

Facebook unmanned aircraft flies at YPG

In late June, Facebook completed the first successful flight of Aquila -- its solar-powered plane that will beam the Internet to remote parts of the world and eventually break the record for longest unmanned aircraft flight.

The flight took place before dawn at Yuma Proving Ground. The original mission was to fly Aquila for 30 minutes, but things went so well that it was decided to keep the plane up for 96 minutes. Testers gathered lots of data -- and after two years of development, it was emotional to see Aquila actually get off the ground.

The eventual goal is to have a fleet of Aquilas flying together at 60,000 feet, communicating with each other with lasers and staying aloft for months at a time -- something that's never been done before.

To get there, a number of difficult

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German Soldiers visit YPG to test sniper rifle



A German Army soldier takes careful aim at a target hundreds of yards downrange. They fired well over 500 rounds in the course of their week at YPG. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

By Chuck Wullenjohn

When it comes to the testing of large scale weapon systems such as 155mm artillery pieces and 120mm mortars, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground boasts a long and storied history.

Proving ground testing offer many benefits to customers, such as specialized data gathering equipment,

some of the longest ranges in the western world, a remote location, and deep expertise that began in the early 1950's. Testing large bore weapons remains an important component of the Yuma Proving Ground's workload today, with customers from friendly nations around the world.

Though proving ground facilities are optimized for the testing of large

scale weapons, smaller weapons such as rifles and machine guns have also undergone frequent testing, though in much smaller numbers. One example occurred in early July when six German Special Forces soldiers visited the proving ground to fire the German army's G29 sniper rifle in a real world desert environment.

Master Sgt. Andreas Jung, a 24 year German army veteran, explained that the new rifle is replacing one used since 1997 and that it is important to test it in climates outside of central Europe. "We are firing at ranges between 300 and 1100 meters for one week," he said, "including at night." The soldiers fired a total of over 500 rounds.

The bolt-action G29 rifle fires a Swiss-made .338 Lapua Magnum round, which will travel extremely long distances. The G29 rifle is much more accurate and precise than rifles carried by typical infantrymen.

Planning for the test at YPG began several months in advance when the Germans requested to test at the proving ground through state

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FACEBOOK

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engineering challenges must be addressed:

Weight -- Aquila has a wingspan wider than a Boeing 737, but has to weigh as little as possible to stay up for as long as possible. That's why the body of the plane is made of a carbon fiber composite so the whole aircraft weighs less than 1,000 pounds -- or about the same as a grand piano. Designers will continue to make it lighter.

Power -- The amount of energy Aquila collects from the sun during the day has to be enough to keep its propellers, communications payload, avionics, heaters and light systems running when it's dark. That means using about 5,000W of power at cruising altitude, or about as much as three hairdryers.

Control -- Aquila is mostly self-sufficient, but it still relies on a ground crew of about a dozen engineers, pilots and technicians who direct, maintain and monitor the aircraft. They control the aircraft through software which allows them to determine heading, altitude and airspeed -- or send Aquila on a GPS-based route. Takeoff and landing are automatic, since no human pilot can



Aquila, Facebook's solar-powered plane, has a wingspan wider than a Boeing 737 but weighs less than even the smallest compact automobile. The unmanned aircraft will carry a communications payload that will use lasers to transfer data more than 10 times faster than existing systems and aim its beams precisely enough to hit a dime more than 11 miles away while in motion.

land in a precise location as well as software can.

Speed -- When you see Aquila fly, one of the most surprising things is how slow it goes. That's on purpose. In order to use the least amount of energy, Aquila needs to go as slow as possible. At higher altitudes, where the air is thinner, it can go a bit faster -- about 80 mph.

Altitude -- In order to take off, fly and land, Aquila's wings and propellers have to be able to operate both in high, cold altitudes and lower, warmer altitudes where the

air can be 10 times denser. Facebook developers are working to figure out how much power that takes -- and what impact it will have on solar panel performance, battery size, latitude range and seasonal performance.

Load -- Almost half the mass of Aquila will come from high-energy batteries. That's a lot of weight to put on large, flexible wings, which is why computer models have been developed to predict how Aquila's shape deforms under load.

Communications -- Aquila will

carry a communications payload that will use lasers to transfer data more than 10 times faster than existing systems. It will be able to aim its beams precisely enough to hit a dime more than 11 miles away while in motion.

Over the next year Aquila testing will continue -- flying higher and longer, and adding more aircraft and payloads. It's all part of Facebook's mission to connect the world and help more of the four billion people who are not online gain access to all the opportunities of the internet.

