



# PASS IN REVIEW

“Shedding Light On Idaho’s Military History”

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

October 2001

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Grand Opening of the Idaho Military History Museum was held on Labor Day 1995. We are now in our seventh year of operation; we've come a long way!

The Board of Directors, the Executive Director and the working volunteers are justly proud of the facility and the quality of the exhibits. All are to be complimented: The Board of Directors (past and present) for their visions and perseverance; the Executive Director for his expertise, guidance and hard work; and certainly **not least of all are the willing volunteers, without which most of the various projects, including fund raising activities, could not have been accomplished.**

All Society members have been providing financial support by their sustained membership and with some contributions to our endowment fund. Some of our members have been revisiting the museum with friends and relatives. These and other visitors add to our coffers through their contributions and gift shop purchases, thereby providing added support to the Museum's operation and growth.

Many of our visitors have been very complimentary and recognize the Museum's cultural value as a source of military history information and interpretation through the use of exhibits. Veterans in particular show an appreciation for the Society's efforts in the preservation and display of military artifacts that hold significance in their memory.

The Museum still has room for continued expansion and refinement.

We are also in the process of developing an Oral History File based on the experiences of Veterans and others with related stories to tell. **Our membership has the potential of providing added support in these efforts:**

- ✍ by making themselves available for election to the Board of Directors;
- ✍ by providing additional financial support and/or
- ✍ by participating in the various tasks in the volunteer role.

We encourage all members and potential members to visit the Museum with the added intent of finding a more involved niche for themselves. They may find they've been missing something. *-Stan Herzinger*

## UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The next Membership Meeting of the Idaho Military Historical Society will be **23 October 2001, at 7:00 pm**, at the Idaho Military History Museum.

**The Election** - At this meeting, elections will be held for four members of the Board of Directors to serve a three-year term. Currently we only have two members seeking reelection. They are:

**Ken Swanson.** Ken has been active in the IMHS since 1993 and is in fact a

Charter Life member. He has served as both President and Vice President. His knowledge and expertise in museum administration and procedures has been invaluable! He is seeking reelection to the Board.

**Gayle Alvarez.** Gayle has been active in the IMHS since 1993 and is a Charter Member. She is currently serving as the IMHS Secretary, webmaster and newsletter editor. She is seeking reelection to the Board.

The Board currently has two additional vacancies due to recent unforeseen events. The nomination process will be open and nominations will be accepted at the meeting. The only requirement is that the nominator and the nominee be a member in good standing.

Members who have expressed an interested in running for the Board are **Bob Auth, Dawana Edwards, and Fran King.**

*If you are interested in helping lead a growing, dynamic organization and taking an active roll in directly supporting the preservation of Idaho Military History for future generations, then we would like to hear from you.*

Please mark your calendars and join us on **23 October 2001.**

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**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

As I mentioned in the last issue, there are very few "dull" moments at the Museum! The WWII half track is now a reality, parked in a prominent spot in the center of the display hall. It has been beautifully restored (over a ten year period) to its original condition.

Our July picnic at the outdoor pavilion brought together about 50 members and friends. The Oral History Training session brought together 13 of our members for orientation on how to conduct oral interviews. If any of you know someone with an interesting story about their military experiences, ask them if they will share it with us.

During August, Dennis Hain completed work on our security system and a number of us learned how not to arm or disarm the system! Fortunately, the Security Police have been very understanding.

September 8th & 9th, our cheery group of pancake flippers helped raise money for our jeep restoration project. This time we were twice as successful as last time in that we netted about \$800. On Sunday, we also had the raffle drawing for the bomber jacket. Congratulations to Miles Soppe of Boise!

In the near future we will have some new artifacts on exhibit, thanks to the recent acquisition of two display cases. One will allow us to enhance our "Idaho Volunteer Infantry in the Spanish American War" exhibit; the other will house a Viet Nam exhibit.

We also have some new items in the gift shop. Thanks to Bob Auth, we have four different photo lithographs of aviation art; the PT-22, The Stearman Duster, B-17's over Mt. Etna (Italy), and Lt Duane Beeson's P-51B. Also, we have just received a shipment of new polo shirts in this years hot fall colors with your favorite IMHS logo.

