

M10 Booker tested at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is currently testing the M10 Booker, one of the Army's top modernization priorities.

The Army's highly touted assault gun is meant as an armored infantry support vehicle, not a battle tank. The Army has stated they will ultimately acquire more than 500 of the vehicles for this role.

"The data we are collecting is for a decision on full rate production next summer," said Jade Janis, YPG test officer.

The vehicle originally underwent competition testing of prototypes here in 2020, with Janis serving as test officer on the entrant that was ultimately selected.

"It's a lightweight infantry vehicle



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is currently testing the M10 Booker, one of the Army's top modernization priorities. The vehicle originally underwent competition testing of prototypes there in 2020, and the Army has stated they will ultimately acquire more than 500 of the vehicles for this role. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

similar in weight to a Bradley, but with a larger weapon," said Janis. "The intent is to be able to rapidly deploy them with an infantry combat brigade: you should be able to fit two of them in a C17."

The M10's main weapon is a M35 105mm low-recoil tank gun, significantly larger than the 25mm chain gun on the Bradley and boasts a 12.7mm M2 heavy machine gun and 7.62 mm Coax machine gun. The platform's diesel engine puts out 800 horsepower and can power it up to 40 miles per hour. The hydraulic suspension is similar to the advanced running gear tested on a Bradley surrogate at YPG about five years ago. Though it is not a tank, some aspects

SEE **M10 BOOKER** page 11

YTC Commander
keynotes 29th
annual Camp Bouse
Days ceremony
/ Page 2



Army recruits visit
YPG to learn more
about active-duty
opportunities
/ Page 7



Army experience
led employee to
current career at
Yuma Test Center
/ Page 8



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Yuma Test Center Commander keynotes 29th annual Camp Bouse Days ceremony

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks served as keynote speaker at the 28th annual Camp Bouse Commemoration Ceremony in the La Paz County

town of Bouse on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025.

The modern-day mission of YPG has a direct lineage with the Soldiers of the World War II-era 'Greatest Generation' who in the 1940s tested

the Canal Defense Light, a 13 million candlepower arc searchlight mounted in the turret of an M3 tank at Camp Bouse. The system was never fielded, but at the time the project constituted the second-most secret Army program after the Manhattan Project.

YPG is the last active Army installation within the World War II-era California-Arizona Desert Maneuver Area, of which Camp Bouse was a part.

"I'm proud that the work done at Yuma Test Center today is at the forefront of current Army transformation efforts," said Hicks. "For as long as the United States has a military, the Soldiers and civilians of Yuma Test Center will ensure that those who put themselves in harm's way do so with equipment that works exactly as it is supposed to and is superior to that of our nation's adversaries."



U.S. Army Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks keynotes the 29th annual Camp Bouse Days ceremony in Bouse, Ariz. on Feb. 8, 2025. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



U.S. Army Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks (left) speaks with La Paz County, Ariz. Supervisor Duce Minor prior to the 29th annual Camp Bouse Days ceremony on Feb. 8, 2025.

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Scores of people attend the annual Camp Bouse Days ceremony to honor the soldiers who tested the Canal Defense Light, the second-most secret American military project of World War II, at Camp Bouse during the 1940s.

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Southern Arizona Defense Alliance tours YPG to learn about capabilities



Feb. 2, 2025, members of the Southern Arizona Defense Alliance (SADA) and the Yuma 50 visited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground to learn about the capabilities of its three extreme environment test centers. Technical Director Ross Gwynn provided a command brief then the group toured three test support shops. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



One stop was the Instrumentation Division which collects test data in various forms. SADA members had a lot of questions about the data collecting capabilities.



YPG Command Col. John Nelson joined the group at mission control which provides live views of tests across the proving ground among other capabilities. Data Processing Branch Chief Ashley Thompson (left) discussed the capabilities with the group.



At the conclusion of the tour SADA President Robert Medler said, "We are an advocacy organization so the best way you can be an advocate is to get out and see and learn and ask questions." He added that the tour plays into the bigger picture of their mission. "How SADA works with the different installations in Southern Arizona, we're thinking about, 'what can we advocate for that helps everyone? What is the component at YPG that ties in with the other installations?'"

