



LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

GLENDALE, ARIZONA

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 2 | APR-MAY-JUN 2026



BEWARE: 'VETERAN SAVINGS PROGRAM' POSTCARD SCAM

A postcard scam targeting veterans and their spouses in North Carolina mirrors similar fraud attempts reported last year in other states with con artists offering up to \$185 a month and free dental coverage to those who call a toll-free number within five days.



"No such program exists," said a March 27 press release from the North Carolina Department of Justice, which included a photo of the postcard touting a "Veteran Savings Program."

The release also offers simple advice for recipients: "Throw the card away."

Warnings from Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Iowa in late 2025 highlighted similar scams. The postcards mention legitimate programs like CHAMPVA and TRICARE For Life, but they are not connected to an official federal agency. Those who call the number on the cards may be asked to provide personal or financial information, which could be used to access bank accounts or credit cards, or to commit other types of identity theft. [Mar 30, 2026] For entire article:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/finance/veterans-savings-program-postcard-scam-hits-multiple-states/>

VA'S FRAUD PREVENTION KIT

Fraud attempts targeting Veterans, their families, survivors, and caregivers are on the rise. Fraud can be defined as intentional deception that results in the loss of money or benefits. Fraudsters, or bad actors, are actively evolving new tactics to deprive Veterans of their hard-earned cash and benefits. A November 2021, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) study found that 78% of Veterans have been targeted by scams designed to exploit their military services history. More info at: https://www.va.gov/files/2023-11/fraud-protection-kit_0.pdf

LUKE COMMISSARY TO CHARGE FOR SINGLE-USE BAGS

Bring your own bags or pay!!
5 cents – plastic bag
10 cents – paper bag



Beginning April 6, 2026, the Commissary will start charging for plastic shopping bags. It "will allow the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) to continue to offer its eligible patrons significant savings while strengthening fiscal stewardship," officials said. Patrons can purchase reusable bags in-store or via Commissary CLICK2GO®. "Providing the single-use bags costs the commissary agency \$17 million a year," said commissary spokesman Keith Desbois. [Mar 18, 2026] Full article:

<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/mil-money/2026/03/18/paper-or-plastic-military-commissaries-to-charge-for-single-use-bags/>

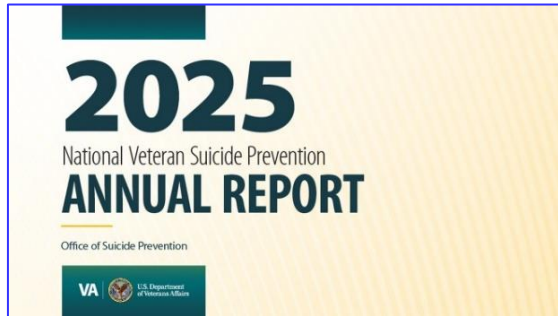


RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) AT LUKE AFB: We, the volunteer staff of Luke AFB RAO, connect retirees of all military and uniformed services, and their surviving spouses / family members / next of kin, with information and assistance on matters pertaining to their benefits and entitlements. Our goal is to provide guidance and referral assistance on military and uniformed service retiree matters.



VA RELEASES 2025 NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT

In February, VA released the 2025 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, which provides the most current and comprehensive picture of suicide among Veterans and non-Veteran U.S. adults from 2001 through 2023.



While the report shows that **suicides among Veterans declined in 2023**, it emphasizes the continued need to ensure every Veteran has access to support, care and connection. Each loss is not only an individual tragedy, but it also has a profound impact on families, communities and the broader Veteran population. In 2023, 6,398 Veterans died by suicide, which was 44 fewer deaths than in 2022. According to the report, the 2023 total was lower than 14 of the previous 15 years, which reflects recent momentum in suicide prevention efforts. These numbers show encouraging results and illustrate that continued, collective action to reduce suicide risk and strengthen protective factors (like social support, employment, housing and more) has positive effects in this fight against Veteran suicide. Full report at:

<https://news.va.gov/145433/2025-national-veteran-suicide-prevention-report/>

Across the Total Force...

