

**56th Fighter Wing and  
Luke Field/Air Force Base  
Heritage Pamphlet  
1940 - 2020**



**56th Fighter Wing History Office  
Prepared by Mr. Rick Griset  
As of 14 August 2020**

The crest of the 56th Fighter Wing is a shield-shaped emblem. The background is orange. A blue chevron is positioned across the middle. Two yellow lightning bolts are superimposed on the chevron, one pointing up and one pointing down. The crest is surrounded by a yellow border. At the bottom, a white banner with a yellow border contains the text "56TH FIGHTER WING" in blue, serif, all-caps font.

## Blazon

Tenne on a chevron azure fimbriated or two lightning flashes chevronwise of the last.

## Motto

**CAVE TONITRUM** (Beware of the Thunderbolt)

## Significance

The orange background was the color of the Army Air Corps and represents the 56th Fighter Group's World War II service. The chevron, representing support, is blue to signify the wing's flights in support of the nation's quest for peace. The lightning bolts are symbolic of speed, aggressiveness, and the capability to strike immediately in any direction. "Cave Tonitrum," Beware of the Thunderbolt!

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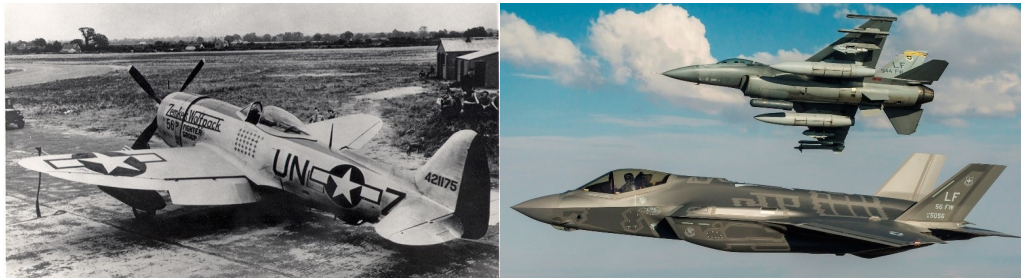


**2d Lt Frank Luke, Jr.**

In September 1918, 2d Lt Frank Luke, Jr., made aviation history in World War I when he wreaked havoc on the aerial fleets of Germany. During an 18-day period, of which Luke AFB only flew 8 days, he destroyed 18 enemy aircraft. Because he targeted the most dangerous prey, the heavily defended observation balloons, he became known as the “Arizona Balloon Buster.” He was the first aviator awarded the Medal of Honor. On June 6, 1941, Litchfield Park Air Base (AB) was redesignated Luke Field in his honor and memory.



## 56th Fighter Wing History



The 56th Fighter Wing, one of the most highly decorated aviation units in history, traces its heritage to the 56th Pursuit Group, which first activated on 15 January 1941 at Savannah Air Base, Georgia. Redesignated a fighter group, the unit was equipped with the P-47 Thunderbolt and then reassigned to England. On 13 April 1943, the 56th flew its first combat mission of World War II. During its two-year involvement in the air war in Europe, the group shot down 667 enemy aircraft, more than any other group in the theater. It damaged or destroyed a total of 1,598.5 enemy aircraft. In the process, the 56th only lost 25 pilots in aerial combat while producing 40 fighter aces.

After World War II, the 56th Fighter Group was assigned at Selfridge Field, Michigan. On 15 August 1947, the 56th Fighter Wing was activated with the group as a subordinate unit. The wing's mission was air defense. The unit wrote another chapter in aviation history when on 14 July 1948 its F-80 Shooting Stars made the first ever west-to-east crossing of the Atlantic by military jet fighters. That flight was a month after the Soviets set up their blockade of Berlin, and put the Soviets on notice that the United States was capable of deploying a large package of modern military aircraft across the Atlantic in minimum time. The wing was inactivated on 1 January 1964.

On 16 March 1967, the wing reactivated as 56th Air Commando Wing at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base (AFB), Thailand. On 1 August 1968, it was redesignated as the 56th Special Operations Wing. The 56th trained Laotian and Thai Air Force personnel, and supported and conducted combat operations against opposing armed enemy forces. It played a major part in trying to win the hearts and minds of the population with its Civic Action Section. It took part in search and rescue, and suppression of enemy defenses missions. As such, it took part in the Battles for Khe San and Lima Site 85, as well as the rescue raid on Son Tay prisoner of war camp and the attempted to rescue of the crew of the United States merchant container ship *SS Mayaguez*.

Renamed on 30 June 1975, and reassigned to MacDill AFB, Florida, the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing conducted combat aircrew training in F-4s and later fighter training in F-16s. In the early 1990's, USAF downsized which removed fighter aircraft from MacDill AFB. The renamed 56th Fighter Wing remained in the active fighter force. On 1 April 1994, the wing was reassigned to Luke AFB, Arizona, flying F-16s and the F-15E Strike Eagle. A year later the F-15E training mission moved to Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina. On 10 March 2014, the wing received its first F-35A aircraft.

Today, the 56th Fighter Wing, a unit that historically had some of the world's greatest fighter pilots, continues with what Luke AFB has been identified with since 1941: "To train the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat ready Airmen."

**56th Fighter Wing Commander**  
**BRIGADIER GENERAL GREGORY KREUDER**



Brig. Gen. Gregory Kreuder is the Commander, 56th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB Air Force Base, Arizona. The wing's mission is to train the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat-ready Airmen. As part of Air Education and Training Command, and home to 28 squadrons with both F-16 Fighting Falcon and F-35A Lightning II aircraft, the 56th FW is the largest fighter wing in the Air Force and graduates more than 105 F-35 pilots, 188 F-16 pilots and 300 air control professionals annually. Additionally, the 56th FW oversees the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field and is steward of the Barry M. Goldwater Range East, a military training range spanning more than 1.05 million acres of Sonoran Desert.

Brig. Gen. Kreuder commissioned in 1995 as a distinguished graduate of Officer Training School. His fighter assignments include duties as an instructor pilot, flight examiner, weapons officer, operations officer, squadron commander, vice wing commander, and air operations center commander. He is a command pilot with more than 2,700 hours in the F-16 Fighting Falcon, including 350 combat hours. Prior to Brig. Gen. Kreuder's current assignment, he served as the Senior Defense Official, Defense Attaché-Iraq, Baghdad.

### **EDUCATION**

1991 Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering, Rice University, Houston, Texas  
 1994 Master of Science, Aerospace Engineering, University of Texas, Austin, Texas  
 2001 Distinguished Graduate, Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama  
 2004 F-16 Weapons Instructor Course, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nevada

- 2008 Master of Military Operational Art & Science, Air Command & Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
- 2008 Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., by correspondence
- 2009 Master of Airpower Art & Science, School of Advance Air & Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
- 2016 Master of Science in National Security Strategy, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. June 1995–August 1996, Outstanding Graduate, Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas
2. January 1997–July 1997, Student, F-16 Training, Luke AFB, Arizona
3. September 1997–September 1998, Fighter Pilot, 35th Fighter Squadron, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea
4. October 1998–December 2000, Flight Lead, 69th Fighter Squadron, Moody AFB, Georgia
5. January 2001–January 2004, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner, Flight Commander, 310th Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Arizona
6. January 2004–June 2004, Student, F-16 Weapons Instructor Course, Nellis AFB, Nevada
7. July 2004–August 2006, Weapons Officer, Flight Commander, 523rd Fighter Squadron, and Chief, Wing Weapons and Tactics, 27th Operational Support Squadron, Cannon AFB, New Mexico
8. August 2006–August 2007, Wing Weapons and Tactics Flight Commander, 51st Operational Support Squadron, Osan AB, South Korea
9. August 2007–June 2008, Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
10. July 2008–June 2009, Student, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
11. August 2009–June 2012, Director of Operations, 14th Fighter Squadron, and Commander, 13th Fighter Squadron, Misawa AB, Japan
12. July 2012–July 2014, Joint Doctrine Planner; Executive Assistant to the Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia
13. July 2014–July 2015, Vice Commander, 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano AB, Italy
14. July 2015–June 2016, Student, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
15. June 2016–June 2017, Chief, Air Force Division, United States Military Training Mission, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
16. June 2017–March 2019, Commander, 607th Air Operations Center, Headquarters Seventh Air Force, Osan AB, South Korea
17. March 2019–June 2019, Deputy Chief, Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq, U.S. Embassy Baghdad
18. June 2019–May 2020, Senior Defense Official, Defense Attaché – Iraq, U.S. Embassy Baghdad
19. May 2020–present, Commander, 56th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB, Arizona

## **SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS**

1. July 2012–July 2014, Joint Doctrine Planner and Executive Assistant to the Director, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia, as a lieutenant colonel

2. June 2016–June 2017, Chief, Air Force Division, United States Military Training Mission, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as a colonel
3. March 2019–June 2019, Deputy Chief, Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, as a colonel
4. June 2019–May 2020, Senior Defense Official, Defense Attaché – Iraq, U.S. Embassy Baghdad, as a brigadier general

#### **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: command Pilot

Flight hours: 3,000

Aircraft flown: F-35, T-37, T-38, F-16 Blocks 25-52

#### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Defense Superior Service Medal

Legion of Merit

Defense Meritorious Service Medal

Meritorious Service Medal with silver oak leaf cluster

Air Medal with three bronze oak leaf clusters

Aerial Achievement Medal

Air Force Commendation Medal with bronze oak leaf cluster

#### **EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant June 23, 1995

First Lieutenant June 23, 1997

Captain June 23, 1999

Major November 1, 2005

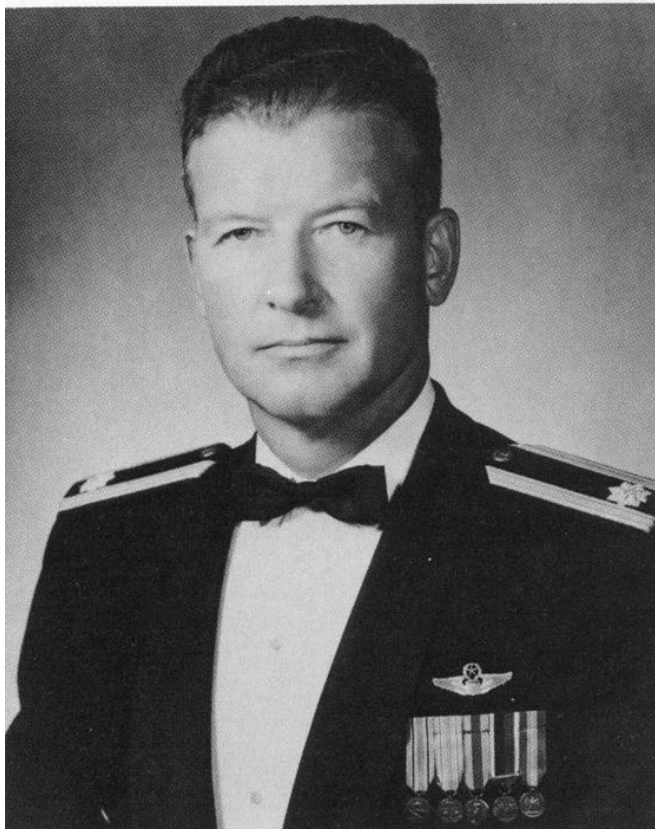
Lieutenant Colonel March 1, 2009

Colonel October 1, 2014

Brigadier General April 2, 2020

(Current as of May 2020)

### Medal of Honor



**Colonel William A. Jones III**

602d Special Operations Squadron  
of the  
56th Special Operations Wing

1 September 1968

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Col. Jones distinguished himself as the pilot of an A-1H Skyraider aircraft near Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. On that day, as the on-scene commander in the attempted rescue of a downed U.S. pilot, Col. Jones' aircraft was repeatedly hit by heavy and accurate antiaircraft fire. On one of his low passes, Col. Jones felt an explosion beneath his aircraft and his cockpit rapidly filled with smoke. With complete disregard of the possibility that his aircraft might still be burning, he unhesitatingly continued his search for the downed pilot. On this pass, he sighted the survivor and a multiple-barrel gun position firing at him from near the top of a karst formation. He could not attack the gun position on that pass for fear he would endanger the downed pilot. Leaving himself exposed to the gun position, Col. Jones attacked the position with cannon and rocket fire on 2 successive passes. On his second pass, the aircraft was hit with multiple rounds of automatic weapons fire. One round impacted the Yankee Extraction System rocket mounted directly behind the headrest, igniting the rocket. His aircraft was observed to burst into flames in

the center fuselage section, with flames engulfing the cockpit area. He pulled the extraction handle, jettisoning the canopy. The influx of fresh air made the fire burn with greater intensity for a few moments, but since the rocket motor had already burned, the extraction system did not pull Col. Jones from the aircraft. Despite searing pains from severe burns sustained on his arms, hands, neck, shoulders, and face, Col. Jones pulled his aircraft into a climb and attempted to transmit the location of the downed pilot and the enemy gun position to the other aircraft in the area. His calls were blocked by other aircraft transmissions repeatedly directing him to bail out and within seconds his transmitters were disabled and he could receive only on one channel. Completely disregarding his injuries, he elected to fly his crippled aircraft back to his base and pass on essential information for the rescue rather than bail out. Col. Jones successfully landed his heavily damaged aircraft and passed the information to a debriefing officer while on the operating table. As a result of his heroic actions and complete disregard for his personal safety, the downed pilot was rescued later in the day. Col. Jones' profound concern for his fellow man at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Air Force and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.



A 602d Special Operations Squadron Douglas A-1H Skyraider,  
Tail Number 52-139778, Over Vietnam in June 1970



**56th Fighter Group Aces**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Aerial Victories</u>		
	<u>In 56 FG</u>	<u>Lifetime Total</u>	
1. Lt Col Francis S. Gabreski	28	34.5	POW 20 July 1944
2. Capt Robert S. Johnson	27	27	
3. Col David C. Schilling	22.5	22.5	
4. Capt Fred J. Christensen, Jr.	21.5	21.5	
5. Maj Walker M. Mahurin	19.5	24.25	Evaded 27 March 1944; POW 13 May 1952
6. Maj Gerald W. Johnson	15.5	16.5	POW 27 March 1944 (Lieutenant General)
7. Col Hubert A. Zemke	15.25	17.75	POW 30 October 1944
8. Capt Joe H. Powers	14.5	14.5	
9. Capt Felix D. Williamson	13	13	
10. Maj Leroy A. Schreiber	12	12	KIA 15 April 1944
11. Maj James C. Stewart	11.5	11.83	
12. Maj Paul A. Conger	11.5	11.5	
13. Capt Michael J. Quirk	11	11	POW 9 September 1944
14. Sq Ldr Michael Gladych	10	10	
15. 1st Lt Robert J. Rankin	10	10	
16. 1st Lt Stanley B. Morrill	9	9	Killed aircraft accident 29 March 1944
17. Maj George E. Bostwick	8	8	
18. Maj Michael J. Jackson	8	8	
19. 1st Lt Glen D. Schiltz, Jr.	8	8	
20. 2d Lt Billy G. Edens	7	7	POW 9 September 1944
21. 1st Lt Robert J. Keen	7	7	
22. 2d Lt Frank W. Klibbe	7	7	
23. Capt Robert A. Lamb	7	7	
24. Maj Leslie C. Smith	7	7	
25. 1st Lt John H. Truluck, Jr.	7	7	
26. Capt Mark L. Moseley	6.5	6.5	
27. Capt James R. Carter	6	6	
28. Capt Walter V. Cook	6	6	
29. 1st Lt George F. Hall	6	6	
30. Capt Cameron M. Hart	6	6	
31. Capt Joseph H. Bennett	5.5	8.5	
32. 1st Lt Frank E. McCauley	5.5	5.5	
33. 1st Lt Donovan F. Smith	5.5	5.5	(Lieutenant General)
34. Capt John W. Vogt, Jr.	5	8	(General-USAFE)
35. Maj Harold E. Comstock	5	5	
36. 1st Lt Joseph L. Egan, Jr.	5	5	KIA 19 July 1944
37. 2d Lt Steven Gerick	5	5	
38. 2d Lt Joe W. Icard	5	5	KIA 8 March 1944
39. Flt Off Evan D. McMinn	5	5	KIA 6 June 1944
40. Capt Eugene W. O'Neill, Jr.	5	5	

### 56th Fighter Group Chronology

- 15 January 1941 The 56th Pursuit Group (Interceptor) and 61st, 62d, and 63d Pursuit Squadrons were activated and assigned to Savannah Air Base (AB), Georgia, equipped with Seversky P 35, and Curtis P-36 Hawk aircraft.
- 26 May 1941 The group moved to Charlotte Army Air Base, North Carolina, to fly the Bell P 39 Airacobra and Curtis P-40 Warhawk aircraft.
- 15 May 1942 The group was redesignated as the 56th Fighter Group (FG).
- June 1942 The 56 FG was reequipped with Republic P-47B Thunderbolt.
- 13 November 1942 The first two 56th pilots thought they broke sound barrier when their P-47s dove from 35,000 feet and reached an indicated airspeed of 725 miles per hour. Later, engineers realized that those buffeted aircraft only approached the barrier, but did not reach the speed of sound.
- 6 January 1943 All 56 FG personnel boarded the Queen Elizabeth for passage to England from the New York port of embarkation.
- 12 January 1943 The 56 FG was reassigned to Kings Cliffe, England for air war in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) as part of Eighth Air Force (AF).
- 5 April 1943 The 56 FG moved to Horsham St Faith (Norfolk), England.
- 8 April 1943 The 56 FG reached operational status.
- 13 April 1943 The 56 FG flew its first WWII combat mission, a fighter sweep over France.



On 12 June 1943, Capt Walter V. Cook, 62d Fighter Squadron, recorded the 56th Fighter Group's first aerial victory against a Foch-Wulf 190 near Blankenberghe, Belgium. Captain Cook flew Little Cookie, his P-47C, Tail No. 41-6343.  
Pictured with his Crew Chief

- 12 August 1943 The first time belly tanks were used on the wing's P-47s, but lacked the range to escort bombers deep into Germany.



Capt Gerald M.  
Johnson

1st Lt Frank E.  
McCauley

Capt Walker M. "Bud"  
Mahurin

19 August 1943

Captain Gerald M. Johnson, 61st Fighter Squadron, was the first 56 FG pilot to be credited with five kills, thus becoming its first ace. Much later, it was determined that one of his 17 August 1943 kills was also claimed by 1st Lt Frank E. McCauley, also of the 61st. They both officially received a half credit taking Johnson to 4.5 kills as of 19 August. As a result, Johnson officially become an ace on 10 October 1943. This meant that on 4 October 1943, Capt Walker M. "Bud" Mahurin, 63d Fighter Squadron, officially became the group's first ace. All three were aces by the end of the war.

25 November 1943

The 56 FG's first fighter-bomber mission, fifty P-47s dropped 500-pound bombs on an airdrome facility in France.



8 May 1944

Captain Robert S. Johnson of the 61st and 62d Fighter Squadrons surpassed the World War I record of Capt Eddie Rickenbacker, when he shot down two enemy aircraft in one day and raised his total to 27.

6 June 1944

During D-Day Invasion, group flew 142 protective cover and air-to-ground sorties.

5 July 1944

Lieutenant Colonel Francis S. Gabreski shot down his 28th aircraft to become the top ace in the European Theater of Operations, but was shot down and captured two weeks later.



Lieutenant Colonel Gabreski shakes hands with his Crew Chief, SSgt Ralph Safford, while his Assistant Crew Chief, Corporal Felix Schacki, looks on.



On 7 July 1944, Capt. Fred Christensen, Jr., 62 FS, set new record in the ETO, when he destroyed six enemy aircraft in one engagement.

1 November 1944

First Lieutenant Walter R. Groce, of 63d Fighter Squadron was first pilot in the group to take part in shooting down a jet fighter



On 13 April 1945, group fighters attacked German airdrome and destroyed or damaged 190 of the enemy Aircraft parked there.

- 21 April 1945      The last group combat mission flown over Munich. During its 2-year involvement in World War II, 56th Fighter Group destroyed 667 enemy aircraft in aerial combat, destroyed another 324 on the ground, probable kills totaled 58, and another 543 were damaged. 56th posted that record of 1592 aircraft damaged/destroyed while losing only 25 fighters in aerial combat. Unit produced 40 aces.
- 11 October 1945      The entire group returned to the United States aboard the Queen Mary.
- 18 October 1945      The 56th inactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.
- 1 May 1946          The 56th Fighter Group activated at Selfridge Field, Michigan.



Major Lucian A. Dade, Jr., 62d Fighter Squadron, flew this P-47D-25 with a bubble canopy during June 1944. Shown is Tail Number 42-26417, painted with the D-Day paint scheme. Dade later commanded the 56th Fighter Group. He also commanded Luke AFB's 3600th Maintenance and Supply Group in the mid-1950s.

### 56th Fighter Wing Chronology

- 15 August 1947 The 56th Fighter Wing (FW) activated as part of Strategic Air Command's Fifteenth Air Force at Selfridge Field. The wing assumed command jurisdiction over 56th Fighter Group. Other subordinate groups activated as the 56th Airdrome Group, 56th Maintenance and Supply Group, and the 56th Station Medical Group.
- 2 June 1948 The 56 FW's F-80s defended the base from a simulated bombing attack by Boeing B-29 Superfortresses, which were escorted by North American F-51 Mustangs.
- 14 July 1948 Sixteen 56 FW Wing Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star jets flew the first west-to-east crossing of Atlantic by military jets in 13 days. The mission named Fox Able One proved to the Soviets the USAF's ability to deploy large fighter contingents long distances in a short time.



A 56th Fighter Wing Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star being loaded with munitions in 1949.

- 1 December 1948 The wing was reassigned from Strategic Air Command to Continental Air Command's Tenth Air Force.
- 20 January 1950 Both 56 FW and 56th Fighter Group were redesignated as the 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing and 56th Fighter-Interceptor Group.
- 25 April 1950 Wing began conversion from to North American F-86 Sabrejet.
- 1 September 1950 Wing was assigned to Eastern Air Defense Force with the primary mission of air defense.



- 26 September 1950 The 56 FW conducted a 24-hour aircraft endurance test on an F-86 to see what the jet could do. The aircraft ran for 23 hours, 30 minutes, and 10 seconds. It landed at Selfridge Air Force Base (AFB) every two hours for refueling and rotated pilots while the engine was running.
- 17 May 1951 The Lockheed F-94 Starfires of the 61st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron were restricted from flying with external tanks including wing tip tanks. The restriction reduced the average flight time by 75 percent from two hours to thirty minutes.
- May 1951 The 172d Fighter-Interceptor Squadron flying F-51 Mustangs left Kellogg Field in Battle Creek, Michigan, and physically joined the wing and group at Selfridge AFB. In 1947, the 172d originally activated as a reserve squadron for 127th Fighter Group. That group and its wing reopened Luke Field as an AFB in 1951. That same month the 56th lost the 62d and 97th Fighter-Interceptor Squadrons to the 142d Fighter-Interceptor Wing.
- 1 June 1951 The 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing became responsible for the logistics support for up to 32 Air Control and Warning Squadrons scattered throughout the upper mid-west. Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.
- 21 July 1951 The 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing assigned control of the Niagara Falls Municipal Airport.<sup>1</sup>
- 13 August 1951 General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Chief of Staff of the USAF, visited Selfridge AFB to officially dedicate the new housing area named in honor of his uncle, the late US Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan.
- 7 September 1951 The 56th Maintenance and Supply Group received verbal permission to install a locally manufacture retrofit kit on F-94B aircraft thus completing the modification of the aircraft so they could again fly with wing tip tanks.
- 17 December 1951 On the coldest day of the year, the local natural gas company could not keep up with the demand for heating and cooking gas. Therefore, although most of Selfridge AFB used coal for heat, the mess halls could not cook and the houses in Vandenberg Village were without heat. The Michigan National Guard came through with Army field kitchens so the Airmen could eat a hot meal.
- 6 February 1952 The 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing and 56th Fighter-Interceptor Group inactivated at Selfridge AFB.
- 20 June 1955 The 56th Fighter Group redesignated 56th Fighter Group (Air Defense).

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<sup>1</sup> EADF GO #82, 20 July 1951

- 18 August 1955 The 56th Fighter Group (Air Defense) activated at O'Hare International Airport, Chicago, Illinois.
- 1 October 1959 The 56th Fighter Group was reassigned to K. I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan.
- 1 February 1961 The 56th Fighter Group (Air Defense) was inactivated and the 56 FW (Air Defense) activated in its place at K. I. Sawyer AFB. The organizations changed to a tri-deputy organization with a Deputy Commander for Operations, Deputy Commander for Maintenance, and a Deputy Commander for Services. The 56th USAF Hospital was an equivalent organization to the deputy commanders. The wing's mission was to provide combat trained air defense combat crews for active air defense of the continental United States.
- October 1962 Due to events surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis, the 62d Fighter Interceptor Squadron increased its alert status with crews and aircraft dispatched to a dispersal base on a rotating basis throughout the crisis.
- January 1963 With the worst weather within the previous 50 years, the temperatures dropped to below 0° Fahrenheit for 10 days straight with long periods of wind chill so severe that maintenance personnel could only work for 15 minutes at a time. Using a great deal of overtime, maintenance met the F-101 flying commitment despite a multitude of hydraulic leaks, which made aircraft scheduling a problem for the maintenance technicians.
- 1 April 1963 The 56 FW reorganized to the Air Defense Command Standard Wing/Base Organization. Thus, the 56th Air Base Group was redesignated as the 56th Combat Support Group. It gained the Chief of Manpower and Organization, the Chief of Base Services, and lost the Chief of Supply and Services. The 56th Supply Squadron realigned under the Chief of Supply and the 56th Air Police Squadron reactivated under the 56th Combat Support Group. The Deputy Commander for Maintenance was renamed the Deputy Commander for Material and picked up all supply activities while keeping all maintenance activities.
- 1 April-30 Sep 1963 The wing highlighted the first and second quarters as the very first quarters at K.I. Sawyer AFB that the maintenance complex did not experience engine damage due to Foreign Object Damage.
- 17-18 July 1963 The 62d Fighter Squadron competed for right to represent 30th Air Division at the upcoming William Tell Meet at Tyndall AFB, Florida, in October. In middle of the second day, the Air Defense Command team arrived for a No Notice Operational Readiness Inspection. The resulting double tasking called for an unusually high number of sorties for the William Tell effort, as well as those sorties required for the inspection. Additionally, maintenance needed to maintain a satisfactory Operational Ready Rate. The maintenance organization went to around the clock operations for next two days. The inspection included fast aircraft turn a rounds, a mass load out, and a practice nuclear weapon accident. Their efforts paid off, the 62d Fighter Squadron scored 140 of 150 possible

points to win the right to compete in October and the Maintenance Section passed the inspection.

1 January 1964

The 56 FW inactivated.

16 March 1967

The 56 FW activated and redesignated as the 56th Air Commando Wing.

8 April 1967

As commander, Col Harry C. Aderholt, organized the 56th Air Commando Wing as the host USAF unit at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base (RTAFB), Thailand. Assigned to Thirteenth Air Force for command and administrative control, Seventh Air Force exercised operational control. Initially, the 606th Air Commando Squadron from Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, and the 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando), were assigned to the wing. The wing also organized the 56th Combat Support Group, 56th USAF Dispensary, 56th Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron, 56th Field Maintenance Squadron, 56th Civil Engineering Squadron, 56th Services Squadron, 56th Supply Squadron, 56th Security Police Squadron, and 56th Transportation Squadron. The wing/base were to double in size within its first year. Its mission supported Royal Thai Air Force & Royal Lao Air Force during combat and non-combat operations. It trained those two air forces to include the use of Special Air Warfare Mobile Teams, and maintenance training for Royal Lao Air Force. Both countries were fighting wars with in-country insurgencies. Additionally, wing provided experienced, highly qualified personnel and aircraft to assist Royal Lao Air Force and US Embassy in Laos. Wing conducted Civic Action programs in conjunction with Thai government. Finally, they conducted combat and unconventional warfare operations, and maintenance for small embassy aircraft.



TSgt Jim Cook, NCO of the Life Support Section, makes a last minute check on survival and flying equipment issued to Col Harry C. Aderholt, 56th Air Commando Wing Commander, at a base in South Vietnam, 1967

8 April 1967

The mission of the 606th Air Commando Squadron was to conduct combat operations primarily in Laos, increase the Royal Thai Air Force's capability, support and fulfill the Thailand Interdefense Plan requirements, train and support the Royal Lao Air Force, and help with USAF operations requirements in Southeast Asia. Those missions included psychological warfare operations. Its combat operations concentrated upon interdicting the flow of traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. To do that, it used its North American T-28 Trojan, Douglas A-26 Invader, Fairchild C-123 Provider, and De Havilland U-6 Beaver aircraft. Its Civic Action Section dug wells, privies, and taught sanitation and hygiene classes. That section also sent doctors to rural villages.

