

## Departing commander leaves mark on Cold Regions Test Center

By Mark Schauer

Spring has sprung and residents of interior Alaska are eagerly anticipating mild spring weather and endless summer days.

For U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center commander Lt. Col. Michael Kovacs, however, the season is bittersweet. Despite his efforts to extend his tour an extra year, the Army is calling him to a new duty station next month. Though disappointed to leave Alaska, 29 years in uniform have taught Kovacs that change is inevitable in the life of an Army officer.

“We’ll make sure my replacement is all set up and able to have a good time, too,” he said with a smile.

Kovacs made the most of his two year tour, staying active with plenty of hiking, hunting, and fishing in his free time.

“It would be silly not to have a good time,” he observed. “This is a great assignment for exploring and getting outdoors—it’s almost criminal if you don’t.”

He has also been a regular participant in swimming and intramural basketball at Fort Greely, and won post-wide notice when he won a bench-pressing competition at the post fitness center, hefting an impressive 425 pounds.

“It’s all in good fun,” he said. “There are a great many young Soldiers with the missile defense unit here, so I figured CRTC had to get on the map somehow.”

Kovacs’ time in Alaska has hardly been all fun and games, however. Aside from overseeing an increasingly busy workload at the Army’s only cold weather testing facility, Kovacs also completed two Master’s degrees during his command: one in public policy administration from the University of Missouri and the other in procurement and acquisition from Webster University.

Having deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan seven times and spending time in the project

SEE **DEPARTING** page 3

## Personnel parachute continues to be tested and refined

By Mark Schauer

Mass combat jumps of paratroopers have taken place in virtually every large-scale deployment of American forces since World War II.

Useful for seizing isolated air fields deep behind enemy lines, which can then be used to receive and deploy more troops and armaments, the tactic was used successfully by American forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the decades have passed, the personnel parachutes American Soldiers use have advanced to meet modern requirements of design and function. The current T-11 parachute offers jumpers a slow

SEE **PARACHUTE** page 2



US ARMY PHOTO

YPG is home to all manner of parachute testing, with spacious and instrumented ranges large enough to accommodate even the world’s largest parachutes. Rigorously testing personnel parachutes like the T-11 is a one-stop shop for customers.

Congressional  
staffers get “blown  
away” at YPG

/Page 4



Yuma Proving Ground:  
Army’s busiest test  
organization

/Page 6



Seeing Alaska  
through a  
camera lens

/Page 8





# Yuma County Fair

A record 181,000 people attended the six day 2016 Yuma County Fair, with many stopping by YPG's exhibit. (Left) Arizona legislator Charlene Fernandez discusses YPG's impact on combat readiness with Public Affairs Officer Chuck Wullenjohn. (Below) Public Affairs Specialist Mark Schauer shows a young visitor the three primary Army helmets of the 20th century. He was thrilled to try on all three.

US ARMY PHOTOS



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## PARACHUTE

FROM PAGE 1

and stable descent, especially in high winds, and can support more weight than previous parachutes, a crucial advantage for warfighters who carry robust, but heavy gear. Also, since the T-11's canopy deploys slowly and further away from the aircraft than preceding parachutes, the Army was able to increase the gross cargo weight of a C-17 aircraft by 15,000 pounds, which allows the aircraft to safely carry more fuel or cargo. A decade ago, the T-11 underwent extensive developmental testing at YPG that proved it extraordinarily capable.

"It's a complex system with a large canopy and a lot of components, and we rigged many, many malfunctions into them during developmental testing and could not make the parachute fail," recalled Keith Allen, team lead in the Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division who has also served as an Army paratrooper. "We tied the hem shut, and it still inflated through corner vents. We put different reefing lines throughout the canopy and tried to restrict airflow inside, and it still inflated."

There is always room for improvement, however, and recently the T-11 has returned to YPG for testing of different packing configurations of both the main canopy and the reserve canopy Soldiers depend on if the main fails.

"The purpose of the test is to evaluate packing configuration changes that will ease the burden on riggers as well as improve performance," said Allen.

For nearly a year, YPG testers conducted mannequin drops several times, gathering performance data on each of the newly proposed packing configurations and comparing the results to data gathered when the current configuration of the T-11 underwent developmental testing at the proving ground in 2005. Since there is no physical instrumentation

on the parachutes themselves during these tests, evaluators depend on ground-based tracking instruments for video and data of each configuration's deployment, particularly its critically important first seconds of flight. The testers used strain link systems installed on the parachute's risers to measure its peak opening force.

