

# THE OUTPOST

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## Lt. Col. James DeBoer takes command of test center

El Paso, Texas, native receives a warm, warm, welcome to YPG



PHOTOS BY MARK SCHAUER



Col. Reed Young (left), YPG commander, passes the flag to Lt. Col. James DeBoer as he accepts command of the Yuma Test Center at a change of command ceremony held Thursday, June 5. Looking on are Lt. Col. Chad Harris (outgoing commander) and Master Sgt. Brian Davis (Acting Command Sgt. Maj.). Military and civilian co-workers, family and friends attended the ceremony in front of the Heritage Center museum as Harris relinquished command to DeBoer. Harris, who had been at YPG since 2011, declared his utmost and deepest appreciation for the Soldiers and civilians of the proving ground and assured them the test center will continue to thrive far into the future. "Customers will continue to come to YPG because YPG provides excellent test capabilities: there are not many places in the world that have the expertise, land and airspace to do the kind of testing we do," said Harris, who departs for Austin, Texas to perform a one-year acquisition fellowship as part of the Army War College. Incoming commander DeBoer, a native of El Paso, Texas, said that he is honored to be part of this team. "You could not ask for a better group of Soldiers and civilians," he said. "I'm looking forward to it." Above: Lt. Col. DeBoer and his wife, Kathryn (to husband's left), meet and greet members of the workforce at a reception held at the Heritage Center museum.

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# Col. Young concludes three years at YPG

By Chuck Wullenjohn

The last three years have been filled with challenges, what with combat operations in Southwest Asia winding down, budget declines, mission adjustments, hiring freezes, sequestration, and last year's partial government shutdown. U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground was fortunate to have a knowledgeable and resourceful commanding officer during these years to exercise the judgment necessary during unpredictable times.

Col. Reed Young is handing over the reins of command to Col. Randy Murray in a change of command ceremony to take place the morning of June 19th. Having served 28 years, his active Army service began in 1986.

During a recent wide-ranging interview, Young said he believes YPG will continue to be a center of testing excellence in future years. "As long as people in the workforce embrace the business mentality and continue to offer great service at an excellent cost, customers will come," he said. "Individual test and training missions may change but the proving ground will continue to thrive."

"YPG is healthy today because the organization and infrastructure is flexible and dynamic – I see it each day," said Young. "Everybody, from top to bottom, 'heaves to' to make things happen."

One of the highlights he will take with him is



PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

**Col. Reed Young is handing over the reins of command to Col. Randy Murray in a change of command ceremony to take place the morning of June 19th.**

the proactive relationship maintained between the Yuma community and YPG. "I've served at numerous military posts during my career and I have seen no relationship better than the one here," he said. Young says city, county and state officials have been remarkably supportive of the military in general and the YPG test mission in particular.

Though he did not serve at YPG during all the years of America's combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, he says the work performed at YPG that supported the war effort was "magnificent," for it resulted in military weapon systems and munitions that reliably functioned on the battlefield because the faults

were found early at YPG.

"The YPG workforce played a direct role in the war effort and one can't help but be proud of its accomplishments."

Over the course of the over ten year Southwest Asia conflict, millions of Americans were sent into theater at one time or another. These included military personnel, government civilians and contractors. Every square inch of those theaters was under some kind of threat during these years from active combat, sudden mortar or rocket strikes, or the threat of improvised explosive devices.

"Everyone benefited in some form or fashion from what took place at YPG,"

said Young, "and some very directly." An untold number, perhaps thousands, of lives were saved and injuries prevented thanks to YPG testing.

Throughout the last three years, he was a firm believer in the workforce and the ability of leaders throughout the chain to make effective, appropriate decisions. One of the pieces of advice he offers incoming commander Col. Murray is to provide test officers and other leaders with the flexibility to execute their jobs.

"Cut them loose and let them shine, for they always behave magnificently," said Young with a smile.

As Young's military career comes to an end, he is reflecting on his experiences and accomplishments. He believes his time at YPG was the pinnacle of his career, though he feels the

Army offers a tremendous amount of responsibility and authority to officers from day one. "I entered at the rank of 2nd lieutenant as a platoon leader, and each consecutive assignment added another level of responsibility, plus more people," he said.

He looks back on the years fondly, particularly his time in Yuma. "I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Yuma community," he said. "The support was remarkable and the relationship was one I will never forget. I've enjoyed my time and hope to continue my friendships."

Young, who has a doctorate degree in mechanical engineering, is retiring from the Army and looks forward to a second career in that field. In the meantime, he plans to spend time with family and travel with his wife, Norma.

