

# The Outpost

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

VOLUME 75 NO. 3 FEBRUARY 02, 2026

## Training aid undergoes rigorous testing at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

American Soldiers can be confident in their ammunition because reliability has been meticulously proven at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG).

YPG conducts rigorous lot acceptance tests (LATs) for more than live ammunition, too.

Recently, YPG conducted a comprehensive LAT of the XM 343 Training Aids, Devices, Simulators, and Simulations (TADDS), a training aid for the XM 343 Standoff Activated Volcano Obstacle (SAVO). The XM 343 is a rapidly hand-emplaced, one-man portable bottom attack weapon.

YPG has long tested the XM 343 to ensure it works as it should



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground conducts rigorous lot acceptance tests (LATs) for more than live ammunition. Recently, the post conducted a comprehensive LAT of the XM343 Training Aids, Devices, Simulators, and Simulations, a training aid for the XM 343 Standoff Activated Volcano Obstacle (Photo by Mark Schauer)

before Soldiers' lives depend on it. With its wide-open spaces far from any populated areas, decades of institutional knowledge, and a full complement of realistic threat target vehicles at hand, YPG's Smart Weapons Test Range is highly instrumented and designed specifically for this type of testing. Built in the mid-1990s, the site is intricately networked with fiber optic cable and hard power lines, without which noisy generators could interfere with the testing.

The same personnel who conduct these important evaluations devote the same rigor to ensuring the device that trains Soldiers on the XM 343's proper use can have a

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# YPG welcomes new Child and Youth Services Program Chief with wealth of experience

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Child and Youth Services welcomes Evelyn Eggs-Alston as the Chief of the Child and Youth Services (CYS) Program.

Eggs-Alston joined YPG in 2025. She was most recently at Fort Bragg, N.C. for the last five years and comes with a wealth of experience during her stints at Fort Stewart, Ga., Fort Detrick, Md., and Fort Drum, N.Y.

Her experience encompasses working at child development centers (CDC), with the middle school and teen programs and sports programs. Her extensive experience helped Eggs-Alston jump straight into her role at YPG. She first served a 60-day detail in August of 2025 and applied when the position opened.

"It's just something I love to do, is being a coordinator" she said. "You



U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground's Child and Youth Services welcomed Evelyn Eggs-Alston as the Chief of the Child and Youth Services (CYS) Program in late 2025. (U.S. Army photo)

place.

She also has oversight of the CDC, School Aged Care and youth sports program.

"I love keeping busy so it's the perfect job for me," said Eggs-Alston.

It's truly a family affair for Eggs-Alston. Both of her children have followed in her footsteps, building their careers within CYS at Fort Sill, Okla., and Fort Bragg. Her daughter now serves as a CDC Assistant Director at Fort Sill, while her son works as an Assistant Director in Youth Sports at Fort Bragg.

For this family, the commitment to highquality programming runs deep. As former military dependents, they once sat in the very seats of the children they now support. That lived experience gives them a unique understanding of the needs, challenges, and perspectives of the youth they serve every day.

If you are interested in enrolling your children in the YPG CYS program visit buildings 1001 or 1102 to speak with a parent central representative. For childcare, visit MilitaryChildCare.com to start the process.

## The Outpost

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**Public Affairs Officer:** Mark Schauer  
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**Arctic Regions Test Center Photographer:** Sebastian Saarloos



are leading a program. You have the direction in which the program needs to go."

As the Chief of the CYS, Eggs-Alston wears several hats working as the school liaison keeping the communication lines open with the schools where military connected children attend.

"We make sure that all our military children are provided all the information and resources, be it scholarships, be it transitions or deployments. We make sure during those deployments our military children are well taken care of."

She's the outreach service director who oversees Parent Central Services where the enrollment and registration process for CYS takes

Scan the QR code to listen to episode 84 of Outpost Outspoken featuring Evelyn Eggs-Alston.



