



LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

GLENDALE, ARIZONA



RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 1 | JANUARY 2024



LUKE DAYS ★★★★★ MARCH 23–24, 2024

Aerial acts – static displays – vendors! For information, www.luke.af.mil/lukedays/



The **RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) AT LUKE AFB** connects retirees of all military and uniformed services, and their surviving spouses / family members / next of kin, with information and assistance on matters pertaining to their benefits and entitlements. The RAO is staffed by volunteers who provide guidance and referral assistance on military and uniformed service retiree related matters.



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year Everyone!!
 2024 is the lunar new year of the dragon, considered a symbol of strength, courage, and good fortune. I wish these for each of you.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is –
What are you doing for others?!"
 – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

January, 15, 2024. Phoenix celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a Commemorative March that starts at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, 1401 E. Jefferson St, Phoenix, AZ 85034. Assembly: 8:45am. March begins—9am. Festival—10am to 4pm, Margaret T. Hance Park, Phoenix.

"A Day On, Not a Day Off!"

2024 is the 29th anniversary of MLK Day as the only Federal holiday designated as a **National**

Day of Service. All Americans are encouraged to volunteer to improve their communities. For information on more events celebrating MLK Day, see www.azmlk.org

February 19, 2024 Presidents' Day

Commemoration of the birthdays of our first President, George Washington, and our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln.

March 23–24, 2024 Luke Days. The world-class Luke AFB Air Show returns after a multi-year hiatus with aerial performances from the U.S. Thunderbirds flying the F-16 Fighting Falcons and the U.S. Air Force F-35 Demo Team, static displays, and vendors. I hope to see you there.

– Jeanne Davis, MSgt, USAF (Ret.)
 Director, Luke RAO

"FIGHTER COUNTRY" LUKE HISTORY

Nowadays, Luke Air Force Base is home to the 56th and 944th Fighter Wings. Training on the F-35 Lightning aircraft occurs daily as the fighter jets take off and land. But it hasn't always been that way. Have you ever wondered how long Luke has been around? Why it's called Luke? Who trained here before the F-35s arrived?

The man with the answers is **Rick Griset, Jr., LtCol, USAF (ret.)**, who wrote *Images of America, Luke Air Force Base* (March 2020).

When asked, "What fascinates you most about Luke Field?" Griset responds enthusiastically.

"Wow, look at the immensity and scope of what they accomplished in such a short period of time during World War II," he says. "Almost every World War II Army Air Forces topic existed at Luke Field or through its graduates. Those topics include Fly Sergeants, Rosie the Riveter, segregation, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), the Flying McConnell Brothers, movie stars, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Ploesti Raid, flying the Hump, and training America's all-time leading ace, Dick Bong (40 kills).

Luke Field graduates flew in every World War II theater with many flying bombers and cargo aircraft. Too many graduates never came home.

In 1942, the Army Air Forces, successor to the Army Air Corps, gave Luke Field an additional mission to turn pilots into fighter pilots. That mission continues today. Since then, Luke's rebirth as an Air Force Base in 1951 occurred."

In the book, Griset writes, "Luke Air Force Base, created in less than a year from desert scrub and farmland, stands some 20 miles west of Phoenix. On March 31, 1941, months before the United States entered World War II, construction began. That summer, the Army Air Corps named Luke Field after World War I hero and triple ace **Frank Luke Jr.** From the beginning, Luke Field trained fighter pilots, as it does today. Over the years, Luke Air Force Base was home to 14 primary fighter aircraft, graduated over 60,000 students, and accounted for millions of training flight hours. For decades, Luke Air Force Base has been home to more fighter aircraft than any other base in the United States, earning the moniker "**Fighter Country.**" (extract from *Images of America, Luke Air Force Base*)



Rick Griset, author

Griset developed and maintains a comprehensive website about Luke's history (lukefieldaz.com/luke-field-history/). The topic *Then and Now* shows photos of buildings around base from the main gate and hospital to the hangars and family housing.

Family of those who served at Luke Field will appreciate the by-name Honor Roll, Cadet List, and class books dating back to 1941.

Griset spent 16 years as a U.S. Air Force Historian, with 12 years as the 56th Fighter Wing Historian at Luke AFB. Previously, he was the 480th Intelligence Wing Historian at Langley Air Force Base. Griset graduated from the USAF Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Military History and later from the University of Oklahoma with a Master of Arts in History.

