

63rd AMU building best future airpower

By **AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CALEB WORPEL**
56TH FIGHTER WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Since the arrival of the first F-35A Lightning II to the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Luke Air Force Base earlier this year, maintainers, crew chiefs and other respective maintenance positions have been steadily working to continue developing Airmen toward building the future of airpower.

The 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit officially opened its doors Oct. 1 and has since led to the success of 162 sorties and 228.3 flying hours in support of

Luke’s F-35 program. “The 63rd AMU is contributing to the F-35 program by working out kinks with operations,” said Capt. Cameron Taylor, 63rd AMU officer in charge. “We are getting the aircraft in the air to better the software and ready pilots for the impending arrival of more 3F aircraft.”

The unit is the first Luke F-35 AMU to receive a 3F, or full-up, combat aircraft capable of pulling 9Gs in the air.

“Each unit has a significant job within the F-35 program to train pilots and maintainers,” said Tech. Sgt. Derriel Morris, 63rd AMU non-commissioned officer in



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Caleb Worpel
Airman 1st Class Eric Ruiz-Garcia, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief, performs an inspection Dec. 1 on an F-35A Lightning II at Luke Air Force Base.

charge of debrief. “The 63rd is unique because we are just getting started. Our sorties might be lower than other units right now, but we are going to keep ramping up to match, and, eventually, surpass them.”

Currently, 146 personnel and seven aircraft are assigned to the 63rd, Taylor said. The AMU is scheduled to grow to approximately 200 personnel and 22 aircraft in the near future.

Through technological advances and continuous analysis, the F-35 program at the 63rd AMU and Luke, as a whole, continues to directly build the future of airpower from within the 56th Fighter Wing.

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From the Desk of Fighter Country Partnership: Helping a neighboring military base rewarding for all

Let me set the scene for you. A few months ago, we had a meeting in our office with the vice commander of the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base. He brought with him the commander of a large unit at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Yuma.

We soon discovered that the Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma was interested in implementing an Honorary Commander Program and were interested in how Luke developed its Honorary Commander program over the years.

Luke AFB has a very strong Honorary Commander program which has flourished over the past decade, or so. In basic terms, an Honorary Commander program brings prominent civilians onto a military instal-

lation and associates them with a military commander. In most instances, an Honorary Commander is associated in like terms (as much as possible) to the military commander. So, a civilian police chief would be a good candidate for a security forces squadron.

That can't happen in every instance, of course, but every attempt is made to make it happen.

At Luke, during their two-year term, the Honorary Commander and military commander reciprocate their professional know-how in their fields of expertise. The program is only as successful as what each commander (Honorary and Military) puts into it. It is an opportunity for the civilian leader to understand the military culture and lifestyle, and vice versa. It

COMMENTARY



Bill Johnston
Program Director
Fighter Country
Partnership

is also not uncommon for a real friendship to foster over the two years.

So, we discussed in-depth, with the Air Force Colonel and Marine Colonel, what a Military Support Organization like Fighter Country Partnership (FCP) can do to help facilitate this program.

Over the next several weeks, information was shared via email between FCP and MCAS Yuma leadership about how to implement an Honorary

Commander program for their installation. Next, we visited the MCAS commander and the Marine Weapons School commander.

From the outset, we were aware that the MCAS Honorary Commander program would not be identical to the Luke program. And it doesn't need to be. The Marines will create and implement their own program organically and it will build and flourish over the next several years. After leaving the meeting, we could feel the momentum starting to grow.

The City of Yuma is similar to Phoenix in the strong community support they provide to their prospective military installations. All of the meetings with the MCAS, Yuma leadership shared a common theme: the "want" and

desire to further build relationships with their community. But they were unsure about the mechanism to bring it to the forefront.

The same could be said for Yuma-50, the local Military Support Organization (MSO). Both organizations want to build on their existing relationships and FCP is excited to be a part of facilitating the growth of this program.

We headed back to Yuma weeks later to further our meetings with Yuma-50 and MCAS, Yuma. This visit was a little different. FCP brought a group known as the Blue Blazer Squadron (BBS). The BBS is a Luke AFB Honorary Commander alumni program. In order to become a Blue Blazer Squadron member you must have served

honorably during your tenure as an Honorary Commander at Luke AFB.

This visit, which doubled as a BBS off-site, was meant to highlight the potential for growth of an engaged Honorary Commander program. This was an opportunity for us to talk about Honorary Commander programs and for them to discuss Marine Corps culture.

