

Some people grow up on a quiet street in a house with a white picket fence, the occasional sound of the morning birds interrupting an otherwise tranquil existence. Me? I grew up under the thundering sound of jets.

When you're born and raised in the West Valley near Luke Air Force Base, as I was, you get used to the sound of fighter pilots overhead. It is the sound of promise and progress; commitment and camaraderie; firepower and freedom.

Luke Air Force Base has been a part of our community for nearly 80 years now. Luke sent pilots off to World War II, gave birth to the Thunderbirds, supported operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recently reorganized around a next generation fighter jet, the F-35.

As our community has grown and evolved, so has Luke. Now home to approximately 7,000 military members, Luke is not just the training ground of the world's best fighter pilots; it is also a powerful economic engine in Arizona with a total economic impact exceeding \$2 billion.

As a Maricopa County Supervisor, I'm proud of our efforts to partner with and support Luke airmen and their families. One example is the Military and Veteran Success Center that opened in late 2017. It's the nation's first holistic support center for active and former military members and their families. We know it's not always a smooth transition from service to civilian life. The Success Center, made possible with support from the Maricopa County Industrial Development Authority and other community partners, provides a wealth of individualized resources—from education to housing to mental and physical health—to make the transition easier.

The men and women who serve as part of the USAF 56th Fighter Wing (and their families) are a stabilizing force for good in our community. We owe them our gratitude, our respect, and our support. Perhaps as important, we owe them the small commitment in time and attention required to understand who they are and what's important to them. I hope this magazine will promote that type of understanding.

Growing up and living near Luke, I've seen how much a military base can lift a community, and how a community can rise up strong around it. So when you hear those jets overhead, I hope you feel a sense of pride and duty. It is not just the sound of freedom; it's the sound of home.