

# Desert Lightning News

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Serving Southern Arizona's military community, including Davis-Monthan Air Force Base

AUGUST 2022

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### FEATURE



Courtesy photo

#### TACKLING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP

See Page 10

# 355th Wing changes command

By  
355th WING

Public Affairs

U.S. Air Force Col. Joseph Turnham, 355th Wing commander, relinquished command to U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills during a Change of Command Ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, June 30, 2022.

As the commander of the 355th Wing, Mills is responsible for one of the largest installations and flying operations in the United States, and is also charged with leading geographically separated rescue, maintenance and administrative units at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, and supporting 34 federal mission partners at DM.

"There is no team I'd rather be a part of to take on that challenge than this one," said Mills. "Thank you for the chance to stand with you today and tell our adversaries that we will be ready."

Fifteenth Air Force Commander U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael Koscheski served as the ceremony's presiding officer.

"Our Airmen deserve great leadership, and that is exactly what they get with Col. Scott Mills," said Koscheski. "Mills comes to us with an impressive resume and is no stranger to rescue and attack missions."

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.

Koscheski also praised Turnham and the 355th Wing Airmen for their commitment over the past two years.

"[Col. Turnham] you led this wing during one of the most challenging times in our nation's history filled with unpredictable events that require decisive leadership," Koscheski continued. "Commanding the wing is a challenging task. When I look back at the last two years, you have successfully executed a very challenging and complex plan."

Over the course of his command, Turn-



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

**U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael G. Koscheski, 15th Air Force commander, delivers a speech during a change of command ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, June 30, 2022. U.S. Air Force Col. Joseph Turnham, outgoing 355th Wing commander relinquished command to U.S. Air Force Col. Scott Mills.**



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

**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, June 30, 2022. 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.**

ham led five groups and 29 squadrons, and ensured the well-being of 46,000 Airmen, family members and retirees in the Tucson community. With his support, the 355th Wing won more than 191 higher headquarter awards, including the best installation in Air Combat Command two years in a row.

During the ceremony, Turnham expressed gratitude to the men and women of DM in his parting remarks.

"Commander may be the one who's responsible, but command is a team sport," said Turnham. "I've been blessed with one incredible team. I can't think of anyone I'd rather have help me close this chapter in DM's history and begin writing an even better one of the future. Welcome to an All-Star team my friend and the best job in the world's best Air Force."

Turnham will continue to serve the nation as the director of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command Joint Operations Center at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

## Desert Lightning News

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# HISTORY HIGHLIGHT

**1980s — In honor of the countdown to the U.S. Air Force's 75th Anniversary in September, we're showcasing pieces of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base history and highlighting how far it's come over the years through innovation, accelerating change and thriving through the decades.**

The 1980s brought several diverse missions to DM, including:

- The 868th Tactical Missile Training Group, which trained crews to operate, maintain and defend Ground Launch Cruise Missile systems.
- The 41st Electronic Combat Squadron, equipped with the EC-130H Compass Call aircraft, arrived on July 1980 and reported to the 552nd Airborne Warning and Control Wing.
- The 602nd Tactical Air Control Wing, responsible for the Air Force's tactical air control system west of the Mississippi River, activated at DM in September 1982.
- In 1984 the Titan II wing deactivated, and the cruise missile mission terminated in 1990.
- The 41st ECS continues to remain a part of DM's rich heritage to this day and provides electronic attack warfare across the globe.



Courtesy photos



## Warrior of the Month

Warrior of the Month celebrates outstanding Desert Lightning Airmen who go above and beyond to contribute to the United States Air Force mission.

Congratulations to July's Warrior of the Month, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua A. Kibler, 355th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron. Kibler served in the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) program by saving 229 mental health provider hours. His innovation and efforts educated more than 506 Airmen and slashed command-directed referrals over a 3-month period by 13 percent. He also proposed and got an ADAPT lesson plan approved within the ALS curriculum to best mentor supervisors, promoting early intervention and help-seeking.

