



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **IDAHO'S TWO BASES BOTH PROVIDE GREAT VALUE FOR AMERICA'S MILITARY**

***By Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter***

Idaho has a long history of supporting the armed forces. The Idaho Territory was created during the Civil War, and since then the people and treasure of Idaho have played important roles in all our nation's conflicts.

Idaho's military tradition and devotion to duty are important parts of who we are and how we think about the world.

Now there is the looming possibility that we may have to forfeit the flying mission at Gowen Field in Boise or risk the near certainty of sacrificing the future of Mountain Home Air Force Base. My message to Air Force Chief of Staff Mark A. Welsh III when he visits Idaho in May will be that such a choice ignores the tremendous value that both facilities represent.

Relatively unimpeded air space over broad swaths of lightly populated terrain, extraordinary flying weather, an expanded flight training range, a qualified and committed workforce, community support that's second to none and excellent facilities should make both Gowen Field and Mountain Home Air Force Base the darlings of Pentagon planners.

As a proud veteran of the 116th Armored Cavalry, and now as the Idaho National Guard's commander in chief, I can tell you with a high degree of certainty that our state's contributions to national defense and the wellbeing of our communities are respected and held in high regard by military professionals. But the Obama administration's vision for our military is based on future conflicts being somehow "different."

But we are up to the challenge of overcoming these threats precisely because of the cost effectiveness and utility of bases like those in Idaho. Just look at the high retention rates, readiness, proven reliability and great contributions of bases like Mountain Home and Gowen Field. That's to say nothing of the invaluable service by trained personnel from both bases in times of wildfire, floods and other natural disasters.

Moreover, Air Force men and women stationed at Mountain Home stay here or return after retirement at rates higher than most military bases, and the National Guard men and women who drill and work at Gowen Field are on the vanguard of a growing Idaho aeronautics industry. Both facilities are home to solid, productive, patriotic citizens and families who are integral to our national defense and community.

If the administration wants to talk seriously about putting these valuable defense assets to their highest and best uses, we're listening. I look forward to Chief of Staff Welsh's visit and the opportunity to make our case.

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