

Two decades and counting: Thousands of elite military parachutists train at YPG

By Mark Schauer

Testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal is U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's primary mission.

Yet for more than 20 years, the Military Freefall School, part of the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, has utilized the proving ground's vast ranges to train thousands of the military's most elite paratroopers.

"Military freefall is inherently a high-risk activity," said Maj. Alan Enke, the school's commander. "It's also more of a clandestine activity that can get you into a denied area fast with all of your equipment and



For more than 20 years, the Army's Military Freefall School has utilized YPG's vast ranges to train thousands of the military's most elite paratroopers. "YPG essentially provides everything that we need in order to run our training courses here," said Maj. Alan Enke, commander. "Virtually everything but the administrative and logistical functions of the freefall school itself are provided by Yuma Proving Ground." (US Army photo)

manpower. It's just another way to get there, from the sky."

In the six decades of military freefall, fewer than 1000 individuals have qualified as instructors, and this select group has trained well over 20,000 freefall parachutists. To qualify for this instruction, a prospective student needs to have done a minimum of five static line jumps, though most students have many more than this. Regardless, the increased complexity of freefall parachuting usually renders such experiences irrelevant to a student's ultimate success.

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Environmental Management a YPG priority

By Chuck Wullenjohn

The primary business of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is testing weapon systems and munitions, work that takes place in the great outdoors.

Some might presume, incorrectly, that the interior of the proving ground is a pulverized waste land, permanently contaminated with

unexploded artillery projectiles and the noxious residue of gunpowder. This is far from the truth.

Though firing takes place each workday, it is carefully controlled and restricted. Artillery pieces, mortars, tank guns, and every other weapon system fires into defined impact areas using designated lines of fire.

Electronic data gathering equipment tracks the flight of each shell, as do human observers. Many missiles and other projectiles are recovered after impact, for developers need them to fully analyze test results.

As the Army's extreme environment test expert, it is useful to think of the proving ground's landscape as a

natural laboratory. YPG's people have a vested interest in preserving the desert and all of its flora and fauna. In fact, some of the best preserved areas of Southwest Arizona's precious Sonoran Desert are located within the proving ground's boundaries.

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Employee handles ammo by day, budding baseball players by night

By Mark Schauer

By day, Yuma native Daniel Landin works in YPG's ammunition storage section, playing a big role in making sure YPG's busy artillery-testing mission proceeds smoothly and safely. He methodically deals with armament of tremendous potential energy, enough to destroy buildings, requiring a sure hand and a level head.

"It's a good job," he says simply.

Off duty, these same skills come into play when he deals with some of the most potent kinetic energy in existence: more than a dozen hyper three and four year old children, including his son, that he is melding into a cohesive t-ball team called the Rattlers, part of the Yuma Fast Pitch and T-ball League.

"I've always loved baseball," said Landin, who played second base for Cibola High School. "My boy is growing up, so I thought it would be a chance for him to enjoy it and do something together."

The players he coaches may be small, but Landin's commitment is large. The 12-game season consists of two games per week,

including a weeknight, and there are usually two hour-long team practices per week. In the two weeks prior to the season there were three, which Landin said was particularly necessary given the rudimentary—or non-existent—skills of the youngsters. Early on, for example, scenes of multiple players piling atop each other to get possession of a ground ball are common. During practices, some players need to be called by name, multiple times, to get their attention.

"Some have never played baseball before," Landin explained. "The attention span isn't always there." Toward the middle of the season, he says, things start getting easier and you see skills improving.

In his second year as a coach, Landin and his assistant coaches, wife Elizabeth and brother Luis, serve on a completely voluntary basis, and even supplement some of the equipment provided by the league. The games are more about familiarizing the players with sportsmanship and teamwork than competition: two innings long, they end after each player has had two turns at-bat.

Despite the sacrifices, Landin loves



Despite the sacrifices, Daniel Landin loves coaching t-ball, and the devotion on his young players is palpable. "It's definitely rewarding," he said. "Seeing kids improve by the end of the season and knowing you did something for them is great."

coaching the team.

"It's definitely rewarding," he said. "I'd rather have the kids running around getting exercise than sitting in front of the TV. Seeing kids improve by the end of the season and knowing you did something for them is great."



