

The Outpost

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

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U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground tests Next Generation Rocket Assisted Projectile

By Mark Schauer

For most of its history, artillery testing has been the core mission at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG).

As artillery technology evolved across previous decades, YPG was on the cutting-edge testing guided and semi-guided munitions capable of hitting within mere meters of a target kilometers away.

Today, the proving ground is testing prototypes of the Next Generation Rocket Assisted Projectile (NGRAP), which intends to dramatically increase the roughly 30 kilometers a currently fielded 155mm howitzer shell is capable of when fired at top zone with rocket assistance.



For most of its history, artillery testing has been the core mission at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground. Today, the proving ground is testing prototypes of the Next Generation Rocket Assisted Projectile, which intends to dramatically increase the roughly 30 kilometers a currently fielded 155mm howitzer shell is capable of when fired at top zone with rocket assistance. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

“It’s going to replace the legacy M549A1 rocket projectile that was developed in the 1970s,” said Steve Flores, YPG Long Range Precision Fire Integrator.

An artillery round needs to be reliable to be accurate, and adding a rocket to any projectile adds variability to its fired trajectory. The NGRAP also needs to be compatible with a larger cannon in the future.

“We are testing a new, one-piece joint with a base closure on the end,” said Jonathan Armijo, test officer. “It is a characterization test of the strength of the design, how the projectile holds up to the stresses of firing and how the rocket performs.”

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New Yuma Proving Ground Chaplain brings deep experience

By Mark Schauer

Maj. Byron Denman has experienced Army life as an enlisted man and an officer

Recently arrived at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) from Fort Polk, Louisiana, the new YPG chaplain, his wife, and their three younger children are adapting well to the new community.

“My family and I are excited to be here. This is a broadening experience for me and I will grow a lot, but this is also a good move for our family.”

An Army brat who was born in Germany, he graduated from high school in Oklahoma after Fort Sill was his father’s final duty station before retirement. He went to college in Florida and joined the Army in 2004.

“My father, my uncles, and both of my grandfathers served in the military,” he said. “I was raised not with an expectation of joining the military, but with the idea that there is a lot of honor there and that is how we provide the support for our country that does so much to support



Recently arrived at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground from Fort Polk, Louisiana, Chaplain (Maj.) Byron Denman, his wife, and their three younger children are adapting well to the new community. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

us.”

Denman’s original Military Occupational Specialty was cryptologic linguist specializing

in Arabic and his first 10 years in uniform were as an enlisted Soldier.

“I loved that job. I love languages anyway, but learning new languages is something that I’ve always enjoyed.”

He served multiple deployments in Iraq, and while assigned to an aviation battalion then-Spec. Denman came to YPG in the summer of 2006 for a multi-week training course on unmanned aerial support on YPG’s remote ranges.

“I had no idea that a chaplain position was here,” he recalled with a laugh.

His calling to serve as a minister dated back to a visit to a rural church in England during a semester studying there before he joined the Army.

“I immediately started consulting with some of the wise men from my faith background. It was pretty intimidating because it felt very clear to me.”

He tried to become a chaplain when he first enlisted in the Army, but at the time lacked the necessary

educational and experience requirements. Eight years into his Army career, his wife reminded him of his calling.

“I got pulled into this idea that I was still serving how I could and that maybe I would be a pastor later. I got that little nudge from my wife and it called back to mind where I was supposed to be.”

He was a chaplain in an engineering battalion at Fort Carson, then an armored brigade before his last duty station at Fort Polk’s Joint Readiness Training Center before coming to YPG.

“Those 10 years and seven days that I spent on the enlisted side informed how I relate to Soldiers. It gives me a perspective I wouldn’t have had if I had just come straight into the Army just to be a chaplain. I wouldn’t have grasped what it felt like to go from junior enlisted to NCO or felt some of that struggle of going through the Iraq campaigns and watching friends suffer.”

One of his first orders of business after arriving at YPG was to extensively tour the post’s test ranges.

“As much as I understand that some ministry can be done the exact same way no matter where you are, effective ministry needs to understand the audience where you are. My hope is to understand the YPG mission and make sure that I’m still covering all our tenant units. Gaining that understanding is the first step to getting to a balanced philosophy of ministry over the next few years.”

Denman encourages YPG personnel to attend services and look to the chapel as a place for personal and spiritual guidance, regardless of their denominational background.