The already demonstrated, "want" for an Honorary Commander program is there. So, now, we need to determine the "how" and "who." We discussed further categories of civilians that might be good fits with Marine Corps squadron commanders. The Blue Blazers all described their professions; from commercial real estate developers to architects, engineers, managers,

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Fighter Country Partnership

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500th F-35 pilot takes to the sky

By 33RD FIGHTER WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Air Force trained and graduated the 500th F-35 Lightning II pilot across the joint and international enterprise Sept. 19 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Maj. Chris Campbell, 461st Flight Test Squadron director of operations, is an F-16 test pilot with more than 1,000 fighter hours and 245 combat hours. He began F-35 fighter pilot training at the 33rd Fighter Wing this summer and became the 500th pilot to graduate the program.

"As a test pilot, working on the F-35 is an opportunity for me to be a real force-multiplier," Campbell

said. "Flying the F-35 has been a long-term goal of mine. I am thrilled to be part of the program and I hope to make a positive impact."

While training as an F-35A student pilot at Eglin Air Force Base, Campbell completed approximately 200 hours of academics, 14 simulators, a high-speed taxi, and six flights in the aircraft before being deemed qualified.

The coursework takes full advantage of emerging technology by leveraging virtual reality training for pilots to compliment the military's most advanced weapon system.

"As we discover new ways to employ the F-35, based on its expanding capabilities, we have to

adapt the way we train our pilots to ensure they meet the needs of our combat air forces," said Col. Paul D. Moga, 33rd Fighter Wing commander. "The world of fifth-gen tactics is rapidly evolving. It is changing the way we think, train and execute as a joint and multinational force."

Since the first aircraft was delivered in 2011, the F-35 enterprise and integrated training program have delivered more than 200 additional jets, produced more than 4,500 maintainers, and flown more than 100,000 hours.

"The F-35 and the capabilities it brings to the joint fight are key to the Air Force's ability to dominate in any airspace," Moga

said. "The Airmen we train and graduate today are the finest in the world. Their skills, coupled with the survivability and lethality of this weapon system, will ensure continued air superiority for the U.S., our partners, and our allies for decades to come. Five hundred down, thousands to go."

"This milestone represents the epitome of a team effort: active duty, Guard, Reserve, civilian, contractor, Air Force and Navy personnel all coming together with a common purpose to accomplish a common mission - train and graduate outstanding professionals for the combat air forces."

Campbell plans to use his ex-

perience as a legacy test pilot to help improve the fifth-generation fighter through developmental testing on the aircraft.

"The F-35 will be the backbone of the Department of Defense's tactical fighter fleet," Campbell added. "Making the product better in the developmental test phase will have a huge positive impact on the Combat Air Force in the future."

Eglin AFB is one of two bases in Air Education and Training Command responsible for the F-35 training mission. Together, Eglin AFB and Luke AFB, Arizona, enable AETC to provide F-35 flying and maintenance training that are critical to the joint fight.

HONORARY: Helping a southern neighboring military base build relationships, From 2

etc. This was done to capture a pool of professions from which to seek good Honorary Commanders.

As we learned over our many visits, the Marine Corps is organized differently than the Air Force. I think it's fair to say there are many differences between the Air Force and Marine Corps.

There are definite similarities, too. Both groups are there to protect the nation and, as stated before, have communities that support them.

During our four days in Yuma, the

Marines gave us a real look into their culture. They brought us out onto the flight line to look at several Marine Corps helicopters. This alone was cool.

But the truly awesome part was talking with the young Marines who were at MCAS, Yuma to attend the Weapons Instructors Course. There were Marines from Japan, and other overseas locations, as well as other Marine installations across the U.S. It's always gratifying and heartwarming to talk with young service members about why they joined.

We were given a tour of the Marine Corps "Weapons School" and educated on how Marines come to Yuma from all over the world to become weapons instructors and trainers for the entire fleet. FCP and the BBS are so thankful to the Marines and Yuma for allowing us to participate in this unique experience.

It was an incredible opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with Marines from all over the world. It is an equally incredible opportunity to help form the new MCAS, Yuma Honorary

Commander program. Although the Air Force and Marine Corps cultures differ, there are many similarities. The same can be said for community support.

Phoenix is not Yuma and Yuma is not Phoenix, but their support and level of pride for their military personnel is equal. The Honorary Commander program that MCAS, Yuma builds will be different than Luke AFB's, but the end goal is the same...to build and foster a positive relationship between the military and civilian community.



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Airmen pay tribute to fallen with Trojan workout

By AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
CAROLINE BURNETT
56TH FIGHTER WING
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Thunderbolts gathered Nov. 27 at the base of the Troy Gilbert Memorial Bridge to perform an intense workout to commemorate the life of a fallen hero, Maj. Troy Gilbert.

