

## **HONORARY COMMANDER SPOTLIGHT: Paul Dias, Honorary Commander with the 355<sup>th</sup> Wing**

Paul Dias, Dias Management, Inc. d/b/a McDonald's, has served as the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DMAFB) Honorary Commander (HC) for the 355<sup>th</sup> Wing since March 2017. We asked Paul a few questions about his experience as an HC and she shared the following.

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

My experience has been amazing, I have loved every second of it, and I have learned so much about the Air Force.

### **What activities have you participated in?**

I have participated in many activities such as the A-10 simulator, parachute simulator, mid-air refueling from a C-130 out of Phoenix. I attended several Air Force balls, two Purple Heart Ceremonies and a Silver Star ceremony, just to name a few.

### **What did you find most meaningful when participating?**

The most meaningful part of my experience was getting to know the Airmen personally and better understanding their day-to-day lives and the extent that they and their families sacrifice all for the sake of our freedom.

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

The more on-base experiences we can have the better. That's where I learned the most. Seeing the airmen in their environment helped me understand their lives more.

### **Anything else you would like to add?**

Again, it was the most exciting experience of my life, and I treasured and appreciated every second of it.

I look forward to continuing to learn and share with others in our community what the base brings to our community. I hope that the Desert Thunder experience will help me continue that.

*Photos: Silver Start Ceremony with Chief Lyda, Nellis AFB, Las Vegas*

*DMAFB Emersion Tour*



**Response from Command Chief James R. Lyda, CMSgt, 355<sup>th</sup> Wing:** It has been awesome having Paul. I have never had, nor heard of an honorary Command Chief, but have loved the concept.

Things I would add to Paul's list that had a bigger impact on the Airmen than he realizes:

1. Paul and Nelie took a Rusty Nail shot in the PJ Heritage Room, saluting one of their fallen. That happens VERY VERY VERY rarely and is traditionally a closed event.
2. Paul has smoked cigars and had a few+ drinks with the Chiefs. They have loved his success stories, the work he does with young people every day in the local community, and his efforts at the RMHC. He has taught the Chiefs more than he realizes.
3. He and Nelie have eaten MRE's in my kitchen...I think Nelie has a new appreciation for field living conditions! The Chiefs still talk about that night.
4. Paul has welcomed so many Airmen (of all ranks) into his life. He sponsored Col Kenerson and I into the Tour de Tucson last year, rides bikes every weekend with Airmen, and spends time at Boss and Buddy.
5. I have photos and video of Paul and Nelie 4-wheeling...It might be the only time Paul has ever been dirty.



Patricia and I are very lucky to have Paul and Nelie share this tour with us.

Lastly...Paul is not done yet! He has 8 more months with me!



*Photos: Air Force awards ceremony with Col. Drowley @ DMAFB  
Air refueling trip over Arizona in C-130*



10.01.20

## What's next? – The Desert Thunder Squadron:

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](mailto: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](mailto:355WGPA@us.af.mil).



*Photos: Air Force Ball with Chief Lyda and Col. Drowley  
With Senator Martha McSally at Purple Heart Ceremony*