



General Patton Memorial Museum

***Celebrating 20 Years***

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**LOCAL SOLDIERS WHO DIED IN IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN WAR SALUTED AT  
GENERAL PATTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM**

*Families Recognized at Veterans Day/20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations*

**Chiriaco Summit, CA. – (Nov 8 2008)** State Senator-elect John Benoit and Rear Admiral Ben Montoya (Ret.) today acknowledged families of several local soldiers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan during Veterans Day and 20th Anniversary events at the General Patton Memorial Museum, Chiriaco Summit.

Saluted were: Marine Corp. Jesus A. Gonzalez of Indio who was killed in Iraq, April 2003; Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Joshua M. Palmer of Banning, who fell in Iraq, April 2004; Army Sgt. Norman R. Taylor, III of Blythe, killed in Iraq in October 2006; Army Pvt. Ming Sun of Cathedral City, killed in Iraq in January, 2007; and Navy Corpsman Marc Retmier of Hemet, who fell in Afghanistan, June, 2008.

These and other soldiers' names were placed on the new Defenders of Freedom Wall at the museum, which was unveiled at the ceremonies.

Retmier, a graduate of Alessandro High School in Hemet, was the 500<sup>th</sup> service person from California to have been killed when a Taliban rocket exploded the Humvee he was in while patrolling in northern Paktia province. His parents, Steve and Joy Retmier and their parents, Bob and Carol Pesce and Dale Powers, attended the event in honor of their son and grandson.

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The late Sgt. Norman Taylor III, a 2003 graduate of Palo Verde High School who was killed by a roadside bomb while serving in Iraq, was represented by his parents, Shannon and Norman Taylor, Jr., sister Christine, and other family and friends from Blythe.

Army Pvt. Ming Sun, a graduate of Cathedral City High School, died from wounds suffered while his battalion came into contact with enemy forces in small arms fire in Ramedi, Iraq. Representing the Sun family was Ming's former Cathedral City High School US/World History teacher, Lee Wilson. Born in China, Sun was given US Citizenship posthumously.

The family and friends of the late Joshua M. Palmer of Banning came out to pay respects as the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Lieutenant's name was placed on the Defenders of Freedom wall at the General Patton Museum. Palmer died from wounds received during enemy fire in Al Anbar, Iraq. His mother, Jackie Palmer Kennedy, and step father Randy Kennedy, accepted proclamations from Senator-elect Benoit and Rear Admiral Montoya. After Palmer's death in 2004, the city of Banning renamed the street on which the family's business, The Farm House Restaurant, is located to Joshua Palmer Way.

Marine Captain Jesus A. Gonzalez name was also placed on the Defenders of Freedom Wall. Gonzalez, a native of Mexico, graduated from Indio High School and attended College of the Desert before joining the Marines. He was killed in action while manning a check point in Baghdad, leaving his wife and daughter. Family members were unable to attend.

Top military representatives included Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, USAF (Ret), honorary chairman of the Museum; Rear Admiral Ben Montoya (Ret); Col. Jim Chevalier, garrison commander at Fr. Irwin; and General Tim Clifford (ret).

The Veteran's Day also honored General George S. Patton, Jr. and the Native American Indian Code Talkers. Live patriotic music by the Navy Band Southwest and an appearance by Sam Wolcott as General Patton were part of festivities.

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**About the General Patton Memorial Museum**

An historic adventure for the entire family, museum exhibits include the Tank Yard with WWII military equipment, uniforms, weapons, medals as well as artifacts used by WWII fighting men and women and the West Coast Vietnam Memorial Wall honoring the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.

The General Patton Memorial Museum is a testament to the role General Patton and his Desert Training Center played in winning World War II. The museum is among important historic sites for Patton's military training operations, located one mile from his Camp Young Field Operations headquarters and the former Army Airfield.

The General Patton Memorial Museum is in association with the Bureau of Land Management and located at 62510 Chiriaco Road, Chiriaco Summit. It is open daily from 9:30 am. To 4:30 p.m. except for Thanksgiving and Christmas. For more information, call (760) 227-3483 or visit online at [www.generalpattonmuseum.com](http://www.generalpattonmuseum.com)

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