

# Arizona Commanders Summit

## **Issue:**

Arizona Commanders Summit (ACS)

## **Background:**

The Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-65) transferred the land management function for the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR) from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Defense. Management responsibility was ultimately delegated to the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base (AFB) for the eastern portion and to the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma for the western portion of the range.

The Arizona Commanders Summit was originally established to address issues such as joint utilization and stewardship requirements of the BMGR. The initial membership included the primary users of the BMGR: Luke AFB, MCAS Yuma, Davis-Monthan AFB, and the Arizona Air National Guard. The Commanders quickly realized the benefit of such a forum and expanded the scope of the ACS.

## **What was done:**

The ACS provided a forum for Commanders to address issues affecting the BMGR. Commanders recognized that there were many other issues of common concern such as: encroachment, environmental compliance, and community relations issues. As a result, the ACS agreed to expand membership to include all military installations in the State of Arizona. An ACS charter established the mission to: *facilitate smooth military operations in Arizona and create a cooperative effort among the commanders of Arizona military organizations to ensure the highest possible level of training operations.* The focus of the Summit includes air and ground encroachment, environmental concerns, Native American issues, utilization of special-use airspace, range enhancement programs, community relations, and any other issues Arizona military units may have in common. The Commander of the 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing serves as Chair and the Commander of MCAS Yuma serves as Vice-Chair. Meetings are held semi-annually in March and September. Meeting locations are rotated throughout the military facilities in Arizona. The hosting unit presents a unit mission briefing and invites their town mayor which assists in community outreach.

## **How the mission benefited:**

Through a cooperative exchange of information, the Summit serves as an avenue for members to learn of other units' approach to the issues which will assist in a standardized resolution to shared problems. The forum helps to develop a strong sense of unity and cooperation among military organizations across all military services in Arizona. Specific endeavors include:

- Development of installation fact sheets.
- Facilitation of cross-sharing of information which assists military commanders to “speak with one voice” when communicating with State and local jurisdiction.
- Determine best ways to address issues that impact military missions such as location of housing development under convergence of military training routes and location of a cargo airport impacting the ingress/egress location to the BMGR.
- Receive updates on state legislative activities.
- Receive updates and opportunity to provide input on the Joint Land Use Studies (JLUS) conducted in the state of Arizona.
- Attendance at a Summit meeting by the Governor of Arizona and stated commitment of her administrations support of the military mission.
- Communication on the impact of illegal trespass of undocumented aliens on Department of Defense land. This assisted to standardize data collection and impact assessment criteria. As such, the

Commanders of Luke AFB and MCAS Yuma briefed the Secretary of Homeland Defense, Mr. Michael Chertoff in May 05 in an effective, unified approach.

- Worked with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and signed a Pollution Prevention Partnership agreement designed to promote mission readiness through effective prevention programs such as de-fueling and recycling.
- Expanded membership to include representation from the Regional Environmental Coordinators (REC) which increased installation commanders' involvement in mission sustaining environmental planning processes.

The ACS is enthusiastically supported by all Arizona military installations and given its success is under review to be similarly situated in other states and regions.

**Lessons Learned:**

The opportunity for Installation Commanders to meet face to face on a regular basis has been instrumental in developing a better understanding of each others military mission and the problems they encounter. The development of a "One Voice" approach to address operational issues such as encroachment, community relations, airspace, and environmental concerns has proven effective. This interaction between Installation Commanders and their staffs has been instrumental in developing joint use of valuable air and ground training assets and airspace.

**For more information:**

For more information please contact the 56th Fighter Wing Range Management Office, Luke AFB, Arizona at 623-856-5857 (DSN 896-5857).