Before the 30 two-man teams started, Brig. Gen. Brook Leonard, 56th Fighter Wing commander, expressed a few words to Gilbert’s family, friends and the participating Thunderbolts.

“At the apex of the Troy Gilbert Memorial Bridge is a plaque that outlines the service and sacrifice he gave for our country,” Leonard said. “We use this bridge daily, and I never want crossing it to be routine. As we go through the workout, you’ll notice the 34 repetitions were in honor of the age he passed away, 56 repetitions were done because he deployed out of the 56th Fighter Wing, 20 burpees simulat-



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Pedro Mota

Thunderbolts participate in the Trojan Warrior Workout at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Nov. 27. Thirty two-man teams participated in six heats.

ing the 20 mm rounds he fired at insurgents to keep the soldiers on the ground safe, and the five different stations placed throughout the bridge are in honor of the five children he loved so dearly and left behind.”

After the opening ceremony, five teams lined up to begin one of six heats.

At station one, participants completed 34 calorie rows, and 34 sumo deadlift high-pulls with a 53-pound

kettlebell for males and a 35-pound kettlebell for females. After both partners completed both exercises, they took the kettlebells and ran to the second station at the apex of the bridge.

At station two, one partner completed 56 squats while holding a weight, while the other did 56 kettlebell swings.

After completing each exercise, teams carried a

weighted plate and kettlebell to station three on the other side of the bridge.

Exercises at station three were the same as station one, except each participant had to burn off 34 calories on an assault bike, before completing 34 sumo dead-lift high-pulls.

Next, male and female participants carried 45- and 25-pound weights, respectively, to station four at the apex of the bridge,



Capt. Christian Gordon, 56th Fighter Wing chief of military justice, participates in the Trojan Warrior Workout at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Nov. 27. The Workout was in remembrance to Maj. Troy Gilbert who gave his life protecting his country.

where they completed the other half of station two.

After station four, teams ran with weights to station five on the other side of the bridge and finished out the course with 20 synchronized burpees.

After the workout, Airmen reflected on what they had accomplished.

“I thought the hero workout was fantastic and for a good cause,” said Capt. Christian Gor-

don, 56th Fighter Wing, chief of military justice. “I thought it was challenging, but achievable, and the speeches in the beginning motivated you to get the workout done.”

Participants’ journey of sweat and tears came to a final conclusion, leaving the teams with a better understanding of Maj. Troy Gilbert’s life and the

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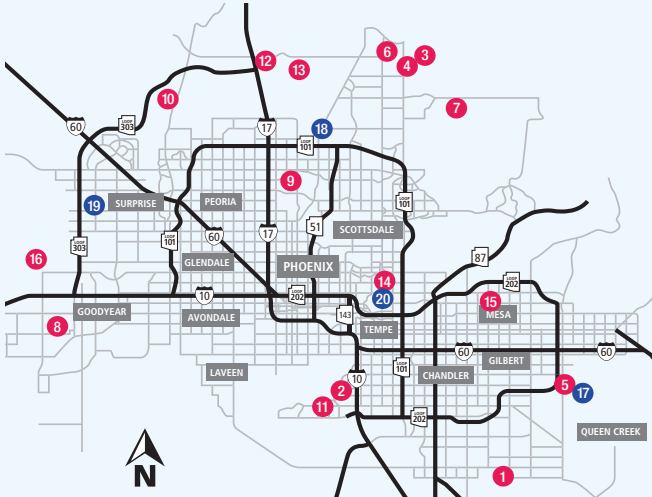
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U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Pedro Mota

Retired Chief Master Sgt. Scott Dearduff addresses the Trojan Warrior Workout participants Nov. 27 at Luke Air Force Base. Dearduff served with Maj. Troy Gilbert before he died.

WARRIOR: Honoring one of their own, From 6 sacrifice he gave for his country. “We lost Maj. Troy Gilbert in an air-fight during Operation Iraqi Freedom,” said Retired Chief Master Sgt. Scott Dearduff. “His remains were gone for 10 years before he was returned, and what really struck me was that our nation never forgot and continued to keep the promise that we will never leave an Air-

man behind. Today, we remember Troy’s sacrifice. I know that if he was here, and I know he is up there looking at us, he would feel honored.” While Thunderbolts are focused on training pilots and putting jets in the air on a daily basis, taking the time to remember a fallen Airmen is just one way we take care of our own.

