

PASS IN REVIEW

"Shedding Light on Idaho's Military History"



The official newsletter
Idaho Military History
and Museum | Spring



Notes from an Idaho P.O.W.'s diary

Lt. Daniel Davis, a fighter pilot from Pocatello, Idaho, served in WWII. He was credited with two enemy aircraft shot down before he was shot down and captured in 1944. This edited excerpt comes from a diary he kept while a prisoner of war in Germany.

The morning of September 11, 1944 was rather cloudy but a very good flying day for England. I was flying the No. 4 position with Lt Prybazeski #1, Lt Jamison #2, Lt Hauseholder #3. Just as we crossed the Rhine R. (river), Lt Hauseholder, #3, turned back with engine trouble. About fifteen minutes later, around 11:15, my high blower cut out. I monkeyed around with it for a while but it wouldn't go on. I figured I may as well finish the mission even though I couldn't pull more than 28" [an indication of engine power]. I could just keep up with the flight with my throttle wide open.

About 11:45 someone called in and reported fighters in the area. We were flying about 25,000 feet! About five minutes later we spotted a gaggle of Me109's and Fw190's in a huge Luftberry [a defensive turning aerial maneuver]. By that time we had dropped our wing tanks and pushed everything to the firewall. The rest of the section had gotten in the Luftberry by the time I got there, there was nothing else to do but go in alone and wish like hell it was a nightmare—it wasn't, much to my regret.

I looked around and noticed about fifty Me109's coming in on us. Our flight leader had called in for help and reported about 100 Me109's and Fw190's and with the fifty Me109's coming in it made a rough total of 150 Jerry fighters.

I tried to talk myself into saying I wasn't scared, but hell I couldn't even talk. There was just seven of us trying to corner 150 Jerries over Jerryland. I entered the Luftberry from the top about 20,000 feet. I went around with them six or seven times just looking them over and trying to figure out how I could be a hero without the usual three easy lessons. I could see the expressions on the Jerry pilots' faces, sometimes I



Lt. Daniel Davis, from Pocatello, in the cockpit of his P-38 Lightning fighter during WWII. Davis was a P.O.W. in Germany from 1944 until freed in 1945. (Davis family photo)

would fly on their wings so close I could tell time on their wristwatches. I could see they were scared of me, so I finally decided to pick one out and persuade him to leave the party early. I picked a Fw190 and fired a couple of bursts at him, I got some strikes and pieces flew off his plane. I fired another burst and he burst into flame, he broke out of the Luftberry and started down. I broke with him firing another burst, he went into a spin and the last I seen of him was an explosion.

I got back in the Luftberry, and by this time I was down to 12,000 feet. I still don't know why the hell they didn't get me when I broke out of the Luftberry, I guess I was born to be hung. About that time the Jerries started for the deck and they really went down fast. I found myself alone except for a Me109. I turned into him firing all the time, pieces flew off his plane, he flew straight and level even after I hit him until I got on his tail. I gave him a final burst and white

— See IDAHO P.O.W. page 3

IMHS annual membership meeting report

By Gayle Alvarez
Secretary

Members of the Idaho Military Historical Society have filled four openings on the group's board for this year. Charles Ake and Rick Johnson were re-elected and two new board members were elected. Please give a warm welcome to Pete Glick and Carlo Fenicottero.

After the elections, the Board of Directors met and elected its officers for the year. Here are the results:

Robert Lytle has accepted the position of President. Pete Glick has accepted the position of Vice-President. Gayle Alvarez was re-elected as Secretary and Gary Donnelly was re-elected as Treasurer.

The other Board members are Charles Ake, Bill Beck, Carlo Fenicottero, Russ Trebby, and Rick Johnson.

Bill Miller has stepped down from the Board but will still be actively involved in IMHS activities. We thank him for his many efforts and contributions to the IMHS and the Museum. They are deeply appreciated.

Ken Swanson who recently stepped down as our Executive Director has been presented by the Board with the title of Director Emeritus. A Director Emeritus is a former member of a company's board of directors who has completed his service as director but continues to be associated with the business as an adviser.

You're invited to attend museum board meetings

As friends and supporters of the Idaho Military History Museum you have an open invitation to attend and participate in the museum's monthly board meetings.

The meetings are usually held the last Wednesday of the month at the Museum starting at 18:30 and last for about 60 minutes.

We want and value the involvement and help of our fellow museum supporters. We welcome both questions and suggestions.

We don't claim to have all the answers, so we can always use new input, ideas and enthusiasm of board members and friends.