## THE OUTPOST

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**Jonna Pittman was presented with a certificate of achievement for being selected YPG's top civilian. Pittman, who has been at YPG for seven years, served for 30 years in the Army and retired at the rank of sergeant major.**

(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

# Civilian excellence highlighted

By Yolie Canales

Jonna Pittman, equipment specialist for the Optics Division, was selected as YPG's civilian employee of the quarter for the second quarter of 2014. While serving as an equipment specialist for YPG's Geodetics Branch, Pittman achieved professional excellence by taking charge and maintaining not only her position, but due to unforeseen vacancies, the duties of two other equipment specialists. Yet, she still found time to provide expert logistics advice to several outside divisions.

Pittman is responsible for product research and procurement of optical instrumentation systems, assists 26 hand receipt holders in managing

hand receipts, trains others in asset tracking measures, and documents property and asset tracking procedures for the Optics Division.

Pittman, who has been at YPG for seven years, served for 30 years in the Army and retired at the rank of sergeant major.

"I am honored to be selected, but to use a well-worn but accurate cliché, I didn't achieve this success on my own," she said at a recent ceremony.

Her team consists of herself and two contractors, Ursula House and Karen Mort, who work hard and take a great deal of pride in what they do. "I'm simply using the skills that I learned from 30 years of service to make a positive impact for the Optics Division," she concluded modestly.

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# Military spouse brings family issues to the forefront

By Yolie Canales

Early this year, Stacey Faris, family readiness group leader for the Military Freefall School, was named 2014 Yuma Proving Ground Spouse of the Year (SOY) by Military Spouse Magazine. A luncheon was held at YPG late last month in observance of Military Appreciation Spouse Day and honor Faris for this title.

More than a million military spouses support and maintain the home front while service members defend the nation. Military Spouse Magazine founded the Military Spouse of the Year (MSOY) award in 2008 to honor military spouses of all ranks and from all branches of service.

The MSOY award is a

merit-based program that recognizes the important contributions and unwavering commitment of spouses to the military community. Nominations are solicited in the late fall of each year, with the competition open to all active duty military spouses. Three phases of voting follow, culminating in the announcement of the MSOY at an award luncheon in our nation's capital that attracts Congressional members, senior military and Department of Defense leadership.

Faris attended the 2014 Military Spouse of the Year luncheon in Washington, D.C., hosted by Deani Dempsey, wife of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen.

Martin Dempsey. "This was a great opportunity because it put me face-to-face with many of those who are deciding our fate as service members and families," said Faris. "The entire first afternoon was dedicated to meeting with the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission to share our thoughts, ideas and concerns. This, in itself, was an honor."

"Being selected as YPG's spouse of the year allows me to connect with military spouses across the nation and abroad regarding issues facing our military and their families," said Faris. "These connections are invaluable in to helping me better serve



(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

**Stacy Faris was honored at a recent luncheon at the Cactus Café for being selected the 2014 Spouse of the Year by the Military Spouse Magazine.**

the military families stationed at YPG."

As the YPG SOY, her mission is two-fold. First, she will continue to challenge others to be involved in the community. "If something needs to get done, we can't wait for others to do it," remarked Faris. "Simply put, be a part of the process and a part of the solution."

She intends to work with organizations on YPG to support financial readiness within the ranks. This is a topic she is passionate about.

Faris has been an active duty Army wife for almost eight years. Combine that with being

a mom of two, ages 5 and two and half, she wears multiple hats on a daily basis. Sometimes the days are so crazy that, she can't keep up, but the truth of the matter is, she wouldn't have it any other way. "Boredom isn't an option for me," said Faris.

Coming from a military family that moved quite a bit in her young years, the military lifestyle is a good fit. "I love moving to new places, meeting new people and the new adventures that come with it," said Faris. "No matter where we are living, I can make

it our home. If being in the desert for four years already, and actually enjoying it, doesn't make this true, nothing does!"

A look at Faris's daily calendar explains why she is proud of her title. From being a family readiness group leader; to a volunteer soccer, football and t-ball coach; home school teacher; story-time coordinator, vocalist at church; chapel volunteer; chauffeur for various occasions, right down to financial peace coordinator and intramural volleyball and tennis player speaks for itself.

According to peers, you never see Faris waiting around for others to fill her schedule. In addition to all the above, she still finds time to take a Zumba class weekly, help families and friends with budgets and financial questions, and go on camping trips with her family.

