

The vast open spaces of the California Desert are uniquely situated within a few hours drive of more than 15 million people. In recognition of the special challenges created by this situation, Congress established the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) in 1976. Over one fifth of the Desert's 25 million acres are public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency of the U. S. Department of the Interior. Congress directed BLM to provide for the administration of public land in a way that would protect its unusual natural and cultural values while providing for the wise use of its resources.

For more information about the DTC-CAMA, or the CDCA in general, contact BLM at:

Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area
63-500 Garnet Ave.,
P. O. Box 2000
North Palm Springs, CA 92258-2000
(619) 251-4800

Needles Resource Area
101 W. Spikes Rd.,
P. O. Box 888
Needles, CA 92263-0888
(619) 326-3896

Barstow Resource Area
150 Coolwater Lane
Barstow, CA 92311
(619) 255-8700

California Desert District Office
6221 Box Springs Blvd.,
Riverside, CA 92507
(909) 697-5200

Ridgecrest Resource Area
300 South Richmond Road
Ridgecrest, CA 93555-4436
(619) 384-5400

El Centro Resource Area
1661 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
(619) 337-4400

DESERT TRAINING CENTER

CALIFORNIA - ARIZONA MANEUVER AREA



Between 1942 and 1944, more than 1 million young American soldiers were brought from all parts of the country to train in the deserts of California and Arizona. A network of facilities developed overnight that covered 18,000 square miles and spanned three states.

When the tides of war turned in favor of the Allies, the camps were closed, and although most of the structures were removed, much of the infra-structure, including rock-lined streets, staging areas, flag circles, and tent areas remain. These and other features have withstood the ravages of nature and the indifference of man for more than 50 years.

Now, the Bureau of Land Management, charged with managing the public lands on which the camps lie, is engaged in an effort to protect and interpret them. We hope that most of the remaining features at these historically significant sites can be protected and interpreted for the benefit of future generations. To interpret the camps, we must ask for the support of many people. If, after looking at this brochure, you are interested in supporting our interpretive efforts with a donation of money or volunteering your time, please contact the Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area.

With your support we can interpret the camps of DTC-CAMA for the benefit of future generations of Americans.

Welcome to History

In the earliest days of World War II, when this Nation was thrust into the greatest global conflict the world has ever seen, the virtually uninhabited deserts of California and Arizona became a combat training ground for the young troops who would carry that early training on to victory in the sands of North Africa, the mud and mire of Europe, the ice and snow of Alaska, and even into the Pacific jungles.

A site near Shavers Summit (now known as Chiriaco Summit) between Indio and Desert Center, was selected as the headquarters of the Desert Training Center (DTC). This site, called Camp Young, was named after Lieutenant General S.B.M. Young, the Army's first Chief of Staff, who once campaigned in the California Desert.

One of the first units transferred to the Desert Training Center, the 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, recorded in its official history:

"Camp Young was the world's largest Army post and the greatest training maneuver area in U. S. military history. Eighteen thousand square miles of nothing, in a desert designed for Hell."

Major General George S. Patton Jr. came to Camp Young as the first Commanding General of the Desert Training Center. His first orders were to select other areas within the desert that would be suitable for the large-scale maneuvers necessary to prepare American soldiers for combat against the German Afrika Korps in the North African desert. Ten other camps were established from near Boulder City, Nevada, on the North, south to the Mexican border, east to Phoenix, Arizona, and west to Pomona, California.





After General Patton was detailed to North Africa, the camps continued to operate under several different commanders. During this time, the name of the training center was changed to the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA). Twenty separate divisions, consisting of more than one million men, trained there, including the 5th, 7th, 8th, 33rd, 77th, 79th, 81st, 85th, 89th, 90th, 93rd, 95th, and 104th Infantry Divisions, and the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th, and 11th Armored Divisions. When the direction of the war shifted to the Allies' favor in 1944, the DTC-CAMA, plagued by a shortage of supplies and equipment, was closed, thus ending the largest simulated theater of operations in the history of military maneuvers.

