



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Day 15
Thursday,
January 17th

Chirico Summit
To the
Salton Sea

Weather
40's to 60's and sunny

Hello to Family & Friends

Today was a day of surprises.

I will warn you now. After being a good Harvest Host member and thanking the museum employee for allowing me to spend the night, I spent two hours in the museum above. There are a lot of plaques and reading. Just stuff I found interesting.

Surprisingly, this was a very well organized and informative museum. Clean, great photos, several military vehicles out in the yard. I enjoyed it.

There are also more photos today than any other day, so far.

In Search of Eldorado

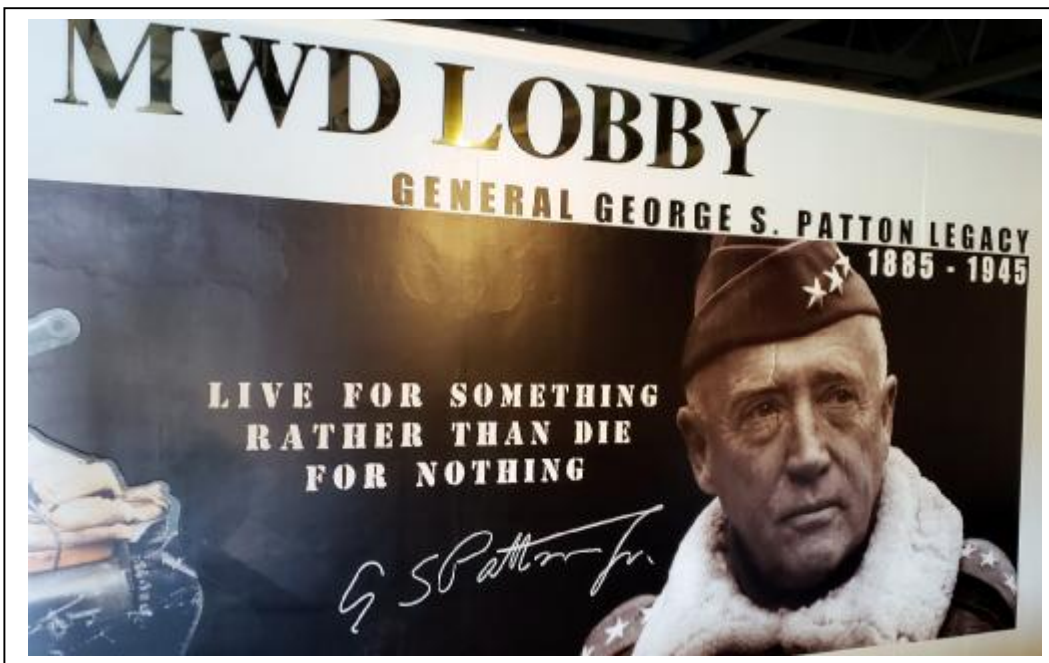
By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'





Patton was, of course, famous for his ivory handled pistol.



COLT .45 MODEL

The Legend of General Patton is something that continues to interest the public. Did General Patton carry a Pearl handle pistol, or was it Ivory, was it a .357 Magnum or something else? The gun on display is an exact replica of the General's Colt single-action Army .45 revolver.

The General, when asked about having pearl handles, responded that they were in fact Ivory. "only a New Orleans pimp would carry a pearl handled gun!"

However, the General did carry other lesser known guns like the Remington Model 51 .380, the Colt Detective .38 Special, and the Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum revolver.

Jerry Busche Collection
1994.01.082
General Patton Memorial Museum

Olympics - First in the Modern Era

In May of 1912, George Patton received notification that he been selected to represent the United States of America in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. He was selected to compete in the Individual Sabre Fencing. He was also invited to compete in the inaugural sport based on the games of ancient Greece. It was introduced by the creator of Modern Era Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin, and called the Modern Pentathlon.

Continuing the tradition today in Summer Olympic Games, the Modern Pentathlon is a five-discipline sport based on the skills necessary for a soldier to carry an important message to the battlefield. Beginning on horseback, the soldier comes upon the enemy and must defend himself with a pistol, then with a sword, before escaping by swimming across a river and running towards where he is to deliver the message.

For this newly introduced sport, only the military were invited to compete. Using a borrowed horse from a Swedish competitor after his went lame in the steeple-chase, Patton finished the riding discipline with a perfect score. In the 4,000-meter foot-race, he finished third with a very close finish. Since fencing and shooting were also disciplines that Patton excelled at, the outcome of him ending fifth overall in the Modern Pentathlon was not unexpected. The competitors for this sport were considered "World Class Athletes" during the competition. The strategy he employed, the level of skill he exhibited, the endurance and conditioning he demanded of himself to complete the competition - all is clearly recognized as principles he used in World War II.



I never had any idea that Patton was in the Olympics. That was a shocker.

The Cousins 1945

standing left to right

- Ralph F. Stearley
- Hoyt S. Vandenberg
- Walter Bedell Smith
- Otto P. Weyland
- B. Richard Nugent

seated left to right

- William H. Simpson
- George S. Patton, Jr.
- Carl Spaatz
- Dwight D. Eisenhower
- Omar Bradley
- Courtney H. Hodges
- Leonard T. Gerow



