

The Outpost

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

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YTC acquires new laser cleaning capability

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Test Center (YTC) at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is continually looking for methods to advance its capabilities, efficiency, productivity and sustainability.

YTC's latest investment in the Laser Ablation Cleaning System marks off all those requirements.

Bartek Dajnowski, president of GC Laser Systems and inventor, explains how the machine he describes as, "effective, precise and environmentally friendly," works.

"Laser light is targeting the corrosion and the deposits on the copper crusher. The laser pulses are exciting the molecules of that contaminant. They get so excited that they shake themselves apart and eject off the surface."

The contaminant is then vaporized and captured in a vacuum hose through a HEPA filter. YTC



Yuma Test Center (YTC) recently invested in a Laser Ablation Cleaning System which uses laser light to remove corrosion and deposits from copper crusher gauges and other materials. The contaminant is then vaporized and captured in a vacuum hose through a HEPA filter. Bartek Dajnowski, president of GC Laser Systems and inventor, describes the system as, "effective, precise and environmentally friendly," and traveled to YTC to train trade workers on how to use the laser. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

purchased a stationary unit that allows for coupled and decoupled operations. In the coupled state, a robotic arm performs all the operations autonomously and in the decoupled state, personnel can decouple the laser from the robot and operate it manually.

Mechanical engineer David Le, who is one of the most experienced professionals in the field of non-destructive testing, brought the system to YTC's Physical Test Facility to bring efficiency to the process of cleaning a critical component of live fire testing, copper crusher gauges. Brianna Carlson explained how the gauges measure the pressure of a round.

"They set two of these between the last propelling charge and the breech. When the artillery is fired, there's

SEE **LASER** page 7

Wild burros are longstanding denizens of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground / Page 3



BROC entrance landscape improvements / Page 5



All-Range Tactical Clothing system tested at Yuma Test Center / Pages 6



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YPG Command team visit ARTC



While Yuma Proving Ground's Command Team is normally experiencing Yuma's triple digit heat, they experienced the extreme opposite while making a visit to Artic Regions Test Center in Alaska the week of July 21. The visit was the first for YPG's Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus. He and YPG Commander Col. John Nelson experienced the minus 60-degree cold chamber at ARTC. (Left to right) ARTC Technical Director Jeffrey Lipscomb, Holthus, Nelson, Lt. Col. Brian Karhoff. (Photos by Sebastian Saarloos)



The command team interacted with the rugged professionals of the ARTC workforce during the annual Organization Day. The day is set aside each year to promote esprit de corps, which is camaraderie, morale, and teamwork among Soldiers and civilian employees.





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YPG Commander Col. John Nelson presented a Safety Steamer Award to Karhoff during the visit recognizing ARTC's outstanding safety record.

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Wild burros are longstanding denizens of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

For most of its 82-year history, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has seen itself as a natural laboratory, testing equipment Soldiers use in the most realistic natural environment possible.

As such, YPG has a deeply vested interest in being good stewards of the environment, and the proving ground's record in this area shines.

Among the multiple species found within YPG's over 1,300 square miles of range space are wild burros, well known to all YPG personnel who spend their days on the range testing equipment for warfighters.

"There are a lot more burros than there are wild horses," said Daniel Steward, YPG Wildlife Biologist. "We track where they're at for our safety."

Though the burros are generally popular with the YPG workforce, the creatures occasionally cause mischief. For example, some years ago one enterprising burro managed



Among the multiple species found within YPG's over 1,300 square miles of range space are wild horses and burros, well known to all YPG personnel who spend their days on the range testing equipment for warfighters. Slow moving and with binocular vision, burros are incapable of moving out of the way of a vehicle moving at highway speeds in time to avoid a costly-and deadly-accident. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

to turn on a water spigot—he drank his fill, then departed with the tap still running.

"Food, water, and shelter are what draw wildlife into our area. When it gets really dry, horses and burros are looking for water. Landscaping and sprinkler systems provide water—we really try to watch out for pooling water that would attract burros."

