

The Outpost

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

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On the Army's 250th birthday,
YPG's history resonates
/ Page 4



Timeline: The making of
Yuma Proving ground
/ Page 10



Yuma is a Great American
Defense Community
/ Page 18



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BBQ Lunch with Birthday Cake

Location: Cactus Café (1100 Start)
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Army Birthday Fun Run/Walk & Cake Cutting Ceremony

Location: Fitness Center
Distance: 2.50 miles
(0600 Start) After the run, cake cutting ceremony in the gym (~0645)

U.S. Army 250th Birthday Celebration*

Location: Colorado River State Historic Park 201 N. 4th Avenue, Yuma, AZ

FREE, Family-friendly event (0900 - 1300)

*No federal endorsement implied

Location: Fitness Center
Who can participate: All YPG Personnel

The Army Birthday fitness challenge will consist of 8 different challenges each in the spirit of the Army's 250th Birthday, running from 1 June -14 June.


Winners will earn the title of "Army 250 Champion" and have their name engraved on a plaque displayed at the Fitness Center.

25.0 - mile bike or run
250 squats
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250 - meter swim
250 lunges
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2500 - meter row

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Fri - Sat: 1000 - 1700

Pool hours for Meter Swim
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Tues & Thurs: 1730 - 1900

For questions, contact YPG S-5, Stefanie Jacobs at 928-328-3871



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Yuma to celebrate Army's 250th Birthday with free public event

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) isn't the only place in Yuma celebrating the Army's 250th birthday this year.

The Colorado River State Historic Park, the grounds of which were an Army Quartermaster Depot from 1869 to 1884, will host a free public event on Sat., June 14, and YPG will be there.

The celebration, in planning for more than six months, was spearheaded by park director Tammy Snook with the support of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area that oversees the facility.

"I wasn't surprised, but I have to say I was delighted," said YPG Commander Col. John Nelson. "We have an opportunity to engage with the community and show what we do at YPG. Because our workforce lives in Yuma, they will be part of the community that comes out to the event and show their families what they do every day to support the national defense."

From the opening ceremony at 9 a.m. to the end of the event at 1p.m.,



visitors will be able to get up close and personal with the gear used and tested by the elite Soldiers of the Airborne Test Force, see equipment tested at YPG like the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle and Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle, as well as a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and M119 howitzer. Young folks interested in a military career will have the opportunity to talk to several of Yuma's Army recruiters, who will be on hand after

the opening ceremony in which Nelson will swear in a group of newly enlisted Army recruits.

"Celebrating the 250th anniversary at the Colorado River State Historic Park is another opportunity to remind the folks in Yuma that the Army has been here a long time and will be here for the next 100 years," said YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare. "Telling the story to make sure the community knows who we are is very important to us."

The opening ceremony is also expected to feature Yuma Mayor Douglas Nicholls reading a City of Yuma Proclamation honoring the Army's semiquincentennial. There

will be free hot dogs and sodas for eventgoers, along with a traditional Army birthday cake that is scheduled to be cut by at 11 a.m.

Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot will have several vintage Army vehicles on display and multiple other exhibitors will be present for the fun.

"It goes to show you why Yuma was recently awarded the title of Great American Defense Community," said Nelson. "There is a long history of support for this installation."

The Colorado River State Historic Park is located at 201 N. 4th Avenue in Yuma.



The Outpost

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News may be submitted to:

The Editor, Outpost, Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma, AZ, 85365

Phone: (928) 328-6149 or DSN 899

Visit our website at: www.yuma.army.mil

or email to: ana.c.henderson.civ@army.mil

Commander: Col. John Nelson

Public Affairs Officer: Mark Schauer

Public Affairs Specialist/Outpost Editor: Ana Henderson

Public Affairs Specialist: James Gilbert

Visual Information Manager: Eugene Garcia

Cold Regions Test Center Photographer: Sebastian Saarloos



On the Army's 250th birthday, Yuma Proving Ground's history resonates

By Mark Schauer

The year is 1949.

