



# PASS IN REVIEW

“Shedding Light On Idaho’s Military History”

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter

December 2006

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND ELECTIONS

The Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections of the Idaho Military Historical Society were held on October 25, 2006. Elected were *Steve Bonde, Bill Miller and Joe Icenhower.*

The new Board then met and reorganized by electing its officers for the coming year. Those officers are:

- President – Rick Johnson*
- Vice-President – Steve Bonde*
- Secretary – Gayle Alvarez*
- Treasurer – Bill Miller*

Following our membership meeting, we had the distinct privilege of hosting General Gayhart, Deputy Commanding General, Army and former commander of the 116<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade.



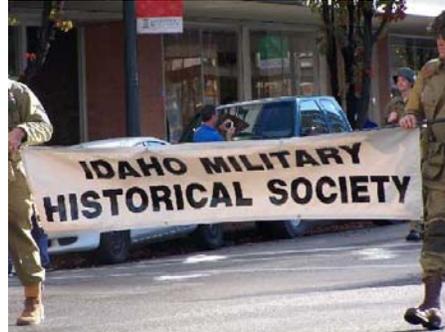
**General Gayhart discusses the 116<sup>th</sup> Brigade deployment to Iraq**



Everybody who attended expressed appreciation to both General Gayhart and the Brigade for their service. ☆

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

It has been a very busy year for the Museum! Some of the more recent events include General Gayhart’s presentation at our annual membership meeting, IMHS participation in the annual Veteran’s Day Parade and our second annual Veteran’s Day night fire event.



**Jeff Packer and Charles Ake carry the IMHS banner in the annual Boise’s Veteran’s Day Parade**

This year’s Veteran’s Day event was a great success. We held our second annual night fire event on Saturday evening which included demos of Revolutionary War, Civil War and World War II equipment by reenactors dressed in uniforms of the various periods.

The event kicked off with a special salute to all veterans with the firing of Civil War era cannons by Generals Johnson and Gayhart. This was followed by blank firing demonstrations narrated by ILT Chris

Borders, the new historian for the Idaho National Guard. Although it was a very cold evening, the event was well attended and the parking lot overflowed!



**SPC Chris Rigg, a member of the 116<sup>th</sup> BCT recently returned from Iraq, explained the workings of some of their equipment to visitors**



**Revolutionary War and Civil War Reenactors at Veteran’s Day Open House**

Volunteer efforts also helped plan and execute the Veteran’s Day event. We are extremely grateful to the **Eagle High School History Club** for their ‘manning’ our main gate and the concession stand. We would also like to extend a special thank you to the

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Gem State Young Marines who provided parking and assistance.



**Members of the Eagle High History Club at Veteran's Day Open house**

Also joining us were local authors **Bill Heath** who was on hand to autograph copies of his book *The 148th Field Artillery Story World War II* and **Stephanie Hanson**, who was on hand to autograph copies of her book *A Corpsman's Legacy*.



**Stephanie Hanson autographs a copy of her book, *A Corpsman's Legacy* at the Veteran's Day Open house**



**Members of The Sleekit Beasties Bag Pipe Band performing at the Veteran's Day Open House**

Also joining us were members of The **Sleekit Beasties Bag Pipe Band** who provided musical numbers for those in attendance and the **Idaho Automatic**

**Weapons Collectors** who set up an exhibit on some of the weaponry that has been in use over the years.



**Idaho Automatic Weapons Collectors Association also joined us**

As we go to press, our planning committee is putting the finishing touches on our calendar of events for 2007. As they become available they will be posted on our webpage. We will also make periodic announcements as we have in the past via e-mail.

If you would like to receive these and be on our e-mail distribution list, make sure Gayle has your e-mail address. Hers is [gayle.alvarez@idbois.ang.af.mil](mailto:gayle.alvarez@idbois.ang.af.mil). We hate e-spam as much as you do and we DO NOT sell or distribute our members and volunteers e-mail addresses to other individuals or organizations.

I would personally like to thank each and every one of your for your support this past year and wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*-Rick Johnson*

**DID YOUR ZIP CODE RECENTLY CHANGE?**



If you live in Meridian, Idaho, your Zip Code may have recently changed from 83642 to 83646. If yours did, please contact Gayle and let her know. The Meridian Post Office will only honor your previous Zip code for a limited time. ★

**CURATORS CORNER**

Lately, one question I have been asking myself is "Where did 2006 go!?" I cannot believe how quickly this year has gone by as it has been a VERY busy year. It has also been one of the most successful in the life of the Museum.

