



PASS IN REVIEW

“Shedding Light On Idaho’s Military History”

4th Quarter

December 2008

MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND ELECTIONS

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Idaho Military Historical Society was held on November 15, 2008. At the meeting, the Annual election was held for four members of the Board of Directors.

Elected were:

Rick Johnson
Jeff Packer
Charles Ake
Gary Donnelly

You may have noticed that this year, there were four vacancies instead of the normal three. The reason for this is: **The Board is very pleased to announce that our new Executive Director is Ken Swanson. He will be joining us full time beginning in January.**

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

President – Russ Trebby
Vice-President – Rick Johnson
Secretary – Gayle Alvarez
Treasurer – Bill Miller

Following the election, the Board treated the membership and volunteers to a tailgate party with BBQ brisket, hotdogs, hamburgers, baked beans, potato salad, and the works while we enjoyed watching the Broncos go up against the Vandals. R.C. Willey graciously loaned us a large flat screen TV for the event.



Members and Volunteers enjoy watching BSU trounce the Uofl while feasting on hamburgers, hotdogs, beef brisket and all the fixins.

“I look forward to serving as the president of the board of directors of the IMHS in the coming year. I would also like to thank everybody for all of their support and wish everybody a very *Merry Christmas* and Happy New Year.” - *Russ Trebby*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am certainly looking forward to being at the Idaho Military History Museum full time starting in January. I think we have a great start and can build on all of the success that the Museum has already achieved.

For those of you that volunteer and docent I really want to hear your suggestions, complaints, and ideas for the future, or whatever. You are the ones that have held the Museum

together and make it work. I look forward to working with you. We have come a long way these past few years and I believe that many great things still lie ahead for us. I believe that together we can enhance the Museum and continue to make it something we can all be proud of and that the public will enjoy visiting.

-*Ken Swanson*

PEARL HARBOR REMEMBERED

On Sunday, December 7, 2008, the 67th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Naval Reserve hosted a Pearl Harbor Remembrance at the Museum. Gowen Field Security opened the gate between the Museum and the base and many guardsmen joined the proceedings.



The Navy arrives

The event began at 0900, the same local time that the attack on Pearl Harbor began on December 7, 1941.

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ETC(SS) Curry welcomed those in attendance and gave a brief history of the attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.



Retired Admiral Archie Clemins, former Commander of the Pacific Fleet, addressed those gathered which numbered roughly 100.



Major General Lafrenz was one of the guest speakers and read a proclamation from the Governor declaring December 7, 2008, as *Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day* in Idaho.



Following Admiral Clemins, two sailors from the Boise NOSC laid a wreath at the foot of the flag pole, the USMC fired a rifle volley and EO1 (ScW) Lower played Taps.

attendance. The remembrance was poignant and very well received.



Many of the attendees visited the Museum afterwards, several for the first time.



After the visitation and reception concluded, Lieutenant Commander Fryberger and ETC(SW) Brown moved the wreath to the Museum's Pearl Harbor exhibit.



Sailors from the NOSC rendered honors.



The local POW organization also took part in the program and numerous other veterans organizations, including a Pearl Harbor Survivor were also in

Commander Fryberger was very pleased with how things went and is seriously considering holding a similar remembrance next year.



In Remembrance, lest we forget.

NEW MEMBERS

Special Welcome to:

- ★ Raymond Brasch
- ★ Frederick Gilson
- ★ Janelle Gilson
- ★ Robert Suggs
- ★ H.R. 'Rik' Williamson

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MOST WANTED



➤ A legal sized 4-5 drawer file cabinet. Our Archives continue to grow and Fred's existing file cabinets are overflowing.