THE OUTPOST

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Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg (right, foreground) watches with delight as the Aquila makes its first flight at YPG on June 28th. Over the next year Aquila testing will continue -- flying higher and longer, and adding more aircraft and payloads. (US Army photos)

Rain and dust on demand at Yuma Proving Ground

by Mark Schauer

Soldiers are accustomed to facing insidious enemies, but rely on YPG testers to keep them safe from one that can't be dispatched with weaponry: the ravages of extreme conditions on equipment.

Yuma Proving Ground specializes in extreme environmental testing of military equipment, with jurisdiction over test centers in the arctic, tropics, and desert. Among testing activities performed by the Metrology and Simulation Division at YPG's Yuma Test Center is one that can create rain and dust storms on demand, any time of the year.

The rain facility can accommodate virtually any piece of equipment normally tested at YPG, including ammunition. If necessary, testers can bring in a large fan to simulate wind-driven rains of up to 50 miles per hour and can vary the speeds to mimic gusts of winds of different velocities and intensities.

"We can rain on anything, but the rain facility is primarily used for vehicles," said Frank Aguilar, engineering technician.

Comprised of over 500 adjustable nozzles on three stationary and two portable walls, the rain chamber can deliver highly pressurized water to simulate a fierce monsoon or a slow, steady, misting rain. Testers can

simulate either over the entire item, or concentrate the spray on one part of it.

"We can close off walls and hit the test item from any angle the customer wants," said Aguilar. "One program wanted only their vehicle's turret hit at a 45 degree angle, so we adapted the nozzles to do that."

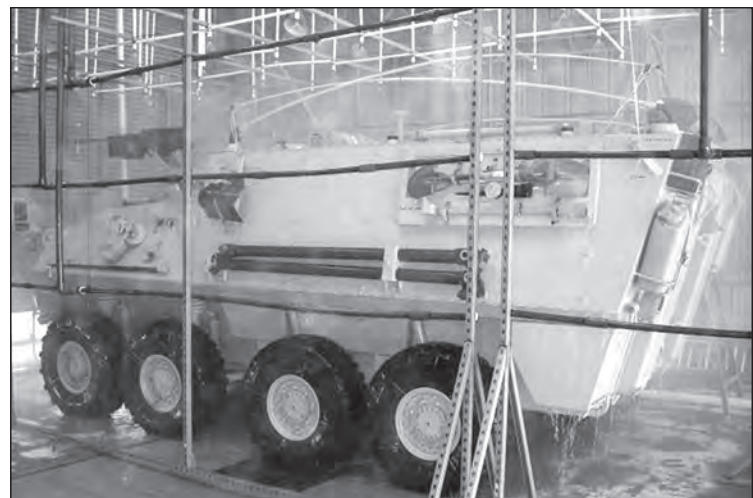
Two pumps push the pressurized water from a 10,000 gallon tank outside the facility's test bay through nozzles inside. The rate of spray hitting the item is entered onto a control panel, and is confirmed by a rain gauge inside. Drains in the test bay floor send the water to two sump pits. When the test is completed, the collected water, which could possibly contain oil or grease residue, is transferred to tanker trucks, which transport it for disposal in an environmentally friendly way.

Exterior cameras monitor the test item's experience inside the facility, and occasionally video is taken from inside a vehicle during the mock storms. A wet vehicle compartment caused by inadequate seals would be more than just uncomfortable for Soldiers in theater: it could be potentially life-threatening if the water shorts out important electrical equipment inside, a threat that YPG testers keep close watch for during evaluations.

"If there is substantial leakage, we'll measure by weight the amount of water that intruded into the vehicle," explained Aguilar.

Rain is a potential menace for equipment in a desert environment, but the ravages

of dust is a daily reality that must be planned for in places where American Soldiers are currently deployed. Though YPG has both in abundance, test items are subjected to controlled and sustained exposure in a separate steel chamber that is part of the same complex as the rain facility. The items inside endure potent concentrations of blowing silica powder for six hours at a stretch, and are often put through their paces on the test range as soon



Comprised of over 500 adjustable nozzles on three stationary and two portable walls, YPG's rain chamber can deliver highly pressurized water to simulate a fierce monsoon or a slow, steady, misting rain. Testers can simulate either over the entire item, or concentrate the spray on one part of it. (US Army photo)

as the punishing dust blasting is completed.

