

PASS IN REVIEW

"Shedding Light on Idaho's Military History"



The official
Idaho Military
and Maritime



The museum is back in business!

Wielding a vintage cavalry saber, Major General Gary Sayler, Commanding General, Idaho National Guard, cut a ribbon to officially reopen the Idaho Military History Museum after an extensive remodeling and redesign.

Dozens of visitors were on hand to witness the June 7 ribbon cutting and to get their first look at the "new and improved" museum.

The event featured reenactors in authentic-looking uniforms from America's military history, and displays of vintage and modern military weapons and equipment.

The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free.



Major General Gary Sayler, helped by Ken Swanson, uses a vintage saber to cut a ribbon to officially reopen the Idaho Military Museum. (IMHS photo/Mike Condrack)



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Jeff Packer has replaced Ken Swanson as IMHS Director

By Jeff Packer
IMHS Director/Chief Curator

For the past seven years, we have had the privilege of having Ken Swanson as our Director and Curator. He came to us with 30-plus years of knowledge and experience which were welcome and greatly appreciated.

As is true with most things in life, all good things eventually come to an end. Ken decided to retire, and left the Executive Director/Curator position on July 31. We, the IMHS, have made a great deal of progress under his guidance and leadership for which we are eternally grateful. We thank him and wish him well in his life of retirement.

Ken is a Lifetime member of the IMHS so this is not a permanent farewell. He will be available to help us with any questions that may and will arise.

The board offered me the position of Director and Chief Curator, which I have accepted. Additionally, the board decided to split the Executive Director position into two part-time positions. This will allow for more flexibility and overlap for emergencies and those situations which often arise where a task presents itself that requires two people to perform. Charles Blake, an Air Force retiree with a history



"A changing of the guard" took place July 31 as Jeff Packer (left) became the museum's director, replacing Ken Swanson (right), who has retired. (IMHS photos)

degree and a lifetime IMHS member, will now serve as our Curator of Collections. He is a welcomed addition to the IMHS team.

As a result of these changes, I stepped down from the board on July 31. Our acting vice president, Charles Ake, assumed the position of President of the IMHS. Rob Lytle agreed to become our vice president.

Our board of directors for 2014 includes Gayle Alvarez, our secretary;

Gary Donnelly, our treasurer, and four directors: Bill Beck, Rick Johnson, Bill Miller, and Russ Trebby.

I look forward to serving you in my new position.

We are sorry to report that Frances "Fran" King, our archivist for 14 years, has passed away. Her funeral will be held August 21 at the Potter Funeral Chapel of Emmett.

Here's an update on our effort to transcribe records from the Farragut Naval Training Center: Mission accomplished! The board wants to give a very special "Thank You" to Kris Vonderahe and Linda Fisher for their help in adding the last of the Farragut rosters.

You're invited to attend museum board meetings

The museum's Board of Directors extends an ongoing, open invitation to anyone interested to attend and participate in monthly museum 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 the input,

ideas and enthusiasm of our board members and supporters.

Anyone interested in contributing as a future member on the board is encouraged to attend and learn how they might help to make the museum better and better.

If you are interested in attending, call Jeff Packer at 208-272-4841.



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PASS IN REVIEW

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Opinions expressed herein are often those of volunteers and museum supporters, and may not represent policies or positions of the State of Idaho, the Idaho Military Division, or the Idaho State Historical Society.

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.

CAP cadet squadron restores the museum's MiG-21 "Fishbed"

By Bill Miller
IMHS Director

Under the leadership of CAP leader and Air Guard A-10 Crew Chief Brian Deeds, the local CAP Cadet Squadron met Saturday June 14 to perform a very special mission—restore the Museum's MiG-21 to showroom condition. Work began at 0930 and ended by 1400. Their results are shown in the accompanying photos.

Step one was the safety briefing, assuring all knew the risks of preparatory sanding and climbing about on work stands and on the aircraft. Proper safety procedures were covered, including work stand safety and respirator use.

Next came masking of unpainted metal areas, and soon all cadets took on the lengthy job of scuffing exterior surfaces in preparation for a coat of outdoor latex primer-style paint.