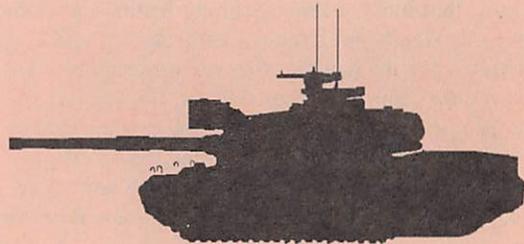
Today, little remains except the remnants of white rocks that once lined the streets of the camps where hundreds of youngsters grew up in 13 weeks and went on to make a grateful Nation proud. Where tanks once rumbled and aircraft droned overhead...where an unending line of trains once unloaded troops and equipment at a railroad crossing that has long ago ceased to exist...the

constant forces of nature are slowly and inexorably reclaiming the desert's own.

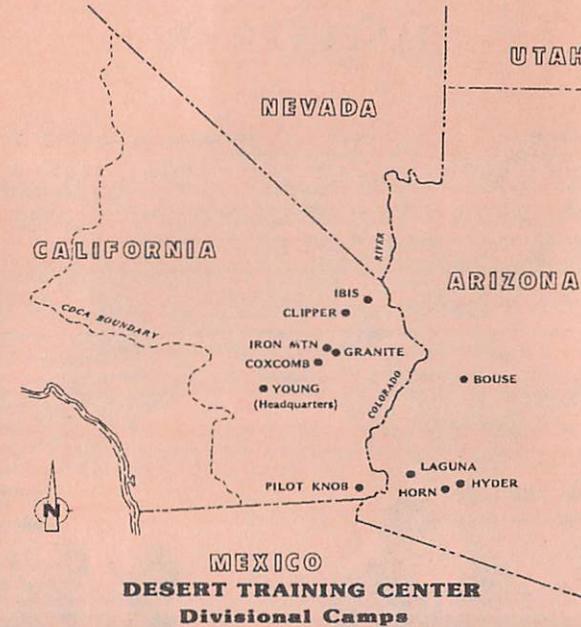
At Camp Young, a private, nonprofit organization has built the General George S. Patton Memorial Museum, which opened on November 11, 1988. The museum serves as a repository for artifacts (legally collected by permit only) and information related to the DTC. BLM supports this effort and is assisting the organization by providing technical information and general support. A visit to the museum, located off Interstate 10 at Chiriaco Summit, will be rewarding for anyone interested in the military history of the southwestern United States. More information can be obtained from BLM or the General Patton Memorial, Inc., Chiriaco Summit, CA 92201.

At Camp Coxcomb, located north of Desert Center, CA, a contour map of the DTC near Division Headquarters and a stone altar in the chapel area are still in place. The contour map has deteriorated, but portions of the map still display its original colors, including the blue for the Salton Sea.

Camp Iron Mountain, designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1980, is perhaps the best known and certainly the best preserved of all the camps. The area has been fenced to provide protection from vehicular traffic. Despite the ravages of time, a contour map, many rock mosaics, two altars, and numerous rock alignments along roads and walkways have survived.



Some of the camps now include private lands, and access to most is limited to four-wheel drive vehicles. Unfortunately, man has destroyed or removed many artifacts from the camps. As an irreplaceable part of America's heritage, these remnants must be preserved for future generations. Please help us protect the Desert Training Center Camps!



Looking Toward the Future

In an effort to preserve and interpret the remaining features of these camps, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared the Desert Training Center, California-Arizona Maneuver Area Interpretive Plan. BLM, which manages the majority of land on which the camps are situated, hopes to gain public support to assist in implementing the essential components of this plan.

Maintaining the present condition of the sites, restoring many of the remaining features, and interpreting the camps are the primary goals of the interpretive plan. Steps to accomplish these goals

include extensive site inventory, repair of existing camp roads, curation of artifacts, and restoration of rock alignments, rock mosaics, relief maps, and altars.

Interpretation of the camps will include brochures, self-guided trails, signs to identify important sites throughout the camps, and street name signs.

In the future, BLM hopes to implement an Adopt-A-Camp program where organizations having an affinity for one particular camp provide funding for its restoration, upkeep, and interpretation.

The prescribed actions, as well as the Adopt-A-Camp program are explained in detail in the Desert Training Center, California-Arizona Maneuver Area Interpretive Plan, available from the BLM offices listed on the back of this brochure.

For more information or if the BLM office you visit does not have the DTC-CAMA interpretive plan, please contact BLM's Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area at (619) 251-4800 or the Needles Resource Area at (619) 326-3896.