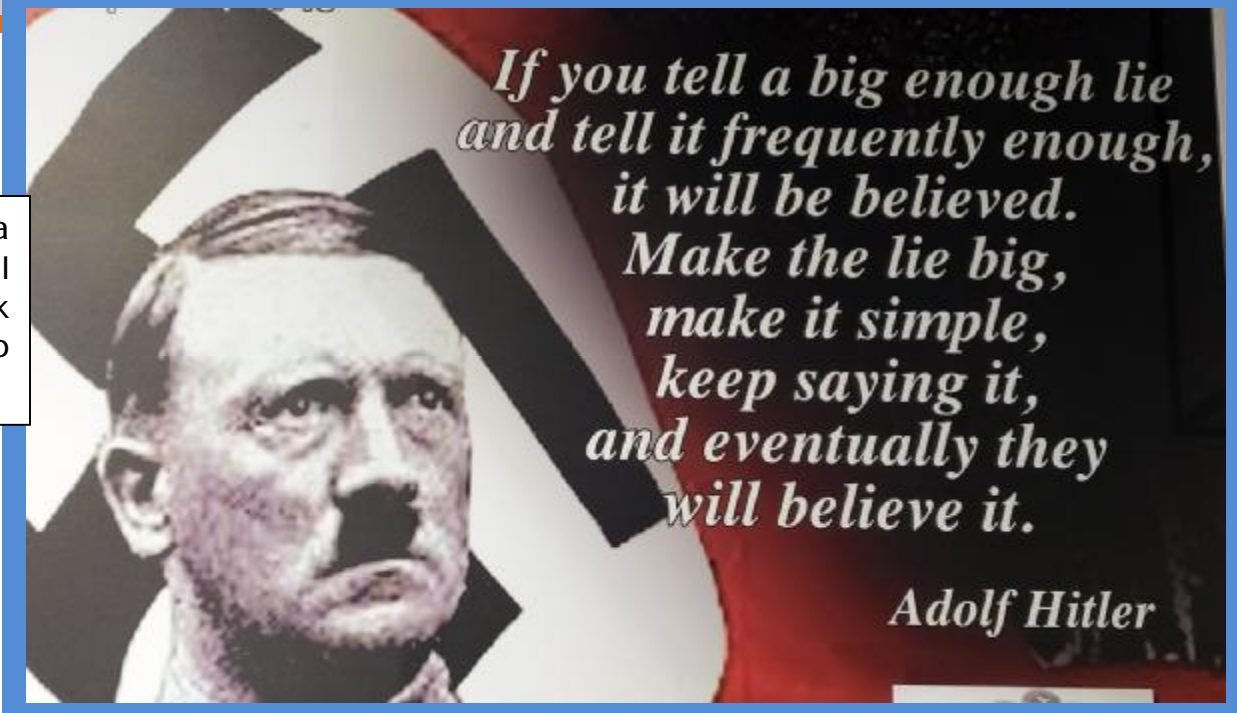
Quite the cadre of military history here.



German Helmets "Pickelhaube"
The Pickelhaube was made popular in the 19th century, and was originally used by Prussian Infantry units. Was discontinued during WW I because it offered the soldier little protection, and was replaced with the M16 "Stahlhelm."

As a kid I remember my brother had a car model with this helmet as the cover. You also see it a lot in humorous WWII movies. It's what I always associated with the Red Baron (all hail Snoopy).

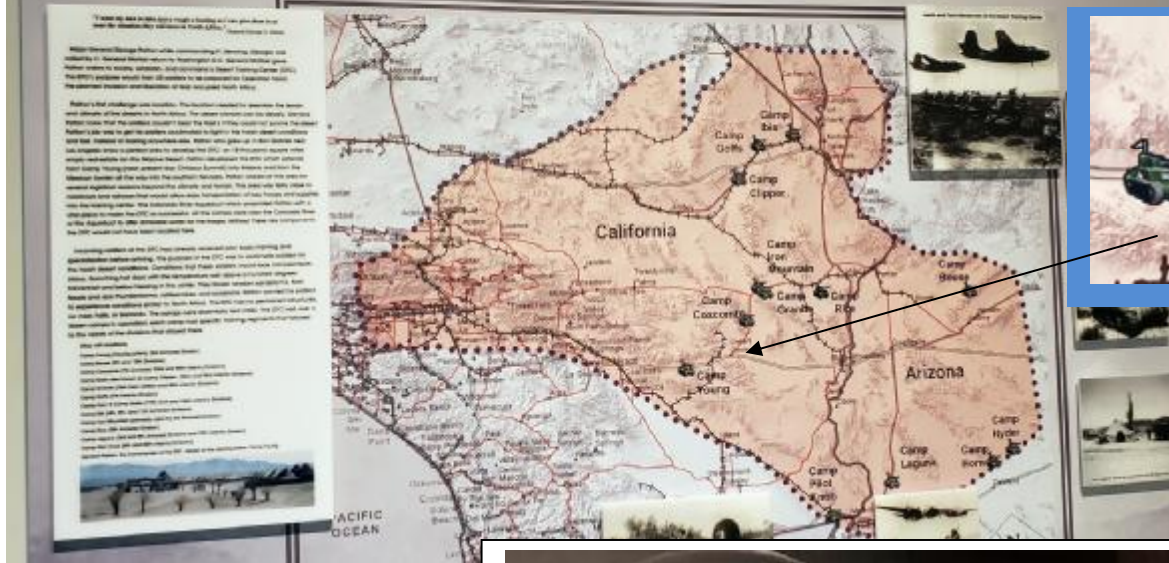
Sounds like a business partner I used to have took this advice to heart.



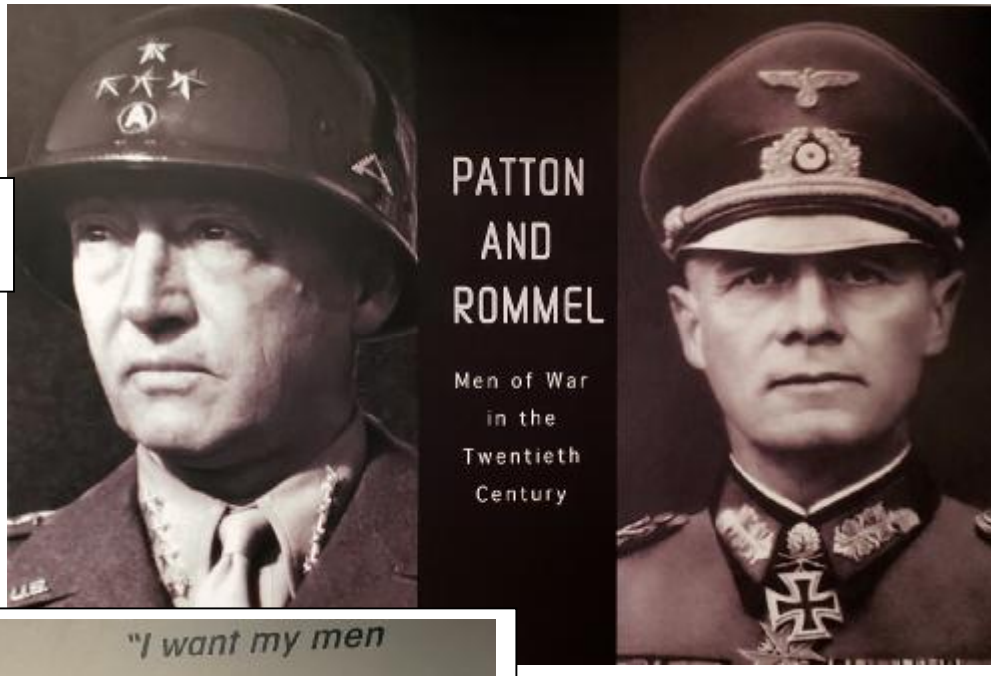
*If you tell a big enough lie
and tell it frequently enough,
it will be believed.
Make the lie big,
make it simple,
keep saying it,
and eventually they
will believe it.*

Adolf Hitler

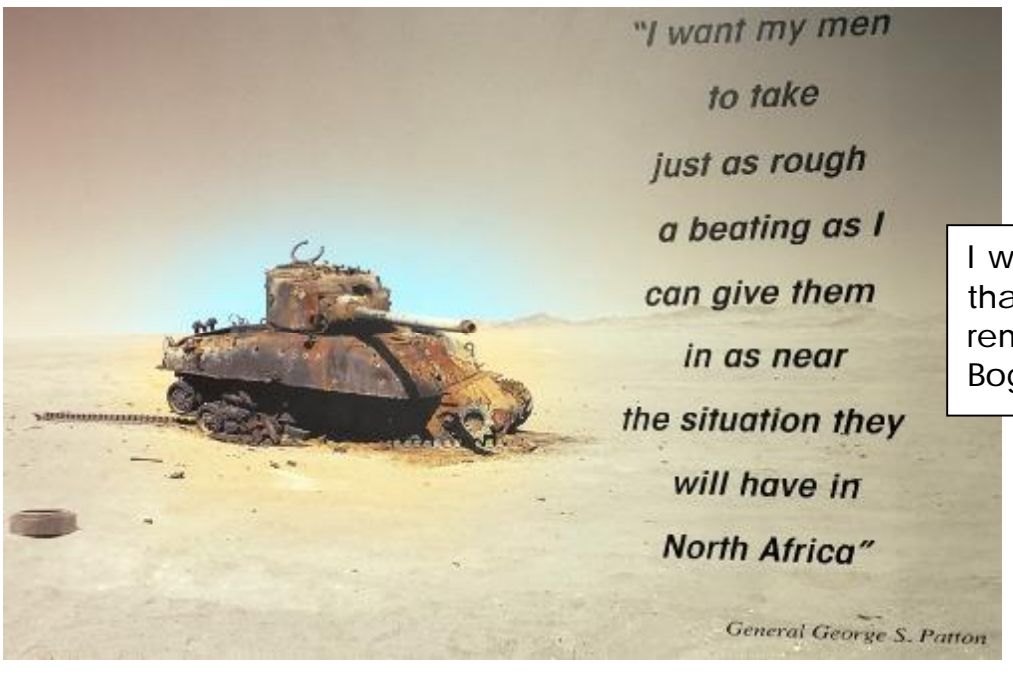
1942 - 1944 Desert Training Center



Old Blood and Guts and The Desert Fox



PATTON AND ROMMEL
Men of War in the Twentieth Century



"I want my men to take just as rough a beating as I can give them in as near the situation they will have in North Africa"

General George S. Patton

I would not have wanted to be in that tank. But seeing that picture reminds me of the Humphrey Bogart movie SAHARA. I good flick,

I assume we all recognize this photo. It took up an entire wall at the museum.

U.S. flag on Iwo Jima

U.S. Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, February 23, 1943
28th Marine Regiment of the 5th Division
Raising the U.S. Flag on Iwo Jima, became an iconic photograph of WWII and is still being used today. The photo was taken by Joe Rosenthal on February 23, 1945, which depicts six Marines raising a U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi, during the Battle of Iwo Jima. The Marines in the photo in the front are (right to left) Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley, Harold Schultz, and Harlon Block. The two marines in the back are Michael Strank (behind Sousley) and Rene Gagnon (behind Schultz). Marines Strank, Block and Sousley died shortly after this picture was taken.



1944 D-Day

"You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, Toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you"

General Dwight D. Eisenhower

Weight: D-Day

During World War II, every soldier was required to carry common items in their packs such as underwear, socks, pants, shirts, blanket, and a field jacket. The everyday clothing weighed 30 pounds alone. This is without any additional equipment or supplies. The U.S. Soldier carried a helmet, first aid, canteen, entrenching tool, field bag, and K-rations (3 meals). The total weight of this equipment weighed nearly 19 pounds.