We were able to open our new Medal of Honor exhibit and showcase Gurdon Barter's Medal of Honor, thanks to the efforts and dedication of Gayle Alvarez. This helped lead to the donation of Sgt David Bleak's Medal of Honor by his widow and family. Needless to say these two events are some of the most significant we have witnessed.

Additionally, the Idaho State Legislature approved dedicated funding for the Museum to build new exhibit cases and improve existing ones as well as artifact collections needs. Does this mean the IMHS and the Museum are now financially set? No, there is still the need for financial contributions and memberships.

It is time to take advantage of the momentum we have gained! The need still exists for more volunteers since with these successes comes additional work. There is still a shortage of Docents to open the doors and greet the public. Our visitation has increased dramatically due to repeat visitors and a better awareness of the Museum. Ask any of our current Docents and they will tell you it's a satisfying and rewarding experience.

So what can you expect for 2007 in the Museum? Look for big changes as we will be able to get more exhibits completed. **One of the big projects will be the rededication of the Medal of Honor exhibit area which will include Sgt Bleak's Medal and story in photographs. This will take place on 14 June**, the anniversary of his action as well as the one year anniversary of the donation by his family.

I encourage you to come be a part of this Museum as this is an exciting time. You will find a team of volunteers who are some of the finest people you will ever meet. I would like to close my final report of 2006 by thanking them for making the Idaho Military History Museum the quality educational facility it is. You can all be proud of what you have done and I thank you!

*-Gary Keith*

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATES**

**Don't forget, it is now time to renew your membership!** Check the label on your newsletter if you aren't certain you have renewed. It will give you the date your renewal is due. If you receive the newsletter electronically, contact Gayle via e-mail.

If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, send Gayle your e-mail. With another postage rate increase in the mill, every little bit helps!

Annual renewals are:

- General Membership:** \$25
- Senior (60+):** \$15
- Associate (Spouse):** \$10
- Student:** \$10

**Lifetime Membership is \$375**

Lifetime payment may be spread out over a one-year period.

In addition, as the year begins drawing to a close, many people contemplate their charitable contributions for the year.

**The Idaho State Tax Commission offers a tax credit for contributions to Idaho 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.

**Thank you for your support of the Museum.** Don't forget, the Museum is a great place to bring your visiting houseguests too! ☆

**MOST WANTED**



We have some special requests this edition. **>We are in need of a Gift Shop Manager.**

With the guidance of the Gift Shop Committee (and as a member of this committee) this person will place the orders for and inventory the items received from the various businesses selling the merchandise.

This person will also conduct periodic inventories of the gift shop and order replacement items as needed in addition to making sure the gift shop is ready for our weekday and weekend visitors. There will also be the requirement of using the very large noisy "typewriter" to stamp out the periodic dog tag orders.

Do you have experience running or working in a small business and have a couple hours a week you can share with us? If so, please contact Steve Bonde at [sbonde@imd.idaho.gov](mailto:sbonde@imd.idaho.gov) for all the details.

**> We are in need of Docents.** We have been so short handed of late that Gary is having a hard time performing his job as Curator. He and **we really need your help during the week.** Please give Gary a call (or e-mail him at [gkeith@imd.idaho.gov](mailto:gkeith@imd.idaho.gov)) if you can spare even 2 hours.

**> We need an assistant librarian.** Joe has made great strides in sorting and organizing the library but he could use some help.

**> We are still looking for 116th Engineer** related items from WWII, Korea and Vietnam to include stories, pictures, and memorabilia. ☆

**NEW MEMBERS**

*Special Welcome to:*

- ★ **Douglas Cooper**
- ★ **John Locke**
- ★ **Kathleen Marquart**
- ★ **Andrea Packer**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**ENDOWMENT UPDATE**



Our Endowment balance currently stands at **\$35,204.00 – Another milestone as we progress to our goal of \$500,000!!!**

Recent Endowment Donors include:

- Fred & Ann Anderson**
- Karen Bengoechea**  
*(In memory of 'Gus' Hofert)*
- Brig Gen (Ret) Gary Brewington**
- James Barker**
- Stan Herzinger**  
*(In memory of Clarence Miller)*
- Stephanie Gowen Locke**
- Ronald Jennings**  
*(In memory of Earle Winfrey)*

We also received two donations (\$150 total) from Twin Falls Chapter of Quiet Birdmen after they received presentations from Bill Miller about the Museum and the 190th FIS mission in the cold war.

We also received a donation from Shadow Hills Elementary after Gary made a presentation there.

