

# The Outpost

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365

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## Bradley Protection System Base Kit tested at Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

The Bradley Fighting Vehicle has proved itself to be lethal and survivable in multiple theaters since first fielded in the 1980s.

Armed with a 25mm chain-driven autocannon, a 7.62 mm machine gun, and twin Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided (TOW) missiles, the Bradley has accompanied American troops in multiple theaters.

In ensuing years, the threat faced by American Soldiers has mutated, but the Bradley has remained viable and relevant thanks to Army modernization efforts and extensive testing of all upgrades at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG). Recently, YPG personnel conducted a production qualification



Recently, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground personnel conducted a production qualification test on the Vehicle Protection System Base Kit (VBK) of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, which utilizes sensors on the corners of the turret to provide 360 degrees of detection for incoming laser threats. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

test on the Vehicle Protection System Base Kit (VBK), which utilizes sensors on the corners of the turret to provide 360 degrees of detection for incoming laser threats. If the system detects an adversary is lazing the vehicle, the vehicle's commander can immediately slew the Commander's Independent Viewer in the turret to the area the laser originated from.

"It has an audio warning that notifies the crew when a laser is detected and visually show you where the laser is originating from," said Alan Vega, test officer. "The Soldier is able to decide whether to attack or do some kind of evasive maneuver in response to the threat."

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Chaplain reaches goal of perfect score on Army Combat Fitness Test / Page 3



Fostering educational partnerships for the future test mission / Page 4



Last man standing: recent retirements leaves one final employee who transferred from Jefferson Proving Ground after BRAC / Page 6



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# YPG commander speaks at local ceremony

By Mark Schauer

On the morning of Jan. 11, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson spoke at a ceremony commemorating the U.S. Army of the West Mormon Battalion's 1847 crossing of the Colorado River.

The annual ceremony at Yuma's West Wetlands Park honors the Soldiers of the battalion, who were the first Army presence in what later became Yuma. YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare also attended.

Following six months of grueling

privation across difficult terrain, the battalion's primary and most lasting contribution to American history was the founding and successful navigation of an all-weather southern route to California capable of sustaining wagon traffic.

In remarks at the ceremony, Nelson noted that YPG's work at the forefront of Army modernization efforts carries on the battalion's legacy.

"Today, YPG is at the forefront

of all of the Army's modernization efforts," said Nelson. "YPG's reputation is known throughout the Army, as well as across the Department of Defense and by international partners. When I think about the folks, I work with every day conducting this exciting work, it reminds me of the spirit of the Mormon Battalion—trailblazers, innovators—that spirit carries on in the workforce that is the biggest single employer in Yuma County."



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson speaks at a ceremony commemorating the U.S. Army of the West Mormon Battalion's 1847 crossing of the Colorado River on Jan. 11, 2025. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Nelson and YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare speak to eventgoers at the ceremony, which has taken place since the statue commemorating the Mormon Battalion's 1847 crossing of the Colorado River replaced in 2007.



More than 100 people attended the event, which commemorates the significant impact the crossing had on Western United States history.

## The Outpost

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# YPG chaplain reaches goal of perfect score on Army Combat Fitness Test

