

# Bureau of Land Management

## PATTON CAMPS

In early 1942, soon after the United States entered World War II, the War Department realized the need to prepare troops for the rigors of combat under harsh conditions, over rough terrain, and in inhospitable climates. The Desert Training Center/California-Arizona Maneuver Area, encompassing more than 18,000 square miles, was created by General George S. Patton to fill this need.

A site near Shavers Summit (now known as Chiriaco Summit) between Indio and Desert Center, was selected as the headquarters of the DTC. This site, called Camp Young, was the world's largest Army post.

Major General George S. Patton Jr. came to Camp Young as the first Commanding General of the DTC. 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 in an area stretching from Boulder City, NV to the Mexican border, and from Phoenix, AZ to Pomona, CA. Twenty separate divisions consisting of more than one million men trained here.

When the direction of the war shifted to the Allies' favor in 1944, the camps were closed, bringing to an end the largest simulated theater of operations in the history of military training and maneuvers.

## THE DESERT TRAINING CENTER (PATTON CAMPS) TODAY

The Bureau of Land Management has primary stewardship and land management responsibilities for the public lands on which most of the camps are located. The BLM is actively engaged in efforts to protect and interpret these significant sites for the public.

Camp Iron Mountain is one of the best known camps and provides the best access and interpretive experience for the public. The area has been fenced to provide for pedestrian access while providing 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.

**Do's and Dont's**—To protect these resources, vehicle use within all Camps, except Camp Pilot Knob will be limited to designated routes of travel. Vehicle use in Camp Pilot Knob will be limited to Sidewinder Road. The discharge or use of firearms and the use of metal detectors at all Patton Camps is prohibited

**Contact any BLM office or the following BLM partners for more information:**

**The General Patton Desert Training Center**  
78-365 Hwy 111, #299 • La Quinta, CA 92253  
760-954-4934, crkiener@msn.com

**The General Patton Memorial Museum**  
#2 Chiriaco Road • Chiriaco Summit, CA 92201  
760-227-3483

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## DESERT SAFETY

As a visitor to our public lands, you will have the opportunity to enjoy some of this country's unique and breathtaking natural beauty. The public lands are yours to enjoy and to preserve for generations to come.

To protect yourself, we offer a few safety reminders.

<b>HEAT</b>	<b>FLASH FLOODS</b>
Heat related injuries can be life threatening situations. Users of the public lands should always have plenty of water available.	Flash floods are a common and widespread disaster that can occur often in the desert. Know where high ground is and how to get there quickly.
<b>PROPER CLOTHING</b>	<b>EXPLOSIVES</b>
Lyme Disease and Hantavirus are rare in this area but there have been documented cases in Southern California. The best prevention for Lyme Disease is long pants, socks and boots covered with tick repellent. The best prevention for the Hantavirus is to avoid rodents.	Military explosives can be found most anywhere in the desert. If you suspect any type of crime or violation contact the Federal Interagency Communications Center (FICC) at 909-383-5651 or call 911.
<b>ABANDONED MINES</b>	<b>DRUG LABS</b>
We have many abandoned mines here in the desert. The best advice we can give you is KEEP OUT!	Methamphetamine drug lab waste is a growing hazard on the public lands. Report any such devices to FICC at 909-383-5651 or call 911.

Before leaving on your trip we suggest the following: Obtain a map of the area; Check the current weather conditions and forecast; Don't travel alone. Provide someone an itinerary of where you are going, when you will be back and descriptions of vehicles you will be using.

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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California Desert District  
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Phone: 951-697-5200 • Fax: 951-697-5296

**24-HOUR EMERGENCY HOTLINE: 909-383-5651**



U.S. Environmental Protection  
Agency, Region 9



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers