



## **Grand Re-Opening of the Arizona Military Museum Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer**

Friday, October 30, 2009

I would like to thank Colonel Joe Abodeely who has been a great advocate of the Arizona Military Museum as President of the Arizona National Guard Historical Society.

It might seem as if it's been closed forever, Joe, and I know this is definitely a day you have been looking forward to for a long time!

The Arizona Military Museum has quite a story to tell.

The Spanish Conquistadors first entered what is now our beloved Arizona in the 15-hundreds.

In 1752, Juan Bautista de Anza was appointed as the first commandant at the Presidio at Tubac.

Twenty-three years later, in 1775, a Spanish captain selected a piece of land on the east side of the Santa Cruz River for a presidio -- or fort -- that was manned by Spanish and then Mexican soldiers until the territory became part of the United States in 1853 by the Gadsden Purchase.

This was how Tucson was born.

Arizona's military history includes an 1857 experiment in which the U.S. Army imported camels to determine how well they would do for transportation purposes in our deserts.

While the camels did better than the Army's mules, the coming Civil War ended the experiment.

For years, people around Quartzsite told of wild camels wandering the desert.

Not too many people today know that the southern part of Arizona was a Confederate territory before it officially became a U.S. Territory on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1863.

On April 15, 1862, what is called "the western most battle of the Civil War" was fought at Picacho Pass north of Tucson between Confederate and Union forces.

Even fewer people know that the real western-most fight between North and South was in La Paz in May 1863, when Union soldiers from Fort Yuma were ambushed in front of the Goldwater's store.

Following the Civil War, Arizona became the center stage for the Indian Wars.

Fort Whipple, Fort Apache, Fort Verde, Fort McDowell, Fort Lowell, Fort Bowie became legendary names as did the names of Cochise, Geronimo, and General George Crook.

In the late 19-hundreds, the famed Buffalo Soldiers came to Arizona being stationed at Fort Huachuca which today remains the oldest active military post in Arizona and the home of U.S. Military Intelligence.

When the Spanish-American War began in 1898, Arizona provided two troops of 250 men to go to San Antonio, Texas.

There, the recruits became part of the First Volunteer Cavalry – the "Roughriders."

The idea for the regiment originated with Bucky O'Neill, the Mayor of Prescott and a famous frontier sheriff.

Their executive officer was Lieutenant Colonel by the name of ... Theodore Roosevelt.

During the Mexican Revolution in 1916, Pancho Villa's men killed 17 Americans in Columbus, New Mexico. President Wilson sent General John Pershing into Mexico with an expeditionary force to kill or capture Villa.

The First Infantry Regiment of the Arizona National Guard was mobilized to assist Pershing's troops by guarding and patrolling the border between Douglas and Naco, Arizona.

The First Infantry Regiment became the 158th Infantry Regiment in World War One and was sent to France. The regiment was mustered out of federal service on May 3, 1919.

After the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the 158th Infantry Regiment trained in jungle warfare and became famous as the Bushmasters after the deadly bushmaster snake.

General Douglas Mac Arthur personally selected and requested that the Bushmasters be sent to his command in the Southwest Pacific. Mac Arthur later said that, "No greater fighting combat team has ever deployed for battle."

Arizona was also home to the Navajo and Hopi code talkers.

Our state had its own special mission during World War Two ... training pilots.

Luke, Thunderbird, Marana, Williams Fields, Falcon Field in Mesa, and Davis-Monthan Army Air Field in Tucson were among the airports used. Arizona's skies and wide-open spaces were the perfect environment for flight training then and they still are.

Arizonans have answered their nation's call to arms in Korea, Viet Nam, Panama, Grenada, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today, members of the Arizona National Guard are deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, as Fort Huachuca continues to serve as the home of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and the U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command.

So, you see, our state has a long and glorious military history.

That is why this museum is so important.

Nothing speaks to the courage of our men and women in uniform as eloquently as places like this.

Here, mementoes of past conflicts remind us of the high prices that were paid for the cause of liberty.

Here, we are reminded of those who served on the frontlines of this struggle, this noble struggle. We are reminded of those who serve, still.

So, thanks to you all for including me in this celebration of re-birth -- where Arizona history is displayed and honored so that continuing generations understand the cost of freedom through the decades, and why we can say with pride, we are Americans, we are Arizonans.

Thank you. God bless you, God bless Arizona and God bless the United States of America.