

Pass In REVIEW

“Shedding Light on Idaho’s Military History”



The official newsletter
of the Idaho Military
Historical Society and
Museum | Spring 2017

Who was ‘A.H. Capwell’?

By Gayle Alvarez
Idaho Military Division

There is a wall in the Adjutant General building on Gowen Field that tells the history of the men who have served as Idaho’s Adjutants General. Several of them are pictured but the further back one goes in time, the less information is available. Some have only photographs, some have only initials and the years they held the position.

One such individual was A.H. Capwell. There was a photograph of him but nothing else was known, not even his name. This is no longer the case.

Thanks to an obituary published in the Des Moines (Iowa) Register in 1915, we know that he is Albert Hiram Capwell and he was born in Wisconsin in 1867 but moved to West Union, Iowa in time for the 1870 Census. He was in Iowa for “the first twenty years of his life.”

Exactly when he came to Idaho is not currently known but he was “the Adjutant General of the state militia of Idaho during the Coeur d’ Alene riots, and two years later effected the compromise among the miners, employers, and state and federal governments.”

Capwell served as Idaho’s Adjutant General from 1894 to 1897. On 3 February 1897 he married Eva M. Whitney while in Idaho.



A portrait of Albert Hiram Capwell, Idaho’s Adjutant General from 1894 to 1897, is displayed in the Adjutant General building on Gowen Field.

“Subsequently he was deputy state treasurer and state auditor of Idaho and was a government auditor in the Philippines when his death occurred in a Manila hospital on June 10, 1915.”

“Mr. Capwell accompanied President McKinley and staff on an investigation tour of irrigation projects, and has been given credit with initiating the action which resulted in obtaining federal aid for western irrigation.”

Capwell’s ashes were returned to his home state of Iowa and buried in the West Union cemetery.

News Briefs



More than 300 people visited the museum during this year’s Spring Break!



The Sherman tank currently in the Bldg. 600 static display will soon move to the museum. A piece of equipment in the museum’s static display will take its place.



Damage to the museum’s ceiling caused by snow and ice earlier this year has been repaired. It looks better than new!

Take time to tour Idaho's Military History Museum

Covering a broad spectrum of military history, via photos and artifacts, the Idaho Military Museum can show visitors Gowen Field as it was during World War II, as well the roles Idaho veterans have played in the Philippine Insurrection and Operation(s) Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom.

Military aircraft, armored vehicles, weapons, and uniforms arms are on display, along with many flags from Idaho units, some of which have felt the breezes of distant lands and date back to the early part of the 20th century.

There are also exhibits from Idaho's Army and Air National Guard units, Mountain Home Air Force Base, the United States Marine Corps and U.S. Navy. Books on Idaho's military history, scale models of aircraft and vehicles, postcards and photos are available for sale.

Our volunteer staff will be happy to help you with any questions that you might have about the displays and our museum.

Admission is free (donations are welcomed). The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday (except Christmas and New Year's day) from noon to 4 p.m. You should allow at least one hour for your visit.

How To Get to the museum

The Idaho Military Museum is located on Gowen Field, but can be accessed by the private entrance on Harvard Street. As you come down Orchard or Gowen Road, follow the brown signs to the museum. Parking for cars or buses is in the front of the museum.

You're invited to attend museum board meetings

The museum's Board of Directors extends an ongoing, open invitation to anyone interested to attend and participate in monthly museum board meetings. The meetings are usually held the last Wednesday of the month at the Museum starting at 18:30 and last for about 60 minutes.

We want and value the involvement and help of our fellow museum supporters. We welcome both questions and suggestions. We don't claim to have all the answers, so we can always use the input,

ideas and enthusiasm of our board members and supporters.

Anyone interested in serving as a member of our board is encouraged to attend and learn how they might help to make the museum better and better.

If you are interested in attending, call Jeff Packer at 208-272-4841.



Please Like Us On Facebook!

facebook.com/Idaho
MilitaryHistoryMuseum



Norden bombsight on display

Currently on display in the Idaho Military Museum is the famous Norden bombsight, one of the most closely guarded military secrets of World War II. It was so important to the Allied war effort that airmen who used it were to guard its secrecy with their lives.

Bomardiers training on Gowen Field learned to use the complex assemblage of more than 2,000 cams, gears, mirrors, lenses, and other components to help Allied bombers accurately place a bomb on a target from four miles up. It could "put a bomb in a pickle barrel from 20,000 feet."

The bombsight was used during World War II, the Korean War, and for photoreconnaissance missions during the Cold War.

PASS IN REVIEW

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Your comments or article suggestions are welcomed. Call the museum at 208-272-4841 during our scheduled hours or visit us on line at museum.mil.idaho.gov.

Idaho Volunteers used the Model 1889 rifle

By Capt. Robert Taylor
State Command Historian

When soldiers of the First Idaho Infantry Regiment of United States Volunteers marched off to participate in the Spanish-American War in 1898, they likely carried Springfield Model 1889 rifles with them. Unfortunately, the single-shot, black powder gun was already outdated by then.