8 April 1967

The 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando) flew its Douglas A-1 Skyraider aircraft on a number of missions. It took part in search and rescue missions throughout Southeast Asia, to include providing armed escort for helicopters. It also escorted helicopters on clandestine insertion and extraction of personnel missions in Laos and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Its aircraft conducted armed reconnaissance missions in Laos and parts of North Vietnam. It also struck military targets and acted as forward air controllers in directing strikes against military targets in Laos and North Vietnam. Often the aircrews conducted several of these missions during one sortie.



Douglas A-1E Skyraider aircraft of the 1st and 602d Special Operations Squadrons, 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai AFB, Thailand.

3-7 May 1967

Pilots from the 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando) struck a number of caves in Northern Laos used by the Pathet-Lao and North Vietnamese communists.

8-14 May 1967

Aircraft from the 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando) hammered targets in the Xam Neua area of northern Laos.

- 14 May 1967 Captain William C. Cory, of the 480th Tactical Fighter Wing at Da Nang AB, Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), landed the first tactical jet at the Nakhon Phanom RTAFB when he landed his McDonnell Douglas F-4C Phantom II because he was short of fuel. He used the new steel matting taxiway opened 11 days earlier as a runway. The taxiway marked the end of the Pierced Steel Planking, known as Marsden Matting, era at the base.
- 14 May 1967 The wing's Civil Action Section and Thai medical officials launched a 75-foot medical boat on the Mekong River so that they could reach inaccessible areas during the monsoon rains.
- 19 May 1967 Firefly 11 of the 602d was hit repeatedly with heavy anti-aircraft fire at 10,000 feet after rolling in from 13,000 feet. His wingman saw the aircraft begin to spin. It impacted the ground near the enemy gun position with no parachutes and no beeper.
- May 1967 Start of the monsoon season greatly reduced truck traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail, thus reducing the number of targets available.
- 12 June 1967 The Seventh Air Force ordered the 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando) to stop all operations over North Vietnam except for search and recovery missions. Operations in Laos continued.
- 26 June 1967 The 602d Fighter Squadron (Commando) had a good day. Two aircraft destroying three trucks and struck the adjoining storage area. Six others struck troop and storage targets in the Plaine des Jarres. In both cases, they dropped their ordnance and then directed F-105s in their attacks. One two-ship was credited with destruction of ten storage buildings, damaged others, and counted seven secondary fires and four secondary explosions.
- 30 June 1967 By this date, all of the 606th Air Commando Squadron's De Havilland U-6 Beaver aircraft were replaced with the Helio U-10 Super Courier.
- 1 July 1967 The 56th Security Police Squadron established joint US-Thai training classes for security procedures.
- July 1967 The 56th Civil Engineering Squadron was reorganized into four branches: Fire Protection, Operations and Maintenance, Programs, and Engineering and Construction.
- 4 August 1967 The base established a curfew between 0100 and 0800 Local for military personnel in the town of Nakhon Phanom. Within the last two years, the town more than doubled in size. Many military personnel rented bungalows in town helping cause rents to soar and overstrained the electrical and water delivery systems. Additionally, an uptick in the number of cases of Venereal Disease helped convince the commander, Col Aderholt, to establish the curfew.

- 9 August 1967 Captain Allen S. Cherry of the 602d Air Commando Squadron was Killed in Action while attacking a truck park with his A-1E Skyraider.
- August 1967 A new general purpose building allowed the pneudraulic, sheet metal, machine, and electrical shops to move out of temporary trailers/vans. The mechanical accessories shop, instrument shop, and Field Maintenance Squadron office also moved into permanent buildings.
- 8 September 1967 The 56th Supply Squadron converted the supply system to a UNIVAC 1050-II computer from the Punch Card Accounting Machine supply control system a month ahead of schedule. With the computer's installation, the Comptroller's Data Automation Section was able to stop being the primary processing agency of supply data for the base.
- 15 September 1967 The 609th Air Commando Squadron activated taking over the Douglas A-26 Invader night interdiction mission from the 606th Air Commando Squadron.
- 22 September 1967 Colonel Aderholt extended the curfew for the town of Nakhon Phanom to 2400 to 0800 Local. In part, that was because the Venereal Disease rates continued to climb and rents remained about the same. A series of meetings followed as the commander searched for solutions.
- 30 September 1967 That quarter, the Civic Action Section of the 606th Air Commando Squadron increased its medical, veterinary, dental and public works projects from 4 to 6 first-class health centers and from 13 to 23 second-class health centers. It also began a program to fight rabies in the Nakhon Phanom province.
- 30 September 1967 By that date, the 602d Air Commando Squadron accomplished multiple missions during Search and Rescue sorties in Laos and North Vietnam. Its aircrews often conducted pre-strike, post-strike/battle damage assessments. Quite often they would use their own ordnance before acting as forward air controllers for the F-105 jet aircraft strikes. During the monsoon season, these sorties became more difficult due to low ceilings that precluded jets from taking part. Those low ceilings combined with the intense anti-aircraft ground fire greatly reduced their ability to conduct battle damage assessments. During the quarter, the squadron dropped over one million pounds of bombs and fired over one million rounds of ammunition and rockets.
- 30 September 1967 By that date, it became clear to wing leadership that their primary job was to interdict the southbound supply routes from North Vietnam through Laos along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- September 1967 The reciprocating engine shop, propeller shop, the base engine manager, and the propulsion branch leadership moved into a permanent building.
- 10 October 1967 Colonel Aderholt expanded the curfew for all base personnel for the town of Nakhon Phanom from 2300 to 0800 Local.



- 26 October 1967 Mobile Training Teams of the 606th Air Commando Squadron were phased out because they had completed their training objectives. Air Commando Advisory Teams were phased in to become advisors. Actually training requirements were heavier than before. But, American personnel were needed other places, thus necessitating the change.
- October 1967 As the monsoon began to end, hundreds of trucks were seen on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Although the wing destroyed up to 142 trucks a week in that quarter, supplies continued to flow south.
- October 1967 An eight-man Combat Control Team of the 606th Air Commando Squadron formed in September and became operational in early October. The team started its operations with leaflet missions, loudspeaker missions, and parachute jumps.
- 11 November 1967 The 602d Air Commando Squadron lost an A-1E during a Search and Rescue mission.
- 20 November 1967 Enemy trucks hid under the thick triple canopy foliage during attacks. Because the foliage could be extremely flammable during the dry season, Col Leonard Volet, the Vice Wing Commander, suggested using incendiary munitions to defoliate the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- 27 November 1967 The 21st Helicopter Squadron was assigned to the 56th Air Commando Wing. Previously, it worked for the 507th Tactical Control Group at Shaw AFB, South Carolina. Leading the unit, flying Sikorsky CH-3 Jolly Green Giant helicopters, was Lt Col Harry F. Hauser. It performed Search and Rescue, and airlift missions, and dropped flares in support of base and Special Forces defenses.
- 30 November 1967 As four enemy trucks pulled out of a parking area, friendly forces struck and damaged them, thus blocking the road. Shortly after, 50 trucks were stopped upon the road and the 606th Air Commando Squadron's T-28D Zorros attacked. Despite heavy anti-aircraft fire, all aircraft returned to base after a highly successful mission. But, five T-28Ds were grounded for over-G stress. Since the T-28Ds had a propensity to be overstressed during high-G maneuvers, to include avoiding anti-aircraft fire, they were given less defended missions after that date.
- November 1967 A new tactic proved itself useful when C-123B Candlestick aircrews of the 606th Air Commando Squadron began dropping three ground markings (similar to traffic flares) at one second intervals. Previously, only one marker was used. Since the three markers tended to land in a fairly straight line, it gave both Forward Air Controllers and strike aircraft both distance and a line to calculate their approach to the targets.
- 1 December 1967 The 456th Munitions Maintenance Squadron, led by Lt Col Donald D. Kaynor, activated under the 56th Air Commando Wing. The squadron consolidated all load crews into one unit, approximately 18 months after the disaster at Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam. Cut from the flying

- squadrons and the 56th Field Maintenance Squadron, the squadron contained the armament, explosive ordnance disposal, gun maintenance, and munitions shops. The 56th Field Maintenance Squadron kept the airborne photo, auto pilot, communications, instrument, navigation, and radar shops.
- 20 December 1967 The 1st Air Commando Squadron moved from Pleiku AB, South Vietnam to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, and was reassigned to the wing. Led by Lt Col John A. Saffell, Jr., it previously worked for the 14th Air Commando Wing. Flying Douglas A-1 Skyraider aircraft, it provided air cover and close support to ground forces, directed air strikes on tactical targets, escorted special missions, conducted armed reconnaissance, and Search and Rescue missions.
- 25 December 1967 The 606th Air Commando Squadron lost a T-28 during an armed reconnaissance mission. Lieutenant Colonel Terry T. Koonce was not recovered and is still carried as Missing in Action.
- 27 December 1967 The wing flew its first MUSCLE SHOALS mission. A number of wing units supported that operation. But, it was the primary mission for the 21st Helicopter Squadron and 1st Air Commando Squadron. Part of the mission required the 21st to lift personnel and electronic devices to lace the Ho Chi Minh Trail with electronic sensors. One problem the project had was precise placement of the sensors. The 21st continued to train and experiment with sensor delivery through the end of that quarter. The 1st Air Commando Squadron implanted anti-vehicular mines at choke points along the trail. Unfortunately, on the first mission the dispensers did not work as planned thus miss-dropping the mines. The 56th Armament and Electronic Maintenance Squadron built up, and checked the sensors prior to the missions.
- 27 December 1967 The 609th Air Commando Squadron lost a A-26 Nimrod in combat.
- December 1967 The 609th Air Commando Squadron reported an increased number of trucks struck during the quarter. Pilots believed it was due to better weather, better coordination with the Forward Air Controllers, use of the Starlight Scope by both A-26s and Forward Air Controllers, and dropping more cluster munitions.
- 29 December 1967 The 609th Air Commando Squadron lost an A-26 west of Route 911. The crew and an on board combat controller were missing. In early 1993, a joint American/Loa team uncovered the remains of Capt (later promoted to Maj) Carlos R. Cruz, Capt (later promoted to Lt Col) William J. Potter, and SSgt (later promoted to SMSgt) Paul L. Foster.
- 31 December 1967 During the quarter the Civic Action Section started, helped or supervised the construction and installation of hundreds of wells and privies in the poorest areas of Thailand. Those actions immediately improved the

- sanitation and health of those people, thus improving their view of the Royal Thai Government.
- December 1967 The A-1 Sandy aircraft of the 602d Air Commando Squadron assisted in the rescue of 29 downed fliers during the quarter.
- 2 January 1968 The engine of Zorro 11 (T-28) of the 606th Air Commando Squadron failed over Laos causing the pilot, Maj John R. Pattee, to bail out before the aircraft crashed.
- 7 January 1968 While two 602d Air Commando Squadron A-1s, Sandy 1 and 2, were on a Search and Recovery mission near Sam Nuea, Laos, close to the North Vietnamese border, two MiG-21s fired two Air-to-Air missiles at them. The incident caused the Sandies to reduce their pre-planned orbits from 18 to two.
- 17 January 1968 Near Xom Duong, North Vietnam, the 602d Air Commando Squadron lost an A-1 while on a Search and Recovery mission. The remains of Lt Col (later promoted to Col) Robert F. Wilke have not been recovered.
- 17 January 1968 The 1st Air Commando Squadron began dropping both anti-vehicular mines and micro-gravel along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, especially at choke points.
- 18 January 1968 MiG-21s engaged A-1s of the 602d Air Commando Squadron while they were over a crash site.
- 20 January 1968 The 21st Helicopter Squadron flew its first Sikorsky CH-3 Jolly Green Giant combat mission.
- 21 January 1968 The North Vietnamese Army attacked the Khe Sanh Combat Base in northwestern Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam, just miles south of the Demilitarized Zone.
- 22-28 January 1968 A-26 Nimrods of the 609th Air Commando Squadron destroyed 124 trucks in southeastern Laos for the largest weekly total for the quarter.
- 19-31 January 1968 The 602d Air Commando Squadron stepped up operational support to Lima Site 85 in Northern eastern Laos. Lima Site 85 was a radar and tactical air navigation (TACAN) system site used by Airmen to navigate in the rugged jungle terrain of Northeastern Laos.
- 27 January 1968 Captain Charles W. Brown of the 606th Air Commando Squadron broke off his mission when his T-28, Zorro 16, began to have engine problems. While he tried to nurse the aircraft home, he ended up bailing out of the burning aircraft over Laos and was rescued.
- 28 January 1968 Due to the number of engine problems, all of the T-28 Trojans of the 606th Air Commando Squadron were grounded for three days for detailed inspections. The aircraft's missions were generally restricted to daylight hours and close to the base after that date.
- January 1968- The 56th Air Commando Wing provided close air support during the

- 14 March 1968 Battle for Lima Site 85 in Laos.
- 3-4 February 1968 The A-1 Skyraiders of the 602d Air Commando Squadron struck targets around Lima Site 236 after the enemy overran the position. Over the two days, the Fireflies destroyed 32 military structures and witnessed 22 secondary explosions.
- 4 February 1968 The 1st Air Commando Squadron began all out support to the US ground forces at Khe Sanh, including personnel mines originally planned for use against the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- 5-11 February 1968 The Nakhon Phanom RTAFB was alerted that it might be attacked by air.
- 8 February 1968 The A-26 Nimrods of the 609th Air Commando Squadron and three T-28 Zorros from the 606th Air Commando Squadron flew day missions near Khe Sanh. All three T-28 landed at Khe Sanh to refuel. One of them blew both tires on rollout and remained there overnight. Major Pattee and two crew chiefs arrived the next day to repair and fly the aircraft home. They replaced the tires, but had to cut a number of wires because the wheels had frozen. The major decided to fly the aircraft home anyway. So, all three climbed in and Maj Pattee flew the aircraft home with the landing gear down and with no nose wheel steering.
- 8 February 1968 After a dry reconnaissance (recce) sortie on 5 February, the 602d Air Commando Squadron flew its first night armed recce sortie using specially modified A-1E aircraft. The aircraft carried a Self Contained Night Search and Attack System that used Low Level Light Television. The project was known as Tropic Moon I. On 13 February 1968, Tropic Moon I earned its first two confirmed truck kills.
- 9-17 February 1968 The base continued to maintain an advanced security posture.
- 12 February 1968 An A-1 Skyraider, Firefly 15, of the 602d Air Commando Squadron bailed out over enemy territory and was picked up by a rescue helicopter. It was thought to be the first operational use of the "Yankee" extraction system. The system pulled the pilot out of the cockpit with a tether. The seat remained in the aircraft.
- 10 March 1968 Lima Site 85 was overrun by the North Vietnamese Army.
- 11 March 1968 Wing aircraft diverted to Lima Site 85 to pick up survivors and cover the rescue efforts.
- 11 March 1968 An A-1 Skyraider, Hobo 21, of the 1st Air Commando Squadron piloted by Maj Lee D. McIntosh lost power at low level and crashed in the Mekong River south of Nakhon Phanom village. Although the crash killed a Thai fisherman, another fisherman rescued Maj McIntosh.
- 13 March 1968 The enemy shot down two of the 56th Air Commando Wing's A-1 Skyraiders, one in northeastern Laos and one in southeastern Laos. Lieutenant Colonel Guy F. Collins and Maj Joseph H. Byrne of the 1st Air Commando Squadron were killed.

- 15 March 1968 The T-28 Zorros of the 606th Air Commando Squadron hit targets around the south central town of Tahkhek, Laos, across the river from Nakhon Phanom, in aid of Royalist Lao forces.
- 17-18 February 1968 Seven T-28 Zorros of the 606th Air Commando Squadron struck Pathet-Lao troops who had cornered Royalist troops in the Ban Natan Valley in Laos. Before the strikes, the Communists controlled most of the valley. Afterwards, the Royal Lao troops had full control over the valley.
- 18 March 1968 An A-1 Skyraider, Firefly 15, of the 602d Air Commando Squadron, received enough battle damage that it crash landed near Udorn AB, Thailand.
- 19 March 1968 The A-1 Fireflies of the 602d Air Commando Squadron knocked out the TACAN station at Lima Site 85 to keep it out of enemy hands. The loss of the navigation aid deeply curtailed night operations in northeastern Laos for the 609th Air Commando Squadron and its A-26 Nimrods.
- 20 March 1968 The Tropic Moon I A-1E aircraft of the 602d Air Commando Squadron began hunter-killer night operations with the A-26 Nimrods of the 609th Air Commando Squadron.
- 23 March 1968 For base security, 20 sentry dogs and their handlers arrived at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB and assumed patrol duties.
- 30 March 1968 The 21st Helicopter Squadron lost a CH-3, Dusty 51, when it was destroyed after taking ground fire over a target and making a precautionary landing at a base in eastern Laos. A second helicopter picked up the crew.
- April-9 July 1968 The 56th Air Commando Wing provided close air support to the Marines and Army defensive forces during the North Vietnamese siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base, South Vietnam.
- 1 August 1968 The 56th Air Commando Wing redesignated as a special operations wing, 56th Special Operations Wing, as were all of its subordinate units.
- 1 September 1968 Colonel William A. Jones III, flew his A-1H Skyraider back to base while it was on fire to report the location of a downed airman after Jones's radios stopped working. Despite severe burns on the upper parts of his body, Jones related the downed Airman's position while he lay on the operating table. The downed Airman was picked up shortly thereafter and Col Jones received the Medal of Honor for his actions.
- 13 December 1968 On a night mission, a B-57 tactical bomb ran into Candlestick 44, a C-123 of the 606th Special Operations Squadron. The collision knocked the pilot unconscious and put the aircraft into a slow flat spin. When the pilot came to the crew was gone, so he bailed out. He was the only one to be rescued. The C-123 crew included Co-pilot 1st Lt (later promoted to Maj) Joseph P. Fanning, navigators 1st Lt (later promoted to Maj) John S. Albright and 1st Lt (later promoted to Maj) Morgan J. Donahue, and

- crewmembers TSgt (later promoted to CMSgt) Fred L. Clarke, SSgt (later promoted to SMSgt) Douglas V. Dailey, and SSgt (later promoted to CMSgt) Samuel F. Walker. The C-123 crew is still listed as Missing in Action. In 2013, the B-57 crew's remains were recovered.
- 2 July 1969 Captain John L. Flinn's A-1 of the 1st Special Operations Squadron, Fighter, went down. He was declared Killed in Action.
- 4 July 1969 Colonel Patrick M. Fallon, 56th Special Operations Wing Vice Commander, was declared Missing in Action. He had previously served as the Wing Commander while Col Edwin J. White, Jr. was gone for an extended period. His remains were never recovered. On 22 June 2012, his family held a ceremony at a grave site at Arlington National Cemetery. The 56 FW provided the flyover.
- 5 July 1969 The new base laundry at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB became operational.
- 6 July 1969 Majors James E. Sizemore and Howard V. Andre's A-26 of the 609th Special Operations Squadron, was shot down. They were declared Killed in Action.
- 19 July 1969 The 609th Special Operations Squadron was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.
- 22 July 1969 The Search and Rescue mission for Jury 413A/B was successful.
- 1 August 1969 The CH-3 helicopters of the 20th Special Operations Squadron were consolidated with those of the 21st Special Operations Squadron under command of the 21st. The action consolidated all CH-3s in Thailand under one chain of command.
- 1 August 1969 Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing graduated the first class of the C-47 Mobile Training Team students.
- 10 August 1969 The Search and Rescue mission for Tiger 02A&B was successful.
- 18 August 1969 Colonel Samuel E. Crosby became the 56th Special Operations Wing Vice Commander.
- 18 August 1969 First Lieutenant Daniel R. Davis' Cessna O-1 Bird Dog of Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing, went down. He was declared Killed in Action.
- 4 September 1969 The Search and Rescue mission for Tiao Pha Khao was successful.
- September 1969 Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing, conducted the first Forward Air Guide training program.
- 1 October 1969 Combat Controller activities of the 606th Special Operations Squadron ceased.
- 2 October 1969 The Search and Rescue mission for War Ace 300 was successful.
- 2 October 1969 Sandy 02 lost with pilot, 1st Lt Donald R. Moore, Jr., declared Killed in Action.



6 October 1969 Two CH-3s, Knife 61 & 62, of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, were brought down by small arms and automatic weapons fire. The Search and Rescue mission for all 8 crewmen was successful.

8 October 1969 All PAVE EAGLE assets left Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. The PAVE EAGLE project used modified civilian Beechcraft 36 Bonanza aircraft, called QU-22 Pave Eagle aircraft, as airborne signal relay stations.

8 October 1969 Nail 78 had a mid-air collision with Nail 07. The Search and Rescue mission for Nail 07A/B was successful.

8 October 1969 The Search and Rescue mission for Boxer 61B was successful.

27 October 1969 Firefly 33, an A-1 Skyraider of the 602d Special Operations Squadron was lost to enemy ground fire. First Lieutenant James W. Herrick, Jr., was not recovered.

October 1969 The wing closed its Civic Action sites in Sawang Daen Din and Wanon Niwat districts of Thailand.

October 1969 The 56th Special Operations Wing established Forward Operating Locations at Da Nang AB and Pleiku AB.

October 1969 The 556th Civil Engineering Squadron, a Red Horse unit, was phased down.

1 November 1969 The A-1 Skyraider, Firefly 27, of the 602d Special Operations Squadron, experienced engine problems and went down. Major Richard W. Lytle did not survive.

6 November 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Raven 52A/B was successful.

10 November 1969 Last U-10 Super Courier aircraft, of the 606th Special Operations Squadron, used for loudspeaker missions and leaflet drops departed Nakhon Phanom and the wing.

11 November 1969 Zorro 65 was lost to probable Anti-Aircraft Artillery. One crewmember was recovered on that day. The other was recovered the next day.

12 November 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Nightowl 07A/B was successful.

15 November 1969 Completed phase-in of A-1 aircraft and crews from Pleiku AB.

16 November 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Boxer 24A/B was successful.

22 November 1969 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Milestone 513.

November 1969 PRIME BEEF Team #5 arrived at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.

1 December 1969 The 609th Special Operations Squadron inactivated.

1 December 1969 Firefly 55, an A-1 of the 602d Special Operation Squadron was lost due to control problems. One crewmember was recovered.

3 December 1969 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Wolf 01A/B.

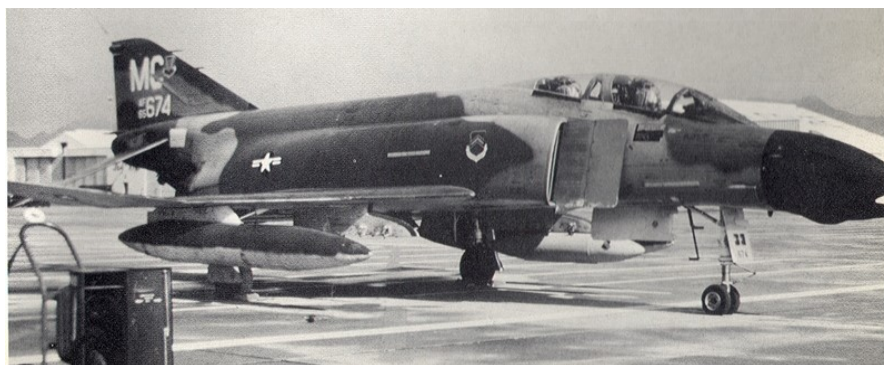
- 5-7 December 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Boxer 22B was successful, but not for Boxer 22A.
- 10-11 December 1969 Seventh Air Force staff visited 606th Special Operations Squadron.
- 21 December 1969 Firefly 11 was lost due to unknown causes. One crewmember was recovered.
- 21 December 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Bullwhip 12A/B was successful.
- 27-28 December 1969 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Playboy 16A/B.
- 31 December 1969 Search and Rescue mission for Nail 37 was successful.
- December 1969 The 1st Special Operations Squadron began night escort program for AC-119K and AC-123K gunships.
- December 1969 The 22d Special Operations Squadron began PRAIRIE FIRE escorts for Knife CH-3 helicopter missions.
- December 1969 The 602d Special Operations squadron picked up escort missions for Director of Operations for Special Activities and PRAIRIE FIRE missions.
- December 1969 Wing's Forward Operating Location at Pleiku AB was officially closed.
- 2-3 January 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Milestone 507A/B was not successful.
- 7 January 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Sidewinder 47 was not successful.
- 11 January 1970 First Lieutenant Richard D. Chorlins' A-1 of the 602d Special Operations Squadron was struck by ground fire and crashed. He was declared Killed in Action.
- 13 January 1970 The Search and Rescue mission for Blind Bat 14-4 was successful.
- 13 January 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Misty 30A/B was successful.
- 18 January 1970 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Coachman 29.
- 22 January 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Zorro 16 was successful.
- 27 January 1970 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Cookie 02.
- 28 January 1970 Jolly Green 71 was shot down by a MiG while conducting the Search and Rescue mission of Seabird 02A/B. The Search and Rescue mission was not successful.
- January 1970 Radar controlled Anti-Aircraft guns became prevalent in Laos.
- January 1970 The 606th Special Operations Squadron awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.
- 3 February 1970 A CH-3 was shot down by ground fire during an exfiltration mission. The crew was recovered.
- 6-7 February 1970 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Milestone 516.

- 11 February 1970 Lieutenant Colonel William L. Kieffer's A-1 of the 1st Special Operations Squadron crashed and he was declared Killed in Action.
- 18 February 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Banyon 03B was successful.
- 18 February 1970 The officer's modular barracks was opened for occupancy.
- 21 February 1970 The Xieng Khouang Airfield in northern Laos was captured by enemy ground forces.
- 28 February 1970 The Civic Action Center was inactivated.
- February 1970 The Air Force placed night restrictions on both A-1 Skyraiders and C-123 Providers along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in the areas of Mu Gia and Ban Karai passes in Laos.
- 1 March 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Charger 411 was successful.
- 5 March 1970 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Firefly 32.
- 10 March 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Firefly 23A/B was successful.
- 14 March 1970 Major Donald B. Fincher's A-1 of the 602d Special Operations Squadron crashed and he was declared Killed in Action.
- 15 March 1970 Successful Search and Rescue mission for Garfish 501.
- 16 March 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Nail 53 was successful.
- 20-21 March 1970 Search and Rescue mission for Wolf 06A was successful, but the mission for Wolf 06B was not.
- 21 March 1970 Major Edward M. Hudgens' A-1 of the 22d Special Operations Squadron was hit by ground fire, exploded, and crashed. Initially, declared probably Killed in Action, in 1996, his remains were identified.
- 26 March 1970 First Lieutenant (later promoted to Maj) Henry L. Allen and Capt (later promoted to Maj) Richard G. Elzinga's O-1 Bird Dog of Det 1, 56th Special Operations Wing, went missing. Later, Elzinga's remains were recovered and identified in 2010. Allen is still Missing in Action.
- 21 November 1970 Elements of the 56th Special Operations Wing took part in the raid upon the Son Tay Prison Camp (35 miles west of Hanoi, the North Vietnamese capitol) that held American prisoners of war. While execution of the raid was deemed successful, the North Vietnamese had previously moved the prisoners.
- February 1971 The 56th Special Operations Wing began a major campaign of direct support to the Army of South Vietnam.
- 1 September 1972 The 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron moved to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB to work for the 56th Special Operations Wing. It flew modified Douglas C-47 Skytrain aircraft, the EC-47. Its mission was airborne intelligence gathering.

- 3 January 1973 Thirteenth Air Force Commander, Lt Gen William G. Moore, visited the wing.
- 27 January 1973 An North American OV-10A Bronco, tail number 683806, of the 23d Tactical Air Support Squadron, was shot down over the MR-T area of South Vietnam by an SA-7 Surface-to-Air missile.
- 28 January 1973 The Vietnam Ceasefire went into effect.
- 5 February 1973 An EC-47, tail number 048638, of the 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron, was shot down over southeastern Laos by Anti-Aircraft Artillery. All eight Airmen on board were declared Missing in Action.
- 9 February 1973 The wreckage of the tail number 048638 was found. In 1993, a joint American-Loa team recovered the remains of Capt George R Spitz, Capt (later promoted to Maj) Arthur R Bollinger, 1st Lt Severo J Primm III, 2d Lt Robert E Bernhardt, Sgt Dale Brandenburg, Sgt Peter R Cressman, Sgt Joseph A Matejov, SSgt Todd M Melton. Their remains were identified in 1995.
- 15 February 1973 The mission to move VIPs around Southeast Asia permanently moved from Tan Son Nhut AB near Saigon, South Vietnam, to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, under the wing.
- 17 February 1973 The 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron said goodbye to its commander, Lt Col William Moses, and greeted its new commander, Lt Col Harry W. Moore.
- 22 February 1973 The Laotian Ceasefire went into effect.
- 7 March 1973 CINCPAC, Adm Noel A.M. Gayler, visited the wing and base.
- 29 March 1973 The VIP mission removed the final group of American general officers and other VIPs out of Saigon, South Vietnam.
- 30 February 1973 Vice Chief of Staff of the USAF, Gen Horace M. Wade, visited the wing.
- 1-2 April 1973 All general officers and wing commanders attended a seminar on race relations. There had already been a number of race riots within the Department of Defense.
- 18 April 1973 First of many T-38 blew a tire on the wet runway at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.
- 19 April 1973 Lieutenant General Moore visited the wing and base.
- 23 April 1973 Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Richard D. Kisling visited Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.
- 11 May 1973 Lieutenant Colonel Howard J. Pierson assumed command of the 23d Tactical Air Support Squadron.
- 18 May 1973 Lieutenant General Moore visited the wing and base.

