

The Outpost

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

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U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground supports milestone user test of launched effects

By Mark Schauer

Next generation equipment first tested at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is a step closer to fielding.

Personnel from YPG supported a Launched Effects Short-Range Special User Demonstration (LE-SR SUD) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in August.

The event marked the first time an active-duty unit employed the technology, and the participating Soldiers' feedback will help improve both the technology and its supporting doctrine prior to fielding. JBLM's 7th Infantry Division supported the demonstration along with members of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and 1st Special Forces Group.



Personnel from Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) supported a Launched Effects Short-Range Special User Demonstration at Joint Base Lewis McChord in August. The event marked the first time an active-duty unit employed the technology, which was previously tested at YPG. (U.S. Army photo)

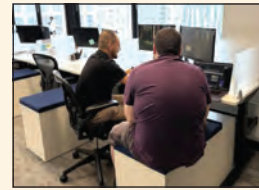
“The Launched Effects Special User Demonstration at Joint Base Lewis-McChord is a critical milestone in the Army’s Continuous Transformation and our goal to equip every division with Launched Effects by 2026,” said Lt. Col. Patrick Gargan, Launched Effects Lead for the Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team. “This is the first delivery of launched effects to a U.S. Army Forces Command unit informing future deliveries, materiel development, and launched effects integration in the Army’s formations. By receiving Soldier insights early, we are laying the foundation for a seamless fielding of this capability, which will revolutionize how

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Making a difference: Army Suicide Prevention Month outreach



Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson (front) and Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus visit an Army Suicide Prevention Month display in the BROC Atrium staffed by Suicide Prevention Support Specialist Minda Federmeier and Army Substance Abuse Program Manager William Lloyd. The pair will bring their display to the AOC on Sept. 24. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER
CONNECT TO PROTECT

In honor of **Suicide Prevention Month** (September 2025), we're excited to launch the YPG Push-Up Challenge — and we want YOU to be part of it!

This initiative goes beyond push-ups. It's about promoting **wellness, building camaraderie, and raising awareness** for mental health across our community.



YPG PUSH-UP CHALLENGE

EVENT STARTS **08SEP25 AT 0000**

No sign-up required! Just show up and represent your division, department, Command or group — that's your team. Whether you can do 5 push-ups or 50, you're welcome to join. Modifications are encouraged, and teamwork is what makes it powerful.

Recognition for the **Top team** will have their name placed on the Challenge Trophy. **Top 3 individual Males** and **Top 3 Individual Females** will be recognized.



Event Ends **02OCT25 at 1300**. Winners to be announced shortly after.



QUESTIONS?
Contact YPG's Suicide Prevention Team

1. **Bill Lloyd**928-328-2249
2. **Minda Federmeier**928-328-6765
3. **Amanda Torres**928-328-7085

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Connect to protect: YPG leaders share mental health resource information



September is Army Suicide Prevention Month, and Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks, and YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus greeted the workforce at the entrance gates early on Sept. 4 to raise awareness and promote the weekly Prevention Month Pushup Challenge currently in progress. The 2025 Army Suicide Prevention month theme is "We Are Stronger Together. Connect to Protect." This theme underscores the importance of connecting with people we trust because individuals who have strong, supportive relationships have a lower risk for suicide. (Photos by PAO staff)



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Insider Threat Month: protecting our YPG community starts with you

By Reginald Boler

September is Insider Threat month. The insider threat program plays a critical role in protecting Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) advanced testing capabilities and technological innovations in today's challenging environment. By deterring, detecting, and mitigating risks from individuals whether intentional or unintentionally, who have access to sensitive materials, this program safeguards national security interests and ensures the integrity of military operations.

The YPG insider threat program integrates information analysis, employee education, regular assessments, and secure network monitoring. This collaborative effort not only prevents data breaches, theft, or sabotage but also upholds operational continuity in a landscape where emerging technologies and

sophisticated testing procedures are heavily targeted by adversaries. Personnel receive training to identify warning signs, reinforcing a culture of vigilance and early reporting of suspicious activities.

