



LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

GLENDALE, ARIZONA

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 1 | JAN - MAR 2025



AFTER NEW ORLEANS, LAS VEGAS ATTACKS, ACCESS RESTRICTED TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ACROSS COUNTRY

Jan 4, 2025: "Trusted Traveler" is suspended at military installations across North America. US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) has directed 100% ID checks. For details, see <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2025/01/06/trusted-traveler-program-bases-across-us-suspended-following-las-vegas-new-orleans-attacks.html>

Prior to gaining access to Luke AFB, all visitors (age 16 or older) are required to be screened, vetted, and issued appropriate visitor's passes by security forces. Persons requesting access must provide:

- name & phone # of their sponsor
- purpose for access
- a document that establishes identity, such as State Driver's License, Passport, Resident Card, etc.

To obtain a visitor's pass, the sponsor will meet their guest(s) at the Lightning Gate Visitor's Reception Center (VRC), operational Mon-Fri 0800-1600 hours. During non-duty hours, passes will only be issued at the South Gate Installation Entry Control Point. More info at:

<https://www.luke.af.mil/Home/LUKE-AIR-FORCE-BASE-ACCESS-PROCEDURES/>

CHECK IT OUT – EACH SERVICE PUBLISHES A RETIREE NEWSLETTER

Each Armed Service publishes a quarterly (or bi-annual) retiree newsletter to update retired military members, surviving spouses, and families on their benefits and entitlements,

developments within the Service, and how they can support their Services in their civilian communities. Latest copies are available online at the following links:

AIR FORCE: "AFTERBURNER"

<https://www.retirees.af.mil/Library/Afterburner/>

ARMY: "Army Echoes"

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/army-echoes>

NAVY: "Sailor for Life"

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/media-center/publications/sailor-for-life/>

MARINES: "SEMPER FIDELIS"

<https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/Manpower-Reserve-Affairs-MMSR-6/>

Scroll down page to latest issue, click on link (e.g. VOL 68 NO 3 AUG – SEP 2024)

COAST GUARD: "The Long Blue Line"

<https://www.longblueline.org/>

DFAS RETIREE NEWSLETTER:

<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/newsevents/newsletter/>

2025 COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA)

Based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index, there is a **2.5 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)** for most retired pay & Survivor Benefit Plan annuities, effective Dec 1, 2024. Retirees will see the change in their Dec 31, 2024 payment and annuitants in their Jan 2, 2025 payment.

For details, see FY 2025 COLA Memorandum:

<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay/Retirement/cola>



RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) AT LUKE AFB: We, the volunteer staff of Luke AFB RAO, connect 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. Our goal is to provide guidance and referral assistance on military and uniformed service retiree matters.



LUKE AFB RAO VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Col. Abercrombie,
Cdr, 56th Msn Spt Grp,
presents
RAO 2023
Volunteer of Year
to
Ida McDonald, Col.,
USAF (ret.)

On Dec 18, 2024, Col. Peter Abercrombie, Commander, 56th Mission Support Group, presented the **RAO 2023 Volunteer of Year** award to Ida McDonald, Col. USAF (ret.), at the Luke AFB RAO Christmas Party.

Since 2018, Ida has been a stalwart volunteer of Luke AFB RAO, which serves about 80,000 retirees in the Phoenix area. Starting as a staff volunteer, she rose to Deputy Director, provided continuity of leadership during the RAO Director transition in 2023, and coordinated the 2023 Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) hosted by Luke AFB.

GET YOUR NEXTGEN ID CARD NOW!



Starting in 2026, Legacy Uniform Services Identification cards (USID)—the blue ID card (DD Form 2 retiree)—**will NO LONGER be accepted** for access to benefits, privileges or DOD bases.

As a veteran, military retiree, spouse or dependent of a service member, you may be eligible for a **Next Generation Uniformed Services ID card (USID)**. This military ID proves your identity

to the DOD and gives you access to military services and programs. For details:

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/blog/01Oct2024-Get-or-renew-a-military-ID-Card>

RAO DIRECTOR'S CORNER

BETH JOHNSON

A hearty THANK YOU to WD Moore who served as the Luke AFB RAO Director (for the 2nd time) during most of 2024. WD, now RAO Director Emeritus, agreed to continue participating in the RAO mission, and for that we are grateful.