We recently received 2 Jeeps from Elmore County. We are in the process of restoring one of them and have reached the point where it needs to be sanded prior to its being painted. **We need sanders!** If you can help, please stop by.

In fact, if you have any free time and enjoy a cup of coffee now and then, becoming a Museum volunteer may be just the thing for you.

-Bob Benbough

**LIBRARIANS  
CORNER**

"Ghost Soldiers" is a must read for any World War II history buff! Hampton Sides writes of the daring rescue of a group of starving American P.O.W.'s. These last survivors of the Bataan Death March had only days left before the retreating Japanese army would be ordered to kill any survivors.

A group of U.S. Army Rangers were tasked to rescue these "Ghost Soldiers" as they called themselves, those remaining alive in Camp Cabanatuan. This very well written account of a courageous raid gives the reader a moment-by-moment view of the characters in command, the attitudes of the field soldier, and the desperate conditions which our soldiers endured, as P.O.W.'s.

You may shed tears, as I did, for these many heroes as they move through this adventure. The author recorded scores of personal histories of survivors, of reference books and *eight pages* of acknowledgements. - Kay Benbough

**NEW MEMBERS****Special Welcome to:**

- ★ Barbara J. Elston
- ★ Idaho Women Veterans Organization
- ★ Francis King
- ★ Terry L. Losh
- ★ Mervin G. McConnel
- ★ Charles von Tagen

**IN MEMORIAM**

It is with regret that we convey the passing of William 'Bill' Martin. Bill joined the IMHS in 1994 and became a valuable member, volunteer, and friend. Bill spent many hours helping in the library and restoring many pieces of ordnance. His warm smile, gentle spirit and enthusiasm for our program will be missed by all. Our deepest sympathies to the Martin family.

We also extend our deepest sympathy to Ron Galloway in the recent passing of his wife Janet. ❖

**VOLUNTEER OF THE  
QUARTER****Please meet Max Moorehouse**

Max was born in Greely, Colorado and at the age of 7 moved to Idaho. (*Surely that makes him an Idaho 'native'.*) He graduated from Nampa High School in 1949 and enlisted in the Idaho Air National Guard shortly thereafter.

Max went on active duty in 1951 and had assignments in radio repair work at several bases across the country. He and his wife Betty were married in Valdosta, Georgia in 1952 and that started a family of two children, three grandchildren and three *great-grandchildren*.

After being discharged later in 1952, Max and Betty returned to Idaho in 1957 and Max went to work full time with the Idaho Air Guard in the radio shop where he later became the shop chief. Max retired at the rank of Senior Master Sergeant in 1984 and turned his attention to his hobbies of hunting, fishing, boating, golfing, traveling and VOLUNTEERING.

For the last two years Max has devoted many hours to the Museum, refinishing furniture and display cabinets, and helping on the P-51 project. If you'd like to see a sample of Max's expertise, come to the Museum library and look at the beautifully restored oak chairs.

He also does a great job handling the grill during fundraising breakfasts! *We truly appreciate Max and all that he has done to help us.* ❖

**THE BATTLE OF  
WHITE BIRD CAÑON  
(PART I)**

The first meeting between the Nez Perce and the white man took place in September 1805 when Lewis and Clark led a small group across the Bitterroots into Nez Perce country. "The Nez Perce received them graciously, gave them supplies, and told them about the river route to the Pacific. Soon fur trappers and traders, both British and American, followed in their wake.

In the 1840s settlers began to make their way westward along the Oregon Trail, and in 1846 the Nez Perce found themselves part of the United States when the U.S. and Great Britain divided the Oregon Country along the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. By this time, the Nez Perce had come under the influence of Christian missionaries, who believed that the Nez Perce should abandon their traditional ways and adopt the white man's religion and culture."<sup>1</sup>

In 1855 the Nez Perce reservation was created, consisting of most of the Nez Perce's traditional homeland. "The discovery of gold on the Nez Perce Reservation in 1860 raised calls from white people for a smaller reservation that would exclude the gold fields. So in 1863 a new reservation, containing only one-tenth of the land originally set aside, was proposed to the tribe. Lawyer, a pro-American, Christian leader, and his followers accepted the plan and signed the treaty. Other Nez Perce leaders rejected it, giving rise to the 'treaty' and 'non-treaty' designations of the respective factions.

Four years later the U.S. Government launched a campaign to move all the Nez Perce onto the new, smaller reservation. The Nez Perce leaders who had not signed the treaty and who lived off the new reservation ignored the orders. Foremost among them was Old Joseph, who led a band that lived in Oregon's Wallowa Valley. Young Joseph, who succeeded his father as chief, hoped that a peaceful solution could be found, for he did not wish to

go to war or leave his home. In May 1877, the non-treaty Nez Perce were told that the U.S. Army would forcibly move them onto the reservation. So in early June, Joseph and his people crossed the Snake River into Idaho and camped near Tolo Lake while preparing to move onto the reservation by the June 14 deadline.

On the morning of June 13, 3 young men, angered at what was happening and seeking revenge for the murder by a white man of one of their fathers, rode out of camp. By midday June 14 they had killed 4 settlers. Joined by 17 others, the group killed 14 or 15 whites in the next 2 days. Knowing that Gen. Oliver O. Howard would retaliate, the Indians headed for White Bird Canyon."<sup>1</sup>

General Howard made the decision to "send immediate relief to Mount Idaho; he had to stop the killings and insure the safety of those living in the vicinity.



**Map showing location of White Bird Battle<sup>2</sup>**

He had only two companies of cavalry available at Fort Lapwai for duty, but they would have to suffice. He hoped the small contingent might also serve another purpose - that of containment. He wanted to keep the Indians occupied while he marshalled troops to deliver a crushing blow. His orders would start two more companies of cavalry marching from Wallowa and a detachment of infantry steaming up the river from Walla Walla. Additional troops and supplies would be forthcoming from more distant posts under his command. It would take time to assemble the strength he needed, and time was precious, but above all

Howard did not intend to 'feed the enemy with dribbles."<sup>3</sup>

The relief force consisted of Company F and Company H of the First Cavalry; Company F consisted of 49 enlisted men with cooked rations that would last 3 days; Company H consisted of 54 men with rations good for 5 days. Each soldier carried forty rounds of ammunition. Captain Perry and 1st Lt Theller commanded Co F., Captain Trimble and 1st Lt. Parnell, commanded Co H. CPT Perry led the command, accompanied by a number of friendly Nez Perce.

When everything was ready, CPT Perry turned to Gen Howard.

"Good-by, general!"

"Good-by, colonel. You must not get whipped."

"There is no danger of that, sir."<sup>3</sup>

LT Parnell recorded the time of departure as "eight o'clock on the evening of June 15<sup>th</sup>."<sup>4</sup> He also recorded: "The Nez Percés were a brave and warlike type of the Indian, tall, strong and well formed, armed with weapons equal, if not superior, to our own, for theirs were Winchesters, sixteen shooters; ours were the Springfield, single-shot, breech-loading carbines. They had a large herd of good, strong ponies, giving them almost unlimited relays for their remounts, either for pursuit or retreat."<sup>4</sup>

The roads were muddy and especially bad in sheltered places. Terrain features such as heavy timber and deep ravines compounded the problem and combined with the blackness of the night, it was impossible to proceed very rapidly. After a brief stop around 10:00 am for a hurried breakfast, they reached Grangeville about sunset. The leader of the citizen volunteers, Arthur Chapman, persuaded Perry "that unless the troops pursued the Indians quickly and caught them before another day had passed, it might be too late."<sup>3</sup> Perry summoned his officers; they concurred, the attempt should be made.

"'Boots and Saddles' came at 9 o'clock, and a half-hour later the column was ready to move out...Perry had asked



Chapman to augment his force with as many volunteers as he could muster and to provide him with a guide. Chapman promised twenty-five or thirty men but later showed up with eleven, including himself."<sup>3</sup>

Somewhere between midnight and 1:00 am, the command reached the head of White Bird Cañon. Perry gave the word to dismount and keep awake. "He also issued an order prohibiting fires and smoking. The men were starting on their second night without sleep and many of them dozed off."<sup>3</sup>

Sgt McCarthy {1st Sgt Troop H} made continual rounds to rouse the sleeping. He also noted in his journal that the horses were also tired and many lay down next to their masters. "Forgetting himself, one of the men struck a match to light his pipe."<sup>3</sup> McCarthy's journal recorded that "it did not come from any of our people for there are imperative orders about lighting matches."<sup>5</sup> Almost immediately, a coyote howl was heard. Several individuals noted the sound 'was not quite natural'<sup>5</sup> and it was assumed that the sound came from an Indian signaling their approach.

