



# PASS IN REVIEW

*"Shedding Light On Idaho's Military History"*

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter

March 2010

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are having a very busy late winter/early spring. Two new interns from Boise State University's History Department are working on various projects. Sahar Mazloomi, Senior, has made a big dent in the artifact cataloging backlog and is now working on new exhibit ideas. Melissa Whitmire, Graduate student, is working on oral interviews of women who have served with the Idaho National Guard.

Of course, our great volunteers continue to keep us going. We are in need of more docents, if you can spare a 4 hour shift some afternoon we would be happy to plug you in and give you any training that is needed. Please contact me, Ken Swanson, at 272-4841.

We have enlarged the gift shop and will expand our book area. If someone has a standing bookcase, not over 48 inches wide, that they are not using, and would like to donate it, it will be put to good use.

*Ken Swanson*


## NEW MEMBERS


Special Welcome to:

- ★ Don McNarie
- ★ Barrett Tillman
- ★ Loyle Washam  
(Welcome back!)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are highlights of upcoming events or activities that the IMHS will be involved in. More details will be posted on the webpage as more information becomes available.

 **31 May 2010** - Larry Gebert hosts his morning weather program at the Museum to announce our 5 June 2010 D-Day Re-enactment Battle

 **31 May 2010** - Memorial Day Retreat Ceremony and Flag Disposal Service (Also a 21 gun salute at the State Veterans Cemetery)

 **5 June 2010** - D-Day Re-enactment Battle ★

## FIRST BRICK LAYING SCHEDULED

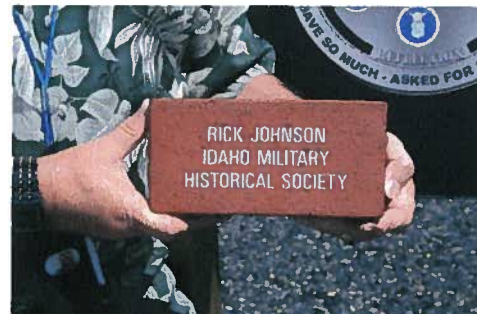
The first section of Memorial Bricks for the Gowen Field Memorial Park will be placed in time for a ribbon cutting/unveiling scheduled for Thursday, May 27th.

Bricks already ordered now and those ordered by Friday, 26 March 2010 will be placed in the inaugural lay-down and unveiled during the ribbon cutting.

Bricks can be purchased by anyone! Two sizes are available: 4 x 8 or 8 x 8, depending on the number of lines of text you want. Proceeds go to further development of the park exhibits. Memorial Park Coins are also still available.



If you haven't already done so, visit the Idaho Military History Museum Website/GF Memorial link and order a brick today to commemorate your military service, or that of a friend or relative.



Pictured here and above is an actual brick and coin. The website is:

<http://museum.mil.idaho.gov/GFMemorial/donations.htm>

More information and brick order forms are also available from CMSgt Glick @ 422-6997. ★

## Inside This Issue – Highlights include:

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THE IMHS SALUTES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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WASPS RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

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IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY – Nicole Washington Smith

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ENDOWMENT UPDATE

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JUST IN CASE

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## THE IMHS SALUTES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!

Each year, March is designated as National Women's History Month to ensure that the history of women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country.



American women of every race, class and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways.

## WASPs RECEIVE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

On Wednesday, March 10, 2010, at 11:00 a.m., in the Rotunda of the National Capitol Building, the WASPs were recognized for their service during WWII with a Congressional Gold Medal.

In a record-setting three months, Congress passed Public Bill 111-40 awarding the WASPs the gold medal for their unselfish, extraordinary service during WWII. The surviving WASPs were invited to Washington, D.C. to receive their medals. One family member of each deceased WASP was also presented the medal. Additionally, one medal will be placed in the Smithsonian Museum.

This is the culmination of a 65 year wait for proper recognition for these pioneers of flight and appropriately coincides with Women in History Month. (Courtesy of <http://waspmuseum.org>)

To read about the WASPs stationed at Gowen Field, see *Pass In Review* 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1998. ★

## IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY



APACHE PILOT

**NICOLE SMITH**  
**CAPTAIN,**  
**1-183RD**  
**AVIATION**  
**BATTALION**  
**AH-64**

Nicole Washington, the youngest of six children, was born on December 20, 1974, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Her grandfather, her father and one of her three brothers served in the Active military. Although she had always admired and honored their service, she hadn't considered a future in the military for herself.