The United States is four years past victory in World War II.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of 16 million American Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, the nation is safe from the aggression of hateful adversaries across each ocean.

At Yuma Test Branch during the war, engineers used the Laguna Dam to rapidly test and field thousands of pontoon bridges adequate to modern mechanized warfare.

Meanwhile, at Camp Laguna and nearly a dozen other sites across the Arizona and California deserts, 20 divisions of Soldiers had trained in general Geroge S. Patton's Desert Maneuver Area, rationed to two quarts of water a day. Two of the divisions hit the shore at Normandy on D-Day, and 10 of the divisions of the 20 went on to liberate concentration camps in Europe.

The nation was safe. It was time to demobilize and enjoy post-war freedom and prosperity. Yuma Test Branch wasn't needed any longer-- it was shuttered.

And then, in June 1950, a new war began.

Communist North Korea suddenly invaded free South Korea. In September, General Douglas MacArthur led a United Nations force in a daring amphibious landing at Inchon. By November, the North Korean invaders had been pushed back nearly to North Korea's border with China.

The weather was brutally cold. The uniforms the American forces had were not suitable for the frigid conditions. Their rations froze to the point of being inedible. Then, an American force of about 30,000 near the Chosin Reservoir was attacked by a Chinese force four times as large.

The weather got worse. Rifle bolts froze shut in the most desperate

moments of combat. Tank treads froze to the ground.

Against all odds, the Americans made a successful fighting withdrawal south across two grueling weeks of some of the most intense combat in the history of warfare.

What if their equipment had been up to the extreme conditions?

What if their equipment had been tested in a natural environment before their lives depended on it?

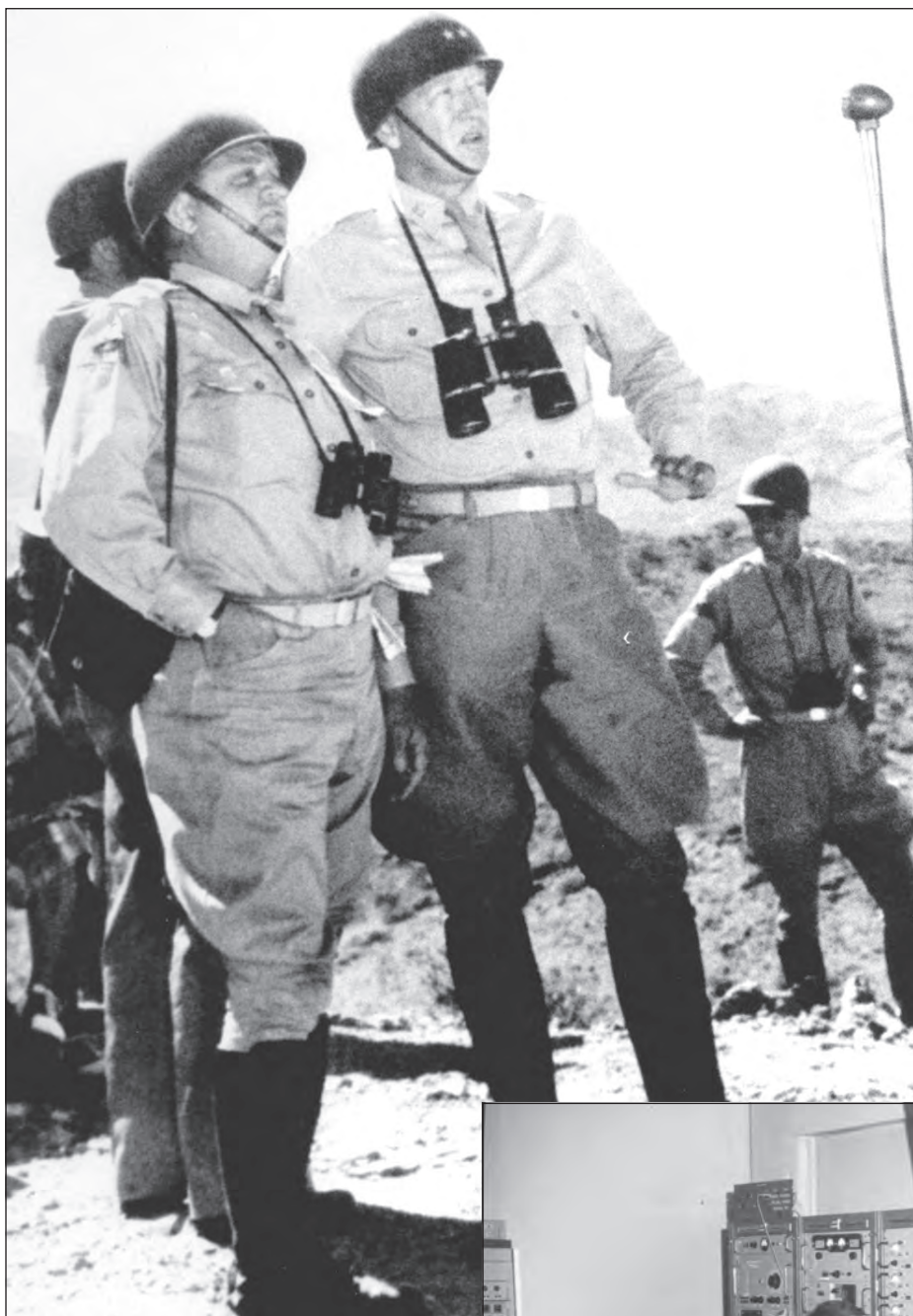
'What if' was a painful question America's armed forces never wanted to face again.