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U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson (left) gives a capabilities briefing to members of the Arizona Space Commission after a public meeting of the Arizona Space Commission held at YPG on Jan. 14, 2026.



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Technical Director Ross Gwynn (right) discusses capabilities with members of the Arizona Space Commission during a tour following the public meeting. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

## U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground hosts Arizona Space Commission meeting

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has a long history of supporting multiple aspects of outer space utilization and exploration.

From hosting tests for NASA since the inception of the space program to serving as the developmental testing site of the Global Positioning Satellite system in the 1970s and 1980s, YPG has deep institutional knowledge.

Local and state officials in Arizona are likewise enthusiastic about fostering space industry in the state. After being inactive for more than a decade, the Arizona Space Commission was relaunched last February. Commission member Douglas Nicholls, City of Yuma Mayor, offered to host one of its regular public meetings in Yuma and asked YPG to serve as venue. The post did so on Jan. 14.

“I believe that as we grow our aerospace industry in Arizona, the assets here at YPG that aren’t provided anywhere else in the state—and in few other states in the country-- would be beneficial to our industry partners,” said Nicholls.

“The ability to do private industry work in this amazing test facility the Army has developed in Yuma is unique, and the staff has a great deal of institutional knowledge.”

A highlight of the meeting was a presentation about the proposed Yuma Spaceport by City of Yuma Chief Information Officer Isaiah Kirk. A public-private partnership that plans to launch 12-24 satellite payloads of up to 1,300 pounds per year over the Sea of Cortez, officials hope to host the first launch before the close of the decade. The facility would be the first of its kind in Arizona and is expected to bring an additional aerospace industry cluster to support it, and commission members were interested in learning about YPG’s ability to support testing for private industry customers.

“There are a lot of industry partners that don’t have the suite of instrumentation to collect test data that we have, and we are able to facilitate testing for them,” said Col. John Nelson, YPG Commander. “I do see some opportunities where

industry may want to leverage a set of instrumentation and operators for use at that facility. We definitely feel that some of the capabilities we have are complimentary to what they are trying to do there.”

Following the meeting, commission members received capabilities briefings from Nelson and Lt. Col. John Leone, Operations Manager for Marine Corps Air Station Yuma. The group then met with multiple subject matter experts from YPG’s aviation

systems, electronic warfare, and instrumentation branches.

“I knew there was incredible stuff here, but there is something so impressive about actually being here and learning about it,” said Marisa Walker, Executive Vice President of Infrastructure for the Arizona Commerce Authority. “We’re always interested in figuring out ways for those companies we are working with who have unique testing capability requirements to be able to leverage assets like this.”

# Senate Armed Services Subcommittee Chair visits U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer of North Dakota visited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) on Jan. 21.

Cramer, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Airland, came for an in-depth look at the post's extensive mission testing counter-small unmanned aerial system (C-sUAS) capabilities.

"The committee and certainly the Department of War has taken base security especially to heart and has tried to incentivize as much private sector innovation as possible," he said. "When I learned that Yuma

Proving Ground was the tip of the spear on a lot of that testing, that is what prompted me to come here."

Cramer received a briefing from YPG Commander Col. John Nelson, Technical Director Ross Gwynn, and other post senior leaders, then toured an instrumentation facility and one of the post's airfields that specialize in UAS testing.

"What I have learned is very encouraging to me," Cramer said. "Our Army facilitates real innovation at the speed of our adversaries, and we're quite advanced at it."

He also praised the dozens of YPG personnel he interacted with during his visit.

"There are a whole bunch of smart people—engineers, technicians, scientists—patriots all, and it is quite refreshing," he said. "That's what makes this place special: the demand comes from the military, but the innovation comes from the patriotic engineer that has dedicated their life to the warfighter. I thought the culture here was great."