471 service members died by suicide in CY 2024, less than in CY 2023, when 531 service members died by suicide.

The "Annual Report on Suicide in the Military" is posted at <https://www.dspo.mil/>

BUDDY CHECK

Call your buddy.

Sometimes, the people who seem the strongest are the ones struggling the most. That's why checking in matters. Don't assume they're okay. Connection saves lives.

- ✓ Ask.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Be present.

VETERAN'S AFFINITY – VETERAN COFFEE HOUR

Join us for coffee & donuts, stay for camaraderie.

**West Side / Phoenix
All Events 9AM –10 AM**

1st Tuesday of Every Month 420 S. Estrella Pkwy, Goodyear, AZ
1st Wednesday of Every Month 16063 W Bell Rd, Surprise, AZ
2nd Tuesday of Every Month 15826 Del Webb Blvd, Sun City, AZ
3 rd Tuesday of Every Month 200 W. Beardsley Rd, Phoenix, AZ

Veterans Affinity is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) and our services are 100 percent FREE.

We will assist senior Veterans apply for VA healthcare, benefits, and community resources. NOTE: The Veteran must be enrolled in the VA for healthcare before we apply for resources.

More info at: <https://veteransaffinity.org/>
 CSM Rick Krieger, US Army (ret), Founder & Exec Dir, rick@veteransaffinity.org



APRIL 11, 2026: SURPRISE VET FEST

5 – 8 PM

**Surprise Stadium, 15850 N. Bullard Ave.
Surprise, AZ**



This all-ages, fun-filled evening is a chance for our community to support, celebrate and connect with veterans, military families and those currently serving. Enjoy live music, food trucks, vendor booths, a kids' zone, sensory tents, static displays of military vehicles and more.

Hosted by the City of Surprise Veterans, Disability and Human Services Commission and presented by America's Mighty Warriors, Vet Fest highlights resources and support services available to veterans in our community.

Show your support for our troops by participating in a special service project. Volunteers can write letters to service members, sort donations, assemble care packages and decorate donation boxes. Youth for Troops will also be collecting donations to help send monthly care packages to military members.

See the list of needed items and register to volunteer at surpriseaz.gov/VetFest.

We hope to see you there!

<https://surpriseaz.gov/1353/Vet-Fest>

APRIL 18, 2026: SPORTING CLAY EVENT

7 AM – Noon

**Ben Avery Clay Target Center
5060 W Skeet St, Phoenix, AZ**

Join us for a morning filled with laughter, friendly competition, and a chance to make a real difference for our military veterans. Not only will you have a great time, but every shot you take will help support life-changing services for veterans at no cost to them. Can't wait to see you there!

15TH ANNUAL CHARITY SPORTING CLAY EVENT

Saturday, April 18th 2026
Ben Avery Clay Target Center
5060 W. Skeet St, Phoenix AZ 85086

ALL PROCEEDS RAISED FROM THE 15TH ANNUAL SPORTING CLAY EVENT FUNDRAISER WILL GO TOWARD THE SOLDIER'S BEST FRIEND TRAINING PROGRAM. MAKE AN IMPACT - HELP VETERANS AND ARIZONA HOMELESS DOGS

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 7:00 AM: REGISTRATION AND RAFFLE OPEN
- 7:45 AM: SAFETY BRIEFING
- 8:00 AM: SPORTING CLAY EVENT BEGINS
- 11:00 AM: LUNCH AND PRESENTATIONS
- 12:00 PM: PRESENTATIONS/RAFFLE DRAWING CLOSES