Yuma Test Branch reopened as Yuma Test Station in 1951. A new name. A greatly expanded mission. One that has continued every year since.

It would be shorter to describe what the proving ground didn't test in the following decades. If a Soldier drove, fired, or wore it, most likely it came here before it entered their hands.

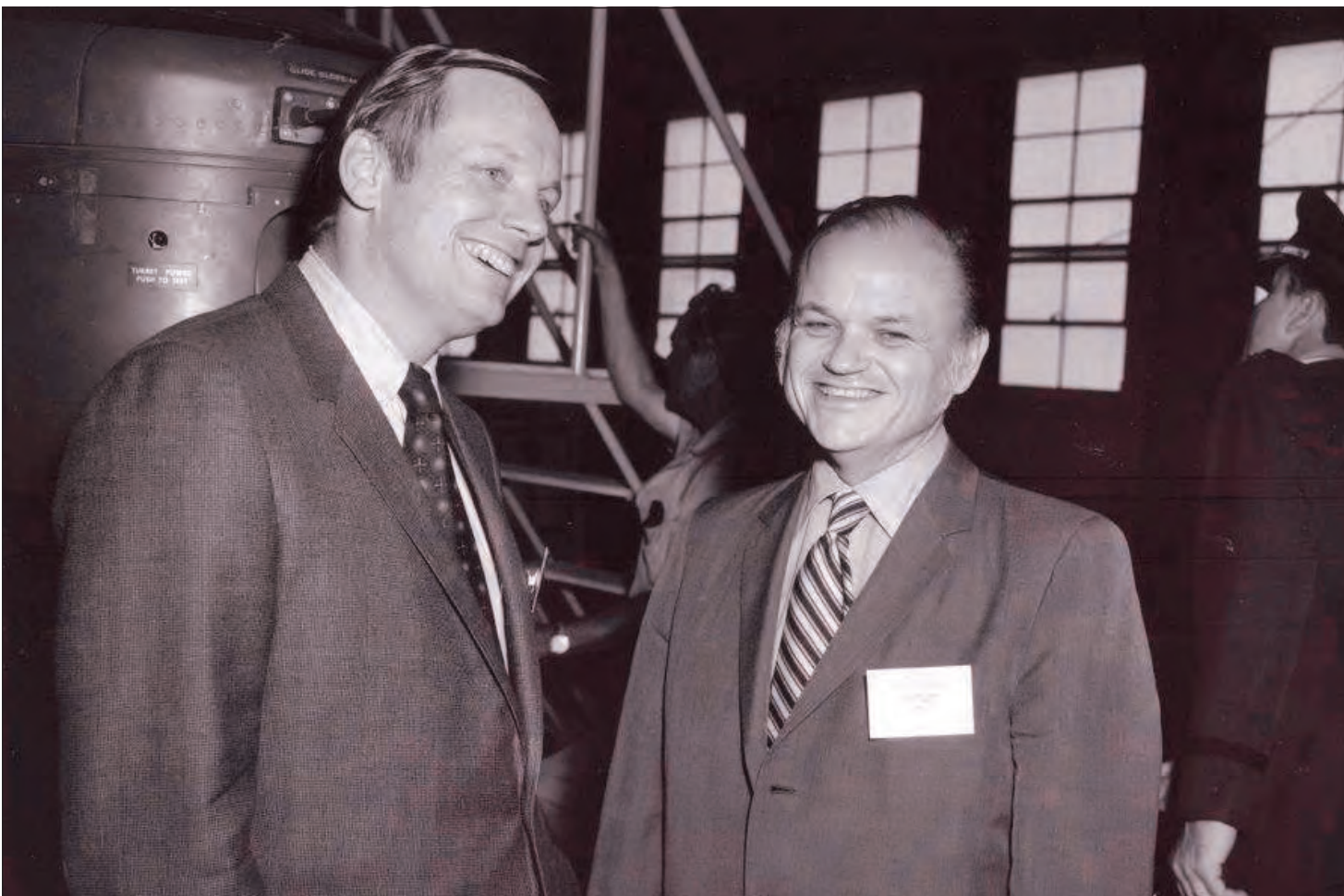
As a multi-purpose test center that took on the lion's share of the nation's artillery testing, it was always a majority civilian post, with engineers and technicians busy testing numerous pieces of artillery