- 27-28 May 1973 Lieutenant General Gerald W. Johnson, the Eighth Air Force Commander, a 56th Fighter Group WWII triple ace, visited the wing and base.
- 28 May 1973 The Interagency Overseas Assistance Team arrived on a staff assistance visit on Project Transition.
- 16 June 1973 Lieutenant Colonel C.E. Norby took command of the 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron.
- 28 June 1973 Congress passes a bill that cut the funding for bombing Cambodia.
- 30 June 1973 President Richard M. Nixon agrees to halt the bombing of targets in Cambodia on 15 August 1973.
- 31 July 1973 The 56th Special Operations Wing was notified it was the Thirteenth Air Force nominee for the Air Force Maintenance award.
- 15 August 1973 The halt in bombing targets in Cambodia, previously announced by President Richard M. Nixon, took effect, ending all tactical operations in Cambodia. The halt also changed the primary mission of the wing from a combat mission to a training mission. Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare missions continued but the Forward Air Control mission ceased.
- 10 September 1973 The 56th Special Operations Wing closed its Forward Operating Location at Ubon AB. All aircraft and the remaining 95 officers and 5 enlisted returned to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB.
- 15 September 1973 The 56th Special Operations Wing Commander, Col William B. Owens, went into cardiac arrest. The Vice Commander, Col Ralph H. Bowersox, took command until the next wing commander arrived.
- 30 June 1974 The 361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron was inactivated.
- 12 April 1975 The 56th Special Operations Wing took part in the successful evacuation of the American Ambassador, American citizens and designated Cambodians from the country's capital, Phnom Penh. Five days later, the Khmer Rouge entered the city and executed all of the Khmer Republic Government's top leaders that remained behind along with the remnants of the Khmer National Armed Forces.
- 29-30 April 1975 The 56th Special Operations Wing assisted with Operation FREQUENT WIND, the evacuation of South Vietnam's capital, Saigon. Almost 8,000 American, Vietnamese, and third country nationals escaped the communists during that operation. The city fell in the afternoon of 30 April thus unifying Vietnam under communist control.
- 12-15 May 1975 The 56th Special Operations Wing was involved in rescue of crew of merchant ship, Mayaguez, after it was seized by the Cambodian Khmer Rouge. The wing provided forward air control and helicopter insertion/extraction support.

- 14 May 1975 A Sikorsky CH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant, Tail No. 68-10933, of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, crashed during the Mayaguez Incident killing the crew of 5, and all 18 56th Security Police Squadron Airmen on board.
- 30 June 1975 The 56th Special Operations Wing redesignated as the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing, reassigned to MacDill AFB, Florida, and conducted McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II training.



The 56th Tactical Training Wing's McDonnell Douglas F-4D Phantom II aircraft Tail Number 65-0674 on the ramp at MacDill AFB, Florida.

- 15 September 1975 Colonel Ernest A. Bedke, the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing Commander, pressed for tighter controls on personnel that abused drugs and marijuana. The USAF had a major problem with drug abuse by the end of the war in Southeast Asia.
- 15 January 1976 The 13th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated and was assigned to the 56th Tactical Fighter Wing. That took the wing to four fighter training squadrons.
- 26-28 January 1976 Chief Master Sergeant of the USAF, Thomas N. Barnes, visited the wing and base.
- 2 June 1976 Opposite sex visitation allowed in the Men's and the Women's dormitories at MacDill AFB.
- 30 June 1976 An F-4E from the 61st Tactical Fighter Squadron crashed on the Foxtrot Tactical Weapons Range.
- 15 July 1976 A minor tornado damaged the Mobile Home Park and facilities at Avon Park.
- 2 August 1976 The reconstructed targets on the Echo Tactical Range at Avon Park Range were used operationally for the first time.
- 22 September 1976 An Army OV-10 Bronco from Ft Bragg, North Carolina, successfully made an emergency landing at Avon Park Auxiliary Airfield.

- 27 September 1976 An Cessna O-2 Skymaster from the 549th Tactical Air Support Training Group successfully made an emergency landing at Avon Park Auxiliary Airfield.
- 30 September 1976 Explosive Ordnance Disposal began a major clearing operation of the Foxtrot Tactical range in preparation for reconstruction of a new target airfield complex.
- 22 October 1979 The first Lockheed F-16A/B Fighting Falcon, Tail No. 78-0100, delivered to wing as it converted from F-4 to F-16.



The 56th Tactical Training Wing Flagship Tail No. 78-0056

- 1 October 1981 The 56th Tactical Training Wing redesignated a tactical training wing.
- 1 July 1982 The 13th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron inactivated reducing the number of flight training squadron in the wing to three.
- 27 June 1988 Wing received its first F-16C.
- 30 July 1991 Congress approved the realignment of MacDill AFB as part of the 1991 Base Realignment and Closure Commission.



On 1 October 1991, The 56th Tactical Training Wing redesignated a fighter wing.

- 1 June 1992 The 56 FW became a unit of Air Combat Command.

- 25 February 1993 The 56 FW's 63d Fighter Squadron reassigned without personnel or equipment to 58th Fighter Wing at Luke AFB.
- 14 May 1993 The 56 FW's 62d Fighter Squadron inactivated.
- 19 August 1993 The 56 FW's 61st Fighter Squadron inactivated.
- 4 January 1994 The 56 FW transferred all assets to 6th Air Base Wing. All remaining 56 FW units, except the wing, inactivated. 56 FW remained assigned at MacDill AFB without personnel/equipment.
- 28 February 1994 The USAF announced 56 FW to be reassigned to Luke AFB to take over host unit responsibilities from the 58th Fighter Wing effective 1 April 1994.



Colonel James E. Brechwald, Vice Commander, unfurls the 56 FW Flag for the first time at Luke AFB on 1 April 1994

- 1 April 1994 The 58th Fighter Wing redesignated as a special operations wing and reassigned to Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Most 58-numbered units at Luke AFB inactivated as did the 311th Fighter Squadron and 314th Fighter Squadron. 56 FW moved from MacDill to Luke AFB and assumed assets/mission of 58th Fighter Wing. The 308th Fighter Squadron moved from Moody AFB, Georgia, to Luke AFB and was assigned to 56th Operations Group. All 56-numbered groups and squadrons, including four new medical squadrons, activated and were assigned to wing/groups as were the 61st Fighter Squadron and 309th Fighter Squadron. Additionally, the 62d Fighter Squadron, 63d Fighter Squadron, 310th Fighter Squadron, 425th Fighter Squadron, 461st Fighter Squadron, and 550th Fighter Squadron were reassigned from 58th Operations Group to 56th Operations Group.
- 10 May 1994 Anti-encroachment meeting at Luke AFB chaired by member of Governor's Save Luke AFB Committee concluded that unchecked development could not continue because of area's lack of water.



- 1 August 1994 USAF moved to ensure continued availability of water for Luke AFB by locating an environmental law attorney at base to represent Luke AFB in on-going water rights adjudication process.
- 5 August 1994 The 461st Fighter Squadron inactivated as part of plan to reassign the McDonnell Douglas F-15E Strike Eagle program to Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina.
- 24 August 1994 Mission Ready Technician Program to provide mission ready crew chiefs to F-16 units USAF-wide implemented in wing.



On 21 September 1994, Captain Sharon Preszler graduated from 61st Fighter Squadron becoming the first female Air Force F-16 pilot.

- 1 October 1994 The 56th Support Squadron inactivated. Maintenance of Goldwater Range assumed by civilian contractor.
- 1 January 1995 The 311th Fighter Squadron activated to conduct foreign training. Unit had provided foreign F-16 training under 58th Fighter Wing and had inactivated on 1 April 1994.
- 31 March 1995 The 550th Fighter Squadron inactivated ending all F-15 training at Luke AFB. Since program began in 1974, 3,303 students trained in F-15A/B/C/D, and 495 pilots and 402 weapons systems officers trained in F-15E for total of 4,200 graduates.
- 1 July 1995 The LANTIRN confidence check area used to calibrate avionics prior to flying to range for missions moved west to accommodate Mountain Vista Ranch and Sun City Grande.
- 13 July 1995 Arizona Senate Bill 1062 became law and required sellers of dwellings in high noise zones around military airports to disclose that fact to potential buyers.
- 24 August 1995 The City of Glendale annexed Luke AFB as part of efforts to protect base from encroachment.
- 9 September 1995 Members of 56th Medical Group provided medical assistance for victims of AMTRAK train derailment west of Luke AFB.

- 1 October 1995 An intricate chain of command caused reassignment of Mission Ready Technician Program to the 82d Training Wing, Sheppard AFB, Texas. After that reassignment, the program became tenant at Luke AFB.
- 1 December 1995 The 311th Fighter Squadron inactivated. Its foreign training mission and most its jets transferred to the 162d Fighter Group (Air National Guard) in Tucson, Arizona.
- 22 March 1996 The 1995 Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) study was released and delineated smaller noise print than previous studies.
- 1 May 1996 House Bill 2355 became law and required state real estate department to prepare noise maps allowing potential home buyers to determine if prospective dwellings located in high noise areas.
- 16 May 1996 The last Peace Carvin II F-16A/B jets left Luke AFB as part of plan to upgrade program to Block 42 F-16C/D jets.
- 25 June 1996 Terrorist attack on a facility in Saudi Arabia killed 19 Americans and injured 250 more. Among injured were three men from 56 FW.
- 8 August 1996 The 21st Fighter Squadron activated to conduct F-16 training for Taiwan AF.



On 11 September 1996, President Bill Clinton visited Luke AFB during area stop. It was the first such visit since 14 November 1974, when President Gerald Ford visited base to preside over acceptance ceremony for first F-15.

- 23 October 1996 56 FW formed the 56th Range Management Office by merging three functions, the 56th Operations Support Squadron's Airspace Management and Range Scheduling Offices, the 56th Support Group's Operating Location (OL) A, and an environmental specialist from the 56th Civil Engineer Squadron. The 56th Range Management Office provided daily oversight for Goldwater Range operations to include range scheduling between Luke AFB, the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field contractor, and numerous Department of Defense (DoD) agencies. It also charged with coordinated the use of military training routes and special use

airspace through and over the Goldwater Range, and was to act as a liaison between USAF and American Indian districts for land leases required for upgrades to a wing aircrew training device called the air combat maneuvering instrumentation (ACMI) system.

- 6 December 1996 The first Block 20 F-16A/B jets, Tail Nos. 93-0705 and 93-0825 landed for 21st Fighter Squadron's use in Taiwan AF training program. The A-model, Tail No. 93-0705, piloted by the squadron Director of Operations, Lt Col John R. Swarsbrook, landed first. Major Mike A. Hanson piloted the B-model.
- January 1997 Arizona agreed to sell USAF 81,000 acres of state land on range for \$10 million. State initially wanted \$40 million.
- 27 January 1997 It was reported wing to train more basic course students to offset losses of pilots separating/retiring early. Other added taskings included training in night vision goggles, Forward Air Controller (Airborne), Block 52 F-16C/D ground training, and enhanced Maverick training.
- February 1997 The 1995 AICUZ study noise print revised when it was noted that improper throttle settings were used to compute noise zones. Revised noise print reduced high noise zones around base by 2,739 acres.
- 28 February 1997 The Taiwan AF F-16 program graduated its first class when four men in Class 97 CCTW completed conversion course.
- 1 July 1997 The 56th Security Police Squadron redesignated as the 56th Security Force Squadron.



Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope

- 27 August 1997 The US Fish and Wildlife Service issued opinion that air operations on Goldwater Range were not likely to jeopardize continued existence of Sonoran pronghorn antelope. Environmentalist group's charge that air-to-ground missions jeopardized existence of that endangered species, which prompted the US Fish and Wildlife Service's opinion.
- 26 September 1997 The City of Surprise signed Arizona League of Cities and Towns resolution for development of strategic plan to preserve state's military airports.
- 29 October 1997 The first Forward Air Controller (Airborne) class, 98 AFG, and its four students completed training with 310th Fighter Squadron.

30 November 1997 The wing's mission capable (MC) rate for F-16 dropped below major command standard for the first time since August 1984, and was prelude to parts-supply problems which affected wing into 1999.



US Fish and Wildlife Service complaints that concerned over 1,000 abandoned air-to-air target darts in the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife refuge led to efforts by Luke AFB personnel to begin a clean-up. Part of that effort involved using available roads to transport people close enough to the targets so they could walk into the area and retrieve the 170-pound darts. It was reasoned that targets further from the roads would have to be retrieved by helicopter. (USAF Photo taken in 1997 by Amn Shenna Jones)

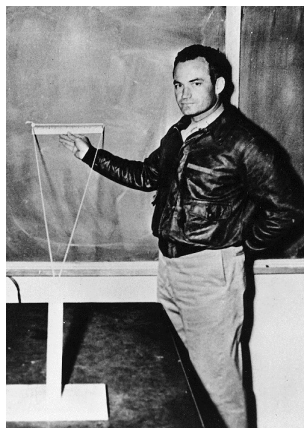
January 1998 The Gila Bend AICUZ study completed due to increased operations at field and to provide guidance in land planning in the area.

7 February 1998 Chronic parts shortfall resulted in Saturday flying to ensure programmed fighter training completed on time.

18 March 1998 A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 reported low fuel and diverted to Luke AFB where it landed safely.

8 April 1998 Reports stated El Mirage planned zoning changes that could allow residential development 1.5 miles from base's potential accident zones.

29 May 1998 The longtime USAF supporter, Senator Barry M. Goldwater, succumbed at age 89.



Captain Barry M. Goldwater, then a World War II Instructor Pilot at Luke Field.





On 2 June 1998, 425th Fighter Squadron began another upgrade for the Peace Carvin II Program from Block 42 to Block 52 jets with the arrival of Tail Nos. 94-0276 (D-model) and 94-0266 (C-model).

- 15 July 1998            An ASU West study placed the economic impact of base at \$1.9 billion annually.
- 30 July 1998            US Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl (Rep, Arizona) attached amendment to Defense Appropriations Bill for USAF to lease 640-acre parcel north of base from Phoenix for \$1 annually to prevent Surprise from seizing land for development. USAF was downsizing so, service did not enter into lease.
- 24 August 1998        El Mirage gave tentative okay for projects in base's high noise zones including 1,000 Hancock homes, 600 Broad Land Properties units, and 708 Parque Verde structures.
- 28 September 1998    The 310th Fighter Squadron mobile training team began night vision goggles training for Air National Guard pilots.
- 2 October 1998        Wing submitted draft legislative environmental impact statement under Land Withdrawal Act to Congress requesting Goldwater Range be withdrawn from public use indefinitely rather than for 15 years.
- October 1998            Engine parts shortfalls saw wing with 39 F-16s with engine holes in February 1998. In April wing started getting parts and by end of October turned the 39 engine holes into first spare engine in five years.
- 14 October 1998        West Valley leaders explored 17,000-acre agricultural buffer zone around Luke AFB to protect it from encroachment.
- 19 November 1998     The 56 TRS graduated first Block 52 class (ground training) when six men in Class 99 AJX completed training.
- 18 February 1999      Luke AFB hosted a engine summit to look at problem areas with the 220/E engine. The summit recommended more funds for fixes to 220/E engine on AETC F-16s and USAF F-15s, and GE F110 engine that powered F-16s.

- 27 March 1999 The 56 FW leadership joined USAF leadership in naming engine problems as cause of recent aircraft losses at Luke AFB.
- 27 March 1999 Jet losses caused renewed calls for establishment of 17,000 acre agricultural zone around base to protect it from encroachment.
- 13 April 1999 Brig Gen John L. Barry, 56 FW Commander, made a statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the renewals of Military Land Withdrawal Act of 1986 for the Barry M. Goldwater and Nellis Air Force Ranges.
- 27 April 1999 Wing leadership addressed media after sixth jet loss in six months and noted four of losses due to engine problems.
- 30 April 1999 The wing posted 62.6 MC rate, lowest F-16 MC rate ever for a Luke AFB unit. Driving factors were engines and the grounding of the fleet for safety inspections.
- 17 May 1999 House Bill 2579 creating agricultural district around Luke AFB signed into law but not funded.
- 31 May 1999 It was reported US Senator John McCain withdrew his amendment designed to withdraw range from public use from Military Funding Bill because of pressure by environmentalists and Native Americans.
- 11 June 1999 Augmentor separation problem that caused two jet losses resolved. The repair included performing multiple technical orders on augmentors for cracks in welds. The permanent fix was installing new seamless augmentors in the engines.
- 26 June 1999 Environmentalist group sued USAF and other federal agencies charging their actions were not ensuring recovery of endangered Sonoran pronghorn antelope on range and neighboring lands.
- 26 June 1999 Wing submitted final legislative environmental impact statement to Congress for renewal of range withdrawal.
- 30 June 1999 Blade tip curling that caused loss of jets resolved. Fix included more inspections and installing 4,000 cycle low pressure turbines with improved materials not prone to curling. Initially, the new turbines had faulty blade outer air seals (BOAS). This fix installed new BOAS.
- 30 June 1999 Series of F-16 losses prompted President Bill Clinton, US Senator John McCain, and acting USAF Secretary F. Whitten Peters to call for Congress to allocate more funds for engines and spare parts.
- 1 July 1999 Phoenix/Surprise dispute over 640 acres in base's fly zone resolved by land swap. Surprise traded Phoenix 926 acres north of base which Phoenix planned to keep as agricultural zoning. Phoenix gave Surprise 640-acre parcel, but with deed restrictions to ensure compatible development with base's operations.

- 20 September 1999 The wing lost seventh jet in 11 months. The loss was not traced to recent trends as was due to electrical problems. Loss of seven jets was extraordinary in modern times, but paled when compared to 1940s when Luke AFB had over 400 crashes in a year. Worst period was September 1943 when there were 58 major accidents.
- 5 October 1999 Congress approved withdrawal of Goldwater Range from public use for 25-year period. USAF/Navy took over range management from Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Cabeza Prieta Wilderness Area that made up a third of range was not withdrawn, but a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Interior still allowed over flights of area. Approval required compilation of Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan.
- 31 December 1999 On-going shortage of pilots due to early separations/retirements resulted in plan to implement Associate F-16 Instructor Pilot Program designed to reassign some wing Instructor Pilots to operational units to alleviate pilot shortages, and augment wing's dwindling Instructor Pilot force with active Guard, Reserve and traditional Reserve Instructor Pilots.
- 4 January 2000 The mission of 21st Fighter Squadron changed from providing F-16 qualification training for Taiwan AF pilots to providing proficiency training for Taiwan AF pilots already qualified in jet.
- 25 January 2000 The first Associate Instructor Pilot Program sortie flown with the 62d Fighter Squadron.
- February 2000 The wing conducted first deployment in support of Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF). Luke AFB sent 75 personnel to the Middle East. It was asset management concept designed to protect US interests in world hot spots by ensuring US presence in those areas.
- 3 March 2000 The 301st Fighter Squadron activated to implement Associate F-16 Instructor Pilot program. Unit was assigned to 944th Fighter Wing, but under the operational control of the 56th Operations Group.
- 8 March 2000 Luke AFB produced 50,000th fighter training graduate since 1941 as 1st Lt Joshua G. Padgett completed basic course with 62d Fighter Squadron.
- 17 April 2000 Senate Bill 1415 became law. It amended previous legislation, and required attorney general to review mandatory reports from cities for compatible land use planning. Gave attorney general authority to penalize cities for non-compliance.
- 25 May 2000 Surprise officials amended a developer's plan thus dropping 700 homes from project with no homes planned in high noise zones.
- 22 July 2000 Parts shortfall resulted in Saturday flying to meet programmed flying training requirements.
- 5 August 2000 Parts shortages again caused Saturday flying to meet training schedule.

- 20 September 2000 Northern departures with live ordnance terminated due to proposed building of two new schools. Live ordnance missions restricted to departures to south.
- 20 September 2000 Encroachment concerns arose over proposed 10,000-home development near White Tanks Mountains and under an entry/departure control point for base's air traffic.
- 20 October 2000 AETC officials named Luke AFB on short list for possible beddown of joint strike fighter.
- 28 November 2000 US Senator John McCain warned next round of base closures could name Luke AFB to close because of encroachment.
- 9 December 2000 Continuing pilot losses resulted in reassignment of 944th Fighter Wing from ACC to AETC and unit joining 56 FW; Kelly AFB, Texas; Springfield Air National Guard Base, Ohio; and 162FW in Tucson in providing F-16 qualification training.
- 23 January 2001 Local landowner, neighbor, and longtime Luke AFB supporter, Mrs. Edith Denny, succumbed at age 90. She was daughter of Paul and Florence Litchfield who arrived in area in 1916. They were a major economic force in West Valley.
- 13 February 2001 Federal judge ruled for AF biological assessment and Environmental Impact Statement in suit over antelope filed by environmentalist group (see 26 June 1999 entry); but, suit was not dismissed against other defendants. No impact on fighter training.
- 4 May 2001 House Bill 1120 signed into law and provided funding for agricultural district around Luke AFB (see entry for 17 May 1999).



- On 13 June 2001, the wing headquarters moved from bldg S-11 at main gate to bldg 452 near flightline in a move to enhance force protection.
- 1 July 2001 Senate Bill 1525 became law. Directed compatible development in areas affected by state's military airports. Law also extended base's southern accident potential zone from 15,000 to 30,000 feet.



- 10 July 2001 Phoenix/Tempe dispute on flight safety hazards at Sky Harbor Airport due to proposed new football stadium resulted in resurrection of question of regional airport at Casa Grande. Governor's Regional Airport Advisory Committee on 18 May 1993 had voted against such a proposal and named Williams AFB as a reliever airport. Regional airport at Casa Grande could have impacted Luke AFB's access to range.
- 20 July 2001 State Attorney General's opinion on SB 1525 determined it did not apply to school districts (see 1 July 2001 entry). Resulted in state school facilities board decision to expand three schools in base's noise/accident zones. Board, however, planned to move location of two new schools out of zones.
- 26 August 2001 Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told US senators he wanted a round of base closures to save money. US Senator John McCain noted more personnel planned for state's bases and said that, "...bodes well for Luke AFB and Davis-Monthan [AFB, Arizona]."



Pentagon After the 9-11 Attack.

- 11 September 2001 Terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. resulted in the highest level of force protection at Luke AFB, which launched 27 combat air patrol missions over the Phoenix Metroplex, and deployed 65 personnel (as of 31 December 2001) in support of war on terrorism.
- 6 November 2001 Air Force/Navy assumed management of Goldwater Range from Bureau of Land Management.
- 13 November 2001 The 944th Fighter Wing began F-16 qualification training.
- 7 December 2001 State's fiscal shortfalls resulted in funding cuts for Luke AFB agricultural preservation district under SB 1120. (see entry 4 May 2001).
- 14 December 2001 Media reported Congress OKs round of base closures in 2005.

- December 2001 Ocotillo Manor base housing vacated in preparation for demolition and construction of new housing complex.
- 15 January 2002 The 308th Fighter Squadron joined 310th Fighter Squadron in providing night vision goggle training to satisfy combat air forces' request that all F-16 pilots be qualified in the device.
- 24 January 2002 El Mirage started building in 75 decibel area three miles north of base's runways.
- February 2002 Congressional staffers alerted to negative effects of regional airspace systems plan. Effects included actions by local airports that would impact military training routes/operating areas, close LANTIRN confidence check route, affect access to range, affect simulated flameout pattern, restrict use of Gladden/Baghdad during inclement weather, and increase air traffic controller workloads. Commercial/general aviation growth resulted in loss of 290 Luke AFB flying hours in August 2001.
- 23 March 2002 US Senator John McCain met area leadership and charged all to reach consensus on actions to resolve developments impacting base's southern corridor to range. He stressed local action and did not indicate federal government becoming involved.
- 17 April 2002 State criticized in media for spending \$31 million on yet-to-be-built football stadium, but only \$0.5 million to protect asset with \$1.9 billion annual economic impact, Luke AFB.
- 29 April 2002 Luke AFB first base removed from Superfund List. List designed to locate/sanitize sites where past practices resulted in generation of hazardous waste. All 33 sites found on base sanitized.
- 6 May 2002 Governor signed SB 1393 which rectified shortcomings in SB 1525 (see entry for 01 July 2001) by expanding definitions of political subdivisions to include schools as prohibited from construction in military airport noise/accident zones.
- 8 May 2002 Wing leadership told Goodyear City Council if southern air corridors at Luke AFB threatened and stifle operations and efficiency at base, then Luke AFB could be targeted for closure.
- 9 May 2002 Massive 14,000-home development called Verrado launched on 8,800 acres near White Tanks Mountains in Buckeye and southwest of base.
- 13 May 2002 Air encroachment in growing Phoenix metro area and its negative effects on a high-value asset, Luke AFB, was brought to attention of general public in a front page article in area's major daily.
- 14 May 2002 Glendale-commissioned McGuire study revealed military had \$5.6 billion annual economic impact on state. Luke AFB's impact was \$1.4 billion and lower than previously thought due to survey guidelines.
- 5 June 2002 Robsen communities reduced Goodyear development in Luke AFB's noise zone from 204 to 145 homes. Goodyear used 1995 noise print

- instead of 1988 noise contours in zoning property. Now city wanted no homes built in noise zone.
- 7 June 2002 The 944th Fighter Wing graduated its first class from F-16 qualification training. Class 02-AB had six students. All 944th Fighter Wing students received ground training with 56th Training Squadron and, therefore, were counted in 56 FW student production totals.
- 17 June 2002 Plight of Duncan Farms located in southern Accident Potential Zone (APZ) featured in area media. Farm toured 20,000 visitors annually since 1992, but 2001 expansion of APZ and shift of most base operations to south affected safety of the farm and its visitors.
- 11 June 2002 Undersecretary Defense Installations/Environment Raymond F. Dubois, Jr., asked Congress for relief from environmental laws for military.
- 24 June 2002 Goodyear approved actions to request right-of-way use of state land easements south of base to protect Luke AFB by developing noise abatement and accident mitigation corridor.
- June 2002 An environmental assessment required when wing shifted most operations to the south revealed shift had no significant impact on environment.
- 12 August 2002 Wing leadership briefed on plan to build cargo airport nine miles west of Gila Bend. Facility would impact Luke AFB's access to range and commercial air routes to San Diego and LA. Luke AFB opposed the facility and the Gila Bend government did not support it.
- 13 August 2002 Pentagon began working with National Governors Association to develop laws governing state-wide military compatible land uses.
- 21 August 2002 The (Representative) Bob Stump (Rep Arizona) National Defense Authorization Act's Cooperative Buffer Zone Acquisition Program implemented and allowed military to enter discussions on encroachment near military bases, and to acquire property near bases to limit incompatible development or preserve habitat where environmental restrictions affected training.
- 26 August 2002 Fund raising began for 5,000-student Catholic university as part of Verrado planned community in Buckeye (see entry 9 May 2002).
- 30 August 2002 Surprise Okayed 318-acre development called Litchfield Manor, partly in base's high noise zone. City explained it had to okay the project as area was zoned prior to 2001 when smaller 1995 noise footprint was used rather than the larger 1988 footprint mandated by state law.
- 14 September 2002 West Valley/Luke AFB Regional Land Use Open House held to get inputs from various publics on land use near Luke AFB. Comments from attendees to be included in Arizona Military Airports Regional Compatibility Project report in attempt to merge general plans of 10 cities and desires of local land owners.

