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SEPT. 22, 2023

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A look back at Davis-Monthan



A-10 Warthog



HH-60G Pave helicopter



A-10, F-22, and F35



EC-130H Compass Call

The 355th Fighter Wing: 76 years of history

by
355TH FIGHTER WING

Historian's Office

The legacy and heritage of the 355th Fighter Wing began Nov. 12, 1942, when it was activated as the 355th Fighter Group in Orlando Army Air Base, Florida. The 355th FG became fully operational on Sept. 9, 1943, at Steeple Morden, England. By war's end the 355th FG had destroyed 865 enemy aircraft and logged more than 17,000 sorties in P-47 Thunderbolt and P-51 Mustang aircraft. The unit was inactivated Nov. 20, 1946.

Nearly nine years later, on Aug. 18, 1955, the 355th FG reactivated at McGhee-Tyson Airport, Tennessee, operating the F-86D Sabre under the Air Defense Command. For two years, the 355th FG participated in numerous readiness exercises and provided fighter defense for the Atomic Energy Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the Alcoa Aluminum Plant, and the Tennessee Valley Authority dams, as well as the eastern region of

the U.S. The unit inactivated Jan. 8, 1958.

On April 13, 1962, the 355th was activated again at George AFB, California, under a new name, the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing. Their mission was to operate the Republic F-105 Thunderchief. By November 1965 the unit had transferred to Takhli Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand.

Before inactivating on Dec. 10, 1970, the 355th TFW amassed more than 101,000 sorties over North Vietnam, delivering 202,596 tons of bombs, and destroying 12,675 targets. Assigned pilots were also credited with 22 MiG aerial victories, eight MiGs destroyed on the ground, and another nine damaged.

The 355th TFW reactivated July 1, 1971, at Davis-Monthan AFB flying the A-7D Corsair II aircraft. In early 1975, the 355th TFW prepared for conversion to the A-10A Thunderbolt II and received the first four A-10As in March 1976. In the 1990s, the 355th continued to train A-10 crews for assignment to units in the U.S., England, and Korea.



Courtesy photos

The North American P-51 Mustang was flown by the 355th Fighter Wing at their World War II home at Steeple Morden, England on Sept. 9, 1943.

In 1995, the 355th Wing began supporting Operation Southern Watch with deployments to Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, to ensure compliance of the 32nd parallel southern no-fly zone. The initial deployment in 1995 required 12 A-10s. That number doubled to 24 for the 1997 deployment. In 1998 the wing deployed 16 A-10s while the final deployment in 1999 required 14 A-10s to sustain operations.

Since the attacks of 9/11, the 355th Fighter Wing has completed nine deployments in support of multiple contingency campaigns around the world. While a majority of the deployments supported combat operations in Central Command's Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Inherent Resolve, European Command and Pacific Command were also supported on separate deployments with Theater Security Packages comprised of units from the 355th.

These vital TSP operations prevented the spread of aggressive forces into Eastern Europe and the Republic of Korea. In support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the 355's latest deployment, new combat records were set for number of sorties flown, mission capability rates, and ordnance expended.



By war's end, the 355th FG had destroyed 865 enemy aircraft and logged more than 17,000 sorties in a P-47 Thunderbolt like this one, and P-51 Mustang aircraft.

Training and fighting since 1940

by
**DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE
BASE**

public affairs

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, a key Air Combat Command installation, has a colorful history and a long tradition of excellence in service to our country. The base was named in honor of Lieutenants Samuel H. Davis, Jr., and Oscar Monthan, two Tucsonans and World War I-era pilots who died in separate military aircraft accidents after the war ended.

DMAFB was initially established as a military aviation training facility in 1940 and served as a major training base for B-24 Liberator and, later, B-29 Superfortress aircrews during the World War II. The sudden end to the war in August 1945 caused all B-29 training to abruptly end and transformed DM's flight operations into the unique mission of aircraft storage, a mission that remains until this day.

In March 1946, with the Strategic Air Command taking control of DM, bomber operations and training would remain the primary missions until the early 1960. During this era B-29s, B-50s, and B-47s were the primary aircraft assigned to DMAFB. The 1960s brought sweeping changes to the base.