Incoming RAO Director Beth Johnson, US Army, and outgoing RAO Director WD Moore, US Air Force

On Jan 1, 2025, I accepted the position of Director, Luke AFB Retiree Activities Office (RAO). I've been a volunteer since 2022 and enjoy the friendly camaraderie of the men and women who volunteer. Makes my day to serve fellow retirees and spouses who show up at RAO for help with ID cards, military pay and benefits, casualty assistance—we connect them to the correct contact. More than 30 retirees and a few spouses, from the Air Force, Navy, Army, Marine Corps, and US Public Health Service volunteer at Luke AFB RAO. We're located in Bldg 1500 (next to bank). We're open Mon-Fri from 9AM to 3 PM. **STOP BY AND SAY HI!**

2025 RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY (RAD)

Saturday 18 October 2025

9 AM – noon

**Navy Reserve Center
14160 West Marauder St.
Bldg 300, Luke AFB**

2025-LUKE AFB RAO MEETINGS

Join us & find out more about volunteering.
3rd Weds of each month, 11 AM,
 Club Five Six, 14000 W Eagle St, Luke AFB

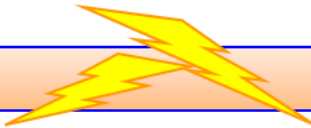
- Jan 15, 2025
- Feb 19, 2025
- Mar 19, 2025
- Apr 16, 2025 – RAO Picnic
- May 21, 2025
- Jun 18, 2025
- Jul 16, 2025
- Aug 20, 2025
- Sep 17, 2025
- Oct 15, 2025
- 18 Oct 2025 – Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD)
- Nov 19, 2025
- Dec 17, 2025 – RAO Christmas Party

**SATURDAY, FEB 1, 2025,
 GROUND-BREAKING FOR VETERANS
 COMMUNITY—50 HOMES TO BE BUILT IN
 GLENDALE, AZ**

YOU ARE INVITED!
11 AM Ceremony begins
Please arrive by 10:30 AM
 Located behind VFW Post 1433,
 7618 N 63rd Ave, Glendale, AZ 85301



Presentation of Colors
National Anthem
Welcome from Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers
Officials and key partners
Bryan Meyer, CEO, Veterans Community Project
 In Glendale, AZ, Veterans Community Project (VCP) of Glendale will build a specialized village



of 50 transitional homes with wraparound support services to help Veterans experiencing homelessness regain the dignity of home.
<https://www.veteranscommunityproject.org/glendale>



Glendale AZ Mayor
 Jerry Weiers

Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers: "I'm incredibly proud of the work that my city is doing to try and address the ever-growing homeless population and to expand services for the Veteran community through very deliberate strategies. Glendale is committed to the success of this development and this model of public-private partnerships, will not only provide immediate care to Veterans, but also serves as a model for other communities to follow."

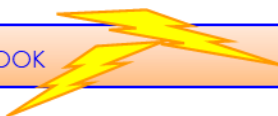
In Sept 2023, Glendale, AZ, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with VCP for the development of 50 units of transitional housing for homeless veterans on city-owned property located at approximately 6324 NW Grand Ave.
https://www.glendaleaz.com/news/what_s_new/veterans_transitional_housing_project

Triple M Mayor's Military Mission:
<https://www.facebook.com/TripleMCommittee>

**TAX ASSISTANCE AT LUKE AFB
 STARTING JAN 27 UNTIL APR 7, 2025**

A New Leaf's **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** Program offers FREE tax assistance to households who make \$64,000 or less, who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. VITA will be at the Luke AFB Library every Monday from 9 AM-noon starting January 27, 2025 to April 7, 2025. They will accept walk-ins. For more information, you can contact the base library at (623) 856-7191. To find other VITA locations in the Phoenix area, please visit

<https://www.phoenix.gov/humanservices/programs/tax-prep>
Get Your 1099-R Now – Details at:
<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/newsevents/newsletter/December2024-Still-Time-to-Get-Head-Start-on-Tax-Season/>



HEALTHY LIVING: YING AND YANG

by Ida McDonald, Col. (ret.) USAF & volunteer
Luke AFB RAO

Do you ever wonder about opposite effects of items? Here are a few insights to consider.