- 19 September 2002 Duncan Farms located in southern APZ agreed to stop student tours of farm (see entry 17 June 2002).
- 26 September 2002 Wing leadership noted RJ Springer Homes building 1,000 homes on one acre lots near Luke AFB Aux Field #1 where 13,000 operations conducted annually.
- 27 September 2002 Wing reached initial operating capability under new standard wing structure. Major change was returning to specialization with jets and technicians reassigned from operations group to logistics group which was redesignated a maintenance group.
- 11 October 2002 US Senate approved \$13 million for land acquisition near Luke AFB.
- 17 October 2002 Phoenix area's lack of water seen as affecting unchecked development; however, Buckeye annexed 35,000 acres which included Hassayampa River watershed, the richest aquifer in state, and had plans for a community of up to 80,000 homes.
- 26 October 2002 National Governors Association Center for Best Practices said Arizona was a leader in using legislation to protect military airports.
- 6 December 2002 It was learned that Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration home loan guidelines did not deny loans for homes in high noise areas.
- 7 December 2002 Surprise dedicated monument on former site of Luke AFB's Aux Field #3 to pilots who trained at base in World War II.
- 31 December 2002 Engine/spare parts problems that resulted in low MC rates since June 2000 eased and resulted in wing exceeding MC rate standard from September through December 2002.
- 11 February 2003 An 186-person Air National Guard contingent arrived at Luke AFB to augment base's security forces.
- 11 February 2003 It was reported that Goodyear would purchase Duncan Farms for \$3.5 million (see entry 17 June 2002).
- 27 February 2003 Wing leadership named city of Surprise development plans as greatest threat to continued operation of Luke AFB.
- 12 March 2003 Stop Loss implemented to ensure units had sufficient personnel to conduct mission. Affected 680 wing personnel who had approved retirement/separation dates.
- 20 March 2003 Operation IRAQI FREEDOM began.
- 22 March 2003 Arizona Department of Commerce released Western Maricopa/Luke AFB Regional Compatibility Plan. Plan sought to meld land use desires of military, government officials and landowners in areas affected by base's operations.

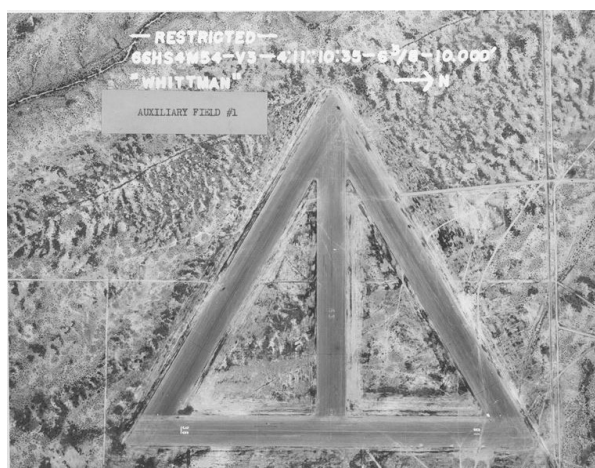
- 4 April 2003 Wing officials criticized regional compatibility plan for shifting from looking for compatible use of land near base to compensating landowners for loss of use (see 22 March 2003 entry).
- 8 April 2003 Fighter Country Coalition sent letter to Intermodal Group opposing group's plan to build airport at Gila Bend. Said facility would jeopardize military mission in Arizona (see entry for 12 August 2002).
- 22 April 2003 Gila Bend Town Council approved Resolution 03-10 which enhanced military use of Gila Bend AFAF and, therefore, stopped Intermodal Group Airport (see entry 12 August 2002).
- 25 April 2003 City of Peoria to spend \$25,000 to motivate area cities to raise over \$100,000 to hire firm to lobby Congress for funds to buy land around Luke AFB.
- 1 May 2003 President Bush announced end to large scale operations in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.
- 8 May 2003 Talks began with Glendale for building of public training facility in base's southern corridor. Seen as compatible use.
- 10 May 2003 Surprise passed ordinance directing real estate offices to display maps of Luke AFB's noise zones.
- 16 May 2003 Dysart School District projected to grow from 9,000 to over 16,000 in 2007 and require eight new schools.
- 22 May 2003 Goodyear owned 3,718 acres in southern departure corridor; planned 99 percent of land for compatible use with Luke AFB's mission.
- 22 May 2003 Two days after re-election on platform on saving Luke AFB, Surprise mayor voted to okay 1,300 homes in base's high noise zone.
- 23 May 2003 County planned for a flood plain on the approach to Aux #1 and planned flood basins in southern APZ; seen as compatible land use.
- 27 May 2003 US Senator John McCain/Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano criticized Surprise mayor for actions seen as detrimental to national defense and illegal (see entry for 22 May 2003).
- 27 May 2003 It was reported Buckeye residents okayed the annexing of Douglas Ranch, where town planned 80,000-home community.
- 27 May 2003 Governor's Military Facilities Task Force established by executive order to demonstrate to DoD the state's readiness to enhance and maintain military presence in Arizona.
- 10 June 2003 F-16 crash traced to manufacturing defects in engine turbine blade. Forced stand down of 70 percent of 56 FW jets. Problem affected all F-16/F-15 users of F100 engine.
- 13 June 2003 Arizona Attorney General defined grandfathering in SB 1525 (see entry 1 July 2001) as development plan/zoning approved before 2001.

- 16 June 2003 The 56 FW formed Community Initiatives Team to work encroachment by improving communication with cities and stakeholders.
- 16 June 2003 In an about face, Surprise voted to rezone Kenly Farms II from residential to commercial.
- 18 June 2003 Surprise reacted to criticisms by noting that El Mirage approved 10 times more dwellings than county and other towns near base.
- 20 June 2003 Retired US Representative Bob Stump succumbed at age 76. He headed the House Armed Services Committee until retiring in 2002. Media said he was factor in Luke AFB's surviving past base closures.



On 11 July 2003, a rebuilt Ocotillo Manor base housing complex south of Glendale Ave opened for occupancy with 95 new units.

- 12 July 2003 Surprise changed policy and began to restrict residential development near base.



On 24 July 2003, Work began on joint land use study for Aux #1. Study to use F-16 noise profiles and suggest compatible land uses.

- 31 July 2003 Stop Loss ended (see entry 12 March 2003)
- 15 August 2003 It was reported base housing to convert to civilian contract in 2005 and housing to be reduced from 874 units to 425.

- 1 September 2003 The CSAF directed 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels flight moved to 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron in move designed to place sortie support units under one maintenance unit commander.
- 30 September 2003 The 56 FW attained full operational capability in new combat wing structure (see entry 27 September 2002).
- 30 September 2003 The wing ended FY03 with average MC rate of 83.4, despite safety stand downs due to engine problems.
- 1 October 2003 Air Force blue suiter positions for back shop support to 21/425th Fighter Squadron converted to 119 Air Force civilian positions.
- 14 October 2003 The US Fish and Wildlife declared DART tow targets on Cabeza Prieta as habitat thereby negating need for 56 FW to retrieve targets.
- 17 October 2003 The 56 FW received its first Block 32 F-16, Tail No. 86-0296, from the 944th Fighter Wing as a backfill jet.
- 13 November 2003 The US Customs Service conducted three weeks of tests with the Predator unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) from Gila Bend AFAF on Goldwater Range to determine feasibility of using UAV for surveillance along the US/Mexican border south of Gila Bend.
- 15 November 2003 Landowners value land near base at \$60,000 per acre.
- 20 November 2003 Surprise planned to annex Aux #1 to control lot splitting.
- November 2003 The 2003 AICUZ released because of changes in noise zones resulting from shifting of operations from north to the south.
- 4 November 2003 Congress allocated \$14.3 million for land acquisition near base.
- 5 December 2003 It was reported that DoD received Congressional approval to begin the Base Realignment And Closure Commission (BRAC) process.
- 17 December 2003 Senator John McCain noted Congress approved \$14.3 million for Luke AFB land acquisition. Warned area leaders that federal government alone could not protect Luke AFB. He asked that state, county, local governments step up and raise funds for land acquisition around base.
- 17 December 2003 A wing official noted the success of the graduated density concept that allowed low density development near noise zones and increased densities away from those areas. Local towns and DoD planned for possibly using the concept at all installations.
- 17 December 2003 The City of Surprise praised for turning from anti-Luke AFB to pro-Luke AFB decisions on land use.
- 31 December 2003 During the year, the 56 FW deployed 645 personnel to locations throughout world supporting humanitarian/peacekeeping operations.
- 31 December 2003 Captive breeding program began for Sonoran pronghorn antelope with construction of a large pen in Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge. Program attempted to save endangered local herd from extinction.

31 December 2003	Wing encroachment officials worked to place 26 new schools near Luke AFB in the least hazardous locations.
31 December 2003	The Arizona Public Service cooperated with base by ensuring new power poles to service growing communities near Luke AFB did not affect flight paths or communications.
31 December 2003	The City of Surprise to annex near Aux #1 to prevent lot splitting and protect field from encroachment.
31 December 2003	The County was against Phase IV of Patton Place Estates near Aux #1 for safety reasons.
3 February 2004	Force Shaping program implemented to reduce manning in-line with Congressionally-directed personnel ceilings.
3 March 2004	The Governor formed permanent Military Affairs Commission to deal with preservation/growth of military installations in state.
19 March 2004	Pinal County officials denied zoning for La Osa Ranch north of Tucson which would have negatively impacted access to range.
31 March 2004	The first stakeholders' meeting held to explain land purchase program.
5 April 2004	Falcon Star began and was designed to increase service life of jets through improvements to fuselage and structural components.
19 April 2004	The Governor signed HB 2141 which provided same protection for Aux #1 as the rest of the state's military airports enjoyed.
23 April 2004	The Governor signed HB 2134 which prohibited construction of natural gas storage facility near Luke AFB. It was seen as a threat to health and safety of base personnel.
26 April 2004	The Governor signed HB 2662 requiring state real estate maps depict military training routes.
17 May 2004	The Governor signed HB 2140 which established a funding stream to buy easements/property that encroached on base.
18 May 2004	A 30-member contingent of civilian contract workers began augmenting Luke AFB's security forces to enhance force protection.
May 2004	Joint Land-Use Study for Aux #1 completed.
6 July 2004	A USAF senior leader postulated half of the F-16 fleet could be retired due to base closures and to save money for other programs.
14 July 2004	The first purchase of 143 of 273 acres for force protection near the munitions storage area was completed for \$950,000.
15 July 2004	Maintenance of 21st Fighter Squadron jets converted from blue suiter to civilian contract.
1 October 2004	Manpower office reassigned from wing to 56th Mission Support Group in move to align specialties with similar functions.



- 1 October 2004 No significant results found in a test that reassigned 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels to 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron (see entry 1 September 2003). Fuels to be returned to 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron.
- 7 October 2004 A group of West Valley leaders met with DoD officials to stress area's support for continued existence of Luke AFB.
- 12 October 2004 The City of Surprise announced city land near Aux #1 to be rezoned for airport preservation.
- 12 October 2004 Congressional-directed Goldwater Range Task Force met to find ways endangered species and military use could co-exist on range.
- 1 November 2004 The 186-person Army Guard contingent defederalized and relieved from Luke AFB security augmentee duties (see entry 11 February 2003).
- 1 November 2004 The Augmentee Duty Program (READY) began drawing personnel from various specialties to augment base security forces.
- 20 November 2004 The LANTIRN confidence check flight path to calibrate instruments prior to LANTIRN mission moved for second time (see entry 1 July 1995) due to planned developments.
- 30 November 2004 The 56th Medical Group announced planned major reduction in medical services as directed by higher headquarters.
- 8 December 2004 Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano met with DoD official to stress area's support for continued existence of Luke AFB.
- 9 December 2004 Wing officials noted range closed 37 times in 2004 so Border Patrol could remove groups that wandered onto range.
- 28 December 2004 It was announced that an endangered species on range, the Sonoran pronghorn antelope, was rebounding from near extinction as its numbers increased from less than two dozen to some 58 animals.
- 31 December 2004 The 56 FW deployed 401 personnel worldwide in support of humanitarian and peacekeeping operations during the year,
- 31 December 2004 Wing leadership outlined Luke AFB's requirements as ability to take off and land at Luke AFB; access to range; continued use of Aux #1 and Gila Bend with 12,000 and 45,000 annual operations, respectively, (without them operations would move to Luke AFB and quadruple base's noise zones); and continued use of Bagdad/Gladden Airspace.
- December 2004 Congress passed the Readiness/Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) which provided the military with funds to purchase land to stem incompatible land use.
- 25 February 2005 It was reported the USAF purchased 244 acres near munitions storage area for \$3 million from SunCor (see 14 July 2004 entry).
- February 2005 Joint Land Use Study completed on Gila Bend and Goldwater Range.

- 7 March 2005 Range task force (see entry 12 October 2004) reported to Congress on coexistence of antelope and air operations on range through captive breeding & forage enhancement programs.
- 8 March 2005 Surprise voters Okayed Proposition 300 rezoning 106-acre Kenly Farms II from residential to commercial.
- 11 March 2005 Expeditionary Thunderbolt Training began to give deploying Airmen look at combat scenarios they might see when deployed.
- 2 April 2005 The 308th Fighter Squadron jets were the first wing F-16s to fly dissimilar air combat missions against the F-22 Raptor during deployment to Tyndall AFB, Florida.
- 4 April 2005 It was reported one acre Phoenix land in Munitions Storage Area (MSA) procured for \$15,400 completing MSA land purchases.
- 7 April 2005 The Phoenix mayor issued proclamation that 920 acres north of base to be zoned for compatible use with base's mission.
- 3 May 2005 The Border Patrol began flying three-to-four nightly helicopter missions from Gila Bend AFAF over range to detect undocumented aliens.
- 9 May 2005 The Goodyear/Pebble Creek dispute over 145 homes in high noise zone resolved by moving building site to new location of increased density. Dispute settlement resulted in all 3,783 acres in southern departure corridor being zoned for compatible use.
- 13 May 2005 BRAC announced 56 FW to lose 37 jets & 278 slots.
- 25 June 2005 Wildfires contained after burning 58,000 acres on range.
- 6 July 2005 The Republic of Singapore AF unit at Cannon AFB, NM, inactivated and sent three F-16s to 425th Fighter Squadron.
- 15 July 2005 Over 70 near misses since 2000 prompted wing to call for creation of special airspace rule.



On 29 August 2005, President and Mrs. George W. Bush visited landed at Luke AFB, the third visit by a sitting US President. President Gerald Ford visited on 14 November 1974 and President Bill Clinton on 11 September 1996.



On 4 September 2005, the first 54 of a contingent of 93 people from wing deployed to Gulf Coast to aid in relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina which damaged 95% of facilities at Keesler AFB.

- 15 September 2005      President Bush endorsed BRAC commission's recommendations for base closures and realignments. Wing to lose 22 jets as well as 425 positions. However, which jets the wing was to lose was to be decided on by wing officials.
- 15 September 2005      Common Configuration Implementation Program (CCIP) began; upgrading selected Block 42 systems to Block 52 capabilities.
- 21 September 2005      A 56th Medical Group contingent deployed to Dominica and treated 3,000 patients.
- 23 September 2005      Base indefinitely closed two gates for force protection and personnel shortfalls due to hurricane relief and Southwest Asia deployments.
- 28 September 2005      Services terminated at 56th Medical Group ambulatory procedures unit and operating rooms.
- 29 September 2005      Services terminated at 56th Medical Group extended hours clinic and podiatry.
- 8 November 2005        Congress passed the BRAC commission's recommendations.
- 14 November 2005      The first Basic course air-to-ground exercise held at Gila Bend utilizing bare-base environment for students to gain experience in flying/fighting from undeveloped sites.
- 31 December 2005      The wing deployed some 644 personnel to locations throughout the world to assist in peacekeeping/humanitarian efforts during year.
- 31 December 2005      The wing official stated Wittman, Arizona, resident's suit challenging HB 2141 protecting Aux #1 would be defeated in court for second time.
- 31 December 2005      Mobile training teams from 310th Fighter Squadron trained 46 in the Forward Air Controller (Airborne) course that year.

31 December 2005 Lease for 700 acres at Aux #1 up for renewal and state increased price from \$35,000 to \$140,000 annually for 10 years. Lower price of \$70,000 annually negotiated, savings \$700,000.



In 2005, 56th Fighter Wing, at Luke AFB, was the world's largest fighter unit with eight fighter squadrons assigned that boasted an aerial fleet made up of 189 F-16 Fighting Falcons. As of 4 August 2017, it had 11 fighter squadrons in three locations flying three different aircraft.

11 January 2006 The USAF announced cuts in aerial fleet to gain funds for F/A-22.

3 February 2006 The Quadrennial Defense Review was released and stressed leaner, meaner force to include cuts in personnel to fund recapitalization of new weapons systems.

17 March 2006 Hands-on cell phone use while driving outlawed at Luke AFB.

ca. March 2006 Environmental Impact Statement completed on integrated natural resource management plan for range.

9 May 2006 The site activation task force for BRAC-directed 944th Fighter Wing realignment held at Luke AFB.

22 May 2006 Expeditionary Thunderbolt Training (see entry 11 March 2005) moved to Gila Bend to train deploying members in bare base/desert operations.

29 May 2006 Some 180 sorties over the Baghdad-Gladden Area and Aux #1 cancelled over four days when glider meet at Pleasant Valley Airport posed safety hazard to F-16 pilots flying in areas.

1 June 2006 Enlisted Club terminated evening dining and administrative functions. Officers' Club open to all ranks for those services.

- July 2006 Wing formed AF Smart Operations 21 Team to find ways to work smarter and reduce non-value added functions.
- 15 August 2006 The first 944th Fighter Wing jet, F-16C 86-0273, left Luke AFB under BRAC directive that unit was to lose all 17 of its F-16s and some 480 personnel authorizations.
- 23 August 2006 The CSAF directed 40,000 personnel cut to gain funds for weapons systems recapitalization.
- 2 September 2006 Sixteen-member team, which included nine people from 56th Medical Group, deployed to Guatemala where the team treated 7,500, and give out more than 14,000 prescriptions.
- 14 September 2006 Mark Grace Thunderbolt Field officially dedicated. The new baseball field in Fowler Park was a \$300,000 project funded by Summit Builders, Arizona Diamondbacks, and former D-back player, Mark Grace.
- 30 September 2006 The wing deployed 647 men and women from 41 specialties to numerous locations within the nation and foreign sites to support humanitarian and peacekeeping operations that year.
- 31 October 2006 Class 06-C2L with two students in Transition course was last class trained by 944th Fighter Wing.
- 4 October 2006 The USAF announced new F-35 joint strike fighter to be based at Eglin AFB, FL for flight/maintenance training.
- 7 November 2006 Voters passed Proposition 207 -- restrict zoning or face litigation.
- November 2006 Environmentalist group filed intent to sue US Fish and Wildlife Service and wing for delisting Bald Eagle on range from endangered species list.
- 25 November 2006 It was announced base housing to be privatized on 1 January 2006 (see entry 15 August 2003).
- 27 November 2006 Construction began on Litchfield Park overpass to ease congestion and aid force protection.
- 31 December 2006 BRAC decisions resulted in 56 FW losing 425 personnel authorizations, retirement of F-22 jets. Decision made that all jets to be retired were Block 25 models (see entry 15 September 2005).
- 31 December 2006 The 56 FW official saw plans for 300 percent increase in local airports.
- 31 December 2006 The wing briefings to general aviation pilots accompanied by decrease in near misses. Request for special airspace traffic rule at Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, DC.
- 31 December 2006 The Purchase price for 634 acres in the south accident potential zone 2 at a staggering \$87,000 an acre, or \$55 million, resulted in deletion of property from any acquisition attempts.

- 31 December 2006 Landowners' prices for sale of property 400 percent above Corps of Engineers offers. Led to condemnation actions which owners favored as they could get higher price through arbitration.
- 31 December 2006 Approximately \$18.8 million of \$27 million Congress appropriated for land purchase were obligated.
- 25 January 2007 A 10,000-acre site near Gila Bend approved for Volkswagen test track; seen as compatible land use with air operations there.
- 6 February 2007 Base Housing transferred to civilian firm under privatization program (see entry 15 September 2005).
- 12 February 2007 The last three 944th Fighter Wing F-16s left Luke AFB in preparation for inactivation of 302d Fighter Squadron.
- 27 February 2007 USAF leadership signed the record of decision on integrated natural resources management plan which was compiled by direction of the Congress (see entry for 5 October 1999).
- 10 March 2007 In-line with BRAC decisions, the 944th Fighter Wing's 944th Maintenance Group and 302d Fighter Squadron were inactivated.
- 6 May 2007 The 56 FW leadership signed the final Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (see 5 October 1999 entry).
- 12 April 2007 The 56 FW initially to lose 37 jets under BRAC, but Change 06-01 directed 944th Fighter Wing lose 15 jets and 56 FW only 22 aircraft (see entry 13 May 2005).
- 1 August 2007 Public Affairs and multimedia merged to increase utility of scarce personnel assets.
- 17 August 2007 It was reported USAF leadership to direct reorganization to global wing structure where jets and technicians reassigned from the 56th Maintenance Group to 56th Operations Group.
- 30 September 2007 The 56 FW FY07 budget reduced by \$67 million when costs for aviation gas Air Force-wide consolidated and paid for by office in the Air Staff.
- 30 September 2007 The 56 FW deployed 465 men and women during FY07 to national and international sites to support peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.
- 30 September 2007 All but \$800,000 of \$13 million appended to FY03 MILCON program was obligated to purchase land/easements.
- 1 October 2007 Information technicians moved from offices and consolidated mostly at group level to increase utility of those personnel.
- 1 October 2007 The 56 FW FY08 budget reduced by \$147 million when costs for parts Air Force-wide consolidated and paid for by Air Staff.
- 1 October 2007 Life support/survival equipment technicians moved from fighter squadrons and consolidated in the 56th Operations Support Squadron to increase their utility.



22 October 2007 Thirty F/A-18 Hornets from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar deployed to Luke AFB as part of a move to protect the aircraft from fires raging throughout southern California.

14 November 2007 The first 56 FW jet reassigned under BRAC was F-16D, Tail No. 83-1175 to 162 FW, Tucson Airport.



On 18 December 2007, Lightning Street on base renamed Gillespie Drive for MSgt Randy J. Gillespie of the 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron who was killed on 9 July 2007 in combat while on temporary duty in Afghanistan.

31 December 2007 Some \$6 million of \$14.3 million appended to FY04 MILCON program for purchase land/easements remained unobligated.

9 January 2008 Army agreed to second antelope captive breeding pen near Yuma Proving Grounds (see entry 31 December 2003).



On 28 January 2008, Overpass over Glendale Ave opened to traffic and dedicated to Maj Troy Gilbert who lost his life in Iraq on 27 November 2006.

- 15 February 2008 Wing leadership announced 63d Fighter Squadron to inactivate in 2009 to comply with BRAC directives on F-16 realignment at Luke AFB (see 15 September 2005 entry).
- 26 February 2008 The 63d Fighter Squadron Class 08 ALL and its four members first to complete F-22 Raptor Lead-in Course.
- 10 March 2008 Completed three BRAC directed moves. LANTIRN pods/personnel moved to Hill AFB, Utah. Personnel positions moved to Eglin AFB, Florida, for F-35 stand-up. Logistics Readiness Squadron positions moved to Langley AFB, Virginia, for regional supply squadron.
- 20 March 2008 Attorney General opinion on HB 2141 required development plan/zoning be approved by 31 December 2004 for developments near Aux #1. Opinion advantageous for Luke AFB as would halt incompatible development around Aux #1.
- 31 March 2008 Force Shaping ended after separating 766 Luke AFB personnel since it started (see entry 3 February 2004).
- 12 May 2008 The CSAF directed reorganization to global wing structure with inactivation of 56th and 756th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 56th Maintenance Operations Squadron with Aircraft Maintenance Units realigned to fighter squadrons, movement of 56th Logistics Readiness Squadron from 56th Mission Support Group to 56th Maintenance Group and redesignation of 56th Maintenance Group as 56th Materiel Group.
- 26 May 2008 The 56th Comptroller Squadron lost 12 authorizations due to transfer of military pay and travel pay functions to Air Force Financial Services Center at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota.
- 6 June 2008 It was announced 944th Fighter Wing's 301st Fighter Squadron to be reassigned to Holloman AFB, New Mexico. Unit provided support for 944th Fighter Wing Instructor Pilots augmenting 56 FW Instructor Pilots under Associate Instructor Pilot Program (see entry 31 December 1999). 69th Fighter Squadron to take over 301st Fighter Squadron mission at Luke AFB.
- 27 June 2008 Acting Secretary of the AF Donley directed delay in reorganization to global wing structure (see entry for 12 May 2008).
- 30 June 2008 Program to purchase/lease land/easements to protect base's access to range completed.
- 14 July 2008 Thirty-four of wing's Block 42 jets found to have cracks in bulkhead which provided structural rigidity to jets. Flying and class sizes reduced while repairs on-going.
- 25 July 2008 Study released by governor's office puts Luke AFB annual economic impact at \$2.17B.
- 27 August 2008 New CSAF, Gen Norton A. Schwartz, directed reorganization to Global Wing be halted. (See entry for 12 May 2008.)



- 30 September 2008 State sued Maricopa County for failure to enforce law on compatible land use near Aux #1 and county sued state over property rights near Aux #1.
- 30 September 2008 Luke AFB deployed 684 personnel during FY08 in support of humanitarian and peace-keeping operations throughout the world.
- 7 October 2008 Three-day site survey began to determine feasibility of basing F-35 at Luke AFB; decision expected in 2011.
- 6 November 2008 The last of 77 jets to receive CCIP upgrades returned from Hill AFB (see entry 15 September 2005).
- 24 November 2008 The 310th Fighter Squadron, which had traditionally provided LANTIRN, Forward Air Controller (Airborne), and night vision goggles training started instruction in Basic course.
- 9 December 2008 State and municipal officials met with SecAF and CSAF to stress area's continued support for existence of Luke AFB and to press for basing of F-35 at the installation.
- 5 January 2009 US Marine Corps Bulk Fuels Company Charlie moved to Luke AFB to ease transportation problems and high street crime at old site.
- 10 February 2009 Superior Court judges rules in favor of state and directed county to stop issuing building permits which were resulting in incompatible development near Aux #1. (See entry for 30 September 2008)
- 17 February 2009 The 107th Air Control Squadron moved to Luke AFB from downtown Phoenix in move to ease transportation problems.
- 26 February 2009 The 56th Services Squadron assumed mission and assets of 56th Mission Support Squadron and was redesignated 56th Force Support Squadron. 56th Mission Support Squadron inactivated.
- March 2009 El Mirage officials travel to Washington, District of Columbia to request stimulus money and complain basing F-35 at Luke AFB would negatively impact town.
- 26 June 2009 USAF announced a force structure change that was to reduce 56 FW F-16 fleet by another 28 jets.
- 30 September 2009 The 63d Fighter Squadron inactivated in-line with BRAC realignment of 56 FW F-16 fleet.
- January 2010 AETC published the F-16 Combined Wingman Syllabus, which restructured three courses and syllabi into one syllabus.
- 1 February 2010 The 301st Fighter Squadron (AFRC) inactivated, and the 69th Fighter Squadron (AFRC) activated and joined the 944th Fighter Wing (AFRC).
- 4 February 2010 Officials representing the state of Arizona and Maricopa County signed an agreement to restrict building within the 65 decibel range of all military airports, including Luke AFB.

- 22-26 February 2010 Wing leadership participated in public meetings on how the Environmental Impact Statement process would work.
- 29 July 2010 The Air Force announced Luke AFB as the preferred alternate location for F-35 pilot training. The announcement also included the movement of two F-16 squadrons to Holloman AFB, New Mexico. The first squadron would move in October 2011.
- 30 September 2010 The 61st Fighter Squadron inactivated.
- 15 December 2010 In answer to Lt Col Timothy W. Trimmell's, 756th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander, challenge to launch all of their aircraft, the 310th Aircraft Maintenance Unit launched 22 of 26 F-16s.
- 13 January 2011 The 62d Fighter Squadron and 62d Aircraft Maintenance Unit deployed four aircraft to Eglin AFB, Florida, to keep 33d Fighter Wing pilots current and develop that wing's operational procedures.
- 3 February 2011 The 308th Aircraft Maintenance Unit launched all 26 aircraft in response to Lt Col Trimmell's challenge. (See entry for 15 December 2010).
- February 2011 The 56th Component Maintenance Squadron's Hydrazine plant went operational for first time in over 2 years.
- 19 April 2011 Pause lifted for inaccurate engine noise data in the F-35A Training Draft Environmental Impact Statement.



On 27 April 2011, Lieutenant Colonel Frank D. Bryant, Jr., 56th Operations Group, was Killed in Action in Afghanistan.