Depending on the type of weapon the soldier had affected the overall weight they carried during the war. A soldier carrying the B.A.R., like the one on display, would weigh nearly 100 additional pounds. This would include the weapon, ammo, grenades, hatchet, pistol, common clothing, and common equipment.

During D-Day, the record shows that some U.S. soldiers were required to swim with nearly 100 extra pounds strapped to them. Unfortunately, an unknown number of soldiers drowned due to the amount and weight of the gear they had to carry. Today, the U.S. Armed Forces train our soldiers to swim carrying their packs and gear so they are prepared for anything and avoid another incident like D-Day.


The photo below shows all the equipment each man carried on his person.



It was very difficult to get a picture of the BAR below due to the glass case it was in. BAR stands for Browning Automatic Rifle.



M60 Patton Tank



Weight: 100,000 pounds
Built by: Chrysler
Dimensions: 10' x 12' x 30'
Diesel Engine - Holds 385 gallons
Top Speed: 35 mph
Widely used by the US and Cold War allies



General Patton Memorial Museum

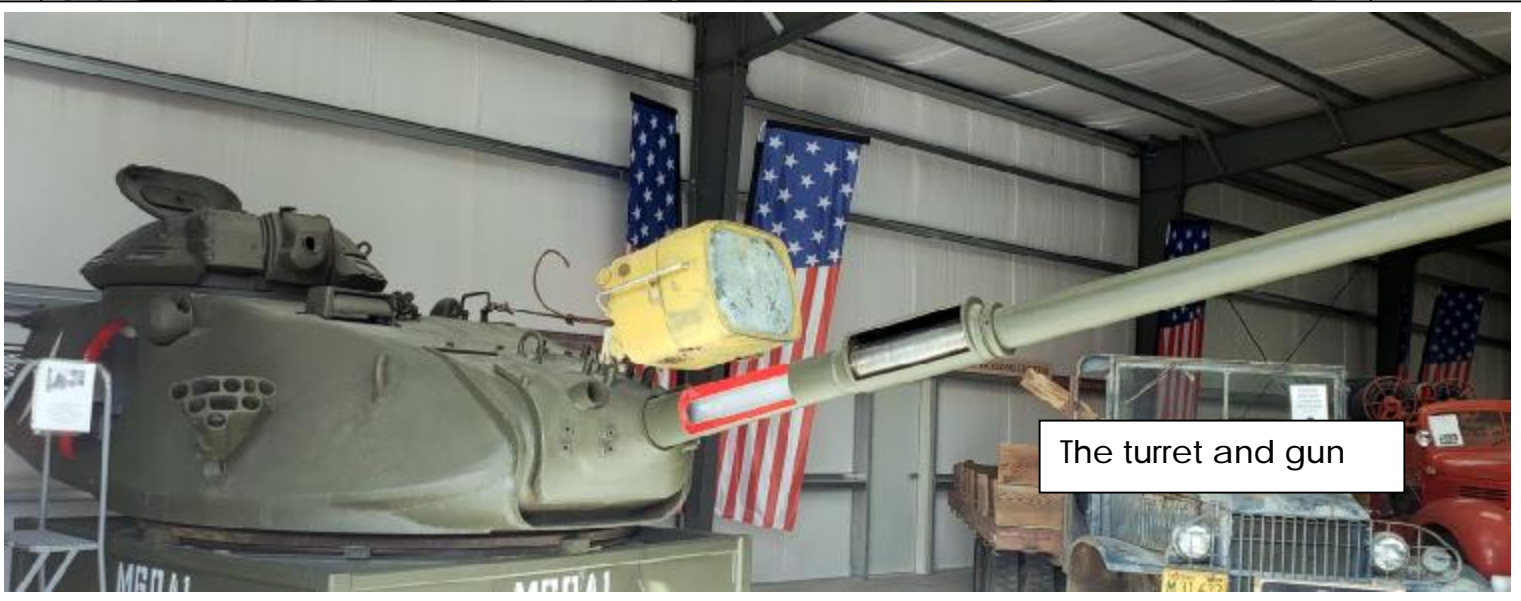
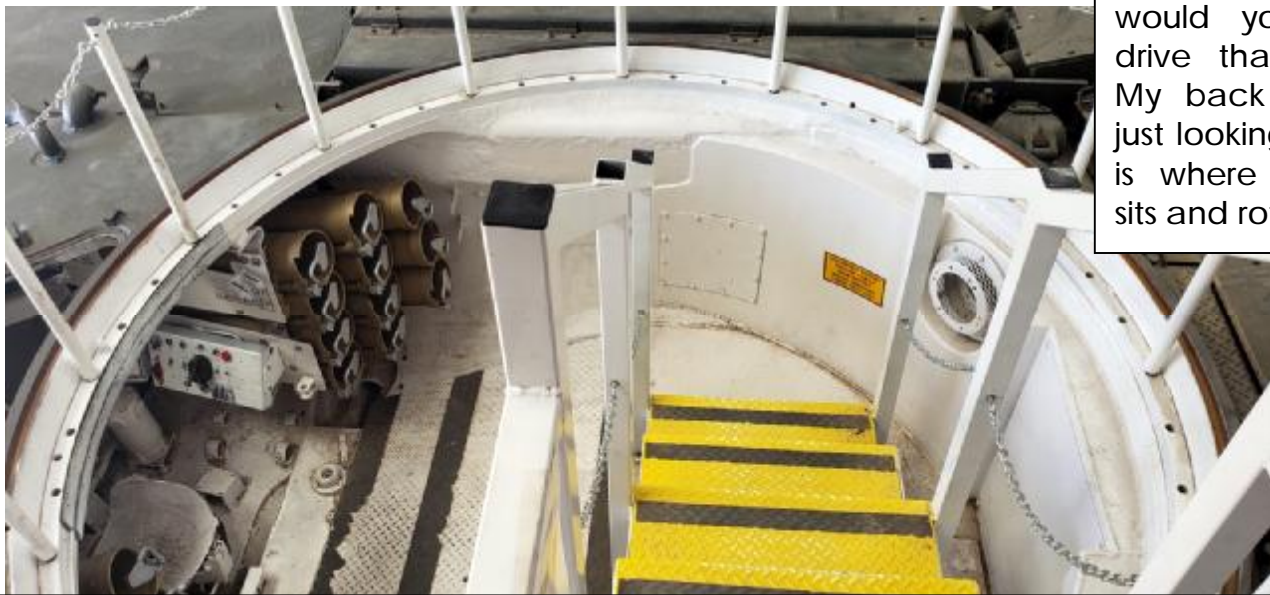
Do Not Touch
The General Patton Memorial Museum
3330 Surface Road
Chateau Square, GA 30228
Thank you for visiting the General Patton Memorial Museum
Call us 7 days a week 800-333-3333

