

## ABOUT DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB

**Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DM AFB)** is a United States Air Force base located within the city limits approximately 5 miles south-southeast of downtown Tucson, Arizona. It was established in 1925 as **Davis-Monthan Landing Field**. The host unit for Davis-Monthan AFB is the 355th Fighter Wing (355 FW) assigned to Twelfth Air Force (12AF), part of Air Combat Command (ACC). The base is best known as the location of the Air Force Materiel Command's 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (309 AMARG), the aircraft boneyard for all excess military and U.S. government aircraft and aerospace vehicles.

### Overview

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Davis-Monthan Air Force Base is a key ACC installation. The 355th Fighter Wing (355 FW) is the host unit, providing medical, logistical, mission and operational support to all assigned units. This wing's combat mission is providing A-10 Thunderbolt II close air support and OA-10 forward air controllers to ground forces worldwide. In addition to its deployable operational A-10 squadrons, the 355 FW is also the sole formal training unit for the A-10 aircraft, providing initial and recurrent training to all U.S. Air Force A-10 and OA-10 pilots, to include those in the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and the Air National Guard (ANG). The 355th is also ACC's executive agent for INF and START treaty compliance.

One of the wing's tenant units, the 55th Electronic Combat Group (55 ECG), is a geographically separated unit (GSU) of the 55th Wing (55 WG) at Offutt AFB, Nebraska and is an ACC unit tasked to provide offensive counter-information and electronic attack capabilities in support of U.S. and Coalition tactical air, surface, and special operations forces with its EC-130H Compass Call aircraft and employing the EC-130H in tactical air operations in war and other contingencies worldwide. The 55 ECG also provides initial and recurrent training to all EC-130H Compass Call pilots, navigators and air crew.

Two other major tenants, the 563rd Rescue Group (structured as a GSU under ACC's 23d Wing at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia), and the Air Force Reserve Command's (AFRC) 943rd Rescue Group (structured as a GSU under AFRC's 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida), are tasked to provide combat search and rescue (CSAR) and personnel recovery (PR) support worldwide.

Perhaps the most prominent tenant is the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (309 AMARG) of the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC). As the main location for the 309 AMARG, Davis-Monthan AFB is the sole aircraft boneyard for excess military and U.S. government aircraft and other aerospace vehicles (e.g., ballistic missiles, etc.). Tucson's dry climate and alkali soil made it an ideal location for aircraft storage and preservation.

### History

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The base was named in honor of World War I pilots Lieutenants Samuel H. Davis (1896-1921) and Oscar Monthan (1885-1924), both Tucson natives. Davis, who attended the University of Arizona prior to enlisting in the Army in 1917, died in a Florida aircraft accident in 1921.

Monthan enlisted in the Army as a private in 1917, was commissioned as a ground officer in 1918, and later became a pilot; he was killed in the crash of a Martin bomber in Hawaii in 1924.

## Origins

In 1919, the Tucson Chamber of Commerce aviation committee established the nation's first municipally owned airfield at the current site of the Tucson Rodeo Grounds. The rapid increase in aviation activities meant a move in 1927 to the site which is now Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. After the City of Tucson acquired land southeast of town for a runway in 1925, Charles Lindbergh, fresh from his nonstop crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, flew his "Spirit of St. Louis" to Tucson in 1927 to dedicate Davis-Monthan Field, then the largest municipal airport in the United States.

Military presence at the field began when Sergeant Simpson relocated his fuel and service operation to the site on 6 October 1927. He kept a log containing names of the field's customers, including Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Benjamin Foulois, and Jimmy Doolittle. Doolittle, awarded the Medal of Honor for his 1942 Tokyo raid, was the first military customer at the field on 9 October 1927. The combination of civil and military operations worked well until the early 1940s, when military requirements began to require the relocation of civil aviation activities.

## World War II

Davis-Monthan Airport became Tucson Army Air Field in 1940, as the United States prepared for World War II. The first assigned U.S. Army Air Corps units were the 1st Bomb Wing, 41st Bomb Group and 31st Air Base Group, activating on 30 April 1941 with Lieutenant Colonel Ames S. Albro Sr. as commanding officer. In its military role, the base became known as **Davis-Monthan Army Air Field** on 3 December 1941. U.S. Army Air Forces leaders then utilized the airfield for heavy bomber operation, sending Douglas B-18 Bolo, Consolidated B-24 Liberator and Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers, for training and observation missions.