When dawn broke at around 4:00 am Sunday morning, June 17<sup>th</sup>, Perry gave the order to mount. While moving toward the cañon proper, he set up an advance guard with scouts. When they neared the Indian Camp, an Indian peace party approached the command but "without a moment's hesitation Chapman opened fire."<sup>3</sup> Chapman fired twice, the Indians retreated and Trumpeter Jones began to blow the call to battle which would bring the main force forward. Before Jones could finish, a bullet jarred him from the saddle.

Many Indians were on foot and some of the troops felt at a disadvantage and dismounted. The volunteers moved forward but when the Indians returned fire, many "turned tail and fled."<sup>3</sup> Turning to Trumpeter Daly to give the order to charge, Perry learned the man had lost his trumpet. Perry could see the Nez Perce advancing below him.

Sizing up the situation, he perceived that the ridge he held was the most defensible position in the vicinity and he would make his stand on the ridge. The Indians began to move around Co H's flank and Trimble detailed McCarthy and six men to hold a rocky point that commanded the ravine and the west half of the ridge.

"Perry was desperately in need of means of projecting his commands."<sup>3</sup> Battle noise, dust & smoke made communication nearly impossible. Perry was quoted as saying, "a cavalry command on a battlefield without a trumpet is like a ship at sea without a helm."<sup>3</sup> Soon 2 volunteers were wounded and at the same time, "the



**This photo, taken in 1916, shows White Bird's rugged terrain.<sup>6</sup>**

regulars on the left of the line began to move back in response to the telling fire delivered by the warriors on the point. Seeing the soldiers withdrawing, the volunteers hastily galloped to the rear...Perry was too far away to order a charge to retake the hill."<sup>3</sup>

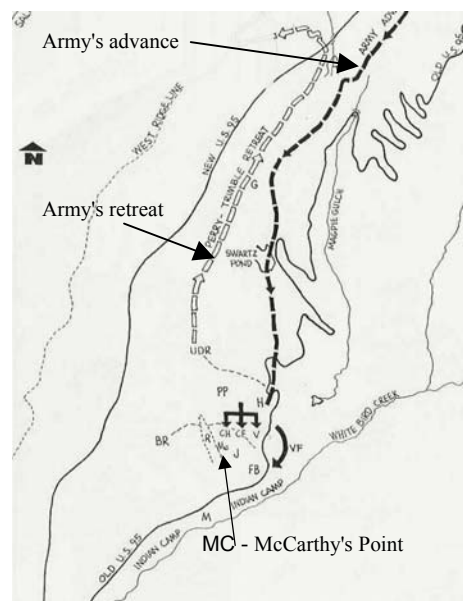
"He ordered the word passed from man to man to move slowly to the right and rear...A few of the men were having difficulty managing their horses, which were bucking and kicking in cadence with each volley."<sup>3</sup> To further complicate things, the last trumpet had also been lost.

"After the volunteers fled from the knoll, some of the warriors moved round the end of the line and fired into the company from a position in the rear...suddenly the skirmishers on the left saw the right of the line begin to pull back and move up the ridge to the west to join Co. H. Word had not yet

reached them of the tactics being employed by Perry, and they interpreted the movement as a signal for a full-scale retreat."<sup>3</sup>

"Scurrying down the banks of the hollow, terror-stricken soldiers swung into the saddle and galloped to the rear - some of them leaving their weapons behind in their haste." As they fled, "the men on the right panicked and in a short time most of the company joined in the unceremonious retreat."<sup>3</sup>

To further compound the situation, "the Indians had driven a large herd of loose ponies through our line, and scattered in among the ponies were some sixty or seventy warriors who immediately attacked us in the rear, demoralizing the troop, many of whom were recruits,...it became utterly impossible to control them."<sup>4</sup>



