

PASS IN REVIEW

"Shedding Light on Idaho's Military History"



The official newsletter of the
Idaho Military Historical
Society and Museum

Winter 2014

Medal of Honor soldier's grave found in Idaho

By Gayle Alvarez

William H. Smith was born circa 1847 in Lapeer, Michigan.

He reportedly enlisted in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1868 but the National Archives could not locate his service records. The U.S. Army Register of Enlistments shows him at age 21 enlisting into Company G, 1st Cavalry on 2 July for five years. A 'clerical error' gives his middle initial as "N."

His physical description was listed as 5' 10 3/4" tall, with grey eyes, dark hair and a dark complexion. His previous occupation was listed as "Soldier," so he may have served during the Civil War.

Company G of the 1st Cavalry is known to have participated in the following actions: 13 January 1869, Mount Turnbull, Arizona; 4 February 1869, Ariyaypa Mountains, Arizona; 29 April 1869, Turnbull Mountain, Arizona; 15 May 1869, near Fort Lowell, Arizona; 30 June 1869, Burro Mountains, New Mexico; and 8 Oct 1869, Chiricahua Pass, Arizona.

Smith and two other future Idahoans were at the Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona Territory on 20 October 1869. All three were recommended for the Medal of Honor in the same letter dated 20 December 1869:

[To] Colonel John P. Sherburne,
Assistant Adjutant General
Department of California,



U.S. Army Photo

The Medal of Honor awarded by the U.S. Army from 1862 through 1896.

San Francisco California

Colonel,

I have the honor to submit the following names of men of Troops 'G', 1st and 8th Cavalry for gallantry displayed during the engagement of October 20, 1869 in the Chiricahua Mountains.

These men are they who advanced with me up the steep and rocky mesa under as heavy a fire as I ever saw delivered from this number of men (Indians) say from one hundred to two hundred.

These men advanced under this fire until within thirty steps from the Indians when they came to a ledge of rocks, where every man who showed his head was shot at by several Indians

at once, here the men remained and did good shooting through the crevices of the rocks until ordered to fall back, which was done by running from rock to rock where they would halt and return the fire of the Indians.

When a Government gives an incentive to men for special good conduct I feel confident in saying that every one of these men is justly entitled to be specially rewarded.

[The eleventh name on list] Private William H. Smith, Troop G, Regiment, 1st Cav.

*I am Colonel, Very Respectfully,
Your obedient Servant.*

R. F. Bernard

Capt, 1st Cavy. Bt Col USA

The approval dates for this group vary; Smith's Medal was approved on 3 January 1870. The method of presentation is unknown, but he acknowledged receipt of the medal from Camp Bowie, Arizona Territory on 22 February 1870.

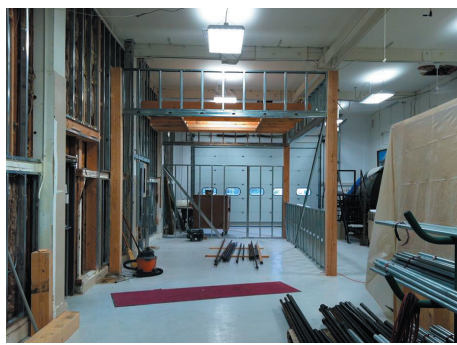
Company G continued operations in Arizona and participated in actions on 31 October 1869, again at Chiricahua Mountains,

— See "Medal of Honor," page 3.

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Remodel update: 'A work in progress'



You're invited to attend museum board meetings

The Board of Directors would like to extend an ongoing invitation to attend and participate in the monthly Board meetings. The meetings are usually held the last Wednesday of the month at the Museum starting at 18:30 running for 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.

Anyone potentially 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 Ken Swanson at 208-272-4841.



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facebook.com/IdahoMilitaryHistoryMuseum

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.

Medal of Honor

from Page 1

Arizona and 28 January 1870, Dragoon Mountains, Arizona.

The 1870 Census dated 11 August 1870 shows Smith, age 23, at Pima County, Arizona Territory.

Smith's unit also participated in actions on 1 January 1871, near Gila River, Arizona; 2 December 1872, Land's Ranch/Tule Lake, California; and 12 January 1873, Tule Lake, California.

By 17 January 1873 Smith had been promoted to Corporal and was cited for "gallant conduct in action against hostile Modoc Indians in the Lava beds, California." This was near Tule Lake. This is also the same action in which another future Idahoan, Major John Green, earned a Medal of Honor.