- 5 May 2011 United States Fish and Wildlife Service announced its final ruling on plan to reestablish Sonoran pronghorn as a nonessential experimental population.
- 20 May 2011 Ms. Kathleen I. Ferguson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Installations) signed the Barry M. Goldwater Range Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision which finalized six of ten proposals.
- 13 June 2011 General Edward A. Rice, Jr., Commander, Air Education and Training Command, briefed and the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force approved delaying the move of the first F-16 squadron to Holloman AFB until April 2013. Delays were due to needed time for Environmental Analysis process, lack of funding, and time to design and renovate/construct facilities.
- 24 August 2011 The populous of the city of El Mirage, Arizona, elected pro-Luke AFB Mayor and city council.
- 2 November 2011 The Chief of Staff of the Air Force's memo ordered the shortening of the F-16 Basic course
- 22 February 2012 Contractor Field Team began the 5.1 modification to Block 42 aircraft hardware and software
- 27-29 March 2012 The F-16 Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) #4 held at Holloman AFB, New Mexico.
- 4 May 2012 The base fitness center was renamed the Bryant Fitness Center in honor of Lt Col Frank Bryant Jr. who was killed in Afghanistan on 27 April 2011.
- 18 June 2012 The 309th Aircraft Maintenance Unit took over support to the F-35A pilots of the 33 FW at Tyndall AFB from 62d Aircraft Maintenance Unit. (See entry for 13 January 2011).
- 12 July 2012 Nineteenth Air Force inactivated. Thereafter, the 56 FW reported directly to Air Education and Training Command.
- 1 August 2012 The Air Force announced the F-35 Training Record of Decision. Luke AFB would receive 72 F-35A aircraft making up three squadrons. (See entry for 15 June 2012).
- 1 August 2012 The 56 FW stood up the F-35 Office to bed down first three squadrons.
- 7 August 2012 The Secretary of the Air Force supported the Secretary of Defense and suspended aircraft transfers and retirements previously scheduled for implementation in FY12.
- 13-16 August 2012 AETC held the first F-35 Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) at Luke AFB to work out issues dealing with locating the F-35 there.

- 10 September 2012 Four future F-35A pilots began the training and flying portion of the operational utility evaluation at Eglin AFB. 309th Aircraft Maintenance Unit tasking would end after the completion of the evaluation. (See entry for 13 January 2011).
- 24 September 2012 Mr. Charles E. Buchanan took over the 56th Range Management Office from Mr. James R. Uken.
- September 2012 The Army Corp of Engineers let contracts for the F-35A Academic Training Center, and the first and second F-35A Operations and Aircraft Maintenance Unit buildings at Luke AFB.
- 5 October 2012 Secretary of the Air Forces Public Affairs office announced all F-22, T-38 and F-16 moves were on hold until spring 2013
- 16-18 October 2012 AETC held SATAF #5 at Holloman AFB, New Mexico, to work the details to move Luke AFB F-16s to Holloman AFB
- 6 November 2012 AETC levied a 30 percent reduction in temporary duty spending across the command.
- 19 November 2012 The 56 FW established the Community Support Coordinator office to teach Airmen to be more resilient.
- 1 December 2012 The 56 FW's Operating Location-A at Holloman AFB, New Mexico inactivated and 56 FW's Detachment 1 activated in its stead
- 6 December 2012 Marked 30 years of F-16 operations at Luke AFB, see 6 December 1982.
- 27 December 2012 The 56th Operations Group changed the Intelligence Office under the group to an Intelligence Flight in the 56th Operations Support Squadron
- 10 January 2013 Reported that Congress approved a one year delay in the movement of F-16s to Holloman AFB
- 14 January 2013 Due to budgetary issues, CSAF directed a Civilian hiring freeze
- 15 February 2013 Brigadier General Rothstein cancelled the 2013 Open House scheduled for 16-17 March 2013 due to uncertainty over the USAF budget. The Air Force later cancelled all open houses/air shows.
- 20 February 2013 Contractor Field Team completed the last 5.2 modification on a total of 58 F-16s
- 1 March 2013 Sequestration went into effect
- 6 March 2013 AETC held a Program Management Review on the Lockheed F-35A Lightning II Pilot Training Center-1 at Luke AFB. It found extremely tight timelines to be ready for first aircraft arrival in February 2014



On 13 March 2013, 1st Lt Matthew J. Wetherbee, a 309th Fighter Squadron student, flew Luke AFB's 1,000,000 US F-16 flying hour in Tail No. 89-2157.

- 29 March 2013 After 27 months, 56 FW support of four F-16s and 40 maintenance technicians to 33 FW at Eglin, AFB, Florida, ended. (See entry for 13 January 2011).
- 7-11 May 2013 AETC held SATAF #2 for the F-35A at Luke AFB
- 8-16 May 2013 Taiwan Air Force inspected the 21st Fighter Squadron
- 15 May 2013 SECAF signed Second Record of Decision for 3 of 10 range enhancements proposed for the Barry M. Goldwater Range
- 22 May 2013 Detachment 2 of the 56 FW activated at Kingsley Field ANGB, Klamath Falls, Oregon, to provide AETC administrative control over the F-15 students there.
- 10 June 2013 Taiwan Air Force began a week long Program Management Review of the 21st Fighter Squadron
- 27 June 2013 The Air Force announced the F-35 Training Record of Decision. Luke AFB would receive an additional 72 F-35A aircraft, bringing the total number of aircraft to 144.
- 1 July 2013 The 56th Maintenance Operations Squadron inactivated
- 1 July 2013 The 607th Air Control Squadron at Luke AFB was reassigned to the 56th Operations Group from the 552d Air Control Group.
- 8 July 2013 Due to budget constraints, the DOD began furloughing almost all of its civilian work force one day a week
- 6 August 2013 Secretary of Defense reduced the length of the Civilian furloughs to six days. That reduction meant the immediate end of the furlough for most employees.
- 28-29 August 2013 The F-35 Joint Program Office held a Sustainment Readiness Review at Luke AFB to work on the bed down of the aircraft.

- 26 September 2013 Four of the seven F-35 partner nations and the United States signed the F-35A Pooling Implementation Arrangement.
- 30 September 2013 Luke AFB deployed 300 Airmen during fiscal year to contingency and humanitarian operations worldwide.
- 30 September 2013 As the fiscal year ended, the United States Congress was still deadlocked on the budget for FY14.
- 1 October 2013 With Congress deadlocked on the budget with no Continuing Resolution, meant most civilian employees were furloughed until 7 October 2013
- 31 October 2013 Ms. Dorothy M. Rowe retired after 70 years of federal service, mostly at Luke AFB.
- 1 March 2014 54th Fighter Group activated at Holloman AFB, New Mexico, as part of the 56 FW. Four squadrons also activated, the 311th Fighter Squadron, 54th Operations Support Squadron, the 54th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and the 54th Maintenance Squadron. Collectively, their task was to train pilots to fly F-16s.



On 10 March 2014, the first permanently assigned Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II, Tail No. 11-5030, arrived at Luke AFB. Colonel Roderick L. Cregier, 412th Test Wing F-35 Program Director/Test Pilot, taxied the aircraft to its parking spot. It was assigned to 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit, 56th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

- 19 April 2014 The 56th Medical Group deployed a team to the Dominican Republic where the team treated 14,000 people and give out 14,000 prescriptions.
- 6 May 2014 SrA Jessica M. Reitano, 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron found first longeron cracks around F-16 cockpits, affecting mostly two-seat D-models. Much of fleet grounded, requiring a syllabi change and delayed class graduations well into FY15.
- 30 May 2014 The 309th Fighter Squadron went unmanned after sending its aircraft to the 311th Fighter Squadron at Holloman AFB.

- 2 July 2014 The 62d Fighter Squadron unmanned. All personnel and equipment became part of the 309th Fighter Squadron, which remained.
- 7 August 2014 Canopy sill longeron cracks were identified on 47 F-16s at Luke AFB, grounding 52 percent of the U.S. F-16 fleet at Luke AFB. On 21 October a Depot Field Team arrived and assisted in returning the aircraft to service by early January, a full month ahead of schedule.
- 1 October 2014 Nineteenth Air Force reactivated. Direct reporting to Air Education and Training Command ended for 56 FW.
- 18 December 2014 The first Partner Nation and the first Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), F-35A, Tail Number 12 5061 (A35-002) joined the 61st Fighter Squadron and 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Luke AFB



- On 15 April 2015, Brigadier General Scott L. Pleus, 56 FW Commander graduated as the first F-35A student at Luke AFB.
- 27 April 2015 General Pleus, and Chairman Ned Norris, Jr., of the Tohono O’odham Nation signed new 5-year Memorandum of Understanding continuing the formal government-to-government relationship between the base and the Nation for military operations over the Nation and activity within the Barry M. Goldwater Range.
- 4 May 2015 The first full F-35A class began training with the 61st Fighter Squadron.
- 21 May 2015 The mission of the 56 FW changed to “Train the world’s greatest F-35 and F-16 fighter pilots.”
- 22 May 2015 Thirty-five member team, which included twenty-five people from 56th Medical Group, deployed to El Salvador where the team treated 10,800 patients and gave out 21,000 prescriptions.
- 4 June 2015 The 62d Fighter Squadron remained to become the second F-35A squadron at Luke AFB. The unit was unmanned on 2 July 2014.
- 15 June 2015 Squadron Leader David N. Bell, RAAF, became the first Partner Nation student by joining the F-35A Instructor Pilot Course, Class15-BIL graduating on 11 September 2015.





On 16 June 2015, twelve 308th Fighter Squadron F-16s launch to provide aircraft to the 54th Fighter Group. Nine more left the next day.

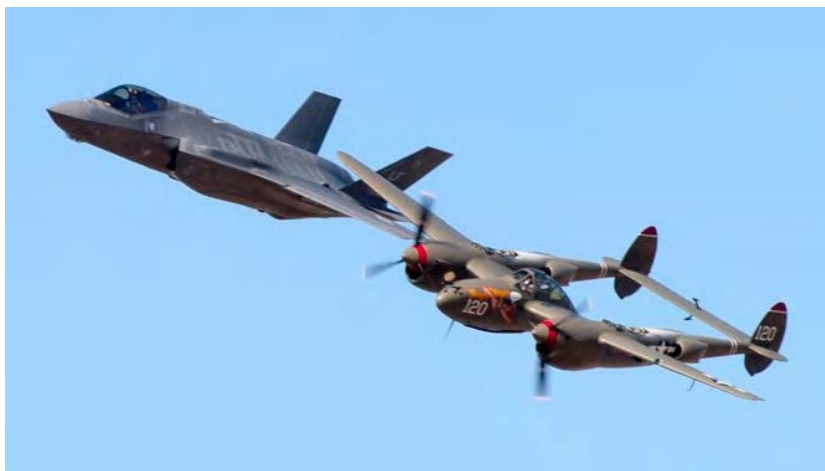
- 25 June 2015                    The 308th Fighter Squadron inactivated.
- 6 July 2015                    The 314th Fighter Squadron activated at Holloman AFB under 54th Fighter Group, but held its reactivation ceremony on 14 July 2015. Began training its first class of students the next day.



On 21 September 2015, two Norwegian and two Italian pilots began F 35A classes at Luke AFB, Arizona. From left to right: Maj Morton Hanche (Norway), Maj Eskil Amdal (Norway), Maj Gianmarco Di Loreto (Italy), and Capt Marco Mangini (Italy). (U.S. Air Force photo by A1C Ridge F. Shan)

- 11 September 2015            Squadron Leader David N. Bell, RAAF, became the first F-35A Partner Nation student to graduate. See 15 June 2015 entry.
- 10 November 2015            About mid-day on the sunny Tuesday, the first two Norwegian F 35As arrived at Luke AFB. They were Tail Numbers 13-5087 and 13 5088, also referred to as A35-078 and A35-088.
- 10 November 2015            Within hours of the arrival of the first two Norwegian F 35As, Maj Morton Hanche took off becoming the first Norwegian F 35A pilot to fly a sortie at Luke AFB in USAF Tail Number 13-5088.

- 18 November 2015 The 56 FW received first of 3 F-16 Interim Routine Action Safety Inspection Time Compliance Technical Orders for Canopy Sill Longeron cracks. By 11 January 2016, they grounded 18 aircraft. On 21 March 2016, Depot Teams arrived at Luke AFB & Holloman AFBs to repair aircraft.
- 2-3 April 2016 Largest Luke AFB Air Show to date with 425,000 people attending to see the Thunderbirds and the F-35A Lightning.
- 2-3 April 2016 US Air Force Heritage Flight puts on its first shows with the F-35A during Luke AFB's Air Show. The 61st Fighter Squadron provided the F-35A and pilot, Maj William Andreotta



On 4 March 2016, the F 35 Lightning II flew in formation with the P-38 Lightning during the Heritage Flight Conference at Davis Monthan AFB. The F 35 heritage flight team from Luke AFB was the first F 35 team to participate in the Heritage Flight Program. The program featured modern USAF fighter aircraft flying alongside World War II, Korean, and Vietnam era aircraft in a dynamic display of our nation's air power history. (US Air Force photo by SSgt Staci N. Miller)

- 20 May 2016 The first two Italian F-35As arrived, Tail #12-5063 and #12-5064 for the 62 FS.
- 1 August 2016 The 63 FS reactivated as Luke AFB's third F-35A flying squadron
- 17 August 2016 Brigadier General Brook J. Leonard , 56 FW Commander, signed the Public-Public, Public-Private Program Charter
- 2 November 2016 Mission of the 56 FW changed to "We build the future of Airpower," with the Vision of "We will lead the Air Force in developing Airmen and training fighter pilots"
- 16 November 2016 944th Operations Group, Detachment 2 of the 944th Fighter Wing (FW) graduated the first Israel Defense Forces F-35A class, which was academics only.



On 28 November 2016, Lockheed Martin and Japanese Air Self-Defense Force personnel work together to taxi in the arrival of the first Foreign Military Sales F-35A onto the 944th Fighter Wing ramp at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. The arrival marked the next step for the international F-35 training program. Tail Number 14-5114, with its local designation of 8701, was the first of four Japanese Defense Force F-35As scheduled to arrive at Luke Air Force Base. Over the next year, the 944th will train three classes of Japanese Defense Force F-35 pilots and graduate several dozen Japanese Defense Force maintainers. (U.S. Air Force photo by TSgt Louis Vega Jr.)

- 20 March 2017            The first F-35A for 63 FS arrived at Luke AFB
- 3 April 2017            The 550 FS reactivated at Kingsley Field ANGB, assisting 173 FW with F-15C/D pilot training as part of USAF's Total Force Initiative, but held its reactivation ceremony on 21 July 2017
- 4 August 2017           The 8 FS reactivated under the 54 FG at Holloman AFB
- 5 August 2017           The 61st Fighter Squadron graduated all six students of the first F-35A Basic-Course in the USAF, Class 17-ABL
- 5 October 2017           Col Gregory E. Hutson, 56th Maintenance Group Commander, transferred the group staff to the 56th Component Maintenance Squadron.
- 24 October 2017           General Leonard told the commanders and staff at Stand Up that AETC was planning of increasing Undergraduate Pilot Training throughput from 1,200 to 1,400 slots and then to 1,600 slots. The result would be an increase in the pipeline that fed the 56 FW.
- 28 November 2017       Luke AFB hooked up to the Liberty Water company, an off base water source. Recently, the base connected with an EPCOR water source. A third connection would turn on within the next two weeks. In the past, the base had 14 wells, but now it only had two wells. Neither well provided fluoride. Another concern was guaranteeing a water source for the base into the future. By connecting to commercial water sources, Luke AFB had guaranteed future sources of water. That project was part of the Public-Public, Public-Private Initiatives.

- January 2018 The 56th Maintenance Group began an experiment with flight line support for the F-35A in the 62d Aircraft Maintenance Unit. Maintenance developed six-person Lightning Integrated Technician teams, dedicating one team to each aircraft. Combining the career fields of crew chiefs, weapons, avionics, and low observable technicians created those Lightning Integrated Technicians. Besides a number of traditional common tasks, trainers used Cross Utilization Training for the other tasks. Each team was responsible for 1,225 maintenance tasks that covered the aircraft from the nose to the tail.
- 23-26 May 2018 On 23 May 2018, all five Japan Air Self Defense F-35As, Tail Numbers 14-5114, 14 5115, 14-5116, 14-5117, and 15-5158 departed Luke AFB for Japan after completing their Foreign Military Sales case run by the 944th Operations Group, Detachment 2 for the 56 FW. The 944th Operations Group, Detachment 2 flew the F-35s to Japan to deliver them to the Japan Air Self Defense Force.
- 24 May 2018 The Republic of South Korea's first F 35A aircraft arrived.
- 30 May 2018 South Korea's first class, Class KOR-1, began training at Luke AFB.
- 26 June 2018 The first two Turkish Air Force F-35A Tail Numbers 15-5219 and 15-5220 arrived at Luke AFB from the factory. They joined the USAF aircraft in the 63d Aircraft Maintenance Unit.
- 27 June 2018 Colonel Daniel L. LaMar assumed command of the 56th Medical Group from Col Jeffrey J. Freeland.
- 2 July 2018 Air Education and Training Command reactivated the 308th Fighter Squadron at Luke AFB as the fourth F-35A flying squadron and assigned the squadron to the 56th Operations Group. The squadron remained unmanned until 30 November 2018 when Col Matthew W. Renbarger, 56th Operations Group Commander, appointed Lt Col Robert D. Miller as the squadron commander.
- 10 July 2018 The first two Turkish Air Force officers, Maj Halit Oktay and Maj Onur Kara, started training in the F-35A Transition Course, in Class 18-J2L in the 63d Fighter Squadron.
- 20 July 2018 Brigadier General Todd D. Canterbury changed the 56 FW's mission, vision, and mindset statements to refocus the wing. He changed the mission to "We train the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat ready airmen." The new vision statement was the old mission statement, "We build the future of airpower." He then modified one of the previous beliefs and made it the 56 FW's mindset of "We are changing the Air Force from within the 56 FW."
- 20 July 2018 The first Republic of Korea Air Force pilot flew his first F-35 sortie with the 944th Operations Group, Detachment 2. That sortie was part of the Republic of Korea Air Force Foreign Military Sales case.

- 26-29 September 2018 Several base leaders honored Lt Frank Luke's sacrifice and achievements by traveling to France. There they attended ceremonies at Murvaux, France, where Frank Luke fought and died 100 years ago and at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery at Romagne-sous-Montfaucon in Meuse, France.
- 1 October 2018 Air Combat Command transferred Holloman AFB and its 49th Wing to AETC. As part of that change, AETC reassigned the 54th Fighter Group from the 56 FW to the 49th Wing. As such, the 54th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and 54th Maintenance Squadron inactivated. The 849th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron activated and absorbed F-16 flight line personnel and equipment. Air Education and Training Command activated the 49th Component Maintenance Squadron and the 49th Training Squadron. The former absorbed some of the personnel and equipment of the 54th Maintenance Squadron with the rest going to the 49th Equipment Maintenance Squadron. Upon its activation, the 49th Training Squadron took parts of the 54th Operations Support Squadron and the 49th Operations Support Squadron.
- 19 October 2018 President Donald J. Trump, plus 16 people, visited Luke AFB for a roundtable discussion. That visit was the fourth time a sitting President visited the base. On 14 November 1974, President Gerald Ford was the first sitting president to visit Luke AFB. On 11 September 1996, President Bill Clinton stopped by the base. On 29 August 2005, President George W. Bush came to Luke AFB



On 19 October 2018, Brigadier General Todd D. Canterbury greets President Donald Trump on when the president visited Luke AFB. (U.S. Air Force photo by SrA Alexander H. Cook)

- 16 November 2018 The first F-35A Republic of South Korea class, Class KOR-1, graduated.
- 4 February 2019 The first Royal Netherlands Air Force F-35A aircraft, Tail Number 17-5302, LRIP 11, also called AN-03, arrived at Luke AFB from the factory, for the 308th Aircraft Maintenance Unit.
- 27 February-  
3 Mar 2019 The 56 FW F 35A Demonstration and Heritage Teams underwent training and certification at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

- 1-4 March 2019 The 63d Fighter Squadron took two F-35A aircraft and the 21st Fighter Squadron took two F-16 aircraft to Sheppard AFB, Texas, an Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) base. Flown on the trip were F-35A aircraft Tail Numbers 11-5038 and 11-5039 and F-16 aircraft Tail Numbers 93-0721 and 93-0828. The purpose of the visit, and trips that followed, was the 56 FW's effort to expose US Air Force Academy cadets and UPT students to flying fighter aircraft. The lack of fighter pilots over the last few years meant much less exposure for those students to become a fighter pilot as a career choice.
- 29-31 March 2019 The 56 FW F-35A Demonstration Team performed its first show at Orlando Melbourne International Airport, Florida.
- 26 April 2019 Colonel Richardson, 56 FW Vice Commander, announced at Stand Up that the 56th Maintenance Group, in conjunction with the 944th Maintenance Group, won the 2018 Clements McMullen Memorial Daedalian Weapon System Maintenance Trophy, commonly referred to as the Daedalian Trophy, as the best maintenance organization in the US Air Force.
- 29 May 2019 The 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit placed aircraft Tail Number 09 5005 into depot modification in Hangar 915, Bay 2. That was the first modification at Luke AFB to upgrade an LRIP 3 jet from Block 2B to Block 3F 30P00 software.
- 7 June 2019 General Canterbury grounded all Turkish personnel and removed their access to the F-35, while the US awaited Turkey's decision over buying the Russian made S-400 Triumpf (NATO name: SA-21 Growler) Mobile Air Defense System. Subsequently, Turkey did buy the S-400 system and the US and other Partner Nations removed Turkey from the F-35 program. By 9 August 2019, all Turkish personnel left the base. The Turkish aircraft remained on base until the Air Force decided what to do with them.
- 3 July 2019 Col Michael P. Allison assumed command of the 56th Maintenance Group from Col Gregory E. Hutson.
- 15 July 2019 AETC reorganized the 56th Medical Group. It inactivated the 56th Dental Squadron. Those personnel joined the 56th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, which was redesignated as the 56th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron. The 56th Medical Operations Squadron was redesignated as the 56th Healthcare Operations Squadron. The 56th Medical Support Squadron remained unchanged.
- 29 July 2019 Col Ryan E. Richardson assumed command of the 56th Mission Support Group vice Col Robert A. Sylvester.
- 1 August 2019 The 61st Fighter Squadron / 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit flew the first TR2 modified F-35A at Luke AFB. On 30 July 2019, the 61st Aircraft

- Maintenance Unit received aircraft Tail Number was 09 5005 back from the modification team. The modification took the LRIP 3 jet from Block 2B to Block 3F 30P00 software, which made it approximately equivalent with an LRIP 6 jet.
- 16 August 2019 Four Republic of Korea Air Force F-35s from the 944th Operations Group, Detachment 2, departed Luke AFB for the Republic of Korea. They were Tail Numbers 15-5221, 15-5222, 15 5223, and 15-5224. That movement ended the F-35 Foreign Military Sales commitment for the 56 FW for the time being.
- 30 September 2019 The 56 FW deployed 209 Airmen around the world during FY19.
- 28 October 2019 An F-35A Lightning II, assigned to the 61st Fighter Squadron, flew over the base during a sortie at Luke AFB Air Force Base, Arizona. That sortie, flown by six F-35s, was recognized as the 35,000th F-35 sortie flown at Luke AFB. Airmen at Luke AFB trained 75 percent of the world's F-35 pilots, certifying approximately 105 pilots annually
- 14 November 2019 Lt Col Robert J. Kongaika, the 56th Maintenance Group Deputy Commander, and Col Michael Miles, 388th Maintenance Group Commander from Hill AFB, briefed the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Installations, Logistics & Force Protection on a blending of the F-35 Lightning Integrated Technician and the Blended Operational Lightning Technician concepts. The blended concept was the Lightning Technician Program.
- 15-17 November 2019 The 56 FW F-35A Demonstration Team performed its last show at Nellis AFB, Nevada. After that show, Air Combat Command would provide the F-35 Demonstration Team.
- 18 December 2019 AETC awarded the 56 FW an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for the period of 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. During the War in Southeast Asia, the 56 FW earned four Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device. Counting those wartime awards, the 2018-2019 Air Force Outstanding Unit Award was the 56 FW's twenty-ninth.
- Jan 2020 Following a successful initial evaluation period, the Lightning Integrated Technician program merged with Hill AFB's Blended Operational Lightning Technician program to create the Lightning Technician Program to evaluate the concept across two Major Commands for Air Force-wide implementation.
- 9 March 2019 Brigadier General Canterbury increased Luke AFB Air Force Base's Health Protection Condition (HPCON) to Alpha from Routine due to the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19). Level Alpha reflected that community transmission was beginning.
- 11 March 2020 The World Health Organization identified the spread of the COVID 19 disease a pandemic.



- 11 March 2020 Department of Defense issued the first Stop Movement order for DoD military personnel catching some in middle of their movement. It restricted all DoD personnel and family members from traveling to countries highly infected with COVID-19.
- 12 March 2020 Mr. Bryan K. Evans, 56th Force Support Squadron Civilian Personnel Flight Chief, sent out guidance to the government civilian workers at Luke AFB. Those employees, who had authorization to work from home, or telework, were to exercise that option. For those employees, who could not telework, commanders could decide to send them home for an extended period.
- 13 March 2020 After many meetings/conversations with military health officials and local civilian community leaders, Brig Gen Canterbury cancelled the air show, called Luke AFB Days 2020, scheduled for 21-22 March 2020. His decision was due in part to trying to slow the spread of COVID 19. General Canterbury stated that despite COVID-19, the mission of training the world's greatest fighter pilots and combat ready Airmen would go on at Luke AFB. Even so, he cancelled all organized events that would bring a large number of people together.
- 13 March 2020 With local schools closing, childcare became a major issue with the Child Development Center already at capacity
- 14 March 2020 Both the Main Base Exchange and Commissary placed quantity limits on certain items, like cleaning products, toilet paper and other paper products. Panicked buying cleaned out the commercial stores off base.
- 17 March 2020 Luke AFB closed both the Child Development Center and the Youth Center for at least 11 days.
- 17 March 2020 Governor Ducey ordered no gatherings of 10 or more people in the State of Arizona. He ordered people to telework or work alternative schedules
- 18 March 2020 Luke AFB identified its first case of COVID 19. Two individuals tested positive for the virus. As a result, General Canterbury upgraded the HPCON for Luke AFB from Alpha to Bravo. He immediately gave all military base personnel a four-day pass and directed civilians to go to minimal manning covering 19-22 March 2020. He closed a number of functions and restricted others. The entire base went to telework or minimal manning, and mission essential members would work as normal.
- 30 March 2020 Governor Ducey signed Executive Order 2020-18, which ordered the entire state to "Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected *Physical Distancing to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission* [italics in original]."
- 30 March 2020 Both the 56th Operations Group and the 56th Maintenance Group primarily went to weekly work shifts, where shifts worked every other week. They flew a reduced schedule due to the reduction in manning.



On 23 March 2020, A1C Gloria Carrera (center), 56th Medical Group technician, conducted a COVID-19 mouth swab test on a patient, at Luke AFB, Arizona. The 56th Medical Group was administering tests for Luke AFB members who had symptoms of COVID-19 to help identify patients who might be positive for the COVID-19. The 56th Medical Group followed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and working closely with Arizona health officials to minimize the spread of COVID-19 at Luke AFB. (US Air Force photo by A1C Brooke Moeder)

- 5 May 2020                      General Canterbury stated he would base his decision to go to normal operations upon Governor Ducey's decision to allow his stay home order to expire. If Governor Ducey allowed the order to expire on 15 May 2020, Canterbury wanted the groups to plan to go back to normal operations on 18 May 2020. In the general's mind, normal operations included each fighter squadron flying two goes per day. Thus, General Canterbury's conditional decision started the recovery phase for Luke AFB of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 7 May 2020                      In an effort to improve resiliency and support all Airmen's religious needs, the Chaplain's Office began opening satellite offices across the base.
- 18 May 2020                      Based upon Governor Ducey allowing his stay at home order to lapse, Luke AFB restarted relatively normal operations with maximum health safety precautions in place, like wearing facial coverings, and social distancing.
- 26 May 2020                      Brig Gen Gregory Kreuder assumed command of the 56 FW from Brig Gen Todd D. Canterbury.
- 10 July 2016                      Colonel George R. Watkins assumed command of the 56th Operations Group from Col Matthew W. Renbarger.
- 22 July 2020                      The 63d Fighter Squadron and Lockheed Martin employees working in the 63d Aircraft Maintenance Unit transferred out all four Turkish F-35 aircraft to Edwards AFB, California. They were tail numbers 15-5219, 15-5220, 17 5310, and 17 5311.

### 56th Fighter Wing Lineage

56th Fighter Wing activated as parent unit of 56th Fighter Group on 15 August 1947.<sup>2</sup>

Redesignated 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing on 20 January 1950

Inactivated on 6 February 1952.