SEE **HISTORY** page 9



ABOVE: At the same time Yuma Test Branch began operating in 1943, the Army established Camp Laguna a few miles to the west to train troops in mechanized warfare. Camp Laguna was one of 12 major U.S. Army desert training camps in the California-Arizona Maneuver Area, an 18,000 square mile area chosen by Gen. George S. Patton (right), that became the training ground for over one million Soldiers. Maj. Gen. Walton Walker (left) was the first commander of Camp Laguna. (U.S. Army photo) RIGHT: The truck-mounted MGR-1 'Honest John', the United States' first surface-to-surface nuclear-capable missile, was tested at Yuma Test Branch in 1958. To accommodate missile testing, the branch received significant upgrades in what was then state-of-the-art telemetry, as seen here, and other range improvements. (U.S. Army photo)





NOTABLE MOMENTS and VISITORS

One out-of- this-world visitor

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has had many distinguished visitors over the decades, but none as out-of-this-world as astronaut Neil Armstrong (left), the first man to walk on the moon. Nineteen months after taking his giant leap for mankind, in February 1971 the Apollo 11 commander visited YPG to see testing of the AH-56 Cheyenne attack helicopter. The photo of Armstrong, taken at Castle Dome Heliport, includes then-congressman Lucien Nedzi (right) of Michigan. Though the AH-56 was cancelled by the Army the following year, the program was a boon to aviation testing at YPG, as it brought about the construction of a substantial amount of infrastructure like laser and optical tracking sites. YPG has done testing for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration since 1966, when the mobility test article, a precursor to the lunar rover, came here for engineer design evaluations. (U.S. Army photo)

Happy 250th Birthday United States Army



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NOTABLE MOMENTS and VISITORS

Presidential visit to Yuma Proving Ground

The first United States President to visit U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground in the installation's history took place March 24 and 25, 1997, as George H. W. Bush trained for and made a parachute jump over the 1,300 square mile proving ground. Bush had made one previous parachute jump, on Sept. 2, 1944, when he bailed out of his flaming "Avenger" torpedo-bomber over the Pacific during World War II. The nation's 41st president jumped from an elevation of 12,500 feet and opened his parachute canopy at 4,400 feet. Media representatives from throughout the nation were present, including all the major television networks, the New York Times, Associated Press, and others. (U.S. Army photo)



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LeTourneau Overland Train: 54-wheel drive in the desert

On April 2, 1962, the LeTourneau Overland Train seen here arrived at Yuma Test Station for evaluation. With a crew of six, the 572-foot long, 13-unit land train could haul 150 tons of cargo: if you look closely, you can see the full compliment of cargo cars loaded with a M113 armored personnel carrier, a bulldozer, a Jeep, and multiple cargo containers.

