

HONORARY COMMANDER SPOTLIGHT: Nancy Cole, Director Pima County Project Management Office, with the 355th Contracting Squadron

Nancy Cole, Director of the Pima County Project Manager Office, has served as the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DMAFB) Honorary Commander (HC) for the 355th Contracting Squadron since March 2019. We asked Nancy a few questions about her experience as an HC, and she shared the following.

Explain the squadron you are affiliated with and when your term started.

I am a part of the 355th CONS (Contracting Squadron), and my term started with a HC Change of Command ceremony March 26, 2019. I was inducted as the Honorary Commander with Major Mizzell (pictured), prior to the 355 CONS change of command to Major Reeves in July 2019.



What has your experience been as an HC with your squadron?

This program is an excellent way for regional community leadership to interact with the base on a much more personal level to see how they operate as a “business” and what challenges and needs they confront to meet their mission goals. I have no previous military experience and have enjoyed seeing how the squadron operates. In particular, CONS has a mixed balance of both military and civilian staff which has also provided good insight to their operations.

What activities have you participated in?

There are a variety of activities, from change of command ceremonies, to a memorial ceremony, to a tour of the AMARG facilities and the extra access on the Heritage Flight Practice Sessions Day. I also had a driving tour of the base and participated in many informal events with the squadron (often scheduled around promotions, personnel changes and of course food). With the onset of the COVID virus, there have been less formal events available for participation. Early in my tenure, I was invited to give a presentation about who I am and what I do to the squadron, and that was a great introduction to the group. In return, we have recently asked Major Reeves to provide some leadership tips from his military experience in a presentation within Pima County that was very well received.

What did you find most meaningful when participating?

It’s very difficult to choose one type of event that is most meaningful, as all of these have been extremely interesting and new experiences. However, what I have found really inspirational is the overall response that DM has had in terms of both the COVID19 virus and the recent civil protests. Through my connection with the squadron, I have linked up in Facebook with the DM page where there is fabulous ongoing outreach to the airmen and families (and those of us following) regarding the response to these remarkably challenging times. I have pulled information from this site to use with my staff, and I’m continually impressed with the efforts by

the 355th Wing to ensure everyone is ready and focused for the mission. “Fight the virus, not the process” is one of my favorite slogans, and the contacts you have with Simon Sinek and ESPN anchors has been amazing. Major Reeves also provided specific CONS experiences, and the Stand Down day to focus on our current racial inequities was eye opening. We support our staff well from a health and safety perspective, but this type of facilitated outreach could be an important next step.

Is there anything you would suggest to make the experience more valuable?

I’d like more time! Two years doesn’t seem long enough. The tours have been really helpful. For example, at AMARG I appreciated seeing their process. How they have become expert problem solvers in managing the boneyard inventory to the benefit of the entire military has been eye-opening. All Tucsonans know about the boneyard, but what I didn’t know is how much engineering and mechanical knowhow is applied every day to help keep more equipment flight ready throughout the organization. Plus, my son is finishing his mechanical engineering degree and would love to see this type of tour first hand.

Anything else you would like to add?

I have been truly blessed to be included in the 355th CONS as an Honorary Commander. I can only hope they are receiving a similar benefit in return...or at least enjoying lots of homemade brownies.