She attended Penn State, graduating with a degree in biology and worked in that field for about a year. It became rather boring and she began seeking something more challenging. At this same time she was also seeking a way to repay some of her student loans as well as a way to give back to her community. She became interested in the military and enlisted in the Army Reserve in June 1998 at the age of 24. She attended Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

*"I arrived at FT Jackson, SC around 7pm and was shuttled to a reception station to in-process and get my gear issued. Early the next morning, they crammed all of us onto a bus like sardines with your 2 duffle bags on your lap and we were driven to the company area where the barracks were. As we pulled up next to area, the Drill Sergeants were pacing around, almost like a school of sharks anticipating their next meal.*

*"The bus came to a stop, and one of them hopped up the stairs and yelled 'You have 30 seconds to get off of MY*

## ENDOWMENT UPDATE

Our Endowment balance currently stands at **\$49,500.00**



Recent Endowment Donors include:

- Stan Herzinger
- Donald McGough  
(in memory of Jack Ulbright)
- James Barker
- Roger Perkins
- Lenore Johnston
- William Free
- Loyle Washam

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:** Look for this image/link on our webpage to take you directly there.



**I tried it. IT REALLY WORKS!!**  
**There are no extra charges or inconveniences!!!**

*Thank you for supporting The Idaho Military History Museum. ★*

*bus.' Well you can imagine how that went. And because we didn't meet the standard, we were doing pushups not long after getting off the bus. That would be a never ending cycle for the next 8 weeks. So started my basic training and the beginning of my military career."* Following Basic, Nicole attended Advanced Individual Training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where she graduated with a Civil Affairs (38A) MOS.

In October of 2001, she earned her first set wings in the form of her Parachutist Badge after graduating from the Basic Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Although the first two weeks were tough, she described it as “an absolute blast!”

In 2002, her Civil Affairs Unit deployed to Bosnia. “While leaving base one day in Bosnia, I saw a female in a flight suit for the first time ever. I had always had an interest in flying, but figured that it was something that I would do later on in life. I had never considered flying in the military and didn’t even know it was a possibility until I saw this woman in a flight suit.”

While in Bosnia, she met many members of Idaho’s 183<sup>rd</sup> Aviation Battalion including MAJ Ralph Myers (now LTC Myers) and LTC Michael Garshak (now COL Garshak). Now seriously interested in becoming a pilot, she attempted to pursue pilot training in Pennsylvania as well as two other states but ran into roadblocks because of her age and gender.

She was even told by one representative that “the unit leadership had serious concerns about sending a female to flight school.” She reestablished contact with Idaho’s 183<sup>rd</sup> Aviation Support Battalion and was strongly encouraged to come to Idaho and participate in the Aviation Selection Board. She came to the Idaho National Guard in August 2003 and went before the flight board, where she was selected as number one on the order of merit list!

January 2004 found her enrolled in OCS at Fort McClellan, Alabama. “It was pretty miserable and presented me with yet another opportunity to prove someone wrong and correct one of the many myths about women that still exists today: That women don’t have the strength or endurance of men. I not only kept up in the runs, but was at the front of the pack for most of them and the one guy that ‘looked’ the part of GI Joe, fell out of more than half of the time.

“During the last week, we had to meet with our instructors for performance reviews and in front of the other cadre, my instructor apologized to me and wrote one of the best performance reviews that I had received. It wasn’t the appraisal nor the apology that I relished, it was the fact that I had changed his perspective and his way of thinking.”

Following OCS was flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama where she received her second set of wings in the form of Army Aviator Wings. She also graduated second in her class!

She completed her AH-64A Apache training in June 2005 and three months later, in October, the 183<sup>rd</sup> was mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom 7 (OEF VII).



