

"Shedding Light On Idaho's Military History"

3rd Quarter

PRESIDENT'S Message

Hello Everyone,

This has been a busy time for the Museum, with changes in the IMHS Board of Directors and vacancies in the Treasurer and Executive Director positions for the Museum. Many of you have met the Interim Executive Director. Gary Keith, during your visits or volunteer work for the Museum. We had an Open House on Labor Day and hosted a breakfast for the Saturday of September drill.

The vacant Executive Director position has been renamed as "Curator". The Curator position advertised with Job was Service. and closed on September 16, 2002. The Board Members will review the applicant resumes. conduct interviews, and select a Curator in the near future.

We have three openings on the IMHS Board, and welcome your interest or nominations in filling those positions. The Board Members meet monthly to oversee the welfare of the Museum. The most important function of the Board Members is to ensure the financial security of the Idaho Military History Museum.

If you have skills and/or interest in gaining financial successes for a non-profit organization such as ours, we welcome your input. I encourage you to submit your name for consideration as a Board Member, or if that is not your desire, to serve by becoming involved in activities that will help us ensure our financial growth. If you are interested in being considered for a position on the Board, please contact a member of the Board so we can add your name to the Ballot.

We continue to expand the Museum through projects and displays. If you would like to help in any of the following areas, please stop by the Museum, or contact the Museum at 422-4841, to set up a time to discuss how you may do so.

We welcome your help in research, working as a docent, helping with an Open House or special celebration (like the upcoming Veteran's Day), setting up a display or in vehicle restoration projects.

Thank you to all of you who help in making the Museum a success. I look forward to seeing you at our Membership Meeting in October. - Dawana Edwards *

September 2002

Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Idaho Military Historical Society will be 29 October 2002 at the Idaho Military History Museum, at 7:00 PM.

At this meeting, elections will be held for 3 Members of the Board of Directors. Currently, 2 Board Member will be seeking re-election and...**there is an opening for an additional board member**.

The nomination process will be open and nominations will be accepted at the meeting. This meeting will also give you a chance to get up to date on the latest 'goings-on' at the Museum and upcoming events.

Following the elections, Bill Miller will recount his experiences as an F-102 pilot with the 190th Fighter Squadron. The F-102 saw service with the Idaho Air National Guard from October 1964 to October 1975. F-102 pilots spent many hours on standby ready to scramble at a moments notice during the days of the Cold War.

Please mark your calendar and join us on

29 October at 7:00 PM. *

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PASS IN REVIEW, 116th Combat Engineers Make Donation

On September 7, 2002, during the fundraising breakfast, we were approached by our own **Robert Carter** with wonderful news. The 116th Combat Engineers who were part of the 41st Infantry Division in WWII, had a donation to make to the Museum!

Several members of the 116th Combat Engineers Association were also on hand and all adjourned to the Museum for the presentation. The check pictured was in the amount of \$1,170.23!



Pictured here are (right to left) **Robert L. Carter**, **Jerry T. Kendall** and accepting the check for the Society is **Gayle Alvarez**.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, *thank you very much for your wonderful donation*, we sincerely appreciate it.

MUSEUM HOSTS ESGR Conference Attendees

On 8-9 August, the Idaho National Guard hosted an ESGR (Employer Support of Guard and Reserve) Conference at Gowen Field. ESGR Members were flown to Gowen Field from all over the state and visited various stations on and around Gowen Field where they learned about some of the missions and responsibilities of different elements of the National Guard and Military Division. The Museum was one of the stations!! Visitors received a short presentation on the history of the Museum, the Endowment, and Idaho History Day projects. We received many favorable comments and numerous promises of return visits.

Thank you to all who staffed the Museum during that time and a very special thank you to Generals Kane and Lafrenz for including the Museum in the conference. *

RECAP OF IMHS Events

➢ On June 29, 2002, Gayle Alvarez, Ed Carlson, Ron Galloway, Susan and LeRoy Hartgrave and Stan Herzinger represented the IMHS at the biannual Twin Falls Air Show.



