

Richard Baird has interesting Veterans Day display, discussion with Alton Middle School children

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Richard Baird, a historian, teacher and advocate for veterans, had an interesting display of military memorabilia for children, showing much of his family history on Friday at Alton Middle School.

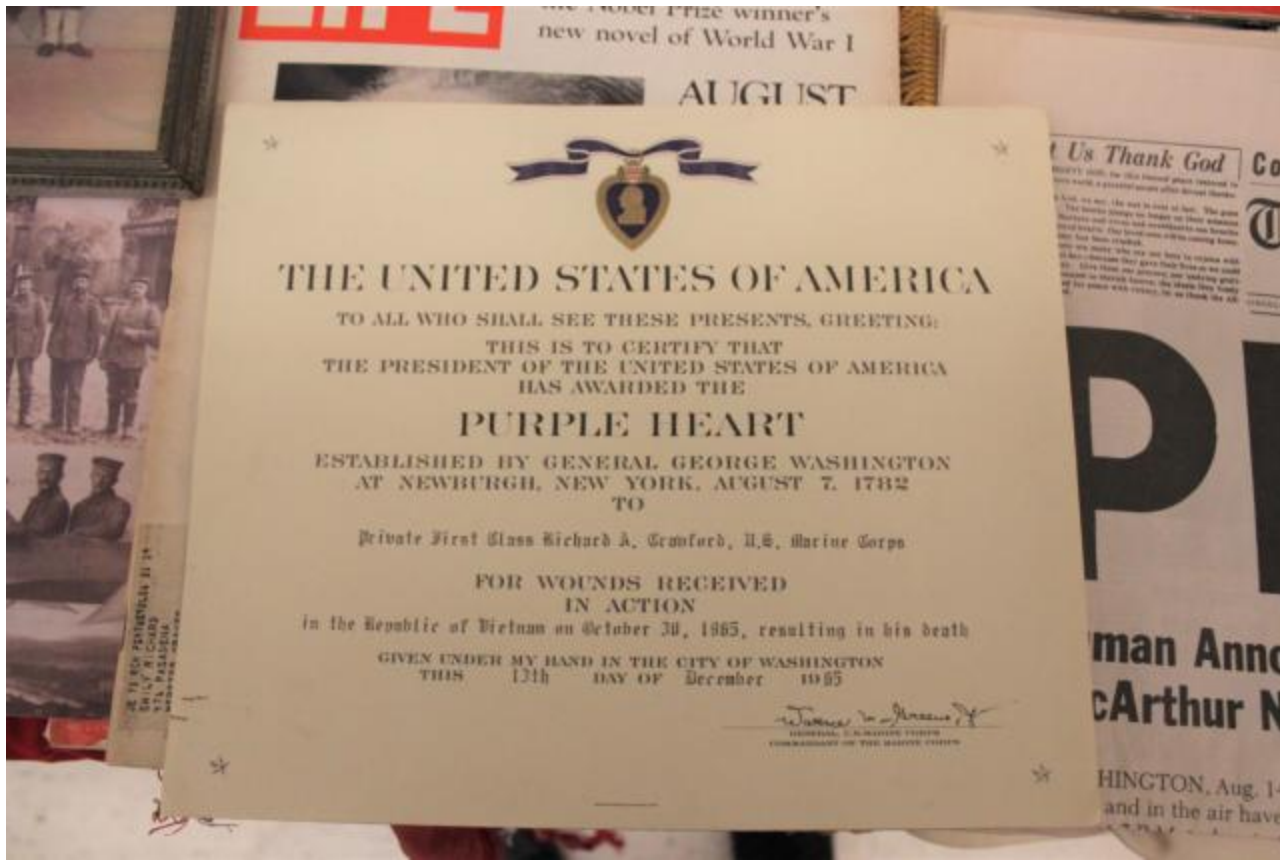
Baird did the display for children prior to Veterans Day on Saturday, celebrated throughout the country. Baird is also a Vietnam veteran and has had many family members serve in the military over the years. He also coordinates an evening Memorial Day ceremony at the National Cemetery in Alton each year that has developed quite a tradition.

