

## Saturdays' flag to raise funds to honor veterans

by **Marcia Martinek**  
Herald Editor

Visitors to Saturdays, south of Leadville, are doing a double take when they enter the store and see the huge American flag that is painted on the wall.

Frank Nickle, Saturdays owner, said he's always wanted to have a flag painted on that wall, but never had the money.

Then Nickle attended the services for Marine Lance Corporal **Nick Palmer** who was killed in action in Iraq in December 2006. When he saw the care and reverence shown the U.S. flag, he decided he had to go ahead with the flag.

"That flag became more than a piece of fabric," he said.

Nickle is dedicating the flag to all the men and women in any branch of the service who have died for our freedom.

He found a local artist, Annie Margarita, a noted muralist and a former Marine herself, to design and paint the mural. She completed the flag last week and will return, after an assignment out of town, to also paint the emblems of all branches of the service on the wall.

"He is a brother of mine," Margarita said of **Nick Palmer**. "I'm so proud of him."

On Thursday of last week, Brad and Rachele Palmer, **Nick Palmer's** parents, visited the store to see the flag. County Commissioners Ken Olsen and Carl Schaefer also were there, taking advantage of the occasion to present the Palmers with a letter from U.S. Senator Ken Salazar, who had attended the services for Nick, expressing his condolences to the family and lauding their son's patriotism and courage. Salazar had read a commendation for the fallen Marine into the Congressional Record, and a copy was presented to the Palmers by Olsen.

Nickle is sure that visitors to his store will want their pictures taken in front of the flag, and he plans to provide a ladder for that purpose. The photos will be free, but he will ask for donations for a new memorial in the works at Evergreen Cemetery honoring Leadville's military personnel.

Palmer said that Doug Cecil, a Lake County veteran, is heading up the design and implementation of the memorial which will be constructed in three phases.

Part of it will include a sculpture of a Marine's helmet, boots and rifle, the traditional symbol for one who is killed in action. That piece will specifically be dedicated to **Nick Palmer**.

Plans for the memorial should be available soon, and the first phase is expected to be completed for Memorial Day ceremonies this year.

People interested in contributing to the memorial can do so at the Elks Lodge. Funds contributed to the **Nick Palmer** Memorial Fund at Peoples Bank also will be used in constructing the memorial.

Nickle is pleased with the way the flag turned out and visitors' reactions to it.

"When I come in the front door of the store, I get to honor the flag every day," he said.