Setting up the booth

They set up a giftshop booth and made dog tags in the main terminal raising approximately \$850 for the IMHS treasury!

> On July 30th we held our annual summer picnic and BBQ. This year we held it at the Indoor Pavilion (No sprinklers to contend with!)



The IMHS
 webpage was
 selected as the
 Feature Site for August 2002 by

Homeofheroes.com. "This site for the Idaho Military History Museum is very well done...we highly recommend these pages." Congratulations to our webmaster, **nice job Gayle**! > On September 2, 2002, we held an open house in celebration of our 7th **Anniversary!** Yes, it has been 7 years since the doors to the *Idaho Military History Museum* opened; my how time flies!



Part of the new Marine exhibit

Several new exhibits were open for viewing including Marines in WWII South Pacific, German WWII artifacts, Japanese in WWII South Pacific, and an updated 41st Infantry Division in WWII. (Nice work Gary!)

Over 100 visitors came by and joining us were the WWII Reenactors and the Civil War Reenactors. In addition, TV Channels 2, 7, and 12 sent camera crews over and all three stations had stories about us on their evening news. Channel 7 ran the story the next day as well!



Pilot In Training at Open House

> On September 6^{th} , the 388^{th} Bombardment Group, which traces its history back to Gowen Field and the B-17 Flying Fortress, was given a tour of Gowen Field. The Museum was one of



388th Bombardment Group Visits Museum

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the attractions on the tour and hosted approximately 80 veterans and their wives. They were <u>very</u> pleased with the Museum and the exhibits. We received <u>many</u> favorable comments.

> On September 7, we held our quarterly fundraising breakfast at the Gowen Field Officers club with the assistance of the American Legion.

Also in September, The Idaho Military History Museum was listed under VolunteerMatch.org, a nationally known website for volunteers looking for an organization to help. So far we have received 2 volunteers from the site.

> On September 10^{th} , Sally Craven and a camera crew from Channel 7 came to the Museum to do a story on our volunteers. In addition to VolunteerMatch.org, the IMHS is listed with Channel 7's website under their volunteer section and we have received 2 volunteers from that site as well.

This last quarter as you can tell was quite an eventful one. Thank you to everyone who helped make all of our recent events such a success. We truly couldn't have accomplished everything we have this last quarter without each and every one of you. *The Board* *

New

MEMBERS

Special Welcome to:

★ Jean Cassell
★ Ralph D. Elston
★ Leo Holmes
★ Arthur Jackson
★ Sally Jackson
★ Rich Johnson
★ BG Lawrence F. Lafrenz
★ John W. Norris
★ Reuben Wilske
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Volunteer Of The Quarter



Please meet Doug Doehle

Douglas A. Doehle was born in Bismarck North Dakota, the son of a wheat farmer. In 1946 the family moved to Oregon where he graduated high school in 1954, and Oregon State University in 1958.

He completed ROTC at Oregon State, was commissioned as a 2LT with the infantry, and went on active duty December 27, 1958. He married Marlene Moody in August 1958. Doug went on to serve 30 years with the US Army and was stationed at numerous places including Ft. Benning, GA, Ft. Eustis, VA, Vietnam (2 tours), Tripoli, Libya, Naval War College, Newport RI, Seoul, South Korea, the Pentagon, Bremerhaven, Germany, and Rotterdam, Holland to name a few.

Doug retired to Lakewood, Washington on 1 October 1988 with the rank of Colonel and moved to Boise in 1992.

He heard about a place called the *Idaho Military History Museum* and stopped by one day to see if that was where he wanted to donate his dress uniform. He liked what he saw, not only the Museum itself but the dedicated volunteers as well.

Doug joined the volunteer group and in March 1998, he became a member of the Society; Marlene joined the next year. Doug recently completed work on a display of Distinctive Unit Insignia which is now open for viewing.

PASS IN REVIEW

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The above picture does not do the display justice; it was a *major undertaking*.