➤ **LADIES – tell us your stories!** March is Womens History month and our file drawer on womens military history stories is bare. Please share your story with us! You needn't worry about not being the Honor Graduate of your class or the Top Gun in your training group. Just tell us what you did and where you were. To share your story, please e-mail Gayle at galvarez@imd.idaho.gov. ★

ENDOWMENT UPDATE



Our Endowment balance currently stands at **\$41,867.00**

Recent Endowment

Donors include:

- Fred & Ann Anderson**
- Frank L. Boguslawski**
(in honor of all veterans)
- James S. Brooks**
(in memory Donald Troyer)
- Walton C. Glass**
(in memory Donald Troyer)
- Lei Lonnie Wood**

With 2008 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. When was the last time you visited our Museum? Stop by and you will be pleasantly impressed by our progress.

Also, the next time you purchase something on line, the Museum can receive a commission on your purchase. **The only 'catch' is that you have to access the retailer through this website:**



The number of businesses that are listed is sizeable, growing, and include everything from **Home Depot to Best Buy, Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, 1-800flowers, even ebay will donate a portion of your purchase to the Museum.**

Thank you for your support of the Society and the Idaho Military History Museum!★

UPCOMING BOOK ON HISTORY OF THE IDAHO AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Early next year, our own **Bill Miller** will publish the book **"FIRST CLASS OR NOT AT ALL--The Story of the Idaho Air National Guard 1946 to 1975."**



Pictured here is the actual book cover picturing three fearless P-51 pilots: Lt Stan Woolley, Lt Harry O'Neil, and Capt Harold W. "Waxy" Wheeler. Notice the mission statement!

The following is an excerpt from the book.

Bill Coburn related to me this story of the 190th Fighter Squadron's 1949 summer camp at Moses Lake Washington, back in the days when the entire unit went away for two weeks to train.

"We were at Moses Lake, shooting--Kenny and Martin and I--shooting air-to-ground gunnery on these panels; ten-foot panels with a bull. And we dipped our shells in paint, so that everybody knew what color was his when the sleeve [gunnery target] was brought back. Well anyway, we were shooting on this air-to-ground target on the desert, and as we were flying up there we saw an old dirt airstrip--auxiliary strip.



Bill Coburn Straps in for Gunnery Mission

"Well, I'm down there shooting, you know, and I'd just lobbed off a few, when Kenny calls me and says 'You got a little smoke coming out of your airplane.' So I looked around and everything looked normal, so I came back and made another pass, and then he said 'I'm getting a little oil on my windshield,' so that took my attention to the oil pressure gage. I looked down and it was right on zero! Well, I knew that 1500 hp liquid-cooled engine wouldn't last long without oil!"

"So I immediately converted, and we popped up to about 7,000 feet. So now we're looking for that damned airfield, and I can't see it, Martin can't see it, and Kenny can't see it.

Martin says 'How are you doing?,' and I says 'Well, this baby's going to quit pretty quick, because right now I'm getting smoke in the cockpit and I'm down to 21 inches manifold pressure, and about 1800 RPM.' So, I said 'I think I'll just belly this thing in the desert.' I'd already lost an engine once on takeoff at Boise on runway 28, and almost slid into the canal, so I knew how to do that!



Coburn's Previous Engine Failure

"And so Kenny says 'Bail out--you bail out,' because, as he says 'There's boulders down there as big as cars!' [laughing] So I'm going about 220 knots, and I take off my harness, and check my belt, and everything, and roll my canopy back and looked out into that slipstream--and I thought I was going to die from fright! I said 'to hell with this,' so I just rolled the canopy shut, put the belt on, and I said 'I'm gonna' put 'er on the ground.'

"Once in a while I'd see a little dirt road out there, and just about this time Martin says 'There's the field, right over there to the left,' so when I saw the field, I was too high to go straight in. Well, now I'm just about out of power, and I said 'Here I go,' and I just dove that sucker for the runway. I got down and I was holding maybe, 190 or 200, and just as I got down to about 500 feet--I didn't really 'rack' it around--just gently pulled it around, and kept it in pretty close. And I come way back around here [gesturing with hand], and about here I put the gear down. I put the gear down and about a quarter flaps, and right here that old prop just blew off--like a whale, when

it popped the coolant--and then things got real quiet!