From here I moved to the vehicle pavilion. This display was awesome. The turret is removed for display.





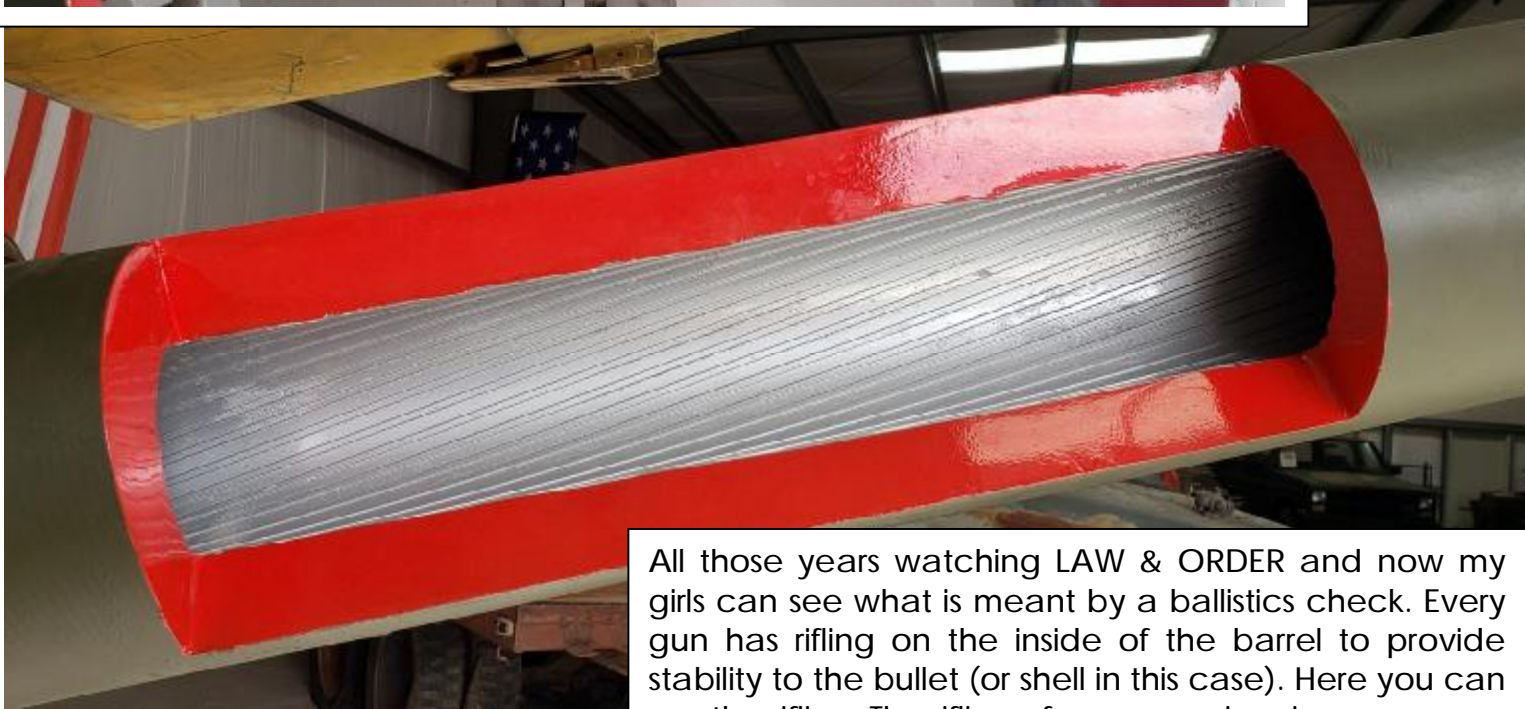
No A/C; desert heat of the Sahara; how would you like to drive that all day. My back gets sore just looking at it. Left is where the turret sits and rotates.



The turret and gun

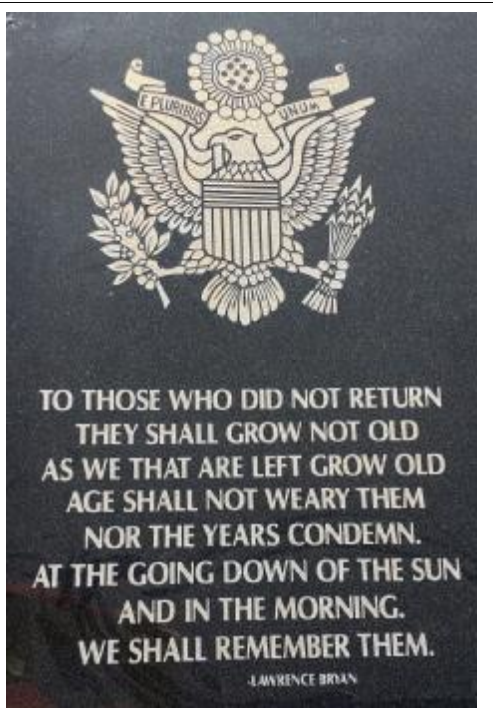


Looking through a hole cut is the turret.