Although they are not visible here, the insignias are in the category applicable to them, i.e., Infantry, Artillery, Engineers, Signal, Aviation, Quartermaster, to name a few. Each insignia is also labeled with the specific unit it represents.

Doug also volunteers his time researching artifacts, editing artifact descriptions, and helping out at fundraising breakfasts.

Doug can be found at the Museum each Tuesday morning, working on the other 2/3 of the Distinctive Unit Insignia. He and Marlene also volunteer as Docents on weekends.

Thank you Doug, we deeply appreciate all your hard work. You are our Volunteer of the Quarter! *

UPCOMING EVENTS

19 October – We have been invited to the Eagle Auxiliary Bazaar which will be held from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at 7025 Overland Road, Boise. If you can help us operate a gift shop table at this event, please let us know.

2-3 Nov Fundraising Breakfast – This will be our last breakfast fundraiser this year. If you are able to help out at this event, please let us know. We currently have need of cooks and servers for <u>both days</u>.

11 November – Veterans Day Open House. We are inviting several veterans organizations to join us and Larry Gebert of Channel 7 will do his early morning show live at the Museum! *

-3

PASS IN REVIEW Volunteering Is good For Your Health

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."

- VolunteerMatch.org 🖈

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

"**Ron Galloway** was recently honored as the hunter education instructor of the year for 2001 for Idaho.

Galloway has volunteered 1,400 hours in the classroom and taught 55 courses, including 13 in one year."¹ That doesn't include the time he puts in at the Museum! Congratulations Ron, nice work!*

Update

We recently received an inquiry as to the origin of the name of the street on which the Museum is located. If the street was named after Col Charles Lindbergh, the name was misspelled, the 'h' having been left off the street sign

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and local maps. An official inquiry was made and it does appear that the street was named after the famous aviator.

The Museum brochures and web page are being updated to reflect the proper spelling of 4748 Lindbergh St. **Thank you Mr. Jackson**! *

ENDOWMENT Update

Since our last update, we have received additional donations to our endowment from:

Mr. G.I. Shore Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Jackson Ms. Lenore Johnston

We have also received an updated letter of support from Senator Crapo.

"The establishment of the Idaho Military Historical Society and the resulting Idaho Military Museum is a wonderful contribution to the State of Idaho and its citizens. There can never be replacement for those who sacrificed their lives, careers, and families in this nation's call to war. but we can and should make every effort to remember and honor those who have been asked to carry the burdens required to maintain our freedoms countries and opportunities.

The nation's past and our state's participation in the struggles that have made America great can easily be forgotten, unless we encourage and support programs and projects such as the Idaho Military Historical Society. Focusing on the unique role played by Idaho's citizens and resources in defending and sustaining our national pride and freedom, this project holds particular significance for our state.

Please know that I am privileged to share your vision of the establishment of an endowment fund to ensure the continued dedication of the Idaho Military Historical Society to preserve our heritage. To all who might read this letter, I encourage you to support this endeavor seeking to preserve the Idaho Military heritage for generations to come." - Michael D. Crapo, Senator, July 2002 *

UPCOMING REUNIONS

116 ENGR BN AND 148 FA BN

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the return of the 148th FA Battalion from the Korean War, a reunion is being planned. Invited are all 148th FA Bn Veterans, their spouses or widows, and friends of the 148th FA Bn, i.e., 200th Tank Battalion, 116th Engineer Bn and current members of the 148th FA Bn or any veteran or member of the Idaho Army National Guard who wishes to attend.