Then the cadets began rolling the latex paint onto all surfaces—top and bottom! With such an industrious and motivated crew, the job was finished in jig time.

Several days later, IMHS volunteer and Boise sign painter Bruce Vanderhoef prepared and applied the red star insignia, numerals, and the interior zinc chromate color to



Cadets from CAP 73rd Composite Squadron (top and lower left) scraped, scrubbed, sanded and repainted the Museum's MiG-21 "Fishbed" (top right), with help from 124th Wing members, to restore the aircraft to what it may have looked like in the Soviet air force (lower right). (Photos by Bill Miller.)

all speed brake and landing gear doors.

The IMHS salutes the CAP Cadets and their leaders, Brian and John, for a safe and fun project, and volunteer Bruce Vanderhoef for paint/design creations and technical, ... er, artistic advice.

The Idaho Air Guard's 124th Wing loaned the project several work stands, which assured a safe operation. Our special thanks goes to CMS Carlo Fenicotterro for making the safety equipment available.

MOH grave marker will soon be in place

Thanks to generous donations from many of you we are ready to place a headstone in memory of Medal of Honor recipient William H. Smith in Grangeville's Prairie View cemetery.

The generosity of a Grangeville funeral home that will supply and install the marker at a fraction of the cost for one shipped from the east coast, plus a contribution from Crea de Haven VFW Post 3520 in Grangeville, helped us complete this project.

Once put in place, Smith's headstone will be dedicated in a ceremony conducted by VFW members.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Don't forget to renew your IMHS membership!

If you need a renewal form, it is available on our webpage at: <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov/Application.htm>.

Annual renewal 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 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.

An Idaho sailor goes to sea—and war—on the ‘Big E’

Excerpts from “Interesting Times,” the personal history of William “Bill” Norman, a Canyon County native and well-known Caldwell, Idaho, businessman.



William “Bill” Norman

“I went to the College of Idaho, now Albertson College, and enrolled there for the first semester in 1940. I met a fellow there from Nampa by the name of Bob Hansen, and he and I got to talking about the possible difficulties we faced. The writing was on the wall. War in Europe was raging. We could not discount it at all. We had no doubt that we would

find ourselves in the Army before too long.

“Bob had learned that the Navy took 100 men out of the fleet every year to go to a prep school in West Virginia where they studied for six months and then went on to Annapolis to become naval officers. They first had to spend a year at sea on a capital ship, a heavy cruiser, a battleship or carrier, where they were assigned to an Ensign who tutored them for that year. That is what we decided to do. We went to a Navy recruiter who told us we could sign up for the officer candidate program. So, we joined the Navy. I was only 18 when I enlisted on February 4, 1941.”

My first ship: The “Big E”

“Bob Hansen and I went to the U.S.S. Enterprise (CV-6), an aircraft carrier. The Enterprise was in the San Diego harbor, so they sent a delivery boat over for those of us assigned to it. There must have been 15 to 20 people. Joe and I were assigned to the quartermaster group and Bob went to be a yeoman (clerk) in the ship’s office.



“It took us four days to go from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, and my station at that time was on the flight instructor level, just above the flight deck. When they had flight quarters, that’s where I was, at what was called secondary steering. There was a wheel and compass and all the things we needed for operating the ship from there.”

The “Winds of War”

“On Nov. 23 we received a “Secret” message telling

all ships to go to “Condition Red,” which meant we would work four hours on and four hours off, twenty-four hours a day, for as long as we were at sea. We were directed to prepare our aircraft with weapons and munitions because an attack from enemy forces was imminent. Of course, being where we were it was pretty obvious who the enemy was. We figured that it was the Japanese. We went on our way and those pilots took off to join our troops on Wake Island. Those fellows wreaked havoc with the Japanese when they attacked our forces on the island. Our pilots would sink a cruiser and a destroyer before the enemy finally overpowered them.”