At the time, the 54-wheel drive welded aluminum beast was the longest rubber-tired vehicle in the world. The result of logistical support problems encountered in World War II in areas without adequate highway and rail networks, the land train performed well but was rendered obsolete by heavy lift helicopters like the S-64 Skycrane before it could be fielded. Today, the land train's prime mover is a crowd-pleasing display item on Yuma Proving Grounds's Howard Cantonment Area. (U.S. Army photo)

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HISTORY

FROM PAGE 4

and armored vehicles in the rugged desert.

In 1958, the Airborne Test Force, the Army's most elite active-duty experts in all manner of cargo and personnel parachutes, was stood up here.

In 1963, the post got a new name: U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG). And across the long years in Vietnam, YPG's personnel kept up the test mission. Virtually all the weaponry you can think of.

There was even more than that, though. In 1966, the highest-ever artillery shot took place at YPG. At the same time, NASA was testing the mobility test article, precursor to the lunar rover, across the rugged ranges.

In 1971, the aircraft armament testing mission permanently relocated from Aberdeen Proving Ground to Yuma Proving Ground. The nation's first prototype and fielded attack helicopters got their potent compliment of weaponry thanks to the efforts of Yuma Proving Ground's testers.

Around that same time, the post's engineers were testing a network of satellites that came to be called the Global Positioning System.

The core components of the Army that roared to rapid victory in Desert Storm: the Apache attack helicopter, the M1 Abrams main battle tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, all proved their mettle here before Soldiers needed them there. In those years, a tread on an Abrams or Bradley might last hundreds of miles. After long testing at YPG, their life expectancy is now measured in thousands of miles.

The Soviet Union fell. The Cold War ended. In the early 1990s, the economy was in recession. Did America really need to invest as much as it did in its armed forces? Across the nation, bases were realigned and closed. People wondered if Yuma Proving Ground's story was nearing an end.



Parachute testing at YPG dates to the founding of the Airborne Test Force in 1958. Army test jumpers are few and highly skilled, capable of preparing personnel and cargo parachutes and loads for a wide variety of systems. Additionally, jumping out of airplanes with new and emerging parachute system technologies is a routine part of the job. Today, the proving ground is home to all manner of parachute testing, with spacious and instrumented ranges large enough to accommodate even the world's largest cargo parachutes. (U.S. Army photo)

And then, once again, the world changed. Terror visited the homeland in unprecedented fashion. Towers fell. The epicenter of America's military was attacked.

The Global War on Terror was going to be a new kind of warfare. Irregular. American forces were targeted with improvised explosive devices rigged up by insurgents. Their power against unarmored and under-armored vehicles was deadly to American forces inside. YPG personnel worked 60- and 70-hour weeks, in some years on every day except Christmas, to rapidly test and field jamming devices for remote triggers and new armored vehicles with blast-diffusing V-shaped hulls. Their efforts saved the lives of thousands of U.S. Soldiers, and the limbs of thousands more.

And during those same years, guided artillery projectiles were tested and fielded. The punishing power of the King of Battle could

be delivered with near pinpoint accuracy, sparing civilians while taking the fight directly to the enemy's own hideaways.

Today, near-peer adversaries loom across the ocean. The United States

isn't going to be caught off guard this time. In 2018, the Army formed the Army Futures Command tasked with preparing for all comers in this multi-domain new world, and Yuma Proving Ground remains at the forefront of the constant effort to defend the nation. We hosted the first two iterations of Project Convergence, the annual capstone of Army Futures Command's campaign of learning, the second of which was the largest single capabilities demonstration in the Army of the preceding 15 years.