With 2006 coming to a close, now is an excellent time to make a financial donation to the IMHS. Your help will assure continued expansion of the exhibits, education projects, and programs that are educating young people and citizens on the military's role in our society.

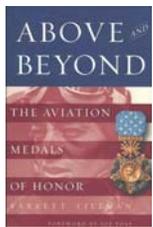
You can also use your credit card to make an *on-line donation* through a web-based organization we have partnered with. You can also use the form at the end of this newsletter for the *standard mail-in donation*. Look for this link on the Museum's web page. **Click the button to donate now.**



*Thank you for your support of the Society and the Idaho Military Museum!* ☆

**NEW ITEMS IN GIFT SHOP**

Local Author Stephanie Hanson (See Letter from the President) has made her recently published book *A Corpsman's Legacy* available to our gift shop. It details the story of her search for her father, a Navy Corpsman who was killed in Vietnam just before she was born. With this book, Corpsman Gary N. Young continues to heal others through the daughter he never knew.



Noted author and historian Barrett Tillman has graciously made his book *Above and Beyond, The Aviation Medals of Honor* available to our gift shop. It covers WWI through Vietnam. *Autographed copies* are now available! Makes a great present for the aviators on your Christmas list!

**UPDATE**

After the story on POW camps in Idaho during WWII ran (See *Pass In Review* 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2006) we received an update from Merv McConnell.

*"For a period of time, probably 1943 or 44, the old National Guard encampment area north of Fort Street and west of the armory was used to intern Italian POWs.*

*"One reason I remember it so well is that on one occasion, the POWs, probably at the instigation of the camp commander, put on a genuine Italian feast for all the Army officers in the area, together with their families. Naturally, my father, as the senior officer in the area, was included and he, my mother, and I attended. [for our new members, Merv is the son of the late Adjutant General Mervin G. McConnell]*

*"As a grade schooler greatly interested in the events of the war, I was agog.*

*The Italians were very well disciplined and I remember that it was the best (and most) Italian food I have ever eaten." ★*

**VOLUNTEER(S) OF THE QUARTER****Introducing Ray and Effie Rae Wallace!**

This quarter's volunteer is a two for one deal. Ray Wallace began volunteering last December in our artifact collections. Ray served ten years in the USMC and USMC Reserve as a combat engineer officer. Ask him and he'll tell you about all the times he spend bobbing around the Atlantic seaboard in a flat bottomed assault craft.

He even participated in the Cuban Missile crisis, his unit having been activated and ready to go in. After serving in the Marine Corps, Ray became interested in mining and geology and has lived and worked in both Montana and Idaho.

After several months of volunteering and going home to tell his wife Effie Rae about all the fun he was having, she decided to join us as well. Effie Rae began volunteering late last summer and the two of them have proven to be an excellent duo, working together on Wednesday afternoons.

Both are fast learners and have become an invaluable part of our artifact collections team. Because of Ray and Effie Rae, our artifact collections area is getting caught up on cataloging, storage and organization. They are very open to learning about how to care for artifacts and once they learn something, they implement it immediately. Ray and Effie Rae, you can be proud of what you have accomplished in a short amount of time!

***Thank you Ray and Effie Rae! We deeply appreciate all your hard work. You are our Volunteers of the Quarter! ★***

**NEWS FROM THE FRONT** - Easy Company 1-183<sup>rd</sup> AVN BN (Atk Hel)

What do you get when you mix home-grown potatoes from Idaho and fresh creamery cheese from Wisconsin? You come up with the best "Cheese and Tater" mix that has ever tantalized your taste buds. Just as the two samples of produce from these two states make an excellent combination, the same is true of the Wisconsin/Idaho "mix" of soldiers in Task Force Talon. Far exceeding the standard for FARP operations and Ammunition upgrades, soldiers from "Easy Company" in TF Talon have excelled in four different locations in Afghanistan.

In FOB Salerno the Soldiers of Easy Company have installed a total of 8 fuel bags upgrading the fuel containment area at the Salerno FOB to over a half million gallons of JP-8. In order to protect the containment liners at the FARP from rotor wash and extreme weather, 19,200 sand bags have been laid to date. The soldiers of Easy Company persisted in completing this task despite severe heat conditions and necessary extended work hours.

KBR fuel operations have also been assisted by Easy Company soldiers. Not only did the soldiers completely remove the previous KBR ground retail point, but they rebuilt a new point which would produce accurate fuel samples and maintain a safe distance from the Ammunition Supply Point (ASP). This task was completed with no heat casualties or recordable first aid cases. These tasks were executed outside of normal operational duties required to support the attack mission of Army aircraft within TF Talon's Area of Responsibility (AOR).