Anyone interested in serving as a future member on the board is welcome to attend and learn how they

can help to improve and support the museum.

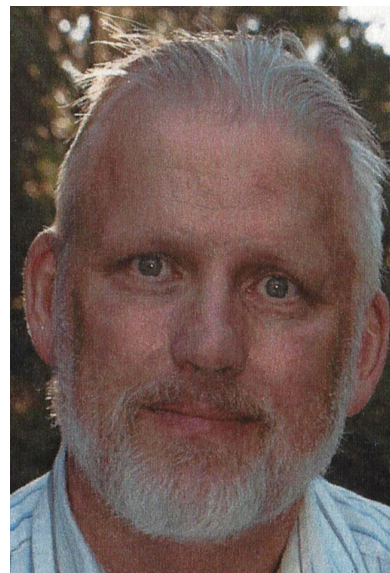
Call Jeff Packer at 208-272-4841 with questions.

PASS IN REVIEW

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



Charles M. Blake
1960 – 2015

Charles M. Blake, the museum's Curator of Collections, passed away Jan. 9, 2015, shortly after taking part in the governor's inauguration ceremony at the Idaho Capitol.

Charles was born May 25, 1960 in Harrison Township, Ohio to a military family. He attended high school in Killeen, Texas, where he was a member of the National Honor Society, ROTC and football team.

Charles joined the U.S. Air Force in 1978, where he had an accomplished career as an Aircraft Mechanic, Aeromedical Evacuation Technician, Repair and Reclamation Technician, Crew Chief, Flight Line Chief/Expeditor, Production Superintendent, and Senior Weapons Systems Coordinator. He retired as a Master Sergeant in 2003.

Charles and Donna were mar-

— See CHARLES BLAKE page 5

An Idaho P.O.W.'s Diary from page 1

and black smoke poured out of his right side and his prop was just wind milling. I'm still kicking my ass when I think of my biggest mistake which I pulled with that Jerry. I got too damn curious about this Jerry and forgot where my flaps handle was, and that usually to slow down one shouldn't cut the throttle. I drifted alongside the 109 flying show formation with him and looked him and his plane over. His tail and fuselage were shot to pieces with large holes in them, his canopy was blown off and smoke was pouring out of his plane.

I started to pull up and turn to the left. I looked over my shoulder and knew that I'd bought it. I could see his guns firing and could damn near look down his gun barrels. As his slugs hit me, I stalled out and went into a spin, I could smell smoke and it was so hot I thought I would roast. I popped the stick forward and recovered from the Spin, it was so hot I had to close my eyes. I reached for the canopy release handle and pulled it to release the canopy, it came off easy and I leaned back and wondered why the hell I couldn't leave. I finally realized my safety belt wasn't unfastened, I reached down and unfastened it and I must have been diving pretty fast because I didn't make a move to jump—I was just sucked out of the plane in a sitting position.

The next thing I knew everything was quiet. I opened my eyes and I was stomach down, head and shoulders below my feet. The first thing I saw was the 109, later I saw him crash at the edge of a small forest, God rest his soul. I figured I may as well pull the ripcord and see if my chute was going to give

me any trouble, but it didn't, it opened and was really a beautiful sight. My first sane thought as I looked over the ground below was "this is a hell of a way to fight a war."

Below me was a forest where the 109 had crashed. I guess it was rather windy because my chute damn near spilled several times. I drifted over a huge factory on the opposite end from the forest.

I could see people running around, apparently all the fuss and bother was some sort of a greeting for me, I thought it was awfully nice of them to give me such a big reception. At first I thought I would land in a huge pile of clay and quicksand, if I had to of, I sure wouldn't have gotten out of it. On one side of it was a 25 foot bank and a railroad track, on the other side of the railroad was a cinder embankment about 50-75 feet down and rather steep. I landed on the ties between the railroad tracks.

I got out of my chute and stood up. A civilian Jerry guard was running down the track waving a rifle, I raised my arms above my head and waited for him. He took me through the factory up a hill to a pillbox and used the telephone to get the local police. They finally came up and took me back to the factory office.

There (when I hit the ground it was 12:10) they stripped me and went through my clothes. They finally got a truck (wood burner) and put my stuff on it. By this time, everybody had quit work and were gathered around the truck, mostly girls and old men and women. They put me on the truck and went to a small village

where they stopped to get more home guards, then they continued on until they got to the edge of the forest and they started searching, I think for more chutists! They found the 109 and brought back pieces of his plane. They said he was wounded and took the Red Cross box over to the plane. When they came back they didn't bring a body with them, so I figured he was dead.