Redesignated 56th Fighter Wing (Air Defense) and activated on 28 December 1960.<sup>3</sup>

Organized on 1 February 1961.

Discontinued, and inactivated on 1 January 1964.<sup>4</sup>



Redesignated 56th Air Commando Wing and activated on 16 March 1967.

Organized on 8 April 1967.<sup>5</sup>

Redesignated 56th Special Operations Wing on 1 August 1968.

Redesignated 56th Tactical Fighter Wing on 30 June 1975.<sup>6</sup>

Redesignated 56th Tactical Training Wing on 1 October 1981.

Redesignated 56th Fighter Wing on 1 October 1991.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> GO-77, 20 August 1947

<sup>3</sup> AFOMO 536m, 28 December 1960 and ADC GO #192, 28 December 1960

<sup>4</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>5</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>6</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>7</sup> TAC SO GB-100, 27 September 1991

## 56th Fighter Wing Honors \*<sup>8</sup>

### *Service Streamers.*

#### **World War II American Theater \***

### *Campaign Streamers.*

#### **World War II European-African-Middle Eastern Theater \***

Air Combat [1941-1945]  
 Air Offensive Europe [1942-1944]<sup>9</sup>  
 Normandy [1944]<sup>10</sup>  
 Northern France [1944]<sup>11</sup>  
 Rhineland [1944-1945]<sup>12</sup>  
 Ardennes-Alsace [1944-1945]<sup>13</sup>  
 Central Europe [1945]<sup>14</sup>

#### **Vietnam**

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II [1967-1968]  
 Vietnam Air/Ground [1968]  
 Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III [1968]<sup>15</sup>  
 Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV [1968-1969]  
 Tet 1969 Counteroffensive [1969]  
 Vietnam Summer/Fall 1969 [1969]  
 Vietnam Winter/Spring 1970 [1969-1970]<sup>16</sup>  
 Sanctuary Counteroffensive [1970]<sup>17</sup>  
 Southwest Monsoon [1970]<sup>17</sup>  
 Commando Hunt V [1970-1971]<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> \* **NOTE:** The 56th Fighter Group's honors for 15 January 1941-18 October 1945, 1 May 1946-14 August 1947, and 18 August 1955-1 February 1961 are temporarily bestowed upon the 56th Fighter Wing. The group was active, but not a component of the 56th Wing during those periods. The history of the 56th Group between 15 August 1947 and 6 February 1952 is a permanent part of the wing's history, since the group was a component of the wing. The bestowal means, that the wing may display as its own, the group's service and campaign streamers and the two Distinguished Unit Citations.

<sup>9</sup> WD GO 85/1945

<sup>10</sup> WD GO 102/1945

<sup>11</sup> WD GO 103/1945

<sup>12</sup> WD GO 118/1945

<sup>13</sup> WD GO 114/1945 & WD GO 24/1947

<sup>14</sup> WD GO 116/1945

<sup>15</sup> PACAF SO G-184, 30 July 1969

<sup>16</sup> PACAF SO G-352, 14 June 1971

<sup>17</sup> PACAF SO GB-0019, 31 January 1974

<sup>18</sup> PACAF SO GB-0022, 31 January 1974

**Campaign Streamers. (Continued)****Vietnam (Continued)**

Commando Hunt VI [1971]<sup>19</sup>  
 Commando Hunt VII [1971-1972]<sup>20</sup>  
 Vietnam Cease Fire [1972-1973]<sup>21</sup>

**Decorations.****Distinguished Unit Citations \***

European Theater of Operations, 20 February-9 March 1944<sup>22</sup>  
 Holland, 18 September 1944<sup>23</sup>

**Presidential Unit Citations**

Southeast Asia 1 November 1968-1 May 1969<sup>24</sup>  
 Southeast Asia 1 October 1969-30 April 1970<sup>25</sup>  
 Southeast Asia 1 April 1972-22 February 1973.<sup>26</sup>

**Air Force Outstanding Unit Award**

1 December 1970-30 November 1971 with Combat "V" Device<sup>27</sup>  
 1 December 1971-29 February 1972 with Combat "V" Device<sup>28</sup>  
 23 February 1973-28 February 1974 with Combat "V" Device<sup>29</sup>  
 24 January 1975-2 May 1975 with Combat "V" Device<sup>30</sup>  
 1 January 1977-1 January 1979<sup>31</sup>  
 1 July 1980-31 May 1982<sup>32</sup>  
 1 June 1984-31 May 1986<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> PACAF SO GB-0025, 31 January 1974

<sup>20</sup> PACAF SO GB-0027, 31 January 1974

<sup>21</sup> PACAF SO GB-0187, 15 July 1974

<sup>22</sup> WD GO 34/1944

<sup>23</sup> WD GO 34/1944

<sup>24</sup> DAF SO GB-552/1970

<sup>25</sup> DAF SO GB-352, 14 June 1971

<sup>26</sup> DAF SO GB-046, 20 January 1977

<sup>27</sup> DAF SO GB-667, 28 September 1972

<sup>28</sup> DAF SO GB-553, 31 July 1973

<sup>29</sup> DAF SO GB-600, 17 July 1975

<sup>30</sup> DAF SO GB-623, 10 August 1976

<sup>31</sup> DAF SO GB-719, 30 November 1979

<sup>32</sup> DAF SO GB-117, 22 February 1983

<sup>33</sup> DAF SO GB-275/1987

**Decorations. (Continued)**  
**Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (Continued)**

1 May 1987-30 April 1989<sup>34</sup>  
 1 May 1989-30 April 1990<sup>35</sup>  
 1 May 1990-30 April 1991<sup>36</sup>  
 1 July 1994-30 June 1996<sup>37</sup>  
 1 July 1996-30 June 1998<sup>38</sup>  
 1 July 1998-30 June 2000<sup>39</sup>  
 1 July 2001-30 June 2003<sup>40</sup>  
 [1 July] 2003-30 June 2005<sup>41</sup>  
 1 July 2005-30 June 2006<sup>42</sup>  
 1 July 2006-30 June 2007<sup>43</sup>  
 1 July 2007-30 June 2008<sup>44</sup>  
 1 July 2008-30 June 2009<sup>45</sup>  
 1 July 2009-30 June 2010<sup>46</sup>  
 1 July 2010-30 June 2011<sup>47</sup>  
 1 July 2011-30 June 2012<sup>48</sup>  
 1 July 2012-30 June 2013<sup>49</sup>  
 1 July 2013-30 June 2014<sup>50</sup>  
 1 July 2014-30 June 2015<sup>51</sup>  
 1 July 2015-30 June 2016<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> TAC SO GA-053, 29 August 1989

<sup>35</sup> TAC SO GA-048, 16 August 1990

<sup>36</sup> TAC SO GA-069, 26 September 1991

<sup>37</sup> AETC SO GA-18, 15 November 1996

<sup>38</sup> AETC SO GA-12, 9 November 1998

<sup>39</sup> AETC SO GA-9, 8 December 2000

<sup>40</sup> AETC SO GA-55, 29 April 2004

<sup>41</sup> AETC SO GA-0052, 22 June 2006

<sup>42</sup> AETC SO GA-045, 8 May 2007

<sup>43</sup> AETC SO G-054, 28 February 2008

<sup>44</sup> AETC SO G-071, 3 April 2009

<sup>45</sup> AETC SO G-025, 11 March 2010

<sup>46</sup> AETC SO G-086, 9 May 2011

<sup>47</sup> AETC SO G-171, 17 April 2012

<sup>48</sup> AETC SO G-036, 1 March 2013

<sup>49</sup> AETC SO G-017, 1 February 2014

<sup>50</sup> AETC SO G-029, 8 January 2015

<sup>51</sup> AETC SO G-006, 14 October 2016

<sup>52</sup> AETC SO G-022, 22 March 2017

**Decorations. (Continued)****Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (Continued)**1 July 2016-30 June 2017<sup>53</sup>1 July 2017-30 June 2018<sup>54</sup>1 July 2018-30 June 2019<sup>55</sup>**Special Honors.**

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, 6 April 1967-28 January 1973

**PAST AND PRESENT UNITS ASSIGNED**

<b>Currently Assigned Units</b>	<b>Time Frame Assigned</b>
56th Comptroller Squadron	1 April 1994 <sup>56</sup>
56th Operations Group	1 April 1994 <sup>57</sup>
56th Logistics Group later, 56th Maintenance Group	1 April 1994 <sup>58</sup>
56th Support Group later 56th Mission Support Group	1 April 1994 <sup>59</sup>
56th Medical Group	1 April 1994 <sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> AETC SO G-015, 19 December 2017

<sup>54</sup> AETC SO G-057, 20 May 2019

<sup>55</sup> AETC SO G-013, 18 Dep 2019

<sup>56</sup> AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994

<sup>57</sup> AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994

<sup>58</sup> AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994

<sup>59</sup> AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994

<sup>60</sup> AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994



Previously Assigned Units	Time Frame Assigned
<b>Groups</b>	
54th Fighter Group	1 March 2014-1 October 2018 <sup>61</sup>
56th Fighter Group	
later, 56th Fighter-Interceptor Group	15 August 1947-6 February 1952.
56th Operations Group	1 November 1991 <sup>62</sup> -4 January 1994.
56th Airdrome Group	15 August 1947-1 August 1948.
56th Air Base Group	1 August 1948-6 February 1952.
56th Air Base Group	
later, 56th Combat Support Group	1 February 1961-1 January 1964. <sup>63</sup>
56th Combat Support Group	
later, 56th Support Group	8 April 1967-4 January 1994. <sup>64</sup>
56th Maintenance and Supply Group	15 August 1947-1 August 1948.
56th Maintenance and Supply Group	1 August 1948-6 February 1952.
56th Logistics Group	1 November 1991 <sup>65</sup> -4 January 1994 <sup>66</sup>
56th Station Medical Group	15 August 1947-1 August 1948.
56th Station Medical Group	
later, 56th Medical Group	1 August 1948-6 February 1952.
56th USAF Hospital	1 February 1961-1 January 1964. <sup>67</sup>
56th USAF Dispensary	
later, 56th USAF Hospital <sup>68</sup>	8 April 1967 <sup>69</sup> -30 June 1975. <sup>70</sup>
USAF Regional Hospital, MacDill	
later, 56th Medical Group	30 June 1975-4 January 1994. <sup>71</sup>

<sup>61</sup> AETC SO G-14-8, 21 February 2014 and AETC SO G-18-23, 26 Sep 2018

<sup>62</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>63</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>64</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967; ACC SO GB-18, 30 December 1993

<sup>65</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>66</sup> ACC SO GB-18, 30 December 1993

<sup>67</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>68</sup> **NOTE:** Redesignated 56th Tactical Hospital and activated in 1987 as a subordinate of the USAF Regional Hospital, MacDill. Regional Hospital became 56th Medical Group.

<sup>69</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>70</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>71</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975; ACC SO GB-18, 30 December 1993

<b>Previously Assigned Units (Continued)</b>	<b>Time Frame Assigned</b>
<i>Squadrons.</i>	
1st Air Commando Squadron, Fighter later, 1st Special Operations Squadron	20 December 1967 <sup>72</sup> -15 December 1972.
13th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron	15 January 1976-1 July 1982.
18th Special Operations Squadron	25 August 1971-31 December 1972.
21st Helicopter Squadron later, 21 Special Operations Squadron	27 November 1967-30 June 1975.
22d Special Operations Squadron	25 October 1968-30 September 1970.
23d Tactical Air Support Squadron	15 March 1972-30 June 1975.
56th Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron later, 56th Avionics Maintenance Squadron	8 April 1967-15 July 1974. <sup>73</sup>
56th Avionics Maintenance Squadron later, 56th Component Repair Squadron	30 June 1975 <sup>74</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>75</sup>
56th Comptroller Squadron	15 August 1988-4 January 1994. <sup>76</sup>
56th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron	1 February 1961 <sup>77</sup> -1 January 1964 <sup>78</sup> ; 15 July 1974 <sup>79</sup> -30 June 1975;
56th Field Maintenance Squadron	8 April 1967 <sup>80</sup> -15 July 1974.
56th Field Maintenance Squadron later, 56th Equipment Maintenance Squadron	30 July 1975 <sup>81</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>82</sup>
56th Munitions Maintenance Squadron	1 December 1973-15 July 1974 <sup>83</sup> 30 June 1975 <sup>84</sup> -1 November 1977

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<sup>72</sup> PACAF SO G-212, 21 November 1967

<sup>73</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967; PACAF SO GA-20, 17 June 1974

<sup>74</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>75</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>76</sup> ACC SO GB-18, 30 December 1993

<sup>77</sup> ADC GO #192, 28 December 1960

<sup>78</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>79</sup> PACAF SO GA-20, 17 June 1974

<sup>80</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>81</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>82</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>83</sup> PACAF SO GA-20, 17 June 1974

<sup>84</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<b>Previously Assigned Units (Continued)</b>	<b>Time Frame Assigned</b>
<b><i>Squadrons (Continued)</i></b>	
56th Organizational Maintenance Squadron	3 July 1972-15 July 1974 <sup>85</sup>
56th Organizational Maintenance Squadron later, 56th Aircraft Generation Squadron	30 June 1975 <sup>86</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>87</sup>
56th Supply Squadron	1 April 1963-1 January 1964 <sup>88</sup> ; 8 April 1967 <sup>89</sup> -28 February 1975; 30 June 1975 <sup>90</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>91</sup>
56th Tactical Training Squadron	1 October 1979-1 November 1991. <sup>92</sup>
56th Transportation Squadron	1 April 1963-1 January 1964 <sup>93</sup> ; 8 April 1967-bef 30 September 1973; 30 June 1975 <sup>94</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>95</sup>
61st Tactical Fighter Squadron later, 61st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron	30 June 1975 <sup>96</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>97</sup>
62d Fighter Interceptor Squadron	1 February 1961 <sup>98</sup> -16 December 1963.
62d Tactical Fighter Squadron later, 62d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron	30 June 1975 <sup>99</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>100</sup>
63d Tactical Fighter Squadron later, 63d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron	30 June 1975 <sup>101</sup> -1 November 1991. <sup>102</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> PACAF SO GA-20, 17 June 1974

<sup>86</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>87</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>88</sup> SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>89</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>90</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>91</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>92</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>93</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>94</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>95</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>96</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>97</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>98</sup> ADC GO #192, 28 December 1960

<sup>99</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>100</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>101</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

<sup>102</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<b>Previously Assigned Units (Continued)</b>	<b>Time Frame Assigned</b>
<b><i>Squadrons (Continued)</i></b>	
72d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron	1 July 1982-1 November 1991. <sup>103</sup>
361st Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron	1 September 1972-30 June 1974 <sup>104</sup>
456th Munitions Maintenance Squadron	1 December 1967-1 December 1973
554th Reconnaissance Squadron	15 December 1970-30 September 1972.
602d Fighter Squadron, Commando later, 602d Special Operations Squadron	8 April 1967 <sup>105</sup> -31 December 1970.
606th Air Commando Squadron later, 606th Special Operations Squadron	8 April 1967 <sup>106</sup> -15 June 1971.
609th Air Commando Squadron later, 609th Special Operations Squadron	15 September 1967 <sup>107</sup> -1 December 1969.
4456th Avionics Maintenance Squadron later, 4456th Component Repair Squadron	bef 8 April 1977-Unknown <sup>108</sup>
4456th Field Maintenance Squadron later, 4456th Equipment Maintenance Squadron	bef 8 April 1977-Unknown <sup>109</sup>
4456th Organizational Maintenance Squadron later, 4456th Aircraft Generation Squadron	bef 8 April 1977-Unknown <sup>110</sup>
4501st Tactical Fighter Replacement Squadron	15 January 1983-1 April 1994 30 June 1975 <sup>111</sup> -15 January 1976

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<sup>103</sup> TAC SO GB-16, 1 November 1991

<sup>104</sup> PACAF SO G-159, 31 August 1972

<sup>105</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>106</sup> PACAF SO G-41, 8 March 1967

<sup>107</sup> PACAF SO G-141, ca. 15 September 1967

<sup>108</sup> TAC SO GA-31, 8 April 1977

<sup>109</sup> TAC SO GA-31, 8 April 1977

<sup>110</sup> TAC SO GA-31, 8 April 1977

<sup>111</sup> TAC SO GA-12, 10 June 1975

Previously Assigned Units (Continued)	Time Frame Assigned
<i>Squadrons (Continued)</i>	
88th Air Base Squadron	attached 1 February 1952-6 February 1952
97th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron	attached 1 December 1950-20 May 1951.
464th Signal Heavy Construction Company (Aviation)	attached ca. 1 February 1948-May 1949
468th Signal Heavy Construction Company (Aviation)	attached ca. October 1948-ca. 23 May 1949
Company B, 838th Engineer Aviation Battalion	attached ca. 20 May 1948-ca. October 1948
4301st Base Service Squadron later 2476th Base Service Squadron later 4655th Base Service Squadron	1 August 1948-1 December 1948; attached 20 September 1950-14 February 1951
4684th Air Base Squadron later, 88th Air Base Squadron	21 December 1951 <sup>112</sup> -5 February 1952



Four North American F-86A Sabres of the 62d Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Wing, flew over Chicago in February 1951. Top to bottom Tail Numbers were 53-1243, 53-1288, 53-1264, and 53-1262.

<sup>112</sup> EADF GO 120, n.d.; 4684 AB Sq GO 1, 21 December 1951; 88 AB Sq GO-1, 1 February 1952

### Assignments and Stations

**Assignments.** Fifteenth Air Force, 15 August 1947<sup>113</sup>; Strategic Air Command, 1 October 1947<sup>114</sup>; Tenth Air Force, 1 December 1948 (attached to 26th Air Division [Defense], 10 December 1949-19 February 1950; 30th Air Division [Defense], 20 February 1950-); Eastern Air Defense Force, 1 September 1950-6 February 1952 (remained attached to 30th Air Division [Defense] to 6 February 1952). Air Defense Command, 28 December 1960; Sault Sainte Marie Air Defense Sector, 1 February 1961; Duluth Air Defense Sector, 1 October 1963-1 January 1964.<sup>115</sup> Pacific Air Forces, 16 March 1967; Thirteenth Air Force, 8 April 1967 (attached to Seventh Air Force, 8 April 1967-26 February 1974; United States Support Activities Group/Seventh Air Force, 27 February 1974-30 June 1975); Ninth Air Force, 30 June 1975; Nineteenth Air Force, 1 April 1994<sup>116</sup>; Air Education and Training Command, 12 July 2012<sup>117</sup>; Nineteenth Air Force, 1 October 2014-Present.<sup>118</sup>

**Stations.** Selfridge Field (later, Air Force Base), Michigan, 15 August 1947-6 February 1952. K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base, Michigan, 1 February 1961-1 January 1964.<sup>119</sup> Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, 8 April 1967-30 June 1975; MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, 30 June 1975; Luke AFB Air Force Base, Arizona, 1 April 1994<sup>120</sup>-Present.

**Emblem.** Emblem originally approved on 19 April 1967. Newest rendition approved on 16 May 2013



Lt Col Francis S. Gabreski, 61st Fighter Squadron, talks with his Crew Chief, S/Sgt Ralph Safford and Assistant Crew Chief, Schacki.

<sup>113</sup> 15 AF GO-77, 20 August 1947

<sup>114</sup> SAC GO-93, 12 September 1947

<sup>115</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>116</sup> AETC MO MO-2, 25 March 1994

<sup>117</sup> AETC SO G-12-18, 30 May 2012

<sup>118</sup> AETC SO G-14-28, 30 Sep 2014

<sup>119</sup> AFOMO 90n, 16 September 1963 and SAC SO G-82, 25 September 1963

<sup>120</sup> AETC MO MO-2, 25 March 1994

## 56th Fighter Wing Primary Aircraft

### Aircraft.

#### Post War and Korean War

Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star	1947-1950
North American F-86 Sabre	1950-1952
Republic F-47 Thunderbolt	1951-1952
North American F-51 Mustang	1951-1952
Lockheed F-94 Starfire	1951-1952

#### Air Defense

McDonnell F-101 Voodoo	1961-1963
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#### Viet Nam War

De Havilland U-6 Beaver	1967
Douglas A-26 Invader	1967-1969
Helio U-10 Super Courier	1967-1969
Douglas A-1 Skyraider	1967-1972
North American RT-28 Trojan	1967-1972
Sikorsky CH-3 Jolly Green Giant	1967-1972
North American T-28 Trojan	1967-1973
Fairchild C-123 Provider	1967-1971
Fairchild UC-123 Provider	1968-1971
Douglas C-47 Skytrain	1969-1972
Beech QU-22	1970-1972
Sikorsky CH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant	1970-1975
Fairchild AC-119K Stinger	1971-1972
Sikorsky H-34 Choctaw	1972
Douglas EC-47 Skytrain	1972-1974
North American OV-10 Bronco	1972-1975
Cessna O-1 Bird Dog	1973

#### Post Viet Nam War

McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II	1975-1982
Bell UH-1P Iroquois	1975-1987
Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon	1980-Present
McDonnell Douglas F-15E Strike Eagle	1994-1995
Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II	2014-Present



### Wing Commanders

#### 56th Fighter Wing [15 August 1947-20 January 1950]

Col William T. Hudnell	15 August 1947	(Major General)
Lt Col David T. McKnight	June 1949	
Col James R. Gunn, Jr	23 August 49-20 January 1950	

#### 56th Fighter Interceptor Wing [20 January 1950-6 February 1952]

Col James R. Gunn, Jr	20 January 1950	
Col George S. Brown	15 August 1951-February 1952	(General-CJCS)

#### 56th Fighter Wing (Air Defense) [1 February 1961 – 1 January 1964]

Col James F. Reed	1 February 1961 <sup>121</sup>	
Col John M. Konosky	16 May 1963 <sup>122</sup> – 1 January 1964	

#### 56th Air Commando Wing [16 March 1967 – 1 August 1968]

None (not manned)	16 March-1967	
Col Harry C. Aderholt	8 April 1967 <sup>123</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col Roland K. McCoskrie	19 November 1967-1 August 1968 <sup>124</sup>	



Col William T. Hudnell,  
The First Commander of the 56th Fighter Wing

<sup>121</sup> 56 FW 19610201-19610331 History, p. 3

<sup>122</sup> 56 FW SO G-20, 16 May 1963

<sup>123</sup> 56 CSG SO G-08, 29 May 1967

<sup>124</sup> 56 CSG SO G-16, 19 November 1967

**Commanders. (Continued)****56th Special Operations Wing [1 August 1968 – 30 June 1975]**

Col Roland K. McCoskrie	1 August 1968	
Col Edwin J. White, Jr.	November 1968	(Brigadier General)
Col Patrick M. Fallon	May 1969	(KIA, 4 July 1969)
Col Edwin J. White, Jr	June 1969	(Brigadier General)
Col Samuel E. Crosby, Jr	October 1969	
Col Edward J. Walsh, Jr	August 1970	
Col Jack A. Robinson	July 1971	
Col Norbert L. Simon	July 1972	
Col Robert E. Wayne	December 1972	
Col William B. Owens	July 1973	
Col Ralph H. Bowersox	September 1973	
Col Charles F. Wood	September 1973	
Col Perry J. Dahl	July 1974	[Ace]
Col Harry A. Goodall	February 1975-30 June 1975.	(Lieutenant General)

**56th Tactical Fighter Wing [30 June 1975-1 October 1981]**

Col Gerald J. Carey	30 June 1975	(Major General)
Col Ernest A. Bedke	August 1975	(Major General)
Col Charles J. Cunningham	November 1977	(Lieutenant General)
Col Henry D. Canterbury	July 1979-1 October 1981.	(Major General)

**56th Tactical Training Wing [1 October 1981-1 October 1991]**

Col Henry Viccellio, Jr	January 1982	(General-AFMC)
Col Ronald R. Fogleman	May 1983	(General-CSAF)
Col Jimmy L. Cash	August 1984	(Brigadier General)
Col Joseph W. Ralston	February 1986	(General-USEUCOM)
Col James L. Jamerson	February 1987	(General-DCINC USEUCOM)
Brig Gen Ben Nelson, Jr	January 1989-1 October 1991	

On 31 October 2013, Ms. Dorothy M. Rowe completed 70 years of federal service. Ms. Rowe began working for the government in Ohio in 1943. She came to Luke AFB in 1953 to be a secretary. From September 1989 until her retirement, she was the Chief of Financial Analysis at Luke AFB.



**Commanders. (Continued)****56th Fighter Wing [1 October 1991-.]**

Brig Gen Ben Nelson, Jr	1 October 1991	
Col (later, Brig Gen) Marvin R. Esmond	September 1992	(Lieutenant General)
Col Charles T. Ohlinger III	19 August 1993-4 January 1994 <sup>125</sup>	
Active without Personnel or Equipment	4 January 1994	
Brig Gen Stephen B. Plummer	1 April 1994 <sup>126</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen (later, Maj Gen) Marvin R. Esmond	14 April 1995 <sup>127</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Carrol H. Chandler	2 April 1996 <sup>128</sup>	(General-VCSAF)
Brig Gen John L. Barry	17 July 1998 <sup>129</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Stephen T. Sargeant	15 February 2000 <sup>130</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Philip M. Breedlove	17 June 2002 <sup>131</sup>	(General-SACEUR)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Robin Rand	8 June 2004 <sup>132</sup>	(General-AFGSC)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Noel T. Jones	13 June 2006 <sup>133</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Kurt F. Neubauer	9 July 2008 <sup>134</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Jerry D. Harris, Jr.	20 September 2010 <sup>135</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen Michael D. Rothstein	12 September 2012 <sup>136</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Scott L. Pleus	20 June 2014 <sup>137</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen Brook J. Leonard	13 July 2016 <sup>138</sup>	
Brig Gen Todd D. Canterbury	20 June 2018 <sup>139</sup>	
Brig Gen Gregory Kreuder	21 May 2020 <sup>140</sup> – Present.	

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<sup>125</sup> 9 AF SO G-41, 26 July 1993

<sup>126</sup> [58 FW SO SO-GA-001, 24 June 1993]

<sup>127</sup> 19 AF SO G-002, 6 April 1995

<sup>128</sup> 19 AF SO G-007, 26 March 1996

<sup>129</sup> 56 MSS SO SO-GR-002, 17 July 1998

<sup>130</sup> 19 AF SO G-00-002, 14 February 2000

<sup>131</sup> 19 AF SO 56 MSS G-3, 13 June 2002

<sup>132</sup> 19 AF SO 56 MSS G-1-2004, 7 May 2004

<sup>133</sup> 56 FW SO MSG-06-02, 13 June 2006

<sup>134</sup> 56 MSG SO G-033, 3 July 2008

<sup>135</sup> 56 MSG SO G-032, 15 September 2010

<sup>136</sup> 56 MSG SO G-034, 10 September 2012

<sup>137</sup> 56 MSG SO GS-20-14, 19 June 2014

<sup>138</sup> 19 AF SO G-16-011, 7 July 2016

<sup>139</sup> 19 AF SO G-18-004, 31 May 2018

<sup>140</sup> 19 AF SO G-20-005, 5 May 2020

## Wing Operations

The wing supported exercises, operations, and training programs of Strategic Air Command, 1947-1948. It pioneered the first west-to-east jet fighter transatlantic crossing along the northern air route in July 1948 and provided air defense for a large portion of the northeastern United States, December 1948-February 1952. The 56th provided air defense in the Michigan area, 1961-1963. It performed combat in Southeast Asia, April 1967-August 1973, and combat support until June 1975, employing a wide variety of aircraft to meet specialized missions. Those missions included interdiction, psychological warfare, close air support, search and rescue, forward air control, training Thai and Laotian air forces, and helicopter escort for clandestine insertion and extraction of personnel in Laos and North Vietnam. Provided close air support during the sieges of Lima Site 85, January-March 1968, and Khe Sanh, February-April 1968. Wing elements participated in the Son Tay Prison raid on 21 November 1970 and continued combat in Vietnam until mid-January 1973, in Laos until 22 February 1973, and in Cambodia until 15 August 1973. The 56th assisted in the evacuations of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 11 April 1975 and Saigon, Vietnam, 29-30 April 1975. Provided forward air control and helicopter insertion/extraction support during the SS Mayaguez rescue operation on 15 May 1975. Upon return to the United States on 30 June 1975, it absorbed resources of the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing and operated MacDill AFB and nearby Avon Park Range, Florida. The wing conducted F-4D/E replacement training for pilots, weapon systems officers, and maintenance personnel, July 1975-July 1982. It was equipped with UH-1P helicopters, 1976-1987, to support Avon Range logistics needs, search and rescue efforts, and humanitarian missions. With conversion to F-16A/B aircraft in 1980-1982, the 56th became the designated unit for transitioning USAF and select allied nation pilots into the new fighter, while continuing to augment NORAD's air defense forces in the southeastern US. The wing provided logistic support to US Central Command beginning in 1983 and to US Special Operations Command after 1986. It upgraded to F-16C/D aircraft in 1988-1990, providing support personnel and equipment to units in Southwest Asia, August 1990-March 1991. Beginning in 1994, the wing primarily provided combat crew training to US and Allied services. In 2014, the wing received its first F-35A aircraft and began training.