# AFREP: Keeping the fleet flying

Story and photos by  
Airman 1st Class  
VAUGHN WEBER

355th Wing Public Affairs

When an aircraft part breaks, it's often replaced with a new part. However, when that broken part is deemed obsolete and no longer available anywhere else in the world, the responsibility to fix it falls to the Air Force Repair Enhancement Program.

Many parts go to a field-level maintenance repair shop along the flightline, while other parts are coded to be thrown away, and a majority of those end up at AFREP. The program is designed to help the Air Force be self-sufficient, and in order to complete the task with all of the little bits and parts needed, it helps to have friends in supply.

A rounds limiter prohibits A-10 Thunderbolt II pilots from firing more than a predetermined number of rounds, helping to conserve ammunition. Over time, the Air Force had to find a way to make the parts they had for the device last because for a period of time, the part wasn't being manufactured. AFREP maintainers stepped up to the plate with a plan to fix the parts, and started supplying bases throughout the Air Force with them.

"A lot of these parts are coded to be thrown away, so when the technicians from the flightline would pull these off the aircraft they'd just throw them away if they're broken," said Todd Zickel, 355th Maintenance Group AFREP supply manager. "But then they're not getting any funding from the depot because no one's supporting them, so we figured out a way to fix it and that's what we really do here. We figure out ways to fix parts that are not usually fixable."

Another part that controls the two crew-served 7.62mm/.50 caliber machineguns on an HH-60G Pave Hawk is coded to be thrown away if broken. This part costs \$84,000 and Zickel can get it sent straight back to the manufacturer where it can be repaired for \$2,000. The \$82,000 saved from sustaining the part then goes back into the Air Force's fund and is dispersed throughout the wing and maintenance shops. That additional money helps pay for new equipment such as sunshades and traffic lights, along with helping to pay the electric bill and fix the pool.

"I designed a new circuit card myself and it goes inside the A-10's breakout box," said Tech. Sgt. Les Reeves, 355th MXG AFREP manager. "This box is used in testing the auto shutdown features of the A-10's auxiliary power unit."

AFREP was originally envisioned to save the Air Force money through repairs and fixes. Today the original vision is still being met, but now it's also sustaining the fleet. They repair parts that are not in any Career Field Education and Training Plans and without AFREP most of those parts would not get repaired, as no one specifically has that in their job description.

To name a few, the AFREP team has fixed the pin setting machines at the bowling alley, broken iPads that hold the TOs for working on the flightline, the scoreboard at the soccer field, the metal detectors for the Security Forces Squadron, bomb robots for Explosive Ordnance Disposal and the ceil-



**U.S. Air Force Staff. Sgt. Eric Carrington, 355th Maintenance Group Air Force Repair Enhancement Program maintainer, works on a part at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, July 5, 2022. This is one of the many parts that get sent over to AFREP for repair.**



**LEFT: U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Les Reeves, 355th Maintenance Group Air Force Repair Enhancement Program manager, repairs a part at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, July 5, 2022. This particular part helps the rotor spin on an HH-60G Pave Hawk.**

ing fan at Benko Fitness and Sports Center. Just recently they fixed the maintenance gate at the 355th Munitions Squadron.

"Are we gate mechanics? No, we're airplane mechanics, but the Air Force gave us skills, we know how to troubleshoot electronics and we know how to use multimeters," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Daniel Isaken, 355th MXG AFREP manager. "So we just go out there and do it. If something needs to get fixed we'll go out and fix it."

AFREP's shop still belongs to the 355th Maintenance Group, but it is not a career field. Within it are many maintainers classically trained to repair A-10s, C-130s and HH-60s, along with crew chiefs, electricians, and avionics specialists. Airmen with an inclination for tinkering and thinking outside the box are most desirable as coming up with solutions for problems is part of the job.

