



PASS IN REVIEW

“Shedding Light On Idaho’s Military History”

3rd Quarter

September 2000

KOREAN CONFLICT 50th ANNIVERSARY

This year, 2000, marks the 50th Anniversary of the beginning of the Korean Conflict. 50th Anniversary ceremonies will be held throughout 2000-2003. The Department of Defense has even authorized a special webpage located at <http://korea50.army.mil> to promote the anniversary. What follows is the first in a series of timelines for the Korean Conflict.

1950



- June 25 North Korea invades South Korea with 135,000 men, initiating the Korean War.
- June 27 President Harry S. Truman deploys the 7th Fleet to waters off Taiwan to prevent the spread of the conflict in Korea to other Far East waters.
- June 27 First air victory of the war. A 68th All-Weather Squadron

F-82 shoots down a North Korean Yak fighter. Two more enemy planes are destroyed in this air battle.

- June 29 Fifth Air Force's 3rd Bombardment Group sends 18 B-26 Invader light bombers against Heijo Airfield near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang: 25 enemy aircraft are destroyed on the ground; one Yak fighter is shot down.
- July 1 First U.S. infantry unit arrives in Korea: 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. Along with Battery A of the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion, it comprises Task Force Smith.
- July 2 Off Chumunjin, on Korea's east coast, the USS Juneau helps destroy three of four attacking North Korean torpedo boats.
- July 5 Battle of Osan. First U.S. ground action of the war: Task Force Smith (406 infantrymen and 134 artillerymen) engages and delays advancing North Korean People's Army (NKPA) units.
- July 6 Fifty-seven Army nurses arrive in Pusan, Korea. They helped

establish a hospital for the wounded. Two days later, on July 8, twelve Army nurses moved forward with a mobile Army surgical hospital (MASH) to Taejon.

- Aug. 4 -Sept. 84,478 U.S. troops participate in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter, including the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.
- Sept. 15 Inchon Landing (Operation CHROMITE). U.S. and allied forces land U.S. Marines and U.S. Army troops at Inchon.
- Sept. 15-30 Inchon Operation and Liberation of Seoul. U.S. and allies recapture Seoul on Sept. 27 after a week of fighting
- Sept. 16-27 Pusan Perimeter breakout. Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) breaks out of the Pusan Perimeter. Four U.S. divisions (1st Cavalry Division, 2nd, 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions) participate.
- Oct 20 War's first airborne operation. Seventy-one C-119s and 40 C-47s of the Far East Air Force's (FEAF) Combat Cargo Command drop 2,860

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paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (RCT) at Sukch'on and Sunch'on north of Pyongyang. Only one trooper killed and 36 injured in jump. Paratroopers, in association with ground forces driving north, kill or capture about 6,000 North Koreans during this operation.

- Oct. 25 Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) launch their first phase offensive of the Korean War.
- Nov. 8 First all-jet combat in history. An F-80 Shooting Star of the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing shoots down a MiG-15 fighter near Sinuiju in a 30-second dogfight.



- Nov. 8-26 EAF B-29s and Navy aircraft attack Yalu River bridges in attempt to isolate the battlefield.
- Nov. 25 - Dec. 15 CF Counteroffensive in North Korea. Seven U.S. divisions participate (1st Marine Division, U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions).
- Nov. 27 -Battle of the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir. The encircled 1st Dec. 9Marine Division fights its way southward from the Chosin Reservoir to the port city of Hungnam.
- Dec. 24 Hungnam Operation is complete-the U.S. Navy evacuates 105,000 U.S. and Republic of Korea (ROK) forces.★

KOREAN SERVICE MEDAL NOW AVAILABLE



"U.S. veterans of the Korean War are now eligible to wear a medal initially offered to them more than 50 years ago, but never issued." An estimated 1.8 million veterans are eligible.