**White Bird Battleground<sup>3</sup>**

- BR Battle Ridge (Dotted Line)
- CF Company F
- CH Company H
- FB Fire Body shot Trumpeter Jones
- J Jones killed
- Mc McCarthy's point
- PP Peace Party fired upon
- R Ravine dividing battle ridge
- UDR Upper diagonal
- V Volunteers
- VF Volunteers' foray (heavy arrow)

Meanwhile, McCarthy reached the point. "An exchange of shots followed,

apparently with little effect on either side. Presently he observed the right of the line begin to swing near him, and a few men of Company F reached the point and took a position on his left. A few minutes later he heard a voice summon him to the rear."<sup>3</sup> "Word was passed to us to mount and join the line for a charge, but before we all got back the order was countermanded and we again advanced to the bluffs, dismounted and opened fire wherever we could see Indians."<sup>5</sup>

(Trimble concluded that the best place to defend given the present circumstances was the bluff held by McCarthy and Perry concurred. When Trimble encountered McCarthy returning he ordered him back to the point.)

"The main body of troops, however, did not reach the bluff or apparently even come close to it. The men became scattered in the charge and the column disintegrated. For the second time, the cavalymen turned to the rear in hasty retreat."<sup>3</sup> McCarthy had succeeded in reaching the bluff but the Indians soon had them cut off. A call to retreat came a second time and McCarthy ordered a rapid withdrawal and they made a "quick run over the boulders through a hail of bullets."<sup>5</sup>

When he reached Parnell, "Parnell begging me to hold them said he would ride to the rear, overtake the fugitives and 'bring me help.' Here again, the most desperate part of the business fell to my share. For a few minutes I managed to hold them...I scolded, swore and abjured the men to deploy and make a stand if for no other reason than to breathe themselves...they are paralyzed with fear or exhausted with fatigue or loss of blood and are killed unresistingly before our eyes...no help appeared...*Up to this time I didn't begin to realize that there was a disaster.*

My horse was wounded. It was time to get me back before he gave out. Harry's gait does not improve so I dismount, turn him loose and take it afoot and get over the ground quite

lively, for I am now thoroughly scared. A half mile dismounted and I am almost exhausted. I overtake a man of my Company (Fowler) took me on behind."<sup>5</sup>

"After a bullet wounded Fowler's horse, McCarthy rode double with Cpl. Michael Curran."<sup>3</sup> [Note, McCarthy's Journal records the loss of his two horses but makes no mention of riding double with Curran] "a friendly Indian caught a loose horse but I was so exhausted that they had to help me on...in a few minutes we overtook a party of our own men with Colonel Parnell. I reported the result of my attempt."<sup>5</sup> Parnell responded: "I could not help you Sergeant you see how everything is going."<sup>5</sup> "The Indians...are getting bolder and are closing in around us."

"I am again unfortunately the last file we have been riding in a column of files, a shot from the Indians following up the road disables my 2<sup>nd</sup> horse and he stops in the road. I dismount and try to run up the road but I am so exhausted from previous effort that when I try to run up the very steep incline I fall on my face several times.

The Indians on the road see my situation and when within almost fifty yards give me a volley. The bullets striking the bank about the height of my knees. I cannot go any further, so turning partly towards them I staggered to the side of the road my foot slipped and I fell all abroad by the side of the road. My fall must have deceived the Indians into the idea that they had killed me in the last volley for ...the whole party passed me at a gallop in the pursuit and so as far as I am concerned the battle of White Bird was over."<sup>5</sup> (End of Part I)



White Bird Today<sup>2</sup>

**Editors Note:** The White Bird battlefield is 15 miles south of Grangeville and approximately .5 miles from the town of White Bird Idaho. The Visitors Center in Spalding has a pamphlet detailing a self-guided tour of the White Bird Battlefield.

**IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY**



Michael McCarthy<sup>3</sup>

**Rank and organization:** First Sergeant Troop H, 1<sup>st</sup> US Cavalry

**Date and Place of Birth:** St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, 19 April 1845.

**Entered Service at:** New York, NY.

**Battle or Place of Action:** White Bird Canyon, Idaho.

**Date of Issue:** 20 November 1897.

**Citation:** Was detailed with six men to hold a commanding position and held it with great gallantry until the troops fell back. He then fought his way through the Indians, rejoined a portion of his command, and continued the fight in retreat. He had two horses shot from under him and was captured, but escaped and reported for duty after three days' hiding and wandering in the mountains. End of Citation 10

"Michael McCarthy was the first sergeant of Company H. Born in St. John's, Newfoundland, he was thirty-two years old. He had apparently enlisted in the Army shortly after the close of the Civil War." [According to the Washington National Guard, he enlisted in the First Cavalry on 3

*November 1865*<sup>9</sup>]. He had seen duty on the Mexican border and had fought in the Modoc War, where he had participated in the capture of Captain Jack. Before entering the Army, McCarthy had been a printer. He was five feet seven inches in height. He had reddish brown hair, brown eyes, and a ruddy complexion."<sup>3</sup>

We also know that for a time he went by the name of Augustus Howard.<sup>7</sup> McCarthy kept a detailed journal. Excerpts from it comprise part of his story and that of White Bird Cañon.

**June 17<sup>th</sup>** - "After falling I lay still a few minutes as much to rest myself as fear, for of attracting attention for my legs from the knees downward were so tired that even when I did move I had to trail them after me and draw myself along on my hands."

He slowly crawled into a small creek and lay there for "about fifteen minutes allowing the water to flow over my legs and employing the time planning an escape. It was rather a difficult thing to attempt to leave the creek for the hills were steep and bare upon both sides and there was no doubt of there being Indians about." "Not daring to leave the creek I retraced by steps, if crawling back again could be called retracing my steps. I succeeded in getting a short distance above where I had fallen, crawling over a bare spot and into a clump of rosebushes when I hear the patter of a pony's hoofs on the road above me. Two warriors returning from the pursuit...It didn't seem possible that they could avoid seeing me, but they did not."

"A squaw also mounted came galloping down the road, another following. The first calling the young warriors back and using the Chinook she told them there was a soldier in the bushes, and she pointed to where I fell about 75 or one hundred yards below. She described me quite accurately not even forgetting my stripes and chevrons. She had evidently seen me when I fell in, and was watching my hiding place,

but I had crawled away from the spot she watched it seems unobserved by her. I had also already taken off my coat and hat fearing the color would betray me and believing that my gray shirt would harmonize more with the color of the rocks."

"I crouched down closer in the channel and managed to conceal the lower part of my body, my head in the thickest part of the brush and my right hand resting on a rock with pistol cocked, determined to have a shot if discovered." He goes on to say that the two warriors fired shots into the bushes where he had fallen and then rode off. The two squaws however continued searching now joined by an old man. They passed so close to him that he recorded, "I could look into their faces ...and I could if I so wished grasp the muzzle of the old smoothbore musket that the old reprobate carried."

He lay motionless, holding his breath. He could see the whites of their eyes but they did not see him. Eventually they left but one of the squaws returned to continue the search. He had now been in the creek close to an hour. He decided to "take up the steep hill behind me and if necessary fight for my life." Fearing that his long heavy boots would impede his movements, he took them off and slowly, quietly, cautiously, crept away. He records that with all the dust, excitement, and darkness, he had not taken much notice to the direction of travel while heading to White Bird. Now, his only guide was Mount Idaho. "Over the stone and shingle on which I was traveling my pace was dreadfully slow by reason of my barefeet, and once I came near treading on a rattlesnake, halting I took off my drawers tore the legs apart and binding a leg around each foot, I drew the now footless stockings over them to keep them in place. This was better, but the stones still hurt. About midnight I reached Rocky Canon, near the Camp the Indians left when they broke out."

He also records that exhaustion and lack of food compounded his situation.

The first record he made of obtaining food was "about noon I commenced to climb to the top. I found some wild berries on my way up. It took me nearly three hours to get to the top, I had to rest every few yards and also to make considerable detours to take advantage of cover, for I was yet only a few miles from the woods I left the day before."