The Army developed the gun after the Civil War in order to fulfill the need for a breech-loading rifle. Funds were low at the end of the war, but there was no shortage of muzzle-loading weapons at the time. So the Army converted more than 30,000 rifles to "trapdoor" weapons. The trapdoor allowed muzzle-loading weapons to be opened at the top of the breech to load a cartridge.

The Army continued to use the

converted weapons until 1868, when the U.S. Rifle Model 1868 was developed with a "trapdoor" manufactured into it. The rifle went through a series of modifications over the next 30 years and was the weapon used by most National Guard units in 1898.

By the time the Spanish-American War began, the Army and National Guard units had a large stockpile of U.S. Rifle Model 1889s, so those units deployed with them.

However, smokeless powder weapons were becoming available by that time that offered two advantages over the Springfield Model 1889 rifle.

The black powder cartridge left a cloud of black smoke, which gave away the shooter's position and created a target for the enemy.

Soldiers also had to wait until

the smoke cleared to fire another round.

In addition, the weapon was a single-shot weapon. Newer magazine-feed weapons allowed soldiers to fire more rounds faster in battle.

Late into their tour in the Philippines, the First Idaho Infantry received a dozen U.S. Rifle, Krag-Jorgensen Model 1896 per company for scout use. The rifle featured a five-round magazine and smokeless powder.

In December 1898, the men were engaged in two battles with Filipino soldiers who were unhappy with the continued U.S. presence. Twenty-three men from Idaho died in the conflict.

The First Idaho remained in the Philippines to help stabilize the area until February 1899.

Shopping on Amazon.com will help support the IMHS and museum

The Idaho Military History Society is now registered with Amazon Smile. That means we can help the museum grow just by shopping at Amazon. It really is that simple!

The next time you shop on line with Amazon, access Amazon via <https://smile.amazon.com/> and select the Idaho Military Historical Society as your charity. That way the Society and Museum will receive a commission on all purchases, large or small, that you, your family and friends make from the online retailer (no names or purchase information is exchanged in the process).

To make sure the IMHS receives credit for your next Amazon purchase go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/82-0463824>

IMHS MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Is it time to renew your membership?

Annual renewal rates:

- General Membership: \$25
- Senior Membership (60 and older): \$15
- Associate Membership (Spouse): \$10
- Student Membership: \$10
- Lifetime Membership: \$375

(Lifetime Membership payment may be spread over a one-year period)

A renewal form is available on our webpage: <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov/Application.htm>.

The Idaho State Tax Commission offers a tax credit for contributions to Idaho's educational entities which include "An Idaho public or private nonprofit museum." The Idaho Military Historical Society is such an organization and donations to the Society qualify for this credit. Please remember the Museum as you plan your donations for the year.

Idaho soldier and sailor earned Medals of Honor

By Capt. Robert Taylor
State Command Historian

Every United States service medal is on display at the Idaho Military Museum, but only one has its own exhibit: the Medal of Honor.



The rest of the medals and awards share the same display case, but the Medal of Honor occupies its own case, which includes the stories of just a few of the Idahoans who have earned the nation's top military award.

Two of those men are Army Sgt. David Bleak and U.S. Navy Landsman Gurdon Barter. Their Medals of Honor are part of the museum's permanent collection.

Sgt. David Bleak was a combat medic in Korea from 1952-53. He was born in Idaho Falls and died in Arco. He is credited for ensuring that all of his fellow soldiers returned safely from a reconnaissance patrol.

The patrol was performing "recon" of a Chinese forward position when early into the mission it was hit by heavy fire. Several soldiers were injured and Bleak quickly provided aid.

The patrol was attacked again as it continued its mission, this time by Chinese soldiers hidden in a trench. Bleak jumped into the trench to tackle an enemy soldier and break his neck using only his hands. He then fatally crushed the windpipe of a second Chinese soldier. Bleak used his knife to kill a third enemy soldier before returning to his patrol to treat wounded members.

— See *Medals of Honor*, pg. 5



Heroic Past... Proud Future

Endowment Donations

In Memory Of
Major Anthony Stoppello

Ray Mathews

New Members

Lifetime:

LTC Douglas R. Smith
Major Kathryn M. roman

Senior Member:
Leland Bunch
Jonathon Wood

New Board members

Brian Elton

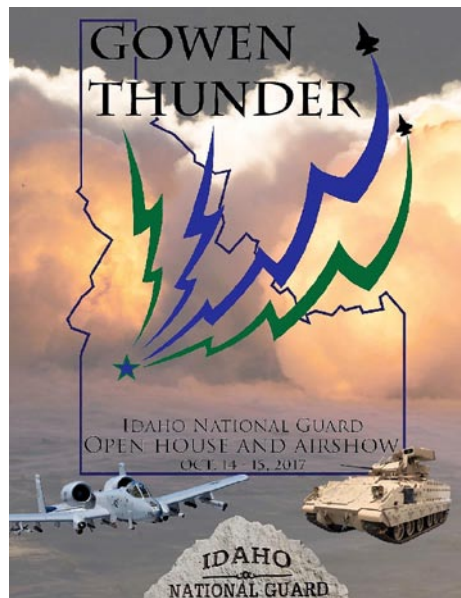
Please join us in welcoming Brian Elton to the Board. He comes to us from the Air National Guard with a degree in history. Welcome aboard Brian, we look forward to working with you!