In a May 13, 2000, letter to Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, Republic of Korea Defense Minister Seong Tae Cho formally announced that his government would provide the Republic of Korea War Service Medal (ROKWSM) to eligible U.S. veterans of that conflict, or to their surviving next of kin. **The medal will be provided at no cost to veterans. The U.S. Air Force has been designated the lead agency to receive and distribute the medals.**

"On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War the ROK government decided to issue the ROKWSM to pay tribute to the Korean War veterans for their historic endeavors to preserve freedom of the ROK and the free world"-Cho. 50th Anniversary ceremonies will be held throughout 2000-2003; **medals may be applied for at any time during this period.**

The medal was originally offered by the ROK in 1951 to United Nations forces serving in Korea and adjacent waters. At the time U.S. law prohibited the U.S. military from wearing medals issued by foreign governments.

In 1998 the government of the Republic of Korea renewed its original offer and on Aug. 20, 1999, the Defense Department approved the acceptance and wear of the medal. Next of kin to eligible deceased veterans can also apply.

To wear this medal on U.S. military uniforms, U.S. military personnel must have:

§ served between the outbreak of hostilities, June 25, 1950, and the date the armistice was signed, July 27, 1953;

§ been on permanent assignment or on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days;

§ performed their duty within the territorial limits of Korea, in the waters immediately adjacent thereto or in aerial flight over Korea participating in actual combat operations or in support of combat operations.

To apply, veterans must provide a copy of their discharge paper, commonly known as a "DD-214," or a corrected version of that document, a "DD-215." National Guard members must provide their statement of service equivalent, "NGB Form 22."

Additional information on how to apply for or request the medal can be found by contacting the Air Force Personnel Center, Mon - Fri, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (CST) at (800) 558-1404, or the Awards and Decorations Section (210) 565-2432/2520/2516, fax (210) 565-3118, or by writing to HQ AFPC/DPPRA, 550 C Street West, Suite 12, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas 78150-4714 or by visiting their website at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/awards>

For most Korean War veterans, the medal will be worn after the United Nations Medal, or the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal if they served during that conflict. **Source:** <http://Korea50.army.mil> ★

**IDAHO FILE
INTO HISTORY**



David Bruce Bleak

Rank and Organization:
Sergeant, Medical Company, 2d, Battalion, 223d Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division.

Service: U.S. Army

Born: 27 February 1932, Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, Idaho

Entered Service at: Shelley, Bingham County, Idaho

Served as: Medical Aidman

Battle and date of action:
Minari-gol, Korea, 14 June 1952

Citation: Sgt. Bleak, a member of the medical company, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and indomitable courage above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. As a medical aidman, he volunteered to accompany a reconnaissance patrol committed to engage the enemy and capture a prisoner for interrogation. Forging up the rugged slope of the key terrain, the group was subjected to intense automatic-weapons and small arms fire and suffered several casualties. After administering to the wounded, he continued to advance with the patrol. Nearing the military crest of the hill, while attempting to cross the fire-swept area to attend the wounded, he came under hostile fire from a

small group of the enemy concealed in a trench. Entering the trench he closed with the enemy, killed two with bare hands and a third with his trench knife. Moving from the emplacement, he saw a concussion grenade fall in front of a companion and, quickly shifting his position, shielded the man from the impact of the blast. Later, while ministering to the wounded, he was struck by a hostile bullet but, despite the wound, he undertook to evacuate a wounded comrade. As he moved down the hill with his heavy burden, he was attacked by two enemy soldiers with fixed bayonets. Closing with the aggressors, he grabbed them and smacked their heads together, then carried his helpless comrade down the hill to safety. Sgt. Bleak's dauntless courage and intrepid actions reflect utmost credit upon himself and are in keeping with the honored traditions of the military service. *End of Citation*



Medic treating injured 2nd Division Infantrymen, while wounded ROK soldier is helped up the steep bank to await his turn.

(Source <http://korea50.army.mil>)

"A Couple of 'Em Got Too Close."