By now the wrappings on his feet were worn through and he was "a mass of bruises from tumbling and rolling, and the other modes of progression I had to adopt in leaving White Bird and crossing Rocky Canon, singing snatches of all the son/g/s I could remember to keep up my courage." Later that day he made the disconcerting realization that he was not traveling towards Mount Idaho but was in fact traveling towards Craigs Mountain. He debated whether to continue on to Cottonwood where he knew of a ranch or to head back to Grangeville and try and locate the rest of his unit. He knew of another ranch which he concluded he had passed the night before, which was directly behind him and much closer.

"About 3'oclock in the morning I reached the ranch, crawling into a field of young wheat I lay down and commenced eating it tops and all. The ears were just beginning to form. This feast of green wheat was very grateful to my empty stomach and I felt better for it. Some wheat straw was stacked in the field. Into this I crawled, burying myself in the straw and I slept about two hours."

Upon awakening, he made his way into the ranch house and found it abandoned with signs that its occupants had left in a great hurry. He found a pair of miners' rubber boots and an old pair of stockings which he put on. He also found about a pound of baked mutton which he also commandeered. Fearing that there may still be Indians in the area, he left the house and using what camouflage nature provided such as



bushes, fences and wheat fields, made his way towards Grangeville.

When he was approximately 5 miles from Grangeville, he noticed "suspicious movements among some cattle" and he took cover in a field. After about a half-hour, he moved towards a small rise. He again heard the sound of people shouting and again took cover, this time in a dry ditch where he was able to hide by covering himself with straw. Shortly thereafter he heard the sound of wagon wheels and knew the sounds he had heard were from white people.

"I came out of my entrenchment and ran towards them, shouting and waving my pocket handkerchief. A mounted man came to meet me and shook hands. When I told him I was the First Sergeant of Co. H he was surprised and said 'all the men said you were killed, several said they saw the Indians killing you,' and more to that effect. I said 'I am not dead just yet, but I am terribly hungry.' He made me mount his horse and we went towards Grangeville."

"My advent was quite a sensation. I had to do considerable shaking hands and answer innumerable questions. Everybody was wonderfully surprised, so certain appeared my death, and I was examined all over for wounds, but nothing worse than a scratched face, and sore feet was discernible. Somebody gave me some canned oysters, I ate them and I would be ashamed to record the amount of meat and bread, but it was enormous, and I turned into Sergeant Baird's bed and went to sleep. Orders were given that I was not to be disturbed and I slept until afternoon, and woke almost as well as ever. My constitution had [endured] the great strain upon it wonderfully well."<sup>5</sup> His journal records that on June 20<sup>th</sup>, he went to Mount Idaho and was given a "pair of boots, a hat and a pair of gloves" by the storekeeper Mr. Rudolph, as a gift. [The book *Forlorn Hope* records that the storekeeper had second thoughts about his gift and after the war had ended, Rudolph presented McCarthy with a bill for the items."<sup>3</sup>]

After his close call at White Bird, McCarthy resumed his military career and recorded the June 30<sup>th</sup> arrival of McConville and his Lewiston Vols. as well as details about the battle of Clearwater but that is a story for a future newsletter.

After White Bird, "Michael McCarthy became the Quartermaster Sergeant of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry on June 10, 1878. He completed his military service in the Regular Army on May 14, 1879."<sup>3</sup>



**Michael McCarthy<sup>8</sup>**

"Following the Nez Perce war he did not reenlist and was discharged at Walla Walla

where he settled. He served with Capt. Painter's Militia company in the Bannock campaign and was very prominent in the early organization of the Washington Territorial Militia in the Walla Walla area. He was elected First Lieut. Of Company A, Walla Walla Artillery, Washington Territorial Militia on 18 May 1881 and to Captain in the same company on 1 Aug. 1881.

In 1884 the designation of the Company was changed to Company A, Washington National Guard and he was re-elected Captain on 20 May 1884. On March 28, 1885 he was appointed Assistant Adjutant General with the rank of Captain and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on March 5, 1887, continuing his assignment as Assistant Adjutant General.

