



Executive Department
State of Idaho

The Office of the Governor
Proclamation

State Capitol
Boise

WHEREAS, Idaho citizen Vernon Joseph Baker was born December 17, 1919, enlisted in the United States Army on June 26, 1941, was assigned to the segregated 270th Regiment of the 92nd Infantry Division and is the last survivor of the World War II Buffalo Soldiers Brigade; and

WHEREAS, in the spring of 1945, Second Lieutenant Vernon Baker led his weapons platoon in a two-day assault against an Italian mountain stronghold that was occupied by the Germans; and, after great loss of life, Second Lieutenant Baker's platoon finally secured the mountain for the American soldiers; and

WHEREAS, his heroic service earned eight awards and decorations including a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star, the Distinguished Service Cross, and a nomination for the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, more than 50 years after the assault, Mr. Baker was awarded the nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor, in 1997 for his actions during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Vernon Baker was one of seven Black soldiers who belatedly received the Medal of Honor for their service in World War II, Mr. Baker being the only one still alive; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Baker retired from the U.S. Army, moved to St. Maries, Idaho, and for the past eight years served his beloved state as a member of the Idaho Human Rights Commission; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2009 Mr. Baker celebrates his 90th birthday;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, "C.L." BUTCH OTTER, Governor of the state of Idaho, do hereby proclaim December 17, 2009 to be

Vernon J. Baker Day

in Idaho, and I encourage Idahoans to honor this courageous citizen who is the embodiment of the true American hero and who ensures and reminds us of all that is wonderful about Idaho and this great country



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Idaho in Boise on this 8th day of December in the year of our Lord two-thousand and nine and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred thirty-fourth and of the Statehood of Idaho the one hundred twentieth.

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

BEN YSURSA
SECRETARY OF STATE