YPG Commander supports 79th annual Silver Spur Rodeo parade



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground proudly supports the Yuma community. One way it does this is by taking part in community events and spreading awareness about its mission of testing items before they get into the hands of the warfighter. On the morning of Feb. 8, 2025, YPG Command Col. John Nelson and Gina Nelson participated in the 79th annual 2025 Silver Spur Rodeo parade. The community lined the streets from 4th Ave to Downtown Yuma to cheer on the parade participants. A huge thank you to Craig Higgins for driving the Nelsons in his 1992 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am convertible, modeled after KITT from the Knight Rider TV show. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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Dynamic data branch chief preparing for the future of test

By Mark Schauer

Data is in a very real sense YPG's chief product, and the post's Data Processing Branch is the nerve center for reducing the enormous amount of data collected during tests on the post's vast ranges.

From optical data to tracking radar data to ballistics data, testers rely on the branch and its chief, Ashley Thompson, to deliver the information leaders need to make decisions about equipment Soldiers will depend on.

Not all of the data collected is from routine testing, either.

"We also get the occasional weird thing that only comes every five or ten years, but it isn't like a private industry business where we say we aren't going to provide that to a customer anymore because there isn't enough demand for it," said Thompson. "If the Army needs that thing, we have to make sure we have the expertise and the tools to process the data. That's hard when people retire and take that knowledge out the door: we have to be sure that even if we automate it, we understand how the automation

works."

In conjunction with the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) it is subordinate to, YPG is developing the local architecture and establishing data governance in advance of more practical case uses for artificial intelligence in support of the post's test mission, and Thompson has extensive historical knowledge to optimize these efforts. The daughter of a Marine Corps veteran who served in Desert Storm, Thompson grew up in Yuma, graduating from Kofa High School. After graduating from Northern Arizona University, she began her YPG career in the safety office in 2008, then worked for Trax as an engineering technician supporting the automotive instrumentation mission. She left for a few years to work as an analyst for explosive testing at Redstone arsenal.

"We were blowing stuff up at China Lake and then mapping out all the pieces, kind of putting the pieces back into a model to see what would happen to different explosive magazines," she recalled.

She returned to YPG in 2013 to

get the post's internal Sharepoint system up and running, and worked for the Resource Management Office and the post's internet server team. She also worked as a program analyst in the Instrumentation Division and oversaw the post's financial systems before beginning her current position two years ago.

YPG has an array of historical data on legacy systems that can be used to train models, and Thompson's team has been utilizing it to make data processing significantly more efficient. A recent successful example involved developing a workable algorithm to help facilitate the acoustic trilateration of air to surface missiles and other helicopter rounds collected from arrays of microphones and hydrophones on the post's highly instrumented ranges.

"We're more than just dipping our toes into it at this point," said Thompson. "We have been training some models and trying to automate some of the rote processes that the analysts are doing."

Mortar lot acceptance tests are another prime area for this sort of

automation.

"We want to facilitate that real-time data, so we are working on a statistical model and build up infrastructure to get them that information immediately in the field," said Thompson. "If there's an issue with a particular set of data looking questionable, we would post-process it here."

YPG has been setting up technical exchanges with other ATEC ranges, too, an effort Thompson is heavily involved with.

"We're working with the other ranges to see what tools and infrastructure they are using and what models they are training," she said. "Nothing is going to be identical between the ranges, but we can at least share the knowledge and tools that seem to work across the board."

Thompson enjoys the mission and the community, and plans to stay for the long haul.

"I think I'm pretty much here. We have aging family here and I have siblings nearby, so it would be a hard sell to move away from this region."



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Data Processing Branch Chief Ashley Thompson (left) briefs Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon and other senior leaders on Sept. 23, 2024. YPG is developing the local architecture and establishing data governance in advance of more practical uses for artificial intelligence in support of the post's test mission, and Thompson has extensive historical knowledge to optimize these efforts. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Yuma Test Center commander recognizes years of service

On the morning of Jan. 28, 2025, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks visited the gunners shop to recognize employees within the

Ammunition & Armaments Division for their years of service to the government. The time includes time served in the military. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Length of Service awards 25 Years — Tony Gingras