In a war the infantry gets mixed up in a lot of things that people don't understand. Yes, they carry rifles and other weapons around, jump up and run, slide on their bellies to a prone position and start firing at something. You've seen all that stuff

-maybe even done some of it. Sure, it's mostly a drill or maybe a scrimmage. But infantry in the line, the "grunt" life, is much more demanding than that. They get all kinds of tough missions. Take this outfit in Korea -back in '52.

It was the 223rd Infantry Regiment, 40th Division, a California Guard outfit that ran this caper. We want to go back to that time and place because they had a medic in the 223rd, an Idaho boy, who showed 'em how a man fights when he has to. A medic fighting? Sure. But maybe we had better begin at the beginning.

Born in 1932, David B. Bleak grew up in the high farm country of Eastern Idaho. That's important since it says he knew hard work - work that breathes self-determination and innovation into the growing young. Bleak pretty much followed farming all of his life.

It kind of naturally followed in those days that on November 1, 1950, at the ripe old age of eighteen, David Bleak joined the U. S. Army. He took his basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas, the famous old horse cavalry post. Before long he was assigned to a Medical Company that became organic to the 2nd Battalion, 223rd Infantry Regiment of California's 40th Infantry Division. He then received more advanced specialized medical aid training at Camp Cook in California. After several months Bleak was made Corporal, and as January of 1952 dawned, the 40th Division was on its way to the Korean

Conflict via Japan.

40th Infantry Division arriving at Inchon

(Source <http://korea50.army.mil>)



Somewhere north of the 38th parallel, before long, Bleak was promoted to Sergeant filling the shoes of another NCO aid man who had recently been killed. The 40th Division assignment was largely a holding action near the 38th parallel.

It was mountain country where the trees had been cut down and used to reinforce entrenched enemy positions in the area. The only cover was a scattering of brush three or four feet high and the rugged contour of the land itself. In this holding action both sides set up fields of fire, logged in artillery concentrations and then probed from time to time to see if the enemy was planning any surprises. The irony of it is that such situations are usually carried as "quiet times" by the media. Yeah, *quiet.*

It was one of those probes that called down all the chaos and violence that is anyone's share of hell in this life. The I & R Platoon (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) of the 2nd Battalion drew the mission to go into enemy territory, capture a couple of North Koreans and/or Chinese and bring them out for interrogation.

Of course, the assignment is easy - it's the execution that's not so easy. The enemy does what we do. They set up trip flares, plant mines, establish outposts (listening posts at night), set up fields of fire and all those nefarious stratagems of man that make infiltrators such poor insurance risks. In spite of that fact, Sergeant Bleak volunteered as the medic for the incursion.

Well, when the recon patrol set out it was as black as the proverbial ace of spades. The patrol was made up of twenty men and

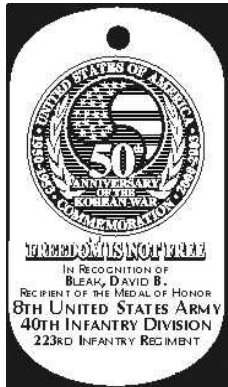
commanded by a senior Tech Sergeant -no officers on this detail.

The hour was about 0430 in the morning and Bleak took up his position at the end of the file moving off into the darkness. The tail end is the assigned position for medics. From that point (when light) they can observe everyone in the team and move quickly to their aid if needed. That "if needed" would soon become the reality of this mission.

The recon patrol pushed quietly on through the darkness, while well off on their left flank, Fox Company from the same battalion moved out in a larger incursion. It would serve to draw attention away from the I & R patrol. But "the die" had been cast otherwise.

A short time later, in the grayness of a Korean dawn, the patrol was snooping around an enemy entrenchment and took their first fire of the mission. It was intense automatic weapons and small arms fire and several in the patrol were wounded.

Bleak moved up and took care of them, making them as comfortable as the situation permitted. He then continued the advance with the patrol that soon came under heavy fire again. The ensuing action is described in the text of Sergeant Bleak's Congressional Medal of Honor award.