Ultimately, the insider threat program forms the backbone of YPG's security posture. It protects classified information, high-value research, and cutting-edge military systems from insider risks, ensuring the continued advancement of defense testing and technology crucial to U.S. security. And remember protecting our YPG community starts with you, so it does not matter if you are a Soldier, DA Civilian, or a contractor, if you see something, say something.

For questions contact me, your Insider Threat Program Manager Reginald Boler at (928) 328-2787, reginald.b.boler.civ@army.mil.

Testing for partner nations



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson, Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus, and other YPG senior leaders greeted counterparts of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) on Aug. 28. The JGSDF is conducting testing of the Type 19 155mm wheeled self-propelled howitzer at the proving ground. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Briefing mission capabilities and infrastructure



On Sept. 3, Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks, Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus, and other senior leaders briefed personnel from the Southwest Mission Acceleration Center about the proving ground's test capabilities. A pilot program first authorized in late 2023, Arizona is one of five states to have a center, which is meant to foster innovative solutions to national security challenges by supporting collaboration between entrepreneurs, academia, industry, and federal and local partners. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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Wide open spaces protect YPG's mission

By Mark Schauer

The status U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has as the Department of Defense's premier test and evaluation facility is greatly aided by its geographic isolation.

Possessing over 1,300 square miles of range space, the proving ground can safely test virtually every piece of equipment used by Soldiers, even inherently dangerous experimental items like very long-range artillery.

YPG's immense ranges, larger in area than the state of Rhode Island, see hundreds of thousands of total rounds fired per year. YPG is the epicenter of testing related to the Army's top modernization priority: long range precision fires. The Army aspires to field systems capable of accurately firing at targets 100 kilometers away, and YPG testing has already achieved significantly increased distances in test fires conducted at both the proving ground, most notably an accurate 70-kilometer artillery direct hit that was widely reported in 2019.

"Yuma Proving Ground is the artillery center of excellence for testing," said Col. John Nelson, YPG Commander. "Every round that is procured across the country is tested here for acceptance."

Artillery tests can take place at all hours: the high-speed cameras testers use to capture crisp images of projectiles in flight have forward looking infrared capability, which allows images to be captured at night without artificial light. In 2014, for instance, an emergency test of the M284 howitzer tube required 3,000 test rounds to be fired continuously across 11 straight days, with over 100 personnel working in two 12-hour shifts to accomplish it.

"At many test ranges, flexibility is very limited," said Steve Flores, Long Range Precision Fire Cross Functional Team Integrator. "Here, we can schedule tests weeks in advance instead of months in advance."

Whatever time of day they occur, YPG's isolation and natural terrain bowl of mountains surrounding it on three sides usually mute the sound of these test fires so far as people who live in the populated areas of Yuma County are concerned. In closer proximity to the gun positions where this testing takes place, however, the

noise of booming artillery produces more decibels that, the average rock concert: loud enough to require YPG personnel to wear hearing protection while at a test site, even if they are behind thick reinforced concrete walls at improved gun positions. The report of artillery fire is ever-present for personnel at YPG, routinely rattling windows and ceiling tiles in buildings miles away from the firing front.

"Those are the sounds our YPG employees are exposed to every workday," said Michael Demcko, YPG Mission Safety Director. "We have appropriate hearing protection to ensure they are not harmed from these occupational hazards."

YPG's vast size also includes nearly 2,000 square miles of restricted airspace, with clear, stable air and an extremely dry climate where inclement weather is a rarity.