Company G took part in actions on 11-20 April 1873, Lava Beds, California; 7 May 1873, Lava Beds, California; 10 May 1873, Soras Lake, California; 17 May 1873 Butte Creek, Oregon; and 30 May 1873, Langell's Valley, California.

Smith was discharged due to "Expiration of service" as a Sergeant on 2 July 1873 at Camp Bidwell in California. He reenlisted into Company G on 2 July 1873 and this time the register shows the correct middle initial. The physical description listed is identical.

At Camp Bidwell, California on 29 October 1874, Smith requested a replacement Medal and returned what was left of his original which had been destroyed in a fire. The file indicates the replacement was approved 18 November 1874 but there is no indication he ever received it.

Various units of the 1st Cavalry participated in the Idaho/Montana Nez Perce war of 1877 but Com-

pany G is not listed as one of them.

William H. Smith died at age 30 on 5 October 1877 in a field hospital at Camp Howard, Idaho Territory of "Inflammation of the bowels." His Final Statement recorded that he was buried in the Grangeville cemetery near Mt. Idaho, and that his grave was "marked by head and foot boards, but the lots are not."

The report also shows that he was owed \$51.10 and that his debts amounted to \$64.17.

His effects included a memorandum book, a bundle of letters and an ink stand, so he likely had friends or family he corresponded with. Sadly, we have none of their names.

As was the custom at the time, some of his personal effects were auctioned off and the money (\$29.29) was sent to the Second Auditor's office. Interestingly, his inventory was completed by Major John Green. There was no mention of a Medal of Honor in the inventory.

There are four different cemeteries in Grangeville Smith could be buried in, but due to poor record keeping in their early days, he is not listed in any of their burial records.

The Prairie View Cemetery in Grangeville, Idaho is willing to accept and waive the mounting fees for an "In Memory of" marker for William.

Current VA regulations prohibit VA funding of an official government marker without family members consent. The VA has authorized Granite Industries of Vermont to engrave and ship privately purchased granite markers that are very similar to the government markers.

The cost for a flat granite marker is \$185 plus \$675 shipping, for a total cost of \$860. The cost for an

upright granite marker is \$285 plus \$775 shipping, for a total cost of \$1,060. Here is an example of the marker:



With your help, we can ensure that William receives the recognition he is long overdue.

If you are interested in helping obtain a proper marker for William H. Smith, please send a check payable to the Idaho Military Historical Society and note on it that it is for the marker for William H. Smith. Our mailing address is 4040 W. Guard St., Boise, ID 83705.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Don't forget to renew your IMHS membership!

Membership forms are available at: <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov/Application.htm>.

Annual renewal rates are:

General Membership:	\$25
Senior (60+):	\$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. The Idaho Military Historical Society is such an organization and donations to the Society qualify for this credit.

Museum's educational outreach program is ongoing

For the past several years, Ken Swanson and various members of the IMHS Board have conducted school visits to several high schools and middle schools in the Treasure Valley. As more history teachers learn of the valuable resource, more requests come in.

The visits entail instruction and “show and tell” in various aspects of military history. Most are often regarding World War II and the instructors are dressed in WWII re-enactors gear but at times the requests deal with Civil War history, World War I and the Vietnam War.

On 19 and 20 December, 414 students, five teachers and one student teacher at Mountain View High School in the Meridian district received instruction on WWII history.

Future educational outreach visits include:

- Timberline High School for WWII on 24 January and an as of yet unscheduled future visit for a Vietnam Panel Discussion.
- Lewis & Clark Middle School, Meridian Middle School, and Lake Hazel Middle School in the April-May timeframe.
- Also scheduled is a BSU ROTC Weapons Day at the range in Emmett on 10 April.

Credit for the visits goes to Rick Johnson, Russ Trebby, Jeff Packer, Charles Ake and Ken Swanson.

For more information about the museum's educational outreach program call Ken Swanson at 208-272-4841.



The museum's educational outreach program, with the help of volunteer reenactors, gives Treasure Valley students an up close look at vintage military equipment and uniforms to help them understand Idaho and America's military history. The program can include information on the Civil War, World War(s) I and II, and the Vietnam War. (Photos courtesy of Ricky Johnson and Idaho Military History Museum)

Help Wanted!

We're looking for a few transcribers

The inquiries we have been receiving lately on the Farragut Naval Training Station are "I know that Dad/Grandpa/Uncle George was there, I just don't know when."