"I was just nursing it in, and I could see the other end of the runway was elevated but in front there was a damned pit about 200 feet. And I thought "Holy Moly, if I get below there I'm a dead man," because I can't even bail out. So I just came up over the edge of the runway, you know--we always three-pointed--so I just pulled that baby up there and [smack hands] put 'er on and got on the binders. And about that time I looked up, and there's seven or eight wild horses out there on the runway, and they were just running like hell. That one white one, I didn't miss him six feet!

"The runway was around 2,300 feet long, and I turned off in about fifteen-sixteen hundred feet, so I went out in the sagebrush and spun it around. And they're still flying around up there.

"So I got out and looked at that thing, and you couldn't tell what color that P-51 was, it was just black with oil! And I said 'What in the world could have happened?' so I walked around to the front of the airplane, and looked around, and then I saw a hole in my oil cooler about that big! [4" circle] And what happened was, a bullet had hit that hardpan and ricocheted up, and I flew right into it. So, anyway, I got back in and called them on the radio and said 'Send a T-6 over here and pick me up.'

"They brought out a T-6, and the next day, we loaded up a new engine in the C-47, and I flew the C-47 out there, and

landed--with mechanics--and we changed that engine, and I flew it out [laughing]."

"Anyway, back home, Rosemary [Trail's wife] called up my wife and says 'Isn't that just awful about Bill?' And she just about ...[fell out of her]... wheelchair, 'you know what I mean? And she said 'No!' Rosemary said 'Well, he shot himself down, up in Washington.' And it came out in the paper that I'd shot myself down!" ☆

IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY



**GUY SIMPSON
COMPANY B**

FIRST IDAHO VOLUNTEERS

Guy Simpson was born on March 19, 1879, on the family farm above Slaughter (now Auburn) Washington Territory. He was the second surviving son of William George and Sarah (Weaver) Simpson.

The Simpson family arrived in Washington Territory in 1873 when Guy's uncle Bob relocated there. Guy's father, mother and older brother Bert followed in October 1875, landing in Seattle after a six-week sail up the coast from San Francisco.

Washington Territory and Puget Sound were considerably different from today. The largest city in the Territory was Walla Walla and Seattle was just another mill town with a population of about 2,500. Puget Sound transportation was mainly by water. A

successful farm required access to navigable water. Guy's parents, after a brief stay in Seattle, claimed 98 acres of homestead land on the Green River 30 miles SE of Seattle near Slaughter, Washington Territory. They lived on this farm for 18 years where in addition to Guy, a sister Lillie was born in 1883. Here Guy received his earliest impressions and elementary education.

Guy's parents William and Sarah seem to have prospered. Sarah built the first hotel in Slaughter/Auburn, nicknamed the Slaughter House, while William entered the booming hop farming business.

Military Service was a tradition in the Simpson family, Guy's father was a veteran of the Civil War having served briefly (six months) as a 15-year old private guarding Union draftees at Ft. Douglas, Illinois. Guy also had two uncles who had served in the Civil War and his Uncle Bob who frequently lived with the family, had spent three years with the 4th Delaware during all the Army of the Potomac campaigns.

Two of his uncles, Thomas and James Simpson, had served during the Civil War in the 1st Delaware and had been killed respectively at Antietam and Spotsylvania. A fifth Simpson uncle, John, had spent three years in the western campaigns with the 92nd Illinois Mounted Infantry.

In addition, Guy's father William was active in the community, particularly with the local post of the GAR having served in several offices, including post Commander. (The GAR or Grand Army of the Republic was a Civil War veterans organization which was quite influential during the 1880's and 1890's.) There can be little doubt that Guy was influenced by the stories of these former soldiers.

Guy's family life started out well but problems began to manifest themselves with a drop in hop prices followed in 1892 by the arrival of the hop louse which destroyed the crop in Western Washington. Hard on the heels of the

crop failure was a depression that began in 1893 and contracted markets and tightened credit.