20 Years
—
Raymundo
Aviles
and
Chris Ades



10 Years
—
Joe
Mucciatti
and
Rafael
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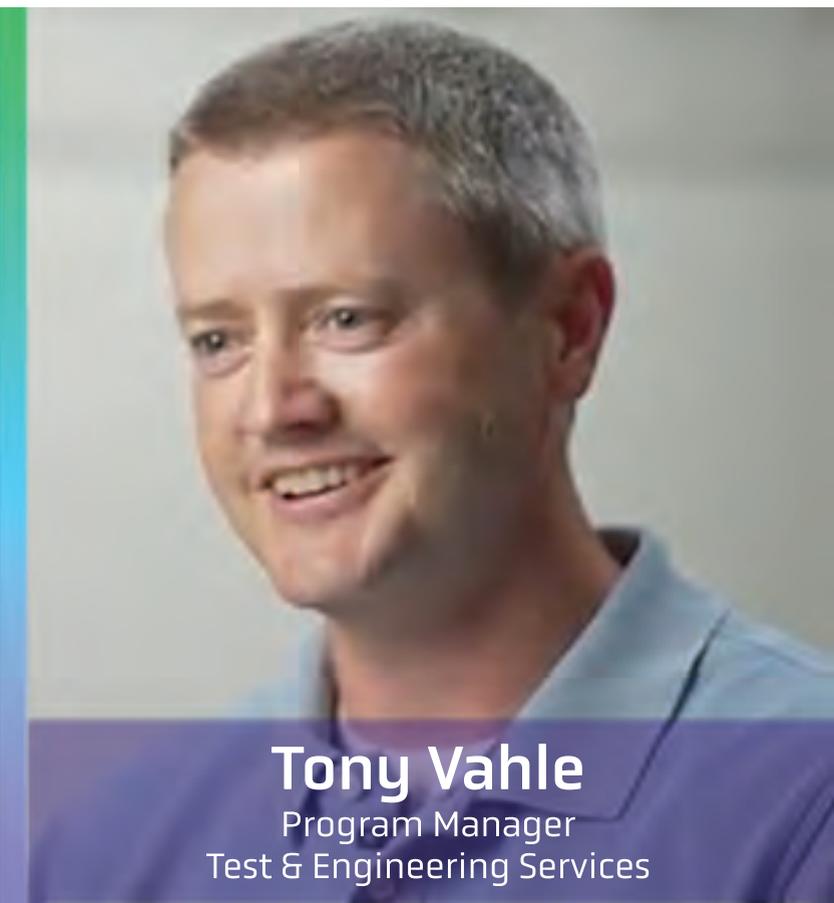
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Yuma Proving Ground recognizes employees' achievements

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) leadership hosted a virtual town hall for employees on Jan. 29, 2025. YPG Commander Col. John Nelson presented from Arctic Regions Test Center in Alaska while Technical Director

Ross Gwynn presented employees with their awards in person from the headquarters in Yuma. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

Length of Service awards

— 20 Years —



Gilbert Moreno

— 5 Years —



Rocio Fernandez

Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Scott Fenstermacher



Ana Henderson

— 5 Years —



Ana Henderson

— 5 Years —



Coty Wright



Eugene Garcia

*Not pictured Chrissy Randle.

Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Timothy Quintero



Michael Schwitzing

*Not pictured, 20 years Stefanie Jacobs and 25 years Michael Blackburn.

Army recruits visit YPG to learn more about active-duty careers and opportunities

By Ana Henderson

A group of teenagers ranging from recent graduates to current high school seniors visited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground to learn about the opportunities the U.S. Army offers.

Some are already committed, others are close. On Jan. 29, they all had the opportunity to learn how the Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force (ATF) at Yuma Test Center support the Army.

One by one, test parachutists jumped on to the drop zone as the recruits along with their recruiters and the ground support crew for the jumpers looked on. The future Soldiers saw both low and high-altitude jumps.

Anthony Cardone, a Senior at Gila Ridge High School, has already committed to the Army and hopes to serve as a parachutist.

"I am here to see hopefully some of what I will doing in the Army with the military free fall jumps," said Cardone.

In 2019, San Luis, Ariz. resident Sgt. Briana Corona, a current Soldier with ATF, attended a similar tour at YPG just after enlisting and getting her Military Occupational



Airborne Test Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Dunwiddie (front center) coordinated the visit on Jan. 30, 2025, along with the local Army recruiter. He's serving a second tour of duty at Yuma Proving Ground, the first from 2013 to 2018. At the time he established the alliance with the local recruiter and upon his return he reestablished the connection because of its success the first time. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Specialty assignment as a 92R, which is a parachute packer.

"It was pretty cool because I got to see what 92 Romeos actually do. We went to the shop, and I saw them packing, then they rigged me up."

Now, she's the one who hopes to inspire these recruits and open their minds to the possibilities an Army career provides.