As Yuma Proving Ground's SOY, Faris intends to be a voice to bring military issues to the forefront. "When our benefits are under attack, I would like to see current service members and their families given the opportunity to speak on their own behalf. Politicians and lobbyists don't exactly win the hearts of millions, but those doing the actual job and living the life are exceptionally capable," she said. "We need to rally our troops from within, and fight for our own."

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# Caring for history

## Major archaeology sites protected at proving ground

By Mark Schauer

As a military installation, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground has a proud history dating back to the 1940s.

Part of Gen. George S. Patton's Desert Training Center/California-Arizona Maneuver Area during World War II, 20 divisions of men trained here for combat, and ten of these liberated Nazi concentration camps in Europe.

From the 1950s forward, the proving ground has tested virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal for the most impressive military in world history. Technologies like the global positioning satellite (GPS) system were pioneered here, and today cutting edge commodities like unmanned aerial systems are put through their paces prior to being fielded to troops.

But the installation larger than the state of Rhode Island is also home to history that is far more ancient. A crossroads for native people for at least seven thousand years, there are hundreds of culturally significant sites within the modern boundaries of YPG. The stewardship of these irreplaceable sites is a high YPG priority, with the proving ground performing painstaking ground surveys of between 12,000 and 15,000 acres annually.

Some of the sites are isolated: vestigial remnants of ancient trails with the occasional arrowhead or potshard strewn on the ground. Others are awe inducing: White Tanks is a canyon studded with

natural rock cisterns that retain rainwater year-round. Some crevices within this undulating volcanic rock have impressive stone formations rising from the center of the ponds.

"It's important spiritually to Native American tribes of this area," said Dr. Meg McDonald, YPG archaeologist. "It's also very important in an archaeological sense because there's a large concentration of camp sites, trails, and petroglyphs."

In fact, a survey done of the vicinity in the early 1990s found more than 46 archaeological sites in the area, one of which includes hundreds petroglyphs.

"It was an important site because it is a water source," said McDonald. "It is also one of several obsidian sources in Arizona, which was used for smaller arrow points."

The water itself may not be palatable by modern civilization's standards: it is still and brackish, sporting a thin, but noticeable film of algae across the top. Bees hover near the water, their low drone one of the most audible sounds in the silent canyon. But to a parched desert traveler of hunter-gatherer times the water was life-saving. Across the millennia, passers-through decorated the canyon walls with hundreds of intricate petroglyphs that remain to this day, a faded but stirring testimony to the importance of this natural wonder to unknown numbers of travelers.

"This is one of the most significant archaeological sites in Arizona," said Andy Laurenzi, southwest field representative of Archaeology



**This awe-inducing canyon (above) is studded with natural rock cisterns that retain rainwater year-round, a life-saving feature to parched desert travelers of hunter-gatherer times.**

Southwest, a non-profit organization dedicated to exploring and protecting the places of the past throughout the American Southwest. "You have this relatively undisturbed landscape with quite a concentration of petroglyphs and indications of human occupation for thousands of years. You find similar places along major river systems, but not very often in arid parts. The added significance of the area is its association with Malcolm Rogers, one of the pioneering archaeologists in the Southwest. Remnants of his camps in the White

Tanks are present today."

Along the top of the canyon are small caves, some of which have ancient pot shards and other artifacts, all suggesting human habitation.

"People were living here," said Laurenzi. "Maybe, not year-round, but certainly for sizable periods of time. If you're going to go to the trouble of carrying in pottery, it suggests you have plans to stay awhile."

Despite the fact that trespassing on military land is both unsafe and a violation of federal law, paths to

White Tanks are exceptionally rugged even for the best four-wheel drive vehicles. The area is surrounded by signs and gates, but unscrupulous people still occasionally slip in to White Tanks and other cultural sites intending to loot or vandalize. Though site surveys over the past two decades show the site is relatively unchanged, YPG personnel want to be proactive in preserving the site for generations to come. In addition to upgrading gates, the likeliest long-term

(PHOTOS BY MARK SCHAUER)

solution is a site stewardship program comprised of YPG employees willing to volunteer their weekend time for periodic site inspections.

"Part of our job is advocating for the preservation of cultural resources," said Laurenzi. "The military has done a great job of stewardship here by recognizing the importance of White Tanks and others like it. The designation of White Tanks Management area by YPG helps minimize intrusions, and that's good news."