Slow moving and with binocular

vision, burros are incapable of moving out of the way of a vehicle moving at highway speeds in time to avoid a costly accident. Mitigating the burro threat to motorists on Highway 95 is no easy task, but wildlife officials have done the best they can.

"We've eliminated water sources near the roads to try to keep horses and burros as far away from

Highway 95 as possible. It's not healthy for the horses and burros to be exposed to high levels of traffic, for the animals or for the people."

Aside from favorable weather and plenty to eat and drink, the creatures tend to live long lives due to their sheer size and wary pack mentality that deters desert predators.

"Burros are big, strong, and have a herd to protect each other. A lot of times they are too dangerous for a predator to take down—it happens, but it is rare. Mountain lions are typically associated with sheep, not burros."

Steward cautions that burros are still wild animals that should be treated as such. In particular, feeding a wild burro should be strictly avoided.

"When people start feeding the burros, they become a real nuisance. These are wild animals—one begging for food can be ornery. You want to keep a respectful distance from any wild animal."

Heartwarming visit for late commander's daughter, granddaughter



Olivia and Nicole Hudson, daughter and granddaughter of the late Col. Oliver Stokes, who commanded Yuma Proving Ground from 1985 to 1987, paid a visit to the post on July 31. Personnel from the public affairs office escorted the visitors to the building that served as headquarters during her father's command to see what was then the commander's office, then to the BROCA Atrium and the Wall of Commanders. YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus, Technical Director Ross Gwynn, and Chief of Staff Omar Silva met with the visitors and presented a challenge coin on behalf of YPG Commander Col. John Nelson, who was on annual leave. The pair then stopped by the public affairs office to look through archived Outposts from Stokes' time in command. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

Hunters help sustain YPG wildlife conservation efforts

By Mark Schauer

As a natural laboratory for testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has a vested interest in responsible stewardship of the land.

Though located in one of the nation's most extreme desert climates, the proving ground is still home to a vast diversity of wildlife, including Sonoran pronghorn, desert tortoises, and bighorn sheep.

YPG's environmental stewardship efforts have earned plaudits from within the Army and from agencies like the Arizona Department of Game and Fish. YPG officials are quick to note that the success of the installation's wildlife management program is in large part thanks to the longstanding support of area hunters and sportsmen.

"We get so much support from groups like the Yuma Rod and Gun Club and Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society for construction of wildlife water catchments and monitoring animal populations," said Daniel Steward, YPG wildlife biologist. "A lot of these things rely on volunteer labor to accomplish, and it is our sportsmen who reliably help get these projects done."

Generations of Yuma-area sportsmen have hunted YPG's ranges— with over 1,200 square miles of land area, there is enough room to allow safe access to hunters without interfering with the post's vital mission on behalf of warfighters.

"We have an obligation to have public use of some of our installation where it is not hindering our mission," said Steward. "The mission is always first, but where it is not a conflict we can bring in hunters."

Still, YPG's developmental test mission of virtually every piece of equipment a Soldier is likely to shoot, drive, or wear means that safety and security considerations



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's environmental stewardship efforts have earned plaudits from within the Army and from agencies like the Arizona Department of Game and Fish. Though located in one of the nation's most extreme desert climates, the proving ground is still home to a vast diversity of wildlife, including bighorn sheep. (Loaned photo)

make access here less liberal than on other public lands.

"We have restricted access because at YPG we are shooting things we have never shot before," said Steward. "We have safety buffer zones we have to observe for our tests. Periodically, if we have a test with a large safety buffer zone, we may have to close specific hunting units."

YPG's hunting areas are divided into these small 'units' to ensure that any such closure is surgically targeted, not a wide swath of land well beyond the needs of hunter safety and mission security.

"It's kind of a balance between safety and security when we establish these hunting areas," said Steward. "They are in places that avoid our busy impact areas and where people can be safe without being a security issue for our

testing."