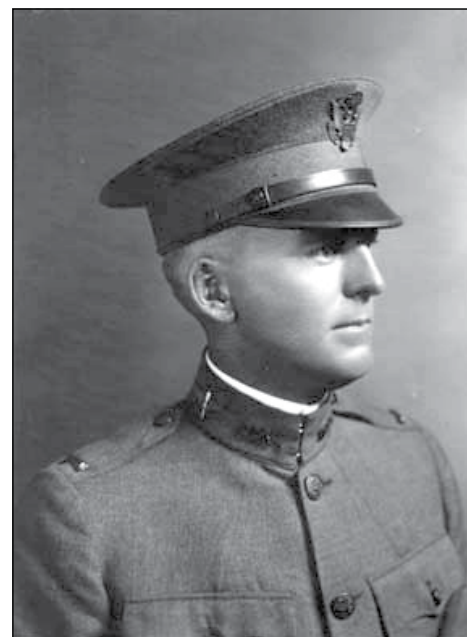
It was during this time that the U.S. Air Force's first operational Titan II missile wing, the 390th Strategic Missile Wing activated. Reconnaissance and Combat Crew Training returned to DMAFB and turned the base into a three-wing installation, 390th SMW, 4453rd Combat Crew

Training Wing, and the 100th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

The primary aircraft assigned to DM AFB during this era were the F-4 Phantom II and U-2 Dragon Lady. Davis-Monthan's operations tempo during the 1970s was as busy as the three previous decades. On July 1, 1971, the Air Force reactivated the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing with the Vought A-7D Corsair II as the primary weapon system.

On March 2, 1976, the wing received the first A-10A. In the midst of constant Air Force changes, jurisdiction of DM was officially transferred from the Strategic Air Command to Tactical Air Command on Sept. 30, 1976. The decades of the 1980s and 1990s brought several diverse missions to DM. The 836th Air Division activated Jan. 1, 1981, and took jurisdiction over all assigned base units. The 868th Tactical Missile Training Group, which trained the crews to operate, maintain, and defend the Ground Launch Cruise Missile system activated. Other units assigned to DM were the 41st Electronic Combat Squadron, and the 602nd Tactical Air Control Wing. In 1984 the Titan II wing inactivated, while the cruise missile mission terminated in 1990.

Resulting treaties between Russia and the U. S. concerning ground launch cruise missiles meant the base was subject to inspection under the INF and START agreements. Additionally, the 355th continued to train A-10 crews for assignments to units in the United States, United Kingdom, and Korea, supported Operation Desert Storm, completed five Operation Southern Watch



LT. OSCAR MONTHAN



LT. SAMUEL H. DAVIS, JR.

deployments, and provided Compass call assets for Operation Allied Force.

Since the attacks of 9/11 the 355th Fighter Wing has completed nine deployments in support of multiple contingency campaigns around the world. While a majority of the deployments supported combat operations in Central Command's Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Inherent Resolve, European Command and Pacific Command were also supported on separate deployments with Theater Security Packages (TSP) comprised of 355th units.

These vital TSP operations prevented the spread of aggressive forces into Eastern Europe and the Republic of Korea. In support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the 355's latest deployment, new combat records were set for number of sorties flown, combat hours completed, and ordnance expended. Presently, the 355 FW has become the 355 WG, after realigning the 563rd RQG giving the wing full Combat Search and Rescue capabilities, to better serve combatant commanders around the globe.

The 355th Wing serves as the host unit for the DMAFB and provides support functions for 34 unique mission partners, to include Headquarters 12th Air Force (Southern) 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, 55th Electronic Combat Group, and the 162nd Arizona Air National Guard Alert Detachment. Other federal agencies using the base include the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) air service branch, and U.S. Border Patrol.

Source: www.dm.af.mil



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Abbey Rieves

U.S. Air Force A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft assigned to the 74th Fighter Squadron taxi for take-off at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Aug. 18, 2023.



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I do; I do—Twice in 70 years

A Korean War veteran, previously stationed at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, and his wife renewed their vows at the Hope Chapel at AFB, Aug. 2, 2023.

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman (ret.) James Bowen and his wife, Patricia, got married July 25, 1953, and after 70 years, they renewed their vows in the same chapel they were wed in.

While in service, James served as a B-29 Superfortress aircraft turret systems operator at Davis-Monthan during the Korean War. While stationed there, he met Patricia, who would become his wife of seven decades. Patricia is a retired schoolteacher of 51 years.

During the renewal Patricia brought a photo of their original wedding day and compared it to the exact same location 70 years later.

"I lived with my aunt and uncle on base while he was an airman 1st class who worked as a remote gunner on the B-29," said Patricia. "While on base, my aunt, uncle and I were invited to a Christmas party where he [James] was and the rest is history."

