

The Luke Air Force Base Thunderbolt

"We train the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat ready Airmen"



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FEATURE



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero

THUNDERBOLT CUP COMPETITION

See Pages 8 and 9

IP War Day advances joint forces training

By Airman 1st Class
MASON HARGROVE

56th Fighter Wing

In a total force effort, the 56th Fighter Wing conducted Instructor Pilot War Day in conjunction with a larger joint-force exercise hosted by the 944th Fighter Wing, Exercise Desert Hammer, Nov. 3-4, 2023, over the Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona.

Exercise Desert Hammer combined with IP War Day, involved more than 300 combat support Airmen and 96 aircraft, this joint-force exercise is a routine event with U.S. Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy.

"The purpose of IP War Day is to guarantee that our operators preserve an elite standard of tactical skill and that our instructor pilots can translate insights from the large-scale exercise into regular training for their students," said U.S. Air Force Col. Matthew Johnston, 56th Operations Group commander. "This exercise solidifies the tactical readiness of our Airmen and affirms their expertise, reinforcing our commitment to training the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat-ready Airmen."

The exercises aimed to replicate intense aerial combat scenarios, featuring an array of aircraft including F-35A Lightning II's from the 61st Fighter Squadron, F-16 Fighting



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Mason Hargrove

A U.S. Air Force KC-46 Pegasus assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base refuels an F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 309th Fighter Squadron, Nov. 3, 2023, over the Barry M. Goldwater Range, Arizona. Instructor Pilot War Day in concert with Exercise Desert Hammer aimed to replicate intense aerial combat scenarios, featuring an array of aircraft from multiple branches and bases.

ing Falcons from 309th Fighter Squadron, F-35B Lightning II's from USMC Air Station Miramar, a KC-46 Pegasus, and F-15 Eagles from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina.

"IP War Day is a testament to our commitment of advancing training and readiness," said Reserve Citizen Airmen Lt. Col.

William Wisheart, 944th Operations Group deputy commander. "This exercise not only reinforces our operational capabilities but also strengthens our community ties, aligning with our mission to train combat ready Airmen and foster enduring partnerships."

The exercise's primary intent was to maintain and enhance tactical proficiency,

particularly focusing on air-to-air defensive maneuvers in a variety of combat scenarios and contested areas. It aimed to bolster coordination and readiness among the various units, ensuring that aircrews are adept and prepared for the agile deployment of airpower in future operations.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Jacob Welton, 414th Maintenance Squadron crew chief, observes an F-15E Strike Eagle as it is prepared for takeoff, Nov. 3, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The 4th Fighter Wing is one of seven military units that participated in Luke AFB's Instructor Pilot War Day in concert with the 944th Fighter Wing's Exercise Desert Hammer.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Jacob Welton, 414th Maintenance Squadron crew chief, signals an F-15E Strike Eagle as it prepares for takeoff, Nov. 3, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jakob Hambricht

SH-60 Sea Hawk aircraft assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 6 conduct landing and refueling operations, Nov. 3, 2023, at Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield, Arizona. The SH-60's participated in a total force effort where the 56th Fighter Wing conducted Instructor Pilot War Day in conjunction with a larger joint-force exercise hosted by the 944th Fighter Wing, Exercise Desert Hammer.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jakob Hambricht

An A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base participates in exercise Desert Hammer, Nov. 3, 2023, at Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield, Arizona.

Thunderbolt

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Email name, phone number and a brief description of your service to kim@aerotechnews.com

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Triumph and Sacrifice:

The legacy of a three-war veteran and fighter pilot

By Airman 1st Class
KATELYNN JACKSON

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The booming sound of North Vietnamese Army soldiers' steps echoed in the tropical summer air in South Vietnam, 1968.

They had marched for over a month through the dense Ho Chi Minh Trail. The only thing between them and the defenseless South Vietnamese village they planned to invade was one last mile of open air.

Or so they thought.

High above them, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Michaud soared in an F-4 Phantom II jet, with a full load of ammunition, and a clear view of his targets.

"During the summer months the North Vietnamese traveled South and invaded villages," said Michaud, now retired, at his home in Mesa, Arizona. "They robbed them of everything they owned, took the women and children as slaves — they devastated them in every meaning of the word."

Luckily, a South Vietnamese U.S. ally, or "friendly," lived in that village and called in for help as he saw the North Vietnamese approaching. Michaud intercepted the call and turned in pursuit for the invaders.

"I could see the North Vietnamese soldiers coming down over an open spot



Courtesy photo

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Earl Michaud poses for a photo inside of an aircraft, at Hamilton Air Force Base, California. During his service, Michaud flew 180 combat missions and helped rescue 78 downed pilots, earning him 5 distinguished flying crosses, a bronze star and 14 Air Medals.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Airman 1st Class Katelynn Jackson

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Earl Michaud poses for a photo in his living room, Sept. 6, 2023, in Mesa, Arizona. Richard served 22 years active duty in the Air Force, earning five Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Bronze Star, and 14 Air Medals.

to take the village," said Richard. "I was lucky enough to have a fully loaded gun pod, and I completely emptied it on them."

The ammunition made contact on target, taking enemy Vietnamese down and sending the rest fleeing back into the dense jungle.

"As I turned to leave, I looked down to see the villagers waving to me," said Richard, his glistening eyes far away. "That was —" he paused, his voice cracking. "That was one of the moments that got to me."

Over his 22 years of service in the Air Force, 16 months deployed to Vietnam and participation in three U.S. wars, flying missions like the one with the South Vietnamese village would earn Michaud 14 Air Medals, five Distinguished Flying Crosses and a Bronze Star.

In addition to a highly decorated career, Michaud's service in the Air Force would be filled with many sacrifices, none more demanding than the time spent away from his wife and four children.

The legacy of courage and exemplary service that veterans like Michaud, and many others displayed, is a testament to the true strength of our Air and Space Force that Airmen and Guardians continue to build upon today.

Michaud's military career began in May 1945 when he enlisted into the U.S. Navy, serving in the Philippines Islands and the Admiralty Islands of the South Pacific. Returning to civilian life, he used the GI Bill to enroll at Utah State Agricultural College (USU) where he met and married his wife, Patricia Merrill, his junior year in 1948.

He joined the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps where he rose to the highest-ranking cadet second in command of the 1,500 brigade and graduated as a distinguished military graduate with a degree in journalism.

From there, Michaud returned to

See LEGACY, Page 4



Courtesy photo

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Michaud, retired pilot and squadron commander, waves to a crowd before taking flight on a Boeing-Steerman Model 75 for his 90th birthday, May 14th, 2017, in Mesa, Arizona. Richard served 22 years active duty in the Air Force, fighting in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

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Luke Veterinary Clinic opens new facility

By Airman 1st Class
Elias Carrero

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility opened their new facility located across from the Block House, on Oct. 23, 2023.

The Luke Veterinary team provides generalized wellness services, basic sick calls, radiographs, and ultrasound services to the dogs and cats of active duty, reserve, and retired service members and their dependents.

"This move is huge for the veterinary care capabilities at this base," said Dr. Rachel Hallman, Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary medical officer. "The equipment upgrades and bigger facility is a giant step up from being a preventative care focused clinic, into a functional sick call facility."

The larger facility expands the number of patients the clinic can treat while providing more specialized medical services for the pets of Luke's active and retired service members.

"In the future, we hope to be able to provide specialized services like surgeries," said U.S. Army Sgt. Ambria Crooks, Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility noncommissioned officer in charge. "This will limit the need to outsource patients and ensure we can provide the upmost quality of care possible in house."

Hallman expressed that the goal of the Luke AFB veterinary clinic was to be there for service members and their animal companions not for a profit, but rather because they view their patrons as family.

"If you are worried about your dog, you're not going to do well at your job," said Hallman. "We are here for service members and taking care of your family."

For additional information on what treatments are available or to schedule an appointment, call the Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility at (623) 856-6453 or email them at LukeAFBVet@gmail.com.



Dr. Rachel Hallman (left), Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility veterinary medical officer, and U.S. Army Sgt. Ambria Crooks (right), Luke AFB Veterinary Treatment Facility noncommissioned officer in charge, interact with Bboa, military working dog, Oct. 23, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility held a ribbon cutting ceremony for their new facility located across from the Block House.

U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero



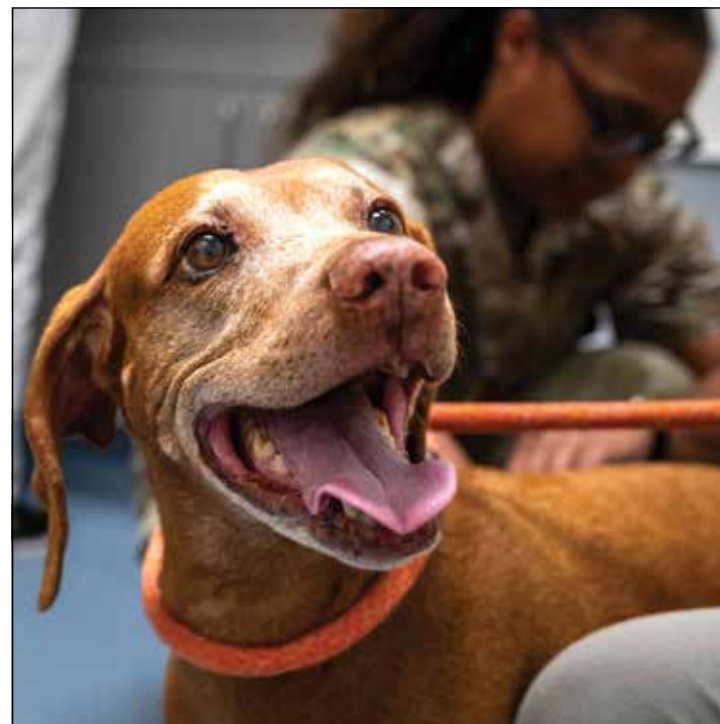
The Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility staff pose in front of their new building after a ribbon cutting ceremony, Oct. 23, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



A dog awaits treatment at the new Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility, Oct. 23, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



A military working dog looks at their handler during the new Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility's ribbon cutting ceremony, Oct. 23, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



A dog is prepped for treatment at the Luke Air Force Base Veterinary Treatment Facility, Oct. 23, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The Luke Veterinary team provides generalized wellness services, basic sick calls, radiographs, and ultrasound services to the dogs and cats of active duty, reserve, and retired service members and their dependents.

LEGACY (from Page 2)

active-duty service: this time as a commissioned officer in the Air Force.

"I went into the Air Force as a non-pilot, just because I wanted to get into the Air Force," said Michaud. "After I had been in a year or so, I decided if you are going to be in the Air Force, you might as well be a pilot."

Michaud had earned his pilot license during his time at the agricultural program at USU. After being selected as a pilot, he eventually had opportunity to attend the Air Force's select Top Gun school at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

After he completed training, Michaud was sent to Landstuhl, Germany, for three years where he flew air defense along the Iron Curtain and served as the base's public information officer.

"I had gone over there to fly F-86D Sabre's, but the base picked up that I had a journalism degree," said Michaud. "They asked if I had any interest working as the base public relations officer and I said 'sure'."

Once he was sent back to the states, Michaud experienced a variety of assignments. He was assigned as an AFROTC instructor at the University of Utah, an airborne radar station pilot covering the West Coast, an operations officer at an Alaska radar station and an AFROTC instructor again at Arizona State University where he began his doctoral degree in the administration of higher education.

When the Vietnam conflict began, Michaud separated from his family once again to serve as the squadron commander of the 602nd Search and Rescue Squadron in South Vietnam, September 1968 through January 1970. This squadron was assigned to the 56th Special Operations Wing, to which the 56th Fighter Wing traces its lineage.

This time would not be without danger for Michaud, and on multiple occasions he put his life on the line in defense of his comrades and nation.

"One time I had nine guns working on me at night," said Michaud, a soft smile spreading on his face. "But a bullet never touched me."

Throughout his flying career, Michaud flew over 180 combat missions and contributed to the rescue of over 70 downed pilots.

Once he returned home after 16 months overseas, Michaud got the news that he would be assigned to Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, in a non-flying assignment. Feeling that uprooting his family to a new location again wasn't the right move, and that he had fulfilled a career he was proud of, Michaud retired in 1972.

Michaud continued to excel in the civilian world after he separated from active duty. His retirement afforded him the resources to complete his doctorate and in 1976, he was elected the President of Arizona Student University Financial Aid Administrators. After seven years at ASU, he was recruited by Utah

State to be their director of financial aid.

After a turn as the President at Utah State, he co-founded the World Championship Dutch Oven Cook-off, as part of the Festival of The American West. The WCDOC gained widespread publicity for USU, such as a nine-page coverage in the *Los Angeles Times*, four pages in *Sunset* magazine and TV coverage on "The Today Show".

Three years after its creation it expanded to become the International Dutch Oven Society, an organization that is still active today world-wide.

While the service offered Michaud numerous opportunities and experiences, he states that he acknowledges that it was not something that came without sacrifices.

"It was hard on my family, I would be gone on flying assignments for months or years at a time," said Michaud. "That's not a small sacrifice that men and women in uniform make, and that is something I have to appreciate."