Without a searchable database of the class photo rosters, we have no way to help them. Our backlog stands at close to 400 rosters.

This project is something you can do from your home computer. We can email you a template and a couple of rosters which you can then transcribe and send the completed template back to us. To see what a roster looks like, there are samples on our Web page at museum.mil.idaho.gov/farragut.html.

We have recently helped two individuals obtain copies of their fathers' company photos and Muster Rolls because we were able to locate names in the database.



Their reactions were heartwarming and were only possible because those particular rosters had been transcribed.

If you can help, please contact Gayle at galvarez@imd.idaho.gov. Your help will make a difference.



**IDAHO
MILITARY MUSEUM**

Heroic Past... Proud Future

ENDOWMENTS

**In Memory of
Bob Bevington
Harold Petty**

Ron Jennings

**In Memory of
Rex Hunt**

Marija Hunt

General Endowment

James S. Brooks
Ron Jennings

NEW MEMBERS

Lifetime Membership

Robert T. Bellew

Meet the crew of Gowen Field's own "Yankee Doodle" bomber

The crew of the B-17E known as "Yankee Doodle" was one of hundreds of bomber crews trained on Gowen Field from 1941 until 1945. The ten airmen trained with a B-17E "Flying Fortress" for three months in 1942, then joined the 99th Bomb Group in Europe to fly the newer B-17F in combat. The crew's 26th mission, flown on July 5, 1943, helped the 99th earn a Presidential Unit Citation.

The crew included (back row, left to right): James A. Burkhardt, Ball Turret Gunner; Almus W. Shively, Radio Operator/Gunner; Irvin L. Bud Herrmann, Right Waist Gunner; Sam I. Crisler, Left Waist Gunner; Robert M. Carlton, Engineer/Top Turret Gunner; and (front row left to right): James E. Richardson, Tail Gunner; William E. Humes, Co-Pilot; James S. Flex, Navigator/Gunner; Dean W. Shields, Pilot; and Arthur B. Cozine, Bombardier/Gunner.

Our thanks to Arthur Cozine for donating this photo.



The 10-member crew of the B-17E known as "Yankee Doodle" trained on Gowen Field in 1942.

'Red Eagles, America's Secret MiGs' by Steve Davies

Reviewed by **Bill Miller**

Did you know that Soviet-built MiG aircraft were operating in the U.S.? They were, in a top-secret program conducted in the Nevada desert for nearly 20 years.

Why were MiGs here, and why didn't anybody know about them? How was this program kept secret? How was it funded?

These fascinating questions and many more are answered in Steve Davies' book, "Red Eagles."

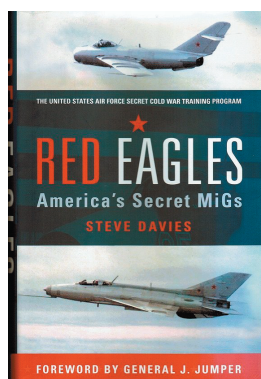
The dismal record of U.S. fighter aircraft against MiGs early in the Vietnam War led USAF tactical aviation thinkers to seek a solution. "Red Eagles" is the story of the program that evolved and eventually put U.S. fighter aviation in the winner's circle.

Red Eagles was a "black" program using "borrowed" Soviet-built MiG aircraft, many details of which were only recently declassified.

Author Steve Davies tells the full story of a program, officially begun in 1968, designed to exploit enemy aircraft capability and combat performance and ultimately give American fighter pilots air-to-air training against adversary aircraft.

The Red Eagles, as they called themselves, were part of the 4477th Test and Evaluation Squadron, created as an adjunct to USAF's Fighter Weapons School at Nellis AFB Nevada.

Flying MiG-17, MiG-21 and MiG-23 aircraft, the Red Eagle Squadron eventually provided secret combat training against MiGs for Air Force, Navy, Marine and Air Guard fighter pilots.



Images courtesy of Bill Miller

"Red Eagles, America's Secret MiGs" by Steve Davies details the Air Force's once-secret use of Soviet MiG aircraft to train American pilots in air-to-air combat

Davies describes how the airfield at the Tonopah Test Range was built from scratch, and later improved to handle aircraft like the Mach 2 MiG-23 and high-performance U.S. fighters. The Tonopah site abutted the so-called "Area 51" of even greater top-secret fame. Davies makes use of his interviews with over 30 Red Eagles pilots and others in the program to bring the Red Eagles' operations back to life. The personalities who initiated and operated this small chapter of U.S. military reform are highlighted, and their stories are entertaining and well told.