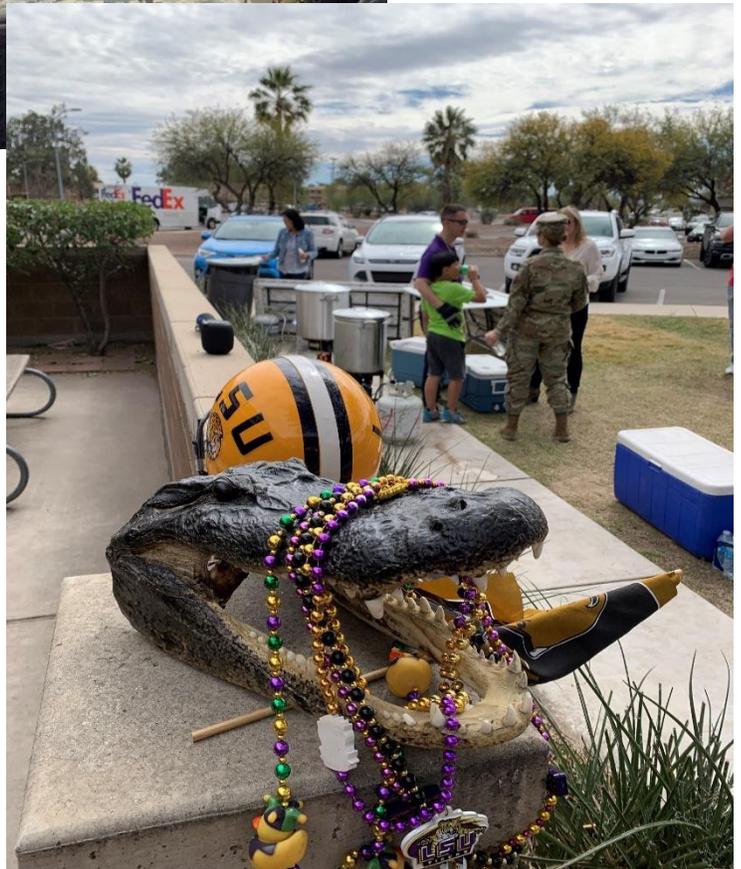


Response from Major Brandon M. Reeves, 355th CONS: Nancy has been a great fit for us as our HC and has been super involved and engaging. She has been extremely supportive of all our events and special functions (and even regularly brings us food). We enjoyed hearing her presentation to the squadron on her job and what it entails. I know Nancy and I had discussed me coming over to her office at some point, but understand that is hard in the current COVID environment. In lieu of a physical meeting, I really enjoyed getting to speak to the CIP team virtually on lessons learned in my first year in command. I think that COVID continues to present some challenges, but it just means we have to find more ways to involve and connect with one another. I just wrapped up my first year in command (wow time flies) and it has been great getting to know

Nancy and work with her!



Major Reeves (pictured below in purple shirt with his son) is an avid LSU fan and displayed his prized alligator head (yes, it's real!) at a squadron shrimp boil team event. Geaux Tigers!



What's next? – The Desert Thunder Squadron:

In response to Nancy's statement "I'd like more time!", the Desert Thunder Squadron (DTS) is here to help an HC's service to DMAFB continue after their term with their squadron comes to an end. DTS is an Alumni Association of the Honorary Commanders of DMAFB. Our mission is to continue our support and be a voice in the community with the knowledge gained as Honorary Commanders to support the men, women, families and mission of DMAFB. As Honorary Commanders we were connected to Squadrons, Groups or Detachments and we continue to engage with our designated Squadrons, Groups or Detachments. As members of the DTS, we now support the base with our personal and professional talents and resources and serve the DMAFB Airmen and Missions at a moment's notice.

The Desert Thunder Squadron is a physical and visual reminder of the community's support for DMAFB. All former HCs are automatically eligible for active participation in the DTS in accordance with rules and regulations contained in the DTS Charter and By-laws. For more information, visit our website at: dts.dmafb@gmail.com

The 355th Wing Public Affairs office administers the HC program for the Wing Commander and provides guidance and advice to ensure the program's overall success. If you would like to know more, please contact the Community Relations office at 520-228-3378 or email 355WGPA@us.af.mil.

Photos: 1) Major Mark Mizzell (L) and Nancy Cole 2019 Honorary Commander, 355 CONS (R)

2) Nancy Cole in her office at Pima County; also an artist, her work is displayed.

3) Major Brandon Reeves briefs his CONS Airmen

4) Major Brandon Reeves with his son at a squadron shrimp boil team event