<http://soldiersbestfriend.org/sporting-clay/>



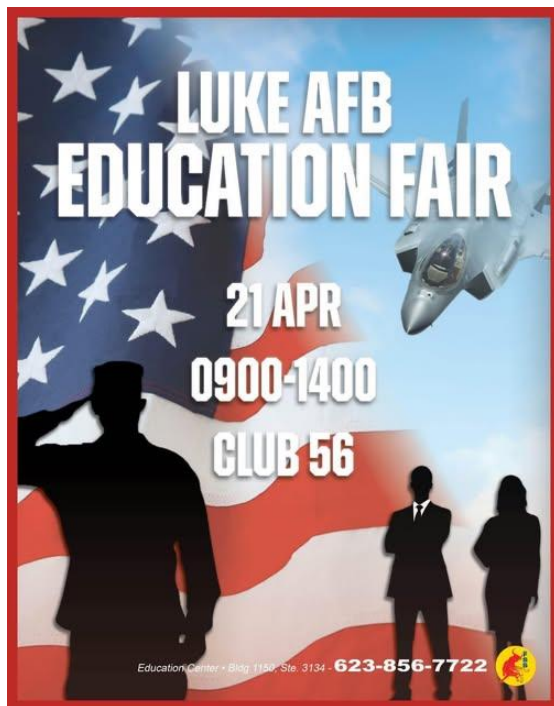
**SOLDIER'S
BEST ★ FRIEND**

Touching 2 Lives at Once

**APRIL 17, 2026: DUELING PIANOS,
CLUB FIVE SIX**



APRIL 21, 2026: EDUCATION FAIR



APRIL 22, 2026: LUKE EARTH DAY

LUKE AFB EARTH DAY BASE CLEAN-UP

April 22, 2026, 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Join the youth of MOMC as we celebrate Earth DAY by making a difference in our community! We will gather outside for 30 minutes to clean up our surroundings. It's a small gesture that, when done together, will create a huge impact. Let's come together to show our commitment to a cleaner, greener world. Be a part of this meaningful event and help us make a positive change!

THUNDERBOLT RECYCLING

April 22, 2026, 10 AM – 2 PM

Luke Base Exchange
FREE PAPER SHREDDING!

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT
PC Computers **
Laptops & Notebooks **
CRT Monitors
Flat Screen Monitors
Keyboards & Mice
Printers & Copiers
Toner & Ink Cartridges
Fax Machines
Peripherals & Gadgets
Power Supplies & Chargers
Batteries & UPS Systems
Cables & Wires
Networking Equipment
Servers & Racks
Circuit Boards
Tape Libraries
CD and DVD Drives
Copiers
Batteries

TELECOMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT
Telephones
Cell Phones
Switches
CSU/DSU Multiplexing Equipment
Phone Systems

AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT
Stereos
Radios
Amplifiers
Projectors
Televisions

**** 100% Recycled! All PC's and Laptops with hard drives will be wiped clean and certified by NIST Standards. A certificate of recycling will be e-mailed upon final disposition by E-Green ITS.**

In Partnership with:
EXCHANGE
shopmyexchange.com

Electronic Recycling Services
Data Destruction • Electronic Recycling
www.ersrecycle.com

ASSURED DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION INC.
shreddingphx.com

Thunderbolt Recycling
LUKE AFB, ARIZONA

WATER USE IT WISELY.

Go-Stewards CERTIFIED

APRIL 30, 2026: MONGOLIAN GRILL

4 PM – 6 PM
Club Five Six Ballroom 3



Sign Up Here:

<https://app.memberplanet.com/#/event/lukeafbclubs/clubfivesixmongoliangrill>

MAY 1, 2026: PATRIOTIC AWARDS LUNCHEON

Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society
 19th Annual Patriotic Awards Luncheon

Reception: 11 AM

Lunch & Program: 12 PM – 2:30 PM

The Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society
19th Annual Patriotic Awards Luncheon
 Friday, May 1, 2026
 Reception: 11:00 a.m.
 Lunch and Program: 12:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 Doubletree by Hilton Phoenix-Mesa
 1011 W. Holmes Avenue, Mesa, Arizona

This Event Will Respectfully Honor Arizona's Finest Patriots and Veteran & Student Scholars

Awards to be Presented:
Copper Star: Clarence "Joe" Larson, ADVS
Copper Eagle: USAA & Veterans Affinity
Copper Sword: The Honorable Judge Jeffrey Singer, Kingman
Outstanding VA Medical Center Employee Recognition
Copper Lamp of Knowledge Veteran and Student Scholarships

Keynote Speaker: Major General Michael T. McGuire, USAF, Retired

Early Bird Registration is available through April 4.
 Online Registration closes April 20.