The status U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground has as the Department of Defense's premier test and evaluation facility is greatly aided by its geographic isolation. Possessing over 1,300 square miles of range space, the proving ground can safely test virtually every piece of equipment used by Soldiers, even inherently dangerous experimental items like very long-range artillery. (U.S. Army photo)

These factors make the post highly coveted for aviation testing, and YPG's Laguna Army Airfield is a busy hub for air sorties for both the test mission and training by special forces operators at the Military Freefall School that has been a tenant at the post since the mid-1990s. YPG's aviation personnel are testing some of the most cutting-edge

platforms around—they have already hosted multiple demonstrations staged by the Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team, including the annual Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE).

"YPG was essential for us to have the simulated threat array to conduct the experiment in at echelon that would replicate an enemy capability that we would potentially face in the future," said Brig. Gen. Cain Baker, Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team Director, following EDGE 2024. "YPG has the air space that allows us to operate at the distances we need and the instrumentation to collect the data to inform our requirements from an analytical standpoint."

Though it has been testing drones since the 1950s, in the last decade YPG has become critically important to testing defeat technologies as

unmanned aircraft have gained prominence.

"Counter-UAS efforts are so important now due to the proliferation of drones in the battle space," said Nelson. "In the Department of Defense, the Army is the lead agency for counter-UAS development and in the Army test community YPG is the center of excellence for testing UAS. We're turning over solutions for the warfighter every day."

YPG's isolation from populated areas also offers protection from interference in the radio spectrum. Things like cell phones, microwave ovens, and garage door openers all use the invisible resource that YPG testers rely on to support their highly specialized testing, from using radar and telemetry in evaluation of artillery rounds to replicating the radio spectrum as it is in various places around the world to facilitate the testing of technologies to defeat adversary unmanned aircraft.

"Counter-UAS has a lot to do with electronic warfare, and the counter-improvised explosive device mission was at YPG for two decades during the War on Terror," said Nelson. "That really lent our range to presenting contested environments for the counter-UAS mission."

Another crucial benefit of YPG's geographic isolation is the lack of places for surreptitious surveillance by America's adversaries. Unlike major military installations within city limits where spy photographers can monitor activities from adjacent houses or commercial buildings, YPG's wide open, natural desert ranges present few places for a determined adversary to hide.

"YPG's isolation provides a natural security buffer that protects and secures our testing," said Jonathan Olbert, YPG Operations Division Chief. "Remaining an isolated installation is critical for national security and the security of our test mission."

Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony

Professional of the 2nd Quarter

— Years of Service —



On Aug. 21, Deputy Garrison Manager Dan Carter awarded Miranda Choate with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

25 years



Kevin Bulkeley

20 years



Capt. Travis Thomas

10 years



Dylan Black

5 years



Danielle Compton

— Civilian Service Achievement Medal —

Name: Miranda Choate
Years of service: 9 years in November
Job title: Workforce Development Program Specialist

Recognition: Selected as Professional of the Quarter for her work as a Workforce Development Specialist, Directorate of Human Resources.

Reaction: "I am truly honored to have been recognized for this award. No achievement is ever the result of one person's actions alone. The support and guidance I've received from our Garrison's leadership has been outstanding, and the collaborative teamwork and steadfast commitment to excellence at USAG YPG is unparalleled. These attributes embody IMCOM's Mission, Vision, Values, & Principles of Service, and have laid the groundwork for every one of my accomplishments. I am incredibly proud to be a part of this organization, and it is a privilege to accept this award."



Jacob Kuntzelman



Lauren Luchtman



Spenser Clark



Capt. Travis Thomas

YTC Commander thanks employees for work well done



LEFT: Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks recognized Test Officer Aaron Wise with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on Sept. 4, for his test support where he "took a major role with the planning, coordination, executing and cleanup." (Photo by Ana Henderson)



RIGHT: Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks awarded Gerald Miller with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on Sept. 8, for his extraordinary performance supporting a test program using his leadership and communication skills. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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YTC up-and-coming employees participate in Public Private Talent Exchange Program

By Ana Henderson

Imagine being able to swap your place of employment for six months to work at a high-tech corporation, then return to work and implement those novel concepts at your organization.