Griset is available for presentations. Contact him at webmaster@lukefieldaz.com

BUDDY CHECK

**On the 22nd of each month,
CALL YOUR BUDDY.
Ask how he or she is doing and listen.**

If You're a Veteran
in a mental health crisis and you're thinking about hurting yourself—or you know a Veteran who's considering this —

**GET HELP RIGHT AWAY.
YOU'RE NOT ALONE.**

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis with qualified, caring Dept of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text.

Veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to **receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

VA announced **Anchors of Hope** in their 2022 report.

- There were 343 fewer Veterans who died from suicide in 2020 than in 2019, and 2020 had the lowest number of Veteran suicides since 2006.
- From 2001 through 2018, the number of Veteran suicides increased on average by 47 deaths per year. From 2019 to 2020, there were consecutive reductions, of 307 and 343 suicides, respectively, **an unprecedented decrease since 2001.**

Extracted from VA's "2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report" found at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2022/2022-National-Veteran-Suicide-Prevention-Annual-Report-FINAL-508.pdf

2023 RAO VOLUNTEER OF YEAR



During the 2023 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) held at Luke AFB, Col. Keagan McLeese (right), Deputy Commander, 56th Fighter Wing, presented the **RAO Volunteer of the Year** recognition to **Gene Newlin, MSgt, USAF, (ret.)**.

Newlin, a civil engineer technician, joined the U.S. Air Force in 1958 after high school. He and his wife raised 2 daughters and 1 son. Newlin served tours in Viet Nam and South Korea, as well as Germany, eastern Canada, and all over the western United States including Alaska.

Newlin says volunteering with RAO "gives me the opportunity to guide veterans and spouses to organizations that can solve their problems. It also means I can have some social times with my peers. I am grateful for the camaraderie."

THANK YOU to the military and RAO planning committee, led by MSgt April Farrar, who made the event a success for retirees who attended.



Volunteers of Luke AFB RAO at Retiree Appreciation Day, Oct 2023

TAX SEASON IS AROUND THE CORNER: ARE YOU PREPARED?

by Tamara Thomas, Military & Family Readiness

Tax season is around the corner and DFAS wants to ensure you are prepared. Now is the best time to double check everything is correct regarding your account so there are no hiccups when you need to file.



Start with myPay

The best tool DFAS offers for ensuring a smooth tax season is myPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>). The most important step to take now is to login to your myPay account, and check and update your mailing address.

An easy, online stop for your tax season needs, myPay offers printing or downloading of your tax statements for your retired pay or your annuity pay. You can print/download your current year tax statement, as well as prior year 1099Rs (up to four prior years for retirees and up to two prior years for annuitants). If you have them, you can also print/download IRS form 1095B, as well as the documentation for any taxable travel income received. You'll have much earlier access to your tax documents through myPay. 1099Rs are generally available in myPay in late December, while paper copies aren't mailed until mid-to-late January.

Use the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator

The IRS has an online Tax Withholding Estimator to help you determine how much tax you need to have withheld. The calculator helps taxpayers estimate if the right amount is withheld from their income to cover their tax liability. The estimator uses a simple, six-step question-and-answer format using information like marital or filing status, income, withholding, adjustments, deductions and credits.

www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator

DFAS cannot provide tax advice. Please consult a tax professional or the IRS.

Federal Taxability of Retired Pay

Military retired pay is paid for many different reasons under many different laws. There are differences in the types of pay a military retiree might receive and the tax laws that apply to them. Whether a portion or all of an individual's military retired pay is subject to federal income taxes depends on his/her individual circumstances. A military retiree can either use myPay or send an IRS Form W-4 to alter the amount DFAS withholds for federal income taxes from their military retired pay.

Please see our webpage regarding taxation of retired pay: <https://www.dfas.mil/retpaytax>

DFAS-2023

<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/newsevents/newsletter/September2023-Tax-Season-Are-You-Prepared/>

For more information:

<https://56fss.com/military-family-readiness-center/>

CHECK YOUR FINANCES LATELY?

by Stephanie Norman, Luke AFB RAO volunteer



We all understand the importance of the annual physical, it's an overview of our general health, to help us see if what we have been doing is helping to keep us healthy, or if something has changed and therefore, we must change something to get our health back on track.