The Metrology and Simulation Division has a wide range of facilities, including hot and cold climatic chambers, vibration tables to test the effects of intense shaking on munitions, and a lightweight shock testing machine that evaluates a piece of equipment's ability to withstand sudden shock such as that caused by underwater explosions encountered in naval combat.

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A View Without a Point

Pancakes and life decisions

By Teri Womack

I am not a big fan of pancakes – to me, they taste like fake cake and false advertising.

First, they have the word CAKE in their name. Secondly, they look just like a layer cake when they are served up on a plate in a big stack. The look even more like dessert when they're topped with strawberries and whipped cream. The hardest thing for me, though, is that they smell just like a freshly baked cake, hot out of the oven. My perception of pancakes is far from the reality of how they actually taste to me.

Every once in a while I doubt

myself when I see other people enjoying pancakes, so I give them another try. I've ordered them with various toppings, recently with chocolate chips in a last-ditch-effort of believing that "chocolate never lets me down". Well, there's a first time for everything.... not even those tasty chocolate morsels could make me like it.

I know I'm taking a big leap here, but it reminds me about decisions we make in life.

I've found myself saying in frustration "I keep doing the same thing over and over and I can't get it to work". So, why keep doing it? If I keep doing what I'm doing, I'm

surely going to keep getting what I'm getting.

After a few iterations of doing that and how much effort I put into it, I realized that no matter how bad I want things to work out, most often it's better to put it behind me and put my efforts into finding something that works. As for pancakes, maybe it's time to take a chance on those crepes that according to the menu "tastes just like red velvet cake."

I recall times in my life where I've made decisions that seemed perfect, but just didn't feel right. I had a feeling it wouldn't work, but I ignored that twinge of doubt and moved ahead anyway and regretted it –from buying those cute shoes on sale that were just a little too tight to ignoring red warning flags and trusting people I shouldn't have. These days, I pay attention to my gut instinct and if I have even a tiny bit of hesitation, I slip on those still-too-tight shoes and journey on in a different direction.

Then there are the times where everything seemed just right.... just not right for me. We don't live in a one size fits all world and what may work perfectly for others doesn't



automatically translate to being good for me. It's even more disappointing when it turns out bad. When choosing anything from picking out the correct SPF in sunscreen, to choosing a career path or a life partner, I've found that it's best to not compare what works for others --I look inside myself for the path that is right for me.

Although I will probably never like pancakes, there are many more breakfast items to choose from... just like there are many choices in life. So, I'll continue on my journey, trying to make the best choices for me, pay attention to that voice in my head that says "Are you sure you want to do this?" and always order french toast for breakfast.

VIEWPOINTS

For this viewpoint, we asked members of the safety office about their favorite books and authors.



Durred Francher, YPG Explosive Safety Manager

I enjoy reading science fiction primarily and history books. My daughter has introduced me to fan fiction stories and I find them entertaining, mainly because they take a book and change some of the established works and give an alternate story. I don't have a favorite author, I choose books based on their content. I especially like reading Star Trek books. They are written by a number of authors and the stories blend in such a manner to keep my attention. History books about World War II are also one of my favorite topics to read.



Anne Fisher, Hazardous Operations Program Manager

I enjoy reading fiction and novels where I can escape from everyday life and experience different places and things. I like a lot of different authors. My favorites are Nora Roberts, Danielle Steel, Daniel Siva and Brad Thor. One of my favorites so far has been *Property of a Noblewoman* by Danielle Steel.

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Pokémon Go has taken the world by storm

By Teri Womack

Pokémon Go is a recently released smartphone game that has set popularity records. Free to download and play, the game uses Google maps with GPS real-time location/map data and smartphone cameras to create an augmented reality, a form of technology that blends together the real world and computer game play.

But, Pokémon Go is not all fun and games. Here are some safety concerns and things for which to look out:

Access to YPG: Some locations on military installations have been mistakenly designated as Pokéstops by the game. As a result, unauthorized people may come seeking access. They must follow the same procedures required of any other person who comes to the gate without authorized access.

Driving: It is against Yuma Proving Ground policy to use a phone while driving, even if you're not talking. This is an offense that can result in a ticket.

Injuries: The real world can be dangerous if you aren't paying attention. It's easy for players to

inadvertently become "glued" to their screens while in gameplay. There have already been instances of people walking into trees, tripping over curbs and getting scratched and banged up in various ways. Be extra cautious if playing at night and be sure to wear reflective clothing.