Sikorsky CH-53 Super Jolly Green Giant Tail No. 68-10933, 21st Special Operations Squadron, 56th Special Operations Wing offloads troops in Southwest Asia. On 14 May 1975, this helicopter crashed during the Mayaguez Incident killing all 23 Airmen aboard.

### **History of Luke AFB**

On 8 August 1940, the same day the Battle of Britain began, President Franklin D. Roosevelt directed the military to produce 12,000 pilots annually. In response to that order, the Army Air Corps conducted feasibility studies for the construction of eight new air fields. Phoenix City Manager Donald C. Scott announced on 13 February 1941 that the War Department had approved a site two miles north of the town of Litchfield Park, Arizona, for the construction of an advanced single engine flying training base. The site not only had almost year-round flying weather, but it also enjoyed proximity to vast stretches of Sonoran Desert that were ideal for bombing and gunnery practice. Two days later, Lt Col Ennis C. Whitehead arrived in the area to supervise construction of the base and to act as its first commander.

Del Webb Corporation broke ground on Litchfield Park Air Base on 31 March 1941, and on 6 June 1941 the installation was renamed Luke Field for 2d Lt Frank Luke, Jr., a Phoenix native, who was a World War I triple ace, and first Army aviator to be awarded the Medal of Honor. The first student pilot class began training the next day. During World War II, Luke Field produced 17,321 graduates from fighter training programs for the US and its allies. The base closed on 30 November 1946.

Luke AFB was redesignated an air force base when it reopened on 1 February 1951 in response to a need for fighter aircrews generated by the Korean Conflict. The base was initially equipped with F-51 Mustang and F-84 Thunderjet aircraft. In 1957, Luke AFB joined the supersonic age when the North American F-100 Super Sabre was assigned to the base. That was followed in 1964 by foreign military sales programs in the F-104 Starfighter and the F-5A Freedom Fighter. The A-7D Corsair arrived in 1969, but was reassigned shortly after when USAF decided to make Luke AFB the Air Force's primary F-4 Phantom II training base. The first F-4 arrived in 1971. The first of the "Superfighters," the F-15 Eagle, was assigned to the base in 1974 followed in 1982 by the second "Superfighter," the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Then in 1988, the F-15E Strike Eagle arrived. Three years later, USAF's decision to make Luke AFB the service's primary F-16 training base led to the reassignment of the F-15s and four years later, in 1995, the F-15E was reassigned.

Prior to the reassignment of the F-15E, the real world political and military situation resulted in a perceived lessening of international tensions and resulted in a down-sizing of the nation's military. Senior Air Force leadership moved to ensure the most highly decorated units in USAF history remained as part of the active force during the drawdown. That led to the reassignment of one of the most highly decorated units in USAF history, the 56th Fighter Wing, from the scheduled-to-close MacDill AFB, Florida, to Luke AFB on 1 April 1994. On 1 August 2012 and 27 June 2013, the Air Force announced that Luke AFB would be the F-35A Pilot Training Center for 72 aircraft and then for another 72, respectively, totaling 144 aircraft. On 10 March 2014, the first F-35A landed at Luke AFB starting the next period in the history of Luke AFB Air Force Base. Since 1941, Luke AFB has produced over 61,100 graduates from fighter training programs for the US and its allies and is truly: "Fighter Country."

## Luke Field/AFB Chronology

### World War II

- 8 August 1940 President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered military to produce 12,000 pilots annually for proposed 54-group Army Air Corps.
- 1 October 1940 Lieutenant Colonel Arthur L Wilson, Army's airport engineer chief, arrived in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss possible establishment of flying training base.
- 26 November 1940 Brig Gen Henry W. Harms, West Coast Training Center commander, recommended Phoenix site to War Department for construction of advanced single engine flying training base.
- 17 December 1940 President Roosevelt increased target for annual pilot production from 12,000 to 30,000.
- 13 February 1941 Phoenix City Manager Donald C. Scott announced War Dept okayed for site just north of Litchfield Park, Arizona, for construction of air base and leased to Army for \$1 annually.
- 29 March 1941 Del Webb Construction Company broke ground for first building.
- 21 April 1941 Litchfield Park Air Base, Arizona, formally designated.
- 1 June 1941 Second Lieutenant Martin D. Mulligan, a flight instructor piloting a North American AT-6 Texan, made first landing at base.
- 6 June 1941 Base renamed Luke Field for 2d Lt Frank Luke, Jr., Phoenix native who achieved triple ace status in WW I and first aviator awarded Medal of Honor.
- 7 June 1941 Class 41-F began training at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport.
- 20 June 1941 Army Air Corps redesignated Army Air Forces.
- 15 July 1941 Flight operations moved from Sky Harbor to Luke Field.
- 15 August 1941 Class 41-F and 43 students first class to complete training.
- 5 September 1941 President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8892 withdrawing federal lands at Gila Bend, Arizona, from public use and set land aside for bombing/gunnery practice.
- 29 September 1941 Luke Field formally dedicated.
- 7 December 1941 Nation's entry into World War II saw Luke AFB construction 95 percent complete with facilities for 3,700 personnel.

26 December 1941 Federal judge authorized government to seize cattle on Gila Bend Range. Ranchers had grazing rights under Taylor Grazing Act and refused to move herds after President Roosevelt issued his 5 September 1941 order. Judge's ruling prompted ranchers to move herds.

December 1941 Heavy rains caused flooding; base covered with silt and debris.

9 January 1942 Second Lieutenant Richard I. Bong completed AT-6 advanced training as a member of Class 42-A. He was all-time top US ace with 40 kills and received Medal of Honor.



Second Lieutenant Richard I. Bong  
as an Instructor Pilot at Luke AFB in 1942

30 January 1942 Gila Bend Gunnery Range placed on exempted status.

18 March 1942 Executive Order 9104 issued and again allowed military use of Gila Bend Range.



On 27 March 1942, the first Chinese Air Force AT-6 class, 42-E, graduated 42 students.

25 May 1942 Project started to modify irrigation ditches/drainage canals to carry excess flood waters away from base.

22 June 1942 Curtis P-40 Warhawk training began.

14 July 1942 Heavy rains filled canal near base and resulted in flood.

September 1942 Heavy rains damaged Luke Field and disrupted training.

12 September 1942 First Chinese Air Force P-40 class, 42-F, graduated 40 students.

2 October 1942 First Army Air Forces class completed P-40 training.

- 6 November 1942 Interior Department Order 56 allowed military use of Gila Bend Range.
- 14 March 1943 Base's P-40 operational training unit revised into P-40 fighter transition training program.
- April 1943 First US P-40 fighter transition class graduated.
- 5 June 1943 First Women's Army Auxiliary Corps members arrived at Luke AFB.
- July 1943 Record-setting 49,784 sorties flown in one month.
- December 1943 Luke AFB produced record 6,447 graduates during year.



On 7 February 1944, Col Lester S. Harris, Director of Training, Maj Hugh A. Griffith, Jr., Base Operations Officer, and Capt William A. Payton, Assistant Operations Officer, greet Col John K. Nissley, Commanding Officer after he completed the 1,000,000 flying hour at Luke Field.

- 23 August 1944 First Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) arrived at Luke AFB.
- 20 December 1944 WASP unit inactivated.
- December 1944 Luke AFB had 546 aircraft, the largest number ever assigned to base.
- 28 February 1945 Executive Order 9526 issued allowing military use of Gila Bend Range.
- 13 March 1945 Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter transition training began.
- July 1945 North American P-51 Mustang fighter transition training began.
- 14 August 1945 P-40, P-38, and P-51 training terminated for US pilots.
- 13 October 1945 Chinese Air Force P-40 training ended.
- 15 May 1946 Chinese Air Force P-51 training ended.
- 15 May 1946 Class 46-A (AT-6) graduated as last class at Luke AFB.



- 30 November 1946 3028th Army Air Forces Air Base Unit inactivated at Luke Field. Base became auxiliary of Williams Field, Arizona. Luke Field produced 17,231 graduates training during World War II, including 13,568 US and 508 Chinese Air Force in AT-6, 2,483 US and 331 Chinese Air Force in P-40, 280 US in P-38, and 61 US graduates in P-51 program.
- 30 November 1946 Gila Bend Range reassigned to Williams Field and redesignated Williams Bombing and Gunnery Range.
- 13 January 1948 Williams Field renamed Williams Air Force Base.
- 28 May 1948 Congress enacted Public Law 561 allowing military use of range.

### **Korean War to Present**

- 1 January 1951 Luke AFB redesignated an Air Force Base; removed from inactive list in response to need for fighter aircrews generated by Korean Conflict.
- 1 February 1951 127th Fighter Wing (Michigan Air National Guard) federalized and assigned to Luke AFB as 127th Pilot Training Wing. Base equipped with North American AT-6 Texan, North American F-51 Mustang, and Republic F-84 Thunderjet aircraft.
- 1 July 1951 Intense rains flood base. Residents of nearby Glendale took in military families whose quarters damaged by flooding.



Flooded Front Gate

- 14 November 1951 Gunnery range reassigned from Williams to Luke AFB as were Gila Bend and Dateland Air Force Auxiliary Fields, both in Arizona.
- 2 May 1952 Federal government took possession of 600,000 acres of public domain land to expand range at Gila Bend.

- 1 November 1952 127th Pilot Training Wing defederalized. The 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter) activated as Luke AFB host unit and assigned to the Crew Training Air Force-Air Training Command. The 3600th Flying Training Group, 3600th Air Base Group, 3600th Maintenance & Supply Group, and 3600th Medical Group activated as subordinates of the wing.
- 21 April 1953 F-51 program ended after producing 624 graduates.
- 25 May 1953 3600th USAF Air Demonstration Flight, the Thunderbirds, activated at Luke AFB flying the Republic F-84G Thunderjet.<sup>141</sup>



Left to Right: Aubrey D. "Brownie" Brown, Robert S. "Mac" McCormick, Cuthbert A. "Bill" Pattillo, Maj Richard C. "Dick" Catledge, Commander, and Charles C. "Buck" Pattillo

- 24 June 1953 The 3600th USAF Air Demonstration Flight (Arco-Jet) formally assigned to the wing
- 1 October 1953 The 3600th Medical Group redesignated the 3600th USAF Hospital
- December 1953 Range at Gila Bend included over 2 million acres of public lands and over 600,000 acres leased from state or private landowners.



On 4 September 1954, Captain Edward W. Kenny won Bendix Trophy Air Race/Bendix Trophy in F-84F when set cross-country record of three hours and two minutes for average speed of 616 miles per hour.

<sup>141</sup> 3600 FTW(F) GO 9, 23 May 1953



On 27 October 1954, 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter) redesignated 3600th Combat Crew Training Wing (Fighter). The 3600th Flying Training Group (Fighter) also redesignated the 3600th Combat Crew Training Group (Fighter).

- 15 February 1955      The 3600th Installations Group activated as a subordinate of the wing.
- April 1955            The Thunderbirds traveled to Long Island to pick up six new Republic F-84F Thunderstreak aircraft at the factory for the team.
- 7 April 1956         USAF gained title to land on which base situated from Phoenix for \$1.
- 31 May 1956         Thunderbirds moved to Nellis AFB, Nevada, to fly supersonic-capable North American F-100 Super Sabres assigned there.
- 1 July 1957          The 3600th Flying Training Wing (Fighter) reassigned to the Flying Training Air Force-Air Training Command.
- 23 August 1957      First German AF class entered F-84 training. Class included seven World War II Luftwaffe aces.



Left to right: Capt Friedrich Obleser (20 kills), Lt Col Guenther Rall (275), Capt Paul Schauder (20), Capt Fritz Wegner (8), Maj Erich Hartmann (352), Capt Dieter Bernhard (8), and 1st Lt Gerd Tetteroo (9).

- 8 November 1957      First F-100 Super Sabre delivered to Luke AFB.



Senator Barry M. Goldwater, Air Force Reserve Officer, climbs into a North American F-100 at Luke AFB.



On 1 April 1958, The 3600th Combat Crew Training Wing reassigned as a direct subordinate of Air Training Command.

1 July 1958

In a move to place all fighter training under one command, Air Training Command's 3600th Combat Crew Training Wing inactivated. The 4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (Tactical Fighter) activated in its stead reporting to Twelfth Air Force under Tactical Air Command. Subordinate groups were inactivated and the 4510th Combat Crew Training Group (Fighter), 4510th Air Base Group, 4510th Maintenance & Supply Group, 4510th Installations Group and 4510th USAF Hospital activated.

September 1959

Saguaro Manor base housing north of Glendale Ave opened with 724 units.





Building 1150, circa 1960

- 10 June 1960 Phoenix Air Defense Sector, Luke AFB's largest tenant unit, moved into "Blockhouse," bldg 1150, which was designed to withstand near miss by a nuclear device.
- 1 July 1960 The 4510th Installations Group redesignated 4510th Civil Engineering Group and relieved of assignment to the wing.
- 5 July 1960 F-86F program transferred to Luke AFB from Williams AFB.
- 23 October 1960 302d Special Operations Squadron assigned to base.
- 27 September 1962 F-86F program transferred to Nellis AFB after producing 123 graduates.
- 6 March 1963 Range redesignated Luke AFB Air Force Range.
- 1 July 1963 The 4510th Air Base Groups redesignated the 4510th Combat Support Group.
- 1 August 1963 The 4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (Tactical Fighter) reorganized using the dual deputy system with a Deputy Commander for Operations, a Deputy Commander for Materiel, 4510th Combat Support Group (Tactical Air Command), and the 4510th USAF Hospital. The 4510th Combat Crew Training Group and 4510th Maintenance Supply Group were discontinued. The following units were activated and assigned to the wing: 4511th, 4512th, 4514th, 4515th, 4516th, and 4517th Combat Crew Training Squadrons; 4511th, 4512th, and 4513th Organizational Maintenance Squadrons; 4510th Field Maintenance Squadron, 4514th Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron, 4515th Munitions Maintenance Squadron, and 4510th Supply Squadron.
- 1 December 1963 The 4441st Combat Crew Training Squadron organized at Williams Air Force Base, but was assigned to 4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (Tactical Fighter) at Luke AFB to train students to fly the Northrop F-5A/B Freedom Fighter.

- 1 December 1963 The 4518th Combat Crew Training Squadron activated and assigned to 4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (Tactical Fighter).
- 1 April 1964 The 4540th Combat Crew Training Group activated as a subordinate to the wing to conduct German Air Force F-104G training. The Group Commander, Col J.D. Collingsworth, was an equal to the Deputy Commander for Operations. The 4518th, Combat Crew Training Squadron was assigned to the group.



F-104s on the Luke AFB ramp.

- 1 April 1964 First F-104 student sortie flown under USAF/German Air Force F-104 Starfighter Foreign Military Sales Program.
- 30 April 1964 First F-5A Freedom Fighter delivered to 4441st Combat Crew Training Squadron at Williams AFB. Program conducted by Luke AFB but based at Williams due to commonality of maintenance/parts between F-5 and Williams T-38 trainer.
- 11 June 1964 F-84 program ended after producing 6,930 graduates.
- 15 June 1964 With the end of F-84 training, the 4513d Organizational Maintenance Squadron deactivated.
- 15 June 1964 Colonel James Jabara, the first jet ace, assumed command of the 4540th Combat Crew Training Group
- 22 July 1965 Project Skoshi Tiger conducted to determine combat effectiveness of F-5A. Success of test resulted in basing jets in South Vietnam.
- 12 December 1967 Luke AFB was operations center for Operation Haylift which saved 500,000 snowbound Indian livestock in northern Arizona.
- 1 September 1969 First A-7D Corsair delivered to base as part of plan to conduct fighter training in jet at Luke AFB.



- 15 October 1969      4510th Combat Crew Training Wing inactivated and 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing activated as Luke AFB host unit in move to redesignate training wings as fighter wings with combat histories. Also, 69th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron and 418th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated as F-104 units, and 425th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated as F-5 unit.
- 15 December 1969      310th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, which was historically aligned with 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing, activated to conduct A-7D training.
- 18 January 1970      311th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, which was historically aligned with 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing, activated to conduct F-100 training, and 426th and 550th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated to conduct F-100 training.
- 13 February 1970      First A-7D class entered training.
- 8 March 1970      Reassignment of A-7D program to Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, announced to make room for F-4 training.



Colonel John S. Clark, Jr., Commander, 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing climbs into his F-4C.

- February 1971 Ocotillo Manor opened with 150 family housing units on the south side of Glendale Ave.
- 7 May 1971 Wing received first F-4C Phantom II.
- 20 July 1971 Last A-7D class graduated. Program moved to Davis-Monthan AFB after producing 143 graduates.
- 30 August 1971 F-100 program ended after producing 3,451 graduates.
- 15 December 1972 Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) study submitted to Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to assist in planning for compatible land use near Luke AFB. Board judged requests for development on case-by-case basis as impossible in 1972 to determine what noise zones to adopt for what areas, and board's authority to zone based on noise was questioned.
- 6 April 1973 First F-5E Tiger II delivered to 425th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.
- 5 July 1974 555th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron reassigned without assets from Thailand to Luke AFB and named as USAF's first McDonnell Douglas F-15A Eagle squadron.
- 14 November 1974 First F-15A Eagle in USAF's operational inventory delivered to Luke AFB. Event presided over by President Gerald Ford.



Lieutenant Colonel Ernest T. "Ted" Laudis, Commander, 555th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron briefs President Gerald Ford on the F-15. Colonel Laudis flew the first F-15 into Luke AFB.

- 17 January 1975 Group called Westside Property Owners filed suit against Luke AFB charging F-15 bed down violated 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, that jet created air/noise pollution. They argued the F-15 posed dangerous accident threat, and that Environmental Impact Statement on bed down contained misleading/inaccurate statements.



- 20 August 1975 First F-15 repainted from air superiority blue to gray.
- 1976 1976 Luke AFB AICUZ published as land use planning guide. Report listed noise/accident potential zones near base caused by air operations. Study had no enforcement power.
- 17 June 1976 Federal judge ruled in favor of Luke AFB in Westside Property Owners' suit (see entry 17 January 1975).
- 23 June 1976 Second F-15 squadron, the 4461st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, activated.
- 1 October 1976 F-104 program began scaling down with inactivation of 418th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.
- 15 November 1976 Five Israeli AF pilots completed F-15 course, F1500F, with 555th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron as members of Class 76 AFL.
- 1 April 1977 New intermediate headquarters, Tactical Training Luke AFB (TTL), activated and 58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing redesignated a Tactical Training Wing under the headquarters.
- 1 July 1977 4461st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron inactivated and 461st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated to assume that unit's assets/mission.
- ca. 1977 Glendale annexed a 10-foot-wide strip around Luke AFB to protect it from encroachment.
- 6 June 1978 Fire from ground accident between two F-15s resulted in first CORKER (boron composite fibers subjected to combustion became electromagnetically charged and shorted out electrical systems).



- 29 August 1979 58th Tactical Training Wing conducted F-4/F-104/F-15/F-5 training. Span of control problems led to activation of second wing, 405th Tactical Training Wing, to assume F-5/F-15 programs while 58th Tactical Training Wing retained F-4/F-104 programs.
- 21 November 1980 302d Special Operations Squadron helicopters rescued 17 people during fire at MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

1 December 1980 TTL inactivated and 832d Air Division activated as Luke AFB host unit in move to do away with nonstandard organizations.



1 January 1981 426th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron reassigned from 58th Tactical Training Wing to 405th Tactical Training Wing. 58th left with its original World War II squadrons, the 69th, 310th, and 311th.

6 April 1981 First of 12 Japanese pilots entered F-15 training under Peace Eagle Program.

4 August 1981 First of 12 Saudi pilots entered F-15 training under Peace Sun Program.

29 June 1982 F-4 program ended after producing 3,147 graduates.



On 6 December 1982, the first operational F-16A/B jet in the USAF, Tail No. 78-0081, transferred from Hill AFB to 58th Tactical Training Wing at Luke AFB

25 January 1983 Training began in F-16 with Class 83 AIL in Instructor Pilot course.



On 16 March 1983, USAF/German AF F-104 Starfighter Program ended after producing 2,200 graduates for North Atlantic Treaty Organization air forces. The 69th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, which conducted the F-104 program, was inactivated.

- 06 April 1983 Foreign training began in F-16 as four Pakistanis entered Transition course with 311th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.
- December 1983 58th Tactical Training Wing proposed LF for use on F-16 tails to differentiate 58th Tactical Training Wing from 405th Tactical Training Wing jets. All Luke AFB host unit jets had used LA on tails since 1957. Request approved, but extended to all Luke AFB host unit aircraft.
- 23 December 1983 The 26th North American Aerospace Defense Command Region/Air Division (formerly Phoenix Air Defense Sector), Luke AFB tenant unit, moved to March AFB, California.
- 24 December 1983 Media reported dispute between Luke AFB/El Mirage over base's opposition to envisioned \$70 million El Mirage project. Luke AFB opposed project as homes planned too close to runways. Initial findings of upcoming AICUZ revealed proposed development would be in high noise areas.
- 1 October 1984 312d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated as USAF's first F-16C/D squadron.
- January 1985 12AF Aerial Demonstration Team formed at Luke AFB to demonstrate F-16 capabilities at sites not usually visited by Thunderbirds.
- May 1985 1985 Luke AFB AICUZ published and included expanded high noise areas to north resulting from departures to northeast turning west earlier to avoid over flights of most of El Mirage, and because F-15E operations were factored in.



On 5 November 1984, First F-16C/D in USAF's inventory delivered to 58th Tactical Training Wing, Tail Nos. 83-1121 (left) and 83-1175 (right).

- 26 June 1985 Interstate 10 near Luke AFB completed. It improved access to West Valley and attractiveness of West Valley developments.
- 25 July 1985 Peoples Republic of China delegation visited base to look for possible areas of cooperation between Peoples Liberation Army and USAF.
- 10 April 1986 State revised annexation law and required municipality to be adjacent to unincorporated land and have okay from landowners before could annex it (see entry ca. 1977).
- 2 May 1986 Arizona Senate Bill 1011 signed into law. It intended to direct compatible land use in areas affected by military air operations, but weakened in House when zoning left to municipalities and suggested rather than directed compatible land use.
- 30 June 1986 After close coordination with Luke AFB, a new Glendale Airport was opened some four miles east of the base.
- 1 October 1986 Maricopa County Joint Land-Use Study (JLUS) Committee conducted own noise study on Luke AFB operations. USAF contributed \$60,000 for study.
- 1 October 1986 314th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron activated as 58th Tactical Training Wing's fourth F-16 unit.
- 6 November 1986 Congress passed Land Withdrawal Act requiring 832d Air Division to submit Environmental Impact Statement to Congress on effects of fighter training on Luke AFB AF Range environment. Congress withdrew range from public use until 2001.
- 1986 Papago Indians at Sells, Arizona, change name to Tohono O'odham.
- 23 March 1987 Luke AFB Range renamed Barry M. Goldwater Range for retired US Senator Barry M. Goldwater (Rep, Arizona). At dedication Goldwater declared, "...Luke AFB Air Force Base will be here forever."
- 9 June 1987 US Supreme Court ruling on taking directed landowners be compensated when new restrictions denied them use of their land.

- 1 July 1987 944th Fighter Group (AFRES) activated. 302d Special Operations Squadron redesignated tactical fighter squadron, equipped with F-16s, and assigned to 944th Fighter Group.
- 21 December 1987 USAF canceled plans to base Midgetman Missile on Goldwater Range. Basing system on range would have restricted its use as overflying nuclear sites prohibited.
- 4 March 1988 First class of two Republic of Singapore AF pilots entered training with 311th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron under a Peace Carvin Foreign Military Sales Program.



On 12 April 1988, the 461st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron received Tail No. 86-0186. Aircraft was the first McDonnell Douglas F-15E Strike Eagle in USAF.

- 1 September 1988 County officials approved JLUS study that reduced noise zones near Luke AFB by 4,000 acres over 1985 AICUZ study.
- 1 April 1989 4444th Operations Squadron activated and assigned to 832d Air Division.
- 2 May 1989 First Block 42 F-16C/D in USAF delivered to 58th Tactical Training Wing.
- 15 May 1989 550th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron became 405th Tactical Training Wing's second F-15E training unit.
- 17 May 1989 First low altitude navigation and targeting infra-red for night (LANTIRN) system accepted into USAF inventory at Luke AFB.
- 1 September 1989 F-5 Foreign Military Sales program ended after producing 1,499 graduates locally and over 200 more in customer nations through deployment of mobile training teams. 425th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, unit that conducted program, inactivated.

On 5 October 1989, Soviet Defense Minister Gen Dmitriy T. Yazov visited base. He was hosted by Lt Gen Peter T. Kempf, Twelfth Air Force Commander and previous 58th Tactical Training Wing Commander at Luke AFB.



On October 1989, the 832d Air Division Support Center activated in the Blockhouse, bldg 1150, and relieved some of base's facilities shortfall.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 26 December 1989 | 310th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron conducted Blacklight exercise and became first unit to drop live ordnance on uncontrolled range at night using LANTIRN system. |
| 3 January 1990   | Peace Carvin Program ended.   |
| 29 November 1990 | 426th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 405th Tactical Training Wing F-15 fighter squadron, inactivated.  |

- 18 January 1991 312d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron inactivated as USAF drew down F-16A/B units. Unit's jets reassigned to more historically significant 311th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.
- 26 February 1991 Last F-16A/B used for training USAF pilots left Luke AFB.
- 11 April 1991 Operation Desert Storm ended. Luke AFB deployed over 600 personnel in support of operations, including 13 pilots who flew 258 combat missions and provided real-world training in LANTIRN system.
- 15 April 1991 USAF announced plan to consolidate all Regular AF F-16C/D training at Luke AFB.
- 1 October 1991 Major force structure realignment inactivated 832d Air Division and 405th Tactical Training Wing while 58th Tactical Training Wing redesignated a fighter wing (FW) and Luke AFB host unit. Reorganization implemented objective wing, did away with deputy commanders for operations, maintenance, and resource management, and set up operations, logistics, support, and medical groups. 4444th Operations Squadron reassigned to Tactical Air Command.
- 1 November 1991 All Tactical Fighter Training Squadron units redesignated Fighter Squadrons.
- 14 November 1991 550th Fighter Squadron inactivated; 555th Fighter Squadron assumed unit's F-15E assets/mission.
- 9 December 1991 Fifty years of stemming encroachment ended as county officials approved JLUS recommendation allowing some residential development in high noise areas near Luke AFB.
- 20 December 1991 Last F-15A Eagle left Luke AFB and F-15A/B/C/D program ended after producing 3,303 graduates since 1974.
- 1 May 1992 607th Air Control Squadron assigned to 58th Fighter Wing. It had been a Davis-Monthan AFB unit but based at Luke AFB as a tenant.
- 1 June 1992 In another reorganization, Tactical Air Command inactivated and Air Combat Command (ACC) activated. Luke AFB and 58th Fighter Wing reassigned to ACC.
- 1 July 1992 Reorganization on 1 October 1991 also merged Component Repair Squadron and Equipment Maintenance Squadron into 58th Maintenance Squadron. Span of control problems led new squadron to split into two units, the 58th Component Repair Squadron and 58th Equipment Maintenance Squadron
- 11 August 1992 Phoenix civic leaders traveled to Washington, District of Columbia and met USAF secretary/USAF vice chief of staff to stress area's support for continued existence of Luke AFB. Group met ACC commander next day to stress same message.



- 17 August 1992 Tests concluded over flights of bat caves on range had no significant impact on Sanborne long-nosed bats which were vital in pollinating desert plant life.
- 20 October 1992 Intense storms caused overflow of Dysart Drainage Canal north of base, resulted in over \$3 million in damage to base housing. Flood caused by land subsidence of 17 feet due to long-term pumping of ground water.