At the ceremony, the minister stands towards them both and recites the vows to both.

"James, do you take this woman to be your wife, to live together in holy matrimony, to love her, to honor her, to comfort her, and to keep her in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live," said U.S. Air Force Chaplain (Maj.) Jason Gunnels, 355th Wing chaplain. James says yes, the minister then turns

to Patricia and repeats the vows. Patricia says yes to the vows as well.

A kiss concluded the ceremony, representing 70 years of consistent marriage at the same place where it all began. This couple is a testament to the resilience of our Airmen and our military families and a living example for future Airmen to follow.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman (ret.) James Bowen and his wife, Patricia, kiss after renewing their vows after 70 years of marriage at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Aug. 2, 2023. The couple originally married in the same chapel that they renewed their vows in 70 years ago.



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

LEFT: James Bowen and his wife, Patricia, hold a photo of their 1953 marriage at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, in the chapel where they were originally married.

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Special Ops Command the future of D-M

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base has experienced many changes since its inception in 1925 as Davis-Monthan Landing Field, named after two World War I Airmen. Then it was Davis — Monthan Airport in 1927, Tucson Army Air Field in 1940, Davis-Monthan Army Air Field in 1941, and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in 1948, when the United States Air Force was born.

The base has seen many changes of their hosts, mission, commanders, technology, and of course, aircraft. Now, once again, there will be another shift — to being the Air Force Special Operation Command's third power projection wing, according to the Department of the Air Force, which will mean the loss of the beloved A-10 "Warthog."

Transforming the 492nd Special Operations Wing into a power projection wing with all of AFSOC's mission capabilities (strike, mobility, ISR, air/ground integration) will enable the Air Force to regionally focus each power projection wing on a geographic combatant commander. The transition will also allow AFSOC to further diversify its locations to protect against natural disasters by ensuring it can maintain its ability to respond to president-directed missions on very tight timelines.

The additional location will also permit AFSOC to take advantage of the Barry M. Goldwater Range, which will provide ad-



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Robert Allen Cooke III

U.S. Air Force Capt. Matt Bor-gen, 354th Fighter Squadron A-10C Thunderbolt II jet pilot, walks away from an A-10 on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Sept. 13, 2023.

ditional training opportunities, capacity and increased prioritization as its forces prepare to meet the priorities of the National Defense Strategy.

Standing up the new wing at Davis-Monthan requires several relocations, planned throughout the next five years. The final decision will be made following completion of the environmental impact analysis process.

The 47th Fighter Squadron (24 A-10s), the 354th Fighter Squadron (26 A-10s) and the 357th Fighter Squadron (28 A-10s) at Davis-Monthan AFB will inactivate and

their respective A-10s will be retired. The 47th FS and 357th FS will continue A-10 formal training until inactivation.

In the fiscal 2024 Department of Defense budget, the Air Force requested an "increase to facilitate the establishment of the 492nd Power Projection Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB. Funds will support Environmental Impact Statement and an Area Development Plan."

Testifying during a House Armed Services Committee, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown said the impact of losing the A-10 to Davis-Monthan and the sur-

rounding communities would be minimal: "Overall, it should be neutral or maybe just a bit of a bump up in personnel when it's all said and done."

Following are the planned transition actions:

The 492nd SOW at Hurlburt Field, Florida, will relocate to Davis-Monthan AFB. The relocation includes the 492nd SOW's transition from support wing into a power projection wing.

An MC-130J Commando II squadron will relocate from Cannon AFB to Davis-Monthan AFB to join the 492nd SOW.

An additional MC-130J squadron will activate at Davis-Monthan AFB.

The 21st Special Tactics Squadron will relocate from Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, to Davis-Monthan AFB.

The 22nd Special Tactics Squadron will relocate from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, to Davis-Monthan AFB.

The 492nd Theater Air Operations Squadron will activate at Duke Field and transfer to Davis-Monthan AFB.

The 34th Weapons Squadron and the 88th Test and Evaluation Squadron will relocate from Nellis AFB, Nevada, to Davis-Monthan AFB, transferring five HH-60W Jolly Green IIs.

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Office contributed to this story.

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HISTORY HIGHLIGHT

Here's some photos of Davis-Monthan highlighting 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.

1940's



The main gate at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.



Davis-Monthan Air Force Base flightline in the 1940s.



Courtesy photos

Above, a PB4-2 Privateer prepares to taxi to the runway at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona. Left, Members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps stand in formation on the flightline at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.