## Staff Delegation learns about YPG's needs



Staffers from the offices of multiple senators and representatives from Arizona's U.S. Congressional delegation visited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground on Jan. 20. Technical Director Ross Gwynn along with other YPG leaders briefed the delegates on YPG's priorities. Afterwards the delegates visited a gun position to see a firing test. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



From left, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks, Yuma Proving Ground Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus, and Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson brief U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Airland, at Yuma Proving Ground on Jan. 21, 2026. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

# YPG inspires students at Yuma Catholic High School



Yuma Catholic High School invited U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground to take part in its Hovering Angels event on Jan. 14. The event celebrates vertical flights to inspire the next generation of pilots. YPG's Aviation Systems & Electronic Test Division Counter- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) lead, Jon Green along with the public affairs team shared YPG's mission with the students. They enjoyed checking out the Puma UAS, C-UAS targets and a flight simulator. YPG is committed to exposing the next generation of leaders to careers in science, technology, engineering and math. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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Instrumentation Division Chief,  
Air Combat System Directorate

**Branch Chief of the Year**



**Jered Ford**  
Indirect Fire Modernization  
& Mines Branch Chief,  
Munitions & Weapons Division



# Yuma Proving Ground

**Employee of Quarter Mission, first quarter**



**Richard Gillmor**  
Information Technology Specialist,  
Accounting, Resource Management

**Employee of the Year**



**Jacob Lopez**  
Engineering Technician,  
Instrumentation Division

**Employee of the Quarter Mission, first quarter**



**Jonathan Bazua**  
Munitions & Weapons  
Test Officer

**Employee of the Quarter Mission Support, first quarter**



**Damian Dowd**  
Air Combat Systems  
Facility Manager

(Photos by Ana Henderson, Mark Schauer and Visual Information)

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# YPG and YTC Commanders recognize exceptional employees

On Jan. 13, Yuma Proving Ground Commander (YPG) Col. John Nelson recognized employees for their exceptional work and for their dedication to serving the United States government in uniform and as civilians.

Nelson praised the YPG employee of the first quarter for his work with YPG's digital transformation saying, "It's humbling and refreshing to see guys like Richard [Gillmor] that are finding the friction points that are

in the office, tedious things that our people were doing and automated those things and using his talents to make people's lives better in the office. I just want to say I appreciate it."

During the ceremony, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks recognized the Employees of the Year of fiscal year 2025. He told the recipients, "We want to recognize your talents and leadership in the organization."



## Years of Service

### 45 years



**Mike Demcko**

### 40 years



**Pat Koepp**

### 15 years



**Michael Barron**

### 5 years



**Verne Edward**

### Army Commendation Medal



**Staff Sgt. Efrain Laureano**

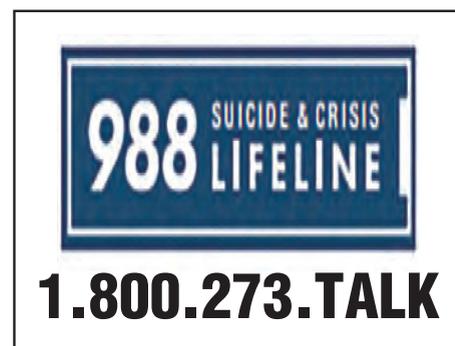
Awarded an Army Commendation Medal, where the citation noted his "tireless work ethic and meticulous attention to detail were instrumental to the successful completion of numerous static line, military freefall, and cargo parachute tests."

### Meritorious Civilian Service



**Durred Francher and Samantha Howerton**

Awarded on behalf of the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Commanding General Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon for passing the recent worldwide ammunition inspection. Nelson remarked, "We appreciate the effort and it's just a tribute to the excellence that's here at YPG." (Photos by Ana Henderson)



# The Dinner Detective gets sold out crowd



The Dinner Detective True Crime Myster Dinner Show came to the Cactus Café at Yuma Proving Ground. The event on the evening of Jan. 16 had a sold-out crowd who took part in an interactive comedic true crime show to try and solve the murder. In the end it was Jeri Padilla who solved the case. (Loaned photos)

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# TRAINING AID

FROM PAGE 1

long service life—in the case of the TADDS, as many as 200 uses.