Today, at age 96, Michaud now does what brings him true happiness, making up for lost time at home with his four children, 19 grandchildren and 63 great-grandchildren.

The true strength of our Air and Space Force is inspired by the legacy of courage and exemplary service that veterans like Michaud have built. Airmen today seek to continue to build upon their sacrifice and achievements so that the Airmen of tomorrow will have the will to do the same.



Courtesy photo

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Earl Michaud, retired pilot, and squadron commander, poses for a photo with his family in North Highlands, California. Shortly after this photo, Richard spent one year in Campion, Alaska, where he was a weapons controller and then as an operations officer in Unalakleet, Alaska.



Courtesy photo

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Michaud, retired pilot, and squadron commander, poses for a photo, 1969, at Nakhon Phanom, Vietnam. Richard was deployed to Vietnam for 16 months, where he flew 180 search and rescue missions saving 72 downed pilots, earning him five Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Bronze Star and 14 Air Medals.

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Nation celebrates Native American Heritage Month

By
David Vergun

DOD News

President Joe Biden issued a National Native American Heritage Month proclamation for the month of November calling attention to the service of Native Americans.

The proclamation states: "Despite centuries of violence and oppression, Native peoples remain resilient and proud. Today, Native Americans are essential to the fabric of the United States. They serve in the United States armed forces at higher rates than any other ethnic group.

"They continue to steward so many of our great lands. Their contributions to science, humanities, arts, public service, and more have brought prosperity for all of us. Their diverse cultures and communities continue to thrive and lead us forward."

Ashish S. Vazirani, acting under-secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said the Defense Department recognizes November as National American Indian Heritage Month.

"This year's theme is 'Tribal Nations Soaring to New Heights.'



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alexander Kubitza, DOD

Dancers perform during a celebration at the Pentagon for National Native American Heritage Month, Nov. 8, 2023.

American Indians and Alaska Natives have a long history of military service. During World War II, the legendary contributions of Navajo Code Talkers were critical for U.S. success. Similarly, Alaska Natives fearlessly defended U.S. territories from Japanese raids.

"Many American Indians and Alaska Natives serving today cite a desire to follow in the footsteps of their family members and have a

deep patriotism for protecting and serving their homeland," he said.

Alicia Madalena Sylvester, from the Pueblo of Jemez tribe, is the Defense Department's senior tribal advisor and liaison for Native American affairs. She and others spoke Nov. 8 at the Pentagon's National Native American Heritage Month celebration.

Native American men and women serve in the armed forces at

five times the national average, Sylvester said. They have served with distinction in every conflict since the birth of this country.

"As Native American veterans have pledged their service to the nation, the Department of Defense is also committed to fulfilling its legal and moral responsibilities," she said. "I want to assure all tribal leaders present here that DOD is committed to ensuring that government-to-government consultation with American Indian and Alaska Native tribes are consistently timely, respectful, meaningful and robust."

The Pentagon event included tribal dances from different Native American tribes. "It is truly a blessing to hear the songs, the native language, and drumbeats throughout the Pentagon courtyard and within our corridors," she added.

According to the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, the 2023 National American Indian Heritage Month poster depicts America's landscape interspersed with symbols that depict American Indian and Alaskan Native achievements and contributions.

The poster is also an ode to the "Skywalkers." Iroquois ironworkers, especially Mohawks, are legendary for their dizzying work in erecting skyscrapers and steel bridges. Mohawk men have walked and worked on nearly all of New York City's towering buildings, including the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and Rockefeller Center. In Pittsburgh, they worked on the U.S. Steel Building, the Civic Arena, and the Fort Pitt Bridge, among other structures.

During the 2020 census, the U.S. Census Bureau identified the following numbers of Native peoples who identify solely as Native American and who are U.S. residents:

American Indian: 2,159,802
Latin American Indian: 766,112
Alaska Native: 133,311
Canadian Indian: 7,723

The census also recorded the following number of U.S. residents who identified as Native Americans of mixed race:

American Indian: 6,363,796
Latin American Indian: 1,319,523
Alaska Native: 241,797
Canadian Indian: 72,701

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Settle into the Season: preserve holiday traditions with commissary

By
KATHY MILLEY

DeCA public affairs specialist

Missed milestones, continuous moves to new duty stations far away from family and friends, and ever-changing international affairs dictate the military family's pace of life. However, holiday traditions serve as a constant, reminding the military family of home no matter where they are in the world.