The reunion is planned for Friday, September 19, 2003, at the Elks Lodge in Lewiston, Idaho. There will be an afternoon registration and get acquainted time. Friday evening will be a catered dinner and dance. The 25th Army Band, who also saw active duty during that same time period, is also invited. For details, contact:

148th Field Artillery Battalion Reunion c/o BOYD L. PEDERSEN, CSM, Ret 2394 Shelley Lane Clarkston, WA 99403-1458 E-Mail to: <u>Pedersen@clarkston.com</u> Telephone: (509) 758-7929

183RD AND 951ST FIELD ARTILLERY

Originally part of the Idaho National Guard, the 183rd and 951st served in Europe during WWII. They are planning a reunion to be held in Boise on July 16-20, 2003. Veterans of the 183rd and 951st Field Artillery Battalions, and their relatives are cordially invited to attend. For details, contact:

*

ALAN HOCHHALTER 827 NE 90th St. Seattle, WA 98115 E-Mail: <u>alanh137@attbi.com</u> Telephone: (206) 517-5849

-<u>J-</u> Idaho File Into History



M. G. MCCONNEL Adjutant General Idaho National Guard January 1925 - August 1946

Mervin Gilbert McConnel was born near Parma, Idaho on December 29, 1882, the son of early western pioneers. McConnel was educated in the public schools of Idaho and attended the University of Idaho from 1901 to 1903 where he received his first military training, that being ROTC². He married Bessie Regains in 1906.



Cadet McConnel, circa 1901

On October 16, 1908, he enlisted as a private in the 2nd Idaho Infantry, Idaho National Guard. In April 1909, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt., and assigned to Company G, at Caldwell, Idaho. He was promoted to Captain on January 1, 1911, and took command of the company.



McConnel, circa 1910

"In 1914, due to the pressure of private affairs, he was obliged to submit his resignation...McConnel was almost immediately recommissioned on the Battalion Staff as a Second Lieutenant."³

In 1916, McConnel accompanied the 2nd Idaho on the Punitive Expedition on the Mexican Border and on March 27, 1917, he was promoted to 1st Lt. and assigned to the position of Battalion Adjutant.

Prior to WWI, McConnel worked with his brother Fred, a Civil Engineer but his situation changed with the entry of the United States into the First World War. "In October 1917, at Charlotte, North Carolina, when Idaho Troops were reorganized by order of the War Department, the Battalion to which he belonged became a Machine Gun Battalion.

He almost immediately applied for transfer to the Field Artillery, which application was approved, and he was assigned to the 146th Field Artillery, which was also Idaho Troops."⁴ The 146th was activated for service with the Allied Expeditionary Force and sailed for France, arriving in the spring of 1918. Upon arrival overseas, the 146th Field Artillery became the 155th GPF.

While in France, McConnel participated in several actions including the Aisne-Marne, St. Mahiel and the Meuse-Argonne.

After the November 11, 1918, armistice that ended the war, McConnel served with the American Army of Occupation and returned the United States on July 18, 1919. He was discharged on July 30th.

After his return to Idaho, McConnel reentered the Idaho National Guard and went to work for the U.S. Post Office in Caldwell.

McConnel was instrumental in organizing what became the 116th Cavalry and the unit was Federally recognized on January 9, 1922. On November 5, 1924, he was assigned to the position of Squadron Commander and promoted to Major.



McConnel, circa 1920

McConnel's service did not go unnoticed and on January 1, 1925, he was appointed to the position of Adjutant General of Idaho by Governor C.C. Moore. This brought him a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. He was promoted to Colonel on October 31, 1926.

Ultimately, seven governors from both major parties would appoint McConnel to serve as Adjutant General. McConnel served eleven successive terms or twentytwo years as Adjutant General for the State of Idaho.

McConnel's tenure saw a wide variety of challenges. In 1928, he petitioned the Ninth Corps Area commanding general for assistance when one of the Army $rac{1}{2}$

cavalry instructors "not only had failed to distribute the progress report as required, but also had disapproved November's administrative pay for nearly all units of the 116th Cavalry... 'He evidently has entirely overlooked the fact that in addition to operating National Guard units that these officers are obliged to take care of civil business and make their living over and above the attention to National Guard business."⁵

"Idaho's National Guard Act of 1927 committed the state to build and maintain armories...and other necessary facilities, but required that funds needed for construction be approved by the legislature. State lawmakers, however, failed to meet this commitment during the entire interwar [1919-1940] period.