“If we do it well, then everyone will feel supported even if they know where our differences lie. It’s okay to have different beliefs. We don’t have to come from the same community to find a way to join in harmony.”

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YPG Commander meets Quechan President and council



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson visited the Fort Yuma Reservation Feb. 25, joined by Technical Director Ross Gwynn, Chief of Staff Omar Silva, Garrison Manager Kenneth Musselwhite and other YPG personnel in visiting with Quechan President Jonathan Koteen, Vice President Virgil S. Smith, and other members of the tribal council. In addition to visits such as this, YPG and representatives from 14 different Arizona and California tribal nations engage in regular consultations about range use and the preservation of culturally significant sites at the proving ground. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

YPG hosts NATO Allied Committee Working Groups



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground hosted the NATO Allied Committee Working Groups in early March. During the two-week gathering the representatives for the Munitions Safety and Suitability for Service Working Group and the Mechanical and Climatic Action Team convened to revise and develop critical test standardization documents. They also received a capabilities tour of Yuma Proving Ground, visiting various locations around Yuma Test Center including the Metrology and Simulation Division, Ammunition Plant Facility, Air Delivery Branch, and a test site where they viewed the firing of the new Artillery Proof Gun Stand by DEVCOM Armament Center as pictured on March 4. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

YPG Installation Safety Office earns 15th Safety Excellence Streamer Award



The U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground Installation Safety Office has earned its fifteenth consecutive Safety Excellence Streamer Award. Director of Installation Safety Ron Van Why remarked after the achievement, "Thank you to everyone who works here for the entire installation because we are very safety contentious. We put that motto out and everybody has totally invested in everything that we do. This award represents all of us as an installation." Posing with the streamer and award memo are (left to right) Deputy Garrison Manager Dan Carter, YPG Commander Col. John Nelson, Van Why, Garrison Manager Kenneth Musselwhite and Command Sgt. Maj. Joshua Holthus on Feb. 25 (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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Munitions and Weapons test officer thrives on YPG excitement

By Mark Schauer

To many of us, a job involving blowing things up on a regular basis sounds like a dream or wishful thinking. Or sheer fantasy.

For U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Munitions and Weapons Test Officer Esteban Hernandez, however, it is his working life.

Yet working at the Army's premier test and evaluation facility was not something the Yuma native expected would happen.

"Growing up in Yuma, I never really heard of Yuma Proving Ground because my family doesn't have a military background. When I was like 10 years old we stopped to see the tanks on display outside the Visitor's Center when we were going to Martinez Lake, but I didn't really pay attention to it."

While working toward his Systems Engineering degree at the University of Arizona's Yuma extension site, dinner with a family friend who



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) conducts rigorous lot acceptance tests (LATs) for more than live ammunition. Recently, YPG Munitions and Weapons Division test officer Esteban Hernandez (center) 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)

worked at the proving ground piqued his interest.

"When I was going to college, I knew I wanted to be an engineer but I didn't know what engineering career I wanted to pursue. A friend

introduced me to YPG and explained what he did for the Combat Automotive Division and that was interesting to me."

He started working at YPG in 2020.

YPG employee takes home Yuma's Best for home-based business



By day Shawn Devoe works at Yuma Proving Ground as a Range Control Lead, at home he and his wife Crystal run Devoe Range Delicacies. For the second year in a row Yuma Sun readers voted their business as "Yuma's Best Home-Based Breads & Pastries" and Yuma's Favorite (second place) for their "Home-Based Desserts," making their Sourdough Breads and more. Congratulations! (Photos courtesy of Shawn Devoe)

"A year before I graduated, I applied for an internship they offered at YPG. I started in May after we finished our spring classes and stayed here for a year until I graduated."

As the post coped with the COVID pandemic, it was also hard at work preparing for Project Convergence 2020, the capstone exercise in a campaign of learning that had the attention of the most senior leaders in the Army. The breadth of equipment and knowledge demonstrated was astonishing and unprecedented, from autonomous vehicles to air launched effects, and took the combined efforts of hundreds of personnel over the course of eight months of preparation. Leaders with a historical mindset likened the significance of Project Convergence with the Louisiana Maneuvers, which prepared American Soldiers of the early 1940s for eventual participation in World War II.