That is what two Yuma Test Center (YTC) employees are experiencing with the Public Private Talent Exchange.

Patty Conley, Program Analyst for Acquisition Workforce & Developmental Employee Programs explained, "It's part of a program arranged by the DAU Human Capital Initiatives Office. They work with all our Army acquisition workforce to provide different programs for leadership experiences to help them develop in their roles, especially those that are rising leadership potential."

Engineers Riley Sinek and Leroy Duarte are both up-and-coming employees with YTC under U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) extreme weather testing umbrella.

Sinek leads test programs for the Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division's Sensors Test Branch. He spent his exchange at Invariant Corporation in Huntsville, Ala., a company he is familiar with.

"I have worked with Invariant Corporation at YPG as a test officer during various counter unmanned aircraft system test events and felt it was a great opportunity to see how they've attained their success in developing, improving, maintaining, and sustaining their systems of systems."

Invariant is known for hardware and sensor development, prototyping, and cutting-edge custom software development.

Duarte, a YTC Employee of the Year, has been at the forefront of YTC's digital transformation efforts.



Two U.S. Army Yuma Test Center employees are participating in the Public Private Talent Exchange. Engineer Leroy Duarte (left) is pictured at MORSE Corp in Cambridge, Mass. where he's spent working for the last six months. (Photo by Ashley Thompson)

He spent his exchange with MORSE Corp in Cambridge, Mass. The firm provides customer-focused algorithm and software development services that solve difficult, multi-disciplinary problems faced by the U.S. National Security Ecosystem.

He describes this first day as "a taste of working in big tech" saying it was "a very busy feeling because most employees are all on one floor of one building, not miles apart like we are at YPG."

Duarte credits the experience for opening the door to software engineering saying, "Breaking out

of your current work cycles and patterns gives you space to learn new ones. I'm learning modern approaches to workflows in software engineering, including project planning, not just the technical aspects."

His supervisor Ashley Thompson, Chief, Data Processing Branch who advocated for him to nab the opportunity which is typically reserved for upper management said, "We need software engineers and data scientists getting that industry experience and bringing it back to our workforce much earlier in their

careers."

Thompson is confident the skills Duarte has learned will help the branch and the organization.

"On our end, it is proving to be extremely fruitful. Leroy is a part of two teams at MORSE working on modern software development and machine learning model training. He's also getting great exposure into how they manage agile software development projects and can bring all of that back to YPG for us to implement within our own development teams."

Both Sinek and Duarte return to YTC in late-September and are eager to implement what they learned.

Duarte mentioned sharing ideas to, "Re-think how we run meetings and how often we have them, change how we document project progress and decisions."

Sinek said, "This opportunity has been different from my typical role at YTC, since it has been much more focused on mechanical engineering design. It has given me a better understanding of how and why design choices are made, and the challenges that engineers face when designing and building systems for the Warfighter. I hope to bring that back to YTC by improving communication with engineers and helping to bridge the gap between engineers and testers."

These types of changes can streamline the workflows at YTC and ultimately get the most accurate data in the hands of those who need it to make critical decisions about test items. This chain reaction is what Conley says the program is all about.

"It allows them to challenge their abilities and help troubleshoot some of the things that are happening here, while also leading the change to what our private industry partners are doing."



Riley Sinek leads test programs for the Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division's Sensors Test Branch. He spent his exchange at Invariant Corporation in Huntsville, Ala. (Loaned photo)

Local law enforcement agencies lend support to Airborne Soldiers' water training

Yuma Test Center's Airborne Test Force Soldiers called on the help of the Yuma County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection for support during a water training exercise.