Like many farmers, Guy's family needed credit advanced on the next crop to get through the growing season. The family thus faced a failed crop, unpaid debt, and an inability to borrow more funds to tide them through to a possible more prosperous year. The result was the family lost their farm to their creditors.



Guy Simpson, age 8¹

They then began a nomadic existence in eastern Washington and western Idaho in search of a new start. The loss of the farm and uprooting of the family put additional strains on what must have been a deteriorating marriage. In July of 1895, Sarah abandoned the family. This then left William 46, Bert 22, Guy 15, and Lillie 11 to find new areas to eke out a living.

The family migrated between Yakima, Walla Walla and Spokane, Washington before settling in Seneaquteen, Idaho in 1897. This former county seat of Kootenai County, 55 miles from Spokane, Washington, was a ferry crossroads on the Pend Oreille River across from Laclede, Idaho.

The area had been a Hudson's Bay post and supply point to the gold rush to the interior of British Columbia. Now the economy was based on timber. The

two boys worked in timber, William found periodic work in Spokane and pursued a Civil War pension; Lillie kept house.

Guy was now poor, living in a broken home in rural Idaho, without any obvious prospects. This was his situation when in April 1898 the United States small professional frontier army needed to be greatly expanded to fight an overseas war.

The "USS *Maine*, a second-class battleship built between 1888 and 1895, was sent to Havana in January 1898 to protect American interests during the long-standing revolt of the Cubans against the Spanish government. In the evening of 15 February 1898, *Maine* sank when her forward gunpowder magazines exploded. Nearly three-quarters of the battleship's crew died as a result of the explosion."²

It was widely held that Spain attacked the ship and retaliation was called for. Congress obliged and declared "that war has existed since the twenty-first day of April, anno Domini eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, including said day, between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain."³

The declaration also stated, "Whereas, by an act of Congress entitled 'An Act to provide for temporarily Increasing the Military Establishment of the United States in time of war and for other purposes,' approved April 22, 1898; the President is authorized, in order to raise a volunteer army, to issue his proclamation calling for volunteers to serve in the Army of the United States."⁴

The country hoped to raise, "volunteers to the aggregate number of 125,000, in order to carry into effect the purpose of the said Resolution; the same to be apportioned, as far as practicable, among the several States and Territories and the District of Columbia, according to population, and to serve for two years, unless sooner discharged."⁵

States governors, to include Idaho, made similar proclamations. "Every company of the Idaho National Guard responded to the call, and from May 7 to May 14, 1898, the companies were mustered into the service of the United States as Companies A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H, First Idaho Volunteers."⁶

Governor Steunenberg of Idaho had already volunteered the state militia and the call went out for volunteers to bring the units up to authorized strength. It is not hard to imagine that exposure to stories picturing something more exciting than the daily grind of the 19th century farm set the stage for Guy's subsequent enlistment. The other factors which made military service attractive to Guy were no doubt economic and familial. Guy Simpson immediately enlisted as a private in Company B, First Idaho Volunteers on April 26, 1898. He was 19 years of age.

Company B, designated from Lewiston, recruited volunteers from north Idaho, including Guy Simpson. Guy enlisted at nearby Rathdrum, Idaho, three days after the initial call and life began to move quickly for him and the other Company's members. The Company arrived in Boise on or about May 6, 1898 and was mustered into service May 14, 1898.