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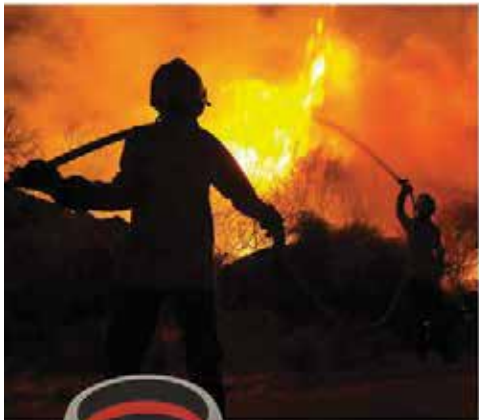
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Luke AFB crew volunteers at MANA homeless veteran transition center

The Luke Air Force Base crew brought a little more brightness to the Valley of the Sun.

After setting a special day aside to volunteer all over Phoenix, 15 men and women from Luke Air Force base visited Catholic Charities' MANA House, ready to offer a full day of volunteering to organize the facility's donation center.

Homeless veterans find support

While their donation of manpower to MANA House was needed and appreciated, the inspiration and hope they brought to the veterans living at the transitional center was priceless. MANA House veterans, who have experienced homelessness, are healing and finding the confidence to rebuild their lives and encouragement is a crucial part of their recovery.

"They give our veterans a chance to connect with active military members," said Peter Fleckenstein, MANA House assistant house supervisor. "That connection helps veterans to remember their active duty in a good way. They remember what success feels like, and it inspires them."

In return, the active Airmen and Airwomen receive wisdom.

"There is so much to learn from our veterans, and their selfless act of serving our country...lessons and experiences that can be passed on," said Staff



Photos courtesy Cartholic Charities

One of the Luke AFB crew breaks out in a smile during his volunteer time at MANA.

Sergeant Justin D. Ruark, F-16 and F-35 maintenance training instructor for Luke Air Force Base.

The Luke Air Force Base crew bought shelves and went to work in organizing, charting and sorting clothing, small appliances, kitchen ware, blankets, pillows and other donations given to help veterans start a life after leaving MANA House. The crew also served meals throughout the day to veterans.

MORE MANA ON 11

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Volunteers from Luke Air Force Base volunteer at MANA House.

MANA: Saved staff weeks, From 10

Volunteers accomplish big job

In seven hours, the Airmen and Airwomen provided 105 hours of manpower and finished a job that Fleckenstein said would have taken MANA House staff weeks to accomplish.

“Not only did they help us out, but they were so grateful to be doing it. A lot of these guys came up to me to say thank you for letting us help you. It was so genuine. They wanted to be there. They were really happy to help us out,” Fleckenstein said.

Luke AFB gives back

This project was one of several Luke Air Force Base is doing to serve the communities surrounding the base; other volunteer projects included serving at UMOM and the Carl T. Hayden Veteran Administration Medical Center. Ruark said the work helps to connect the Air Force to the community. “Overall, the entire project benefitted us, in that giv-

ing back, we continue to humanize the Air Force and the military in general,” Ruark said. “It gives faces to the people that work each day to protect what those at the MANA House have already made sacrifices to provide to their country. On a smaller scale, it provided us the opportunity to fine tune our teamwork and get back to some of our basic skills, while helping out where needed around MANA House to ensure that it continues to operate successfully.”

Jordan Firman, Catholic Charities group volunteer coordinator, said, “An organization like Luke Air Force base provides a wonderful opportunity for our veterans to see successful men and women in the community believe in them and also provides manpower to accomplish work that would otherwise be costly.”

If you’d like to join in serving at the MANA House, contact Jordan Firman at jfirman@cc-az.org.



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Shawn Bradford: Fighter Country Partnership Honorary Commander

Fighter Country Partnership is proud to feature Shawn Bradford, Vice President of Corporate Services with EPCOR Water. He is an alumni member of the Honorary Commanders Program and currently a lifetime member of the Blue Blazer Squadron of Fighter Country Partnership. Bradford was assigned to the 56th Civil Engineering Squadron at Luke Air Force Base from 2008 to 2010.

Bradford has been with EPCOR Water since November 2011. He currently serves as the Vice President of Corporate Services and has over 29 years of experience in the area of water and wastewater management in both public and private sectors. His local experience in Arizona includes serving as Director of Public Works and Water Resources for the City of Goodyear.

When asked what it was like being an Honorary Commander at Luke AFB, he said, “Being an Honorary Commander has been one of the greatest professional opportunities provided to me since my



Photo by Fighter Country Partnership

Shawn Bradford received an orientation flight in the F-16 aircraft at Luke AFB.

arrival to Arizona in 2006. Spending time on the base with the men and women of our military and understanding their mission has been a very humbling experience.