Steward says that the goodwill of YPG's hunting population is invaluable in preserving and perpetuating the installation's wildlife.

"Hunters have been helpful to our program: They help be our eyes and ears on the range. Under the North American model of wildlife management, fees that our sportsmen pay in large part fund all wildlife conservation efforts nationwide."

Hunting at YPG

The biggest communication and administrative tool used is an online system called iSportsman, and the web address to YPG's is www.yuma.isportsman.net. When hunting areas are closed temporarily for military test operations, iSportsman is used to

email notifications of the closures in advance when possible. Closures are also posted to the app's news page.

"YPG has special security and safety requirements," said Steward. "To access YPG requires a background check."

As such, hunters must submit their full names, addresses, and if requested, their driver's license number, and Social Security Number. Steward stresses that all members of a hunting party coming within YPG's boundaries must undergo this step, even if they don't personally plan to participate in the hunt. Folks must also watch a range safety video and sign a hold-harmless agreement as part of the process. Upon completion of the background check, all members of the party can purchase their Hunting Access Pass. Adult permits cost \$35, while minors 17 and under, seniors 65 and older, and persons with disabilities can receive free permits.

Hunters must also register all firearms they bring onto YPG, whether they own the item or are borrowing it from someone else.

"If you're quail hunting and might use two or three different shotguns, or deer hunting with a rifle and a sidearm, you have to register them all," said Steward. "You can get an unlimited number of these free weapons registration permits."

Most importantly of all, the final step once a hunter who has acquired access and firearm permits enters the range is to check-in through iSportsman online, and to check out upon leaving. Both things are easily done on a smartphone.

"The online check-in is closely monitored by range control," said Steward. "For safety reasons, it is vital that our range controllers always be aware of your location as you come and go on the range."

Environmental Protection team spruce up entrance to the BROC



TOP LEFT: When the Directorate of Public Works was working on adding the memorial sign for the renaming of the ROC to the BROC in honor of Yuma Proving Ground's late Technical Director Larry Bracamonte, the team decided the entrance needed some sprucing up. They enlisted the help of the Sustainable Range Program team as well as Environmental Sciences Division to get the job done. BOTTOM LEFT: The ocotillo, cactus and two boulders pictured, were repurposed from the former location of the Big Guns. That area must be cleared for the widening of Highway 95. The petrified wood came from another location that is being developed around post. As a natural testing ground, YPG makes great efforts in practicing responsible ecological stewardship. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

RIGHT: Teamwork made the project possible. Left to right: Carlos Farnsworth, Land Rehabilitation and Maintenance; Daniel Steward Wildlife Biologist; Daniel McDaniel, Safety; Reed Rider Sustainable Range Program; and Josh Lightner, Environmental Office/Natural Resource Specialist) (Photo by Carlos Anaya)



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All-Range Tactical Clothing system tested at Yuma Test Center

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is the Army's natural environment test center.

Encompassing environments from arctic in Alaska to desert in Yuma to jungle in Central and South America, YPG's test centers run the gamut of any condition a Soldier might be likely to face.

Natural environments are uncontrollable, however: what if an evaluation must be completed in a timely way and the outdoor temperatures aren't extreme enough to accomplish the test objectives?

YPG recently answered this with a five-day test of the All-Range Tactical Clothing system at Yuma Test Center (YTC) with participation from nine soldiers from the Army's 11th Airborne stationed at Joint Base

Elmendorf-Richardson.

The system, formally known as the Cold Temperature and Arctic Protection System (CTAPS), is a multi-layer collection of cold weather garments designed to provide the wearer environmental protection in temperatures ranging from 45 °F to -65 °F. The layered components include light and midweight base layer long sleeve crew shirts and thermal long underwear, a lightweight insulation jacket, a soft-shell jacket and pants, and an extreme cold weather parka and pants, seven layers in all.

When an early spring hit the usually frigid interior Alaska at Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC), the test pivoted to a climactic chamber at YTC.