The shop is empowered by the commander to take the next step, using the general TOs and applying their collective knowledge in order to find a solution to any problem. There's a lot of tech data out there and there's a TO on just about everything, along with TOs that are continuously being updated. AFREP has access to TOs that a maintainer on the flightline wouldn't normally have, such as depot TOs and engineering drawings, Isaken mentioned.

"I have developed tests for multiple relay boxes, control panels, and harnesses which previously had to be tested using a multimeter and power supply," said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Tyler Insley, 355th MXG AFREP automatic wire test set technician. "The confidence test that I developed for the A-10 Navigation Mode Select Panel saves around 30-45 minutes compared

to manual testing. The Interior Exterior Lighting Control Panel test allows more accurate testing of intricate switch positions and saves 60-90 minutes during the diagnostic process."

Since the fiscal year of 2001, DM's very own AFREP shop has saved the Air Force \$85,776,337 in total financial benefit, and out of 14,953 items screened, 13,357 were repaired. As of this year, they've saved the Air Force \$6,128,230 in total financial benefit, and out of 634 items screened, they repaired 608.

Parts that were once repaired at a depot are often no longer repaired at depots due to contracts ending or vendors going out of business over time. Meanwhile, in 2022, that part may still be needed to support the aircraft and AFREP finds a way to get it done.



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# Fast BRRReak grand opening

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. KRISTINE LEGATE

355th Wing Public Affairs

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, July 27, 2022.

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 monumental event.

“Thank you all for all the effort that went into opening this,” said Mills. “I worry about the accessibility of healthy options for food, but then I take a look at this place and it is a perfect example of how the Air Force cares for Airmen.”

Fast BRRReak is located on 3965 Craycoft Road, Bldg. 4459, upstairs above Outdoor Recreation, and will be open from 6 to 10:30 a.m. serving breakfast, and 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch.

This not only provides 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.

“This place lets us get training in the kitchen,” said U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Asuncion, 355th FSS sustainment flight commander. “One of our wartime capabilities is to provide for the force when we’re downrange. This gets us



Members behind the creation of Fast BRRReak, 355th Force Support Squadron readiness kitchen, pose for a photo at its grand opening at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, July 27, 2022. Fast BRRReak will provide more food options to those on DM.

back in the kitchen and allows us to become fluent in our skillsets, especially since we’re getting ready to transition back to working in the dining facility on base, which is scheduled to open in 2023.”

Mills plans to spend at least one day a week at Fast

BRRReak to have a cup of coffee. An open invitation stands to the Airmen on base to join him.

“I’m going to be out here from 7-7:30 a.m. in an effort to be there for Airmen, to talk and be available when they need,” Mills said.

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# Inspiring youth

Story and photos by Staff Sgt.  
NICHOLAS ROSS

355th Wing Public Affairs

Over the course of two weeks Airmen from across the 355th Wing mentored children in the Arizona Youth Impact Program (YIP) summer camp. The Youth Impact Program is an innovative program that partners leaders from the U.S. military with leaders from universities across the United States to improve academic and leadership skills in disadvantaged at-risk middle school students.



**U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Richard Gilchrist, 68th Rescue Squadron supply noncommissioned officer in charge, speaks with kids during the Youth Impact Program draft night at Amphitheater Middle School Tucson, Arizona, June 10, 2022. Gilchrist volunteered to be a coach and mentor for the two week YIP summer camp.**



**Youth Impact Program students and coaches pose with 355th Security Forces Squadron Airmen and their military working dogs during a base tour at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, June 17, 2022. The program partners with military and university leaders to improve academic and leadership skills in disadvantaged at-risk middle school students.**

The goal of the program is to guide students through training sessions designed to ignite a passion for STEM based learning, life skills, leadership and character development, and learn to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

“One thing I can guarantee is that the experience that they are going to have at this camp is going to change them and put them on a positive trajectory,” said Syndric Steptoe, University of Arizona (UA) football Director of Player and Community Relations. “Something I take very seriously is being able to pour into the lives of young men and giving them the opportunity to see themselves beyond their current circumstances.”