Commemorative 'Dog Tag' issued as part of 50th Anniversary of Korean Conflict (Source <http://korea50.army.mil>)

"... he came under hostile fire from a small group of the enemy concealed in a trench. Entering the

trench he closed with the enemy, killed two with bare hands and a third with his trench knife.

Moving from the emplacement, he saw a concussion grenade fall in front of a companion and, quickly shifting his position, shielded the man from the impact of the blast.

Later, while ministering to the wounded, he was struck by a hostile bullet but, despite the wound, he undertook to evacuate a wounded comrade. As he moved down the hill with his heavy burden, he was attacked by two enemy soldiers with fixed bayonets. Closing with the aggressors, he grabbed them and smacked their heads together, then carried his helpless comrade down the hill to safety.

Perhaps we should tell you that Bleak was over six feet tall and weighed about 250 pounds. He did all that in order to get at wounded comrades. He tended to dismiss the facts by skipping over the action and saying something to the effect "...a couple of 'em got too close"...(the enemy).

Yes, they brought prisoners back -and, all of the patrol came in -even though a third of them were walking wounded.

And on 27 October 1953, with his family proudly looking on, SGT David B. Bleak received the Medal of Honor from President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House.

Bleak's wound has had a long-term effect. When he was shot in the leg, it severed a nerve. He dismisses that as "no big deal." But I guess when you survive an 'eyeball to eyeball' firefight such as that one was, wounded, outnumbered, in enemy territory on the far side of a Korean ridge, just coming out alive tends to give one a different -a more tolerant perspective on life.

After he got out of the Army he married, Lois is her name, and they had four children, three boys and a girl.

Their youngest son now has the farm -south of Moore, Idaho. Today the Bleak's live in Arco Idaho since he retired about five years ago.

Then, in 1995, Major General John A. Dubia, Commanding General of Fort Sill Oklahoma bestowed another honor on SGT Bleak.

General Dubia owes his life to a combat Medic in Viet Nam and to express his gratitude decided to name the Ft. Sill Troop Clinic in honor of a combat medic. Special permission was obtained; April 20, 1995 was designated as SGT David B. Bleak day; and the new medical facility at Ft. Sill was named the **SGT David B. Bleak Troop Medical Clinic**.


And so there's your infantry. There's your medic. And there's your Sgt. Bleak -forever enshrined in the annals of Idaho's military heroes.

David Bleak's medal is one of the 9 accredited to Idaho.

Editors Note: A very special thank you to Mr. Bleak for granting an interview for this article. The Korea50.army.mil website Ft. Sill Oklahoma, and the Idaho State Archives also contributed to this article.



UPDATE(S)

 On June 21, 2000...more than fifty years after the end of World War II, Medals of Honor were presented to 22 individuals (17 posthumously) involved in that war.

Most of the 22 were from the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team; Japanese-Americans who had been uprooted from their

homes and moved to "relocation camps".

One of those 22 entered the service from the Minidoka Relocation Center, Camp Minidoka, in Hunt Idaho.

His name is **William Kenzo NAKAMURA**. Unfortunately, as is often the case, the deed which earned him the medal, also took his life. We will profile PFC Nakamura in a future newsletter. His award brings the total of Medals **accredited** to Idaho to 9.



Since we profiled Medal of Honor Recipient John Green, (December 1999) new information has come to light.





It appeared that John Green may have been awarded 2 medals for the same event. Further research reveals that this is not true.

In 1904, Congress approved a new design of the Medal of Honor and authorized the Secretary of War to replace those Medals already issued.