They finally took me into town and locked me up in a two by four windowless cell.

Just about all the villagers were out to see me. The village was pretty clean and very much like my conception of a German village. The people were quiet and a few even smiled at me. The children would be running around laughing and when they looked at me they got serious and solemn looking. I got to talk to a 15 year old boy. He said he was talking English in school and liked it, he could speak fairly well. He asked about the war and he wished it was over. When he left everybody questioned him, I guess they thought he was very brave, speaking to an American airman.

I stayed there until about 17:30 that afternoon, then a truck with some Jerry soldiers came up and we were put inside. The ride was about an hour and a half long in the general direction of North, North, West; we finally got to our destination, which was a huge Army Station.

I stayed there that night, one of the fellows said we were about 30 kilometers east of Geissen. At 13:00, September 12, 1944 they took us down to a village close by and

— See IDAHO P.O.W. page 5

From the March 1996 issue of "The Beacon" ...

IDANG welcomes its first A-10—the "Warthog"

Our first A-10 Thunderbolt II attack jets, affectionately known as "Warthogs," have arrived to open yet another chapter in the history of Idaho's Air National Guard and suggest a new nickname for Gowen Field's flightline: "Hog Heaven."

Capt. Glen Eberle, 190th Fighter Squadron, delivered the first "Warthog," aircraft no. 653, March 27. Two more arrived the next day. The 124th Wing's 190th Fighter Squadron will eventually own 17 A-10s—12 attack jets and five OA-10 reconnaissance models.

Eberle is the first Idaho Air Guard pilot to retrain to fly the A-10, and he will become a flight instructor for other pilots in the 190th Fighter Squadron.

Idaho's first A-10 will also be used to train maintenance crews and weapons handlers to prepare them to support "Warthog" missions at home and around the world.

Eberle admits that he looks forward to flying the subsonic "Warthog," but that he will also miss the supersonic F-4G "Wild Weasel," a variation of the famous F-4 Phantom jet.

"The Phantom was one of the all-time great military aircraft," he said. "There aren't many planes that fly faster than Mach 2."

The slower A-10, designed to attack targets on the ground, is a completely different airplane, according to Eberle.

"They're both jet fighters, he said. "But that's where any similarity



Idaho's first A-10 Thunderbolt II, aka the "Warthog," arrived on Gowen Field March 27, flown by Capt. Glen Eberle, 190th Fighter Squadron. (IDANG photos)

between the two aircraft ends."

The A-10 is slower, quieter, and flies at 200 feet or less above the ground in combat. It carries the lethal punch of a 30mm Gatling Gun that fires up to 4,000 rounds per minute. The gun has a recoil force greater than that of the aircraft's twin turbofan engines, causing the jet to appear to stop in midair when the gun fires.

The A-10 can carry air-to-ground missiles and bombs and air-to-air missiles for self defense.

The aircraft is heavily armored—the pilot is enclosed in a titanium shell—but is still one of the most maneuverable combat aircraft in the world, according to Eberle.

Brig. Gen. Ralph Townsend, Assistant Adjutant General, Air for Idaho was on hand to officially welcome Capt. Eberle and his aircraft to Gowen Field.

The general believes Idaho's Air Guard will be as busy flying its new A-10 mission as it was with

recently retired "Wild Weasel."

"These aircraft are always on call," Townsend said. "We need them to keep pace with what's going on around the world."

Don't forget to renew your IMHS membership!

Annual rates are:

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

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

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

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

An Idaho P.O.W.'s diary from page 3

put us on a train. About 01:00 we arrived at Frankfurt an Main from there we walked about 45 minutes until we got to the Oberrusal German Interrogation Center. The next day I was interrogated and got two slices of bread for dinner; the first food I had in gotten since breakfast the morning I went down.

Next day, September 14th, a group of us were marched down to Frankfurt to the train and left for Wetzlar. Gulag Luft was just a 15 minute walk from Wetzlar, north of Frankfurt an Main. We got a Red Cross Joy box and our first solid meal.

September 15th was the first bit of medical attention I received since I was shot down. My eyebrows and lashes were burned off; just my eyes and forehead were unprotected, my helmet and oxygen mask protected the rest of my face. My wrists were burned and I had large blisters, but the Jerries made me carry my chute and dingy which broke my blisters and by the time I received medical attention

my burns were infected and pretty bad off.

September 18, we were put on a train, three car loads of us, and we started for our permanent camp.

At Geissen the railroad yards were bombed and everybody went to the air raid shelter except the POWs. We were locked in the cars and left on the edge of the marshalling yard.

