Richard I. Bong
WWII Heritage Center

305 Harbor View Parkway
Superior, WI
Douglas County

1 Acre

Location: Downtown Superior, overlooking Barkers Island and Superior Bay.

In the brownfield arena, you often hear about new office complexes, restaurants or coffee shops replacing old, broken-down factories, gas stations or scrap yards. Rarely, however, does the legacy of a World War II flying ace come into discussion. Not so for the small, northern Wisconsin community of Superior.

History
From 1871-1920, this property in downtown Superior served as a public wharf owned by the city, and included a railway running along the edge of the property. Most recently, the Superior Chamber of Commerce ran their tourist center at the site until the city moved the building in 2000.

Investigation & Cleanup
Before the site could be redeveloped, investigations showed the soil contaminated with arsenic and low levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Workers removed and disposed of approximately 10,000 yards of contaminated soil at a licensed solid waste landfill.

Redevelopment
City officials were convinced they did not want this value piece of downtown property to sit idle or underused as it had in years past. Working with veteran and other community groups, they decided to create a museum honoring those who served in World War II, including one of Wisconsin’s most famous sons.
Major Richard I. Bong was the greatest flying ace of WWII. Hailing from nearby Poplar, Wisconsin, he shot down a record 40 enemy aircraft in the Pacific Theatre and received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The museum is a 14,000 square foot facility that houses approximately 25 exhibits. Inside sits a restored 1945 vintage P-38 Lightning, the kind Major Bong flew and a favorite among Allied fighter pilots.

The Bong Memorial and World War II Heritage Center hosts a refurbished P-38 Lightning, the type of plane Richard Bong flew during his missions in the Pacific (photo courtesy of the Bong Heritage Center).

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance
The Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program provided technical assistance and oversight on the cleanup and redevelopment of the property.