The camp starts by dividing campers up into teams with both military and student-athlete leaders. Each day the kids are dropped off at the UA.

“The typical daily schedule started with getting the kids checked in and going to breakfast,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Richard Gilchrist, one of the DM YIP team leaders. “The first half of the day is the academic portion, with teams going to English and Language Arts, and STEM sessions.”

After the academic portion the kids received lunch and transitioned to the leadership portion of the day, where speakers discussed different aspects of leadership. The last portion

of the day, the physical portion, involved military physical training and football drills with the UA players.

One day of the camp was dedicated to visiting DM. Campers saw the 355th Security Forces Squadron military working dogs in action, toured the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, spoke with U.S. Air Force Col. Paul Sheets, the 355th Wing vice commander, and got an up-close look at an HH-60G Pave Hawk, a HC-130J Combat King II and an A-10 Thunderbolt II.

“The program is very rewarding and the kids are amazing,” said Gilchrist. “I think seeing all the things that the UA does and provides student athletes if you put in the hard work on the field as well as in the classroom, the possibilities are endless and I think that the military being there showed these kids how to display the core values in every aspect of life. I would recommend this program to Air Force members who want to have a positive impact on kids’ lives while also having fun.”

Since 2006, YIP has conducted 39 programs in 15 different cities across the country.

“This is about having dreams,” Steptoe said. “This is about dreaming big, this is about seeing yourself being a college student, a college athlete, being in the military, being a CEO... that’s what this camp is about.”



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# BEHIND THE BO



*U.S. Air Force Airman Devin Aaronson, 355th Munitions Squadron precision guided munitions technician, and U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Austin Rioja, 355th MUNS PGM crew chief, review data in preparation for testing a AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missile at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. This missile was returned from the 354th Fighter Squadron due to a pilot reported discrepancy.*



*U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Austin Arnett and U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Cody Dyar, 355th Munitions Squadron munitions inspectors, perform an inspection on 40mm smoke grenades before the grenades are allotted to the 48th Rescue Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. The smoke grenades allow the 48th RQS to train and qualify with these munitions.*



*U.S. Air Force Airman guided munitions technician navigating the cross weapon system failure.*



*U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Mia Wilson, 355th Munitions Squadron conventional maintenance technician, pre-positions munitions components with a pallet jack for the next bomb build at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. Most bombs do not arrive pre-assembled and can have as many as 20 different components.*



*U.S. Air Force Airmen from the 355th Munitions Squadron, secure munitions containers to a trailer at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. Munitions personnel have strict guidance on the specific placement and tie-down procedures of munitions to ensure security and safety.*



*U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Lavon Reese, 355th Munitions Squadron conventional maintenance technician, signals to a forklift operator to bring the containers closer to the front of the munitions trailer at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. Airmen on standby ensure the overall safety of surrounding personnel, equipment and munitions during the transfer.*

# OOM



U.S. Air Force Airman Devin Aaronson, 355th Munitions Squadron precision maintenance technician, recalibrates a missile's guidance section at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. This allows Aaronson to align the crosshairs and lock onto targets in order to diagnose any malfunctions.



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Dylan Williams, 355th Munitions Squadron conventional maintenance technician, inspects munitions on the pad at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. Inventories are crucial to maintain accountability of munitions assets.

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



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joseph Clark, 355th Munitions Squadron armament munitions supervisor, cleans the firing contacts on a LAU-131 rocket pod while completing a 30-day storage inspection at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. Having clean firing contacts is essential to ensuring 2.75 inch rockets ignite and release when the fire signal is given.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Joanna Garcia, 355th Munitions Squadron armament munitions supervisor, is safety wiring the GAU-8 Avenger 30mm auto cannon's electrical safety solenoid at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 24, 2022. This is done while the rebuild process for the gun is underway and ensures the electrical connector remains secure during firing sequences.