The Soldiers are preparing to conduct a static line deliberate water jump from two types of aircraft into the water. YCSO, CBP and the U.S. Border Patrol Yuma Sector are providing support in the water from boats and jet skis manned with Soldiers, deputies, agents and members of the Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue known as BORSTAR. On Sept. 3 the units practiced the water techniques part of the training before the jump. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



The morning after the Sept. 5 storm, Shearwater's heavy equipment crews were busy doing storm cleanup and repairs. From scrapping to filling in holes, the crews were immediately on the scene getting the area along Imperial Dam Road between the Howard and the Walker gates back in drivable condition. (Loaned photos)

YPG recovers from monsoon damage

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving (YPG) was inundated by a major monsoon in the overnight hours of Sept. 4.

The post's Walker Cantonment Area (WCA) received more than two inches of rain and was buffeted by 60 mile per hour wind gusts over the course of about an hour.

In comparison, Yuma's typical annual rainfall is approximately three inches. The major deluge did extensive damage to roads across the proving ground, which is larger in land area than the state of Rhode Island.

"It was a lot of rain a very short period of time," said Mark Hendrickson, lead meteorologist. "We got almost our average annual rain in an hour or two. It is for sure the most significant downpour in my 17 years here."

In the immediate aftermath of the monsoon, YPG's Police and Fire Departments were assisting a stranded motorist, barricading flooded roadways, and assessing damage. Running washes across

YPG's vast ranges reached measured heights of up to 38 inches and improved and unimproved roads across the post took a beating. The most publicly noticeable washout was Imperial Dam Road, which became impassable to traffic between the Walker and Howard Cantonment Area (HCA) access points. Officials anticipate the road will be unavailable until at least next week due to extremely saturated ground that could still produce sinkholes.

"We have to beware of compaction issues undermining the road," said Donnett Brown, YPG Department of Public Works Chief. "This storm was severe. The Howard and Walker Cantonment Areas and Imperial Dam Road took the brunt of the damage."

Currently, the only way to access HCA from Highway 95 is through the Laguna Army Airfield Gate during its regular hours, or via the WCA gate, which is being staffed 24 hours per day for the duration of the closure.

Though much of YPG's mission workforce was not scheduled to

work on the following day after the storm thanks to the post's decades-old regular work schedule of four ten-hour days per week, testing downrange was still scheduled to occur on Friday morning.

"The base ops heavy equipment workers are the real heroes right now," said Brown. "They were working from Thursday night throughout the weekend, starting with roads on the range to accommodate testing."

The impacts were keenly felt by personnel and family members who live on post. Except for the post's fitness center, all Family Morale Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) facilities were closed on Friday, Sept. 5 to allow for assessment and recovery of the storm damage. The post swimming pool was closed for one day due to pH levels being out of adjustment following the storm. The common building for the Desert Breeze Travel Camp was the worst affected building and will likely remain closed for many weeks.

"We had some immediate closures that had to take place over the weekend to clear out water, repair damage, and make sure the facilities were safe to reopen," said Chris Reitman, FMWR Director. "The travel camp common area sustained some serious issues and challenges with flooding, and that building will remain closed for some time."

Reitman assures activities that typically take place in the building will be relocated to other places on post, such as the Palm Garden Event Center, and that the travel

camp's administrative office has been temporarily relocated to the nearby FMWR Building.

"We're going to take a creative approach to try to fulfill the program needs," said Reitman. "Spaces are still available to rent, only the common building is closed."

Price School, the kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school operated on post by Yuma Elementary School District #1 was closed on Friday, along with three other district schools that sustained storm damage. The typical daily school bus routes from YPG to schools in town was also suspended for the day. The closures and recovery from damage largely preempted acknowledgement of an announcement heralding a years-in-the-making \$8 million federal grant to rebuild the current Price school building, which dates to 1959 and lacks a kitchen to prepare hot lunches for students, among other modern amenities.

By Monday morning, downed trees and limbs and debris had been removed from the populated areas of the post, with only a thin coating of mud on sections of streets.

"Our folks' immediate and follow-on responses were spot on," said Kenneth Musselwhite, YPG Garrison Manager. "Their work, from assisting stranded motorists, closing roads, and redirecting traffic early in the storm, to quickly assessing the damage and beginning repairs afterwards, shows their professionalism and dedication to keeping the YPG community safe."

