

YPG testing puts humanity a step closer to Mars

By Mark Schauer

The nearly-full sized model of the Orion space capsule was in the cargo bay of a C-17 flying 35,000 feet over one of YPG's isolated drop zones, but at least part of one observer's attention was far away.

"The 2030s will see the first humans walking on the surface of Mars," said Doug Wheelock, astronaut. "NASA usually picks astronauts in their 30s, which means the first Mars walkers are in the school system somewhere. That is very exciting."

NASA envisions humans returning to the moon and proceeding to Mars aboard the Orion, a feat that involves enormous quantities of power, endurance and speed. Escaping Earth's gravitational pull alone requires a speed in excess of 25,000 miles per hour, yet perhaps the most important aspect of human space travel — returning to Earth to tell the tale — involves speeds less than one thousandth of that figure.

The astronauts aboard the Orion capsule count on the Capsule Parachute Assembly System (CPAS) to land them safely back on Earth. Each of the system's three main parachutes have canopies made with 10,000 square feet of broadcloth nylon, and the rope that makes up the parachutes' cord is made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber



Ready for its most dangerous test to date, the mock-up of NASA's Orion space capsule waits inside the cargo bay of a C-130 for its drop. "We're doing what we call minimal system test," said Michele Parker, deputy program manager. "This is the first test of the minimal system of one drogue and two main parachutes." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

used in body armor. The CPAS system is designed to deploy sequentially and pass through two stages prior to being fully open: after hurtling back into Earth's atmosphere, two drogue

parachutes deploy to slow the 10ton capsule prior to main parachutes decelerating the capsule to less than 20 miles per hour. The system is designed with redundancies meant to protect the safe landing of astronauts even if two parachutes fail.

"The chances of losing a chute are pretty low, but that low chance has

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Training realism at YPG

By Chuck Wullenjohn

A camouflaged, body armor-equipped Marine rests a Stinger missile on his shoulder and squints through sights, taking a long, low breath. Spotting an unmanned aircraft approaching from the right about one mile away, he stiffens and prepares to fire. A moment later, he squeezes the trigger and a Stinger missile whooshes into the sky. Approaching the target at supersonic speed, a red and orange fireball erupts within seconds. Success!

Yuma Proving Ground's primary mission is to conduct a wide variety of tests on military weapons and munitions, which accounts for over 90 percent of the proving ground's annual workload. The balance consists of training activities performed by a wide variety of military organizations, from small units to organizations numbering in the hundreds.

The attraction to outside organizations is, among other things, the unspoiled realism and isolation of YPG's terrain, the ability to fire a large variety of weapon systems without endangering anyone, and an unsurpassed level of support.

Typical Army and Marine Corps training ranges throughout the nation are relatively basic facilities allowing personnel to practice individual tasks and achieve qualifications. YPG brings much more to the table.

"YPG training is best suited to combined and collective tasks," said Luis Arroyo, chief of YPG's Training and Exercise Management Office, who has worked at the proving ground since 2004.

He points to the firing of Stinger missiles as an example, for surface danger zone and surface to air altitude requirements are so large that few ranges can safely accommodate it. "Human and mechanical error is always in play when firing complex systems like this," he said. "Here at YPG we can assure that the civilian population remains safe, no matter what happens."

Arroyo's is a customer-oriented organization that offers training units a one stop shop where execution of a quality training experience is the overriding goal. His office works with units from the original concept of a training operation to bringing it to fruition on the ground. This includes the arrival of people and equipment, building base camps, physical security, sanitation, meal operations, and ensuring ranges are maintained to standards.

"From cradle to grave, we're involved in every aspect of the operation," said Arroyo with a smile. "We have a wide scope of work, but it's rewarding at the



Luis Arroyo (left), chief of Yuma Proving Ground's Training and Exercise Management Office, leads a customer-oriented organization that offers training units a one-stop-shop where execution of a quality training experience is the overriding goal. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

same time."

Training operations at the proving ground can last anywhere from a few days to multiple weeks, and never on a 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. basis. Trainees operate for 24 hours each day and as needs come up, they must be addressed.

"Saying 'no' or not being available at all is not an acceptable answer," said Arroyo. As if to prove his point, Arroyo reported to work at 4:45 a.m. the day the Marines fired Stinger missiles to resolve any problems that arose.

"I met the unit when they drew the day's ammunition," he explained. "This was absolutely critical to the operation. Though it went smoothly, it's better to be on the spot during times like this."

