STATE AFFAIRS
WISPOLITICS
Wisconsin's Premier Political News Service

National Guard: Wisconsin Guard member receives prestigious Richard Bong Award

Posted on Thursday, Oct 7, 2021

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. Get the app or access via desktop.

Wisconsin Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Levi T. Parker received the Maj. Richard I. Bong Award at a Breakfast with the Boss event hosted by Wisconsin Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve in September.

Parker, a survey team chief with the Guard's 54th Civil Support Team, earned the award, named in honor of Bong, a Wisconsin native and the top American air "ace" of all wars having destroyed 40 enemy aircraft in aerial combat during World War II.

Bong was a fighter pilot in the Army Air Corps and a Medal of Honor recipient born in Superior, Wisconsin. The award in his honor is given annually by the Milwaukee Armed Services Committee to Wisconsin service members who have displayed outstanding traits of leadership and professionalism through their contributions to their Guard or Reserve military unit and to the community.

Parker was nominated by Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Patrouille, the Wisconsin Army National Guard's state command sergeant major. His contributions to his unit include sponsoring Soldiers for the Best Warrior competition, competing in the Best Sapper competition, and more.

As for his community contributions, Parker designed and created a mask accessory called an ear guard that acts as a mask-loop extension so that masks are supported by the backside of the wearer's head rather than their ears. A total of 6,500 of these were donated to first responders in Wisconsin, troops deployed to Italy, and eight other states.

“I can’t put into words what receiving this award means to me,” Parker said. “It is very humbling and I am absolutely honored to be recognized. This award is named after a true American hero, and the fact that I was chosen as the Army’s recipient this year just blows me away.”

Parker attributes his success to being mindful about doing the right thing,

“I’m always looking to better myself and those around me,” he said. “I try to be the best leader that I can be. I want to work hard and train hard to set the example for others to follow.”

He advises fellow Soldiers that want to get themselves in a position to receive an award like this to always work to be better.

“Give all you have and take pride in your uniform and what it represents,” he said. “Our community and our units are such a huge part of our service, and Soldiers should always strive to make those elements better and be a leader in everything they do. Offer a helping hand, because you never know who may need it.”