YPG hosts the Experimental Demonstration gateway Event making the Army's next-generation combat helicopter and the Joint Counter UAS Office's semi-annual demonstration to fight and defeat small adversary unmanned aircraft.

The fight is more complex than ever, but Yuma Proving Ground is bringing its best to the nation's defense. Machine learning and AI is being utilized to drive major efficiency gains in our testing.

For as long as the United States has a military, and for as long as America wants their Soldiers' weapons and equipment to work as it should, the work of this post will remain vital and necessary to our national defense.

Eight decades. Soldiers. Civilians. Contractors. One team. One fight. For now and always, the story continues.



When testing a combat vehicle, YPG test officers plan for dangers unimaginable to a civilian motorist: If the vehicle's hull is rocked by a roadside bomb, can five Soldiers in full protective gear escape with weapons at the ready before the vehicle is engulfed in flames? Will the engine stall halfway up a rocky 40% grade after driving through a five-foot deep stream? Here, YPG drivers power through a fording basin in the all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle in 2009. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Timeline: The making of Yuma Proving ground

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has been serving the U.S. Army for nearly one third of its 250-year

history. During those years it has been at the center of historic tests for the U.S. Army. However, its past was a bit uncertain and sorted at times.

February 5, 1942- Desert Training Center established under Gen. George Patton as commander extended from California, Nevada, to Arizona.



January 1943- Army Corps of Engineers identified area west of Camp Laguna near Colorado River for the newly created Yuma Test Branch's research on combat bridges. Its long name was Special Bridge Test Section of the Engineer Development Board - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



1944/45- Testing expanded to include mobility and equipment.



1949- Yuma Test Branch closed.

1951- Yuma Test Branch reopened as Yuma Test Station.



1963- Yuma Test Station renamed Yuma Proving Ground.

And the rest, as they say, is history! Happy 250th U.S. Army Birthday to all those along the way who made it what it is today.



Large Vertical Wind Tunnel at YPG honors Soldier

First assigned to the Military Freefall School in August 2008, Master Sgt. George Bannar was noncommissioned officer in charge from 2009 to 2012, serving as an instructor to the school's basic and advanced courses. He taught special forces candidates and future freefall instructors how to maneuver in the air with precision and was frustrated that students had to go to Fort Bragg in the middle of the course to gain critical training time within that installation's wind tunnel prior to going on actual jumps at Yuma Proving Ground's drop zones. Bannar lost his life in Wardak Province, Afghanistan in 2013. The wind tunnel that now bears his name is one of the largest of its kind in the world, with a 16.5-foot flight chamber able to accommodate eight jumpers simultaneously with a top speed of 175 miles per hour. The nearly 100-foot-tall structure holds over 4,000 tons of concrete and 80 tons of steel. The building was completed in about a year, six months ahead of schedule, and 95 percent of the labor to build the \$10.3 million structure came from within Yuma. Even on the hottest desert days, the wind tunnel's chamber can be cooled down to 75 degrees. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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YPG testing critical to development of GPS

By Mark Schauer

Technological change alters the world and becomes so common that radically transformative inventions eventually are taken for granted.

The Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system has long been at such a point.

Currently comprised of 31 satellites in orbit around the Earth, the GPS constellation allows anyone with a handheld receiver to pinpoint their exact geographic location with astonishing accuracy. Today, the technology is used not only by military personnel and testers at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), but by millions of civilian consumers around the world.

Few, if any of these users realize YPG tested GPS from the earliest days of its existence. YPG was the home of GPS testing from 1974 through 1990. YPG testers attracted the program by demonstrating their ability to collect more data at a lower price than other test ranges. Whereas other test ranges of the period gathered position, acceleration, and trajectory data of test items with electro-optical trackers called Cinetheodolites, recently completed testing of the AH-56 Cheyenne attack helicopter had given YPG an edge: The proving ground owned and used a then-state-of-the-art laser tracker that had a far greater range and comparable accuracy to a battery of Cinetheodolites. Further, engineers at the proving ground had adapted room-sized 1960s vintage IBM computers with specialized software that allowed them to collect test data from range instruments and onboard telemetry devices in real time, a groundbreaking advancement that dramatically reduced the time and cost of testing.