It may be a challenging, time-consuming and sometimes stressful job, but it's one that Arroyo thoroughly enjoys. "When I go home, I look forward to coming back the next day," he said. "I feel blessed and happy that the Army has given me the opportunity to do this."

THEOUTPOST

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From electronics to houses, Evaro builds things to last



As one of the longest-tenured civilians at YPG, lead electronic technician Robert Evaro has seen many changes at the proving ground, and developed electronic components to numerous test support devices. Aside from his rewarding career here, he is well known in the community as a working musician and champion karate enthusiast. (Photos by Manuela House)

By Mark Schauer

A creative streak runs deep through the fiber of Robert Evaro.

advance from a young test vehicle driver just out of the Army to lead electronic technician in the proving ground's optics division. As he contemplates retirement, a disused lateral impact drop facility stands

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tall in his mind, encapsulating his ethos. In the early 1980s, Evaro played a major

role in creating the structure, which was once used to simulate hard landings for parachute bundles. A winch pulled the load to the top of the 30- or 45-degree tower, and a microswitch released it to fall on a variety of surfaces, from gravel to concrete and metal.

The forty foot structure might be the most physically imposing of his projects at the proving ground, but Evaro's handiwork ranges from optical triggers and sequencers for YPG's first digital high speed cameras to electronic fail safe devices for test officers firing artillery. Yet the drop facility holds a special place in his professional memory.

"This place is about achievement and devoting yourself to the cause," he said of YPG. "Seeing this facility reminds me of what I'm here for. In a way, this represents the beginning of my creative journey at YPG."

Yet Evaro's creativity has spanned far beyond the borders of the proving ground. Many in the area know him as a premier guitarist from a family with multigenerational musical talent. In decades of gigs with multiple bands across the desert southwest he has played with musicians as diverse as Ray Camacho and Eric Burdon. Perhaps the most special, however, was Selena, the legendary Queen of Tejano music tragically murdered in 1995. Evaro and his band opened for her during a

concert in El Centro in 1987, and he asked the teenage Selena and her family to appear at a benefit concert at Yuma's Disabled Veterans of America Hall the following night. They agreed—it was Selena's first public appearance in Yuma.

"She was a beautiful person, in all ways. I remember her big, beautiful smile."

A third-generation Yuman, Evaro joined the Army in February 1969 and underwent training at Forts Bliss and Leavenworth before shipping out to Vietnam as an airplane mechanic. He served as door gunner on a UH-1 helicopter on occasion and accumulated 50 hours of stick time during his tour in country.

"I loved flying. Every chance I got, I went up. We did 13 hours in the air one dav."

When his enlistment was up, Sgt. Evaro returned to Yuma and applied for work at the proving ground.

"I was very grateful that when I left the Army I got a job in civil service. That was really difficult at the time."

Starting out as a test vehicle operator, he drove missile launchers and M60 tanks. When the test vehicle mission slowed periodically, he would work in the electronics section.

"Certain times of the year testing got slow, and they used to farm the drivers out to different areas."

At this same time, he built a house by

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Army band fills theatre with music

By Teri Womack

Within a matter of weeks, tickets for the recent 62nd Army Band concert were going, going and GONE!

On the first day of this month, the band kicked off a four city tour by performing a free concert to a packed house at the Historic Yuma Theatre. Well over 600 YPG employees and members of the Yuma community showed up in full force to display unwavering support to the over 30 Soldiers in the band, veterans of all services and Warfighters serving in the armed forces today. The event was made even more special as it was dedicated to honoring the official 50 year commemoration of the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Concert attendees were treated to artwork displayed in the lobby painted by Soldiers serving in Vietnam and a colorful poster portraying an illustrated history of U.S. combat forces during the war.

Army band concerts are typically well attended and this one was no exception. Three days before, many hopeful concert-goers were disappointed to hear that all tickets had been distributed. The good news is that the band has agreed to return to Yuma on Dec. 16 to perform a holiday concert. The band will present two concerts that day, at 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Be on the lookout for details, including the date that tickets will be avail-



Vocalist of the 62nd Army Band sings from the heart while entertaining over 600 attendees at the Historic Yuma Theatre. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Yuma Proving Ground commander Col. Randy Murray presents the Army Band commander with a token of appreciation for a great performance in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

able, so you can get your tickets early! Planners estimate this will be about three weeks before the Dec. 16 concert. You don't want to miss out – it's the perfect way to kick off the holiday season with a performance that will have you singing along, tapping your toes and leaving with a song in your heart!