The crews did not stop there; they proceeded to Jalalabad (JAF), Asadabad (ABAD), and Whazi Kwah. At these locations they again went above and beyond the call of normal duty. At JAF, where there was previously no fuel point, Easy

**IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY**

Company soldiers constructed a five point FARP with the ability to draw JP-8 initially from 20K fuel bags. Before the project was completed, additional fuel capacity was added to total 140,000 gallon in support of aviation operations. In order to protect the new fuel point and to keep the bag liners in place, the soldiers laid a total of 22,000 sandbags. They also increased the Ammunition Handling Point (AHA) from two CONEX containers to seven.

Reinforcing the area, they installed several HESCO barriers and sandbags to increase force protection. The soldiers completed these tasks while maintaining 24 hour fuel Operations, including the fueling of (a record) 41 aircraft in one day.

While a number of Easy Company soldiers spent time building up the FARP at JAF, another squad journeyed to ABAD on a mission to double the FARP's fuel capacity by replacing an expired 50K fuel bag with two new ones. Laying a total of 6,400 sandbags, they worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and longevity of the new fuel holding point. The AHA additionally benefited from their efforts as they increased its holding capacity from one CONEX container to four. They also revamped the area around the AHA, increasing force protection.

After the completion of the missions at ABAD and JAF, troops pressed on to Whazi Kwah, where fuel operations had ceased due to the fuel's inability to pass sample testing. Easy Company answered the call to duty and again installed a new bag system, increasing the fuel capacity by 20,000 gallons. They also brought the FARP up to aviation-grade standards, making it now possible to continue the mission by pumping a quality product to the aircraft.

When will this adept company hailing from two great states stop? With only a few months left in theatre, Easy Company soldiers will not settle for second best. They press on to Orgun-E and Ghazni hoping to add the upgrade,

repair, and maintenance of these FARP's to their list of high accomplishments.

To date, these soldiers have fueled 8,044 aircraft and issued 4,011,000 gallons of fuel in a hostile work environment, supporting aviation missions throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan. Often, the glory of mission accomplishment in Aviation battalions is reserved for pilots, but when issuing honor for a job well done, let's not forget Easy Company of the 1-183rd, a group that works together as well as (if not better than) "Cheese and Taters."

- *SFC Towardot*

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

That John H. Bradley, one of the flag raisers at Iwo Jima in the picture below, and whose son James wrote the now famous book *Flags of our Fathers* which has since been made into a movie, attended his Naval Basic Training at **Farragut Idaho?**



In his own words, John stated *"I'm the one that's second from the right as you're looking at the picture."*<sup>1</sup>

The other flag raisers are Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, Corporal Harlon Henry Block, Private First Class Ira Hayes, Private First Class Frank R. Sousley, and Sergeant Michael Strank.

As many of you know, this famous photo is of the second flag raised that day. The first flag was much smaller and was raised about a half hour earlier. It was deemed too small as it couldn't be seen from down below so the second and larger flag was raised. ☆



**JAMES S. BROOKS  
WWII VETERAN  
ADJUTANT GENERAL 1975-1985**

James S. Brooks was born in Los Angeles and raised in Newport Beach, California. He graduated from Newport Harbor Union High School in 1942. *"I went to work driving a dump truck. The first job was at Camp White in Medford, Oregon. When that job was done we came to Boise to work on Gowen Field. Gowen Field was all but completed so we went on to Pocatello and worked on the construction of the airbase there."* (Construction on the Pocatello Airbase began in May 1942 and was completed 15 October 1942)<sup>2</sup> While in Pocatello he met his wife to be, Loa.

He joined the Army Air Force in April 1943 because he wanted a choice in what he would do in the war. If he hadn't enlisted, he would have been drafted when he turned 18. He thought he was signing up to be an aviation mechanic. *"I thought that working on airplane engines was just about as fascinating as anything an 18 year old kid could do. I honestly didn't understand that I had enlisted in the aviation cadet program until I was sent to the Aviation Cadet Center in San Antonito to be classified as to whether I was going to be a pilot, or navigator or a bombardier."*

His basic training began in May in Kearns, Utah and lasted three weeks. From there he went to Wichita, Kansas

to the University of Wichita for what was called CTD (College Training Detachment). Here basic training continued and included physical training and military subjects/customs along with math, physics, science and the theory of flying. In November he was sent to the aviation cadet classification center in San Antonio.