Flooded Base Bowling Alley, 20 October 1992

- 30 December 1992 425th Fighter Squadron activated to conduct Peace Carvin II Program. Program designed to provide Republic of Singapore AF F-16-qualified pilots with continuation training in F-16A/B.
- 25 February 1993 63d Fighter Squadron reassigned from 56th Fighter Wing to 58th Fighter Wing as Block 42 F-16C/D unit.
- 31 March 1993 Williams AFB closed with inactivation of 82d Flying Training Wing. Luke AFB assumed responsibility for servicing some 27,000 retirees in East Valley.
- 18 May 1993 Governor's Regional Airport Advisory Committee, formed to determine if Phoenix area aviation needs better served by regional or reliever airport, recommended Williams AFB be used as reliever airport. Luke AFB favored recommendation as regional airport (at Casa Grande) could have affected access to range.
- 1 July 1993 58th Fighter Wing reassigned from ACC to Air Education and Training Command (AETC) in move to place all training units in AETC. Wing's lone operational unit, 607th Air Control Squadron, remained in ACC and reassigned to Davis-Monthan AFB but based at Luke AFB as a tenant.



- 22 September 1993 Work began on \$12 million Dysart Canal project to protect base from future flooding.
- 9 October 1993 Luke AFB and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed agreement putting base on road to full environmental compliance.
- 23 October 1993 Range Management Office established as a wing staff agency to manage operations, scheduling, maintenance of range.
- 15 November 1993 USAF announced F-15E to move to Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, in 1995 due to facilities saturation at Luke AFB. Move being made to accommodate Taiwan AF F-16 training program and an F-16 international flying training activity (IFTA).
- 23 December 1993 EPA policy change requiring federal projects conform to state environmental requirements resulted in AETC issuing moratorium on bed down of additional F-16s at Luke AFB. Moratorium in effect until assessment completed to determine effects of bed down on environment.
- 31 December 1993 All 58th Fighter Wing jets equipped with Pratt and Whitney 200 engine retrofitted with 220E engine in move to decrease engine maintenance and enhance safety.



On 10 February 1994, the first female fighter pilot in USAF history, 1st Lt Jeannie M. Flynn, completed F-15E basic course with 555th Fighter Squadron.

- 28 February 1994 In move to ensure most highly decorated units remained in active fighter force during period of military drawdown, USAF directed 56th Fighter Wing be reassigned from scheduled-to-close MacDill AFB, Florida, to Luke AFB, effective 1 April 1994. 56th to move without personnel/equipment and take over 58th Fighter Wing assets/ mission.
- 10 March 1994 Environmental assessment/conformity analysis completed and revealed basing of additional F-16s at Luke AFB would have no significant impact. Assessment resulted in lifting of moratorium on bed down of additional F-16s at Luke AFB (see entry 23 December 1993).
- 18 March 1994 62d Fighter Squadron activated at Luke AFB as Block 25 F-16C/D training unit.
- 25 March 1994 555th Fighter Squadron inactivated and 550th Fighter Squadron activated to assume 555th Fighter Squadron' assets/mission and complete F-15E program transfer.
- 1 April 1994 58th Fighter Wing redesignated a special operations wing and reassigned to Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. Most 58-numbered units inactivated as did the 311th Fighter Squadron and 314th Fighter Squadron. 56th Fighter Wing moved from MacDill AFB to Luke AFB and assumed assets/mission of 58th Fighter Wing. 308th Fighter Squadron moved from Moody AFB, Georgia, to Luke AFB and assigned to 56th Fighter Wing. All 56-numbered groups and squadrons, including four new medical squadrons, activated and assigned to 56th Fighter Wing as were the 61st Fighter Squadron and 309th Fighter Squadron. Additionally, the 62d Fighter Squadron, 63d Fighter Squadron, 310th Fighter Squadron, 425th Fighter Squadron, 461st Fighter Squadron, and 550th Fighter Squadron were reassigned from 58th Fighter Wing to 56th Fighter Wing.

Luke AFB chronology joins with that of 56th Fighter Wing, effective 1 April 1994 on page 15.



Seven North American AT-6 Texans from Luke Field in formation over the Agua Fria River during World War II.

### Luke Field/AFB Commanders

<u>Luke Field</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>	
Lt Col (later Brig Gen) Ennis C. Whitehead	21 April 1941	(Lieutenant General)
Col Ross G. Hoyt	13 July 1942	(Brigadier General)
Lt Col Lester S. Harris	13 February 1943	
Col John K. Nissley	19 March 1943	
Lt Col Graham M. Bates	28 July 1944	
Col John K. Nissley	5 October 1944	
Col Lance Call	9 January 1945	
Col John M. Davies	14 April 1945	
Col Graham M. Bates	5 July 1945	
Lt Col Howard J. Bechtel	10 September 1945	
Col Lance Call	27 October 1945	
Col J. Garret Jackson	9 November 1945	
Col Gladwyn E. Pinkston	10 December 1945	(Brigadier General)
Luke Field Inactivated	30 November 1946.	

#### 127th Pilot Training Wing (1 January 1951 – 1 November 1952)

Luke AFB Removed from Inactive List	1 January 1951	
Col Henry J. Amen	1 February 1951	
Col Thomas L. Mosley	15 October 1951-1 November 1952.	

#### 3600th Flying Training Wing (1 November 1952 – 1 July 1958)

Col Thomas L. Mosley	1 November 1952	
Brig Gen Charles F. Born	15 November 1952	(Major General)
Brig Gen Turner C. Rogers	15 August 1953	(Major General)
Brig Gen Robert L. Scott, Jr	1 October 1956	
Col Warren H. Higgins	1 October 1957–1 July 1958.	

#### 4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (1 July 1958 – 15 October 1969)

Col Warren H. Higgins	1 July 1958	
Col (later, Brig Gen) James W. Chapman, Jr	18 January 1959	
Col Bingham T. Kleine	24 June 1961	
Col Augustus M. Hendry, Jr	1 November 1963	(Major General)
Col Arthur Small	16 May 1966	
Col Gerald Brown	1 July 1967	
Col Richard C. Catledge	1 November 1967	(Major General)
Col John J. Burns	1 October 1969 – 15 October 1969.	(Lieutenant General)

**58th Tactical Fighter Training Wing (15 October 1969 – 1 April 1977)**

Col John J. Burns	15 October 1969	(Lieutenant General)
Col John S. Clarke, Jr	26 June 1970 <sup>142</sup>	
Col (later, Brig Gen) Albert L. Melton	31 August 1972	
Col Fred A. Haeffner	15 August 1974–1 April 1977. <sup>143</sup>	(Major General)

**Tactical Training Luke AFB (1 April 1977 – 1 December 1980)**<sup>144</sup>

Brig Gen (later Maj Gen) Fred A. Haeffner	1 April 1977 <sup>145</sup>	
Col (later Brig Gen) John F. O'Donnell	10 June 1977	
Brig Gen John L. Pickitt	17 July 1978	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen William A. Gorton	3 January 1980. <sup>146</sup> – 1 December 1980	(Major General)

**832d Air Division (1 December 1980 – 1 October 1991)**

Brig Gen William A. Gorton	1 December 1980	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Michael J. Dugan	31 March 1981 <sup>147</sup>	(General, CSAF)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Henry D. Canterbury	12 May 1982 <sup>148</sup>	(Major General)
Col Daniel J. Sherlock	14 December 1984 <sup>149</sup>	
Col (later, Brig Gen) John M. Davey	16 January 1985	(Major General)
Brig Gen Billy G. McCoy	25 July 1986 <sup>150</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Daniel J. Sherlock	29 June 1987 <sup>151</sup>	
Brig Gen Ralph T. Browning	4 September 1990. <sup>152</sup> – 1 October 1991	(POW, 8 July 1966)(Brigadier General)

<sup>142</sup> 58 TFTW SO G-1, 26 June 1970<sup>143</sup> 12 SF SO G-66, 15 July 1974; DAF SO AA-496, 30 March 1977<sup>144</sup> TAC SO GA-22, 9 May 1977<sup>145</sup> DAF SO AA-496, 30 March 1977 and TTL SO G-16, 1 April 1977<sup>146</sup> 58 CSG SO G-2, 3 January 1980<sup>147</sup> 58 CSG SO G-22, 18 June 1981<sup>148</sup> 832 CSG SO G-24, 12 May 1982<sup>149</sup> 12 AF SO G-08, 11 December 1984<sup>150</sup> 832 CSG SO G-51, 25 July 1986<sup>151</sup> 832 CSG SO G-53, 26 June 1987<sup>152</sup> 12 AF SO G-012, 28 August 1990

**58th Tactical Training Wing (1 April 1977 – 1 October 1991)**<sup>153</sup>

Col John F. O'Donnell	1 April 1977 <sup>154</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col James P. Coyne	10 June 1977	
Col Edward Levell, Jr.	4 August 1977	
Col Peter T. Kempf	27 March 1978	(Major General)
Col Alan P. Lurie	29 August 1979 <sup>155</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col Malcolm F. Bolton	5 June 1981 <sup>156</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col James F. Record	23 May 1983 <sup>157</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Col James M. Johnston	5 May 1984 <sup>158</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col Ralph T. Browning	18 September 1985 <sup>159</sup>	
	(POW, 8 July 1966)	(Brigadier General)
Col W. Thomas West	16 July 1987 <sup>160</sup>	(Major General)
Col William F. Looke	20 April 1988 <sup>161</sup>	
Col William S. Hinton, Jr.	7 September 1989 <sup>162</sup>	(Major General)
Col Steven R. Polk	2 July 1991 <sup>163</sup> – 1 October 1991.	(Lieutenant General)



Brig Gen Ralph T. Browning, POW in North Vietnam 8 July 1966-12 February 1973, held four commands at Luke AFB. He commanded the 555th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, the 58th Tactical Training Wing, the 832d Air Division, and on 1 October 1991, the 58th Fighter Wing, when the Air Force did away with air divisions.

<sup>153</sup> TAC SO GA-22, 9 May 1977

<sup>154</sup> 58 TTW SO G-15, 1 April 1977

<sup>155</sup> 58 CSG SO G-30, 29 August 1979

<sup>156</sup> 58 CSG SO G-21, 5 June 1981

<sup>157</sup> 832 CSG SO G-20, 19 May 1983

<sup>158</sup> 832 CSG SO G-008, 5 May 1984

<sup>159</sup> 832 CSG SO G-41, 17 September 1985

<sup>160</sup> 832 CSG SO G-58, 14 July 1987

<sup>161</sup> 832 CSG SO G-38, 20 April 1988

<sup>162</sup> 832 MSS SO G-31, 24 August 1989

<sup>163</sup> 832 MSS SO SO-G-23, 27 June 1991

**405th Tactical Training Wing (29 August 1979 – 1 October 1991)<sup>164</sup>**

Col Charles A. Horner	29 August 1979 <sup>165</sup>	(General, USSPACECOM)
Col Robert W. Ruark	21 May 1980 <sup>166</sup>	
Col Peter D. Hayes	9 March 1981 <sup>167</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col Philip W. Handley	23 April 1982 <sup>168</sup>	
Col Daniel J. Sherlock	15 April 1983 <sup>169</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col Thomas C. Skanchy	24 June 1985 <sup>170</sup>	
Col Robin G. Tornow	30 December 1986 <sup>171</sup>	(Brigadier General)
Col George T. Lewis, Jr.	15 June 1988 <sup>172</sup>	
Col John D. Lauher	1 June 1990 <sup>173</sup>	
Col William T. Hobbins	2 August 1991 <sup>174</sup>	-1 October 1991. (General, USAFE)

**58th Fighter Wing (1 October 1991 – 1 April 1994)**

Brig Gen Ralph T. Browning	1 October 1991 <sup>175</sup>	(POW, 8 July 1966)
Brig Gen Patrick K. Gamble	21 August 1992 <sup>176</sup>	(General, PACAF)
Brig Gen Stephen B. Plummer	24 June 1993 – 1 April 1994.	(Lieutenant General)

<sup>164</sup> Redesignated from HQ 405th Fighter Wing [inactivated on 16 September 1974] to HQ 405th Tactical Training Wing on 20 August 1979. Same dates for AMS to CRS, FMS to EMS, and OMS to AGS. 405 TTS, AGS, CRS, and EMS activated on 29 August 1979. 405 Tactical Training Sq constituted 24 August 1979. TAC SO GA-95, 20 August 1979.

<sup>165</sup> 58 CSG SO G-29, 29 August 1979

<sup>166</sup> 12 AF SO G-6, 14 May 1980 and 58 CSG SO G-24, 19 May 1980

<sup>167</sup> 12 AF SO G-1, 4 March 1981

<sup>168</sup> 832 CSG SO G-58, 27 April 1982

<sup>169</sup> 832 CSG SO G-12, 12 April 1983

<sup>170</sup> 832 CSG SO G-25, 20 June 1985

<sup>171</sup> 832 CSG SO G-11, 30 December 1986

<sup>172</sup> 832 CSG SO SO-G-45, 14 June 1988

<sup>173</sup> 832 MSS SO SO-G-21, 24 May 1990

<sup>174</sup> 832 MSS SO SO-G-27, 31 July 1991

<sup>175</sup> 58 MSS SO SO-G-16, 1 October 1991

<sup>176</sup> 12 AF SO G-019, 14 August 1992

**56th Fighter Wing (1 April 1994 – Present)**

Brig Gen Stephen B. Plummer	1 April 1994 <sup>177</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen (later, Maj Gen) Marvin R. Esmond	14 April 1995 <sup>178</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Col (later, Brig Gen Carrol H. Chandler	2 April 1996 <sup>179</sup>	(General-VCSAF)
Brig Gen John L. Barry	17 July 1998 <sup>180</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Stephen T. Sargeant	15 February 2000 <sup>181</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Philip M. Breedlove	17 June 2002 <sup>182</sup>	(General-SACEUR))
Col (later, Brig Gen) Robin Rand	8 June 2004 <sup>183</sup>	(General-AFGSC))
Col (later, Brig Gen) Noel T. Jones	13 June 2006 <sup>184</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Kurt F. Neubauer	9 July 2008 <sup>185</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Jerry M. Harris, Jr.	20 September 2010 <sup>186</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen Michael D. Rothstein	12 September 2012 <sup>187</sup>	(Major General)
Col (later, Brig Gen) Scott L. Pleus	20 June 2014 <sup>188</sup>	(Lieutenant General)
Brig Gen Brook J. Leonard	13 July 2016 <sup>189</sup>	
Brig Gen Todd D. Canterbury	29 June 2018 <sup>190</sup>	
Brig Gen Gregory Kreuder	21 May 2020 – Present. <sup>191</sup>	

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<sup>177</sup> 58 FW SO SO-GA-001, 24 June 1993

<sup>178</sup> 19 AF SO G-002, 6 April 1995

<sup>179</sup> 19 AF SO G-007, 26 March 1996

<sup>180</sup> 56 MSS SO SO-GR-002, 17 July 1998

<sup>181</sup> 19 AF SO G-00-002, 14 February 2000

<sup>182</sup> 19 AF SO 56 MSS G-3, 13 June 2002

<sup>183</sup> 19 AF SO 56 MSS G-1-2004, 7 May 2004

<sup>184</sup> 56 FW SO MSG-06-02, 13 June 2006

<sup>185</sup> 56 MSG SO G-033, 3 July 2008

<sup>186</sup> 56 MSG SO G-032, 15 September 2010

<sup>187</sup> 56 MSG SO G-034, 10 September 2012

<sup>188</sup> 56 MSG SO GS-20-14, 19 June 2014

<sup>189</sup> 19 AF SO GS-16-011, 7 July 2016

<sup>190</sup> 19 AF SO G-18-004, 31 May 2018

<sup>191</sup> 19 AF SO G-20-005, 5 May 2020



### Luke Field/AFB Primary Aircraft

<u>Airframe</u>	<u>Period</u>
North American AT-6 Texan	1941-1946
Curtis P-40 Warhawk	1942-1945
Lockheed P-38 Lightning	1944-1945
North American P-51 Mustang	1945-1946
North American F-51 Mustang	1951-1953
Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star	1951-1952
North American T-6 Texan	1951-1953
Republic F-84 Thunderjet	1951-1964
Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star	1951-1952
North American F-100 Super Sabre	1957-1971
North American F-86 Sabre	1961-1962
Lockheed F-104 Starfighter	1964-1983
Northrop F-5A/B Freedom Fighter	1964-1989
Ling-Temco-Vought A-7 Corsair II	1969-1971
McDonnell Douglas F-4C Phantom II	1971-1982
McDonnell Douglas F-15A/B/C/D Eagle	1974-1991
Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon	1982-Present
McDonnell Douglas F-15E Strike Eagle	1988-1995
Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II	2014-Present



During the late 1970's the 58th Tactical Training Wing conducted F-4/F-104/F-15/F-5 training, which led to span of control problems. On 29 August 1979, a second wing, the 405th Tactical Training Wing, activated and took on the F-5/F-15 programs while the 58th Tactical Training Wing retained the F-4/F-104 programs. Shown in formation from top to bottom, F-15A, Tail No. 76-078; F-4C, Tail No. 63-420; F-104, Tail No. 63-13269; and F-5A, Tail No. 70-1396

### Luke Field/AFB Student Production 1941 – FY19

<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Dates Assigned</u>	<u>Graduates</u>
AT-6	41-46/51-53	14,076/51
P-40	42-45	2,814
P-38	45	280
P/F-51	45-46/51-53	61/624
F-84	51-64	6,930
F-100	57-71	3,451
F-86	61-62	123
A-7D	69-71	147
F-104	64-83	2,200
F-5	64-89	1,699
F-4	71-82	3,147
F-15A	74-91/	3,303
F-15E	88-95	897
F-16A/B/C/D	83-	20,933*
F-35	14-	442
Total		61,178**

\*Included 144 graduates assigned to 944th Fighter Wing who received ground training from 56TRS and, therefore, were included in 56th Fighter Wing graduate totals, and 65 Forward Air Controller (Airborne) graduates trained by mobile training teams (MTT).

\*\*Total incomplete as MTT training not documented prior to 1982, 51-50 checkouts not formal course prior to early 1990s. Total was for US/Foreign Military Sales graduates of syllabus courses, not individual students as some graduated from more than one course. Because of incomplete statistics, exact total not possible; however, it is accurate to say, **"Luke AFB is the world's largest fighter training base and produced over 61,100 graduates from fighter training programs from 1941 through FY16."**



World War II student prepares to take his first solo flight.

**F-16 Flying Hour Programs FY83 –FY19**

<b>Category</b>	<b>*FY83</b>	<b>FY84</b>	<b>FY85</b>	<b>FY86</b>	<b>FY87</b>	<b>FY88</b>	<b>FY89</b>
Sorties	4,718	10,881	13,277	15,452	19,704	21,612	20,750
Hours	6,086	14,175	18,080	21,331	27,382	28,991	28,191.9
ASD	1.29	1.30	1.36	1.38	1.39	1.34	1.36
PAI	38	50.2	57.8	66	87.4	90	89.5
UTE	13.7	18.0	19.1	19.5	18.8	20.0	19.3
<b>Category</b>	<b>FY90</b>	<b>**FY91</b>	<b>**FY92</b>	<b>**FY93</b>	<b>#FY94</b>	<b>FY95</b>	<b>FY96</b>
Sorties	21,108	19,138	17,664	17,414	26,142	37,128	36,615
Hours	28,181.5	26,043	23,856	22,904	34,633	49,163	48,586
ASD	1.33	1.36	1.35	1.31	1.32	1.32	1.33
PAI	96	90.5	76	78.6	111.2	159.2	156
UTE	18.3	17.6	19.3	18.5	19.6	19.4	19.5
<b>Category</b>	<b>FY97</b>	<b>FY98</b>	<b>FY99</b>	<b>FY00</b>	<b>FY01</b>	<b>FY02</b>	<b>FY03</b>
Sorties	33,575	33,577	31,473	31,983	31,841	31,891	31,536
Hours	44,178	44,888	41,444.6	42,843	43,843	43,221	42,831
ASD	1.31	1.34	1.32	1.34	1.37	1.36	1.36
PAI	144	149.2	151	151	151	151	151
UTE	19.4	18.7	17.4	17.6	17.6	17.6	17.4
<b>Category</b>	<b>FY04</b>	<b>FY05</b>	<b>FY06</b>	<b>FY07</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>
Sorties	32,228	32,092	29,535	29,038	25,283	23,377	20,421
Hours	43,895	43,840	40,370	38,959.7	33,928.1	30,317.3	27,006.7
ASD	1.36	1.37	1.37	1.34	1.34	1.30	1.32
PAI	151	151	144	138	143	124	119
UTE	17.8	17.7	17.1	17.6	14.7	15.5	14.9
<b>Category</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>@FY14</b>	<b>@FY15</b>	<b>@FY16</b>	<b>@FY17</b>
Sorties	18,774	18,634	17,779	16,493	14,261	14,847	15,403
Hours	25,082.8	24,887.0	23,612.0	21,579.2	18,158.0	18,758.8	19,408.1
ASD	1.34	1.34	1.33	1.31	1.27	1.26	1.26
PAI	96	96	92	91	103	96	96
UTE	16.3	16.2	16.1	14.2	13.8	13.9	13.6
<b>Category</b>	<b>@FY18</b>	<b>FY19</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Avg</b>
Sorties	16,170	6,428				838,242	22,655
Hours	20,363.6	8,069.6				1,119,087.9	30,245.6
ASD	1.26	1.26				N/A	1.34
PAI	121	45				N/A	110.8
UTE	11.4	13.0				N/A	17.0

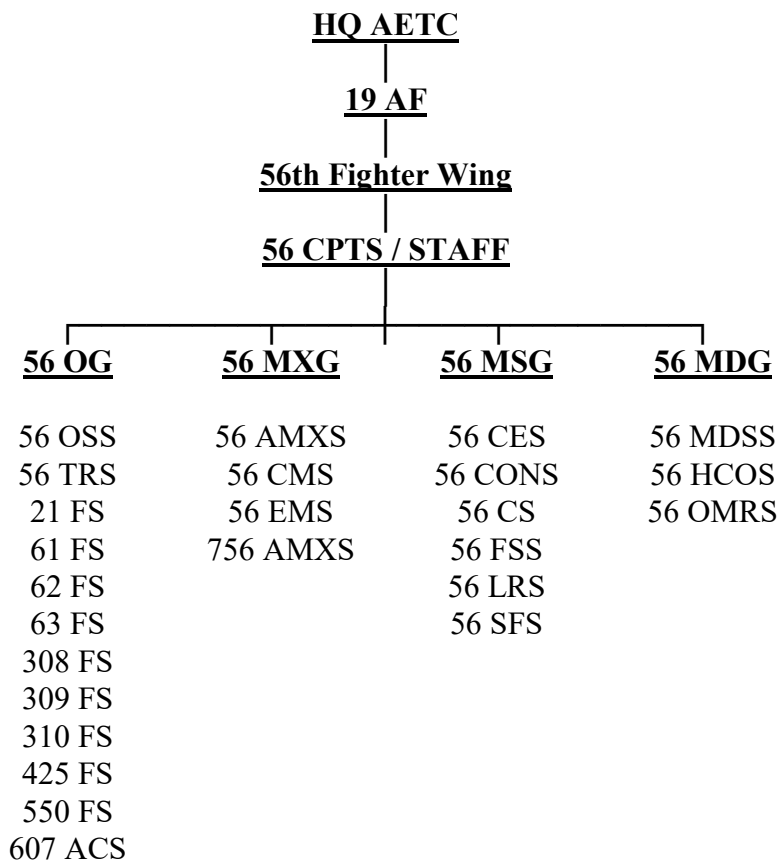
**NOTE 1:** \* 6 Dec 82 First jet assigned to 58 TTW; \*\*FY91-FY93 Conversion from F-16A/B to F-16C/D; #56 FW took over at Luke AFB on 1 Apr 94; @Includes 54th Fighter Group's F-16 at Holloman AFB, New Mexico FY14-FY18. **NOTE 2:** AFB=Air Force Base; ASD=Average Sortie Duration; FW=Fighter Wing; FY=Fiscal Year; N/A=not applicable; PAI=Primary Aircraft Inventory; TTW=Tactical Training Wing UTE=aircraft utilization rate. **NOTE 3:** Foreign Military Sales (sorties/hours) not included in above totals.

**Foreign Military Sales (sorties/hours) not included in above totals.**

Fiscal Year 1993	425 FS=810/1,142;	
Fiscal Year 1994	425 FS=2,177/2,862.7;	
Fiscal Year 1995	425 FS=2,026/2,821.1;	
Fiscal Year 1996	425 FS=2,396/2,971.1;	
Fiscal Year 1997	425 FS=2,824/3,588.3,	21 FS=2,285/2,946;
Fiscal Year 1998	425 FS=2,834/3,623.6,	21 FS=3,828/4,849.5;
Fiscal Year 1999	425 FS=2,656/3,656.7,	21 FS=3,665/4,738.4;
Fiscal Year 2000	425 FS=2,985/3,949.1,	21 FS=2,796/3,591.4;
Fiscal Year 2001	425 FS=2,875/3,768,	21 FS=2,602/3,431.7;
Fiscal Year 2002	425 FS=2,511/3,651.7,	21 FS=2,792/3,592.5;
Fiscal Year 2003	425 FS=2,473/3,293.3,	21 FS=2,630/3,398.8;
Fiscal Year 2004	425 FS=2,214/2,528.4,	21 FS=2,810/3,581.3;
Fiscal Year 2005	425 FS=2,270/2,931.3,	21 FS=2635/3514.1;
Fiscal Year 2006	425 FS=2,716/3,469.7,	21 FS=2,690/3,544;
Fiscal Year 2007	425 FS=1,340/1,741.7,	21 FS=2,627/3,512.8;
Fiscal Year 2008	425 FS=1,318/1,697.5,	21 FS=2,697/3,786.4;
Fiscal Year 2009	425 FS=1,389/1,763.2,	21 FS=2,724/3,739.3
Fiscal Year 2010	425 FS=2,495/3,273.1,	21 FS=2,729/3,693.4
Fiscal Year 2011	425 FS=2,508/3,296.1,	21 FS=2,703/3,601.0
Fiscal Year 2012	425 FS=2,387/3,261.8	21 FS=2,764/3,837.2
Fiscal Year 2013	425 FS=2,350/3,338.4	21 FS=2,456/3,164.1
Fiscal Year 2014	425 FS=2,343/3,353.1	21 FS=2,517/3,245.7
Fiscal Year 2015	425 FS=1,445/1,950.1	21 FS=1,583/2,170.3
Fiscal Year 2016	425 FS=2,134/3,249.6	21 FS=2,459/3,394.7
Fiscal Year 2017	425 FS=1,881/2,616.0	21 FS=2,344/3,220.3
Fiscal Year 2018	425 FS=2,107/3,013.4	21 FS=2,333/2,801.1
Fiscal Year 2019	425 FS=2,110/2,745.9	21 FS=1,870/2,451.3



**56th Fighter Wing Organization**  
**As of 14 August 2020**



**NOTE:** ACS=Air Control Squadron; AETC=Air Education and Training Command; AF=Air Force; AMXS=Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; CES=Civil Engineer Squadron; CMS=Component Maintenance Squadron; CONS=Contracting Squadron; CPTS=Comptroller Squadron; CS=Communications Squadron; EMS=Equipment Maintenance Squadron; FS=Fighter Squadron; FSS=Force Support Squadron; HQ=Headquarters; LRS=Logistics Readiness Squadron; MDG=Medical Group; HCOS=Healthcare Operations Squadron; MDSS=Medical Support Squadron; MSG=Mission Support Group; MXG=Maintenance Group; OG=Operations Group; OMRS=Operational Medical Readiness Squadron; OSS=Operations Support Squadron; SFS=Security Forces Squadron; TRS=Training Squadron;



On 1 May 2020, 14 F-35 Lightning II's and F-16's fly as part of a 17-ship formation during a national COVID-19 Total Force flyover at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The flyover included an aerial review over Luke Air Force Base followed by a morale flyover over Phoenix-Metro to demonstrate local military continued readiness during the national COVID-19 response, while saluting the American heroes at the forefront in our fight against COVID-19. (U.S. Air Force photo by TSgt Louis Vega Jr.)





The crest of the 56th Fighter Wing is a shield-shaped emblem. The top portion is a solid orange field. Below this is a blue chevron with a yellow border. Inside the chevron are two yellow lightning bolts pointing downwards. The bottom portion of the shield is a solid orange field. A white scroll at the bottom of the shield contains the text "56TH FIGHTER WING" in blue, serif, all-caps font.

## **Blazon**

Tenne on a chevron azure fimbriated or two lightning flashes chevronwise of the last.

## **Motto**

**CAVE TONITRUM** (Beware of the Thunderbolt)

## **Significance**

The orange background was the color of the Army Air Corps and represents the 56th Fighter Group's World War II service. The chevron, representing support, is blue to signify the wing's flights in support of the nation's quest for peace. The lightning bolts are symbolic of speed, aggressiveness, and the capability to strike immediately in any direction. "Cave Tonitrum," Beware of the Thunderbolt!