Currently, similar testing is being performed on the T-11's reserve canopy that could eventually result in changes to its components and packing configuration.

YPG is home to all manner of parachute testing, with spacious and instrumented ranges large enough to accommodate even the world's largest cargo parachutes. Testing personnel parachutes is a one-stop shop for customers, Allen says.

"You have to be able to rig these parachutes into malfunctions to test different scenarios," he said. "We have the institutional knowledge of how to do that, and there is really nowhere else in the Department of Defense that has that and the facilities we have. We also have all the historical data, which is another advantage."



US ARMY PHOTO

The current T-11 parachute offers jumpers a slow and stable descent, and can support more weight than previous parachutes. Recently, the T-11 has returned to YPG for testing of different packing configurations.



# DEPARTING

FROM PAGE 1

management side of Army procurement earlier in his career, Kovacs says getting an up close and personal look at testing in an extreme environment was especially rewarding.

"I got to see the extensive coordination that has to go into a test and what has to be done to make people, facilities and trails available in this environment," he said. "You don't just step into a test here. There are risks involved and a lot of work goes into mitigating them."

Most of all, however, he expresses intense admiration for the rugged professionals that make up CRTC's workforce. Given the extreme climate, recruiting potential workers is a difficult proposition: credentialed engineers may not have the ability or inclination to put their skills to work in the brutally cold winters.

"The biggest challenge is maintaining rugged professionals," said Kovacs. "Sometimes you find those golden nuggets—people who may not have the papers, but have the experience to get the job done in challenging conditions and leave customers satisfied with results."

During his command, CRTC has gained efficiencies in a number of areas, one example being the new Vertical and Horizontal Machining Centers that can fabricate parts for test items and specialized infrastructure in a small fraction of the time it takes a manually-operated machine. Kovacs is especially excited about populating the Acquisition Lessons Learned Portal with Man and Material in the Cold reference documents and comprehensive records of cold performance experiences to avoid previous mistakes and provide the basis for making improvements in system development.

"People ask for that kind of information and it takes a lot of effort to put a packet together to answer

those questions," said Kovacs. "Or, you may get a nebulous question like, 'what are the top 10 things that fail in the cold?' A test officer should be able to easily retrieve and package that type of information for a customer or be involved earlier in product development discussions."

According to CRTC officials, such a database could be made to store records encompassing the test center's entire history, with tests of decades past having vital relevance to equipment under evaluation in the modern day.

"CRTC did a test in 1956 where there wasn't room inside the wheel well for the tire chain—the designers didn't think of that," said Jeff Lipscomb, CRTC technical director. "We had a test in more recent years that had a similar problem, and likely we'll see the same problem again in the future. A 'lessons learned' database is something Lt. Col. Kovacs has been championing that is really valuable and I think will be money in the bank for a lot of people."

"My initiative and drive has been to develop a Google-like search and organization tool for horizontal information exchange across the federal science, technology and acquisition communities in a common language," Kovacs added. "The idea is to improve collaboration, requirement focus, investment decision analysis and transparency. We should be able to cross link requirements, engage the broad technical community and compile reviews and comments about initiatives and requirements in one place and pick out what we need to move forward. Nothing is absolute, but there is a real value in knowing what was done in the past."

His tenure at CRTC earned high praise from many, including Maj. Gen. Daniel Karbler, commander of the Army Test and Evaluation Command.

"The leadership up here is phenomenal," said Karbler. "You



PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

Despite efforts to extend his current tour an extra year, Cold Regions Test Center commander Lt. Col. Michael Kovacs is slated to begin his next assignment in May. As CRTC commander, Kovacs oversaw an increasingly busy workload at the Army's only cold weather testing facility, completed two Master's degrees, and spearheaded a data portal that will facilitate information exchange across the federal science, technology, and acquisition communities.

don't have a happy workforce in an extreme environment like this if you don't believe in what you're doing and if you don't have great leaders who are motivating you every day to do well."

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# Congressional staffers get "blown away" at YPG



PHOTOS BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

For most of the staffers, "flying" within the vertical wind tunnel was a once-in-a-lifetime thrill, never to be forgotten.