“My biggest takeaway from my time as an Honorary Commander was that the base and all of its operations are solely focused on its mission. Everything that happens on base supports

this one goal. This level of focus isn’t something I had experienced prior to being an Honorary Commander.”

Bradford explained that his most memorable time as an Honorary Commander was when he worked with the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight at the Barry M. Goldwater Range. The EOD Flight provides the best trained

and equipped technicians to safely accomplish state-side and wartime tasks. They maintain a 24-hour emergency response capability and they neutralize explosive threats to personnel and property and provide special mission support teams worldwide.

“I got a better understanding of the dangers they face in the field disposing of unexploded ord-

nance,” he said.

The Honorary Commanders program is designed to promote mutual partnerships with the local community and to promote a better understanding of the important Air Force mission. Its goal is to gain positive public opinion with influencers and community and business leaders.

Bradford said, “I think this program is a great example of the mutual partnership FCP has established with the base. Working in the community and communicating the mission of the base helps promote all of the benefits Luke provides not only the West Valley, but the entire state of Arizona.”

When asked how he helped integrate his assigned squadron to learn more about the community in which they live outside the base, Bradford said,

“During my time as Honorary Commander, we arranged tours to help educate Airmen and their families about the water and wastewater issues we are all working on

for the West Valley. We toured our regional water treatment plant where we treat and deliver 20 million gallons of renewal surface water each day to our customers in the West Valley.”

Bradford has participated in numerous activities at Luke AFB.

He said, “I worked a shift at the base fire station and assisted operations with water and wastewater issues on the base. I also attended bomb disposal training, change of command ceremonies, staff meetings and most importantly, I received an orientation flight at the end of my Honorary Commander program. That was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I will never forget.

“I have also participated in two mentoring sessions where we met with airmen to discuss their future after they leave the Air Force and also supporting the programs offered by FCP.

“Through the BBS I support the golf event each

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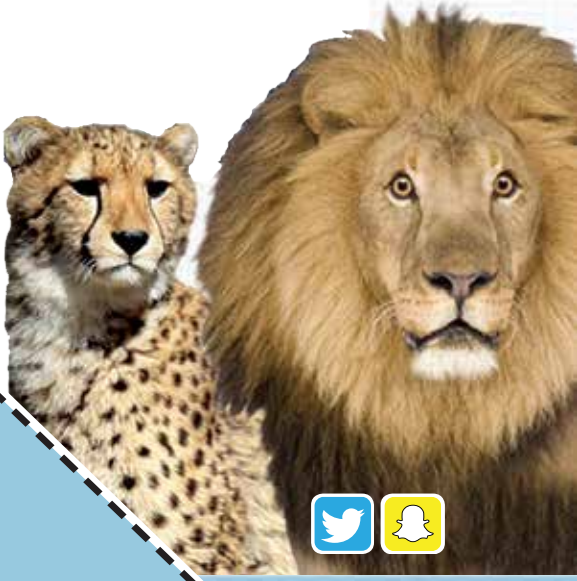
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Photo by Fighter Country Partnership
Shawn Bradford works the burger burn at the big grill for the Luke AFB “Wingman Day” feeding thousands of Luke Airmen.

BRADFORD: Supports all who serve, From 12

year, the largest FCP fund-raising event of the year used to support the men, women and families of those serving Luke AFB. I also support the Luke Days Open House Airshow, March of the Fallen and most recently, the 9/11 Tower Challenge whereby Arizona law enforcement, firefighters, and military personnel (active and retired), family and supporters recreate the 110 flights of stairs (2071 steps) climbed by New York City Firefighters during the attacks on the World Trade Center. We will honor all those who gave their lives on that fateful day and all those who continue to

serve our country, domestically and abroad. This year we anticipate more than 1,000 individuals taking the challenge. Proceeds will benefit the 100 Club of Arizona (provides support to the families of police and fire personnel seriously injured or killed in the line of duty).
“Supporting the men, women and families of those serving at Luke is our main area of focus. Being able to leverage our personal/professional resources and talents through FCP when the need arises is something that everyone who is associated with the BBS fully supports.”

O-Negative Luke AFB blood donors are special heroes to Arizona patients

As the temperatures cool down in our state, Arizona’s population rises with the influx of winter visitors. Along with this growth comes a greater need for blood donors. The cold and flu season often further impacts the need for blood, when many regular donors can’t give due to illness.

Having an ample supply of Type O blood is especially important this time of year, because it gives doctors transfusion options when shortages of other blood types arise.

O-Negative: 6 percent of the population has it; 100 percent of patients can receive it.