All those years watching LAW & ORDER and now my girls can see what is meant by a ballistics check. Every gun has rifling on the inside of the barrel to provide stability to the bullet (or shell in this case). Here you can see the rifling. The rifling of every gun is unique.





“It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather, we should thank God that such men lived.”
-General George S. Patton

World War II was considered one of the longest and bloodiest wars. The record shows it began on September 1, 1939 and after 6 years and 1 day the war finally ended on September 2, 1945. Unfortunately, no one really knows exactly how many lives were lost during the war. The estimation indicates that between 70 to 80 million people, civilian and military, died during the war. What we are certain about, World War II was a global war that affected everyone.

As I started through the museum, reading about Patton’s childhood, I looked back at the wall with the bottom photo on page 1, to see what year Patton was born. What I also took in, rather than just taking a picture, was the fact that he died in 1945. I thought, Oh, he must have died in battle. But I didn’t remember that in the movie with George C. Scott. So when I arrived at the information board below and read how Patton died, I was completely taken by surprise. I think it warrants a full page.

General Patton Car Accident

December 9th 1945: General George S. Patton Jr. departed to Bad Nauheim to hunt pheasants in the nearby countryside. The General's convoy included Major General Hobart, PFC Horace Woodring, and Joe Spruce. General Patton was riding in a 1939 model 75 Cadillac alone with Major General Gay, and the driver PFC Woodring, a jeep driven by Joe Spruce followed that had the extra supplies including the guns and a hunting dog.

General Patton wanted to stop and explore the ruins of an old Roman outpost. His boots and socks were soaked and he sat in the front seat of the Cadillac to dry off by the heater. The Convoy continued on until they stopped at a check point and Patton exited his vehicle to speak with the M.P. After they spoke Patton mentioned how cold it was and was worried about the hunting dog sitting in the jeep with Joe Spruce. He ordered that the dog sat in the front seat of the Cadillac so it wouldn't freeze to death.

General Patton moved to the back seat with Major General Horace Gay. The convoy came upon a railroad track and waited for the train to pass. Once it was safe to proceed, they continued on their way until a large US Army truck abruptly turned into their lane. The Cadillac swerved in an attempt to avoid any major collision. The vehicles collided into each other, the Army truck hit the right front fender and smashed the Cadillac's radiator. No one in the Army truck or Cadillac were severely injured except General Patton.

General Patton sustained a severe head injury and was complaining of trouble breathing and paralysis of his arms and legs. After the wreck, Patton was heard murmuring "I think I'm paralyzed." He was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown forward which caused him to hit a partition in the vehicle. When the ambulance arrived, because of the severity of his injuries, it was decided to take him to a US Army Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany. When Patton arrived at the hospital, he was in shock and had lost a massive amount of blood. Patton was immediately given multiple blood transfusions. The reports indicate that Patton had suffered a severe Y shaped gash above his nose that extended around his head. X rays were taken and confirmed the worst, General Patton suffered a broken neck, and severe spinal cord damage which left him paralyzed from the neck down. In an effort to decrease the pressure on his spine, the Doctors used a special device called "crutch field tongs" that attached to his head and had a 5 lbs. weight attached in effort to stabilize Patton's vitals.

December 10th 1945: News of General Patton's accident spread quickly and reporters from various news outlets began arriving at the hospital. Some reporters attempted to disguise themselves in order to take pictures of Patton in the hospital.

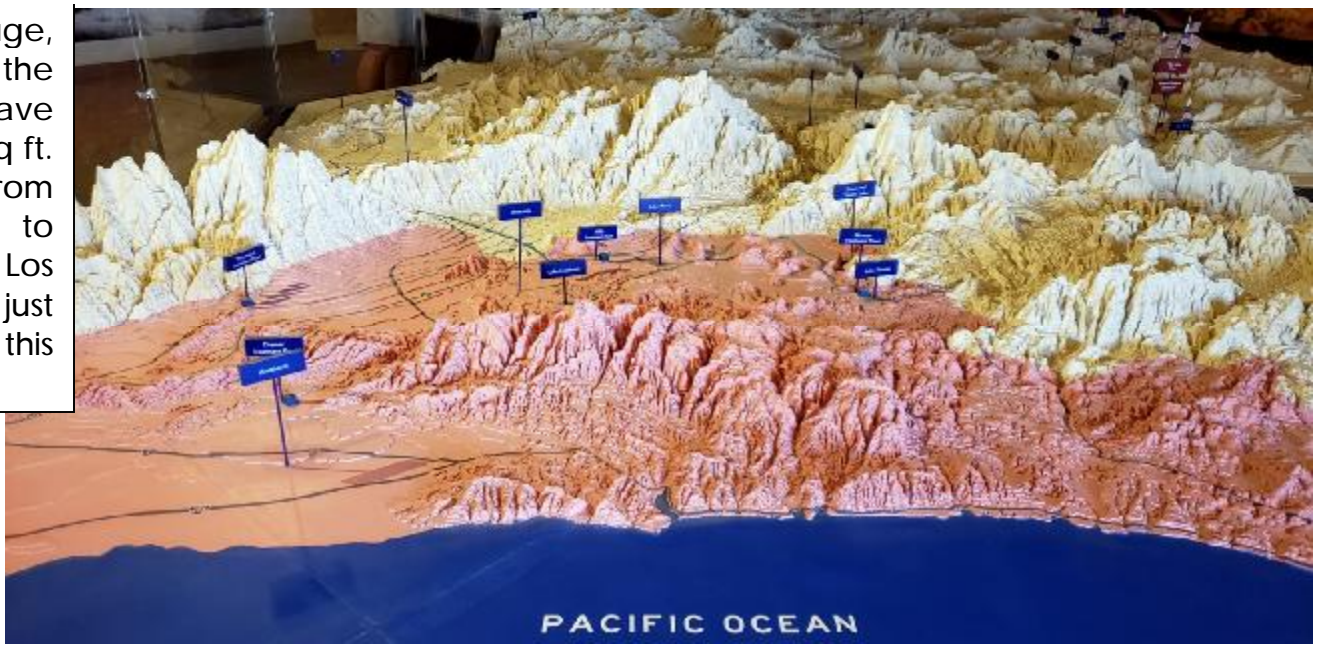
Patton's wife, Beatrice and an American neurosurgeon, Colonel Geoffrey Spurling, was summoned to fly in from the States on the 11th. Patton's medical report read, "Prognosis for recovery increasingly grave." Apparently, General Patton was aware of his condition. When Patton saw his wife, his first words to her were, "I'm afraid, Bea, this may be the last time we see each other."