1950's

Until 1960, DM was the home of the 43rd Bomber Wing, and was the Strategic Air Command's first Supersonic Bomber Wing. The wing employed the B-50 Superfortress and B-47 Stratojet.

As the 43rd BW switched from B-50s to B-47s in 1953, they named one of the B-47s "City of Tucson II" after the B-50 called "City of Tucson."

For the past 75 years, DM has been modernizing our force to maintain the competitive edge of tomorrow.

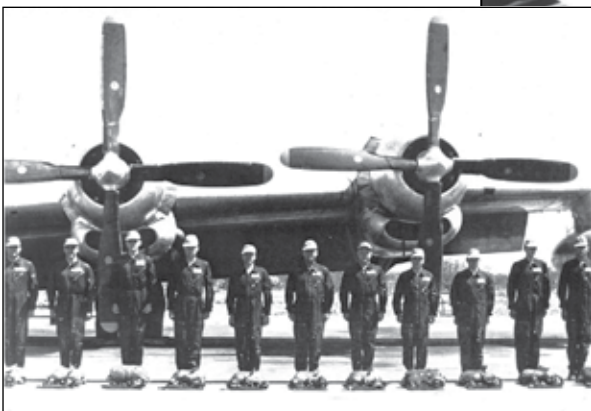


Left: The City of Tucson II at Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, 1953.



Courtesy photos

Above, and at far left, aircrew members stand in front of a B-50 at Davis Monthan-Davis Air Force Base, Arizona.

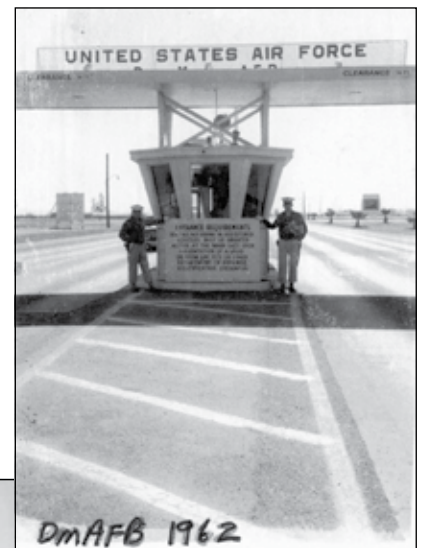
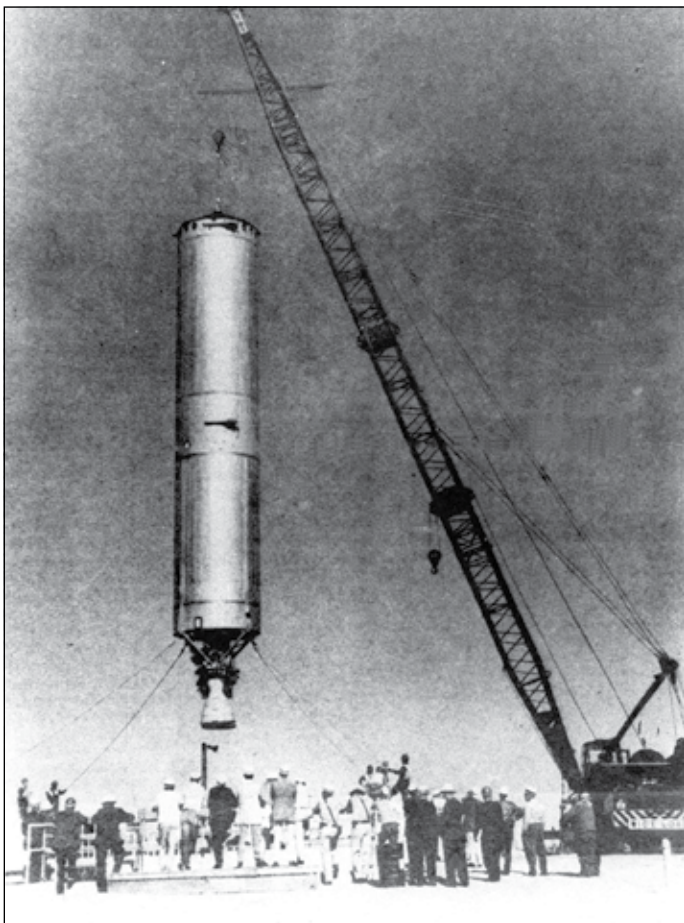


1960's

DM received new missions with bombers phasing out. The base was chosen as one of the locations for a TITAN II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) Wing, designated the 390th Strategic Missile Wing, activated in 1962.