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) stands committed to helping our military families provide a feeling of home and an experience of community by helping them realize all their holiday traditions centered around food.

When they are making a home in a new country or even a new state, Jennifer Rivers and her spouse, Command Master Chief Mario Rivers, the new senior enlisted advisor for the Defense Commissary Agency, depend on their commissary, especially during the holidays.

"When you're stationed far from home, familiar brands, ingredients, and holiday staples can be hard to come by," said Mario Rivers. "But the commissary bridges that gap. There's something incredibly comforting about walking down its aisles and finding my favorite brand of cranberry sauce or the exact pie crust that I always use for the traditional Rivers' holiday recipes."

Visit your commissary to take advantage



Courtesy photo

of all the special offers and promotional discounts from your favorite holiday brands.

Throughout the holidays, commissary industry partners — vendors, suppliers, and brokers — are collaborating with stores to offer promotional discounts beyond everyday savings for the holidays. For example, commissaries worldwide are offering select brands of whole frozen turkeys for 69 cents per pound while supplies last.

Ensure you are getting the most from your commissary benefit during the holiday season by checking the product displays at the end of each aisle. There you will find holiday-related items offered at extra-low prices. Enjoy even more savings and value by choosing Your Everyday Savings (YES!) products and Commissary Store Brands such as Freedom's Choice items.

"The commissary isn't just a store for us;

it's a lifeline," said Jennifer Rivers. "It's a touchstone that connects us to our roots and helps us 'Settle into the Season,' no matter where duty calls.

"As we prepare for the holidays this year, I am filled with gratitude for the role the commissary plays in helping military families like ours find a sense of normalcy in the often-unpredictable journey of military life," Mario Rivers said.

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THUNDERBOLT CUP COMPETITION



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing stand for a group photo at the start of the annual Thunderbolt Cup event Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The T

By
JENNA BIGHAM

56 Fighter Wing Public Affairs

After several years off, the tradition of the Thunderbolt Cup made its return to Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, for a day of competition and camaraderie among Airmen on Nov. 9, 2023.

The first Thunderbolt Cup event took place in 2016 and brought Airmen from across the 56th Fighter Wing together for sportsmanship and to build esprit de corps.

"This year's event marks the first time the competition has been held since 2019 and we are excited to bring it back," said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Myranda Borja, 63rd Fighter Squadron senior enlisted leader and 2023 Thunderbolt Cup project officer. "With a total of eight events and 144 teams registered, we have had a great turnout and a lot of involvement from across the wing."

Participants had the option of competing in a 5K run along the flightline, cornhole, volleyball, softball, 3-on-3 basketball, spades, poker, or attending any of the three resilience events available with special guest speakers.

"The Thunderbolt Cup offers all Airmen of Thunderbolt Nation a chance to come together in a laid-back environment away from the everyday stressors of work," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Jason Rueschhoff, 56th Fighter Wing commander. "The camaraderie and teamwork I've seen today through friendly competition is exactly what we hoped for when we decided to reinvigorate this event."

Squadrons earned points for each event they participated in, with additional points offered to those taking home the win in each of their respective events.

As the competition wrapped up, only one stood to take home the trophy. Though the numbers were close, the 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron came out on top, with the 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron coming in second, and the 56th Component Maintenance Squadron rounding it out with a close third.

In addition to the competition, vendor displays, lunch, and music were among the highlights for all in attendance whether participating in the competition or cheering on their squadron members.

"Congratulations to all and thank you for another great year of the Thunderbolt Cup," Borja concluded.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Mason Hargrove

56th Fighter Wing Leadership presents the Thunderbolt Cup trophy to Logistics Readiness Squadron personnel, Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



U.S. Air Force photo by

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing stand for a group photo at the start of the annual Thunderbolt Cup event Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



56th Fighter Wing personnel play a volleyball game during the Thunderbolt Cup competition at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The Thunderbolt Cup is a base wide competition to win the Thunderbolt Cup trophy.