For example, the "buck fever" phenomenon universally affected U.S. pilots flying their initial encounters against MiGs, causing confusion, hesitation, and poor response—even though the fliers had been briefed beforehand that this would happen.

Detailed discussion of the three MiG models' flight characteristics--attributes and quirks--will pique any pilot's interest. Although not "one of them," author Steve Davies tells the Eagles' story as though he'd been one. Red Eagles is a

"must read" for anyone interested in how our poor air-to-air record early in the Vietnam War was recognized and dramatically improved using secret captured MiG aircraft as training tools.

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Osprey Publishing, Sept. 2008

ISBN-10: 1846033780

Editor's note: Bill Miller is an IMHS founder and board member, a retired Air Guard pilot, author, and VP for the Idaho Aviation Association.

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.

Idaho's Air Guard enters the 'Jet Age' with the Sabre Jet

Idaho's Air National Guard entered the "Jet Age" in 1953 with the arrival of 25 F-86A Sabre Jets, the first swept-wing fighter jet flown by the U.S. Air Force. The Sabre Jet had proven its worth in the just-ended Korean Conflict, where it was the acknowledged king of air-to-air combat.

The single-seat fighter was powered by a gas turbine engine to reach speeds of more than 600 miles per hour—faster than the speed of sound. The jet was armed with six nose-mounted .50 caliber machine guns.

Idaho airmen flew the F-86A until 1955, when it was replaced by the F-89 Scorpion jet.



F-86A Sabre Jets, Idaho's first jet fighter, on the Gowen Field ramp. Idaho airmen flew the supersonic swept-wing fighter from 1953 to 1955.

Master machinist restores military aviation history

By Bill Miller

When restoring old military aircraft, it seems one never can find parts to replace those old, corroded, and bent-up components on the tired birds. But for retired Air Guardsman Bruce Whittig, anything is possible, including complete from-scratch production of any imaginable part.

For example, when asked if he could repair the damaged pitot head on the Idaho Military Museum's MiG-21 aircraft, he took one look and decided to make a replacement from scratch. The head, a hollow tube, was bent at a 90-degree angle and irreparable. But with his shop skills and sharp mind, Whittig went to work. The first picture on the right shows his craftsmanship.

Another job arose shortly after the Museum acquired a Korean War-era F-86A Sabre Jet last fall. Although the Sabre's body and main components were restorable, the nose landing gear doors were badly damaged, with no

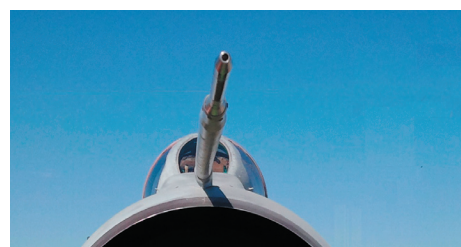
parts available. Another challenge for this ex-Air Guard lieutenant colonel—he would reform the bent surface sub-structure, re-skin the surfaces, and re-finish by painting one side and polishing the other. Before and after images show the result of Whittig's engineering.

He has been at this hobby since he was a kid. Bruce hand-built an all-metal "Midget Mustang" to win "Best in Show" at the Experimental Aircraft Association's home-built competition in 1983. He was also a part-time jet jockey for the Idaho Air National Guard, a corporate pilot, and college student. He was also known for building high performance boats and custom cars.

The Idaho Military Museum is proud of its ever-growing collection of military equipment and aircraft, and volunteers like Bruce who donate time and talent to preserve Idaho's military history.

Bruce is now retired, but enjoys his hobby and work in his business, Sport Aircraft Components.

He is a remarkable ambassador for aviation and the military.



Mig-21 Pitot, "... as good as new."



F-86A Nose Landing Gear, before (left) and after (right) Bruce's work.



Bruce Whittig polishes the Sabre Jet's nose landing gear door. (All photos courtesy of Bill Miller)

Did you know that Gowen Field had its own ...



Baseball team? They were the "Gowen Pilots." Little is known about the team that may have included some of the professional players who trained at Gowen Field on their way to Europe and the Pacific. (Both photos from USAF historical archives at Maxwell AFB)



30-Piece Band? They are performing next to one of the base chapels under construction. Believed to be looking down what is now General Manning Ave., formerly known as Farman. At the time the street was called Broadway.