The universal donor, O-negative is the only blood that can be substituted for all other types. In emergency situations, when there is no time to determine a patient’s blood type, doctors depend on O-negative blood to sustain life until the patient can be stabilized. Having plenty of O-negative available to hospitals is important



Dean relies on red blood cell transfusions to live normally.

because doctors routinely rely on O-negative blood when premature babies and infants under six months old require lifesaving transfusions.

A typical 6-pound newborn has only about 8 ounces (one cup) of blood and extremely tiny veins, making it difficult to conduct blood tests. Furthermore, because of their immature immune systems, neonates often lack the necessary factors to easily determine blood type. O-negative is the only blood type these babies can safely receive.

“My son, Dean, was severely anemic when he was born and needed a blood transfusion right

away,” Twila said.
Dean was later diagnosed with a rare condition called Diamond Blackfan Anemia. His body did not produce enough red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout his body, so he relied on red blood cell transfusions to live normally.
“Dean is type O-negative, and we have waited several hours to get a transfusion that is a match for him,” Twila explained, “It is humbling to realize that my son’s life is dependent upon other people donating blood. Every blood donor is a true hero to Dean.”
United Blood Services has several blood drives scheduled at Luke Air Force Base in December and January. For locations and to make an appointment, visit www.BloodHero.com (Sponsor Code: LAFB), or 1-877-UBS-HERO (827-4376).
To coordinate a blood drive, or volunteer on the LAFB committee, contact: Greg Wieking, 602-614-4772.

Our commitment to the community will never equal that of the men and women that have taken up arms in defense of our country. Thank you for your service.



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Volunteers learn importance of Christmas for the Troops

By CAROLYN DRYER
EDITOR

Nobody knows the importance better than a soldier deployed on foreign soil who has received a care package from home.

Senior Master Sgt. Charles Marsh, superintendent of public affairs at Luke Air Force Base, was on the receiving end of a package from home on more than one deployment. He spoke to volunteers Dec. 21 who had gathered to pack boxes for Christmas for the Troops.

Marsh will be leaving for his sixth overseas deployment in early 2018. He's already been to Kuwait, Qatar, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and other temporary duty stations all over the world. He has 22 years of service.

"I still love what I do and I'll keep doing as long as they let me," Marsh said.

He performs the day to day supervision of the public affairs office at Luke. But his travels have



Photos by Carolyn Dryer

Volunteers listen closely as Peoria Sunset Lions Club President Rachelle Barrett instructs the group about how the packing will proceed.

meant sacrificing the basics most Americans enjoy every day.

"I have been on the receiving end of these types of boxes," Marsh said. "The mail system is pretty amazing; the infrastructure amazing. You take for granted a lot of things you have here."

He mentioned dental floss and mouthwash as items soldiers would not have overseas. There's no access to a store.

"Having those items come to you is amazing," he said.

His favorite items? "Cards and letters from

elementary school children," Marsh said. "Their outlook and thank you for what we do. It's really cute and great laughs sometimes. I put it (a card) in my pocket and get it out and read it again."

While many packing volunteers may look at what they're doing as just items in a box, Marsh said it was more personal.

"You're putting a piece of yourself," he said. "It really makes a lot of difference that you take the time during the holiday season. At the end of the day, you get one of these boxes, see it's from Peoria, Ariz.,

they're thinking about you and your family."

Christmas for the Troops is the major event for Peoria Sunset Lions Club, and club president Rachelle Barrett happily reported this year, \$8,500 was raised to help pay for postage. She congratulated City of Peoria employees Tricia Bowling and Kristy Baker for personally collecting \$302 among their co-workers.

"Community is what helps overseas and at home," Barrett said.

Councilmember Bill Patena acknowledged the volunteers, reminding



Senior Master Sgt. Charles Marsh, superintendent of public affairs at Luke Air Force Base, explains to two young volunteers how much troops look forward to receiving packages.

them, "It's got to be difficult being away from your family in the holidays."

Janelle McCain, 23, of Peoria, was dressed in her finery, complete with crown and banner from Ultimate Elite Pageant. She was accompanied by her brother, Matthew McCain, 17, a student at Mountain Ridge High School. Janelle and her friends from the pageant wrote 500 Christmas

cards to the troops, while her brother's high school wrestling team wrote 123 cards. They delivered the cards, which were packed along with other items for the troops.

It's never too late to donate. Give Barrett a call at 602-359-1623, if you would like to help defray postage expenses, or write a check for other expenditures related to Christmas for the Troops.

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Photo courtesy Credit Union West
Officials from Credit Union West and Luke Air Force Base cut the ribbon Nov. 9 at the newest resource center for veterans transitioning into civilian life.