**Trespassing on military land is both unsafe and a violation of federal law, and paths to White Tanks are exceptionally rugged even for the best four-wheel drive vehicles. The area is surrounded by signs and gates, but unscrupulous people still occasionally slip in intending to loot or vandalize. YPG officials plan to implement a site stewardship program comprised of YPG employees willing to volunteer their weekend time for periodic site inspections. Coming in various shapes, sizes, and depths, (at left and below) some of the natural water tanks within this undulating volcanic rock have impressive stone formations rising from the center of the ponds.**





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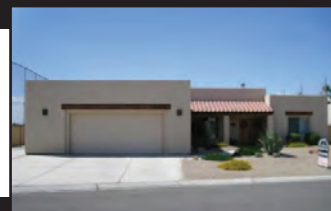
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# Don't do it! Never leave kids in car alone

Submitted by Paul J. Kilanski  
Family Advocacy Program Specialist

You're just dashing into a store to grab some milk, dropping a letter off at someone's house, returning a video rental, or grabbing the dry cleaning. There's no harm in leaving your child in the car for just a minute...right? Wrong! For various reasons, hundreds of kids each year are involved in potentially fatally

accidents when left unattended in a vehicle.

Whether it's from gear-shifted crashes, sweltering temperatures, locking parents out of a car, trunk entrapments, or playing with windows and getting limbs (or necks even) caught, horrific accidents can and do happen in a blink of an eye. And, in some states, it can be considered a misdemeanor offense of leaving a child in the car alone; the

offense can become a felony if there are resulting injuries.

It's easy to understand why parents feel it is okay to leave a child alone in a car for a very small amount of time to perform a quick errand. These parents who don't think twice about leaving a child alone for just a wee minute typically dote on their youngster and would never willingly place him/her in harm's way. Waking a sleeping child or getting a toddler

out of a child seat in freezing cold or less-than-ideal weather is sometimes such a hassle, when the errand can be done single-handedly within a minute or two. But, while the actions can be explained, the consequences could never ever be undone if the unthinkable does occur. As a result, the sound parenting advice remains the same: don't ever leave a child in a car alone, even for a moment.

## —SAFETY CORNER—

### Saving your children

Submitted by the Safety Office

As a father, I couldn't imagine what it would be like to lose a child. I can't imagine the almost unbearable pain and guilt I'd feel if I didn't do everything I could to prevent it. Yet, many parents don't properly protect their children in safety seats and end up sacrificing them in crashes. Many of these deaths could have been prevented.

How big is the problem? According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death among children in the United States. Simply placing children in age- and size-appropriate car seats and booster seats could reduce serious and fatal injuries for these younger children by more than half, according to NHTSA. Yet, many people prefer to make excuses, even while placing their children in great danger. They'll say things like:

"My child doesn't like being in a car seat."

"It's too hard to get the car seat buckled in."

"We are only going to the store."

That last excuse is very disturbing because so many accidents happen within 10 miles of home. And what about the first two excuses? Put yourself in your child's place. Which would you choose — the inconvenience of being restrained in a child safety seat or smashing into the windshield? What if the vehicle rolled? Would you rather be safely restrained or thrown around like a rag doll against the vehicle's interior? How about being thrown onto the road and run over?

OK, you've gotten the message and you'll never let your child ride in a car without being properly restrained. So, you ask, what's the best way to protect your children while they're riding in your car? Check out the information below:

- Seat all children 12 years and younger in the

backseat and ensure they are properly restrained every time they ride with you.

- Read the child safety seat instruction manual and your vehicle owner's manual to ensure you properly install the seat.

- Be sure the child safety seat is installed tightly. If you can move the seat more than an inch side to side or front to back, it's not tight enough.

- Send in your child safety seat registration card so the manufacturer can contact you about any recalls.

- Replace any car seat that was used during a motor vehicle crash.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? It just takes a few minutes of your time to prevent a lifetime of regret.

So what is the right seat for your child? The chart in the box below reflects guidance provided by the safety experts at NHTSA.

When shopping for a child safety seat, keep the following tips in mind:

- No one seat is the "best" or "safest." The best seat is the one that fits your child's age and size, is correctly installed, fits well in your vehicle and can be used properly every time you drive.

- Don't decide by price alone. A higher price does not mean the seat is safer or easier to use.

- Avoid used seats if you don't know the seat's history. Never use a car seat that:

- Is too old. Look on the label for the date it was made. Check with the manufacturer to find out how long they recommend using the seat.

- Has any visible cracks.

- Does not have a label with the date of manufacture and model number. Without these, you cannot check to see if the seat has been recalled.

- Does not come with instructions. You need them to know how to use the seat.



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# Magician works magic for kids of all ages

By Mark Schauer

If the 16th century philosopher Giordano Bruno was right in saying magicians do more by means of faith than physicians by the truth, Ed Millis is a doctor of enchantment.

