

The Outpost

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

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YPG's MWR hosts tee-rrific golf scramble



Rain or shine, golfers turned out for the second annual YPG MWR Golf Scramble hosted at Mesa Del Sol Golf Course on Nov. 15. Nearly 100 YPG and Yuma community members teed up for the event, including YPG's Command Team. Adding to the fun was a heckling station hosted by the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers. Team RK, made up of Rodney Futhrie, Ramon Reyes, Rhonda Kirk and Isaiah Kirk took first place. (Photos courtesy of MWR's Fitness Center)



The Outpost

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YPG's meteorology chief provides support for balloon festival

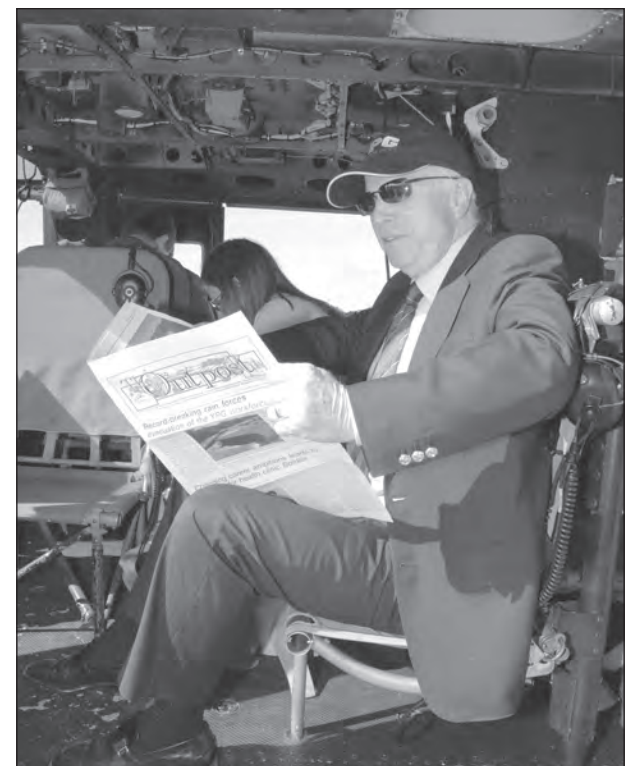


The Colorado River Crossing Balloon Festival is one of Yuma's most beloved annual events, and for well over two decades personnel from YPG's meteorology team have helped ensure the weather is safe for launching the participating hot air balloons. On Nov. 15, YPG Test Support Branch Chief Nickolas McColl had help from his young family as early each morning he launched weather balloons that track wind speed, temperature, pressure and atmospheric density. (Loaned photos)

YPG employees support mayors' biking event



YPG Commander Col. John Nelson along with a group of YPG employees joined in on the fun for the Mayors' International Bike Ride on Oct. 25. The 25-mile bike ride did not deter the motivated group who enlisted their family to ride along as well. The event took the group along with hundreds of others riding from Yuma, through the Cocopah Reservation, Gadsden and ending in San Luis, Arizona. (Photos by Ana Henderson and a loaned photo)



For the duration of its existence, local and national elected officials have gained information and insights about the mission of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) from the post newspaper produced by the Public Affairs Office. Under *The Sidewinder* and *The Outpost* names, YPG has continuously published a post newspaper since 1951. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

For more than 70 years, *The Outpost* has marked the times

By Mark Schauer

From its inception, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has relied on state-of-the-art technology to ensure that the equipment issued to Soldiers works as it should all the time, wherever they serve.

For more than 70 years, a long line of proving ground commanders have relied on the installation's newspaper, printed using technology available at the time, for sharing information with the several thousand employees scattered across 1,300 square miles in Yuma and at test centers in Alaska and the tropics.

YPG has been continuously served by a post newspaper since 1951, during the proving ground's earliest days. The title of the publication was *The Sidewinder* until 1981, when Spc. Patrick Buffet, who was editor at the time, ran a contest to give the newspaper a new name. The winning entry, *The Outpost*, was on the flag of the June 3, 1981, edition, with the explanation

that the new name, "best symbolizes the past history of Yuma Test Station and the basic mission of the post today." Spc. Richard Johnson of the post medical detachment received a \$25 savings bond and a letter of appreciation for submitting the winning entry.

Under either title, few significant stories have escaped the attention of the public affairs staff over the decades: when the LeTourneau Overland Train, the longest off-road vehicle in world history, came to YPG for testing in 1962, a lengthy story appeared on the front page of the April 6 issue. When former President George H.W. Bush dropped into YPG for his first parachute jump in since World War II in 1997, the public affairs office was on hand to produce a front-page story with action photos, even as they simultaneously escorted representatives from state and national media outlets.