**Brooks, December 1944 at Westover Field, Mass. After completing Advanced Individual Training, individuals were sent here to**

**form the 10-man crews.**

After aptitude testing he was classified as a pilot. That was followed by pre-flight training, then primary flight training, basic flight training, and advanced flight training, each of which ran 10 weeks.

He kept wondering when he would be able to ask about working on the engines. He never was! By now, it was getting more difficult to become a pilot as the ranks were filling up. The number of commissioned officers was limited by Congress so the Army Air Forces needed an alternative. The flight officer program was instituted which created Warrant Officers in lieu of Commissioned Officers. Brooks was uncertain whether he would be commissioned a Second Lieutenant or become a Flight Officer and never learned what criteria was used in the decision.

After primary and basic flight training, his advanced training location was Frederick Army Air Field in Oklahoma. Frederick was *“the armpit of America. It was hot and the program was designed to get rid of people; the pressures were incredible. If you ‘washed out’ you went to Sheppard [Sheppard Field in Texas] for gunnery*

*school or you went to the infantry.”* The food at Frederick was atrocious and many got sick and couldn’t fly. An IG inspection finally cleaned things up. Brooks was commissioned a Second Lieutenant at age 19 years, 5 months when he graduated from flight school in August of 1944. *“By the time I went overseas, I felt I had been as well trained as anybody could get. The training was good, it was tough, it was demanding, but it wasn’t unreasonable.”*

*“By early 1945, I was a B-24 Aircraft Commander. We were scheduled to go to Europe but the war there was about over so they changed our orders and sent us west. As we were being deployed, the staging area for the Pacific at Salinas, Calif. was ‘full,’ so they had to hold the train full of B-24 Crews, somewhere. The ‘somewhere’ was Gowen Field! My crew and I were there for about three weeks.”*

His crew did a bit of flying and practiced bombing on the ranges in the desert south of Gowen Road. Brooks also spent time in celestial navigation trainers. He even *“heard Vaughn Monroe play on the same bandstand that is in the club today.”* (Not only did he get to see Vaughn Monroe play at the Officers Club but he also was able to reacquaint with Loa. It was a tradition for the citizens to invite service members to their homes for Sunday dinner. Brooks contacted Loa’s family in Boise and was invited to dinner; he didn’t yet know that Loa, his fiancé, was in Boise!)

From Gowen Field he went to Salinas, California. *“I went to the Pacific and flew with a famous Bomb Group, The Jolly Rogers, [90th Bomb Group of the 5th Air Force] until the war was over.”* He was based in the Philippines at San Jose, Mindora. The new crews were not immediately accepted by the veterans. No matter how much training a crewmember had received, they were considered novices and had to be ‘checked-out’ by the ‘old timers’ to prove they knew their way around an airplane.



**B-24 Crew 67, 31 March, 1945, Lieut. Brooks – Pilot, standing on the left in the back row**

*“I hadn’t been with the outfit very long before the A-Bomb was dropped. We were packing up and getting ready to move to the northern tip of Okinawa, in fact part of our group was already on ships heading there so I really didn’t get any combat flying to speak of.”*

*The missions the Group did fly were generally ‘nuisance missions.’ We patrolled the area between the Philippines and Formosa looking for anything that floated. That was believed to be how the Japanese were gathering their intelligence for the buildup for the invasion of Japan so our missions were mainly to load up with machine gun ammo and shoot up anything we found in the water.”*

After the A-Bombs were dropped, combat flying ceased. His group participated in the evacuation of the American Prisoners of War from Japan to the Philippines. *“This was the most heart rendering experience I have ever had but it made us all proud to be part of the effort and Americans.”*

Then the missions became *“ash and trash.”* The planes by now were quite war weary, they had been pushed to their limits. Sometimes the planes just gave out and pilots had to visit the ‘bone yard’ for a plane that was flyable.

One of the *“ash and trash”* missions he received was to pick up a new B-24 at the depot in Biak, New Guinea for the older crews of the group to fly home. Upon arriving in Biak, Brooks found

that the depot had moved – to of all places – Clark Field, Manila, where he had just come from!

On the return trip, two of the engines on the plane quit and he barely made it to Peleliu. After landing, the plane was no longer flyable and too “weary” to be repaired so he and his crew had to “*bum a ride back to our base at le Shima*” with a layover in Manila to avoid the first typhoon of the season. *(About Peliliu: “It was a Marine Base and though somewhat out of the way, it was the only place in the Pacific that we knew of that had cold beer so all of our flights north and south included a stop there.”)*

Once while looking for a “war weary” plane at the “bone yard” at Clark Field, he found the “Boise Bronc.” After flying it several times, he decided the engines were not in good enough condition to make the trip to New Guinea so another one was selected. He did however pose for a picture with the plane and it was that photo which ultimately led to his meeting Leland Harter of Boise some 30 years later.