After a long day at work, Landin has his young players practice running the bases and other rudiments of the game until sunset. "Some have never played baseball before," Landin explained. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

THE OUTPOST

The Outpost is an unofficial publication authorized under provisions of AR 360-1. The Outpost is published every two weeks by the Public Affairs Office, Yuma Proving Ground. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Army. This newspaper uses material credited to ATEC and ARNEWS. While contributions are solicited, the PAO reserves the right to edit all submitted materials and make corrections, changes or deletions to conform with the policy of this newspaper.



News may be submitted to:
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MANAGEMENT

FROM PAGE 1

The people within YPG's Environmental Sciences Division work closely with testers to sustain the integrity of the proving ground's ranges into the future. The desert is fragile, with little rainfall and sparse vegetation. For example, when a vehicle drives off-road and breaks through a thin crust of desert pavement, called malpais, tire tracks remain almost forever. Even worse, inches of now-exposed fine grain soil that lie beneath the crust can easily be blown by the wind or eroded during wind and rain storms.

"In the desert, vehicle tracks attract additional traffic and, before you know it, you have an ad hoc

road," said Daniel Steward, wildlife biologist. "Off road travel can be very damaging to the environment and dangerous on an active military installation. There are plenty of areas throughout the desert southwest where you still see obvious evidence of training from World War II. Maintaining a small footprint is the most effective strategy for minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources." He goes on to say that being responsible saves the government money and sustains YPG's testing capability.

Steward's area of expertise is managing wildlife, which he says must be performed from an ecosystem perspective. This means developing plans that encompass all parts of the environment – nutrients deriving from the soil, energy coming

A closer look at Daniel Steward

Daniel Steward, wildlife biologist and acting environmental sciences division chief, is a native of Arkansas and has lived in Yuma since 1999. A person who truly loves the outdoors, he enjoys both the greenery of his native state and the dry desert of Yuma.

"I've spent much of life either playing in the woods or playing in the desert," he said with a smile. "The desert gives you an appreciation for water and trees."

In areas with abundant rainfall, such as Arkansas, Steward says one can observe plenty of vegetation and wildlife. But just because there is more wildlife, it doesn't mean that environment is more diverse.

"Animals exist within specialized niches in the desert and have adopted to a harsh, challenging environment," he said. "There are truly incredible things happening on our landscape."

He notes the YPG area is an important stepping stone for thousands of migrating birds each year that travel between southern Mexico and northern South America

to various places in Canada and the United States. They travel northward at the beginning of summer and south in the winter.

"I really like the desert and am completely content here," he says. "I especially like the weather which permits me to be outside throughout the year." One of the things he likes to do is hike into desert areas at night during the summer to watch wildlife activity that doesn't take place during hot daytime hours.

"The desert is so open that you can see and enjoy everything – the geology is not obscured by trees. Plus, there are no mosquitoes, ticks and chiggers to annoy you like in Arkansas!"



Daniel Steward, wildlife biologist and acting environmental sciences division chief, is a native of Arkansas and has lived in Yuma since 1999. Here, he helps conduct a study of Sonoran tortoises on YPG. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



As the Army's extreme environment test expert, YPG has a vested interest in preserving the desert and all of its flora and fauna. In fact, some of the best preserved areas of Southwest Arizona's precious Sonoran Desert are located within the proving ground's boundaries. (US Army photo)

from the sun, plant life producing the foods animals consume, as well as the entire food chain. A huge amount of interaction occurs among these elements – things that eat other things, things that control things from eating other things – truly a complicated web.

"When mankind disrupts one part, unintended consequences can result somewhere along the chain," he said.

The non-native salt cedar trees common in the Yuma area provide an excellent example of the fruits of "unintended consequences." The trees were brought here in the late 1900s. Salt cedars obviously liked the area, for they grew and prospered. Unfortunately, these trees drink copious amounts of water and deposit salts in the soil, displacing native species and often damaging the landscape. Along the Colorado River, prolific salt cedar and other invasive growth have created impenetrable barriers that prevent native animals from reaching life giving water and altering the soil chemistry such that native plants cannot thrive.

Steward is quick to note that

the workers at YPG are often fascinated by the environment and knowledgeable about it.

"Folks are proud of where they work and take pride in working in a beautiful desert," he said. "Test personnel often tell me about amazing wildlife sightings and interactions downrange that you would expect to see televised on the Discovery Channel."