“We pushed the state of the art,” said retired Air Force Maj. Jim Bybee, who worked on the GPS program from 1975 to 1982 and retired as officer in charge of GPS testing at YPG. “YPG was already



In its 75 years of existence, YPG has tested all manner of cutting edge technology. From the mid 1970s to the early 1990s, testing at YPG was critical to the development of the handheld Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology used by millions of people today. By the early 1980s, GPS technology had been miniaturized to the point that a portable backpack unit weighing 25 pounds began testing with Soldiers at the proving ground.

ahead of the state of the art, which is why the Air Force came here. That they had laser trackers integrated into real time was a tremendous cost savings.”

When the evaluations began in March 1977, the launch of the first GPS satellite was more than a year away, and, like today, a GPS user needs coordinates from four satellites to get an accurate location reading. YPG testers coped with this by creating an ‘inverted range’ made up of satellite simulators located in ground-based shelters at four different places. Ground tests of the infant technology were conducted from modified two-and-a-half ton trucks, and aircraft used for testing were outfitted with antennas on the bottom of aircraft to pick up simulated signals from the ground receivers. The earliest GPS systems were so large that a UH-1 helicopter, which carried as many as 14 troops at a time when used in Vietnam, could only accommodate a pilot and two passengers when carrying a GPS device. By September 1977 testers had conducted over 70 test flights with UH-1 helicopters and F-4, P-3, and C-141 airplanes.

“The UH-1 and the C-141 were real workhorses for us,” said Bybee. “But the C-141 cargo plane was large enough to fit three different contractor systems inside, so we got a lot of bang for the buck with them.”

As the Air Force began to launch GPS satellites, evaluators took their positions from the satellites instead of the inverted range receivers. This created new challenges for the testers, however.

“The satellites gradually change position,” said Bybee. “As they launched more satellites, we had a pretty good test period for three or four hours per day. But every two weeks we had to move back our testing by half an hour. We went around the clock at least three times in the time I was here.”

Though the continual changing



of work hours was difficult for the scores of range workers involved with the testing, YPG's vaunted flexibility in range scheduling always gave testers the opportunity to make the most of the situation.

"The satellites being available for only a few hours a day gave us an urgent requirement to test whenever we could," said Bybee. "We also didn't have to compete for range space at YPG. The ranges at other locations were consistently tied up, but at YPG we always had top priority."

By the early 1980s, GPS technology had been miniaturized to the point that a man portable backpack weighing a mere 25 pounds began testing with Soldiers at the proving ground.

"We had a good group of people at YPG and in the program office," said Bybee. "There was a lot of high level interest in the program and everyone



The earliest GPS systems were so large that a UH-1 helicopter, which carried as many as 14 troops at a time when used in Vietnam, could only accommodate a pilot and two passengers when carrying a GPS device. By September 1977 testers had conducted over 70 test flights with UH-1 helicopters, as seen here, and F-4, P-3, and C-141 airplanes. (U.S. Army photos)

was pretty attuned to how important the project was."

Testing at YPG was critical to the development of the GPS technology so commonly used today. Just as YPG's testing prowess was put to good use then, it continues this same way today and will continue to serve the nation in the future.

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New Soldiers and employees learn about YPG's capabilities



Nearly a dozen employees from various departments throughout U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force, received an extensive tour of YPG on May 21. The day started with briefing from YPG's Commander Col. John Nelson. Throughout the day the group made 10 stops and visited areas such as range control, mission control, support shops and a gun position. The group learned about how YPG supports its important mission of testing equipment for the warfighter. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



YTC Commander recognizes Air Delivery employees



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks presented Test Officer Mayra Angulo a Commander's Coin on May 29, 2025, for her support of an Air Delivery test program.