Think of poison ivy and its annoying rash. *Urushiol* (the itch culprit) is mainly found in cashew nut trees and mango skin. For some, even touching or consuming the skin of a mango may trigger a reaction. Although *urushiol* sounds concerning, the inner flesh of a mango is still safe to consume. There are many health benefits from mangoes such as vitamins and digestion assistance. As for cashews, consuming them raw poses the greatest risk, as raw cashews in their shell are toxic and cannot be eaten. Despite the dangers involved in some fruits and nuts, they're still nourishing and delicious.

A cup in the morning when you're tired, or need a pick me up: Yes, it's our friend "coffee"! Besides increasing our mental alertness and general stimulation, studies show that women who drink a cup every day have a 25 % less chance of having a stroke (according to "NutriNeat"). Although we love that morning boost, coffee's caffeine can have negative effects. At higher doses, it can cause anxiety, edginess, insomnia, digestive issues and contribute to high blood pressure. However, consumption in moderation (such as 1 to 2 cups a day) can alleviate many of these side effects. That's approximately 100–200 milligrams (mg) of caffeine, depending on the size of your cup!



Additionally, fruits, such as apples, have this "Yin-Yang" (complementary, yet opposing forces-but interconnected) theme: Apples have numerous benefits to our health such as fiber, vitamins, and cholesterol management, but the seeds contain cyanide in a sugar-based compound called amygdalin. The seeds must be

chewed or crushed to release cyanide, but according to Britannica, it takes anywhere from 150 to several thousand crushed seeds to cause cyanide poisoning. Cyanide is mainly found in nature and in products we eat and use every day. It is mostly used in pesticides, mining, and plastics. There are several forms of cyanides, and they are also found in cigarette smoke, vehicle, exhaust, and foods such as spinach, bamboo shoots, almonds, lima beans, fruit pits, and tapioca. In general, you may continue to munch on several apples a day if desired...and if you happen to chew a few seeds, there's no need to rush to the hospital!



Finally, there are fermented foods. When a food is fermented, it is left to sit and steep until the sugars and carbs that it contains interact with bacteria, yeast and microbes to change its chemical structure. Although this sounds daunting, we eat fermented foods every day; some can be in your refrigerator now, like yogurt! These foods are probiotics and improve digestion, boost immunity and treat certain allergies and bowel diseases. They also have other positive effects on our bodies. Other popular fermented foods/beverages include pickles, kimchi, wine, beer, sauerkraut, aged cheeses, chocolate and coffee. When might fermented foods be bad for you? It could be when you consume too much or chow down too quickly, which can cause bloating or diarrhea. It's best to slowly introduce them to your digestive system. These are not to be confused with what happens when fruit becomes fermented by plain old spoilage, which can lead to ethanol and yeast production. Ethanol can impair your judgement, coordination and reaction time and can cause dehydration, headache, nausea and vomiting. The yeast can produce gas and bloating and trigger allergic reactions.

These examples remind us of the complexity of nature. Knowing the components in our nutrients is highly beneficial. Next time you pick up a cup of coffee, a delicious piece of fruit, or any other foods, you may want to explore the question "is there a Yin-Yang effect to what I am eating?"

RAO VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



We are thrilled to welcome Robert Hernandez, MSgt, US Air Force (ret.), to the Luke AFB RAO. He started with the RAO in Nov 2024.

Born and raised in Phoenix, AZ, Robert entered the Air Force in 1966 and worked as a Jet Engine Technician on B-52 and KC-135 aircraft at March AFB, CA.

During the Vietnam war, he participated in Operation Arc Light from Guam with Strategic Air Command. The US Air Force deployed B-52 Stratofortresses from bases in Guam to provide battlefield air interdiction during the Vietnam war. ...including strikes at enemy bases, supply routes and troop concentrations behind the lines (Wikipedia).



Later he joined the 161st Air Refueling Group, Arizona Air National Guard, and deployed to Desert Shield and Desert Storm with two tours to Saudi Arabia.

As a Federal civilian, he worked 30 years for Defense Contracts Management Agency (DCMA), retiring in 2007.

For 43 years, Robert has been a member of the American Legion, and held leadership positions at the Post, Arizona Department, and National levels.

He served as two-time Commander of Tony F. Soza-Ray Martinez Thunderbird American Legion Post 41 and the Post 41 Honor Guard.

In 2014, he was awarded Legionnaire of the Year.

He was President of the American Legion Post 41 Past Commanders Club and Chef de Gare (commander) of the 40 and 8 Chapter 35.