"Cold weather doesn't suit Arizona



Arctic Regions Test Center test officers Brandon Kubilus and Hannah Henry worked on the test at Yuma Test Center, along with instrumentation help from Dan Fox and Dean Lambert. When an early spring hit the usually frigid interior Alaska at Arctic Regions Test Center, the test pivoted to a climactic chamber at Yuma Test Center. (U.S. Army photos)



The All-Range Tactical Clothing system, formally known as the Cold Temperature and Arctic Protection System, is a multi-layer collection of cold weather garments designed to provide the wearer environmental protection in temperatures ranging from 45 °F to -65 °F. The climactic chamber at Yuma Test Center was conditioned to the test temperature prior to the start of each test day and maintained at that temperature for the duration of the day.

very well, but it wasn't getting cold enough outside to test it in Alaska at that time," said Cullen Wilkes, YPG test officer. "YTC has a suitable cold chamber that meets OSHA standards for personnel, and we went forth from there."

ARTC test officers Brandon Kubilus and Hannah Henry worked on the test here, along with instrumentation help from Dan Fox and Dean Lambert. The climactic chamber at YTC was conditioned to the test temperature prior to the start of each test day and maintained at that temperature for the duration of the day. The conditions in the chamber were extremely cold.

"There's a factor of motivating people to want to do something really not fun, asking them to go into negative 65 degrees and explaining why it is important," said Wilkes. "You have to make sure they understand they are not wasting their time."

Each Soldier was given all components of the CTAPS system and offered the choice of layering up however they felt was necessary:

Due to individual physiological differences, the Soldiers were not directed to wear one singular configuration. The Soldiers had heart rate and temperature monitors throughout the tests—if their temperature dropped below a safe level, they were removed from the chamber.

"Some of the Soldiers would do an anerobic activity moving sandbags from one pallet to the next, while the other group conducted an aerobic activity by marching," said Wilkes. "We had them in the chamber for two-hour iterations followed by a 30-minute break."

A period of rest with wind utilizing electric fans facing the direction of the Soldiers was used to simulate windy conditions. The testers collected survey feedback from the Soldiers each day for the five days, and the project managers asked follow-up questions based on the responses.

"I think the customer was very pleased and won't hesitate to come back here if they have anything else," said Wilkes.

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LASER

FROM PAGE 1

pressure. So, when that pressure hits the piston in the gauge, it crushes a copper BB. Based on the amount that the BB is compressed, they calculate the peak chamber pressure for that round.”

In the near future, YTC will produce the gauges, but for now cycles through a diminishing stock of, on average, 2,000 gauges per month in support of testing. The laser system will speed up the reusability turnaround time as well as extend their life expectancy.

“It’s an insane time difference” said Daniel Henley with Mass Properties who described the previous process of cleaning the gauges, which took about an hour. The new laser system cleans a gauge in just over a minute and can be set up to clean a tray full without using manpower.

Zac Pettigrew with Mass Properties said the same gauge could be reused three or four times a week. Up until now this team would use a water-based solution, with the potential for rust damage, to clean the gauges and had to polish off water spots.

After seeing how well the laser

worked, he said, “This system is going to eliminate having to put them in any kind of liquid. It’s going to give us another layer of life expectancy increase.”

In late July, GC Laser Systems came to YTC to deliver the system and to train and certify the personnel from the Physical Test, Mass Properties, Machine Shop and Support Services who will use the system. The training included 10 hours of online coursework prior to the class, and three days of hands-on.

When using the system in the decoupled state, system operators must wear safety goggles, but when using the system in the coupled state the laser safe glass enclosure blocks out the class IV laser beam for those working in and around the area.

Le foresees using the laser ablation machine for copper crushers is just the beginning of its use at YTC. He’s discussed with gun manufacturers the benefits of applying the laser cleaning into the cannon to clean the gun barrel after firing.