Dec. 7, 1941

“We were due back into Pearl late on the afternoon of Dec. 6, which meant we’d be there for the weekend. We were all looking forward to liberty in Honolulu. We were on target and everything to come in on time, but on the morning of the fifth something interesting happened — I believe it was by the hand of Providence — that probably saved many of our lives. We were traveling in a task force when one of the four cruisers screening our movement against enemy attack came to a complete stop. I believe it was the U.S.S. Salt Lake City. I can’t imagine how it happened, but a hawser, a big rope used to tie up heavy ships, got over the side and into her screws. They had to stop the ship and send deep-sea divers over the side to cut it out. Another report said the ship had a mechanical failure. I think it was a hawser, but I can’t imagine it being left on deck. I have to consider what happened as providence because it was very unusual. It just didn’t happen on a ship.

“Repairs to the ‘Salt Lake City’ delayed us a full day, so we arrived at Pearl Harbor late in the day on Saturday, Dec. 6, to find the harbor closed for the night. The harbor master told us to go to a point away from the island and steam back and forth until 8 a.m. the next morning—Dec. 7.

“We were sitting on our bunks eating and talking to one another when, all of a sudden, a general alarm sounded. Our quarters were right against the port side of the ship next to big steel beams covered with cork and sprayed with paint. We set our cups up in the corner of one of those beams. They balanced pretty

— See “An Idaho Sailor” on page 5

An Idaho Sailor ...

From page 4

good, so we felt like they would be in good shape until we came back. We both thought, "It is just a drill. We'll be back down here pretty soon." We had no idea that the ship had gone to General Quarters and that it would be two full days before we saw that ice cream or our bunks again."

"Torpedo in the water!"

"Just after 8 a.m., our escort destroyer picked up submarine sounds on Sonar. We knew that there could be Japanese submarines all around us, and the "Enterprise" would be a prime target for their torpedoes. I went down to Central Steering, a quiet out-of-the-way place, and started praying. I knew God would watch over me. I know there were many other sailors down there that day doing the same thing. As they say in the Army, "There are no atheists in a foxhole."

"Just as I came back up on deck, our escort radioed, "Torpedo in the water!" It didn't take long to spot the wake of a Japanese torpedo headed straight for our bow. We couldn't turn left or right without getting hit. All we could do was watch and wait. Thankfully, the torpedo missed the bow and passed along side our ship."

Our first wartime mission

"We had some interesting things happen to us on that mission. Admiral Nimitz, who was in charge right after Pearl Harbor, felt the first thing to do was cause as much confusion as possible to the Japanese naval forces as in the Pacific. He ordered our pilots to not engage enemy planes, and if they saw them, to run away. So we would move as far north as we could go at flank speed, 25 knots

(about 28 miles per hour), and send up scout planes. If they saw enemy planes, they were not to attack. The whole idea was to get the Japanese to think that there were more forces in the area than there were, so we made two or three runs like that in the next few weeks.

It was hard on the ship and on the crew because we'd be out sometimes 30 to 40 days at a time. I remember one time we were gone 115 days. That was an interesting thing because we ran out of fuel and food. We picked up a tanker to get us to where we take on a full load of fuel and get back to Pearl Harbor, but we went thirty days with only corn bread, stewed tomatoes, and beans to eat. It all worked out and we got back to normal and went back to Pearl Harbor for our next mission."

Wake Island

"On February 24 of that year [1942] we were sent up to Wake Island. Our task force went up there and actually decimated the place. Wake Island was just a little atoll, a small sand bar on a reef that had just grown there over the years. There was a little foliage there but not much. We caught them shy there, so we just cleaned it up. Our fighters shot everything that was on the ground. All the Japanese planes and whatnot were blown up. I can't remember the total destruction there, but I do know that our cruisers, destroyers, and aircraft sunk several of their small ships. It wasn't as much as we had done at the Marshall Islands, but we let them know that we were still around."

Under attack by the enemy

"It was a little while after that — in August, I think — that we tangled with the enemy again in a duel with some enemy aircraft carriers.



"We took three bomb hits that day. Two were superficial and did little damage to the flight deck. The third was from a 500-pound armor-piercing bomb that went through the wooden flight deck and five lower metal decks before it exploded. It blew open a huge hole right off the starboard quarter just about a halfway between the ship's superstructure and the fantail. Damage from the explosion caused our rudder to lock up, forcing us to run in circles for about 18 hours, which made us an easy target for an enemy submarine.