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks presented Test Officer TJ Smalenberg a Commander's Coin on May 29, 2025, for his support in an Air Delivery test program. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

YPG community rolls up their sleeves to save lives



The Red Cross and Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Health Clinic teamed up to bring a blood drive to YPG. On May 20, Soldiers and community members made their way to the Fitness Center on post with a mission to help save lives. In total nearly 40 people rolled up their sleeves and donated a combined 37 pints of blood. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

VOLUNTEER Appreciation Day

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Duel in the Desert Golf Tournament



On May 24, The Desert Committee LLC hosted the Duel in the Desert Golf Tournament at Mesa Del Sol. Col. John Nelson welcomed the players, and his daughter Lena sang the National Anthem before the 23 teams hit the green. The Desert Committee is continually raising funds to host events in Yuma County. In December of 2024, the committee hosted the first Army ball for Yuma Proving Ground in almost a decade. Tournament winners: Men's Longest Drive Casey Simmons, Women's Longest Drive Ashely Thompson, and overall winners Balls of Fury. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



Here's to 250 years of defending freedom. Here's to life.

Happy birthday to the U.S. Army
and Yuma Proving Ground.

We salute the soldiers and their families who are the heart of the U.S. Army, especially those right here at Yuma Proving Ground. At Onvida Health, we're honored to serve those who serve. We stand with you in celebrating 250 years of duty and honor.

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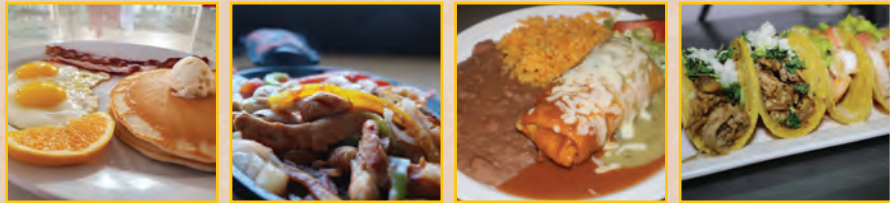
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Yuma is a Great American Defense Community



YPG Commander Col. John Nelson was on hand at the May 21 Yuma City Council meeting as the city was recognized as one of three 'Great American Defense Communities' by the Association of Defense Communities. The day prior, he shared his thoughts on the region's staunch support of the military with a film crew from the organization. "In my 30 years of active-duty service, this is the most military supportive community I have ever seen," said Nelson. "Yuma has two bases, and they support us very well. We have a continuous cooperation and collaboration, and we support each other." (Photos by City of Yuma and Mark Schauer)

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YPG Commander talks about Army's 250th Birthday

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John Nelson talk
about how U.S.
Army Yuma
Proving Ground
is celebrating the
Army's 250th
Birthday.



Watch and learn about YPG history

Scan the QR
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video about U.S.
Army Yuma
Proving Ground's
formation and it's
place in history.



Commemorative U.S. Army 250th Anniversary stamp



The United State Post Service has unveiled a stamp that celebrates the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army. Established by the Continental Congress in 1775, the Army is now a global force with a clear purpose: to fight and win America's wars. Featuring the military service mark of the U.S. Army against a white background, the stamp was designed by Antonio Alcalá, an art director for the USPS.

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Ultra-competitive employees complete 250 Challenge in marathon session



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) employees Ryan Ingham and Harley Hogan took the YPG Fitness Center's 250 Army Birthday Challenge to another level. The fitness challenge involves repetitions of 250 squats, lunges, step-ups, push-ups, as well as a 250-meter swimming and biking/walking or running challenge and a rowing and medicine ball workout. More than 30 people signed up for the challenge that started on June 1 and needs to be completed by June 14. However, the ultra-motivated and competitive athletes completed the challenge in one visit to the YPG Fitness Center on June 3. In the June 23 issue of The Outpost, read about their hours-long journey and what motivated them to get it all done. (Photos by Dani Compton)





Happy Birthday
to you,
Army Corps!



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