The goal of YPG's Environmental Sciences Division is to actively support the proving ground's test mission by aiding in the planning of test projects while complying with federal, state and local environmental regulations. YPG must be responsive to often unique test requirements, and environmental personnel help identify solutions that minimize the footprint on the environment and are cost effective at the same time.

"Some test programs are unbelievably complex with lots of moving parts," said Steward. "But I have found that we can always put our heads together with test officers to develop a solution to any problem that comes up."

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A View Without a Point

New season brings new flavors to crave

By Teri Womack

It's fall – the season I jokingly refer to as the “Foods Available for a Limited Time Only” season. It's my favorite time of year because all of the holiday flavors and specialty items start coming out. You would think that, with my job title, I would not fall for this marketing trick, but not only do I eagerly anticipate it, I immediately buy right into this “Get It Before Its Gone” strategy.

I never realized how much I actually scouted out new and different flavored things to eat and drink until I was asked at work if there was a “strange food” aisle somewhere where I shopped.

Several days later, a friend visiting my home opened the door to my snack cabinet. (No judging - doesn't

everyone have an entire cabinet dedicated just for snacks?). When I asked if she was hungry she replied, “No, I'm just looking to see what kind of weird stuff you bought at the grocery store”.

I usually do pretty well, if I say so myself, since so many others disagree with my foray into crazy food adventures. I do have to admit that biscuit and gravy flavored potato chips were a huge fail. I couldn't find one solitary other person that liked them, even when I tried to pique their curiosity by describing them as unique and interesting. No matter, there are many other flavors to try!

This time of year brings out many new holiday “Limited Edition” items which gives me plenty of new choices to explore. There's eggnog creamer,

gingerbread flavored coffee, cranberry spice tea, and peppermint mocha hot chocolate. Just don't get me started on the upcoming “available for the holiday only” foods because I swear I gain ten pounds just thinking about them!

Since these items are only offered for an undefined limited time, I don't have a clue when they will disappear from the shelves. I never get that memo stating that my limited-time-ending-date is fast approaching and I better stock up or be out of luck until next year. I take this as a personal, willingly accepted, challenge that

compels me to scoop up anything and everything marked “for a limited time only” and add it to my already overflowing grocery cart. I have a preferred customer card at the grocery store and I'm not afraid to use it!

I'm pretty sure I was the first person in line at my favorite coffee shop to get my hands on that eagerly awaited Pumpkin Latte. When I pulled up to the window, I added on a cranberry-orange scone for good measure. My sigh of pure happiness was proof that it was everything I remembered from last year and so much more...

SAFETY CORNER

Students power through with balanced nutrition

Did you realize that physical activity, sleep, and nutrition are directly linked to school performance? Studies have shown that kids who eat a well-balanced breakfast and lunch perform better in school, have more energy and improved concentration throughout the day and maintain a healthier weight.

To help you busy parents and care givers plan healthy meals and snacks for your children, start by browsing the www.choosemyplate.gov website. A nutritious diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low to non-fat dairy products, lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts, and is low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, salt, (sodium) and added sugar.

Be careful about your child's beverage options. The best drinks to offer children are water and low fat/non-fat milk. Stay away from caffeinated beverages that can impair your child's growth and development as well as sugary,

calorie-packed options that offer little nutritional value.

Try these nutritious (and quick!) breakfasts, lunches and snacks:

Breakfast – one container of low fat yogurt (plain is best as you want to watch sugar intake), ¼ cup of granola and a piece of fruit OR one whole grain waffle with peanut butter (watch the serving size as peanut butter can be high in calories, fat and sugar; try almond butter for a healthier alternative) and sliced banana with a glass of low fat milk.

Lunch – peanut butter and jelly (no sugar added) OR chicken salad on whole grain bread with carrot sticks, guacamole, and fruit.

Snacks – a piece of fruit and a cheese stick (for a little fun, make it a fruit and cheese kabob) OR homemade trail mix with dried fruits nuts and granola (stay away from candy) OR a fruit and veggie smoothie (kale and spinach are great) blended with milk and/or yogurt.



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FREEFALL

FROM PAGE 1

"The majority of the demand, I think, comes from the mental stress of flinging yourself out of an airplane wearing a parachute and gear," said Enke. "It's not a natural thing to take a step off of that ramp and have 13,000 feet of air between you and the ground."