**Standing Tall and Looking Good!**

The unit underwent four months of pre-deployment training at Fort Hood, Texas and in February 2006, they

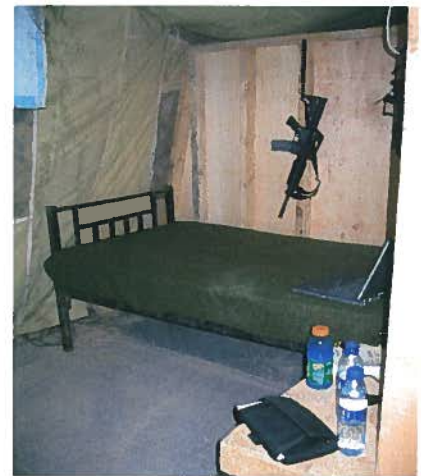
deployed to Afghanistan for a year-long deployment.

With Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) the major news story, they weren’t quite sure what to expect in Afghanistan.



**Southern Afghanistan’s Red Desert**

Fortunately, they were able to spend two weeks with the unit they were replacing. CPT Smith’s company, Charlie Co. 1-183<sup>rd</sup>, was separated from the 183<sup>rd</sup> and attached to the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain’s Task Force Knighthawk, operating out of Kandahar, Afghanistan.



**Home Sweet Home**

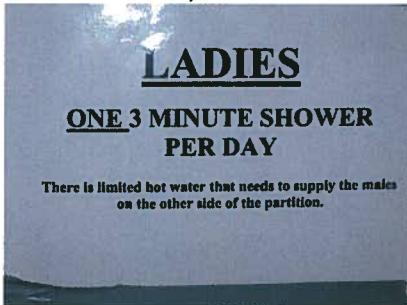
Because of the attachment and operational control, her company was combined with a Troop from Tennessee and forced to change their company name to F Troop, 2-10 Aviation. F Troop supported several types of missions, one of which was a QRF or Quick Reaction Force, which entailed a 12 hour shift; 12 hours on, 12 hours off.

Due to all the hostilities, aircraft did not travel without an escort ship and the 183<sup>rd</sup> often served as security to Medevac missions and resupply missions and convoy escorts. Some missions could average 6-8 hours of total flying time per

day. For the first 5-6 months of their deployment, the 183<sup>rd</sup> was the only Apache unit in country. Suffice to say, they were VERY busy.



**All the Comforts of Home-Well, Almost**



In the latter part of 2006, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), composed of mostly Canadian, British and Danish units, began to operate in the country. The British and Danish brought Apache units with them so those aircraft began to take some of the workload demand off of F Troop. Aside from being a junior officer, Nicole was the only female officer in the unit but she quickly earned the respect of her fellow unit members and pilots.

The most memorable time of her deployment covered two separate incidents during a five day span in June 2006. The first incident occurred on June 24<sup>th</sup>. She and fellow pilot CW4 Paul Kuklish were near the end of their shift having just escorted a Medevac aircraft on a rescue mission.

They were in the process of refueling prior to shutting the aircraft down when the call came in from the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to remain in a ready state that

they would be joined by another Apache and provide support to a TIC or Troops In Contact. A small contingent of soldiers walking through a village had been ambushed. Three were seriously hurt and the group was still receiving fire from the village.



**CW4 Kuklish and CPT Smith**

*"Our mission was to clear and secure a landing zone so a Medevac helicopter could rescue the injured soldiers."* The area was about ten minutes out from the base. They no sooner flew over the nearby ridge than they began receiving ground fire.

*"Trying to make contact with the soldiers on the ground and hearing shots in the background and the urgency in their voice and seeing the sparks fly up outside your window was a surreal experience. Controlling your adrenaline to work for you and not against you is crucial. As much as you want to help them and get the bad guys, you don't want to start shooting until you are absolutely sure where the hostiles are and where the friendly troops are."*

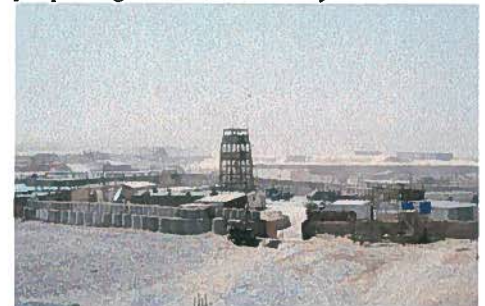
*"By now it was starting to get dark and an Air Force gunship was called in to drop ordinance. We had to go up in elevation and circle until the gunship completed its run. Looking down on the village as we circled, it almost looked like a Christmas tree with all the lights but you knew those weren't Christmas lights! Everyone in that village that had a gun came out with it and opened fire. Fortunately your training kicks in and you are able to concentrate and do your job."*