By Ana Henderson

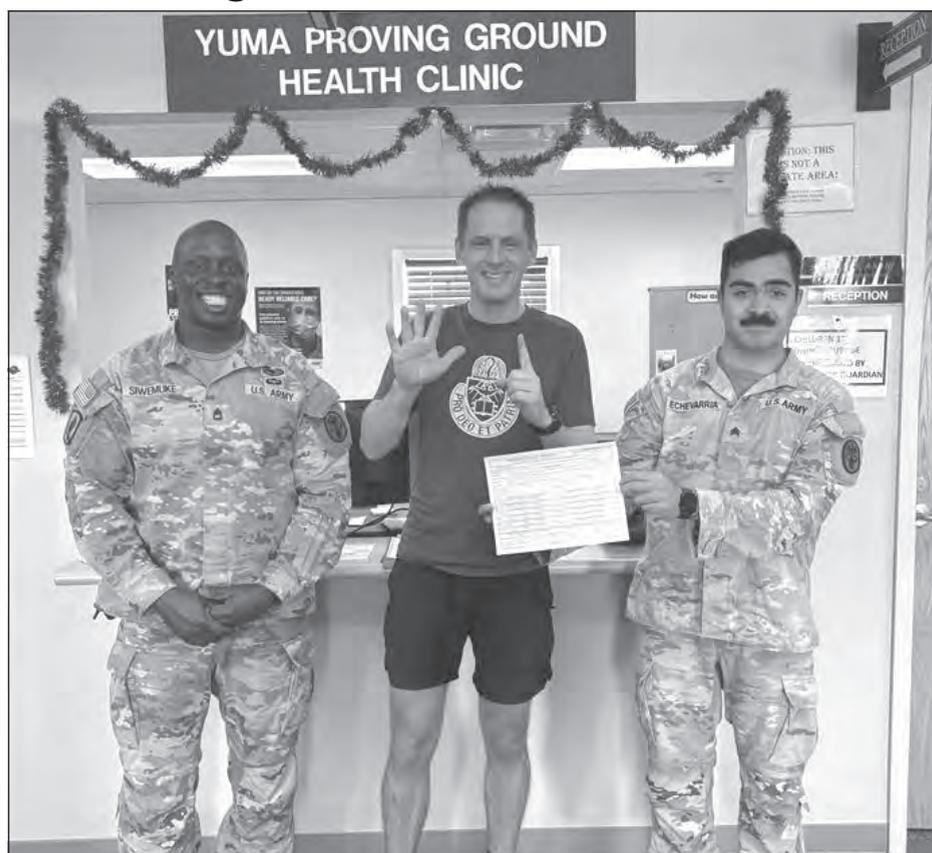
U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse is an accomplished man. He earned his doctorate in Ministry, served as a U.S. Army Ranger, graduated from the Military Free Fall School and now, he can add one more accomplishment to his list of accolades.

Pearse is one of possibly two chaplains in the U.S. Army to earn a perfect score on the Army Combat Fitness Test known as the ACFT.

On Dec. 27, 2024, Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Siwemuke, the YPG Medical Clinic's NCOIC and Sgt. Armando Echevarria graded Pearse, as he went through the six parts of ACFT: three repetition maximum deadlift, standing power throws, hand release push-ups arm extension, sprint-drag-carry, a plank and two-mile run.

Pearse explained, "You have to have a minimum of two people. Someone grading you and then someone making sure you are doing it correctly."

He started training in the summer of 2024 before attending a specialized school. In October 2024, he tested and, although he scored the highest grade in the class, he missed the perfect score by a few points due to a back injury from overtraining. He took a few weeks



Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Siwemuke (left), the YPG Medical Clinic's NCOIC and Sgt. Armando Echevarria (right) graded Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse (center) on Dec. 27, 2024, as he went through the six parts of Army Combat Fitness Test. He earned a perfect score of 600. (Photo courtesy of Maj. Ryan Pearse)

off training and restarted.

"I wanted to continue to train because I knew I was close to an official 600 score. So, I kept training through Christmas break, I knew I was there."

Pearse identified his two weaknesses, the deadlift and the standing power throws, so he trained for the test using the facilities at YPG.

"I used every room in the fitness center," said Pearse as he reminisced on his workout regimen.

The deadlift was one of two movements that challenged him. Now, it's become a badge of honor.

"I can say I deadlifted over twice my body weight. Which I am very proud of."

When asked how conquering this goal made him feel, he remarked, "Accomplished." He added,

"When I have a goal, I set out and I don't care how long it takes, or what I have to do."

Every Soldier in the U.S. Army must complete the ACFT.

## YPG commander leads Pledge of Allegiance at inauguration ceremony



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson leads the Pledge of Allegiance at an inauguration ceremony for recently elected city officials in the city council chambers of Yuma, Arizona's City Hall on Jan. 6, 2025. "I think it is a really important civic-military relationship that you have to sustain, especially with Yuma Proving Ground being the biggest single civilian employer in Yuma County," Nelson said. "I think it's always important to show the public how strong that relationship is." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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# Fostering educational partnerships for the future test mission

By Mark Schauer

As U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) tests military equipment for the Army of 2030, its leadership has embarked on an ambitious program to prepare for the future mission.

Army senior leaders have deemed multidomain operations as the force's new operational concept. The strategy concerns defending against near-peer adversaries able to oppose American forces in all domains: land, sea, air, space, and cyber.

