

Desert Lightning News

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ONLINE AT WWW.AEROTECHNEWS.COM/DAVIS-MONTHANAFB/.

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

A-10 maintenance at sunset

U.S. Air Force Airmen, assigned to the 357th Fighter Generation Squadron, perform maintenance on an A-10 Thunderbolt II, assigned to the 357th Fighter Squadron, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The 357th FGS is responsible for the maintenance of all A-10s assigned to the 357th FS.

January



Courtesy photo

Jan. 8: Rescue group helps save hiker

U.S. Air Force pararescuemen from the 48th Rescue Squadron hoist an unconscious and severely hypothermic 67-year-old hiker into an HH-60G Pave Hawk from the 55th RQS at the Chiricahua National Monument in Wilcox, Arizona. This was a joint rescue mission with the 563rd Rescue Group, the Arizona Cochise County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Team and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

Jan. 15: Space Force swears in new Guardians

U.S. Air Force Capt. Lauren Bauer, U.S. Southern Command and 12th Air Force (Air Force Southern), Space Forces deputy director, swears in future Guardians during a ceremony at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. These six are part of the 521 Guardians directly recruited in 2022.

RIGHT: Airmen assigned to the 355th Operations Support Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base set up runway markers in a dry lakebed during Green Flag-West at Fort Irwin, California. This exercise utilized the Agile Combat Employment concept which creates a network of smaller, dispersed locations that can complicate adversary planning and provide more options for joint force commanders.



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Josey Blades

Jan. 19: Green Flag-West provides air/land training

An A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is parked in a dry lakebed during Green Flag-West at Fort Irwin, California. Green Flag-West is a realistic air-land integration combat training exercise involving the 355th Operations Support Squadron and other air forces of the United States and allies.



February

**Feb. 11: First of 16 JSTARS retired to Boneyard**

U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeff Rice

E-8C Joint STARS aircraft 92-3289 departs one last time from Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. The aircraft has been in military service since 1996 and retired to 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Over the years, E-8C Joint STARS have been involved in Operations Allied Force, Operation Joint Endeavor, NATO operations, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Inherent Resolve and various counter-narcotics missions. Since 9/11, the E-8C fleet has flown more than 130,000 combat mission hours.

Feb. 18: Ready Eagle Exercise tests 355th MDG

RIGHT: A U.S. Airman assigned to the 355th Medical Group participates in Ready Eagle at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The purpose of this exercise was to follow simulated procedures for a mass casualty and chemical or biological disaster response in preparation for a real-world scenario.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish



Courtesy photos

Feb. 7: 2021 Annual Awards

Because of COVID restrictions, the 355th Wing 2021 Annual Award winners received their plaques outdoors. Airman of the Year, Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish, 355th Wing Staff and Non-commissioned Officer of the Year, Tech. Sgt. Joshua Vander-Heyden, 355th Operations Group.

March



Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Alex Miller

March 2-6: DM hosts 2022 Heritage Training

U.S. Air Force Maj. Haden "Gator" Fullam, A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team pilot and commander, taxis on the flight line during the 2022 Heritage Flight Training Course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. During the course, aircrew practice ground and flight training to enable civilian pilots of historic military aircraft and U.S. Air Force pilots of current fighter aircraft to fly safely in formations together. The HFTC is also intended to certify air show pilots for the upcoming air show season.

March 25: Dragon Lady moves to Utah

RIGHT: A U-2S Dragon Lady static display is ready for transport to Hill Aerospace Museum at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, from Heritage Park at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The aircraft will be reassembled and displayed at its new location at the Hill Aerospace Museum. In the 1960s, one of DM's primary aircraft was the U-2 Dragon Lady, and now represents a part of the base's rich history from a training facility to an aircraft storage facility, to a rescue and attack base.