**Brooks and the Boise Bronc**

Harter, now a retired teacher living near Ashland, Oregon, was the one who had named the plane the *Boise Bronc* after the Boise Junior College (BJC) football team and was the one who had flown the plane in combat.

When the war finally ended, he and his crew didn’t have enough points to return home so they were all re-assigned as individuals to wherever they might be needed. Brooks was assigned to a Combat Cargo Group that

flew C-46’s and was the first U.S. unit to land at Yakota, Japan in September 1945. He lost touch with his crew and never learned what happened to them.

He then spent a short time in Korea and with the 32nd Infantry Division on the southern island of Kyushu, Japan. When the 32nd returned home he was detached from the 5th Air Force and assigned to Military Government, General MacArthur’s organization for the governing of Japan, and was made a Procurement Officer. *“My boss gave me the procurement manual, said ‘learn it and then we’ll talk.’ I did and he did and we got along just fine.”*

One memorable event while on this assignment left a lasting impression on him. Outside Kokura, where he was stationed, was a former Japanese Army Ordnance Depot. When sent to investigate an explosion at the depot, long since devoid of all weapons and explosives, he encountered several ammunition storage “igloos”- all open except one and another that was the site of the explosion. (The explosion was attributed to “residual” explosives in the dirt floor.)

After breaking the lock on the one igloo, it was found to contain thousands of bamboo spears about 10’ long and sharpened at one end. His interpreter told him that **these spears were to be used by the women, children and old men to fight with when the invasion of Japan began** as there were not enough weapons for everybody. It truly was Japan’s intent to fight to the bitter end. *“I believe the psychological effect on our invading forces when confronted by women, children and old men on the beaches would have been catastrophic.”*

Brooks returned to CONUS in September 1946. He was released from Active Duty to the Army Reserve in October 1946. He was awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 3 battle stars, the American Defense Medal and the Japan Occupation Medal.

*“I got a job driving dump truck in California but after two weeks I got into a huge row with the Teamsters Union. I knew I had to go back to school. All the schools in California were filled with veterans so that wasn’t looking too good either. I commiserated with my fiancé and she told me I could get into school at Boise Junior College. I packed everything into the back of my 36 Ford and drove to Boise.”* He and Loa were married in June 1947 and he started BJC in September.

*“After arriving in Boise, I went to Gowen Field to see about getting into the ‘new’ Air Guard unit, the 190th Fighter Squadron. I was a bomber pilot and they flew P-51’s. They were not interested in me. In September 1947, I joined Troop A, 116th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in Boise. I became the XO of Troop A (because of seniority).”* The full time technician at the time was Master Sergeant Charles Brandeberry; it was he who filled out the necessary paperwork to bring Brooks into the unit.



**Fort Lewis, June 1948. This is the first time Brooks had ever seen or been in a tank. Note he is still wearing a flight suit, at the time any uniform was acceptable as Army fatigues had not yet been made available for officers to purchase.**

After 2 years at BJC, he transferred to Oregon State for two years. He transferred militarily to the 116th Squadron Headquarters based in Caldwell and stayed on the roster as a “Liaison Officer.” He didn’t attend drills but did attend the annual summer

camp. He graduated in 1951 with a BS Degree in Civil Engineering.



**Fort Lewis, June of 1949. Troop A, 116<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron at summer camp with M8 Armored Cars**

*“I missed my own graduation from college in 1951 because I had to leave to attend summer training at Camp Williams, Utah to make enough money to get my family back to Idaho.”*

‘Brandy’ told Books that the TAG was looking for an engineering officer to develop a training area for the army guard; it was getting too expensive for the Guard to ship all their equipment to other facilities for summer camps. *“Major General Walsh, then AG, hired me right out of school for \$300/mo, not bad in those days. My first job was to design a training site for Idaho, patterned after Camp Williams. I went to work for the Guard and also organized a Light Equipment Company [the 127th Engineer Light Equipment Company]. With this company, I built the first roads, if you want to call them that, and rudimentary ranges in the Orchard Training Area in 1953.”*

In 1952, the Air Guard at the National Guard Bureau discovered it too needed a training site for ANG units in the 8 western states. When the Idaho Air Guard was mobilized for Korea however, Brooks was the only full time engineer officer so he coordinated the ANG’s needs as well. Many of the buildings on Gowen Field were rehabilitated as they were a mess, some had people living in them and some were chicken coops. Most of the work was done ‘in house,’ *“we hired the people, bought the materials and did*

*the work.”* The funding for all of this came from the Air Guard. Brooks became the Post Engineer, and later the State Maintenance Officer. In 1953 Gowen Field became both an Army and Air Guard Training Facility.