Saxophone and trumpet musicians filled the air at the Historic Yuma Theatre with melodious sounds of patriotic marches, medleys and songs from around the world.

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-VIEWPOINTS

By Mark Schauer

Hispanic Heritage Month begins September 15th. We asked members of the workforce who they admired in Hispanic American history.



Sgt. Kyle Dunwiddie, *Airborne Test Force:*

I'm from Texas, so I think the Tejano defenders of the Alamo were definitely heroes. They have been largely forgotten in history, but there were a number who died there fighting for the Republic of Texas against Santa Anna.



Cesar Chavez. My uncle worked for one of the ranches in east county 30-plus years ago and met him, and saw some of the positive things he had done. My uncle worked for one of the better ranches, and the housing and services were still rough.





Cesar Ramirez, Engineer:

Fernando Valenzuela. When the Dodgers built their stadium in Los Angeles in the 1950s, they displaced a poor neighborhood from the site and had difficulty filling the seats for years. When Fernando Valenzuela came along, he unified all races in the community and was such a big sensation that it repaired the relationship with the Hispanic community. I was lucky enough to see some of the games he pitched when I was a young kid, and he was great. He inspired a lot of Latino kids to play the game.

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pretty serious potential consequences if it happens," said Stuart McClung, Orion Crew Module Landing and Recovery System Functional Area Manager. "Gravity doesn't take a vacation."

In the most recent test at YPG, engineers sought to verify that the CPAS could decelerate the capsule to a safe landing speed even if one drogue and one main parachute failed to deploy, one of the riskier tests performed on the system. There were many factors to consider in such testing: for example, how much would the extra mass on the body of the craft from the un-deployed parachute impact its stability in descent?

"From a structural design standpoint we didn't expect it would be an issue, but every time you test, you have the chance of learning something," said McClung.

Given that the Orion capsule and CPAS system had a successful first flight in outer space last December, some folks may assume that this test was anticlimactic. NASA engineers, however, say this is not at all the case: in addition to being able to outfit the test vehicle with far more instrumentation and cameras than would be possible if it was coming from space, testing over land at YPG makes recovery and examination of the parachutes easier than when it lands in the ocean, as in a real space mission.

"We get so much data from these tests that it takes us months to process," said Michele Parker, deputy project manager. "We do a reconstruction where we know the position of these parachutes every millisecond of its descent."

Once the drop was completed, personnel fanned out and carefully recovered the massive deployed parachutes and lines from the desert floor. The August heat was sweltering, but the workers gathered the fabric slowly and methodically: testers want to evaluate any damage that may have occurred to the parachutes, and know that it was not incurred from the recovery efforts. As the packed



Astronaut Victor Glover (center) speaks to media representatives in the moments before the test. "A rocket with an American flag on the side of it is one of the most important things NASA is going to do in the near future in human spaceflight," he said. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)



Astronaut Doug Wheelock feels humans reaching Mars will occur in the long term, but other important advances are much closer to fruition. "The objective is all we will learn in the intervening years about science, technology, engineering, our planet, and ourselves. We will inspire generations of engineers." (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

parachutes made the journey back to the Air Delivery Complex, where the parachutes were suspended from a high ceiling and carefully studied, workers from YPG's motor pool used a large crane to lift the massive test capsule onto a lowboy trailer for transport back to Yuma.

The prospect of humans landing on Mars and its moons entices the imagination, but space travel veterans are quick to remind their Earth-bound fellows that the effort involves far more than extra-planetary strolls for a select few.

"The biggest objective isn't setting foot on Mars—that's just the icing on the cake," said Wheelock. "The objective is all we will learn in the intervening years about science, technology, engineering, our planet, and ourselves. We will inspire generations of engineers: all of these things are part of the riches and rewards we will reap in coming years."



Once the drop was completed, personnel fanned out and carefully recovered the massive deployed parachutes and lines from the desert floor, as seen here. Testers want to evaluate any damage that may have occurred to the parachutes, and know that it was not incurred from the recovery efforts. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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Each of the system's three main parachutes have canopies made with 10,000 square feet of broadcloth nylon, and risers made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber used in body armor. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Unlike the actual Orion capsule, the mock capsule used in the test has exterior panels made of easily sheered-off **Styrofoam. The test** item is the same width as the Orion, but several feet shorter to accommodate the clearance height of the cargo aircraft it is dropped from: this combined with the fact that in tests it touches down on land and not the ocean as it would in a real reentry from space makes upside-down test landings common and expected. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Chaplain's Corner Vision goes beyond sight – What do you see?