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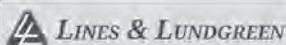
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MILESTONE

FROM PAGE 1

divisions operate in contested environments and enhance the Army's overall readiness and lethality."

Designed for highly contested environments, launched effects are distinct from both unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and loitering munitions. Launched effects work in tandem as expendable 'wolfpacks' that can collaborate semi-autonomously to penetrate enemy defenses and adapt to changing battle conditions in real time.

Launched effects' behaviors provide a decisive advantage to ground commanders, giving them the capability to extend range of sensing and use machines instead of Soldiers to make first contact with an adversary. YPG conducted intense developmental testing of the technologies during the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE) in 2023 and 2024, particularly with semi-autonomy and autonomy at long ranges.

"YPG was essential for us to have the simulated threat array to conduct the experiment at echelon that would replicate an enemy capability that we would potentially face in the future," said Brig. Gen. Cain Baker, Future Vertical Lift Cross-Functional Team Director, following EDGE 2024. "YPG has the air space that allows us to operate at the distances we need and the instrumentation to collect the data to inform our requirements from an analytical standpoint."

For the recent LE-SR SUD, YPG personnel supported immersive scenarios for Soldiers in the same way, delivering multiple realistic surrogate targets of military vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, and



For the recent Launched Effects Short-Range Special User Demonstration, Yuma Proving Ground personnel supported immersive scenarios for participating Soldiers with multiple realistic surrogate targets of military vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, and air defense guns fabricated by the proving ground's Threat Systems Target Simulation shop. These realistic targets are not available on most installations and were critical to the successful employment of launched effects. (U.S. Army photo)

air defense guns fabricated by the proving ground's Threat Systems Target Simulation shop. These realistic targets are not available on most installations and were critical to the success of the launched effects.

"We shipped the targets commercially to Joint Base Lewis-McCord, offloaded them, and emplaced them in the target locations provided by the customer," said Carlos Molina, YPG test officer. "All of these targets were driven by requirements for these large events. They not only support local testing, but other U.S. Army requirements."

YPG also sent personnel to run simulated enemy radar

emissions to heighten the demonstration's realism.

"There were requirements for foreign threat radars, and YPG is the primary operator and maintainer of radar equipment for the Threat Systems Management Office," said Molina.

The Army is rapidly integrating layered UAS and launched effects across formations in a combined arms fight that is synchronized with fires and maneuver across phases to penetrate, exploit, and defeat near-peer adversaries in a complex environment. Launched effects will begin fielding to all Army divisions next year.

Monsoon season storms causing havoc



Lightning struck a power pole along Highway 95 and mile marker 56 on Sept. 2. U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground fire fighters responded to scene to find the pole smoldering. The previous week a lightning strike sparked a fire just south of Highway 95 in Dome Valley. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

YPG returns to Exploration Station event



Hundreds of local youngsters were delighted by the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) hands-on activity at the Colorado River State Historic Park's Exploration Station event on Sept. 6. YPG is Yuma County's premier scientific and technical workplace and has had a presence at the park's annual outreach event since its inception. Participation in the event is part of the proving ground's outreach efforts to encourage local youngsters to pursue STEM careers in hopes they eventually become members of the workforce. YPG tests virtually everything in the ground combat arsenal, a mission that requires many highly trained engineers and math-savvy support personnel to ensure a Soldier's equipment works exactly as it is supposed to. (U.S. Army photos)



'A hawk of a day': YPG employee volunteers with budding pilots, saves wildlife



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground pilot Scott Myers has volunteered with Yuma's Civil Air Patrol squadron for nearly 15 years. In addition to mentoring up-and-coming pilots, he has also flown mercy missions on behalf of raptor rescue efforts, as seen here. (Loaned photo)



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