Among the bombardment groups trained at the base during the war:

- 34th Bombardment (Heavy) 13 May 1942 - 4 July 1942
- 94th Bombardment (Heavy) August 1942 - 1 November 1942
- 302nd Bombardment (Heavy) 23 June 1942 - 30 July 1942
- 308th Bombardment (Heavy) 20 June 1942 - 1 October 1942
- 380th Bombardment (Heavy) 4 November 1942 - 2 December 1942
- 382nd Bombardment (Heavy) 23 January 1943 - 5 April 1943
- 389th Bombardment (Heavy) 24 December 1942 - 1 February 1943
- 392nd Bombardment (Heavy) 26 January 1943 - 1 March 1943
- 399th Bombardment (Heavy) 1 March 1943 - 10 April 1943
- 400th Bombardment (Heavy) April 1943 - 2 May 1943

Training at the airfield came to a halt on 14 August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered. Davis-Monthan played a post-war role by housing German POW's from June 1945 to March 1946. It also served as a separation center, which brought the base populace to a high of 11,614 people in September 1945.

## **Previous names**

- Established as: Davis-Monthan Landing Field, 1 November 1925
- Tucson Municipal Airport, 6 October 1927
- Davis-Monthan Field, 3 December 1941
- Davis-Monthan AFB, 13 January 1948-present

## **Major commands to which assigned**

- Fourth Air Force, 1 February 1942 - 8 February 1943
- Second Air Force, 8 February 1943 - 16 November 1945
- Air Technical Service Command, 16 November 1945 - 31 March 1946
- Strategic Air Command, 31 March 1946 - 1 October 1976
- Tactical Air Command, 1 October 1976 - 1 June 1992
- Air Combat Command, 1 June 1992 – present

## **Major units assigned**

- 41st Bombardment Group, 15 January - 14 May 1941
- 31st Air Base Group, 30 April 1941 - 30 April 1942
- Redesignated: 31st Service Group, 30 April - 16 August 1942
- 1st Bombardment Wing, 28 May 1941 - 16 July 1942
- 4th (later IV) Bomber Command, 19 September - 15 December 1941
- 382d Bombardment Group, 23 January 1942 - 4 April 1943
- 39th Bombardment Group, 5 February - 1 April 1942
- 327th Air Base Group, 2 March - 1 May 1942
- 335th Air Base Group, 30 March 1942 - 2 February 1943
- 34th Bombardment Group, 13 May - 1 July 1942
- 32d Base HQ and Air Base Sq, 13 June 1942 - 25 March 1944
- 308th Bombardment Group, 20 June - 1 October 1942
- 302d Bombardment Group, 23 June - 30 July 1942; 2 December 1942 - 27 January 1943
- 381st Base HQ & Air Base Group, 27 June - 18 November 1942
- 380th Bombardment Group, 3 October - 1 December 1942
- 385th Bombardment Group, 1 December 1942 - 3 January 1943
- 389th Bombardment Group, 24 December 1942 - 1 February 1943
- 392d Bombardment Group, 26 January - 1 March 1943
- 399th Bombardment Group, 1 March - 10 April 1943
- 444th Bombardment Group, 1 March - 31 July 1943; 1 May - 1 October 1946
- 446th Bombardment Group, 1 April - 6 June 1943
- 5th Altitude Training Unit, 10 April 1943 - 1 April 1944
- 400th Bombardment Group, 11 April - 1 May 1943

- 447th Bombardment Group, 1 May - 4 July 1943
- 449th Bombardment Group, 1 May - 5 July 1943
- 451st Bombardment Group, 1 May - 3 June 1943
- 16th Bombardment Operational Training Wing, 1 June - 12 October 1943
- 459th Bombardment Group, 22 September - 25 October 1943
- 491st Bombardment Group, 1 October - 11 November 1943
- 486th Bombardment Group, 9 November 1943 - 9 March 1944
- 499th Bombardment Group, 20 November - 1 December 1943
- 233d AAF Base Unit, 25 March 1944 - 16 November 1945
- 502d Bombardment Group, 1-5 June 1944
- 489th Bombardment Group, 3 April - 13 July 1945
- 466th Bombardment Group, 26 August - 17 October 1945
- 39th Bombardment Group, 1 September - 17 October 1945
- 4105th AAF Base Unit, 16 November 1945 - 31 March 1946

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