Cropped image of the First Idaho Volunteers flag. Flag is on display in The Adjutant General's Building on Gowen Field⁷

The soldiers went "into camp at Camp Stevison, near the Boise Barracks. The would-be soldiers were subjected to a severe medical examination, which weeded out the companies considerably. These vacancies were filled by men who came to Boise from parts of the State where there were no companies formed. As fast as the companies were filled they were mustered in by Lieut. Walsh, 4th U.S. Cav. Senator Shoup having secured permission for Idaho to double her quota, the 1st Idaho Infantry was composed of two battalions, of four companies, of a maximum strength of eighty-one enlisted men to the company. All the companies of the National Guard retained their name, except Company I of Boise which became Company H. They were assigned to battalions as follows: Companies F, A, H and E formed the 1st and Companies D, G, B and C the 2d."⁸



Idaho Volunteers Depart From the Boise Train Station⁹

On May 19, 1898, at 9:00 a.m., "the line was formed and the march to the depot began."¹⁰ The unit then traveled by train to Oakland, California. They then crossed the bay to San Francisco and marched up Market Street to Camp Merritt on May 22, 1898. Here the unit was equipped and received training in preparation for their departure for the Philippines. The war had expanded significantly since the April 21, 1898 declaration. What had started as an effort to remove the Spanish rulers of Cuba was now a two Ocean assault on Spain's remaining colonial possessions.

On May 1, 1898, Admiral Dewey's fleet had destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila harbor opening the Pacific front

in the Spanish war. While the Spanish fleet was eliminated the Admiral did not have the resources to undertake a ground action. The United States thus was dispatching troops to follow up the naval victory. These included the First Idaho. Three contingents of troops under the overall command of Major General Wesley Merritt were dispatched from San Francisco beginning on May 25, 1898. The First Idaho was part of the third contingent sent under the immediate command of General Arthur MacArthur.

The First Idaho left San Francisco in June 1898. Many official sources give the date as June 27 but the *Official History of the Operations of the First Idaho Infantry, U.S.V. in the Campaign in the Philippine Islands*, recorded the date as the 26th. At 2:40 P.M., they steamed out of the bay on the transport *Morgan City*.



SS Morgan City

Many men experienced seasickness and James Camp, author of the previously mentioned official history of the operations of the First Idaho Infantry, stated that "the effort to comply with this demand interfered with all other business for several days."¹¹ The 4th of July was celebrated on board ship and appears to have been a joyous occasion. On July 6th the coastline of Hawaii came into view. After dinner and a public reception at the Palace, they returned to the ship and continued on to the Philippines on July 7th, arriving at "the harbor of Cavite" on July 31, 1898.¹²

On August 6th, they landed at Paranaque and on the 9th, "our turn came to go into the trenches for twenty-four hours. It was a disagreeable duty, as the roads were muddy from the

camp to the trenches. It rained as it can only rain in this country, and when we arrived there, we found that the ditches back of the trenches were full of water. In this the sentinels had to stand knee deep.”¹³

On the 12th of August the men learned that the advance on Manila would be the next day. Guy, three months after enlistment at Rathdrum, Idaho, had found himself in Manila harbor. The First Idaho landed in time to assume a support role in the capture of Manila on August 13, 1898. This effectively ended Spanish Philippine resistance. The war with Spain officially ended December 10, 1898,¹⁴ and included the U.S. annexation of the Philippines, a watershed change from the wars initial objective to free Cuba from its Spanish rulers.

However since the Spanish surrender of Manila, a more determined Philippine opposition had appeared. The Philippine insurgents, displeased with the proposed U.S. Philippine occupation, continued their war of independence against U.S. forces once the Spanish had been displaced. The First Idaho would now participate in a number of actions against the insurgents.



Guy Simpson (center) and some of his fellow Co B members in Manila, 1898¹⁵

Guy Simpson had landed with his unit and participated in the Manila action but soon became ill with malaria fever, chronic dysentery and a chronic cough (described as both bronchitis and tuberculosis). He was not unique. Camp stated, “We were seldom dry, as the rains were so heavy that our poncho was soon wet through. When we came

ashore we brought no extra clothing or blankets. This added greatly to our discomforts for there was no chance to have dry clothes even to sleep in. After being wet all day, to lie down in wet clothes and cover up with a wet poncho was neither comfortable nor healthy.”¹⁶

In the April time frame Camp recorded, “With the beginning of the rainy season, malaria and dysentery became prevalent, our location in the rice swamps making us particularly susceptible to these diseases. The sick list steadily increased, until less than twenty per cent of the men were fit for duty in some of the companies.”¹⁷

The great scourge of this war in the tropics was not bullets but disease. Guy seems to have never fully recovered from these illnesses. He spent September through December in brigade, division and corp. hospitals. While a medical discharge was initiated on November 11, 1898, he seems to have returned to duty in early 1899. Here he was with his company in heated actions against the insurgents at Santa Anna on February 5, 1899, and Caloueau (Caloocan) on February 10, 1899.