Unfortunately, most do not understand the importance of an **annual financial checkup**.

An annual financial review can **keep your finances healthy**. Financial planners usually recommend that you review your finances after major life events, or annually to keep your financial health on track toward your financial goals.

The first step in performing the annual financial checkup is to **review your life changes**. For instance, have you changed jobs, gotten married or divorced, welcomed a new family member, received an inheritance, bought a home, moved, or retired?

Then you need to set or **reset your financial goals**, set a budget, and assess your debt. This is also a good time to review your credit reports with all three credit agencies (Equifax, Experian, and Trans Union). Consumers are allowed one free credit report each year, and you can receive a free one anytime you have been turned down for credit.

Also **revisit your retirement savings**, consider other savings goals, make sure you are properly insured, and evaluate your estate plan making sure all your beneficiaries are up to date.

A financial checkup can help keep you on track toward your **financial goals**.

After completing your checkup, you'll want to begin implementing changes you've decided to make as soon as possible. Then you'll be able to relax until it's time to do it all over again.

LUKE VETERINARY CLINIC MOVES

On Oct 23, 2023, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the new Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility, which is now located **on base across from the Block House**. The larger facility allows the team to treat pets with general wellness and more specialized medical services. Pets owned by active duty, reserve, and retirees and their family members are eligible for treatment that ranges from vaccines to heartworm tests.

Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility
(623) 856-6453 or email LukeAFBVet@gmail.com

VET TIX

"Vet Tix" provides tickets to events which reduce stress, strengthen family bonds, build life-long memories and encourage service members and veterans to stay engaged with local communities and American life. We support our troops by honoring their service and providing positive family and life experiences, during and after their years of service to our country.

Vet Tix provides tickets to all branches of currently-serving Military and Veterans, including immediate family of troops KIA.



The Veteran Tickets Foundation is proud to announce that to date 19,605,274 event tickets have been given out in **all 50 States and Washington, DC** to our Military, Veterans, and their families. Vet Tix secures tickets to sporting events, concerts, performing arts, educational and family activities across the nation. VetTixers sign up online. We verify their service. VetTixers request tickets to events that interest them, then pay a small delivery fee to receive their free tickets. Vet Tix is a 99% back to program charity. (Independently audited for 13 years.)

Above info extracted from www.vettix.org/

OUTDOOR RECREATION

(Bldg 247)

Luke Outdoor Recreation offers a variety of outdoor adventures, day trips & vacations, equipment for rent, and aquatic programs to keep you on the move and loving life.

For information, call (623) 856-6267 or go online to 56fss.com/outdoor-recreation/ for fees and to register for an upcoming event.

Jan 6	Turnbuckle Hike -WIW women in wilderness
Jan 13	Glass Blowing
Jan 27	Skydiving R4R
Feb 3	Indoor Skydiving R4R
Feb 10	Verde Canton Train Ride
Feb 17	Octane Raceway R4R
Feb 24	Sand Buggy R4R / Full Moon Hike
Mar 2	Hot Air Balloon R4R
Mar 9	Devil's Bridge
Mar 16	Skydiving R4R
Mar 23	Hang Gliding R4R

R4R refers to single Active Duty Airmen & single Reservists stationed at Luke AFB, dependents of Deployed service members & service members who have returned from deployment in the last year. R4R allows for 1 guest.

LUKE AFB LIBRARY

(Bldg 219)

Retired military and uniformed services personnel and their family members with a valid ID, may receive a library card. The library card gives you free access to a large selection of books, DVDs, audio books, and down-loadable e-books.

For information: call (623) 856-7191 or online at: daf.dodmwrlibraries.org/luke

COVER TO COVER BOOK CLUB

(2nd Thursday of the month)

Age: Adults | Cost: FREE | Time: 10:30 am

Jan 11	<i>My Travels with Mrs. Kennedy</i> by Clint Hill
Feb 8	<i>Winter in Paradise</i> by Elin Hilderbrand
Mar 14	<i>The One</i> by John Mars

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday: 9:30 am – 7:30 pm
 Tues – Fri: 9:30 am – 5:30 pm
 Saturday: 10 am – 4 pm
 Closed Sundays and Federal Holidays