In a reorganization in 1888 he resigned to accept an appointment as Captain of Company A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Washington National Guard, serving continuously until he was again appointed Lieut. Col. of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment on 27 April 1891. On 22 December 1897 he was appointed Colonel and Quartermaster General of the Washington National Guard in which position he served until he was reappointed in the same grade to serve

as Chief of Engineers, NGW. He retired on 16 October 1905."<sup>9</sup>

The army closed Fort Lapwai in 1885 but continued funding for the cemetery. In 1890 the army ordered the disinterment of those killed at White Bird and they were reinterred at Walla Walla Washington. When McCarthy learned of this, he launched a fundraising campaign to build a monument to them in the Walla Walla Cemetery. When the funds fell short of the needed amount, McCarthy pitched in the remainder. *Forlorn Hope* recorded that it is made of Vermont marble and stands 15 feet high.<sup>3</sup>

On November 20, 1897, McCarthy received the Medal of Honor for his actions at White Bird.<sup>10</sup> History has recorded very clearly that the battle at White Bird occurred on June 17, 1877 yet his citation reads **Date of Action:** June 1876-January 1877. His journal does not records his being captured at White Bird as his citation reads; it does however record his narrow escape.

The book *Deeds of Valor* gives a very heroic detailed account of McCarthy's time on the bluff and contains the following quote: "He seemed to know of no danger and fought like a lion."<sup>8</sup> McCarthy referred to it as a "glowing account."<sup>3</sup>

Col McCarthy died on January 15, 1914 and is buried at the Mountain View Cemetery in Walla Walla, Washington in Block P, Lot 18, Grave 5.<sup>11</sup>

**Editors Note:** A special thank you to Mr. Robert Applegate of the National Park Service in Spalding Idaho and to Mr. David Olling of the Washington National Guard State Historical Society for their assistance with this story.

**A HERO'S WELCOME**

Major Ed W. Freeman, the nations most recent Medal of Honor Recipient **and an Idahoan**, returned home to a hero's welcome at the Boise Air Terminal.

In his Dress Blues with the medal proudly around his neck, Major Freeman stepped off the plane to a throng of smiling, cheering friends, family and well wishers, including IMHS representatives.

Although Mr. Freeman's medal is accredited to Mississippi, he has lived in Idaho for over 30 years, was attached to the Idaho National Guard for a time, and was living in Idaho when he was awarded the Medal. Major Freeman has agreed to share his story with us in a future edition. ❖


*Produced By:* Idaho Military Historical Society  
*Editor & Production:* Gayle Alvarez  
Comments or article suggestions are welcome, contact us at 422-4841 or visit our web site at: <http://inghro.state.id.us/museum/>


(A complete footnote listing will be on our webpage and at the Museum)

- 1 National Park Service Brochure, Nez Perce National Historical Park Idaho
- 2 National Park Service Web page ([www.nps.gov/nepe/site13.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nepe/site13.htm)) Photos courtesy of National Park Service, Nez Perce National Historic Park.
- 3 McDermott, John D., Forlorn Hope, The Battle of White Bird Canyon and the Beginning of the Nez Perce War, Idaho State Historical Society, Caxton Printers, 1978
- 4 Parnell, W.R., The Battle of White Bird Canon, excerpt in Brady, Cyrus Townsend, Northwestern Fights and Fighters, Corner House Publishers, Williamstown, Massachusetts 01267, 1974
- 5 McCarthy Journal, June 15-17. (Extract of Journal courtesy of National Park Service, Spalding, Idaho)
- 6 Idaho Transportation Dept Web page ([www.state.id.us/itd/hmg/WhitebrdTN.jpg](http://www.state.id.us/itd/hmg/WhitebrdTN.jpg))
- 7 Ray Collins of Lang, Collins, White, Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1994, personal communication
- 8 Beyer, Walter F. & Keydel, Oscar F., Deeds of Valor, Vol II, The Perrien-Keydel Co. 1902, pg 239-244
- 9 The Official History of the Washington National Guard, Vol 4, pg 310-311
- 10 Lang, Collins, White, Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1994, Vol I, 1995, pg 287-288
- 11 Walla Walla Cemetery

**JUST IN CASE**

Have you sent in your renewal for 2001? Don't forget, *donations are tax deductible*. **If you aren't sure what your renewal date is, check the address label on your newsletter**, it lists the month and year your renewal is due. **Does your employer (or previous employer as the case may be) match charitable contributions?** Some do, it's worth asking them about it!

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