The following year's iteration of Project Convergence was even bigger, the largest capabilities demonstration in the Army of the preceding 15 years. By that time, Hernandez had graduated from college and supported the leader-follower autonomous vehicle program during the demonstration. His ordinary duties, though, were as a test officer in the Mines-Countermines branch of the Munitions and Weapons Division, testing systems like the Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC), a series of block C-4 explosive wrapped around a 350 foot-long nylon rope encased in a nylon sleeve deployed by a rocket to clear safe passage paths through minefields.

Hernandez enjoys the job, and plans to stay at YPG for the foreseeable future.

"YPG is very interesting: there is something new every day. What other job in Yuma lets you see explosions on your day-to-day job?"

Soldier and employees recognized for their achievements and contributions

Army Achievement Medal



U.S. Army Yuma Test Center Airborne Test Force Staff Sgt Sean McCarron earned the Meritorious Achievement Medal for completing the Advance Leaders Course. His outstanding performance, dedication and leadership were instrumental to this success throughout this course.

Recognition for ARMS inspection



Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander, Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks awarded Scott Myers and Steve Mullins a Civilian Service Achievement Medal for their work on the ARMS Inspection. Hicks presented Daniel McDaniel, Frank Timke, Gordon Temple, and Jorge Vanegas a Certificate of Achievement and YTC Coin for their work on the inspection.

Recognition for ammunition inspection



Jasen Alexander and Jacob Moore received Civilian Service Commendation Medals from Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson. Robert Sinnett received a Civilian Service Achievement Medal from Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks.

Years of Service



(Left to right) LeRoy Reed 40 years, Scott Myers 35 years, Matthew Pollard 25years, and Lori Ittner and James McBride 15 years. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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Making it rain: new artificial rain units at YTC

By Ana Henderson

Rain in Arizona is not something that comes often.

So, when a test plan calls for rain, Yuma Test Center (YTC) needs to be able to make it happen artificially. The addition of two new rain machines makes this capability as easy as turning on a faucet.

The Metrology and Simulation Division at YTC which performs environmental simulation testing recently built two rain units. One is a stationary indoor system, the Enclosed Rain Array System (ERAS). The other is a mobile outdoor system, the Modular Rain Array System (MRAS).

Instead of clouds, Dillon Mann and Zachary Alvarez used hoses, sprinklers and aluminum to make it rain.

YTC secured a grant from

the Capability Program Executive Simulation, Training and Instrumentation office to modernize the ERAS indoor system. That's where Mann, an engineer who performs design and analysis work for small to large components, and Alvarez, a climatic engineer, both with the Metrology and Simulation Division, got involved.

From PowerPoint concept to acquisition the process took roughly a year and a half. Then the building phase began.

Mann and Alvarez used the water testing requirements outlined in military standards to guide their design process.

"Generally, it requires that you be able to output a consistent pressure of 40psi and depending on the test, sustained rainfall rate at different

levels. Aside from that the main concern is adequate coverage of the item, because at least for one of the tests you are trying to test the water tightness of the item," explained Alvarez, adding, "Fun fact, both procedure one and two have a limitation on the droplet size for the ideal rain."

That meant they had to first find the nozzles to meet the droplet size in the military standard and then design around it.

"Nozzles were the main requirement of how we designed whole system" explained Mann. "It was really the starting point because we were designing the systems to a certain nozzle, because that would provide us with a certain spray pattern in order to meet the requirement."