With a significant testing workload on behalf of the Army Futures Command and experience hosting Project Convergence 2020 and 2021, as well as Project Convergence Technology Gateway 2022 and the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event better known as EDGE in 2023 and 2024, YPG's efforts have been at the frontline of ensuring American forces can retain overmatch against any potential adversary.

A major component of YPG's preparation for testing in 2030 and beyond is the post's EMERGE program which stands for Employee Modernization Effort for Relevant Growth and Enrichment, stood up in 2022 with an initial investment of \$270,000. More recently, the investment has grown to \$750,000 with comprehensive and wide-ranging efforts at preparing members of the workforce for all aspects of the future test mission, covering everything from developing new test methodologies for advanced technologies and utilization of machine learning and artificial intelligence to leadership strategies and critical thinking skills.

The proving ground's remote and isolated location makes attracting and retaining skilled personnel challenging: by and large, individuals who hail from the local area or have family located here tend to stay longer than those without such ties, which gives YPG a vested interest in promoting science, technology,



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Technical Director Ross Gwynn (right) speaks with University of Arizona President Dr. Suresh Garimella (left) and local officials at the University of Arizona Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture on Dec. 16, 2024. YPG's outreach efforts have become a model for the Army Test and Evaluation Command as a whole and extends to educational partnerships with area and regional institutions of higher learning. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

engineering and mathematics (STEM) outreach with local youth.

"We're trying to get more outreach and community engagement and expand upon our future generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators," said Janett Rios, YPG STEM outreach coordinator. "We want to give these students some growth and encouragement in STEM fields."

YPG's outreach efforts have become a model for the Army Test and Evaluation Command as a whole and extends to educational partnerships with area and regional institutions of higher learning.

"Under the technology transfer authority that we got a couple of years ago, we are doing educational partnership agreements," said Todd Hudson, director of the YPG Technology and Investments Directorate. "We had three in 2023: Arizona Western College, the University of Arizona, and the Desert Research Institute to help with extreme natural environment characterization."

One recent example of Yuma's growing importance in this vein was a visit from University of Arizona President Suresh Garimella barely two months into his tenure leading the institution. In the offices of the school's Yuma-based Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture in mid-December he met with YPG Technical Director Ross Gwynn and Marine Corps Air Station

Yuma Commander Col. Jared Stone to discuss the current and future educational needs of both installations. Curriculum geared toward the unique requirements of YPG's test officer roles was an area of discussion, as was machine learning

and artificial intelligence. The ability to take such training opportunities locally instead of at universities thousands of miles away would serve to stretch YPG's training dollars further.

"I feel very fortunate that the U of A president came down to specifically focus on the partnership that exists with the Yuma community," said Gwynn. "From the military to the agriculture community, we all have similar knowledge gaps and technical training requirements that we need to address to ensure success for the future. Advancements in technology today will shape how we address challenges in the future, and the U of A is able to leverage all of those similar requirements and enable us to be efficient by getting trained together closer to home."

**CULTURAL AWARENESS**

**OBSERVANCE**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

Jan 20, 2025

**How Long? Not Long**

Selma to Montgomery / 1965

Each year, the third Monday of January is celebrated as Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. The Department of Defense joins the Nation in honoring Dr. King's life, achievements, and enduring impact on the United States.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery march campaign, led by Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) to stop voter suppression.

Following the Civil War and the end of slavery, Jim Crow laws were enacted to suppress African American rights, including the right to vote. Because of stringent voter registration requirements and the threat of violence, Black voter participation in some Alabama counties plummeted to nearly 0%.

In 1965, King and the SCLC launched a protest and voter registration campaign in Selma, Alabama. On March 7, 600 nonviolent protesters began marching 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery.

When they arrived at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, law enforcement attacked them, forcing the protesters to retreat. Fifty people were hospitalized as a result. In response to this violence, Dr. King called for another march.

On March 9, during the "Ministers March," 2,000 protesters once again gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Upon encountering state troopers, they chose to return to Selma to avoid another violent confrontation.

The third and final march began on March 21, this time under Federal and State protection to prevent attacks. Over 8,000 protesters marched for five days until they reached Montgomery.

By March 25, the crowd had swelled to 25,000 people. King upon reaching the Alabama State Capitol building said in his famous "Not Long, How Long..." speech, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," reflecting his belief that justice will eventually triumph over injustice.

On Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, the DoD honors King's legacy and the freedom, equality, and inclusion he stood for. Together, we can live up to his standard, combat injustice, and serve our communities on this holiday because it is "A Day On, Not A Day Off!"

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EXCELLENCE IN ACTION



# Last man standing: recent retirements leaves one final employee who transferred from Jefferson Proving Ground after BRAC

By Ana Henderson

In 1995 about 20 or so employees from Jefferson Proving Ground in Indiana transferred to Yuma Test Center (YTC) after the base realignment and closure better known as a BRAC.

The week of Dec. 16, 2024, Lu Nguyen and John Allen turned in their CAC cards and range passes, leaving Electronics Technician Curtis Overstreet as the sole transplant. Ironically enough, Overstreet's co-workers had joked that he would be the last to retire.

"Did I know for sure no, but jokingly John and people that we knew here would say 'yeah, Curtis will be the last one,' because of my mindset and work ethic."

Nguyen, who retired after 38 years with the government, recounts he had only been working for the government about two years when Jefferson, as most refer to the proving ground, was selected in 1988 for the BRAC.

"I felt disappointed," said Nguyen. "I wasn't quite sure how long I would be here. I thought I would be here two or three years and see how it goes. Next thing I know it has been 30 years."

Allen served the government 40 years and said he knew since day one that his job was not guaranteed.



Recent retirements left Electronics Technician Curtis Overstreet as the sole transplant from Jefferson Proving Ground. Overstreet's co-workers had joked that he would be the last to retire of the group and they were correct. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

"Most of us got hired there in the '89 timeframe, they were under the BRAC then, so when they hired us in, all the ones in electronics area got hired in as temporary."

He said they knew it was happening, just not exactly when.

Nguyen and Allen made a lasting impact at YTC before their departure. At Nguyen's retirement celebration directors, chiefs and co-workers complimented his work ethic and ability to fire more rounds than those generations younger than him. They also praised his knowledge and willingness to mentor.

Remarks about Allen's contributions included Data Processing Branch Chief Ashely Thompson who said, "[his] contributions shaped our organization and the lives of those who had the privilege of working alongside him."

Air Combat Systems Director Jeff Rogers echoed the sentiment. "John really is one of the guys who has fundamentally changed the way we do business around here."

Allen worked in data processing as a lead electronics technician. Overstreet is also an electronics technician. Nguyen worked as a

test officer firing mortars. Gunners, demo and ammunition technicians, and range controllers were all on the list of occupations that transferred to Yuma.

Equipment from Jefferson also made its way west. In fact, the weapon system adorning the entrance of the AOC, where Nguyen worked, came from Jefferson. He recalls a new fire truck and crane making their way from Indiana, and a bombproof.

"I think they brought it, because I still see a JPG logo fading away there. The bombproof even had a heater. We don't have heaters here in Yuma," Nguyen said, amused with the thought.

The item Allen remembers transferred was what the team nicknamed the Lt. Col. Nessel, named after a Jefferson colonel. It was an armored side loading forklift for minework. Other items are still scattered around in use at YTC.

At Nguyen's retirement Ground Combat Director Eddy Patchet joked that the phrase, "Back in Jefferson we did it like this..." would likely not be heard again at YTC.

Allen admits the phrase might have slipped out a few times, even though he tried not to, but defended those who said it.

"We did do some very unique things at Jefferson."

It's not doubt that Jefferson's loss was YTC's gain.

As for Overstreet, he's ready to retire but is laying the groundwork for a successful transition.

"I kind of drew a line in the sand, picked some major things I wanted to accomplish, and I am quickly folding them up. I've already told everybody for the most part that I am going to retire. They have had me in the position of mentoring the contactors and helping them doing this particular area of work because I have been here for 30 years, plus at Jefferson."



The week of Dec. 16, 2024, Lu Nguyen (left) pictured with Steve Flores and John Allen (left) pictured with Carlos Garcia, turned in their CAC cards and range passes and retired. The move leaves only one Jefferson Proving Ground transplant at Yuma Test Center.