The intensive four-week course begins with classes that teach how to pack a parachute and maneuver in freefall. Next is a week putting the classroom lessons in practice inside a vertical wind tunnel, a 16.5 foot flight chamber able to accommodate eight jumpers simultaneously with a top speed of 175 miles per hour, followed by real jumps from altitude with an instructor an arms-length away. Though the first of the real jumps aren't graded, instructors have a good sense of whether or not a student is poised for success. The presence of the vertical wind tunnel, which opened at YPG in early 2014, is a boon to students who need additional practice.

"The problem was if a student was having any problems in that final three weeks, if they weren't worked out while they were actually jumping, they didn't have the skills necessary to graduate," said Enke. "With the wind tunnel here, if a student is having trouble in the early weeks, we can just put them in the wind tunnel and work on those issues. It's an incredibly valuable training aid for us to get our students to the level they need to be in order to do this stuff back at their unit."

Regardless of the student's skill level, the time spent inside the wind tunnel is relatively limited.

"It's not conducive to the body to be in 120 mile per hour wind for an extended period of time. We rotate the students through on one or one-and-a-half minute long rides," Enke said. "A minute in the wind tunnel is equivalent in time to a jump. If a student is in the wind tunnel for 10 minutes, it's making up for 10 jumps we don't have the capacity to do otherwise."

Further, Enke observes that the wind tunnel portion of the training is far more efficient—and less



YPG's vertical wind tunnel, which opened in early 2014, is a boon to freefall students who need additional practice. Additionally, the wind tunnel portion of the training is more efficient than ferrying a sortie of jumpers in an airplane. "The wind tunnel is exponentially cheaper to run for a minute than an aircraft," said Enke. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

expensive—than ferrying a sortie of jumpers in an airplane.

"The wind tunnel is exponentially cheaper to run for a minute than an aircraft. Putting a number of students in the wind tunnel for hours is less costly than putting any students in an aircraft for any amount of time."

The wind tunnel is available for use by other Department of Defense entities, though the freefall school's students get priority in its use.

"We've trained various Marine and SEAL units, and some demonstration teams," said Enke. "We've done evaluation training for organizations that work on emerging equipment for military freefall capabilities."

Though the wind tunnel is an important asset for the freefall school, another factor in its dramatic growth of late is the presence of larger, higher performance aircraft to ferry students on their actual jumps. Whereas in years past the school relied on aircraft such as the Casa-212 for its mission, today it uses the C27J, formerly a niche cargo plane that uses the same engine as its larger cousin the C-130.

"We can get two to three times as

many jumpers in a plane at a time, get to altitude quicker, and get back down quicker," said Sgt. 1st Class Cody Gustin, detachment sergeant.



A student's first real jump from altitude occurs with an instructor an arms-length away. Though the first of the real jumps aren't graded, instructors have a good sense of whether or not a student is poised for success. (US Army photo)



In the six decades of military freefall, fewer than 1000 individuals have qualified as instructors, and this select group has trained well over 20,000 freefall parachutists. "The majority of the demand, I think, comes from the mental stress of flinging yourself out of an airplane wearing a parachute and gear," said Enke. (US Army photo)



To qualify for this instruction, a prospective student needs to have done a minimum of five static line jumps, though most students have many more than this. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

“The Casa is a capable aircraft, just not that fast.”

Enke thinks that the freefall school’s mission training in excess of 1,500 jumpers per year in four separate, concurrently-running courses will continue at YPG far into the future.

“YPG essentially provides

everything that we need in order to run our training courses here. Virtually everything but the administrative and logistical functions of the freefall school itself are provided by Yuma Proving Ground. It’s plug and play for us: we’re very fortunate to have this relationship with them.”



Another factor in the freefall training mission’s dramatic growth is the presence of larger, higher performance aircraft like the C27J to ferry students on their actual jumps. “We can get two to three times as many jumpers in a plane at a time, get to altitude quicker, and get back down quicker,” said Sgt. 1st Class Cody Gustin, detachment sergeant. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Every smoke alarm has an expiration date: What’s yours?

YUMA PROVING GROUND FIRE DEPARTMENT urges all YUMA PROVING GROUND residents to know how old their smoke alarms are, and to replace them every 10 years

October 9, 2016 – Does your home have a smoke alarm? According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the answer is likely yes: NFPA research shows that most American homes have at least one. But do you know how old your smoke alarms are? If you’re like most people, you’re probably not so sure.

A recent survey conducted by NFPA revealed that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced. That lack of awareness is a concern for Fire Department and NFPA, along with fire departments throughout the country, because smoke alarms don’t last forever.