He soon added the title of State Budget Officer to his growing list of titles. A captain of the State Guard, John Walters, was the fiscal agent/budget officer for the military department during the war. After the war, the military department started filling up with veterans. Walters was not a federally recognized officer so he retired. This was in the spring of 1952.

Walters had a lady assistant, Helen, who managed the office. General Walsh asked Brooks to move into Walters’ office so that he could tell Helen what to buy when requests came in for building materials, etc. *“Oh, and by the way, by the 15th of August, we have to submit our biannual budget.”*

Brooks then spent a week with the chief accountant in the state auditor’s office in a crash course on the state’s accounting system. Brooks and Helen then put their heads together and came up with a budget. Viola, Brooks was now a budget officer! In January 1953, when the Legislature convened, Brooks presented the budget to the Joint Finance and Appropriation committee. He did the same for the state budget until he retired 32 years later. This was before computers and PowerPoint presentations!

*“Walter York was an LTC on the state Army Guard staff and was the owner of Symms/York Printing in Boise and a very respected businessman that had had a lifelong interest in aviation. He was one of the prime movers in getting the Boise airport moved in 1938 from what was then the Boise Junior College campus to where it is now. Wearing his ‘citizens’ hat, Walt and four of his close aviation-minded business friends were appointed to the first Boise Airport Commission in 1946. The Commission protected and ‘ran’ the airport and selected the Airport*

*Manager. It was a ‘closed’ Commission of five very influential members of the community. In 1963 one of the ‘chosen’ five died. Walt went to General Walsh and said it was time for the Guard to be represented on the Commission to ‘protect’ the military interests at Gowen Field. By then those interests were considerable. I was selected to be the military representative and I stayed on the Commission for 27 years.”*

Now a Lieutenant Colonel, Brooks was selected as Chief of Staff on 1 January 1965. Prior to that, Brooks attended the Engineer Officer Advance Course, the Nuclear Weapons Employment Officer Course and the Command and General Staff Officer Course. He also attended specialized management courses in Logistics, Post Engineer, Civilian Personnel, Labor Relations, Equipment Maintenance and Disaster/Civil Defense.

Using architectural firms from throughout Idaho, from 1955 to 1967, Brooks supervised the design and construction of armories throughout the state as far north as Bonners Ferry and as far east as Driggs as well as the original facilities for Army Aviation, the USPFO, the Army Guard Support Maintenance and the Adjutant General’s Headquarters buildings at Gowen Field.

Brooks was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and awarded Federal Recognition as a Brigadier General on 1 December 1967. One of his principle duties as Chief of Staff and Assistant Adjutant General was the planning and development of the Gowen Field Training facility. Having originally established the 200 square mile range and maneuver area (now the Orchard Training Area) in 1953, he was responsible for its use by Guard, Reserve and then Active Army units from throughout the United States on a continuing basis. His service did not go unnoticed; he was awarded the Legion of Merit!



**Summer 1966; from left to right - Col Kenny Nordling, COL Jim Brooks, Brig Gen Jim Trail, MG George Bennett, LTC Everett Morrison and Maj Charles Rountree**

Brooks maintained flying status for 35 years. He served as State Aviation Officer attending courses in Aviation Safety at Ft. Rucker, Alabama and the University of Southern California. From 1970 to 1974 and in addition to his duties in Idaho, he was Chairman of the Army Aviation Advisory Committee in the Office of the Chief, National Guard Bureau, Washington D.C. during the post-Viet Nam modernization of aviation in the Army Guard.

He published articles in *Aviation Digest* and holds the Master Army Aviator designation. He received the *Francis S. Greenleaf Award* for Aviation Excellence from the Chief, National Guard Bureau and was the highest ranking Army Guard Officer in the nation on flying status.

General Brooks was appointed Adjutant General/Commanding General of both the Army and Air Guard, Chief, Bureau of Disaster Services (Civil Defense) and Director of Selective Service for Idaho on 1 December 1974. He was promoted to Major General and received Senate confirmation on 19 June 1975. He attended courses on National Military Strategy at both the Army and National War Colleges.