*"We were able to clear the landing zone and the Medevac was able to evacuate the wounded soldiers. We returned to Kandahar and while performing our post flight we found a hole in our tail rotor where we had taken a hit."*



**Photo of Bullet Hole in Tail Rotor**

The second incident occurred on June 28<sup>th</sup>. *"It was actually our day off and we were preparing to go to a FOB (Forward Operating Base) the next day. As part of our company's mission in Kandahar, we would send crews to smaller FOBs for two week periods to provide Medivac and security support to some of the smaller outlying bases. This is what we were preparing to do the next day."*



**Forward Operating Base Qalat**

*"The primary QRF crew had come in early and the next crew would come on in about two hours. Our commander asked if we could cover the shift for those two hours. Sure, what can happen in two hours? About an hour into the shift, a call came in to go RedCon 2 meaning one pilot starts up the aircraft, the second goes to the TOC to receive a quick briefing on the situation and mission."*

*"Our mission was to provide close air support for some ground troops who had been on patrol near a base and been ambushed. We took off from Kandahar enroute to the objective area. Approximately five minutes from arrival,*

*a caution/warning light came on in the cockpit indicating a major component failure.”*

The procedures manual prescribes courses of action for various failures and the manual dictated they LAND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! This wasn't exactly possible in a hostile area so they attempted to fly to the closest FOB which was about 15 minutes away. Then, a second indicator light came on indicating a second component failure and the pilot in the accompanying aircraft reported to them that they were leaking fluids.

Making matters even worse, smoke began to fill the cockpit. Where there is smoke, there is fire; they needed to land, NOW! Trying to find cover in a desert area is not an easy thing to do.

CW4 Kuklish, the Pilot in Command, was able to locate a small area between two small mounds and set the aircraft down. Fearing the worst, they zeroed out all the secure radios, collected their sensitive materials, and quickly exited the aircraft. Roughly ten minutes passed and it became apparent that the aircraft was not going to explode or catch on fire so they went back to the aircraft and gathered the rest of their gear.

The other aircraft continued to fly overhead but had lost radio contact with Kandahar. There was however an Air Force aircraft flying at about 28,000 feet that the circling aircraft could contact and relay information to a smaller outlying FOB. They were told that a DART (Downed Aircraft Recovery Team) would be taking off from Kandahar to recover them in about twenty minutes.

An hour later the DART still had not arrived. It was a well known fact that the locals would monitor aircraft and relay their locations and activities to other hostiles. A situation where two aircraft were seen leaving and now only one was

visible and noticeably circling a location was not good. Everybody also knew that they were only about a mile away from a very densely populated village.

Nicole and Paul took up a position sitting back to back on the ground and watched for any activity. It was now starting to get dark and they had been on the ground for about an hour. The darkness did have one advantage; it helped conceal them. Then the aircraft flying over head contacted them and told them they had good news and bad news. Could things possibly get any worse?

The good news was that they had about an hours' worth of fuel left. The bad news was that the helicopter that was to come and get them had been diverted for a Medivac mission. Both downed pilots knew that there were at least 26 other aircraft at Kandahar which could have been launched to recover them. Why hadn't they???

They could still hear the aircraft overhead but could no longer see it. They both had a M4, a 9mm, a set of night vision goggles and a small survival radio. They began to truly appreciate what the troops on the ground experience everyday and how having an Apache flying overhead definitely does provide a sense of security.

Time passed excruciatingly slow. The Apache circling overhead eventually had to make that dreaded call, that they were low on fuel and had to return to base; there had been no word of any rescue aircraft heading their way.

Nicole and Paul made a split second decision to "hitch" a ride with the crew. The craft made a low pass over the area and found a place where it could touch down. Nicole and Paul threw as much gear as they could into the tail boom of the helicopter. But one must remember.....