December 21st 1945: Beatrice spent her entire afternoon with Patton until he fell asleep. She decided to step away to have supper around 5:15 p.m. (1715 hours). A doctor summoned her at about 1800 hours, but it was too late. General George S. Patton Jr. had died peacefully at 1755 hours on December 21, 1945.

I think I'll have to get a book on Patton from the library. My interest has been peaked. Also more about WWII.

Where are those stories Gpops?

This was a huge, HUGE map in the lobby. Must have covered 400 sq ft. All the way from the Pacific to Phoenix. Los Angeles is just about under this caption.



The museum where I spent the night are the brown signs.

My next stop is here.

This is right about where I am spending tonight.

I was surprised again that gas here was only \$4.09. I would have guessed they would be stealing from those who need gas as other stations do that are in the middle of nowhere. Now I know why the place is so busy. That's funny now that I think of it. Two days ago in Fenner, gas was \$5.99 and there was one vehicle at the pump. Just think how much more money that guy would make if he LOWERED his price.

THE CHIRIACO FAMILY

JOSEPH L. CHIRIACO CAME TO CALIFORNIA FROM ALABAMA IN 1925. HIS WORK AS A SURVEYOR FOR THE LOS ANGELES BUREAU OF WATER AND POWER AND WATER FOR THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF THE COLORADO RIVER AQUEDUCT REGION IN 1930, BROUGHT HIM TO THE DESERT AREA KNOWN AS CHAYES SUMMIT. HE ESTABLISHED A GAS STATION AND GENERAL STORE HERE IN 1930. THE SAME YEAR THAT THE PAVED HIGHWAY, U.S. 60, REPLACED THE GRAVEL ROAD FROM INDO TO PHOENIX. IN 1934 HE MARRIED RUTH E. BERSEGA, A REGISTERED NURSE, AND THEY RAISED THEIR FAMILY AT CHIRIACO SUMMIT. IN 1942 GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON ESTABLISHED THE DESERT TRAINING CENTER HEADQUARTERS AT NEARBY CAMP YOUNG. IN 1945 THE CHIRIACO FAMILY BUILT A MEMORIAL TO PATTON AND HIS WIFE WHICH HAS SINCE GROWN INTO A FULL-SCALE MUSEUM. IN 1958 THE U.S. POST OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED HERE AND THE NAME OF THE AREA CHANGED TO CHIRIACO SUMMIT. JOE AND RUTH CHIRIACO, TRUE FRONTIER SPIRITS, PASSED AWAY WITHIN MONTHS OF EACH OTHER IN THE SPRING OF 1996. THEIR LIFE WORKS, SERVING THE TRAVELING PUBLIC, CONTINUE TODAY THROUGH THEIR CHILDREN.

PLATEAU CREATED BY VILLY-BLONDE (GASITE)
CENTRE MEMORIAL AND MONUMENT OFFICE OF CALIFORNIA STATE
MAY 1996

My next stop is Desert Center, where I was pointing to on the map. According to DesertUSA.com, "There are only about 150 residents living in Desert Center. Downtown there is a post office, an abandoned café, a lot of old buildings and a few memorial plaques, giving the city a historical ambiance." Below is the Café. The pic on the website still shows the gas pumps, which are now gone. In the 30's the Colorado River Aqueduct was being built and some geologists on the payroll happened to find the world's largest deposit of iron ore. In 1983 the open pit mine shutdown, but after the aqueduct was completed in 1940, the population of Desert Center stood at 19. The opening of the Desert Training Center in 1942 helped, but that only lasted two years.



I would assume this truck driver is trying to get a little shade for a nap



According to my GPS, this building is the center of town.

There are a couple trailer parks and a couple operating towing companies.

Read on to see if life will return to Desert Center

Just down the road a company has opened the Chuckwalla Valley Raceway - CVR. It is an Elkhart Lake type road race track. So far there is one complete circuit with two more planned for the future. Sounds like a hoppin' scene on the weekends with all types of racing vehicles. Maybe this will help Desert Center revive.



I noticed this linear irrigation system, quite ancient, and noticed the dead rows of whatever plants those are. I don't think it works anymore.



I guess when a town dies, everything dies right along with it. Note the two drooping palm trees just left of center. Their posture says it all.



Yup, that's exactly what you think it is, a golf course. Supposedly they are relatively cheap. Probably a lot of sand traps since the sand is free.