Once they found the correct

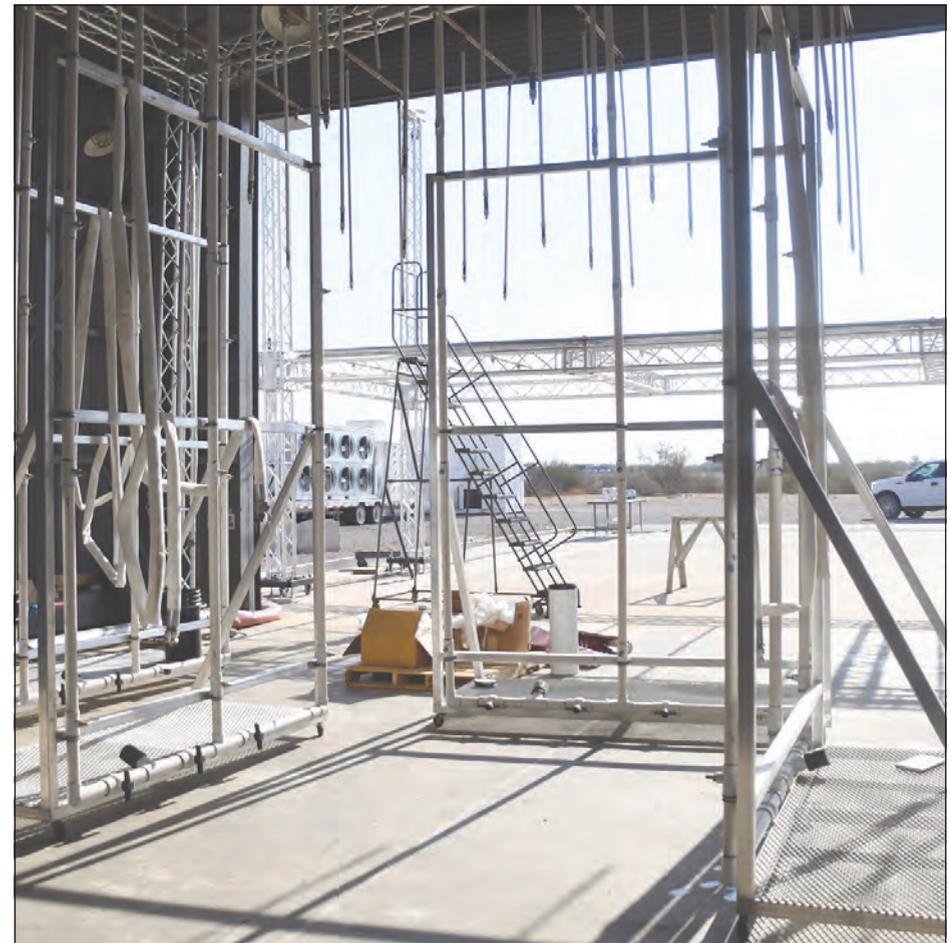
nozzle the next challenge was finding a product that could hold the immense number of nozzles and hoses to meet the specified spray patterns.

Michael Schwitzing and Alvarez provided Mann with a layout of the space, requirements and a two-dimensional sketch. Mann used SolidWorks, a computer aided design software, to create a three-dimensional model.

"I mapped out everything on the software for both the ERAS and MRAS going from the connection from the pumps all the way to the nozzles."

From there they needed to consider the weight of the apparatus.

"We are supporting so much weight overhead that we needed to have a structure to support the system without attaching to the



The Metrology and Simulation Division at Yuma Test Center which performs environmental simulation testing recently built two rain units. The stationary indoor system, the Enclosed Rain Array System (ERAS) is pictured. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



The Metrology and Simulation Division at Yuma Test Center which performs environmental simulation testing recently built two rain units. The mobile outdoor system, the Modular Rain Array System (MRAS) is pictured.

existing building,” said Mann.

They found aluminum trusses seen at concerts to hold lights and speakers. Once the simulations verified the design was safe, the assembly began.

Mann’s skills as an engineer and designer plus Alvarez’s knowledge and attention to detail all played a role in the success of the ERAS and

MRAS rain systems.

YTC can now accurately test items for the Warfighter for water resistance and tightness, either indoors or on location.

From blowing rain, overhead, or torrential rain, “if you want to determine if your test item is waterproof, this test will definitely tell you,” remarked Alvarez.



Dillon Mann and Zachary Alvarez used hoses, sprinklers and aluminum to make artificial rain at Yuma Test Center. The Military Standard outlined the specification for the droplet size, so Alvarez shows how he measured the droplet size using plexiglass.



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PROJECTILE

FROM PAGE 1

Though capable of longer ranges, the new projectile looks similar to currently-fielded 155 mm rounds. The most significant difference is in the round's larger rocket, which testers want to ensure functions properly even when fired under extreme conditions.

"We have standard charges we upweight with extra propellant to try to reach the maximum permissible pressure for these cannons to put these bullets through the highest amount of stress that they would see in this caliber tube," said Armijo. "It is a stress test."

Accurately measuring this data on rounds that travel about one mile per second requires the assistance of some of the world's most sophisticated high-speed cameras and triggering equipment. YPG's scientific photographers

have cameras capable of shooting 100,000 frames per second, though for this particular test they use only a small fraction of this impressive capability. As each round is in flight, workers back at the howitzer take readings from pressure gauges inside the gun barrel as radars and Kineto Tracking Mount operators follow its flight to target.

Methodical test fires of the new round are vitally important and carefully examining the fired rounds afterward even more so.

"We will recover the rounds to measure post gun launch dimensions," said Armijo.