RETURN RETURNS TO FIGHTER COUNTRY



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dominic Tyler

The Thunderbolt cup is a base-wide competition where teams from each squadron compete in activities to earn points and take home the Thunderbolt Cup trophy.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Dominic Tyler
A 5k run in a 5k at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, on Nov. 9, 2023.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jakob Hambright

U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Jason Shaffer, 56th Fighter Wing command chief, participates in the Chiefs vs. Eagles kickball game, Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The kickball game took place during the 2023 Thunderbolt Cup.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jakob Hambright

A U.S. Air Force Airman from the 56th Civil Engineer Squadron participates in a softball game during the 2023 Thunderbolt Cup, Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Mason Hargrove

A volleyball game during the Thunderbolt Cup, Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, where teams compete to earn the most points to walk away with the trophy.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elias Carrero

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 56th Fighter Wing participate in a Spades tournament as a part of the Thunderbolt Cup Nov. 9, 2023, at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



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Raymond Allen Duncan Sr., 85, of El Mirage, Arizona passed peacefully at home Thursday, November 9th, 2023. Raymond Sr. was born September 30th, 1938, in Rossville, GA to the late Walter and Ora Josephine Duncan. He demonstrated exemplary service to his country in the United States Air Force, enlisting in 1956 and honorably discharged in 1983, achieving the highest enlisted rank of Chief Master Sergeant. Raymond Sr. then devoted his substantial skill set to the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station as an Emergency Planning Coordinator until his retirement. He had an unsurpassed dedication to his family, deeply loved our family dogs, was an enthusiastic golf fan and an avid follower of Arizona sports.

He is preceded in death by his beloved wife of sixty years, Lillian Gloria Duncan.

Raymond Sr. is survived by his children, Linda (Duncan) Lagerhausen and her husband John, Raymond Duncan Jr. and his wife Jennifer, James Duncan and his wife Lisa; grandchildren, Kaitlin, Eriq, Kristen and Allison; brothers, Douglas and Hubert; and treasured dog Coco.

A Funeral Mass will be held at 10:30am on Monday, November 20, 2023 at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, 13720 W. Thomas Road, Avondale, AZ. Graveside services with military honors will be held at 2:30pm on Monday, November 20, 2023, at the National Cemetery of Arizona, 23029 N Cave Creek Rd, Phoenix, AZ.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Arizona Humane Society.



Chaplain's thoughts ...

By Chaplain (Maj.)
BEN BUTCHER

56th Fighter Wing Group

It's hard to believe that we are almost done with another year!

Billy, my 7th grader son, was telling me he wished he had a time machine so he could jump a few days into the future and be on winter break already. I don't need to send a calendar reminder; he is counting down the days to our family's upcoming vacation and asking me which rollercoaster is the fastest at the amusement park.

There is an important balance to be struck between focusing on the present and focusing on the future. Thinking about the future can be a great source of hope and provide focus and direction. However, if we are not intentional, it takes our focus away from things in the immediate present. We don't want to skip the importance of making the most of each day.

Thinking about this year, the words "crazy busy" come to mind. Many of us wear many hats: husband, wife, parent, son, brother, daughter, sister, friend, employee, Airman, homework support, amateur

mechanic, do-it-yourself appliance repairman, and the list goes on and on. My wife's list is probably longer than mine. With all the roles we play, finding time to rest and simply connect with those we love becomes extremely important.

My son, Billy, was really expressing looking forward to a time of rest and relationship. Have you intentionally set some time aside to do something fun or relaxing with those you love? Create some lasting memories. Taking some time to connect with your faith, yourself, and other people in your life, will help keep you strong.

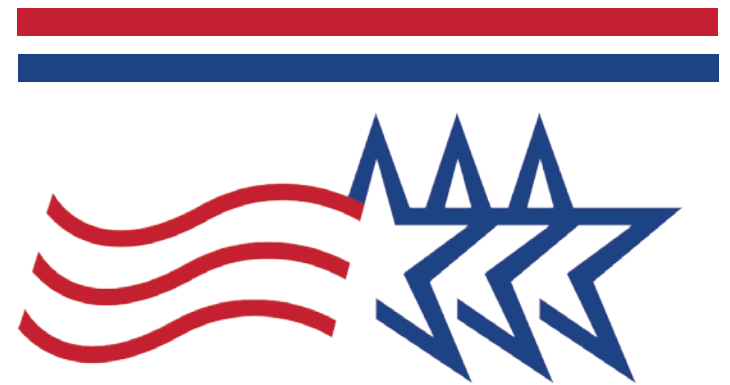
An important word we often hear these days is resilience. Part of resilience are the positive relationships we maintain which become a source of strength. Yet, feeling connected to others sometimes takes an intentional investment, especially for those who are very busy or even overcommitted. You know something is important when it makes it onto your calendar. Do you have time set aside for your relationships?

My prayer for you is that you will make some time for rest and relationship during this season.



Courtesy photo

Chaplain (Maj.) Ben Butcher



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