In addition to his duties in Idaho, he served as a member of the Department

of Army Special Staff for five years as a member of the Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee. He served two of the five years as Chairman of the committee and as a member of the Reserve Components Coordination Council of the Department of Army Staff, both responsible for advising the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff on policy matters affecting the Guard and Reserve. He received a second Legion of Merit at the conclusion of this appointment.

During his tenure as Adjutant General he represented the Governor in recovery efforts following five Presidentially declared Disasters in Idaho, the largest being the failure of the Teton Dam in Eastern Idaho in 1976.

In 1983, General Brooks agreed with the Army's Training Support Center to use the Orchard Training Area and the Idaho Army Guard as co-sponsors of a test and evaluation of various Armor-related training simulators under development by the Support Center.

This was the Guard's first direct involvement with the application of "hi-tech" in training aids. Subsequent evaluations and interest by Army leadership led to the establishment of a Field Activity of the Army Research Institute at Boise State University and Gowen Field for the sole purpose of developing new training techniques for the Guard and Reserve using the Idaho Guard as a test bed. Later cooperative agreements with the Armor Center at Ft. Knox, Kentucky and the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C. led to the establishment of a specialized Tank Commanders Course and other Armor related courses at Gowen Field for use by Guard and Reserve units nation-wide.

General Brooks retired from active status on 5 April 1985 after 42 years and one day of continuous service to the Nation and 38 years to the state of Idaho. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal upon retirement.

During his active service with the Guard, in addition to being a member and subsequent chairman of the Boise City Airport Commission, he also served as a member of the State Law Enforcement Planning Commission, as a member of the first Boise City Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and as a member of the Boise Mayor's Wastewater Management Committee and as a member of the Greater Boise Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee.

Following retirement, General Brooks served as a consultant to the General Accounting Office on management of the National Guard and to a private contractor in the development of an Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan for the Orchard Training Area. He served four years as a special assistant to the Mayor of Boise for Transit Affairs. He served four years on the Executive Council of the National Guard Association of the United States and as Chairman of its Track Vehicle Task Force that lead the effort resulting in the first M1 Abrams series tanks being issued to the National Guard.

He has published articles in *National Guard* calling attention to the need for Armor modernization in the Guard and in *Army Aviation* outlining the challenges faced by the Guard in rebuilding Army Aviation following the View Nam conflict.

He is a member of the Association of the U.S. Army and the Air Force Association. He continued to be active in community affairs as Chairman of the Idaho Transportation Department's Public Transportation Advisory Council; as a member of the Ways and Means Committee and the Management Advisory Council of Valley Regional Transit, the Regional Public Transportation Authority for Ada/Canyon Counties. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Eagle Sewer District

and the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority.

General Brooks and his wife, Loa, moved to Garden Valley shortly after he retired but recently moved back to the Treasure Valley. They currently reside in Eagle, Idaho. They have one son and one daughter, a second passing away in 1983.

*"I enjoyed phenomenal opportunities over the years and had a great career, one most officers would envy and I think I was pretty good at what I did. I did most everything, at one time or another, except serve with troops. A personal disappointment for me. The two years I had the Engineer Company were great, but even that came to an abrupt end. My boss said he couldn't afford for me to be "sidetracked" with command responsibilities as there were too many important things that needed doing. I did get to C&GS because it was required for promotion.*

*I was appointed Asst. AG as an 05 and had two 06's working for me but, my*

*protégés, like Ben Campbell, Jack Kane and Mike Squire all had troop command. I didn't and I've always been sorry. I tried to see to it that the people coming up behind me did have the opportunity."*

On 27 June 2004, in recognition and appreciation of his exemplary record of service, the Auditorium in the Adjutants General Building on Gowen Field was named in his honor.



**General Brooks next to the display commemorating his service in the James S. Brooks Auditorium**

*Editors Note: A very special thank you to General Brooks for sharing his story with us and also to John Norris for his assistance with some of the photos. ★*

**FROM ALL OF US  
at the Idaho Military Historical  
Society and Museum -a very**

*Merry Christmas  
And Happy New Year!*



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Comments, articles or suggestions are welcome! Please contact us at 422.4841 or visit our web site at:  
<http://inghro.state.id.us/museum>

**Footnotes:**  
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq87-31.htm>  
<sup>2</sup> Lenard J. Nelson and Bessie M.S. Roberts-Wright, *The First Fifty Years*, USA, 1993, pg 68

**JUST IN CASE** -Have you sent in your renewal for 2007? Don't forget, donations are tax deductible.



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