LEFT: During testing, simulated missions took the Bradley 6,500 miles across Yuma Proving Ground road courses featuring various terrain conditions, from paved to gravel to punishing desert washboard that would severely rattle less robust vehicles. RIGHT: The Bradley Fighting Vehicle has proved itself to be lethal and survivable in multiple theaters since first fielded in the 1980s. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

## BRADLEY

FROM PAGE 1

During testing, simulated missions took the Bradley 6,500 miles across YPG road courses featuring various terrain conditions, from paved to gravel to punishing desert washboard that would severely rattle less robust vehicles. As they traversed these roads, test vehicle operators continually verified performance.

“We’re looking for any kind of system fault during the performance test and while running miles,” said Vega. “The system is on throughout the whole time it is running miles to see whether heat or operating the system for multiple hours while running the courses causes any issues.”

YPG has the range space to conduct live fire tests of the vehicle from both stationary and moving positions while lazing. YPG’s wide variety of desert terrain features allowed for testing the VBK’s detection abilities from challenging

angles such as on a mountainside.

“It’s very complex angles of arrival that we are doing, using between class one and class four lasers,” said Vega. “Wherever the incoming lasers are coming from,

it will be picked up by one of the sensors.”

The evaluations culminated in a four-week event where Soldiers conducted operational assessment testing across YPG’s vast ranges.

“The VBK gives a Bradley crew a whole another level of protection,” said Tracy Haifley, test officer. “A system like this to help crews make instant decisions is a huge step forward.”



# 2025 Organizational Day

Promoting camaraderie and Esprit de Corps among the Soldiers and Civilians stationed at YPG

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\*Contractor employees may attend YPG Organization Day at no cost to the government and must make arrangements with their employers for their attendance.

# Family Advocacy Program provides tools for parents of teens

By Ana Henderson

Congratulations to Staff Sgt. Nicole Covington and military spouse Kristina Danisa for graduating from the inaugural Active Parenting for Teens class in December of 2024.

Family Advocacy Program Manager Mariah Boykin hosted the six-session class on-post after receiving requests from the community. Boykin said, it was her goal to bring psychoeducation classes to Yuma Proving Ground. She is currently hosting a five-session emotional control workshop.

The parenting class taught

improved listening skills, the difference between punishment and discipline, types of parenting style, and teen behavior.

Covington is parent to a tween and took the class because she said, “I wanted to get more insight for my fast-approaching teenager.”

Danisa and her husband are raising four teenagers. In the last session she shared that she learned how important it is to talk to children respectfully if you want them to talk to you respectfully.

Boykin presented both graduates with a certificate of completion.



## Breakfast is served!

Parents of James D. Price Elementary School students no longer need to worry about providing breakfast at home. The elementary school now serves breakfast for students before school between the times of 7:30 a.m. – and 8:00 a.m. The meals are shelf stable items along with a fruit cup and a milk or juice. (Photo by Eugene Garcia)



Family Advocacy Program Manager Mariah Boykin presented Staff Sgt. Nicole Covington and Kristina Danisa a certificate of completion for graduating from the inaugural Active Parenting for Teens class in December of 2024. (Photos courtesy of the Family Advocacy Program)

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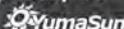
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## New year, new amenities: MWR offering boats and carwash



Yuma Proving Ground's Outdoor Recreation located at the Desert Breeze Travel Camp now offers bass boat rentals. Call 928-328-2244/3989 for more information. (Photos courtesy MWR)



The carwash at the Skill Center on post is ready for business. For six dollars patrons get the high-pressure hose for 30-minutes. Hours of operation are Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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## Cookies bring four generations together



The Child Development Center at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground hosted a cookie decorating event for families Dec. 19, 2024. Families were invited to take part in decorating sugar cookies baked by the Child Youth Services cook. (Photos courtesy Child Development Center)



The yummy and fun event brought out four generations of one family including Oliver (left) and Max Montijo (right), their mother Katrina Gamboa, Auntie Maricar Bernardo, Grandma Irma Gamboa, and Great Grandma Margarita Bernardo.

## YPG employee spends months growing beard to play Santa for grandson



At Yuma Test Center Curtis Overstreet is known for his work as an electronics technician. At home, he's Santa. After his most recent grandson was born, Overstreet decided to grow a beard so he could play Santa for his grandson's first Christmas. He grew it for months. Now, nearly a month after Christmas he still has the beard because a few more family members would like to get photos with him. After that Overstreet says he may shave it off. (Photo courtesy of Curtis Overstreet)

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