[Registration and Sponsorship Information](#)

www.avhof.org

MAY 9, 2026: MILITARY VETERANS & FAMILY CELEBRATION EVENT

2 PM – 7 PM MARTIN AUTO MUSEUM
4320 W Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ



Grab the entire family and join us as we celebrate service and sacrifice of our military veterans and their families. Admission is free for all military, veterans, and their families. Includes entrance to the Auto Museum.

- Food Trucks & Refreshments
- Prize Raffle Fundraiser and Games
- Meet our partners, advertisers, and supporters Presenting Sponsor
- Military Vehicles and Magazine Pickup
- Free entry into car museum

For more information contact Patty Demers at: 602-367-2299 Patty@AmVetsMag.org

2026 COST OF LIVING (COLA)

by Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, February 2026

Click on below link for Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) effective Dec. 1, 2025, based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) through the third quarter calendar year 2025. The term "retired pay" includes retainer pay and the term "members" includes former members. Where applicable, the appropriate section of United States Code (U.S.C.) is cited.

<https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Army-Retirement/Post-Retirement/Army-Echoes-Newsletter-2026-02/2026-02-COLAs-2026>

2025 TAXES DUE APRIL 15, 2026 - AVOID A PENALTY

Taxpayers who don't meet their tax obligations may owe a penalty. The IRS charges a penalty for various reasons, including if you don't:

- File your tax return on time
- Pay any tax you owe on time and in the right way
- Prepare and file an accurate return
- Provide accurate and timely filed information returns

We may charge interest on a penalty if you don't pay it in full. We charge some penalties every month until you pay the full amount you owe. More info at:

<https://www.irs.gov/payments/penalties>

MAY 12, 2026: SUPPORTING ARMY VETERAN STAN MIELE

Army Veteran Stan Miele is taking on the Arizona 75 Challenge to raise funds for the Veterans Medical Leadership Council (VMLC)! On May 12, Stan will ride 63 miles through Arizona and finish with a 12-mile ruck march carrying a 35-pound pack.

Every mile is in support of Veterans facing financial crisis and the programs working to prevent Veteran suicide.

SUPPORT ARMY VETERAN STAN MIELE

THE ARIZONA 75 CHALLENGE
63-mile bike & 12-mile ruck march

May 12, 2026
Cottonwood → Payson, Arizona

Supporting Arizona Veterans through The VMLC

Veterans Medical Leadership Council

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026: LUKE AFB RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY (RAD)

All retirees & spouses WELCOME!
8 AM opening ceremony – until noon
Navy Reserve Center, Bldg 300, Luke AFB
Featuring: Annual Vaccines, DEERS & ID cards, Finance, Legal inquiries (by appt)
Veteran Service Organizations (VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc)
For more Info, email 56fw.rao@us.af.mil



2026 LUKE AFB RAO MEETINGS

Join us & find out more about volunteering.
3rd Weds of each month, 11 AM – noon
Navy Reserve Center, Bldg 300, Luke AFB

April 15, 2026 – Vol Picnic, Fowler Pk
May 20, 2026 meeting
June 17, 2026 meeting
July – no meeting
August 19, 2026
Sept 16, 2026
October 21, 2026
November 18, 2026
December 16, 2026 – Holiday Party

WHEN TO SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE



Most people sign up for Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance) when they're first eligible, typically at age 65. More info at:

<https://www.ssa.gov/medicare/plan/when-to-sign-up>

LUKE AFB Out Door Recreation

The staff at OutDoor Rec has been hard at work curating the 2026 calendar and it is bursting with opportunities to explore, connect, and experience the best of Arizona and beyond! Stay tuned! More info at: <https://www.facebook.com/lukeodr/>

FALCON DUNES GOLF COURSE

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



Papago Park Trail Run/Hike
25 APR • 0900 - 1245
\$25 PER PERSON
 *LAST DAY FOR REFUND IS BY: 20 APR.
REGISTER BY 22 APR.
 *Event subject to cancellation if sign ups are not reached
 *Arrive at ODR 15 mins early.
 Papago Park is a hilly desert park covering 1500 acres in Phoenix and Tempe. It's a great spot for running and hiking, featuring a combination of paved and non-paved trails, moderately hilly. Bring snacks/water.



