

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND OBSERVANCES AT THE NIMITZ

US Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson to Speak **Memorial Day** **Monday at 10 AM**

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson will speak at the Memorial Day Observance at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg. The senior Senator from Texas will be offering welcoming remarks and the Commissioner will be making the keynote address. The ceremony begins at 10 AM Monday, May 31st in the Memorial Courtyard of the Museum at 311 E. Austin Street.

Senator Hutchison was elected to the US Senate in 1993 in a special election, the first — and to date the only — woman elected to represent the state in the Senate. She has been re-elected three times. She is the Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce Committee and serves on the Appropriations Committee. She is the former Chairman and now Ranking Member on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs. The Senator grew up in La Marque, Texas and graduated from the University of Texas and the UT Law School. Prior to her election to the Senate, she was a member of the Texas House of Representatives and was elected state Treasurer in 1990.

Commissioner Patterson is a native of Houston, a Texas A&M graduate and a Marine, retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1993. He was a pilot in Vietnam. Five consecutive generations of Patterson's family have served our nation in time of war. His son, a Marine attack helicopter pilot, recently returned from his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Patterson is only the second Republican to serve as Land Commissioner since Reconstruction, a post he has held since 2003. Prior to this, he represented the Houston area in the Texas Senate. He chaired the first Veterans Affairs Committee in the Senate where his legislation created the state Veterans Home Program.

Established in 1836, the Texas General Land Office is the oldest state agency. As Land Commissioner, Patterson is primarily responsible for the management of 13 million acres of state mineral, surface and submerged lands for the benefit of the Permanent School Fund. The Land Office also acts as the steward of the Texas Coast, provides benefits for Texas veterans and protects the historic documents in the Land Office Archives.

Upon the Conclusion of the Memorial Day ceremonies, more than 50 commemorative wreaths will be placed at various plaques that are lining the limestone walls of the Courtyard. Each will be placed in honor and remembrance of a unit, ship or individual who served in World War II. Honoring those who have paid the supreme price in the current War on Terrorism will be Mrs. Lorna Eckhardt. She will place a wreath in honor of her son, Christopher "Chris" Staats, a native of Fredericksburg, who was killed by an IED in Afghanistan on October 16, 2009. At the time he was serving with the National Guard on a farm imitative program assisting the Afghan people.

Pacific Combat Living History — World War II Re-enactments
Three Shows Saturday and Sunday

Volunteer Living History re-enactors will present three shows each day earlier in the weekend, Saturday and Sunday. The 75-minute shows begin each day at 10:30 AM, 1 PM and 3:30 PM at the Pacific Combat Zone on East Austin at Elk Streets, located two blocks east of the Museum. Visitors will learn about the American and Japanese forces as they prepared for battle on a Pacific island. Weapons will be discussed and demonstrated. All of these weapons will be used in a final attack on the Japanese-held island. Attendees will feel the rumble of a Sherman tank as it moves past the audience and onto the battle field. The only operational WWII flame-thrower in Texas is used in the final assault.

Appropriate for the entire family, admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children over six years of age. Tickets are available at the Pacific Combat Zone before each program or in advance at the Admiral Nimitz Museum or at the George H.W. Bush Gallery.

Author's Forum featuring Bruce Gamble Monday
Fortress Rabaul: The Battle for the Southwest Pacific: January 1942-April 1943

Culminating the Memorial Day Weekend will be an Author's Forum on Monday, May 31st featuring Bruce Gamble, author of *Fortress Rabaul: The Battle for the Southwest Pacific, January 1942-April 1943*. This is the story of Japan invading the Southwest Pacific island of New Britain the beginning of 1942. Rabaul, on the northern tip of the island, quickly developed into a major military complex. The area became the key to Japanese operations in the region. "Fortress Rabaul" was an appropriate name for the Japanese Empire's mightiest base in the Southwest Pacific.

The Forum will begin at 1:30 PM Memorial Day in the Ballroom of the historic Nimitz Hotel, now the Admiral Nimitz Museum on Main Street. Books are available at the Book Store on Main and the Museum Store in the Bush Gallery. Admission to the Forum is free of charge.

www.PacificWarMuseum.org
830-997-8600