Adjutant General McConnel reported in 1927 that only the troops in Weiser, Caldwell, Grace, and Coeur d' Alene had adequate quarters, built without state funds and 'at considerable sacrifice to the individuals who have financed these plants...it does not seem fair to expect the individuals who are interested in the proper up-building of an efficient organization to finance the building of quarters.^{***6}

On September 4, 1927, Adjutant General McConnel activated units from Boise, Meridian, and Weiser "when Col. Charles A. Lindbergh flew the *Spirit of St. Louis* into the capital city. Guardsman restrained enthusiastic crowds at the airport, controlled traffic on nearby streets, and helped protect Colonel Lindbergh and his plane.

The inspector general of the Idaho National Guard praised the troops for their courtesy under these trying conditions."⁷ Also in 1927, McConnel attended the Army War College G-1 Course.

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Adjutant General McConnel and Charles Lindbergh 1937

In 1931, a series of forest fires broke out which were suspected to be arson caused due in part to economic hardship; fighting fires was employment. "Gov. C. Ben Ross declared a state of emergency on August 24 and activated National Guard troops to help bring forest fires under control." Their duties changed when Martial Law reigned from "August 31 through September 12, and National Guard units switched from firefighting to guarding forests and roads."8

The National Guard was activated again during labor unrest in 1935. "In mid August, roughly fifteen hundred pea pickers went on strike in Teton County demanding a wage increase ... Adjutant General McConnel investigated the situation and agreed with local officials who claimed that a handful of agitators was keeping the majority of strikers from returning to work. This information combined with a mob of farmers ... convinced angry McConnel of the need for martial law."9

The following year, the National Guard was again activated during a strike in Clearwater County. This time the issue was sanitary conditions in logging camps.¹⁰

Meanwhile, McConnel's first marriage had ended in divorce and in 1931, McConnel married Evelyn Almquist.

"On May 23, 1936, in addition to his duties as Adjutant General, General McConnel was assigned to command the Fifty-eighth Cavalry Brigade and was promoted to a Brigadier General of the Line."¹¹



Adjutant General McConnel in front of Camp {Bonneville} Headquarters¹² circa 1938

As the threat of international conflict grew, President Roosevelt decided in 1940 to federalize National Guard units for one year of training. On September 3, 1940, Gov. Bottolfsen responded to a telegram from Sec. of War Stimson, by ordering all Idaho National Guard units of the Fortyfirst Division into active service commencing September 16, 1940. At the end of September 1940. Governor Bottolfsen nominated Brig. Gen. McConnel, for induction into federal service as Idaho's executive for selective service. The next month the U.S. Senate McConnel's approved nomination.¹³ General McConnel was called to active duty on October 12, 1940.

As the Director of Selective Service, McConnel was responsible for organizing and directing the operations of the various Draft Boards located in each of the forty-four counties of the state. Each of these draft boards, staffed by local citizens who served on a volunteer basis, was responsible for determining which draft eligible individuals would be inducted for active military service and which were qualified for either exemption or deferment.

The outbreak of WWII and the call of the National Guard to active Federal service, left the state without any military style organization that could be called upon in the event of any natural disaster or local emergency. To fill this void, General McConnel, under the direction of the \Im

undertook the vernor. organization and staffing of the Idaho State Guard. "Governor Clark created the Idaho State Guard on December 15, 1941 [and] by March 5, 1942, twelve hundred Idaho men had been assigned to the State Guard."¹⁴

"Simultaneously, Idaho officials obtained authorization to form the Idaho Home Defense Guard, which subsequently became known as the Volunteer Reserve. The organization was inducted into service April 25, 1942...Members of the Volunteer Reserve furnished their own weapons, ammunition, and equipment.³¹⁵

"By May 1943, the threat of an invasion of Idaho became virtually Earlier, Brig. Gen nonexistent. McConnel had approved the use of State Guard and Volunteer Reserve Troops to help fight forest fires, but the need never arose. Accordingly, state officials took steps to muster out all units of the Idaho Volunteer Reserve by April 1944, which at its peak contained 8,502 men in 165 companies."¹⁶

In April 1946, after a severe heart attack, General McConnel was forced to resign his position as Idaho's Adjutant General. He retired from the Army in the grade of Brigadier General in August 1946.

McConnel was promoted to the rank of Major General on January 24, 1947. He passed away shortly thereafter on April 29, 1948, and was buried in Morris Hill cemetery. He is survived by a son, Mervin G. McConnel Jr.

General McConnel's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Army Commendation the Mexican Border Medal. Service Medal, the World War I Medal with three Victory campaign stars, the American

Defense Service Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

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From Left to Right COL J.W. Barnett. BG J.E. Walsh, TAG **Governor Robbins BG McConnel** LTC Bennett circa. 1946

"Major General Mervin Gilbert McConnel exemplifies to the highest degree a life of efficient and honorable service to his government, his State, and the National Guard. His keen sense of honor and devotion to duty caused those who served with him and knew him best to love and respect him. The nation and the state has lost a good citizen and the military service has lost an excellent officer." - JOHN E. WALSH, Brigadier General. The Adjutant General, Idaho, **GENERAL** ORDER 6, 1 May 1948.

Military service runs in the Mervin G. McConnel family. McConnel Jr., graduated from the US Military Academy in 1956 and retired as a LTC after 20 years of service. He served another 12 years as a Department of the Army civilian.

He recently donated a collection of his father's papers and memorabilia to the IMHS. An exhibit of General McConnel's memorabilia has been assembled and is open for viewing at the Museum.



Mervin G. McConnel Jr., next to the Mervin G. McConnel Sr. exhibit.

Editor's note: This article was a real team effort. Thank you to Gary Keith, John Norris, and Mervin G. McConnel Jr., for their assistance with General McConnel's story.

MOST WANTED



Viet Nam Artifacts. We would like to build an exhibit commemorating the Viet Nam Conflict but our artifacts are limited. If you are looking for a home for

*

your Viet Nam memorabilia, we can help.

We Need You! We have a number of projects that we need help with. Give us a call at 422-4841 or better yet stop by and pay us a visit. You won't regret it and you will be helping us preserve the proud military heritage of the people of the state of Idaho! *

_____ Footnotes:

¹ Idaho Statesman, July 4, 2002.

² 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho

Svingen, The History of the Idaho National Guard, 1995, Idaho National Guard.

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

PASS IN REVIEW, JUST IN CASE

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Have you sent in your renewal for 2002? 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!

	LITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 4040 W. Guard Street, Boise, Idaho 83705-5004
	embership Application/Renewal Form
YES! Please enter my tax-deductible membership application/renewal amount indicated. <i>(The IMHS is a 501(c) 3 organization.)</i> INDIVIDUAL:	in the category checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order in the
\$ 25 [] General \$ 10 [] Associate (Members Spouse)	\$ 375 [] Lifetime \$ 10 [] Student \$ 15 [] Senior (60+)
ORGANIZATIONAL:	
\$ 500 [] Platinum	\$ 100 [] Silver
\$ 250 [] Gold	\$ 50 [] Bronze
OTHER: (Endowment, Contributions, etc.)	
\$ FOR:	TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:
Name:	Phone:
Address: (City, State, Zip)	
Interests: (Volunteering, Research, Displays, etc.)	E-Mail Address:
Idaho Military Historical Society	

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

Heroic Past...Proud Future

¹⁶ Svingen, p. 86

¹ Idaho Statesman, July 4, 2002

² 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho, p. 6

³ 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho, p. 6

⁴ 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho, p. 6

⁵ Svingen, The History of the Idaho National Guard, 1995, Idaho National Guard, p. 68

⁶ Svingen, p. 69-70

⁷ Orlan J. Svingen, p. 74

⁸ Svingen, p. 76

⁹ Svingen, p. 76

¹⁰ Svingen, p. 78

¹¹ 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho, p. 6

¹² 1938 National Guard Historical Annual, State of Idaho, p. viii

¹³ Svingen, p. 81

¹⁴ Svingen p. 85

¹⁵ Svingen, p. 85