Military and Veteran Success Center provides transitioning resources

With an estimated 532,000 veterans living in Arizona (11 percent of the population), it is in the communities' long-term best interest to help military men and women as they transition to civilian life. The VA Mental Health Services notes that rejoining a non-military community and interviewing for civilian jobs may be difficult for new veterans.

To help make the transition easier for as many retiring service people as possible, a new Military and Veteran Success Center opened Nov. 9 near Luke Air Force Base.

The center is part of the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation's Veteran Success Project. The primary goal of the project is to establish centers that

provide a bridge between veterans and the more than 40,000 resources that help veterans expand their education in college courses and financial literacy, find housing, receive resume writing assistance and more.

"Credit Union West has a 65-year history of serving the military," said Bob MacGregor, Credit Union West's president and CEO. "From our beginnings as Luke Federal Credit Union, we expanded to serve Maricopa and Yavapai counties, but still embrace our military roots. We are proud to pledge ongoing support of the Military and Veteran Success Center."

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Park University earns Top Five Best Colleges ranking

Park University has been ranked by *Military Times* as the No. 4 private college/university in the country on the publication’s “Best Colleges 2018” list (formerly known as “Best for Vets”). The ranking is a reflection of the services and support the University provides to active duty military, veterans and their families.

The publication recognized Park with four stars (out of four) for its G.I. Bill gap coverage, and gave it 3½ stars for staff support and three stars for extracurriculars. The G.I. Bill gap coverage rates how well schools reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket costs for Post 9/11 G.I. Bill users.

The staff support distinction rates the number of staff members dedicated to veterans issues in proportion to its military and veteran student population, the amount of time staff spend on veterans issues, and the scope and frequency of military-related training for faculty and staff.

The extracurriculars accolade rates the number and activity level of student veteran groups, and whether the school supports those groups financially, in addition to considering initiatives to support military spouses and families, and service projects.

Military Times surveys colleges and universities annually to meticulously document the array of services, special rules, accommodations and financial incentives offered to students with military ties, as well as describe the aspects of veteran culture on campus.

In addition, the publication factors in data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense, and from U.S. Department of Education sources: the Integrated Postsecondary Edu-



cation Data System, College Scorecard and Cohort Default Rate Database.

For more than 55 years, Park University has maintained a strong relationship with the U.S. military by serving those who serve their country. Park launched degree completion programs for service members in 1962, and in 1972, the University began offering degree programs at military bases around the country. Of Park University’s 41 campus locations across the country, 33 are situated on military installations.

Along with tuition assistance and scholarship opportunities, Park offers unique resources for its service members and veteran student population, including the Park Global Warrior Center, a division of the University’s Department of Military and Veteran Student Services. The PGWC helps students on such topics as education, employment, finances, relationships, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and transition.

In addition to the PGWC, Park offers a Success for Veterans program that provides a smooth and comprehensive transition for veteran students, as well as educational opportunities for students in the U.S. Army’s Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., For more information about Park University’s military and veteran services and programs, visit www.park.edu/military.

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- AMVETS – Provides medical records screening and assistance with VA disability claims
- Personal Development Information & Resources
 - Like us on Facebook: Luke A&FRC
- Military & Family Life Counselor Assistance
- Financial Counseling Education
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- School Liaison Officer - Addresses educational issues involving military children and youth in the local school community

5 Day Dept. of Labor TAP Employment Workshop held Monthly

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Email: 56fss.fsfr@luke.af.mil
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Support your local military and veterans



The Glendale Chamber of Commerce Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

The Glendale Chamber of Commerce Military and Veterans Affairs Committee (MVAC) works closely with the city to provide recognition and assistance to our local military community, which is comprised of active duty personnel, reserve personnel, veterans and their respective spouses and families. It also helps members of the Glendale Chamber of Commerce conduct more business with Luke Air Force Base, and encourages businesses to hire veterans.

Recent events the committee has managed, or supported, include: Operation Stand-Up, The Mayor’s “Big Dog” Motorcycle Run, Veterans Day Celebration, Luke Shoot-Out Golf Tournament, the Saver’s Flag Repurposing Program, and the Military Induction Ceremony, which honors our high school graduates who make a commitment to join our U.S. Armed Forces.

Jeff Turney, chairman of the Glendale Chamber of Commerce, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, said, “Whether you are currently in the military, a veteran, a business owner, or a chamber member interested in assisting, you are invited to participate. Business owners can promote their veteran-friendly businesses on the Glendale Chamber’s MVAC website.”