"I was on the bridge, and I remember that the captain was wondering what to do. He knew we couldn't get down there to find the problem and fix it. I said, 'I think I can get through that area. I know the way down there because I've stood watch there many times.

"He allowed me to go, so I left the bridge. I got a light and some one-inch line (rope). I tied one end at the hanger deck and went down to the next deck below. I had to work my way around damage on that deck. When a bomb of that size goes off it sets even the inside of the lockers on fire and they smolder.

"The heat and smoke were bad down there. Two or three other

— See "An Idaho Sailor" on page 6

U.S.S. Idaho's 'Cruise Book' donated to museum's library

A rare edition of a pre-WWII "Cruise Book" published by the officers and crew of the battleship U.S.S. Idaho (BB-42) is now part of the museum's library collection, thanks to the generosity of David McNair, an IMHS lifetime member and retired IDANG historian.

The 100-plus page book includes dozens of vintage photos of the ship and crew plus holiday programs and menus prepared by the ship's crew during what may have been their last peacetime cruise.

The "Idaho" served in the Atlantic until Pearl Harbor, then was sent to Hawaii to join America's Pacific Fleet. The ship and its crew took part in the invasions of the Aleutian Islands, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, where it was struck by a Kamikaze attack. The battleship, launched in 1919, was decommissioned in 1947 after 28 years of service.



IMHS photo/Mike Condrack
A "Cruise Book" from the battleship U.S.S. Idaho (BB-42), published prior to the ship's WWII service, is now part of the museum's library. The rare book was donated by David McNair (right), who shared his find with Ken Swanson (left) and Mitch Hasse (center), a museum volunteer.

An Idaho Sailor goes to sea—and war— on the 'Big E' From page 5

sailors followed me down there. One was a motor mechanic told by someone on the bridge to go down with me to help fix the rudder. We worked our way around the hole the bomb made as it went down through the decks. I found a ladder next to the steering room and I tied the rope off there. Somebody went back up and we tied it off as we went along so that we had a line for others to follow through the smoke.

"I went down the ladder, not knowing what I would find, and the others followed me. I knew my close friend Joe Kenney was down there — we were in boot camp together and had worked together since we had come on board ship — and I was concerned with his safety. He was the Quartermaster on duty there, along with two or three mechanics, when the bomb hit us.

"I found Joe — he was okay — and sent him and a couple of motor mechanics that were down there up to the main deck for fresh air and to cool off. The bomb blast created temperatures of up to 150

degrees, and in that little room with the motors running, it was hotter than a pistol."

Hurricane!

"I can't remember just when we ran into this hurricane, but it was after one of our actions in a group of islands in the South Pacific. We were headed for Pearl Harbor with our task force of four heavy cruisers and eight destroyers when the storm struck. The weather turned black as night, and in a very short time we were sailing into waves 75 to 80 feet tall and winds of 140 knots (161 miles per hour).

"We were taking rolls of 30 degrees, so we had to steam into the waves head-on to keep from capsizing. A hurricane travels in a circle, so we had to hit the waves head-on. We were taking nine feet of water over our flight deck, which was 75 feet above the water line.

"Our destroyers sailed into the waves and wind, and the water covered their bridges, leaving only their smokestacks visible. The cruisers were doing a little better, but they were taking green water

over their topsides. It took us three days to work our way out of that storm."

"I had an eye problem, a growth caused by the glare of sunlight, so on Nov. 14, 1942 the Navy sent me back to San Diego for medical treatment and transfer to a new ship. The U.S.S. Enterprise had been my home for a year and a half."

Have you read any good books lately?

We welcome your review of books dealing with military history that you believe would interest members of the Idaho Military History Society.

If you include excerpts or photos from a copyrighted book or article, please obtain permission from the author or photographer to use their material.

Email your review as a text document to Gayle at galvarez@imd.idaho.gov.

May 14, 1999: Idaho airmen join ‘Operation Allied Force/Noble Anvil’

The following excerpts come from “Called to Arms,” a brief history of the 124th Wing’s role in NATO’s Operation Allied Force/Nobel Anvil published by the wing’s Public Affairs office.