Early copies of *The Sidewinder* were crudely typed and printed but

included captioned photos and other typical newspaper conventions. By the early 1960s, *The Sidewinder* was published professionally on newsprint, and, in the late 1970s, shifted to a black and white newsletter. From the earliest days until the early 1990s, the production and layout of the newspaper were performed manually. Stories were written on typewriters or early word processors and laid out manually on dummy sheets, pieces of paper onto which stories and photos were pasted after being carefully cut with X-Acto knives.

Though the newspaper alternated between broadsheet and tabloid-style orientation over the years, until the late 1990s it was always eight by ten inches in size. From 1997 to 2011, the newspaper was printed on 11 by 17-inch paper, the conventional size for a tabloid-style newspaper. A year after the switch, *The Outpost* won the Army Materiel Command's Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware award for best small Army newspaper.

Regardless of its format, size, and paper quality, *The Outpost* has been a constant and vital part of YPG life from its inception. So far as the workforce is concerned, *The Outpost* is a unifying force that highlights the totality of YPG's mission. Unlike some Army newspapers, most of *The Outpost's* content is relevant to and produced by writers on post, as opposed to generic 'filler' material distributed by the Department of the Army.

Given the dramatic differences that recent years have brought, 'Outpost' may now seem an incongruous title for the official newspaper of the test facility at the forefront of Army transformation efforts: far from being an isolated outpost, YPG is the epicenter of testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal. Yet YPG's newspaper will remain an important aspect of proving ground life for as long as people continue to read and have an interest in seeking information.



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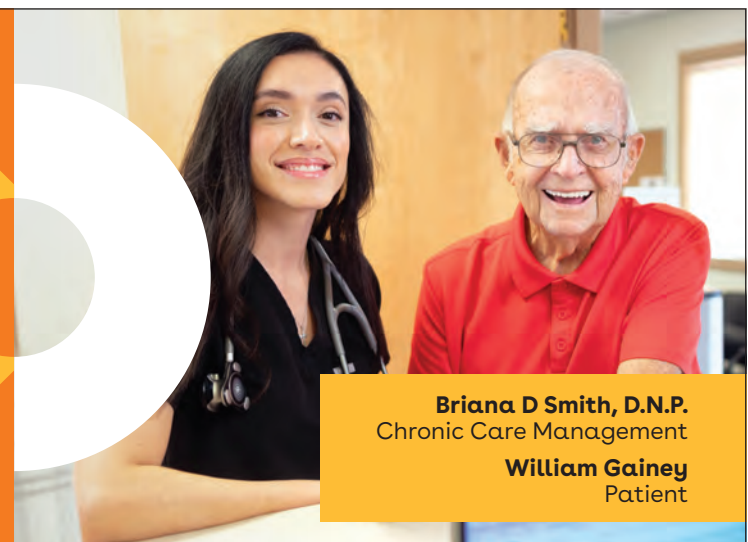
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YPG's isolation from populated areas offers protection from interference in the radio spectrum. YPG testers rely on this invisible resource to support their highly specialized testing replicating the spectrum as it is in various places around the world to facilitate the testing of technologies to defeat adversary unmanned aircraft. (U.S. Army photo)

Airspace a precious commodity at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

The vast size of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) includes nearly 2,000 square miles of

restricted airspace, with clear, stable air and an extremely dry climate where inclement weather is a rarity.

These factors make the post

highly coveted for aviation testing, and YPG's Laguna Army Airfield (LAAF) is a busy hub for air sorties for both the test mission and training.

Safely accommodating LAAF's thousands of aircraft sorties per year requires 3,000 feet of relatively flat land beyond its runway, and an additional 2,000 feet clear of obstructions beyond that.

"That means no fences, no posts, no houses, nothing," said James Walk, Airfield Manager.

Special forces operators at the Military Freefall School (MFFS) that has been a tenant at YPG since the mid-1990s use the airfield to fly sorties to train thousands of the military's most elite paratroopers. Fully 48% of all freefall jumps in the Department of War take place here, and the school's footprint at YPG has expanded significantly in recent years with infrastructure such as a large vertical wind tunnel that

opened in 2013 and a \$48 million two-bay hangar dedicated in 2024 for the Special Operations Aviation Command flight detachment that supports training operations of the MFFS. Earlier this year, ground was broken for the construction of a ready building for MFFS students.

"The C27Js and Casas that belong to the freefall school operate every day, and sometimes late at night," said Walk.

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



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. "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," said Col. John Nelson, YPG Commander. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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.”

LAAF is the largest of the post’s airfields, and its location in an isolated area far from civilian housing or agriculture activities greatly reduces the presence of wildlife, most particularly birds, that can menace the mission. A quick internet search shows the serious safety hazards bird strikes can cause to military aircraft.

“Even a small bird can cause problems for an engine,” said Walk. “It hasn’t been a big issue because we are aware of it and manage their presence in the area. Nearby agriculture would probably be an issue: it’s not just birds it would attract, it could be coyotes or anything that can go under or over the fence.”