“Time and again, I’ve seen the life-saving impact smoke alarms can have in a home fire, but I’ve also seen the tragedy that can result when smoke alarms aren’t working properly,” says Fire Chief Gerald Ball of the Yuma Proving Ground Fire Department. “That’s why we’re making a concerted effort to educate the residents about the overall importance of smoke alarms, and that they do have a life limit.”

NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code®, requires smoke alarms be replaced at least every 10 years,

but because the public is generally unaware of this requirement, many homes have smoke alarms past their expiration date, putting people at increased risk.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, NFPA is promoting this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, “Don’t Wait - Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years,” to better educate the public about the critical importance of knowing how old their smoke alarms are and replacing them once they’re 10 years old. Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, 2016.

The Fire Department will be setting up a fire apparatus and equipment displays at Cox’s Field on October 12th from 1130 to 1330 in support of Fire Prevention Week and this year’s campaign.

To find out how old your smoke alarm is and its expiration date, simply look on the back of the alarm where the date of manufacture is marked. The smoke alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date. The Fire Department also says smoke alarms should be tested monthly, and that batteries should be replaced once a year or when they begin to chirp, signaling that they’re running low.

For more information on smoke alarms and this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, “Don’t Wait: Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years”, visit www.firepreventionweek.org.



Employee excellence honored:

U.S. Army Garrison YPG recognized overall employee excellence at a recent ceremony attended by Joe Capps, acting Central Region Director of the Installation Management Command. Clockwise, from left, a group shot of employees recognized for lengths of government service ranging from five to 40 years constitutes well over 200 years of combined service. Garrison Manager Gordon Rogers (right) recognizes environmental protection specialist Mike Stover as employee of the first quarter, while Capps presents YPG firefighter Jessie Aguirre a coin in honor of being chosen as employee of the second quarter. Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (FMWR) Director Jim Rose (left) praises Sonia May and Evaleen Ballard as FMWR's employees of both respective quarters, as Rogers looks on. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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October is Disability Awareness Month

By Stan Caine, YPG Plans Division

There are as many different disabilities as there are people. Some disabilities are easily seen or heard while others go undetected. October is Disability Awareness Month. It is a month to learn about disabilities as well as to understand the challenges people with disabilities have to live with on a daily basis.

YPG's Plans and Operations Directorate is leading the charge in making all of us aware and appreciative of various disabilities. We have designated themes for each week of October in recognition of Disability Awareness Monthly and will sponsor activities to highlight disability awareness.

Disabilities reach across everyone regardless of race, cultural, ethnic, sexual preference, or biological determinations. Disabilities do not have boundaries; they can and do touch and change lives.

Some disabilities can easily be seen; but, other disabilities are not openly visible. For example, a person with an unseen birth defect to their heart or brain may act "normal," but rely on prescription medications to function "normally." A person with a reading disability may try to "hide" their disability by not publicly reading material. Regardless of the disability, people are people and deserve to be treated with respect.

Some adults with disabilities have endured with their disability their entire life, while others have been inflicted with a disability later in life. Nevertheless, learning to live with a disability is challenging. I suffered a stroke at the age of ten. As a result, I was blind for nearly six months. Learning to live with the personal questions people ask is never-ending.

Imagine how it feels to be 10 years old and having to wear dark glasses and be led around the school because you are blind. Kids can be cruel. As adults, we set the standard of how others see us. We choose whether we want to be part of the problem or the solution.

You can help! If you see someone with a disability, treat them as you would someone without a disability. Remember, there are some disabilities that are easily seen and there are many more that are not discernably known.

People working at YPG have shared personal stories of how their lives are impacted by disabilities. These stories are available on the Plans and Operations SharePoint page under the link 'Disability Awareness.'

Upcoming activities include a walk/run event on the Howard Cantonment Area on October 20, followed up later that afternoon with free refreshments in the Range Operations Center (ROC) atrium. We will offer various ice cream products including: ice cream sandwiches, ice cream in cones with chocolate covering and nuts, ice cream bars with chocolate, fruit bars, as well as sugar-free frozen treats.

Different movies are planned to be shown during lunch hour at Kofa's Armament Operations Center (AOC) as well as the ROC. This is your chance to watch a movie as you eat lunch and learn about disabilities. In addition, three movies will be shown, back-to-back, at Coyote Lanes.