“At this time, we are starting to work on many applications that are needed at this moment. We project there could be several larger applications that we could use on weapon systems or test vehicles before engaging in non-destructive testing, painting, or welding.”



Laser Ablation Cleaning System uses laser light to remove corrosion and deposits from copper crusher gauges and other materials. The photo shows the copper crusher gauges before and after being cleaned with the system. (Photo by Ana Henderson)



Yuma Test Center purchased a stationary Laser Ablation Cleaning System that allows for coupled and decoupled operations. In the coupled state, a robotic arm performs all the operations autonomously and in the decoupled state, personnel can decouple the laser from the robot and use it manually. (Photos by David Le)



In late July, GC Laser Systems visited Yuma Test Center to deliver the system and to train and certify personnel from the Physical Test, Mass Properties, Machine Shop and Support Services who will use the system. (Photo by Ana Henderson)



YTC Commander recognizes employees



On July 30, Yuma Test Center Command Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks presented Combat and Automotive Systems Division (CASD) Test Officer Matthew Hostetler (left) with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal for this support of the M88A3 program. Hicks presented CASD Test Officer Adan Vega with a Certificate of Achievement for his work on the M1147 program.

(Photos by Ana Henderson)



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A farewell to Halo Chapel NCO



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Garrison Manager Ken Musselwhite (left) presents a Meritorious Service Medal to Religious Affairs Specialist Staff Sgt. Nicole Covington prior to her permanent change of station on Aug. 6. Covington was praised for being actively involved in the YPG community since being stationed here in 2022. "I enjoy working with people and planning events," she said. "Most of all I love providing hope and bringing people closer to their personal faith." (Photo by Mark Schauer)



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Chaplain's Corner

God turns a bad ordeal into good

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Chaplain Maj.
Ryan Pearse



Dave Evans, a Duke lacrosse player was falsely accused of a crime in 2006 was quoted as saying, "I am innocent.

Reade Seligmann is innocent. Collin Finnerty is innocent. Every member of the Duke lacrosse team is innocent. You have all been told some fantastic lies." An ESPN documentary titled "Fantastic Lies" later detailed the entire ordeal.

This story is not unlike the classic novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird." If you have ever been the target of a miscarriage of justice, then you have empathy for these lacrosse players. After the accuser recanted

the story and a rogue district attorney was disbarred, the nightmare came to an end.

Genesis 39 tells a similar story of a man named Joseph who was falsely accused and imprisoned for something he didn't do. In the end, God restored him to be the second most powerful man in all of

Egypt (and the world).

Leviticus 19:15 reminds us, "Do not pervert justice."

According to Micah 6:8, we are to "do justice and love kindness."

Genesis 50:20 reminds us, "What man meant for evil, God used for good." God can always turn a bad ordeal into good.

Halo Chapel Sunday Service Times

CATHOLIC SERVICE: 0930

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN SERVICE: 1100

FACEBOOK/GOOGLE MAPS: YPG HALO CHAPEL

OFFICE NUMBER: 928-328-3465



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YPG Public Roadway Survey



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Salsa contest brings the heat



Lunchtime was extra tasty on July 31 thanks to a salsa competition hosted by Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Plans Division. The 16 salsa entries ranged from green to red, chunky to juicy, spicy to salty, mild to hot and members of the YPG workforce enjoyed them all. When the votes were cast, though, Carlos Garcia's entry No. 08, strawberry jalapeno, was voted best blended salsa; Chris Cape's entry No. 24, Barn Burner, best chunky salsa, and Austin Rudolph's entry No. 42, Queso del Vaquero, best dip. (Photos by Gene Garcia)



Students head back to school



On Aug. 4, students at PFC James D. Price Elementary School returned for the first day of the 2025–2026 school year. Smiles were abundant as they made their way out of the building. The new principal, Alexandria Johnson, chatted with families picking up their children. Price is part of the Yuma School District One and is located on post, serving children of both Soldiers and civilians. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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