In order to receive the new Medal, recipients had to turn in their old ones. Many protested and in 1907 Congress relented and instructed the War Department to return those Medals that had already been turned in. Thus, John Green and many others have 2 medals for the same event. ★

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Strategic Directions--The IMHS Board of Directors met last quarter and reviewed our strategic plan. The original plan has served us well, and the Board made some additions based on what we've learned in our first five years. The additions include:

-  To conduct 8 membership-generating activities during the fiscal year,
-  To construct/begin themed 'display rotation' such as Korean War, Idaho Medal of Honor Recipients, Idaho National Guard in World wars, USMC in S. Pacific, type displays.
-  To increase membership from 120 to 160 by 6-1-01,
-  To increase public awareness of Museum and IMHS by publicity events, mobile displays, **educational outreach programs**, news releases, usage of meeting room, and membership activities,
-  To provide consultation to CG's staff on WWII unit memorials, and oversight/ inspection of Gowen Field external equipment displays,
-  To assist CG's staff with information and reports to develop state budget allotment for museum operations.

IMHS Funding--I met with General Kane recently and discussed strategic issues, museum plans, and current needs. Because IMHS spends so much time fund raising, he decided that the Idaho Military Division will request an allotment in their FY 02 budget to cover museum operations. If he succeeds, it will mean that our Executive Director, Bob Benbough, can focus on strategic issues and development and not be constantly organizing fund-raising events. **We owe General Kane many thanks for his vision and support.**

Meantime—Despite that good news, we still need to pay our bills during this current year. The Military Division was able to locate some end-of-year help for museum operations, and I am also seeking assistance from a base MWR support fund. *But, fund-raisers will still be needed in the interim.*

Airshow Activities--The two big air shows this year—Twin Falls and Mountain Home AFB—were productive for IMHS' volunteers who sold merchandise, dog tags, and promoted memberships. **Thanks to volunteer efforts by Stan Herzinger,**

Ellen Hampton, Loren Call, Gayle Alvarez, Cynthia and Joe Strader, Bob and Kay Benbough, (and yours truly), we raised some needed revenue and showed our colors. These events are very productive, and it's fun to serve these crowds that appreciate our museum and historical programs.

Museum Attendance--The traffic count of visitors coming to the museum is steadily increasing. The Year To Date total (an 8 month period) on 1 August had 2900 visitors compared with 2000 the prior 12 months. As more people learn of the quality of our historical efforts, expect these figures to continue increasing.

- Bill Miller

NEW MEMBERS

Special Welcome to:

- ★ Charles G. Bruch
- ★ Mary C. Bruch
- ★ Donald L. Burris
- ★ Bernie F. Gannon
- ★ Alta J. Hofert
- ★ Guy R. Johnston
- ★ Charles F. Sughrue
- ★ Albert D. Trager
- ★ David S. Weick

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 24, 7:00 PM, Membership Meeting and Annual Election of Board Officers.

November 4 & 5, Fund Raising Breakfast at the Gowen Field Officers Club.

November 11 - Veterans Day. Open House and Celebration of 5 years of Operation and Raffle Drawing. ★

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER



Please meet Gayle Alvarez

Gayle joined the Society in 1994 and was in fact one of the founding members. She served as both the Secretary and Treasurer until October 1998 when Cynthia took over the Treasurer duties.

When the Museum's webmaster left, Gayle took over those duties as well and has in fact completely revamped the website. We have received many favorable comments on it, including those from new members and volunteers who joined after viewing it.

Along with her administrative duties as the Society Secretary, Gayle also designed and produced the post cards



in the giftshop as well as designed the

Gowen Field Aviation Highlights

clock. She also designed and produces the Society's newsletter *Pass In Review*.

Did we mention that she is also the primary researcher on the Medal of Honor recipients that we have begun featuring in the newsletter? Or that she is also our unofficial Publicity Coordinator? **Great job Gayle, keep up the good work!** ★

IN MEMORIAL

It is with a deep sense of loss that we convey the passing of Richard 'Dick' Dooley.



Dick joined the Society in 1994 as one of our Charter Members and went on to become a Charter Lifetime member.

He was instrumental in orchestrating the donation from the 41st Infantry Division to the Society and at the time of his passing was in the process of constructing a display about the 41st in the Pacific during WWII.