The 30-year YPG veteran spends his spare time doing magic shows for kids of all ages.

He has delighted audiences on behalf of hospital patients at Yuma Regional Medical Center, and National Adoption Day, and will be staging a repeat performance of his show for the YPG's Library's summer reading program for kids, entitled 'Paws to Read.'

"His show is usually at least an hour long," said Carol Cowperthwaite, YPG librarian. "We've had him two or three times and gets the kids' attention. I think the parents enjoy it as well."

Michigan-born and California-raised, Millis first came to Yuma as a Marine in 1976, with his first job as a data collector at YPG in the 1980s. He had dabbled in magic as a child and dropped it, but never completely let go of his interest in the hobby. Then, a fortuitous temporary duty at a remote location gave him extra spare time to take up magic in earnest.

"In 2001 I was TDY for about five months at Twentynine Palms, Calif.," he said. "There's not a whole lot of activity, so I started doing more and



(LOANED PHOTO)

**Ed Millis performs magic for audiences of all ages who always seem fascinated.**

volunteered at the library."

Over the past decade, Millis has developed a variety of full-blown routines of different lengths and degrees of sophistication.

"My typical show is a birthday party or family gathering. I've also done stage shows for schools and civic groups. One thing I don't do is restaurant-style, in-your-face sleight of hand."

Millis incorporates common magician accoutrements like long, colorful handkerchiefs and large playing cards, but he has also constructed props himself, such as a pair of oversized dice. More important to him, however, are creating compelling routines to show off the magic.

"One of my signature routines is my little dog Ringo, a plastic ring about six inches in diameter, who never wants to stay on his leash," he said with a smile.

Other routines for younger audiences include rope tricks with Millis dressing as a worker in a 'spaghetti factory,' complete with hardhat and safety glasses. Older audiences, of course, need more sophisticated entertainment.

"The older kids are not really interested in slapstick," he explained. "For that age group up to the adults I try to get into their heads --mind magic, if you will."

Millis is philosophical about his craft, investing a great deal of time into each scenario going into an act.

"If you are going to entertain, you have to engage the person," he said. "There has to be something more than a thing disappearing. There has to be a story behind it: why does it matter?"

Millis has no grand ambitions to become the next Criss Angel or David Blaine, but does have goals nonetheless.

"I have a couple of goals as a magician," said Millis. "One is to take an audience of adults and have them leave knowing they've just had an experience they've never experienced before. The other is to take a birthday party full of kids and have them laugh so hard they're snorting Kool Aid out of their noses."

## —CHAPLAIN'S CORNER—

### Savor the Moment

By Chaplain (Maj.) Douglas Thomison

Good day Yuma Proving Ground. This morning I dropped my children off at James D. Price Elementary School (school located on YPG). It happens to be the last week of school. I asked my kids, "on a scale of 1 low and 10 high what is your number for completing the school year on Friday and beginning summer vacation?" Without hesitation both kids said, "Ten."

Now, my children enjoy as well as fair well in school. However, they, as probably is the case with most kids, are looking forward to all of the possibilities the summer will hold. For my children, there will be a family vacation as well as seeing grandparents, and they have no issue with simply "kicking back" at home. However, they will not need to give

much thought about "fun in the summertime."

From what I mentioned above, I think we can learn from children and all the "young at heart" people in our midst. In other words, we don't have to over analyze situations or upcoming events, but embrace them with open arms.

Thus, what are you looking forward to this summer? What are you excited about in life overall? A Bible passages that standouts to me is: "This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24) There is also a hymn entitled, It Is Well with My Soul which goes, "Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul." Indeed, embrace today and life by and large. I hope you have a blessed day, and a wonderful summer. My God be with you now and always.



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## VIEWPOINTS

The 62nd Army Band is giving a free public concert at the Yuma Art Center on June 18th. We asked members of the workforce their favorite memories of past Army band concerts.



### Brian Grimes

Combat systems branch chief

I've always enjoyed the Army band concerts. I think I've been to four of them over the years, and they've always had a pretty good selection and done a phenomenal job. It's nice to see former YPG Soldiers and workers in the audience, too.



### Adam Rinne, Test officer

My top three bands, in no particular order, are Foo Fighters, Cake and the Army band. I've been to three of their shows and I'm pretty psyched that they're coming to Yuma. I really enjoy the patriotic songs they do: I think everyone in the theater gets goosebumps whenever they play something patriotic.



### Thomas Morris

Engineering tech.

I went to the last Army band concert three years ago and thought they were awesome. The professionalism of the music was amazing. This time I'm bringing along four families, 14 people total.



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