

For Immediate Release

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University of Dubuque Salutes Area Soldiers with November Events

University of Dubuque Sergeant Jeffrey B. Dodge Veterans Center welcomes Vietnam Veteran William Albracht. Albracht, decorated veteran, 25 years with the Secret Service, and author of “Abandoned in Hell,” will speak and conduct a Q&A session in conjunction with a partial film screening of “Last Days in Vietnam.”

WHAT: Vietnam Veteran Q&A and partial film screening
WHO: William Albracht, and film *Last Days in Vietnam*
WHEN: Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: John and Alice Butler Hall, Heritage Center, University of Dubuque
TICKETS: Admission is free, however a ticket is required and are available at the Farber Box Office in Heritage Center. 563.585.SHOW; www.dbq.edu/heritagecenter

Bill “Hawk” Albracht was born and raised in Rock Island, IL. After graduating from Alleman Catholic High School in 1966, he joined the US Army. Bill attended Infantry Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1967 at the age of nineteen. He spent his commissioned career in the US Army Special Forces, commonly referred to as the “Green Berets.” At age twenty-one, he was the youngest captain to command combat troops in Vietnam. As the recipient of three Silver Stars for gallantry in action, three Purple Hearts, five Bronze Stars, as well as several other awards for combat valor, Bill is one of the most highly decorated veterans of the Vietnam War.

Returning to civilian life, he worked his way through Augustana College in Rock Island. After graduation, he became a Special Agent of the US Secret Service. Over the next twenty-five years he protected six Presidents and their families, as well as visiting foreign heads of state. He also worked to safeguard America's monetary system, and conducted criminal investigations for the Department of Treasury. Bill retired in 2001 as the Assistant Special-Agent-In-Charge of the Secret Service's Washington D.C. Office. He then went on to manage Ford Motor Company's Executive Security Operations and in 2005, he moved back to the Quad Cities and opened a security consulting firm.

Bill's book, *Abandoned In Hell*, tells the story of his most challenging time in Vietnam: In the autumn of 1969, he took command of Firebase Kate and its 150 soldiers. Within hours, they were under attack by a well-armed and determined enemy force of some 6,000. Under a rain of fire and steel and menaced by almost constant ground attack, Bill and his men held out for five days. Cut off from supplies and reinforcements, with all means of resistance exhausted, Bill led his men through enemy lines under the cover of darkness in a desperate attempt to escape and evade the enemy.

Bill lives in Moline, IL and is married to the lovely and talented Mary Moran of Coal Valley. Together they have five children and eight grandchildren.

Last Days in Vietnam has been nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature and for Critics' Choice Award by the Broadcast Film Critics Association. Writers Mark Bailey and Keven McAlester are nominated for Writer's Guild Documentary Screenplay Award. Produced for American Experience Films/PPS, *Last Days in Vietnam* was directed by Rory Kennedy, youngest child of U.S. Senator Robert Francis "Bobby" Kennedy.

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Letters Home

University of Dubuque Heritage Center continues its third annual *Live at Heritage Center* Performing Arts Series with Chicago's Griffin Theatre Company performing *Letters Home* Wednesday, November 18, at 7:30 p.m. *Letters Home* puts recent Afghanistan and Iraq wars front and center by bringing to life actual letters written by soldiers serving in the Middle East.

WHAT: *Live at Heritage Center* Performing Arts Series – ***Letters Home***
WHO: Griffin Theatre Company of Chicago, Illinois
WHEN: Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: John and Alice Butler Hall, Heritage Center
TICKETS: \$19-\$24 adult, \$15-\$19 UD alumni, \$10 students
Note: Military active duty, retired/veterans, and reserve components eligible for two (2) free admissions each, though tickets are still required.

Inspired by the *New York Times* Op-Ed Article, *The Things They Wrote*, and the subsequent HBO documentary, *Last Letters Home*, the production also uses correspondence from Frank Schaeffer's books, *Voices from the Front*, *Letters Home from America's Military Family*, *Faith of Our Sons*, and *Keeping Faith*. The play, adapted and performed by Chicago's Griffin Theatre Company, gives audiences a powerful portrait of the soldier experience during wartime. These letters were written under difficult circumstances; the disorientation of training, deployment, separation from family, combat, and occupation duties. One theme unites these diverse voices; the belief that the person standing beside you is more important than you. The letters also help define what it means to serve in the military today, through acts of bravery, compassion, social responsibility, sense of community, and brotherhood. *Letters Home* gives a voice to a generation that went to war against terror in Afghanistan and to war in Iraq, for reasons that are still being debated and who are still fighting and dying today. More importantly, the play reveals the humanity that lies within the war as seen through the eyes of the men and women fighting it.

With minimal props and set pieces, this critically-acclaimed production employs the use of images and video projected behind the actors. Photos and videos used in the production are taken directly from actual soldiers' blogs and web posts. To enhance the theatrical experience of the play, the performance is followed by a Q&A period.

Bill Massolia, Griffin Theatre Company Artistic Director, will provide insights into the inspiration, adaptation, and development of this production during a free 30-minute special pre-show lecture at 6:30 p.m. in the Babka Theatre.

Tickets for *Letters Home* can be obtained through the Farber Box Office Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and beginning 90 minutes prior to performances at Heritage Center, University of Dubuque, 2255 Bennett Street; by phone at 563-585-SHOW; or online at www.dbq.edu/heritagecenter.

TH Media serves as the Heritage Center 2015-2016 season presenting media partner.

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For further information, please contact Thomas Hogan, senior director for university relations, at 563-589-3505.