Robberies: There have been reports of criminals luring victims to Pokéstops in order to rob them. Always be aware of your surroundings, the people around you, and if possible, team up when venturing out to public spaces. The game was designed to bring people together in the real world but remember you may not know every person you encounter. Be alert and use good judgment when interacting with people you don't know.

Use common sense: Make sure you adhere to the rules of the human world! This means obeying local laws such as trespassing, looking in both directions before crossing a street, being courteous and polite to other players, and paying attention to where you're walking.

Remember, safety comes first at YPG!



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RIFLE

FROM PAGE 1

department and military channels. According to Training Coordinator David Dupuis of YPG's Training Exercise Management Office (TEMO), planning went smoothly. "My role was to be facilitator," he said. "The Germans had been here a couple years ago to test a machine gun so were well aware of the benefits of YPG testing. Basically, anything and everything they needed came through TEMO."

Items needed included setting up targets, constructing target housings out of wood, arranging for cameras to monitor each target, and a great deal more. During the actual test, Dupuis functioned as range officer in charge. This meant he ensured supporting elements were on hand each day, provided safety briefs each morning and maintained a close watch on events as they occurred. Weapons and ammunition were secured and locked each night – in a separate arms room and storage containers, as per Army regulation.

"It was an excellent test and I know the Germans liked it because of the realism YPG offered," he said. "They have the same attitude regarding the value of real world testing as we do."

Martin Hummel, an exchange



Each firing team consisted of two soldiers, a spotter and the man actually firing the bullets. Their accuracy was astounding. (Photos by Chuck Wullenjohn)

engineer from Germany assigned to the YPG-managed Tropic Regions Test Center, provided critical assistance. Fluent in both the German and English languages, and seamlessly able to go back and forth, he was able to interpret as necessary.

"It was fortunate I was here to help," he said. "I can support the Germans just as they require, plus I find what they're doing interesting."

After the Germans completed their YPG testing, they packed up everything and boarded a

plane bound for the humid jungle of Central America where they conducted an additional week of firing at Tropic Regions Test Center facilities.

Hummel, who journeyed with them, said it was important



The G29 sniper rifle replaces an earlier firearm that has been in use by German army sniper teams since the late 1990s.



The G29 rifle fires a Swiss-made round, the .338 Lapua Magnum.

to conduct the testing in real world desert and tropic extreme environments because the realism brings out situations and problems that don't occur in artificial environmental test chambers.

"The combination of factors such as humidity, temperature, ultra-violet radiation, insects, animals, and more can combine to cause a variety of negative situations," he explained. "In Yuma the rifle was fired in a hot/dry environment, while in Central America we experienced a hot/wet environment. Both proved valuable."

The most common role of snipers on the battlefield is to accurately fire long distances from concealed positions to take out high value targets. This reduces enemy fighting capability as well as pins down forces and reduces morale.

According to one report, the average soldier using a standard rifle hits a man-sized target ten percent of the time at 300 meters. The typical well-trained military sniper achieves a record of 90 percent first-round hits at 600 meters.



Offered the opportunity to shoot a few rounds downrange, Col. Randy Murray, commander, accepted the challenge and proceeded to fire a tightly grouped sequence of shots.



Ranging between 300 and 1100 meters, YPG personnel constructed and erected target panels before the German soldiers arrived.



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Paramedics never stop learning



Firefighter/paramedics Kevin Bulkeley and Alexander McNeely recently completed the Advanced Life Support Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents course at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The course featured an in-depth study involving chemistry as it relates to hazardous materials, the medical management of victims, and the development and management of hazardous materials. Successfully completing the course gives them the added knowledge, skills, and ability to safely interact and treat patients exposed to toxic substances or weapons of mass destruction (WMD). YPG's Fire and Emergency Services can now add these skills to its wide array of response capabilities, making the department one of few within the Army to fortify its hazardous material/WMD response team with "Tox-Medics". (Loaned photo)

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10 things everyone should know about Post-traumatic stress disorder

Submitted by Paul Kilanski, Family Advocacy Program Manager

Living through a frightening or disturbing experience can cause people to develop a condition called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In fact, in any given year, more than 5 million people in the U.S. suffer from PTSD. This condition can be very difficult, but treatment can help.

1. PTSD is a medical condition. It can develop after a person experiences or witnesses a traumatic event. Some things that may lead to PTSD include violent crime like rape or assault, military combat, accidents and natural disasters. Anyone can develop PTSD. Men, women and children of all ages can be affected.