“It’s similar in shape, size, and how you handle it,” said Esteban Hernandez, a test officer in YPG’s Munitions and Weapons Division. “It’s just a different color.”

Unlike the XM 343 itself, the training aid does not deploy its mock mines when activated, however.

“The trainer gives an LED light and an audio buzzer sound to simulate firing,” said Steve Patane, Joint Program Executive Office test engineer. “It doesn’t deploy

the dummy mines; they are just for visual reference and human factors training.”

Over two and a half months, testers put the TADDS through a variety of rigorous scenarios to ensure it can function even after punishing tactical conditions. From subjecting it to a long ride on a vibration table that simulates a jostling ride on the back of a tactical vehicle in field conditions to dropping it at different angles from a 1.5-meter height, the training aid is forced to prove its rugged mettle. One scenario involves submerging the apparatus into water for 30 minutes, letting it dry for a day, and then attempting to use it under normal conditions.

“If the lot passes, they are able to send the whole lot to the warfighter to train with them and learn how to use the tactical version,” said

Hernandez. “These can be used up to 200 times—set up, initiated, put back in their case and stored—for training purposes.”



## Halo Chapel Sunday Service Times

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# PORTABLE VEHICLE START SYSTEM DEMONSTRATED FOR TACTICAL PLATFORMS AT YUMA PROVING GROUND

YUMA PROVING GROUND, AZ – A lithium-based portable ground power system designed to initiate 24-volt tactical vehicles without external support is being evaluated for use in test operations, recovery scenarios, and depot sustainment environments on U.S. ranges. The StartStick Portable Power System enables single-operator jumpstarts through a handheld module that weighs under ten pounds and connects directly to the NATO slave receptacle.

During test and data collection events, tactical vehicles may be instrumented, staged for repeated evolutions, or parked for extended durations. Batteries can discharge, disconnect for instrumentation, or be removed for servicing. Traditionally, recovering a vehicle under these conditions requires a second asset and slave cable positioning, which introduces safety risk, test delays, and additional personnel requirements.



StartStick mitigates these recovery challenges by allowing vehicles to be restarted in place without a support vehicle, power cart, or exposed slave cable operation. The system can start 24-volt platforms with dead or disconnected batteries and delivers 1,250 amps through the NATO interface. Platforms supported include **HMMWV, JLTV, M-ATV, MRZR, FMTV, LMTV, and other 24-volt tactical vehicles up to 15.2 liters of displacement.**



For ranges that prioritize operational realism, throughput, and repeatability, eliminating the need to reposition a second vehicle reduces turnaround time between trials, preserves test lane continuity, and minimizes labor tied to vehicle recovery. The ability to perform single-operator restarts also decreases exposure during confined or instrumented scenarios where moving additional assets is not desired.

The StartStick system incorporates lithium-ion power, zero-spark operation, a digital state-of-charge display, overload protection, and an integrated battery management system. The unit recharges in approximately two hours, retains full charge for up to 18 months, and requires no maintenance. The rugged polymer housing and compact form factor support use in desert and depot environments and allow storage within tactical vehicles or test support packages. There are no HAZMAT restrictions for transport.



The system is **NSN-assigned and field-deployed worldwide**, with more than **50,000 units in service across U.S. and partner nation forces.** Kits are available to support various NATO receptacle configurations on ground platforms and test assets.

As Yuma Proving Ground continues to support testing across tactical wheeled platforms, electrification initiatives, and desert vehicle sustainment evaluations, portable ground power solutions such as StartStick may offer logistical and safety advantages during test cycles, range operations, and maintenance activities.

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**COCOPAH**  
CASINO & RESORT

South Highway 95 in Somerton | [CocopahResort.com](https://CocopahResort.com)