“Idaho’s 124th Wing added a new and dramatic chapter to its history this year [1999] by sending 154 men and women—pilots, flightline crews, support specialists and a chaplain’s team—to help the Air Force support Operation Allied Force/Noble Anvil, NATO’s battle for Kosovo.”

“Wing members served one and one-half months at Trapani Air Base in Sicily as part of the 131st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, comprising people and A-10 aircraft from Air Guard units in Idaho, Massachusetts and Michigan. The squadron, nicknamed the ‘Killer Bees,’ was the first all-Air Guard air combat unit in U.S. Air Force history.”

“The people and aircraft came from Idaho’s 124th Wing, Massachusetts’ 104th Fighter Wing and Michigan’s 110th Fighter Wing. Each unit was tasked to provide six A-10 jets and about 150 people to form the provisional squadron.”

“One hundred and fifty-four people, divided almost equally between full-time (AGR and technician) and traditional Guard members with civilian careers, were called. The group included ten female members and a husband and wife.”

“The deployment order came quickly. Eight A-10s—six primary aircraft and two spares—left Gowen Field May 14 for Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield,



IDANG photo/MSGT Mike Condrack



An Idaho A-10 Thunderbolt II, armed with Sidewinder missiles and 30mm ammunition, leaves Massachusetts on May 17, 1999 as part of the 131st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, the first all-Air Guard combat unit deployed by the U.S. Air Force. The squadron, comprising 18 A-10s from Idaho, Massachusetts, and Michigan, was based in Sicily to fly Close Air Support, Airborne Forward Air Control, and Combat Search and Resue missions in Operation Allied Force/Nobel Anvil, NATO’s campaign against Serb forces in Yugoslavia. Pilots from the provisional unit wore the “Killer Bee” patch on their flight suits.

(Right) Idaho airmen deployed to Sicily load Maverick air-to-ground missiles and munitions on an A-10 Thunderbolt II attack jet from the 131st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.



(Below) Pilots and support team members are welcomed home from Operation Allied Force/Nobel Anvil on July 1, 1999 by family members and the Gowen Field Fire Department.



IDANG photos/CMSGT Owen Clouss

Mass. to join forces with the people who would serve with them in Europe. An en route support team and senior officers followed aboard a C-130 from Idaho’s 189th Airlift Squadron. Ground crews and support team members boarded a chartered airliner later in the day for their flight to Sicily.”

“The first Guard members to arrive found a ‘Bare Base’—no rooms, no laundry, no eating places or stores.”

“Killer Bee” pilots flew 409 combat-effective missions ... [and] compiled a perfect safety record. No injuries, no aircraft lost to “Triple-A” and SAMs encountered on every mission. Two did suffer minor battle damage, but were repaired and returned to service.”

“All members and aircraft came home safely on June 30 and July 1, welcomed by family members, civic leaders and senior Idaho National Guard officers.”

Special Events on Gowen Field

IDANG's Retiree Appreciation Day, Toy Show set for Sept. 7

The 124th Wing's annual Retiree Appreciation Day program will be held on Sunday, Sept. 7, in the Gowen Field Activity Center (see map). All retirees and their spouses are invited to attend.

This year's program will include briefings on the Idaho National Guard's current status and retiree benefits, a group photo, and a BBQ luncheon with side dishes and drinks.

Here is a schedule of the day's events:

0800: Check in at the activity center

0830: Welcome

0845: IDNG State of Affairs briefing with Q&A

0900: Break

0915: Retiree benefits briefing

1030: Group photo

1100: Lunch in Hangar 1530



Please register on line at nationalguard.idaho.gov no later than Friday, Aug. 29 to help the wing know how many guests to expect. Click on the retirees link on the left side of the page.

A "Toy Show Extravaganza" is planned to display cars, boats, motorcycles, crafts, bikes, planes, RC planes and other items of interest on the north of Bldg(s) 1529 and 1530. It's a great opportunity to share your hobby! Call SMSgt Ben Hopkins at 860-6322 or 422-5422 to make arrangements for displays. If you're planning to display an aircraft, gun or craft, please call ASAP.



"Shedding light on Idaho's military history"

Boise, ID 83705-5004
4040 W. Guard St.

Idaho Military Historical Society