Don't miss 'Gowen Thunder' Oct. 14 & 15

Plans are underway for "Gowen Thunder", a two day open house and air show at Gowen Field! The event will be held Saturday, Oct, 14 and Sunday, Oct. 15.

The world famous U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and Canadian Armed Forces Snowbirds air demonstration teams are just two of several performers that will be part of the program.

The Military History Museum plans to have a booth at the event. Please stop by to say hello!



The U.S. Air Force's Thunderbirds and Canada's Snowbirds will perform during Gowen Thunder Oct. 15 and 16.

Medals of Honor *from page 4*

As he was doing so, a Chinese hand grenade landed nearby. Bleak tackled another soldier to shield him from the blast. Neither was injured by the grenade's explosion.

The patrol continued its mission, capturing several prisoners of war in the process, and was ambushed again. Three soldiers were hit, including one that was wounded too critically to move.

Despite being hit in the leg attempting to run to his wounded battle buddies, Bleak provided first aid to the three soldiers and himself, then picked up the critically wounded man and carried him down a hill.

As he was doing so, he was confronted by two more Chinese soldiers. Bleak set the American soldier down, rushed the enemies and smashed their heads together with great force. He pushed them out of his way, picked his buddy back up and carried him to safety.

Bleak was one of eight medics and corpsmen awarded the Medal of Honor for service in Korea, and one of only two so honored non-posthumously. His family donated the medal to the Idaho Military Museum in 2007. His former company commander donated a military jacket like the one Bleak

would wear when he received his award from President Eisenhower.

Landsman Barter was awarded the medal for his actions on January 15, 1865 during the second battle of Fort Fisher in North Carolina. Barter, assigned to the Union's USS Minnesota, was part of the force sent ashore to attack the rebel-held Fort Fisher.

He advanced to bravely fight the enemy through the night, despite conditions that caused two-thirds of his force to retreat. Barter was one of nine men from the Minnesota's assault force to receive the Medal of Honor.

He was born in Minnesota and died in 1900 in Viola, Idaho, 12 miles north of Moscow, Idaho.

Each branch has its own Medal of Honor. The Navy's was established on December 21, 1861 and the Army's award was created July 12, 1862.

The MOH has been awarded to seven sets of brothers.

The MOH has been awarded to two father-son pairs: 1st Lt. Arthur MacArthur, Jr. and General Douglas MacArthur and Theodore Roosevelt and his son Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.

19 people have earned the Medal of Honor twice.

It's healthy to volunteer!

A study conducted at the University of Michigan Research Center and published in the March 1998 Issue of American Health found that volunteering, more than any other activity, dramatically increases life expectancy.

According to the center:

*Men who volunteered at least once a week over the course of the study lived two-and-one-half times longer than men who did not volunteer.

*Participants with heart problems who volunteered had reduced cholesterol levels and chest pains.

*The study also concluded that "volunteering is a way of connecting with people, and those with many social contacts tend to live longer than those who are more isolated regardless of race, income, and level of activity." - Volunteer-Match.org

Museum needs volunteers

The Idaho Military History Museum is looking for volunteers with the following skills:

- Museum Docents and Living History Volunteers
- Carpenters
- WWII Reenactors
- Oral History Development
- Fund Raising
- Library and Archival Operations
- Historians/Historical Researchers

Interested? Please email Gayle Alvarez at galvarez@imd.idaho.gov or call Jeff Packer at the museum at (208) 272-4841 during business hours.

Honor their WWI service

April 6 was the 100th anniversary of the United States entry into WWI, known then as the "Great War" or "War to end all wars."

Idaho guardsmen served in the 148th Field Artillery armed with French 155mm howitzers, participated in the Champagne-Marne Defensive, Aisne-Marne Offensive, St. Mihiel Offensive, Meuse-Argonne Offensive, and served in the Army of Occupation in Germany.

Make sure you visit us throughout the week and follow the U.S. Army Center of Military History on Facebook to learn more about the "Great War" and America's Doughboys.

WWII artwork by Boise artist now on display



Portraits and a poster created by the late John Collias, a well-known Boise artist, while stationed at Gowen Field during WWII, are now on display in the Idaho Military museum. After the war Collias returned to Boise, where he would become the artist behind the "Portrait of a Distinguished Citizen," a weekly feature that ran for 30 years in the Idaho Statesman. John passed away March 29 of this year. His obituary was published by the Idaho Statesman at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/idahostatesman/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=184776353>

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"Shedding light on Idaho's military history"



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