For information on assisting, or becoming a member of the Glendale Chamber of Commerce Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, contact chamber liaison, Harry Shapiro, at hshapiro@glendaleazchamber.org, or 623-937-4754.

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MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Surprise is proud to be a Veteran Supportive Employer and Community!

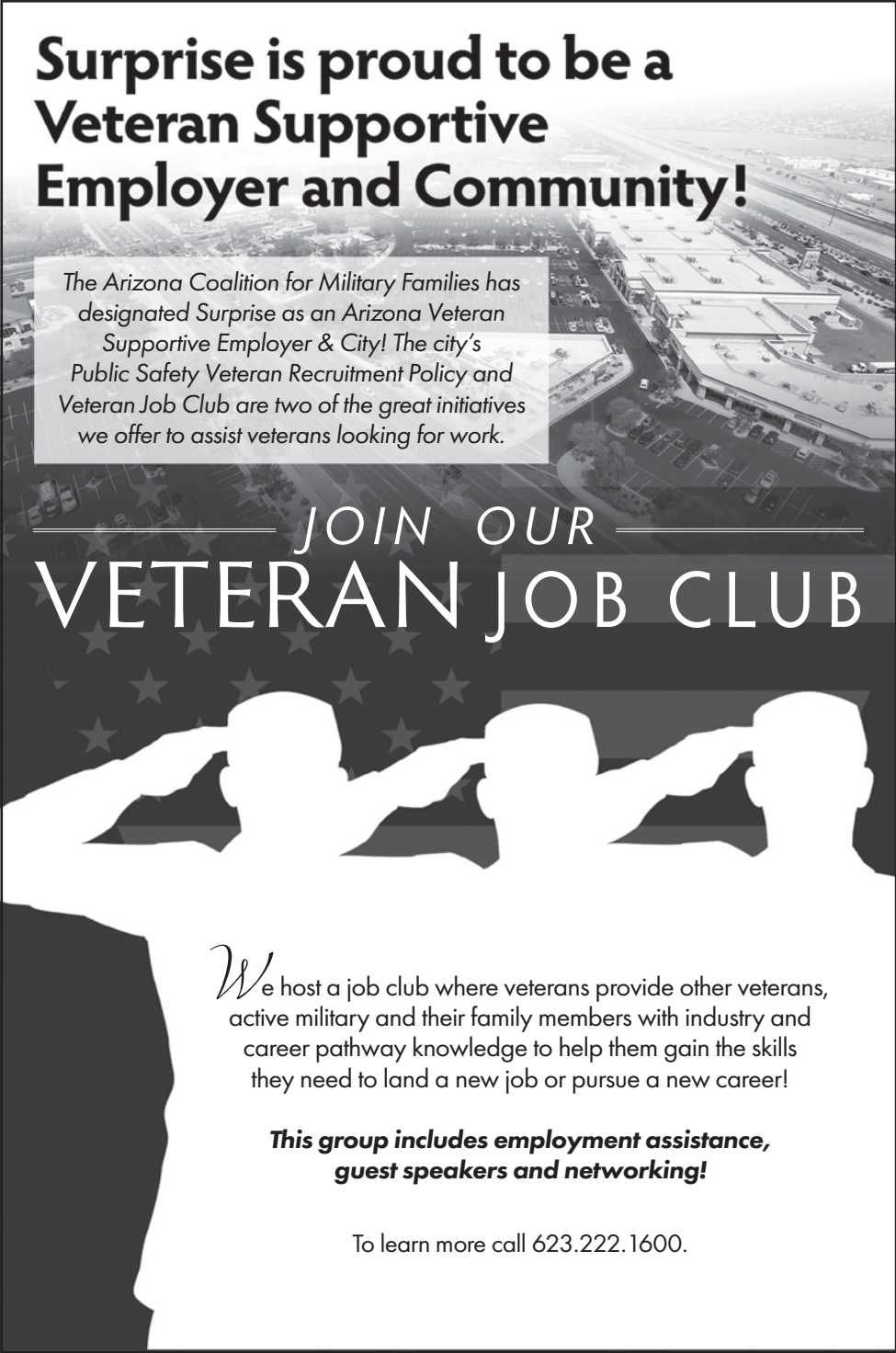
The Arizona Coalition for Military Families has designated Surprise as an Arizona Veteran Supportive Employer & City! The city's Public Safety Veteran Recruitment Policy and Veteran Job Club are two of the great initiatives we offer to assist veterans looking for work.

JOIN OUR VETERAN JOB CLUB

We host a job club where veterans provide other veterans, active military and their family members with industry and career pathway knowledge to help them gain the skills they need to land a new job or pursue a new career!

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