By Chaplain (Capt./P) Steven D. Smith

A blind man once said,"... to see is a wonderful thing, but to remember what was seen is greater." We go through our daily routines looking around seeing either the beauty around us or a sight that has the potential to be beautiful, the desert. As humans, we have the unique ability to see with our eyes and make a determination whether something has worth or should be discarded.

Each of us lives by some type of vision—perhaps depressing, limited, or a vision that everything is going to pieces. But each of us lives by a vision, conscious or unconscious. If it is dark, moving toward disintegration and

chaos, we will be fearful. If the vision is larger and universal—a vision of the kingdom—and we believe it will take place, we will be filled with hope.

The overall vision of God and the kingdom gives us assurance that humanity will be freed from its present bondage and reconciled with the source of its life—God.

In our own time, vision has to do more with the capacity to distinguish what passes before the eyes than with discerning images of a destiny transcending the realities of daily experience. Vision has a central place in the Biblical faith experience. What do you see? What is your experience with Jesus Christ?

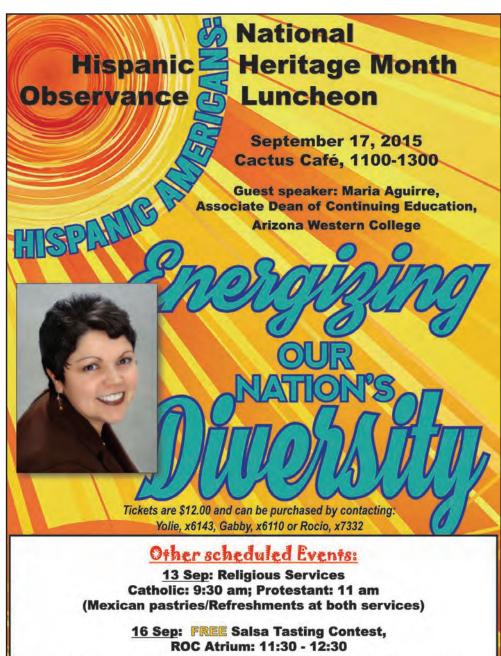
Chaplain (Capt./P) Steven D. Smith is the new Garrison Chaplain. This article is just a small taste of the upcoming message to be preached on Sunday, September 13 at the services. Please come and worship with us.

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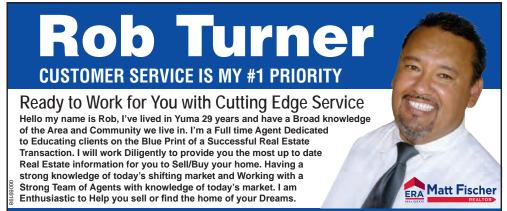
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Safety awards presented to two YPG engineers during recent ceremony



Presenting an award to Jesus Estrada of Munitions and Weapons Division is Col. Randy Murray, YPG commander and Kermit Okamura, Chief of Munitions and Weapons Division. (Photos by Yolie Canales)



Pierre Bourque, team lead for the Combat Automotive Division, Ground Combat Directorate, takes time for a photo with (left to right): Julio Dominguez, YPG Technical Director, Col. Randy Murray and Manny Elizarraras, Combat Systems Branch Chief.

By Yolie Canales

During a recent Safety Award ceremony held at the ROC conference room, Pierre Bourque of the Combat Automotive Division and Jesus Estrada, of the Munitions and Weapons Division, were recognized by Col. Randy Murray, YPG commander, and Julio Dominguez, technical director, for their contributions of making a safer work environment at YPG.

Estrada was recognized for his efforts to create a safer test environment at the Counter Mine (CMINE) Test Range. The CMINE is a heavily used test area on any given day. As such, the CMINE became a haven for coyotes and bees due to several unintended water sources. Estrada, together with the Environmental Sciences Division, devised a plan to adequately rid the place of both, by eliminating the nearby water sources

via the use of a dry well. In addition, Estrada coordinated the efforts of capturing and relocating the coyotes.

Bourque's recognition came about for his exceptional safety accomplishments as a direct fire team leader. His continuous improvement of direct the fire test officer certification requirements and processes resulted in an extensive technical primer for training new direct fire test officers to perform tests safely. Additionally, he revised maintenance procedures for trunnion span mounts, which have been incorporated into the SOP for Automotive Testing, resulting in an increased level of safety and efficiency during testing by mandating more appropriate inspections of high-stress areas based upon the fatigue behavior of the mounts.