FALCON DUNES GOLF COURSE
2026 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
18 & 19 APR. • 7:30AM
 SHOTGUN START • INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY • SIGN-UP BY APR. 18
CLUB MEMBERS- \$140 • NONMEMBERS- \$155
 AWARDS, LUNCHEON, AND PRIZES ON APRIL 19
 Falcon Dunes Golf • Bldg. 2202
623-535-9334
Facebook.com/LukeGolfCourse



Sunrise Hot Air Balloon
25 APR • 0345 - 0800
RAINBOW RYDERS | \$225 PER PERSON
 *LAST DAY FOR REFUND IS BY: 15 APR.
REGISTER BY 15 APR.
 *Event subject to cancellation if sign ups are not reached
 *Arrive at ODR 15 mins early.
 Flight time varies upon wind speed and direction, typically 45 minutes-1 hour, after flight refreshments. Transportation provided. Please wear warm, appropriate clothes, closed toed shoes. Ages 5+.



Couples CHAMPIONSHIP
26 APRIL • 7:30AM
\$125 CLUB MEMBERS
\$135 NON-MEMBERS
TWO PERSON SCRAMBLE FORMAT
 AWARDS, LUNCHEON, AND PRIZES INCLUDED.
 Falcon Dunes Golf • Bldg. 2202
623-535-9334
Facebook.com/LukeGolfCourse



& HORSESHOE BEND
02 MAY | 0530 - 1900
Grand Canyon Adventures, Flagstaff, AZ
Cost: \$300 per person | Max 13 participants
All Military & DoD ID Card Holders (ODR Registered)

64? 65? MEDICARE ELIGIBLE? TRICARE FOR LIFE BRIEFINGS

No Reservation Required

Briefings: **APR 29, 2026**

AUG 3, 2026

NOV 23, 2026

**Briefings start at 9:00 AM &
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

After JUL 31, 2026, refer questions to Patient Administration @ 623 856-7510.

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.

For latest RAO newsletter:

Option 1: Luke AFB website:

<https://www.luke.af.mil/>

Go to blue table on far right. Scroll to Base Information then Retiree Activities Office. Scroll to bottom for link to RAO newsletter.

Option 2 RAO Facebook: Link to latest newsletter is available on Luke AFB RAO Facebook: www.facebook.com/RAO56FW/

Luke AFB RAO Director:

beth Johnson, COL US Army (Ret)

News Editor: Director & RAO staff

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

Phone: (623) 856-3923

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

BASE GUIDE TO SERVICE NUMBERS

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

Military & Family Readiness	(623) 856-6550
Airman's Attic (Thrift Store)	(480) 886-8715
Auto Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6107
Base Exchange	(623) 935-2671
Base Finance / Comptroller	(623) 856-7028
Casualty Assistance	(623) 856-6550
Chaplain	(623) 856-6211
Club Five Six	(623) 856-6446
Commissary	(623) 337-8374
DEERS	(623) 856-7875
DFAS	(800) 321-1080
Falcon Dunes Golf Course	(623) 535-9334
FAMCAMP	(623) 856-4891
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 (Records)	(866) 272-6272
Pharmacy - Activate Prescription Refill Prescription	(855) 729-6500 (623) 343-1747
Retiree Activities Office (RAO)	(623) 856-3923
Security Forces	(623) 856-6322
Tickets & Travel (ITT)	(623) 856-6000
TRICARE West (TRIWEST)	(888) 874-9378
TRICARE for Life (TFL)	(866) 773-0404
Veterinary Clinic	(623) 856-6354
Wood Hobby Shop	(623) 856-6566