Likewise, solar or wind farms near a military airfield can also endanger the mission.

“A lot of solar fields are reflective: a pilot could be temporarily blinded on approach if one was located nearby,” said Walk. “Wind farms are also huge obstacles that would pose a

hazard if they were near.”

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 Col. John Nelson, YPG Commander. “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



YPG’s Laguna Army Airfield (LAAF) is a busy hub for air sorties for both the test mission and training. Safely accommodating LAAF’s thousands of aircraft sorties per year requires 3,000 feet of relatively flat land beyond its runway, and an additional 2,000 feet clear of obstructions beyond that. (U.S. Army photo)

Nelson. “That really lent our range to presenting contested environments for the counter-UAS mission.”

Another crucial benefit to LAAF’s geographic isolation is the lack of places for surreptitious surveillance by America’s adversaries. Unlike some 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.

“We’re a restricted area,” said Walk. “If you have tall buildings nearby where people can take photographs from, it’s not good.”



Laguna Army Airfield is the largest of the YPG’s airfields, and its location in an isolated area far from civilian housing or agriculture activities greatly reduces the presence of wildlife, most particularly birds, that can menace the mission. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

New Yuma Test Center section, MOTRACS demos capabilities

By Ana Henderson

Earlier this fall, senior leadership from Yuma Proving Ground and the Yuma Test Center (YTC) attended a comprehensive demonstration showcasing the expanded capabilities of YTC's newest operational section, the Mobile Operations, Transport, Recovery, and Crane Support (MOTRACS). The event highlighted MOTRACS' ability to integrate advanced heavy-lift equipment, specialized transport systems, and recovery operations into a cohesive support framework.

Jaysen Lockett the Combined Maintenance Branch Chief, explained, "By observing the team in action, leadership gained valuable insight into how MOTRACS enhances mission readiness, improves logistical efficiency, and provides critical support for complex testing environments. This demonstration underscored the section's role as a vital asset in strengthening YTC's operational capacity and ensuring the successful execution of demanding test missions under diverse conditions."

The Motorpool, operated by MOTRACS, represents the consolidation of the Mobile Crane Section, TRAX, and Phoenix Management Inc. It is responsible for executing heavy-duty operations, including the transport and delivery of generators, conex boxes, blast

shields, bomb-proof structures, weapon systems, and other specialized equipment. The team is equipped to perform complex heavy-lift transport and recovery missions under all conditions, ensuring reliable support for critical operations.

During the demonstration in late September the MOTRACS section showed two tractors and trailers loaded with a T80 and T55 which were on their way to be delivered to support training.

The MOTRACS Team showed leadership more capabilities by demonstrating the complete setup of a standard downrange gun position from the ground up. Utilizing the crane, they installed blast shields, bomb-proof structures, and an office container. The team also introduced modified trailers and flat racks specifically engineered to transport multiple generators simultaneously, highlighting their efficiency and technical innovation.

"If a faraway observation point needs three generators, then that's a long trip. That's three trips to get out there. That takes a long time. Now, we can just load it on one truck and just take one trip and drop it off," explained Toney Brooks.

Brooks says the new section will provide efficiency to setting up gun positions and observations points and "reduce the logistic footprint at remote site locations."



Yuma Test Center's (YTC) newest section, the Mobile Operations, Transport, Recovery, and Crane Support provided a demonstration for Yuma Proving Ground and YTC leadership. (Photo by Arturo Anaya)

The Motorpool, operated by the Mobile Operations, Transport, Recovery, and Crane Support, represents the consolidation of the Mobile Crane Section, TRAX, and Phoenix Management Inc. It is responsible for executing heavy-duty operations, including the transport and delivery of generators, conex boxes, blast shields, bomb-proof structures, weapon systems, and other specialized equipment. (Photos provided by Arturo Anaya and Jaysen Lockett)

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Seasonal Fun

Winter visitors welcomed back with BBQ



YPG's MWR team hosted a welcome back BBQ for winter travel camp residents. New this year was the location of the event inside the Palm Garden. Col. John Nelson and Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus along with their spouses Gina and Tiffany, attended and enjoyed getting to know the residents. Sponsors of the event lined up along the perimeter to provide information about their services. (Photos courtesy of MWR)

Pumpkin Carving fun



On Oct. 3, the YPG Child Development Center hosted a pumpkin carving event for the littles and their parents. Everyone was all smiles while they designed and carved their pumpkin and played games. (Photos courtesy of Child and Youth Services)



Character parade brings out creative costumes



One of YPG's most fun events took place Oct. 30. The Annual Character brought out all types of costumes, from superheroes to princesses, they could all be seen making their way from the Child Development Center, past Price Elementary School, down past the Commissary and back to the CDC. Children and parents from both the CDC and elementary school participated. (Photos courtesy Child and Youth Services)



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