"I hope they get to see all the opportunities they have. They don't have to just go there and do their job. They can go to school to become

jumpmasters, jumpers, go to free fall school."

ATF Staff Sgt. Kyle Dunwiddie coordinated the visit along with the local Army recruiter Staff Sgt. Bernardo Figueroa. Dunwiddie is serving a second tour of duty at YPG, the first having been from 2013 to 2018. At the time, he established the alliance with the local recruiter and upon his return he reestablished the connection because of its success the first time.

"A lot of them weren't initially

going in on airborne contracts and that's something they started asking the recruiters about," he said.

During the visit, ATF Master Sgt. Donald Bullock educated the students on the Ranger regiment, opening their eyes to another career opportunity.

Dunwiddie is just shy of two years from retirement. He said the Army has given him skills, training and the opportunity to see seven countries while helping partner forces. Yet it's Army life that's impacted him the most.

"More than anything it's given me experience and friendships," remarked Dunwiddie.

For Cardone, seeing the world is an experience he looks forward to along with personal growth, saying he hopes to, "come out a new person, hopefully transform into something better, someone new."

And with that determination his career will likely soar.

"I always wanted to join the Army, and then as I got older, I wanted to be part of the special operation forces like what they have here. Then I also decided I wanted to be a ranger my freshmen year of high school and set my path when I was 15 and I have been working towards it ever since."



Staff Sgt. Bernardo Figueroa invited Anthony Cardone (front right), a Senior at Gila Ridge High School, who has already committed to the Army on the tour. Cardone hopes to serve as a parachutist. "I am here to see hopefully some of what I will doing in the Army with the military free fall jumps," said Cardone.



On Jan. 29, 2025, a group of teenagers ranging from recent graduates to current high school seniors visited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground to learn about the opportunities the U.S. Army offers. During the visit they learn how the Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force at Yuma Test Center support the Army.

Army experience led employee to current career at Yuma Test Center

By Ana Henderson

The U.S. Army provides Soldiers and civilians a wealth of opportunities. For information technology specialist Ron Hansen, it provided him with experience for a career after the Army as a civilian employee at Yuma Test Center.

Hansen served as both enlisted and reserves. He enlisted in active duty as a helicopter crew chief and served in Desert Storm. Once back he capitalized on the college credits he had and attended Officer Candidate School. He graduated as a commissioned officer and led Soldiers as a heavy maintenance supervisor.

Hansen then re-routed his career towards technology.

"I just always had a knack for technology. So, I ended up going branch transfer with the signal core with wireless communication,

satellite communications, all things signal."

He worked himself up to the position of signal officer and network operations officer. Hansen said he never stopped learning.

"Along the way I went to more military school and increased my knowledge and capacity as a signal officer."

He also served in the reserves with the National Guard where he helped during hurricane disaster relief. After 27 years, Hansen retired and made his way to sunny Arizona away from the dangers of hurricanes.

His career as an information technology specialist at Yuma Test Center began in 2015 and he's been here ever since. In his free time Hansen enjoys flying. He holds both a pilot's license and an instructor license.



Serving in the U.S. Army Signal Core provided Information Technology Specialist Ron Hansen with the experience for a career after the Army as a civilian employee at Yuma Test Center. (Photo to the right courtesy of Ron Hansen, top photo by Ana Henderson)