By Chuck Wullenjohn

A dozen staffers from Democratic and Republican congressional offices throughout Arizona recently made a whirlwind tour of state military activities, including stopping at Yuma Proving Ground for a long afternoon that extended into the evening.

Why so long? The answer is that their last YPG stop was at the vertical wind tunnel where the staffers had the rare opportunity of suiting up and "flying" within the tunnel's flight chamber. Most had never done anything like this before and found it a once-in-a-lifetime thrill.

Everyone agreed that the experience of free-falling was fun and exhilarating, but the YPG visit had a serious side as well. They viewed lots of military equipment undergoing testing and exchanged thoughts with YPG personnel. Col. Randy Murray, commander, provided a detailed YPG briefing and test officers provided short briefings on a wide variety of subjects.

Michael Brownlie, deputy chief of staff for Rep. Christine Sinema (D-AZ), says it gave everyone the chance to see the breadth, importance and integration of military installations within communities throughout Arizona, as well as the diversity of military assets within the state.

"Seeing things first hand leads to a better understanding of how we can be supportive back in Washington, D.C., when coming up with budgets," he said. "It's good to see the value of what is accomplished at YPG and throughout Arizona, and it helped us see what we need to do when fighting for our state."

Jeremy Hayes, professional staffer for the Senate Armed Services Committee and Chairman Senator

John McCain (R-AZ), agrees the visit was valuable, and was even revelatory to those having no military background or who were visiting for the first time.

"The federal budget differs each cycle and, as a result, our challenges are different, so it's very useful to see how dollars are spent," he said. "These visits allow us to view what is happening on the ground versus what we hear verbally or see on PowerPoint charts back in Washington, D.C."

Hayes says he has been in his job for two years. To illustrate how things change, he pointed out that the Islamic State, known as ISIS, was not a known potent threat two years ago. The war in Syria has greatly grown during that time. "Events like these have effects out here in Arizona, just like in Washington, D.C.," he said.

Hayes says there is a push on Capitol Hill to fix the military



Military Freefall School Commander Maj. Josh Enke briefs the staffers about freefall parachuting techniques before they don their suits and step into the vertical wind tunnel's flight chamber.

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acquisition process – to make the process faster and cheaper. He says some feel testing is an area in which time and money can be saved. He is quick to add, however, that neither he nor Senator McCain agrees.

“What we have seen over the decades in combat operations is that if you don’t do the proper testing up front, you end up finding out downrange that the weapon system doesn’t work the way it should,” he explained. “That winds up having a battlefield impact and harms our Soldiers.”

He said the Government Accountability Office (the independent, non-partisan watchdog for Congress) recently conducted a year-long investigation to study this issue and reported that no evidence exists that testing caused cost

overruns or delays.

“The issue for us is that testing is good and we need to keep doing it to ensure full value for the American taxpayer and the safety of our Soldiers,” Hayes said.

YPG employee Mike Dickerson, safety engineer in the Munitions and Weapons Division, who provided an overview of testing of the M777 155mm howitzer, echoed many at the proving ground when he extolled the importance of visits like this.

“It’s essential for Yuma Proving Ground to project a strong image to visitors,” he said.

“It underlines our significance to the Army and the critical importance of the testing we perform. Congress controls the purse strings, so the better face we show, the better for us.”



Mike Dickerson, safety engineer in the Ground Combat Test Directorate, highlights the capabilities of the M119 and M777 howitzers, both of which have been tested at YPG for many years. The visitors expressed great interest in the M777’s new chrome tube that significantly extends the life of the barrel.

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Air Combat Test Directorate Team Leader Keith Allen describes C-130 wind vortex testing to a particularly interested staffer who stayed behind to talk with him after the remainder of the group moved on.

Brownlie of Rep. Sinema’s office believes the visit was an excellent demonstration of how members of the two major political parties, liberal and conservative, can work successfully together, despite the

polarization that exists on some issues.

“When it comes to issues important to our state, we all come together as one delegation to fight for Arizona” he said with a confident smile.



LOANED PHOTO

## History Remembered

The Museum of History in nearby Felicity, Ca., recently held a series of events that attracted a huge crowd from Yuma, including Col. Randy Murray, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Ward. Some of the visitors journeyed from far away, such as French Foreign Minister Jean-Marie Daillet.