# 355th MUNS

# Bringing Airmen's ideas to life

By Airman 1st Class  
PAIGE WELDON

355th Wing Public Affairs

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.

AFWERX, a technology directorate of the Air Force Research Laboratory, assists Airmen in developing their innovative ideas. Two of DM's innovation projects, that predate the creation of the innovation office, have been accepted to the AFWERX Refinery Program which grants them additional funding and testing.

Lightning Spark was established to help expedite all innovative ideas or tools in the Davis-Monthan area from the bottom to the top levels of the chain-of-command," said Tech. Sgt. Arrec Chetwood, 355th WIO deputy of innovation. "We are here to help move projects along with our network of resources."

Chetwood was nominated to join the 355th WIO after being recognized by his supervisors for doing extensive research on innovative projects that could potentially make repairing A-10 Thunderbolt II's more efficient. Chetwood officially joined the innovation office full-time in January 2022.

"I love watching new projects go through all stages of production," said Chetwood. "I am excited to come to work every day and help make a difference."



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

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, March 18, 2022. The innovation team has since become the 355th Wing Innovation Office and is bringing Airmen's ideas to life.



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# Tackling the responsibilities of leadership

By Airman 1st Class  
PAIGE WELDON

355th Wing Public Affairs

Covered in sweat, cuts and bruises, Senior Airman Amanda Gonzalez hits the ground and fights to pass the ball to one of her teammates, while another pulls on the collar of Gonzalez's jersey to support herself and fend off an opponent. Gonzalez reigns victorious from the bottom of the ruck as her teammate gains control of the ball and evades their opponents. This is rugby.

Senior Airman Amanda Gonzalez, an A-10 Thunderbolt II crew chief with the 924th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, describes rugby as a hybrid of football and soccer, but safer. Since protective equipment is not worn, players are educated on the proper way to tackle and be tackled to avoid injuries.

Gonzalez began her Air Force rugby career in 2021 after a friend tagged her in an Air Force Women's Rugby Sevens post regarding an upcoming camp. Gonzalez has been a member of the Old Pueblo Lightning, an amateur rugby team in Tucson, Arizona, since 2019, and is no stranger to the sport. She attended the Air Force camp and fell in love with the atmosphere created by its players and coaches.



Courtesy photo

After joining the team, Gonzalez competed in her first Armed Forces Tournament in Wilmington, North Carolina, June 2021, where the team finished in second place.

"I wanted to be coached by different people and play with different people," said Gonzalez. "It's been fun to expand my rugby knowledge and be a better person overall."

Gonzalez joined the Air Force in 2015 as a reservist with the goal of learning a new skill while maintaining enough flexibility to continue her education. When she is not working as a physical therapist assistant or on the flightline, she is pushing herself to be a better player and teammate.

"At my first camp with the Air Force, I did

my part in being a good teammate," said Gonzalez. "I was there for everyone and always had a positive attitude on the field." She returned to the Air Force rugby team for the 2022 Armed Forces Tournament and was selected as one of the team's captains. "As a team captain, I really feel I can help nourish each player and establish their strengths," said Gonzalez. "I love the pressure of being the calm within the storm." The Air Force rugby team played the four other branches at the tournament and once again finished in second place after a close game against the U.S. Army rugby team. "Just when I thought I couldn't push myself any harder, I saw my teammates around me pushing themselves just as much, if not more," said Gonzalez. "So I pushed myself to go further." The camaraderie and sportsmanship of her teammates and the opposing teams is another part of rugby that keeps Gonzalez playing tackle after tackle. "There's so much sportsmanship," said Gonzalez. "You can tackle each other on the field and still help pick each other back up." Gonzalez said that being a member of the Air Force rugby team made the decision of reenlisting easier for her. She plans on returning as a team captain for the 2023 Armed Forces Tournament and finally beating the U.S. Army rugby team to win the championship.

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