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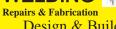
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Starting October 1, 2015, a new law requires all TRICARE beneficiaries, except active duty service members, to get select brand name maintenance drugs through either TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery or from a military pharmacy. Beneficiaries who keep using a retail pharmacy for these drugs will have to pay the full cost.

Maintenance drugs are those you take regularly for a long time, such as drugs to control blood pressure or cholesterol. The law does not apply to drugs you take for a short time, like antibiotics, or generic drugs. Beneficiaries living overseas, or with other prescription drug coverage, are not affected.

The TRICARE pharmacy contractor, Express Scripts, is sending a letter to beneficiaries taking an affected drug, explaining their options. Beneficiaries can contact Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 to see if they are affected.

After October 1, beneficiaries still filling an affected drug at a retail pharmacy will receive another letter informing them of the change to the benefit. After that, beneficiaries have one final "courtesy" fill at a retail pharmacy. If they fill at a retail pharmacy again, they have to pay 100 percent of the cost of their medication.

TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery is a safe, convenient and low cost option to get maintenance drugs. You can get up to a 90day supply, as opposed to a 30-day supply from a retail pharmacy. You save up to \$176 a year for every brand name drug you switch to Home Delivery. Military pharmacies offer up to a 90-day supply of drugs at zero copay, but not all drugs are available. You can check with your local military pharmacy to see if they carry your prescription.

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EVARO

hand during his leisure time. Two-stories tall and boasting a nine-foot tall stone fireplace, a second-floor veranda, a large bay window, and hand-built cabinets, the house still stands tall and strong today, four decades after he raised it.

"The only thing I didn't do from the first shovel of dirt to the last nail on the last shingle was the well, the trenches and hole for the septic tank, and the duct work for the air conditioning. They didn't have nice, do-it-yourself round ones in the old days."

By the late 1970s, a proving groundwide reduction in force saw him transfer to metrology and simulation before ultimately coming over to the optics division with mentor Joe Elias. Outside of work, he continued to push himself to new levels. In his mid-30s he took up karate, and in 1985 won the Arviso Southwest Karate Championship despite competing against much younger men while suffering from a diverticulitis-induced fever.

These days, he delights more in

the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. "It's a very proud moment for me when I see my kids being successful. I'm glad to have passed that work ethic gene onto them."

He dreams of building a modest-sized energy efficient house once he has the time, but there are plenty of other projects in the meantime. Given his lifelong love of music, it may not be surprising that he recently built a guitar to add to the six he already owned.

"I just thought I could and that I'd like to try," he said.

Some of his guitar's components serve unintended double duties, too. "I went to a sign company and all they had was a piece of lexan, so my pick guard is bullet proof," he said with a smile.

Retirement may be on the horizon, but his work life is still vital and interesting.

"I've had a very colorful and rewarding career at YPG. I'm grateful to the Army."

Chief's Corner Visitor Control & Pass/ID Opening Submitted by Dennis Brown, Chief of

Police

The new Yuma Proving Ground Visitor Control Center (VCC) on Imperial Dam Road will open Monday, Sept. 21. The facility will combine proving ground access control and YTC range access operations.

Adult visitors who do not have a Department of Defense (DoD) identification card will undergo a criminal background security check at the VCC. If no problems are identified, he or she will be issued a temporary visitor pass that shows his or her name, reason for visit and expiration date.

Passes can be issued for as little as one and up to 90 days. A temporary pass, shown with an ID, allows visitor access through any gate.

For visitors or workers requiring access to YPG for more than 90 days, a one-year pass can be issued, once proper vetting has been accomplished.

Residents or hunters needing to register a

firearm or register to hunt, must also report to the YPG VCC with their list of weapons to register, (do not physically bring the firearm).

Visitors or workers requiring YTC range certification and access will also be processed through this location.

The VCC is open during normal business hours (6 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.) It features two access control and two range pass work stations and the capability to open one additional service desk. The building contains a small waiting area and restroom facilities. Parking is limited but does include handicapped parking. The outside walkway has lighting for hours of low visibility.

Personnel wishing to obtain installation access on non-duty days or during non-duty hours will continue to process at the access control points.

For more information concerning access control, if you are a YPG employee, go to the YPG Intranet and click on the Department of Emergency Services (DES) link.



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