**Apache's are two-seaters; there is no room for passengers!**

Nicole hooked herself to the exterior of the left side of the aircraft; Paul hooked himself to the exterior of the right side of the craft. They then gave the signal and the aircraft lifted off. What was actually a 10 minute flight back to base felt like 30 minutes; a speed of 7 knots felt like 100. It was very dark; all they could see were small fires in the desert and mud huts of the locals.

*"If it were an amusement park ride, it would have been a blast"* but in combat....not so much! It turned out that the first component failure was a mechanical failure and the second failure was a direct result of the first failure all related to their shaft driven compressor (SDC).

After the incident and their debriefing, the Air Force Commander assembled a presentation on their actions. This was the first recorded incident of an Apache being used to extract individuals in an emergency in Afghanistan; it was not common knowledge to outsiders that the Apache had this capability. Nicole and Paul were asked to make presentations to other pilots and some ground soldiers and demonstrate how they accomplished the feat.

The last week of February 2007, Nicole returned with the rest of the 183<sup>rd</sup> to Idaho. Fortunately no members of the 183<sup>rd</sup> were lost in action during the deployment but all their aircraft did receive battle damage. Other military units were not so fortunate. A fellow pilot from the Tennessee unit was killed in action and one of the soldiers they provided Medevac protection for did not survive his injuries.

In June 2009, Nicole was reassigned to BSU's ROTC department where she will serve a two-year tour instructing cadets. Her husband LTC Douglas Smith was

selected as the new Battalion Commander for the 183<sup>rd</sup> and to avoid all appearances of nepotism, Nicole accepted the transfer. She hopes to return to the unit and her beloved helicopter at the conclusion of his tour.

Nicole has an impressive list of awards:

- § ARMY SERVICE RIBBON (ASR)
- § 2 ARMY RESERVE COMPONENTS ACHIEVEMENT MEDALS (ARCAM)
- § NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RIBBON (NCPDR)
- § ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL
- § ARMED FORCES RESERVE MEDAL w/"M" DEVICE
- § 4 ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDALS (AAM)
- § 2 NATO MEDALS
- § 4 ARMY COMMENDATION MEDALS
- § 2 ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT OVERSEAS TRAINING RIBBONS

- § GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM MEDAL
- § AFGHANISTAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL
- § AIR MEDAL
- § PARACHUTIST BADGE
- § AVIATOR WINGS
- § COMBAT ACTION BADGE

On July 10, 2009, she received an additional award; she is now the recipient of the **Margaret Cochran Corbin Award**. This award is presented annually for exceptional military service by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

It is presented to a member of the military who is selected from all the branches of service. She traveled to Washington DC and was presented the award at the DAR annual convention at their Continental Congress.

The award was named in honor of Margaret Cochran Corbin who, during the Revolutionary War battle of Fort

Washington, took over the loading and firing of the cannon her husband was operating after he was mortally wounded.




**CPT Smith receives the award from DAR President General Linda Gist Calvin**

**Photo credit: Convention Photography Services.**

*Editor's Note:* A very special thank you to CPT Smith for sharing her story and photographs with us.

*Produced By: Idaho Military Historical Society  
Feature Stories, Editor & Production: Gayle Alvarez  
Comments or article suggestions are welcome, contact us at 272-4841 or visit our new web site at: <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov>*

**JUST IN CASE** Have you sent in your renewal for 2010? Don't forget, *donations are tax deductible*. When is your membership due for renewal? Check the date just above your name on the address label or contact Gayle or Jeff.



**IDAHO MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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*Donation/Membership Application/Renewal Form*

**YES!** Please enter my **tax deductible** membership application/renewal in the category checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order in the amount indicated.

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\$ 25 [ ] General	\$ 375 [ ] Lifetime	\$ 10 [ ] Student
\$ 10 [ ] Associate (Members Spouse)	\$ 15 [ ] Senior (60+)	

**ORGANIZATIONAL:**

\$ 500 [ ] Platinum	\$ 100 [ ] Silver	
\$ 250 [ ] Gold	\$ 50 [ ] Bronze	

**OTHER:** (Endowment, Contributions, etc.)

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