On behalf of the Board, Members and Volunteers, our deepest sympathy and condolences are extended to Dick's family. He will truly be missed. - *The Board*

NEW MUSEUM ACCESS

When you visit the Museum, you no longer need to go through security at the Main Gate.



A new fence and gate have been erected and you can visit the Museum by coming through the gate on Harvard. There are also signs directing you on Orchard/Gowen Road. ★

**EDUCATIONAL
OUTREACH
REACHED OUT!**

On 5 June 2000, Braedon from Howard Springs Primary School in the Northern Territory of **Australia** sent us an e-mail.



He stated he was with a school group who had entered The National Schools Web Challenge. They were seeking information about " *the American Soldiers from the 148th Field Artillery that were here in Howard Springs Reserve during WW2.*"

Our webmaster responded that yes we did have such information and Braedon's teacher Barbara Dobson confirmed the request.

Attempts to fax the information to them failed. Gayle built a special page on the IMHS webpage just for them and an **exchange of information began.**

The students, 9 in all, did extensive research on the subject and found some vintage photos of the area as well as photos of some of the soldiers there, including members of the 148th.

They also had a field trip to the actual site. The students then built a webpage on their research. **Did I mention that these kids are just nine years old?** Then on August 8, Barbara Dobson, e-mailed that "our Time Team won the web page section of the NT Youth Web Challenge." **And** on 7 Sep she e-mailed that they "...**won the National Schools Web Challenge!**" Braedon and Barbara were sent to Sydney for the presentation!

The best news of all... they found photos of Idahoans in Australia in WWII and will send us copies!



Researchers Braedon, Diana, Juliet, Stephanie, Jarrod, James, Chris, Jacquie, and Cassandra (James was on assignment)

Part of their research, photos, e-mail address and a link to their webpage are now on the IMHS webpage at <http://inghro.state.id.us/museum>, under the TEACHERS & KIDS Section. **If you served in Australia in WWII, they would love to hear from you!**★

**LET'S GET
READY TO
RAFFLE!**



Just in time for the cooler weather that's just around the corner. We are raffling a WWII style **leather** flyer's jacket, reminiscent of the

WWII Bomber Jacket.

These jackets are on sale in our gift shop & our on-line giftshop on our webpage. Feel free to stop by for a look. We have sizes small, medium, large, and extra large so size is not a problem.

Tickets are \$1 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5. Tickets are available at the Museum or from any Board Member.★

MOST WANTED



Do you like history? Do you enjoy meeting people? Have we got an offer for you!

We are also looking for volunteers and Docents (Museum Guides) for both the mid-week and weekend.

We will show you what you need to do. Then you can pursue both your hobbies, **sharing history and meeting people.**

To learn more, call us at 422-6128 or better yet, stop by for a personalized tour.

Produced By: Idaho Military Historical Society
Production: Gayle Alvarez, Bill Miller and Phil Obenchain
Comments or article suggestions are welcome, contact us at 422-6128 or visit our web site at:
<http://inghro.state.id.us/museum>

JUST IN CASE Have you sent in your renewal for 2000? 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!



IDAHO MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

4040 W. Guard Street,
Boise, Idaho 83705-5004

Donation/Membership Application/Renewal Form

YES! Please enter my **tax deductible** membership application/renewal in the category checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order in the amount indicated.

INDIVIDUAL:

\$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	General	\$ 375	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lifetime	\$ 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student
\$ 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Associate (Members Spouse)	\$ 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior (60+)			

ORGANIZATIONAL:

\$ 500	<input type="checkbox"/>	Platinum	\$ 100	<input type="checkbox"/>	Silver
\$ 250	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gold	\$ 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bronze

OTHER: *(Endowment, Contributions, etc.)*

\$ _____ FOR: _____ **TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:** \$ _____

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: *(City, State, Zip)*

Interests: *(Volunteering, Research, Displays, etc.)*



Idaho Military Historical Society
4040 W. Guard
Boise, ID 83705-5004

Heroic Past...Proud Future