OPERATION ENDURING GRATITUDE

At our Nov RAO volunteer meeting, we heard from Air Force veteran Alan Gaugert, Director at Operation Enduring Gratitude. We are grateful to RAO volunteer Paul Ruehrmund who invited Alan to speak to us.

Founded by Army veteran Charlie Ellis in 2014, Operation Enduring Gratitude (OEG) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit located in Phoenix, Az. Their mission is to fill the gap left by Veteran Affairs and other services by providing assistance and support to veterans in need in Arizona. Most recently, the veterans and non-veterans of OEG have:

- completely rebuilt 7 homes
- installed more than 90 wheelchair ramps
- completed 10 or more bathroom remodels
- finished 5 major code compliance events (in past 5 years)
- fulfilled an emergency request for grab bars with installation

*Veterans Serving Veterans
Rebuilding Homes and Lives*

Phone: (623) 428-9319

Email: info@OperationEnduringGratitude.org

Website:

<https://operationenduringgratitude.org/>

OPERATION ENDURING GRATITUDE
VETERANS SERVING VETERANS
REBUILDING HOMES AND LIVES
OPERATIONENDURINGGRATITUDE.ORG

GOLFING WITH GRATITUDE

RAISING FUNDS TO CONTINUE SERVING OUR VETERANS

4/12/25
REGISTRATION: 6:30AM
TEE TIME: 7:30AM

ARIZONA TRADITIONS GOLF CLUB
17225 N. CITRUS RD., SUPRISE, AZ 85374

OPERATIONENDURINGGRATITUDE.ORG

ADMISSIONS	SPONSORSHIPS	MORE INFO FOUND ONLINE
\$400 per Foursome	ALBATROSS - \$5,000	
\$125 per Golfer	EAGLE - \$2,500	
LUNCH AND GAMES INCLUDED	BIRDIE - \$500	
	PAR - \$250	

LUKE AFB LIBRARY (BLDG 219)

LIBRARY HOURS

Mon: 9:30 AM – 7:30 PM

Tues – Fri: 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM / Sat: 10 AM – 4 PM

Retired military and their family members with a valid ID, may receive a library card, and gain FREE access to books, DVDs, audio books, & down-loadable e-books.

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

STAFF PICKS BOOK CLUB

Age: Adults | Cost: FREE | Time: 10 AM

January 23rd @10am	<i>Every Note Played</i> by Lisa Genova Host: Melanie
February 27th @10am	<i>The Housemaid</i> by Freida McFadden Host: Neriah
March 27th @10am	<i>Weyward</i> by Emilia Hart Host: Shayla

FAMILY EVENING EVENTS

Age: Adults | Cost: FREE

Jan 27th, 5-7 pm	Pet Cents
Jan 27th\All Day	Stuffed Animal Sleepover (stuffed animal drop off before 7pm)
Feb 10th 5-7pm	Self-Care Social
March 3rd 5-7pm	Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss

Chess Club: Every Monday 5 - 7pm

Crochet club: Every 4th Saturday of the Month 11am-12pm

NEW

Modeling Club: Every fourth Saturday of the month 10am-12pm

Vita Tax: Starting Jan 27th-April 7th 2025
Every Monday 9am-12pm

OUTDOOR RECREATION (BLDG 247)

7383 N 140th St.

Hours: Mon-Fri 9 AM – 5 PM

Sat 8 AM – noon, Sun Closed

(623) 856-6267

56fss.com/outdoor-recreation/

Outdoor Recreation offers adventures, day trips & vacations, equipment for rent, and aquatic programs to keep you on the move and loving life. To sign up for a trip, CALL, EMAIL, or STOP BY!

JANUARY 2025

- Jan 11 – Fort Tuthill Winterfest
- Jan 11-12 – Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Overnight (Collab with Fort Tuthill)
- Jan 16 – Paint & Sip
- Jan 18 – Grand Canyon Day Trip
- Jan 25 – Art in the Park
- Jan 31 – Mini Golf & Movie Night in the Park

FEBRUARY 2025

- Feb 14 – Mini Golf & Movie Night in the Park
- Feb 14 – Valentines Sweetheart Dinner at Club Five Six
- Feb 15 – Camelback Mountain Hike
- Feb 15 – Verde Canyon Railroad
- Feb 20 – Paint & Sip
- Feb 22 – Glass Blowing WIW

MARCH 2025

- Mar 1 – Cross Country Ski & Snowshoe Day
- Mar 8 – Hot Air Balloon (Reg/R4R)
- Mar 14 – Mini Golf & Movie Night
- Mar 21 – Carlos Mencia Comedy Show at Club Five Six
- Mar 22 – Renaissance Festival
- Mar 29 – Chiricahua National Monument Hike

TIME TO START YOUR ADVENTURES!