On the way up to Eagle Mountain, another supposed ghost town, I came across this view. Now, this was not mentioned anywhere. That is a solar farm down the road with row upon row of solar panels.



This from desertusa.com again. Eagle Mountain was created for the workers in the open pit iron mine, which is somewhere in those hills below.



It is fenced off, but when security came out to ask if they could help me, I was told this is not a ghost town, people still live here, the school is open and, IT'S PRIVATE PROPERTY. Yes sir, I'll head right back where I came from sir.



I made the decision to make my way around the Salton Sea over the weekend and head back to Joshua Tree next week when the crowds are gone. GPS took me down Box Canyon Rd. Imagine my surprise when I started driving through this badlands type environment. I was stunned. My research never showed anything like this. I bet a person could spend a year here, hiking every day, and not explore all the washes and canyons. Beautiful. I will be stopping here on my way back to Joshua Tree.





My first view of The Salton Sea.



All of a sudden it was green. Groves of lemon, orange and grapefruit trees; Fields of tomatoes and some kind of leafy green; hundreds of rows of whatever that is to the left; forests of palm trees; and many more. My surprise was a, wow, this is great.

I found the State Park VC and grabbed a couple brochures. I only had 15 minutes, according to the ranger at the gate, then it would be a courtesy of me to pay a \$7 parking fee.



Creating Lake Cahuilla

Millions of years ago the Gulf of California flowed all the way up here and beyond the Colorado River. Eventually, sand deposits formed a dam between this place and the ocean. Behind the dam a huge inland sea was created. Over centuries, fresh water from the river replaced all of the salt water, creating Lake Cahuilla.

Native American people lived along the edges of this vibrant lake for generations. Their fish traps can still be seen. However, about 500 years ago, the Colorado River shifted south into the Gulf and the lake began to dry up. As it dried, great salt deposits became visible.

Seeking Salt and Soil

In the mid-1800s, the lake was nearly dry, and miners came for the salt. Farmers discovered that the nearby soil was amazingly fertile, and set about planting and creating new irrigation canals. These canals brought the water from the Colorado River.

A Sea Is Formed

In 1905, a huge flood poured down the Colorado and crashed through the canal barriers. Water rushed downhill into the empty sea, and was flowing for 16 months before men could stop it. A new lake, 45 miles long and 20 miles wide had been formed!

ATTACK OF THE KILLER SALINITY!

Resort Hot Spot

In the late 1950's, the Salton Sea State Recreation Area was hugely popular. On Friday afternoons, thousands of Southern Californians would load up their Airstreams™ and head to the Sea for fun, sun and water play.

Boating was so popular that a 15-lane boat ramp was put in. Long lines of campers waited to check-in for a weekend of fishing, boating and water-skiing.

Saltier and Saltier

Water flows into the Sea from rivers carrying dissolved salts. When the water evaporates, the salt is left behind — millions of tons each year! As the water got saltier, the types of plants, fish and animals here changed. Those that tolerated more salt thrived while others died out. The salts were also hard on freshwater boats, so some boaters chose the Colorado River instead.

Fighting salinity is one of the biggest challenges facing managers of the Salton Sea. Once this battle is won, the sea may once again flourish.

How Long Will It Last?

Today, the sea is kept afloat by agricultural drainage, rivers, creeks, and storm runoff. On some days, up to four million birds visit the sea at one time, and the sport fishing is always rewarding. There are a few problems, however. Because more water evaporates than comes in each year, the sea is shrinking. And as fresh water evaporates, the Sea's waters are becoming saltier and saltier. Finding a way to balance the Sea's mineral and water levels is the key to a healthy future.



By now it was 3:30, and I decided to try a nearby hiking trail that might lead to a free overnight camping spot. The brochure took me down a gravel road, a very nice gravel road, to the trailhead. I was surprised to find out there are two trails from this spot: the Dos Palmas Oasis, which was in the brochure, and The San Andreas Oasis, which was not. I picked this one because the other had a long downhill and back up on the gravel road.

This is a new kind of palm tree on me. Don't let the picture deceive you, the palm is about 30' tall and 8' across the middle.

Below - The salt is right up to the trees, and the path. It's a wonder they can grow in this soil at all.



I feel like Bilbo Baggins about to enter Mirkwood. Where's Gandalf when you need him?

It was much darker and cooler under the fronds of the forest.



I guess palm trees are resilient. I don't think this is the same type as most of them in here, but even after being knocked down it continues to grow towards the sun.

There were a couple spots like the one below. Now that's what I call a low hanging bridge. This was a very short hike, maybe 20 minutes, but it was just another surprise on the day.





I sat at the trailhead for awhile, hoping no one would come along and chase me out. It was much more pleasant with the hill blocking the wind. But alas, it was not to be. The resident host arrived and told me I could not park there overnight, but that I could stay at the graded area at the top of the hill. So that's where the picture above brings me, to the top of the hill and a view of the Salton Sea for company. I really like the reflection on the side of the RV.

So many things to see and do and I think I'm even ahead of schedule. Of course I did gain an entire day because I thought it was Friday when it was only Thursday.

I must be right on top of a cell tower, the internet here is faster than it is at home (which is not really saying much, Spectrum sucks).

Hey girls, I finished the Christmas cookies for dessert tonight.

I know this was a long one with a lot of reading. If you read it all, fine, if you didn't, that's fine also. You are all here with me, rehashing the events of the day, without you I would be truly bored in the evenings. (what do you do for 5 hours when the sun is down and you're camped out in the wilderness by yourself. As Harry Chapin once said "Thank God you're here."

There were lots of good surprises today, and that made it a very good day indeed.

Until next time.....