Courtesy photo

March 17: Senior Master Sergeant selects announced

A group of senior master sergeant selects stand for a photo after being recognized for promotion at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The group is part of the 1,443 master sergeants selected for promotion to senior master sergeant across the Air Force, for a total of 8.28% out of the 17,419 who were eligible.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

April



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class William Turnbull

April 8: Housing renovation begins

Pablo Varela, Soaring Heights Communities property manager, shows the layout of the first renovated home to the Resident Council at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The Resident Council, a group of representatives who advocate for their neighborhood, toured the newly renovated home, and got to see first-hand what improvements are expected in the future. Soaring Heights Communities plans to remodel over 30 homes in the next 1-5 years at Davis-Monthan. Soaring Heights is privatized military family housing for DM, housing active duty and reserve military, Department of Defense retirees, as well as current DOD employees and their families.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Vaughn Weber

April 13: Area firefighters train at Davis-Monthan

Capt. John Conger from the Tubac Fire District carries a hose into a simulated residential structure building at the fire training grounds on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Because some fire districts don't have their own training facilities, they partner with the Davis-Monthan Fire Department every few months to utilize the training grounds to practice various fire drills.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Erghis

April 9: 355th holds Tactical Response Team tryouts

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrea Anderson (right), 355th Security Forces Squadron defender, scores a participant's shooting during Davis-Monthan's first Tactical Response Team tryouts at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The tryouts consisted of a physical fitness test, different weapon skills, close-quarters combat tactics, an assessment of full team movements and stress tests.

Staff

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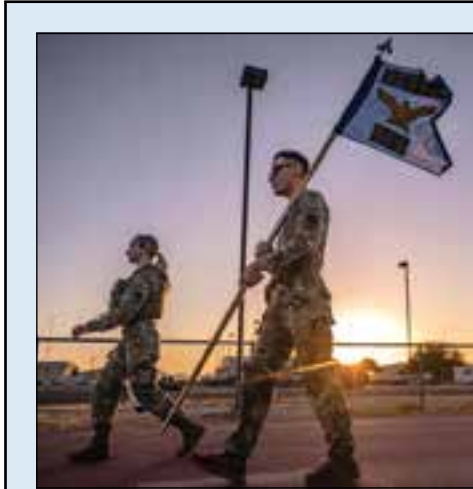
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May



May 14: New Farewell Center opens

Davis-Monthan retrooled their Welcome Center to also assist service members making a permanent change of station move away from DM. When a service member is notified of a new assignment, the list of items needed to complete is long and timely, and without prior experience, accomplishing each item can be confusing. In addition to the step-by-step guidance for passports, EFMP, medical and finance, Farewell Center staff members work closely with out-processing agencies to ease the process where needed.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish

May 16-20: DM marks National Police Week

U.S. Airmen assigned to the 355th Security Forces Squadron participate in a 24-hour run/walk/ruck event during National Police Week at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Countless 355th SFS defenders, volunteers from across the installation and local law enforcement community members carried the U.S. and 355th SFS flags around the Benko Fitness and Sports Center track for a total of 24 hours to honor fallen defenders and police officers, as well as all those still serving.



Courtesy photo

May 17:DM Airman among recognized as exceptional SARCs

Recipients of the 2022 Elizabeth Blanc Exceptional SARC of the Year Award, for work related to support provided to victims of sexual assault, were recognized during a ceremony at the Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. The Secretary of Defense has prioritized eliminating sexual assault in the armed forces and taking care of victims. Across the Defense Department, its sexual assault response coordinators and members of military communities ensure the secretary's goals are met.

May 30: 357th Fighter Squadron honors Dragons

An Airman from the 355th takes a moment to view the new display in the halls of the 357th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The display honoring Dragons of the past offers an opportunity to stop and reflect and pays tribute to those who now live on forever in the hearts of the 355th. Over 77 years of history has been preserved in the display case showing a Steeple Morden Strafers' aviator goggles from World War II, to a Vietnam War Wild Weasel pilot's map depicting North Vietnam. The case was recently unveiled by U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Joel Bier, 357th FS commander.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

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June



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish

June 1: MWDs train to keep base safe

Senior Airman Gabriel Higuera, 355th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, poses as a simulated perpetrator while training SSilke, 355th SFS MWD, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Using a bite suit during training ensures MWDs are fully equipped to protect and attack on command in a real-world environment. MWDs are trained to detect explosives, take down un-cooperative assailants and help protect and defend Air Force installations.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish

June 17: Leadership gets look Under the Helmet

The 355th Civil Engineer Squadron leadership team participates in the Under the Helmet event on the fire training grounds at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The purpose of this event was to give leadership an experience of what 355th CES firemen have to accomplish when executing real-world fire and rescue responses.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kaitlyn Ergish

June 7: Families welcome home 79th Rescue Squadron

A U.S. Air Force HC-130J Combat King II assigned to the 79th Rescue Squadron taxis down the flight line at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Members of the 355th Wing returned home on two HC-130s after an overseas deployment.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class William Turnbull

June 13: Perrin receives award for SAPR work

Teresa Perrin, 355th Wing Sexual Assault Prevention and Response victim advocate specialist, was recognized for her exceptional service as the 2021 Victim Advocate of the Year by Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. Perrin is responsible for providing SAPR services to one of the largest U.S. Air Force installations, composed of 19,000 military dependents over 18 years of age, Department of Defense civilian employees and 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) forward operating locations throughout the Caribbean as well as Central and South America.

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June (continued)

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nicholas Ross

June 30: Mills becomes new Wing commander

U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael G. Koscheski (left), 15th Air Force commander, presided over the 355th Wing change of command ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. U.S. Air Force Col. Joseph Turnham (right), outgoing wing commander relinquished command to U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills, the new 355th Wing commander. Prior to assuming command, Mills served as the 57th Operations Group commander at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Mills is a command pilot with more than 2,400 combined flight hours in the T-37 Tweet, T-38A/B Talon, A-10C Thunderbolt II and F-35A Lightning II.

*July***July 27: Fast BRRReak grand opening**

The 355th Force Support Squadron held a grand opening ceremony for their brand-new readiness kitchen, Fast BRRReak, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills, 355th Wing commander, along with U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Matthew Caylor, 355th FSS, performed a ribbon cutting to mark the event. Fast BRRReak will not only provide the DM community with more food options from smoothie bowls and waffles, to tacos, paninis and more, but it also provides training opportunities for 355th FSS Airmen.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

July: Lightning Spark helps innovation

U.S. Air Force Airmen, 355th Wing innovation team members, pose for a photo beside an A-10 Thunderbolt II after performing a demonstration of an innovation tool at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The innovation team has since become the 355th Wing Innovation Office and is bringing Airmen's ideas to life. Lightning Spark, the 355th Wing Innovation Office, began their mission to shorten the rescue and attack processes, through innovation in July 2021. In June 2022, a charter was signed that officially made the 355th WIO a Wing Staff Agency and also defined its roles, responsibilities and rules. This allows Lightning Spark to quickly respond to unit-level innovation initiatives and supply resources, aiding in bringing Airmen's ideas to life.

August

U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

August 5: New 355th Commander has all-call

U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills, 355th Wing commander, introduces himself to Airmen from across the wing and shares new Wing priorities during his first all-call at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. He shared with Airmen that he intends to be more present and accessible on social media. Mills also set expectations for himself and all members of DM with the new priorities: fight, fit, family — respected, connected, protected.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class William Turnbull

August 11: Multi branches participate in Red Flag-Rescue

Members of the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force Regiment exit an HH-60G Pave Hawk assigned to the 55th Rescue Squadron, at Playas Training Center, New Mexico. Red Flag-Rescue is the Department of Defense's premier combat search and rescue exercise, involving various wings and partner nations. Red Flag-Rescue is a joint exercise that involves other service branches as well as partner nations and is the Department of Defense's premier combat search and rescue exercise held twice a year, hosted exclusively by Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and goes on for roughly two weeks. Red Flag-Rescue 22-2 involved several units from the 355th Wing, including pararescuemen and pilots, in addition to members of the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force Regiment, and other rescue units from Nellis AFB, Nevada.

September



U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Nicholas Ross

Sept. 16: 355th Wing honors POW/MIA veterans

U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills, 355th Wing commander, speaks with POW/MIA veterans at the Pima Air and Space Museum during the POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony in Tucson, Arizona. Established in 1979 and celebrated on the third Friday in September, POW/MIA Recognition Day honors those who were held captive and returned, as well as those who remain missing.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st class Paige Weldon

Sept. 17: USAF celebrates 75th Anniversary

Guests at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base's 75th Anniversary Air Force Ball pose for a photo during social hour at Tucson, Arizona. The Ball is held every September as an opportunity for Airmen to come together, celebrate their accomplishments and reflect on the history and heritage of the Air Force. Tucson, Arizona. Traditionally the highest ranking and youngest enlisted Airmen at the Ball cut a cake made for the occasion. U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills, 355th Wing commander Mills represented the experience of the Air Force while U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Devin Aaronson, 355th Munitions Squadron munitions inspection technician represented its future.