FALCON DUNES GOLF COURSE



Falcon Dunes: (623) 535-9334
56fss.com/falcon-dunes-golf/

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.

GOLF TOURNAMENTS

President's Day Golf Tournament

Date: Monday, February 17, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM shotgun start, 12:30 PM awards luncheon

Price: \$70 for Club Members, \$75 For Military and D.O.D, \$80 for Guests

Description: 4-Player Team Scramble Format, Awards Luncheon and prizes included.

Entry Deadline: February 12, 2025

Presidents Day Sale

Date: Friday, Feb 14 through Monday, Feb 17

Description: 20% off all merchandise (Not valid for golf clubs)

Demo Day

Date: Saturday, March 1, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM

Description: Try out the newest equipment offered by Ping

Entry Deadline: N/A

St. Patrick's Day Golf Tournament

Date: Sunday, March 16, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM shotgun start, 12:30 PM awards luncheon

Price: \$70 for Club Members, \$75 For Military and D.O.D, \$80 for Guests

Description: 4-Player Team Scramble Format, Awards Luncheon and prizes included.

Entry Deadline: March 12, 2025

Merchandise Sale

Date: Saturday, March 1, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Description: 20% off all merchandise (Not valid for golf clubs)

LUKE MILITARY & FAMILY READINESS

Bldg 1113
 7282 137th Ave, Luke AFB, AZ
 623-856-6550

FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/lukeafrfc/>

M&FRC offers services to personnel and their families through core programs offering workshops, special events, and one-on-one consultations. Each staff member works as a Community Readiness



Consultant and can provide services in the center or via outreach. Services include:

- Heart Link Spouse Orientation Program
- Deployed Family Events
- Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)
- Employment & Career Assistance
- Military & Family Life Counselor Commanders Key Support Program (CKSP)
- Personal & Family Readiness
- Personal Financial Readiness Program
- Relocation Assistance

BASE SERVICE NUMBERS

My Base Guide

<https://mybaseguide.com/base/luke-afb>

Military & Family Readiness	(623) 856-6550
Auto Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6107
Base Exchange	(623) 935-2671
Base Finance	(623) 856-7028
Casualty Assistance	(623) 856-6550
Chaplain	(623) 856-6211
Club Five Six	(623) 856-6446
Commissary	(623) 856-3821
DEERS	(623) 856-7832
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-Central Appts	(623) 856-2273
National Archives (<i>Records</i>)	(866) 272-7272
Pharmacy (Activation)	(623) 856-3969
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)	(623) 856-3923
Security Forces	(623) 856-6322
Tickets & Travel	(623) 856-6000
Tricare	(622) 385-6307
Tricare West (<i>HealthNet Federal Service</i>)	(844) 866-9378
Veterinary Clinic	(623) 856-6354
Wood Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6566

64? 65? MEDICARE ELIGIBLE?

TRICARE FOR LIFE BRIEFINGS

No Reservation Required

Briefings: **WED 12 FEB 2025**
TUE 13 MAY 2025
TUE 12 AUG 2025
WED 12 NOV 2025



Briefings start at 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM

Who: TRICARE Beneficiaries who are eligible for Medicare Part A and B

What: TRICARE For Life (TFL) briefings are for TRICARE beneficiaries that have questions or want to learn more about the TFL program

Where: Luke Air Force Base Theater: Bldg 1515

Questions? Please call Marlyn Shults at (623) 856-4300 or e-mail: dha.ncr.56th-MDG.mbx.56-mdg-bcac@health.mil

RAO Hails & Farewells

Thank you & Good Luck to
 Travus Gonzalez, US Air Force (ret).
 Welcome to
 Robert Hernandez, US Air Force (ret).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We welcome your suggestions for content. Contact editor at 56FW.RAO@us.af.mil with "Newsletter" in subject line. The RAO Newsletter is published quarterly by the Luke AFB RAO. All information was accurate at date of publication and subject to change without notice.

To receive this newsletter electronically, please send your email address to
56FW.RAO@us.af.mil.

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