YPG's Plans and Operations Directorate hopes to bring awareness to different disabilities; it is your choice to accept the enlightenment and edification. There are several activities planned:

Week 1 (3-6 October 2016) –

"Overall Disability Awareness"

Activities: Publish stories about disabilities (P&O SharePoint)

Week 2 (10-13 October 2016) – "Easily Seen Disabilities"

Activities: 12 Oct – Movie "Monica and David" (Shown at KOFA's AOC from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

Week 3 (17-20 October 2016) – "Unseen Disabilities"

Activities: 19 Oct - "See What I'm Saying - The Deaf Entertainers Documentary" (Shown at ROC Large CR from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

20 Oct 2016 – Walk/Run event (6:30 a.m.-7:30 a.m. @ Cox Field)

20 Oct 2016 – Free Ice Cream Social (12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. @ South ROC Atrium)



Week 4 (24-27 October 2016) – "All Other Disabilities"

Activities: 26 Oct – 3 Movies (back-to-back 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.)

Shown at Coyote Lanes Theater: "Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken" (starts at 11:00)

"Monica and David" (starts at approx. 12:15)

"See What I'm Saying - The Deaf Entertainers Documentary" (starts at approx. 1:25)

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is noon October 6th**
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YPG energy use up when it should be down

By Gregory Skaggs

The energy article I wrote last month seems to have stirred up questions. The first arrived before I even had a chance to see it in the The Outpost.

This question was a perfectly legitimate query about the source of the temperature standard. The answer is that the Army's temperature standards are in AR 420-1. "During the heating season, temperatures in occupied facilities will be maintained at 68 degrees Fahrenheit during working hours and heating setback temperatures during unoccupied times will be set at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Wherever mechanical cooling is authorized, cooling season temperatures for occupied working and living spaces shall be set at 78 degrees Fahrenheit."

My motivation for writing articles

is not to see my name in print, but to help meet Army water and energy conservation goals. While we have seen a decreasing trend in energy use at YPG since 2009, we reversed that trend this year and as of the 3rd quarter of FY16 we are using 3.38% more energy than last year. The Army's goal is a 2.5% reduction from the previous year.

This is not a

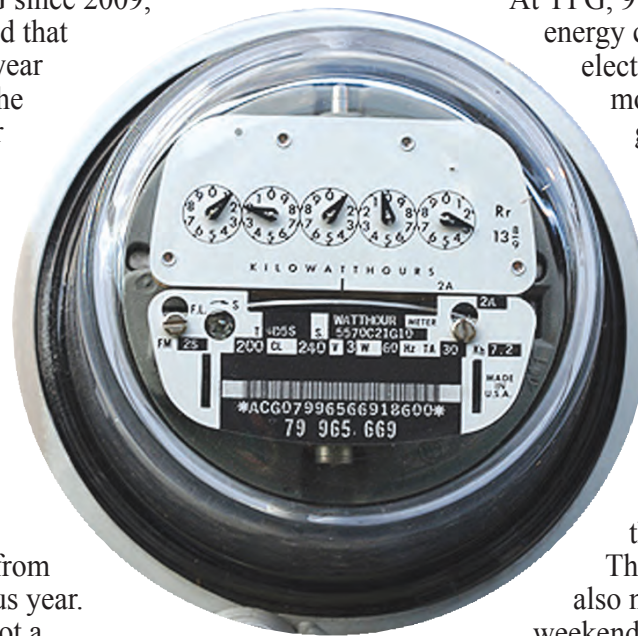
difficult goal. Setting a thermostat at 78, instead of 76, can save about 13% on cooling costs, and about 21% over a setting of 74.

At YPG, 97% of energy consumed is electricity, and most of that goes into air conditioning and lighting. The problem is not just how much electricity we use Monday through Thursday, but also nights and weekends. We know

it can be 115 on Saturday, or 100 at midnight, but do we need to spend money to keep our offices at 78 when we are not there?

There are 168 hours in a week. During how many of those hours are you in your office? Does your own building set back to higher temperatures during non-duty hours? Do you remember to set your own thermostat back? We can save energy and money when we are not at work.

Our #1 priority energy project for FY17 is a project to install programmable thermostats in 90 facilities. For those of you who already have programmable thermostats, please ensure they are programmed to set back on nights and weekends. Those of you who have manual thermostats, please remember to set them back when you go home.



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