FALCON DUNES GOLF COURSE



Falcon Dunes Golf Course offers more than just a great place to play a round of golf. Stop by and try their grill for a great lunch and quench your thirst at their bar after a round of 18 holes. Check out these upcoming events:

GOLF TOURNAMENTS

RED EYE OPEN

Jan 1, 2024

(8:30 am shotgun / 1 pm lunch)

PRESIDENTS' DAY GOLF TOURNAMENT

February 19, 2024

(8 am shotgun / 12:30 pm lunch)

DEMO DAY

March 2, 2024

(10 am to 2:30 pm)

ST. PATRICK'S DAY GOLF TOURNAMENT

March 2, 2024

(8 am shotgun / 12:30 pm lunch)

Falcon Dunes: (623) 535-9334

56fss.com/falcon-dunes-golf/

BASE SERVICE NUMBERS

Auto Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6107
Base Exchange	(623) 935-2671
Base Finance	(623) 856-7028
Casualty Assistance	(623) 856-7834
Chaplain	(623) 856-6211
Club Five Six	(623) 856-6446
Commissary	(623) 856-3821
Community Commons	(623) 856-7152
DFAS	(800) 321-1080
Falcon Dunes Golf Course	(623) 535-9334
Fighter Country Inn	(623) 856-3941
Firestone Car Care Center	(623) 271-8104
Fitness Center	(623) 856-6241
ID Cards	(623) 856-7875
Legal Assistance	(623) 856-6901
Library	(623) 856-7191
Medical Clinic Appts	(623) 856-6273
National Archives (<i>Records</i>)	(866) 272-7272
Pharmacy (Activation)	(623) 856-2273
Pharmacy (Refills)	(623) 856-3669
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)	(623) 856-3923
Security Forces	(623) 856-6322
Tickets & Travel	(623) 856-6000
Tricare	(800) 874-2273
Tricare East (<i>Humana Military</i>)	(800) 444-5445
Tricare West (<i>HealthNet Federal Service</i>)	(800) 444-5445
Veterinary Clinic	(623) 856-6453
Wood Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6566

HAIL & FAREWELL



We are happy to welcome the following new volunteers to our team at the Retiree Activities Office (RAO):

- Gregg C., SMSgt, USAFR (ret.)
- Bill H., SMSgt, USAF (ret.)
- Saul P., MSgt, USMC (ret.)
- Jennifer S., MSgt, USAF (ret.)



We bid a fond farewell to the following volunteers, who made an outstanding, positive difference for their fellow veterans. We will miss them. We wish them all the best in the future.

- Doug P., LTC USA (ret.)
- Peter L., MSgt USAF (ret.)

CEREMONY & CONCERT HONORING WOMEN MILITARY & VETERANS



Arts, 5601 N. 16th Street, Phoenix, AZ.

Veterans First Ltd. announces a Ceremony and Concert to Honor Military and Veteran Women on **Saturday, March 23, 2024**, from 3 pm to 6 pm, at the Madison Center for the

General Admission tickets (\$15) for the public will be available through Ticketmaster or can be purchased at the Box Office day of the event.

Military and Women Veterans Are Eligible for ONE complimentary FREE ticket.

Register at Google Forms to get FREE ticket.
<https://forms.gle/bqE9wNeWqgmLgM17>
 Pick up your FREE ticket at the Box Office.

The program starts with a ceremony to recognize women who served from World War II through the Global War on Terror. Then, Universal Artist **Jeff Senour** and the **Called to Serve band** will perform the "Freedom Rock Experience."

For information, go to: veteransfirstttd.org/news/

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We welcome your suggestions for content. Contact editor at 56FW.RAO@us.af.mil with "Newsletter" in the subject line.

The RAO Newsletter is published quarterly by the RAO Office at Luke AFB. All information was accurate at the date of publication and is subject to change without notice. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please send your email address to 56FW.RAO@us.af.mil

RAO Director:

Jeanne Davis, MSgt, USAF (Ret.)

Editor: b. Johnson, COL, US Army (Ret.)

RAO Location: Bldg 1500 (across from commissary), Luke AFB, Glendale, AZ

Hours: Monday– Friday 9 am – 3 pm hrs*
 *From June–September, RAO closes at 1 pm on Fridays

Phone: (623) 856-3923

Email: 56FW.RAO@us.af.mil

Facebook: Luke AFB Retiree Activities Office - RAO