and then recorded a video inside the tank with our facilities manager, Randy Freeman. He created a QR code and signage that is now posted outside the tank so that our visitors can see what the interior of the tank looks like and where the crew was positioned.

Grace worked on an amazing art collection we have in our collection by local artist and Vietnam veteran Sterling Rathasack. The collection, titled "In Siam" portrays the experiences and sights that Sterling experienced during his service in Thailand during

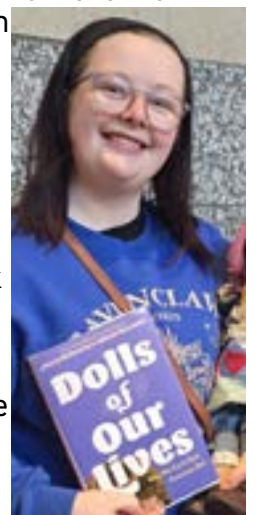


the Vietnam war. She devised a new and improved storage system for artwork as well as created better documentation in our catalog system. She also participated in planning meetings with UWS, as we partner with them to showcase his art on campus in November. This will be one of our efforts this year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Vietnam.

We also had a graduate Library Studies intern, Aly Sveeggen, from UW-Madison who worked mostly remotely on digitized images from Vietnam. She did behind the scenes work, created the metadata needed to make the collections available online through Recollection WI. These photos document the Vietnam experience of several local veterans and are a part of our efforts to recognize the 50th anniversary.



The internship program is an extremely important part of our work at the Bong Museum. We believe strongly in bringing up the new generation of museum professionals and helping to provide them the tools they need to be successful in the field. In return we are the grateful recipients of their hard work and dedication to making the museum experience better for our patrons!



ADMIRAL HYMAN GEORGE RICKOVER

BY MITCHELL TRANTOW, INTERN,
UNIVERSITY OF MN-DULUTH

Author's Note

I have served in the United States Navy (2017-2023) as an enlisted nuclear technician on an aircraft carrier. Although I intend to only tell the history of this man, I have a bias in favor of the Admiral that must be addressed before further reading.

Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, an Overview

Rickover was born on January 27, 1900 in Poland. The



son of a Jewish tailor, his family emigrated to the United States in order to avoid the Russian pogroms in 1905. Rickover obtained a position at the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1918, where he performed well as a bookish and fervently studious individual. After graduating in 1922, he served in the peacetime Navy before heading the electrical division of the Bureau of Ships during the Second World War. After the

war he designed the USS Nautilus (SSN-571), launching the United States Navy into the nuclear age of propulsion and greatly improving the capabilities of submarines. He continued to serve as head of the Navy's Nuclear program and held the shipbuilding contractors as well as his officers to an incredibly and demanding high standard. He was forced to retire in 1982 by President Reagan due to his age and allegations of receiving bribes. Recipient of two Congressional Gold Medals, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Rickover's Naval career spanned 63 years making him the longest serving member of the United States armed forces to date. He passed on July 8, 1986 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Early Life

Born Chaim Gdala/Godalia/Godeliah Rykower in Makow, Russian occupied Poland, to a Jewish family. His family fled the Russian pogroms in 1905 to the United States where they would ultimately settle in Chicago, Illinois. His first name was changed to "Hyman" derived from the Jewish word "Chayyim" (meaning "life"). During his childhood he worked alongside his siblings to help his family make ends meet through various odd jobs (including delivering messages for Western Union). His middle name was changed to George when he entered the Naval Academy where he endured both the traditional hazing, which by his



own testimony he was mature enough to handle, as well as additional mistreatment due to his Jewish heritage. His family life was strict, demanding, and not always affectionate, but it was fair and loyal in a way which shaped Rickover's character.

Military Career

Obtaining a commission to the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1918, Rickover shunned social events and parties in favor of studying and education. He disliked those who insulted him for his Jewish heritage but did not detest the more traditional treatment and hazing which most endured. He graduated 107th out of 540 midshipmen in 1922, and received his officer's commission as well as orders to the USS La Vallette (DD-315) as the Assistant Torpedo Officer, commissary, supply, and watch officer. He endured a series of medical ailments which hindered him throughout his service on the La Vallette and later on the battleship USS Nevada (BB-6). He attended Columbia University where he obtained his Master's in Science in Electrical Engineering and met Ruth Masters 1927-29. He reported for service on the submarine S-9 (SS-114) and later S-48 (SS-159)





SPEAKER SERIES

Our Speaker Series are
ALWAYS: on a Thursday, free,
and begin at 6:30

If you know of interesting
speakers, please tell us!

Call Briana Fiantt
715-718-7023, or email:
fiantt@bongcenter.org

SUMMER 2025

Mark Van Ells
Red Arrow Across Pacific
July 17th • 6:30 PM

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Becoming a member isn't just about free admission, bringing family and friends out for a great explore and education—it's about honoring heroes, preserving history, and inspiring future generations. Your support helps us tell the stories of those who served, ensuring their sacrifices and contributions are never forgotten.

With six membership levels, there's an option for everyone. If you join at the Staff Sergeant level or higher there is a huge advantage. At this level you gain access to thousands of museums through the North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Association—unlocking free admission to cultural institutions across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and beyond. We joined

NARM just this year, so this is a brand new perk!

Call, or stop in to Guest Service if you want a better understanding of what membership includes or even how to become a member.

Now you can enjoy the convenience of a digital membership card, making access easier while supporting sustainability OR print our your membership card, if you prefer, we have all the options!

Your membership strengthens our mission to educate, remember, and connect communities through history. Join today and be part of something bigger! Visit our website or Guest Services to learn more.

Annual membership levels above \$100 automatically include the organization we just joined: NARM, North American Reciprocal Museum Association, Our Member Benefits are awesome!

You get the access to over 1,000 NARM affiliated museums, galleries, historical museums & societies, botanical gardens, children's museums, zoos & more!

See NARM website for details.

Your digital membership card will come to your email, we can assist with any issues. If you want an additional physical card, please see guest services.

[CLICK HERE FOR NARM DETAILS](#)