Company B, Taken in the field near Pasai. Simpson is believed to be in the front row, second from the right¹⁸

Guy was back in the hospital in May and was under medical care when the unit left the Philippines on July 29, 1899. Upon his arrival in San Francisco on the U.S.A. transport *Grant*, “late in the night of August 29th,”¹⁹ he was transferred to the Presidio hospital but was discharged with his unit on September 25, 1899. “On the morning of September 25th, the

regiment was mustered out, and that evening went on board a special free train which landed them in Boise, September 28th, tired but happy to be once more in their native State.”²⁰

The First Idaho Volunteer Infantry was met with large crowds of relatives and friends. They were even “guests of the Idaho State Fair, and occupied their last camp ground by the old Catholic Church.”²¹

Guy, never well, by October 5, 1899, was in Spokane where with his fathers help he applied for a medical pension. Unprepared for this type of situation, the Federal government used a marked up Civil War era application. Guy’s health continued to deteriorate. He was looked after by local Red Cross volunteers and visited by his Company Captain.



The Actual Flag Carried Into Battle By The First Idaho Volunteers. Flag is on display in The Adjutant General’s Building on Gowen Field²²

Guy never recovered and before any action on his pension occurred, he died on December 16, 1899. His burial included an honor guard of his former company comrades and for lack of a more appropriate location he was buried with the Civil War veterans in the GAR section of the Fairview cemetery, Spokane, Washington.

The Idaho legislature honored those who died in service with the First Idaho by placing a plaque with their names in the State Capitol in Boise. Guy Simpson’s name appears on the plaque among those remembered.



Plaque honoring those who died in service with the First Idaho. Finger in picture is pointing to Guy Simpson's name. Plaque reads:

The Deceased Idaho Volunteers To The Volunteer Soldiers Of Idaho Who Gave Their Lives For Their

Country In The War of 1898-1899 With Spain
This Tablet Is Dedicated In Sorrow Gratitude and Pride By The Loyal Women Of Idaho²³
 His other memorial came from within his family. His sister Lillie in 1903 honored her late brother by naming her only son after him. This was Guy Wheeler, the father of Bill Wheeler who contributed greatly to this story.

References:
The History of the Idaho National Guard, Orlan J. Svingen, editor, 1995, Idaho National Guard

Pictorial History of Our War with Spain for Cuba's Freedom, Trumbull White, 1898, The Whitaker & Ray Co.


The War with Spain in 1898, David F. Trask, 1981, University of Nebraska Press

NARA: Pension and Service records of Guy Simpson

Footnotes:
 1, 15, 23 Photograph courtesy of Bill Wheeler Collection.
 2 Navy Historical Center, Washington DC.
 3, 4, 5 Center of Military History.
 6 *An Illustrated History of the State of Idaho*, The Lewis Publishing Co, Chicago, 1899.
 8, 10-13, 16-21 Camp, James, Private, *Official History of the Operations of the First Idaho Infantry, U.S.V. in the Campaign in the Philippine Islands*, The Hicks-Judd Company Publishers, San Francisco, 1899.
 9 Idaho State Historical Society Archives.
 14 <http://www.spanamwar.com/1stidaho.html>.
 7, 21 Photograph courtesy of Gayle Alvarez Collection.

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JUST IN CASE - Have you sent in your renewal for 2009? 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.



IDAHO MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Heroic Past...Proud Future