2. Recognize the symptoms of PTSD. People with PTSD may have recurring nightmares or thoughts about the trauma. These may be so vivid that it feels like they are reliving the event. They may have sudden outbursts of anger or feelings of mistrust or guilt. PTSD can cause depression, anxiety and problems sleeping. People with PTSD may be unable to feel their emotions at all.

3. PTSD may cause physical symptoms. People with PTSD may get headaches, have stomach problems or feel dizzy. They may have chest pain, discomfort in other areas of the body or immune system problems. If you are having any of these symptoms following a traumatic event, ask your health care provider if PTSD could be the reason.

4. PTSD often starts within 3

months of the event. But for some people, symptoms do not begin until years later.

5. Previous trauma can increase a person's risk. Studies show that people who have been through a traumatic event before, either recently or as a child, are at a higher risk for PTSD.

6. PTSD can be treated. Talking with a doctor or counselor who is familiar with PTSD helps many people recover. Medication may ease symptoms like fear, anxiety or depression. Joining a support group with others who have PTSD can also help.

7. Recovery takes time. With treatment, some people are able to recover within six months. For others it can take longer. Treatment helps most people.

8. Positive actions can help the healing process. Learn and use relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs eat a healthy diet and get plenty of rest and exercise.

9. Friends and family members can help. Learn about PTSD. Join a support group for friends and family. Be patient and supportive.

10. For more information talk to your health care provider or contact your local mental health services. Visit these websites: National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov, National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org, Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net. If you are in crisis or afraid you may hurt yourself, call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

Aiding the hungry during the trying days of summer

By Mark Schauer

In Yuma, summer is the hungriest time of year.

Yuma County's chronically high unemployment rate is most acute in summer, and with an assist from generous YPG employees, recipients of food baskets from the Yuma Community Food Bank

Since 2009, the Feds Feed Families program has encouraged federal workers to donate food to local pantries to help ease the perpetual seasonal shortages. The two populations most baskets go to are hungry children and the elderly.

"During the summer months, people don't give as much food," said Mardy Clark, Family Support Division chief.

In past years, YPG employees have stepped up to the plate to help the less fortunate and Clark is confident this year will be no different.

"Last time we gave them about 750 pounds of food," said Clark.

Who are the hungry in Yuma? Most are people who never saw themselves needing such assistance: elderly couples whose fragile economic stability was shattered bailing out



Family Advocacy Program Manager Paul Kilanski (left) donates canned goods to Family Support Division chief Mardy Clark as part of YPG's participation in the annual Feds Feed Families food drive. The drive runs through the end of August, with collection boxes at 12 locations across YPG. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

a child or grandchild who lost his or her job, veterans waiting for a disability rating from the Veterans Administration, even active duty military personnel with large families and small paychecks.

Collection boxes are located at 12 places around the proving ground: at the Commissary, PX and in the ROC Atrium, at the Army Community Services office, Cactus Café, Child Development Center, Coyote Lanes, Fitness Center, Roadrunner Cafe, Palm Garden Library, Desert Breeze Travel Camp, and the Youth Center.

The Feds Feed Families drive runs through August 31st.

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SAFETY CORNER

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Safety Facts and Tips – Not Only for On-the-Job Use

Did you realize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can reduce the number and severity of work-related/off the job injuries and illnesses? PPE not only helps protect people, but also improves productivity and profits. For work-related occupations, the type of PPE is determined by carefully analyzing the workplace and job operations through a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). Our YPG Family can also take their knowledge of PPE home by using the appropriate protective equipment for themselves and their family members when the job and its potential hazards call for it.

- Protect your head with a hard hat when performing construction work, trimming trees, repairing machinery, and doing other jobs with head injury risks.
- Use a sun safety hat (one with a wide brim and neck protection) to assist in the prevention of skin cancer.
- Protect your hearing with acoustic earmuffs or earplugs when operating noisy equipment.
- Protect your vision with appropriate safety eyewear (safety glasses, goggles,

- face-shields) when working in less than perfect conditions.
- Protect your lungs with the correct respiratory equipment (dust masks, cartridge respirators, etc) when working in unusual conditions.
- Is appropriate PPE available in your work area and based on a JHA? Is your PPE clean and serviceable?
- Are your safety boots equipped with steel or ceramic toe boxes and metatarsal supports?

There is a new “Senior Commander’s Policy Statement No. 27S – Procurement of Ergonomic and Personal Protective Equipment” dated July 14, 2016, for YPG Mission and Garrison personnel.

For more information, contact your YPG Safety Office. Remember, “NOBODY GETS HURT.”



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