October

Oct.: Tucson medical providers visit DM

Civilian medical providers pose for a group photo with members of the Desert Lightning Team during an immersion tour at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The visitors from the Tucson area also took a hangar tour. The 355th Medical Group hosted them for tours of various units on base.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st class Paige Weldon



Oct. 17: Families welcome the 355th home

U.S. Air Force Airmen walk on the flight line at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The Airmen, assigned to the 55th Rescue Squadron, were returning from deployment. Families welcomed them with signs, balloons, and many hugs.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

November



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

Nov. 3: F-105 pilots reunite one last time

Former F-105 Thunderchief pilots look at the memorial on the A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team aircraft at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Many of the veterans were assigned to the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, during the mid-1960s to early 1970s, where they saw combat over Northern Vietnam during the war. With most of the attendees in their 80s, it was decided that this would be the last reunion, after 15 years of gathering.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman William Turnbull

Nov. 3: DECON training course held

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 355th Medical Group prepare a decontamination tent for a mock patient at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. The decontamination course offers 15 continuing education hours while also certifying the Airmen in several qualifications. The 20 participants of this iteration of training are now certified in the U.S. Air Force Inplace Patient DECON Class and Hazardous Waste Operations.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Vaughn Weber

Nov. 21: Military groups distribute turkeys

U.S. Air Force Airmen distribute Thanksgiving food during a turkey drive at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. This turkey drive was a joint effort of the Military Assistance Program, Air Force Sergeants Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

Nov. 15: 563rd RQG Airmen provide rescue

An HH-60G Pave Hawk assigned to the 563rd Rescue Group receives fuel before taking part in a rescue in the Pacific Ocean. The 563rd RQG Airmen were dispatched to a cruise ship roughly 500 miles off the coast of San Diego to extract a man who was in critical condition from a ruptured appendix. Before executing the mission, two HC-130J Combat King IIs and crew departed Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, to Naval Air Station North Island, California, for crew change and gas.

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December



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Devlin Bishop

Dec. 12: 563d RQG Airmen receive medals

U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Sean Choquette, 12th Air Force (Air Force Southern) vice commander, poses with medal recipients during an award ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. The medals were awarded to Airmen of the 563rd Rescue Group for their heroic actions during deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Air Medal with Valor was awarded to Capt. Charles Heisler and Capt. Bryan Tordoff, both HH-60G Pave Hawk pilots, as well as Master Sgt. Christian Freeman, Master Sgt. James Hollenbach, Staff Sgt. Michael Buchalski and Staff Sgt. Robert Rutledge, all HH-60G Pave Hawk special mission aviators. Maj. Michael Madden, HH-60G Pave Hawk pilot, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor. Master Sgt. Christopher Wilson and Tech. Sgt. Sean Hopper, both pararescuemen, were awarded the Bronze Star Medal for their heroic actions in Afghanistan in 2021.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

Dec.7: A10 maintenance at sunset

An A-10 Thunderbolt II, assigned to the 354th Fighter Squadron, sits on the flight line at sunset at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. The A-10 provides close air support to ground forces due to being easily maneuverable at low altitudes. The 357th FS is the Air Force's only active-duty A-10 pilot training squadron and teaches pilots all necessary skills to achieve their mission downrange.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

Dec. 13: NASA's SOFIA arrives

The final flight crew for NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) poses for a photo on the flightline at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. The SOFIA made its final flight from NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in Palmdale, California, to DM and is scheduled to be displayed at the Pima Air and Space Museum in 2023.

Dec.10: Santa arrives at DM by helicopter

Santa Claus rappels from an HH-60G Pave Hawk during the 563rd RQG's kids holiday party at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. The party had a variety of holiday themed activities including a hot cocoa station, ornament painting and a visit with Santa Claus.

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