Guided munitions are designed for pinpoint accuracy yet safely testing them requires an enormous amount of range space. Testers appreciate that YPG has plenty of room for this, along with vast institutional knowledge and a favorable climate.

"There's year-round good weather here," said William Gardner, Next Generation Rocket Assisted



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Projectile test lead. "We consider it a top-notch facility that has very good applicability toward extended range tests."

YPG is essential to Army

transformation efforts because natural environments testing cannot be duplicated in a laboratory, conditioning chamber, or computer simulation.



An artillery round needs to be reliable to be accurate, and adding a rocket to any projectile adds variability to its fired trajectory. The Next Generation Rocket Assisted Projectile also needs to be compatible with a larger cannon in the future.



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An Early Exploration of Career Paths for Junior High Students

By **Grecia Guillen**

In late February, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) participated in a career path fair for 7th and 8th grade students at Southwest Junior High School in San Luis, Ariz.

It was exciting to see junior high students exploring a variety of career paths that different employers offer, especially for those who are unsure how to build a career and the experiences and benefits that come with it.

For these students, an ideal career path involves early exploration through hands-on experiences such as internships, part-time jobs, and job shadowing to build essential skills.

During the fair, many of the 7th and 8th graders visited the YPG display and expressed intrigue upon seeing instruments used for various testing machines related to metrology and simulation vibration testing, as well as videos of the processes. Many students were not aware of YPG's facilities and the range of career opportunities available there. Initial discussions prompted students to think about safety guidelines, necessary skill sets or degrees, and whether they needed to join the military to work there. Little did they know that YPG prioritizes safety by thoroughly testing their equipment and offers opportunities such as paid internships and volunteer positions across different fields to help individuals

build their career paths.

Students were surprised to learn that they could still join YPG even if they were undergraduates or did not possess a college degree, as long as they had relevant skills. For example, proficiency in mechanics, logistics, math, or administrative tasks can open doors at YPG. However, if students are looking for higher pay, their grades and degrees may matter more.

As Patricia Conley, YPG Program Analyst, stated, "You don't necessarily need a degree to build a career path. You can start working in different fields that align with your skill set and still earn a good salary with benefits."

YPG is an excellent starting point for exploring future career paths. As discussed at the career fair in San Luis, students can dive into their vocational and professional journeys by applying for YPG's internship and volunteer programs. These programs include on-site work opportunities, per diem, and housing, with roles in engineering, technology, and science. In junior high, you may feel excited about potential career options. Even if you're not ready to choose a specific path, early exploration and awareness through real-world experiences like part-time jobs, internships, and job shadowing can help you discover what you enjoy and what you might not like about various work environments.



Feb. 26, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) participated in a career path fair for 7th and 8th grade students at Southwest Junior High School in San Luis, Ariz. During the fair, many of the 7th and 8th graders visited the YPG display and expressed intrigue upon seeing instruments used for various tests. (Photo by Grecia Guillen)

Dueling pianos gets the crowd dancing and singing



A truly fun night of dueling pianos took place at Cactus Café on Feb. 27, where people gathered to enjoy creative musical-themed cocktails, dance to throwback songs like "YMCA," "Cupid Shuffle," and some Sir Mix-a-Lot, and sing along to a three-hour all-request show performed by How2Go musicians Jonny and Steve. How2Go managed to get the entire crowd to sing "God Bless the USA" with their camera flashes held high. (Photos by Dani Compton)

YPG supports the Arizona Traveling Museum



The United States turns 250 this year and to commemorate the milestone the 'Road to 250' Arizona Traveling Museum exhibit visited the Colorado River State Historic Park on Feb. 24. At the event U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Public Affairs Office shared about the post's history of developmental testing for the Army with more than 1,500 eventgoers. (Photos by Grecia Guillén)

Visit with veterans

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Public (YPG) Affairs Officer Mark Schauer visited with 75 members of Yuma's Country Roads Veterans Group on March 5. The group, composed of veterans from all branches of the American military, learned about both YPG's proud history and its current developmental test mission at the forefront of Army transformation. (Photo by Grecia Guillén)

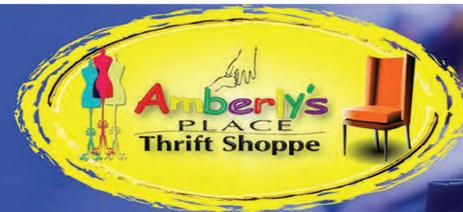


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