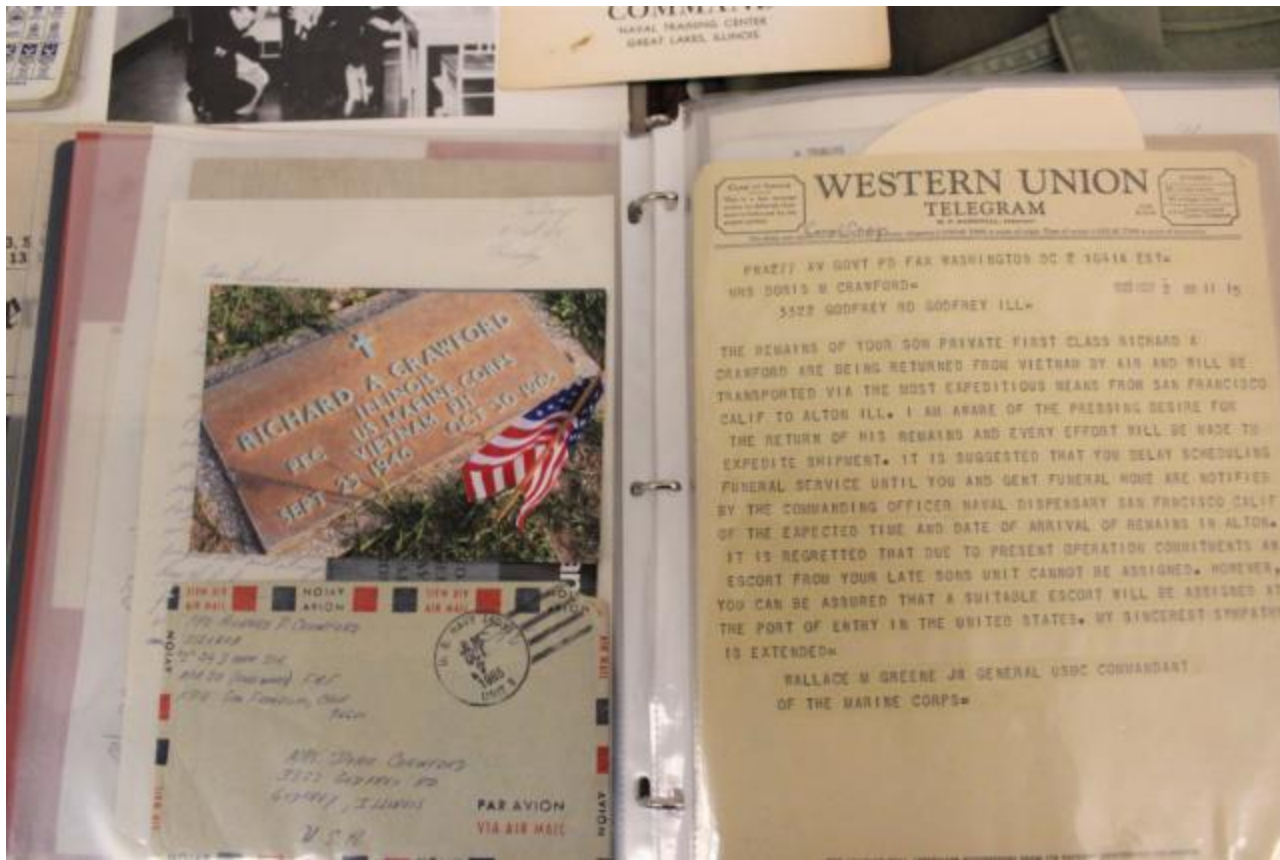
“On Veterans Day, one pauses and recognizes the honorable service of all military personnel, whom have served in the Armed Forces, or currently on active duty, in the reserves, or National Guard,” Baird said. “You understand Veterans Day was once called Armistice Day, a ceasefire agreement and peaceful ending to WWI in 1918; with the first Armistice Day celebrated in 1919. In 1954 Congress initiated and changed Armistice Day to Veteran’s Day. A distinguishable difference from Memorial Day, when its primary focus centers on ‘Those who paid’ the ultimate cost. This ‘cost’ found in numerous National Cemeteries and local graveyards across America and on foreign soil.”

Baird continued: “One might recognize the intrinsic value of the American Flag, interwoven into the spiritual fabric of the American people; acknowledging sacrifices and cost in blood, tears, and death. One should separate him or herself from the physical and emotional aspects of living, while evolving into layers upon layers of spirituality. This red, white, and blue flag represents what is imperfect in a physical sense, yet to be perfected in a spiritual realm.”

Baird closed by saying some lasting words in his typical poetic style: “To recognize history, legacies, and heritage, one endeavors to appreciate, understand, and unravel the very essence of life. Freedoms America offers, defends, and painstakingly reveals are foundations for growth, but not the foundation of one’s core purpose in life. That is found in character building and integrity.”







[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)