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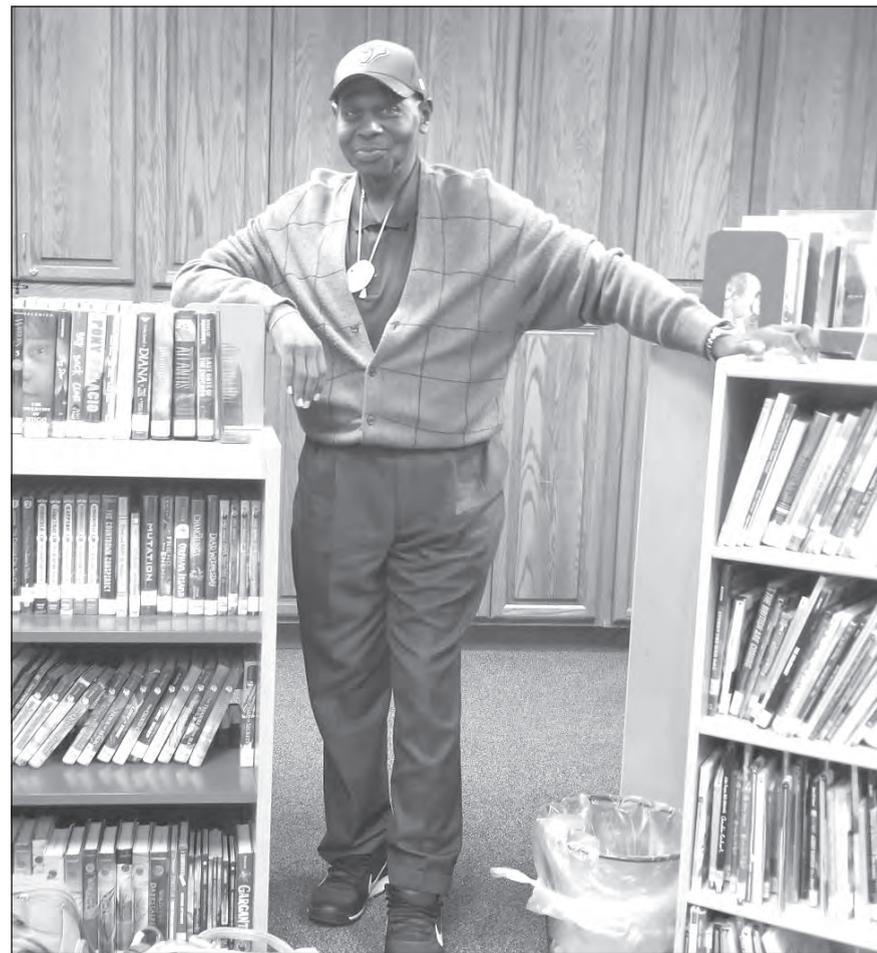
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Valentine's Day themed story time



Valentine's Day was the theme during the monthly story time at the Yuma Proving Ground Post Library. To prepare for the day over a dozen people gathered on Feb. 4, 2025, to listen to library tech Logan Treas read a book, appropriately titled "Valentine's Day." Afterwards the attendees made door hangers adorned with Valentine's Day stickers. The library hosts story time monthly on the first Tuesday of the month at 11 a.m. (Photos courtesy of Bea Brimmage)

Welcome to YPG



The YPG Library team welcomed Leroy Robinson as the new YPG Post Library Supervisory Librarian. He joined the team in late January and will oversee the daily activities at the library. Welcome!

YPG chaplain graduates jumpmaster school



Congratulations are in order for U.S. Garrison Army Yuma Proving Ground Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse for graduating from the Military Free Fall School's jumpmaster program. After weeks of training, Pearse along with several dozen other students gathered on Jan. 30, 2025, to celebrate their achievement. (Photo courtesy of Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse)



M10 BOOKER

FROM PAGE 1

of the M10 are familiar to experienced tankers.

“There are a lot of similarities to an Abrams as far as the turret is concerned,” said Janis. “The hull itself is all new.”

In addition to test firing the armaments in both the natural environment and from a cold chamber, the platform is being subjected to a full complement of performance and reliability, accessibility, and maintainability testing. Test vehicles are running across punishing desert road courses, up steep slopes and through a watery fording basin, sometimes while under a full load.

“Aside from being a totally new platform, there is nothing out of the ordinary for us in the way we test things,” said Janis. “Everything should be standard practice so far as testing is concerned.”

Nonetheless, the personnel supporting the testing, from drivers to gunners to data collectors, had to undergo familiarization training on the platform prior to the beginning of testing. Numbered among these were personnel from Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC), YPG’s cold weather-testing facility at Fort Greely, Alaska, where the M10 is also undergoing performance testing during the coldest winter months. Additionally, some of the personnel supporting the Yuma Test Center portion of the testing will travel to ARTC during that portion of the testing.



The M10’s main weapon is a M35 105mm low-recoil tank gun, significantly larger than the 25mm chain gun on the Bradley and boasts a 12.7mm M2 heavy machine gun and 7.62 mm Coax machine gun. The platform’s diesel engine puts out 800 horsepower and can power it up to 40 miles per hour. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



In addition to testing the armaments in both the natural environment and from a cold chamber, the platform is subjected to a full complement of performance and reliability, accessibility, and maintainability testing. Test vehicles are running across punishing desert road courses, up steep slopes and through a watery fording basin, sometimes while under a full load.

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