The U-2 Dragon Lady also arrived, assigned to the 4080th Strategic Wing. Followed by the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Squadron relocation to DM in 1964 from MacDill AFB, Florida, with the F-4 Phantom II conducting missions in the Vietnam War.

DM and its Airmen have always played an important role in generating military airpower for the nation, past and present.



1970's

During the 1970s, the 355th Tactical Wing was reactivated and DM celebrated its 50th anniversary.

The aircraft flown during this time were the A-7D Corsair II, also known as the "Short Little Ugly Fellow," flown from 1971 to Oct. 2, 1979, and the A-10A Warthog, welcomed in 1976 as DM's first A-10. In the same year, the 355th TFW was designated as the host unit for the installation.



An A-10A Warthog flies above Davis-Monthan Air Force Base after arriving in the 1970s. It has remained a staple of DM's flightline as it continues to meet the war fighting demands of today and tomorrow with its dedicated pilots and maintainers.

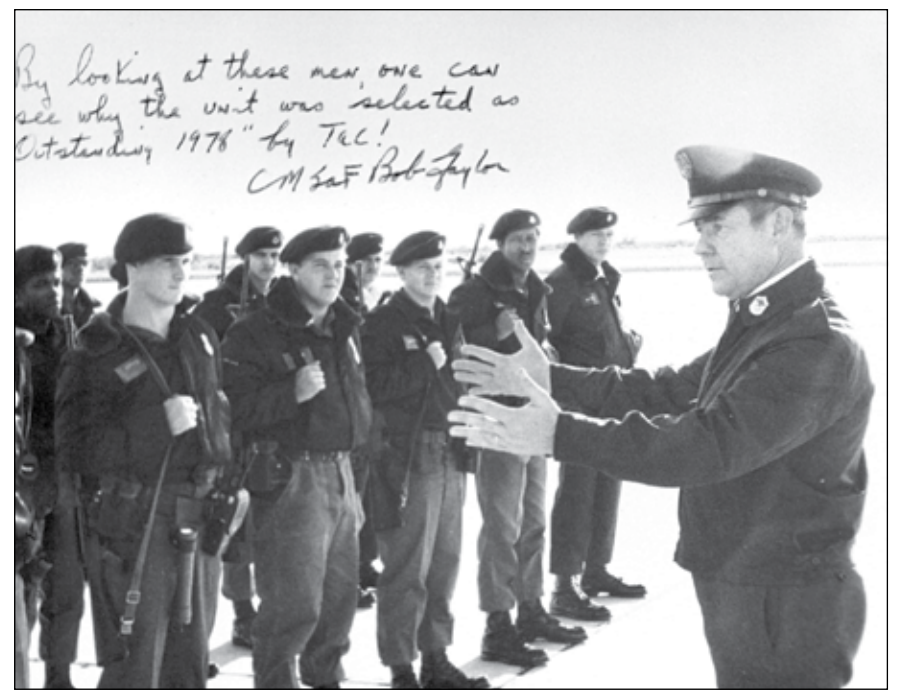


A Volkswagen Beetle is parked beside an A-10 GAU-8 Gatling gun as a size comparison.



An A-7D Corsair II sits on display at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base where it was flown from 1971 to late 1979.

Courtesy photos



By looking at these new ones, one can see why the unit was selected as Outstanding 1978 by TAC!
CM SAsF Bob Gaylor

The fifth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Bob Gaylor, speaks to a group of Airmen during a visit to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, in the 1970s.

1980's

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



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1990's

In the 1990s several big changes and events happened, including:

- From 1980 to late 1991, the 22nd Tactical Air Support Squadron and 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron were both stationed at DM as part of the 602nd Tactical Air Control Wing, when DM was under the 836th Air Division, Tactical Air Command.
- In 1992, the 355th Tactical Training Wing was re-designated as the 355th Wing. The 836th AD was inactivated and TAC changed to Air Combat Command.

- The 23rd TASS, 41st and 43rd ECS deployed from DM in support of Operation Desert Storm, as did several hundred maintenance, operations, support personnel and pilots from the 355th WG.

- In honor of Capt. Patrick Olson, the only member killed in action from the 836th Air Division during Operation Desert Storm, a flag pole was placed in Heritage Park and dedicated to his memory.

- From 1997 to 1999, the 354th Fighter Squadron deployed to support Operation Southern Watch, enforcing the no-fly zone south of the 33rd parallel over Iraq.



Courtesy photos



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