When we reached Berlin they left us sit in the yard all afternoon. They finally hooked us a train and we started off. When we got to Frankfurt an Oder, they discovered we were on the wrong train. We finally got on the right train and continued our journey.

September 22, We arrived at Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany on the Baltic Sea. Kriegsgefangen P.O.W. Kriegies for short. Hard Luck.

Editor's note: Lt. Davis remained at Luftstlag I until the camp was liberated by Russian forces in April 1945. A copy of his handwritten diary is part of the Idaho Military

Volunteering is good for your health

A study conducted at the University of Michigan Research Center 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

social contacts tend to live longer than those who are more isolated, regardless of race, income, and level of activity.'"

Here's a suggestion: Volunteer to serve at the Idaho Military History Museum. Call us at 208-272-4841.



Welcomes a new member:
Jeannette Duvall-Ward.

Charles Blake from page 2

ried in 2004, and he became stepfather to Kendra.

He attended Boise State University, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in History in 2013. He was on the Dean's List for 10 semesters and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society.

Charles was working at his dream job as Curator of Collections for the Idaho Military History Museum, wher he had been a volunteer while attending Boise State University.

He was an avid modeler who enjoyed his game nights with the Brotherhood of the Meandering Trail. He loved anything related to history and military aircraft.

He cherished his family above all else. Charles was preceded in death by his parents, Wesley and Patricia Blake, and by his brothers, Alexander and Christopher. He is survived by his wife, Donna, daughter Kendra, sisters Susan Blake and Mary (Blake) Armstrong, Donna's parents, Charles and Shirley Perkins, and her brother, Perry Kaber.

Charles' family is grateful that he had a wonder last day participating in inauguration ceremonies for Idaho's governor and other state officials.

He had a great passion for history; he was living his dream that day.

—Courtesy of the Charles M. Blake family.

Endowment Donations

Stan Herzinger, in memory of Fran King.

Frank and Gen Boguslawski, in memory of Col. Dan Crew, MSG Joe Cox and John Elliott.

Susan Blake, in memory of Charles Blake.

U.S.S. Idaho's 'China' on display at the museum

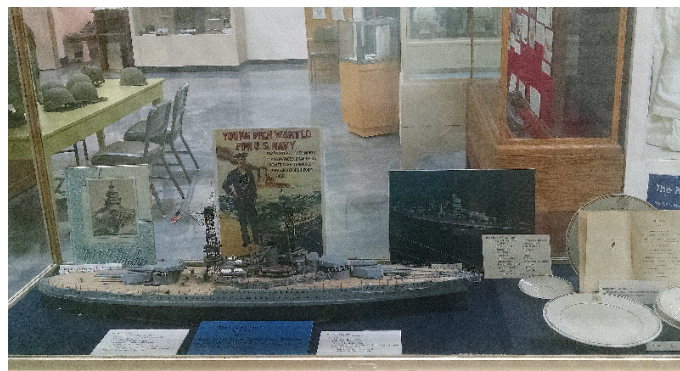
By Charles Blake
Curator of Collections

A set of china dishes once used aboard the battleship USS Idaho has been added to the museum's display of items from the ship's decades of service. The dishes were used in the officer's mess of the "Idaho" and carry the ship's logo and United States Navy emblem.

The plates were donated by Tammy Wiedmaier, whose grandfather, Edward Ellsworth Hess, was the "Idaho's" shopkeeper in the 1930s.

How they came into Mr. Hess's possession is the interesting part of the story. President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited the 'Idaho' in the mid-1930s to have dinner with the ship's captain and officers. During dinner he made an off-the-cuff remark that he was "glad no one was taking pictures, because it would not look good for the President to be seen eating off of gold-trimmed plates during the Depression."

The captain took this as an implied order and ordered Hess to get rid of them. Mr. Hess, according to his granddaughter "ever the practical man," could not



A set of china dishes once used aboard the battleship U.S.S. Idaho is now part of the museum's display of items from the ship. (IMHS photo)

see destroying them, so he packed them up and shipped them to his home in Wisconsin. Without Mr. Hess's frugality and Mrs. Wiedmaier's generosity these important artifacts might have been lost forever.

Historical Note: A battleship would often host dignitaries, so having a special set of dinnerware aboard was not uncommon. And serving President Roosevelt was certainly an occasion to use it.

Idaho Military Historical Society
4040 W. Guard St., Boise, Idaho 83705
<http://museum.mil.idaho.gov/>
208-272-4841