The purpose of the event was to unveil a new granite plaque honoring the success of women in the world of parachuting, with almost one dozen women record holders in attendance. The U.S. Parachute Association also honored Generals James Gavin and William Ryder for the prominent roles they played in the history of parachuting.



# Yuma Proving Ground: Army's busiest test organization

By Chuck Wullenjohn

Members of the public driving on highway 95 through Yuma Proving Ground often wonder what activities take place there, for little can be seen

from the road. Some are left with the impression that little occurs or assume that the proving ground is nothing more than a World War 1 style vast no-man's land into which

the Army fires artillery projectiles.

Everyone in the YPG workforce knows how wrong they are!

One of the largest military installations in the world, about one-third the size of Massachusetts and bigger than the state of Rhode Island, YPG's role in maintaining the quality of America's combat forces is enormous. A tremendous variety of military tests are conducted around the year at the proving ground, consisting of nearly every weapon system and munition in the ground combat arsenal. Yuma Proving Ground performed nearly two million man-hours of work last year, making it the Army's busiest test center for the fourth year in a row.

Yuma Proving Ground features one of the longest overland artillery ranges (40 miles) in the nation, the most highly instrumented helicopter armament test range in the Department of Defense, over 200 miles of improved road courses for testing tracked and wheeled vehicles, well over 1000 miles of fiber-optic cable linking test locations, the most modern mine and demolitions test facility in the western hemisphere, and unique urban areas specifically constructed to defeat the threat of improvised explosive devices. Six airfields are available, with extensive unmanned aerial system testing offered through restricted airspace over a variety of terrain conditions, from gentle valleys to craggy mountain peaks. Unmanned aircraft testing is one of the proving ground's growth areas.

Nearly all the primary ground weapon systems deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan underwent extensive testing at the proving ground.

Normally, between 60 and 90 tests are ongoing at any one time.

The proving ground's sparkling clean air, low humidity, skimpy rainfall—only about three inches per year—and annual average of 350 sunny days, add up to almost perfect testing and training conditions. Urban encroachment and noise concerns are non-existent problems, unlike many other military installations.

A part of the Army Test and Evaluation Command, Yuma Proving Ground's mission is to conduct tests on medium and long range artillery, aircraft armament and sensor systems, cargo and personnel airdrop systems, unmanned aircraft, armored vehicles and automotive equipment, technologies for defeating roadside bombs, and much more. Three test centers fall under the proving ground umbrella that feature extreme natural environments – the Cold Regions Test Center, Alaska, the Tropic Regions Test Center that tests in Panama, Suriname and other tropic areas, and Yuma Test Center, Arizona.

The proving ground's workforce is a thoroughly integrated team. Nearly 2400 people work at the proving ground to accomplish the demanding test workload. Yuma County's largest single employer of civilians and the county's primary high tech workplace, the proving ground sends over \$450 million dollars into the economy each year.

In the modern world, Yuma Proving Ground plays a vital role in maintaining the technical excellence and high quality of America's military arsenal. U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is well positioned to meet the challenges of our young century.



US ARMY PHOTO

A huge variety of weapon systems are tested at YPG, from mortars and parachutes to artillery and unmanned aircraft. Even cancelled Army systems, such as the Non-Line of Sight Cannon seen here, have been extensively tested at the proving ground prior to cancellation.



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# Seeing Alaska through a camera lens

Cold Regions Test Center photographer serves nation, community

By Mark Schauer

If there's no photo, it didn't happen.

This popular catchphrase is especially true in the world of military test and evaluation, where test photography can pinpoint the exact fraction of a second a critical piece of equipment failed, allowing the system in question to be made better and stronger.

This vital work is even more important—and difficult—in the harsh winters and terrain of U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center. It takes talent and tenacity, and recently hired test photographer Sebastian Saarloos has earned high plaudits from his fellow rugged professionals.

"I can't always predict when I'm going to have an issue that needs

photo documentation," said Richard Reiser, test officer. "Sebastian responds as quickly as the geography and his schedule allows. He has raised the standard for photography support and is an excellent credit to the test support division that always supports us on short notice."

Saarloos is a common presence on test sites at CRTC, but helps less visible support activities as well.

"We need a photographer from time to time, but he goes far beyond that," said Sam Porter, machinist. "At CRTC, job descriptions are a starting point: you can take the ball and run with it, and Sebastian does that."

Porter recalls an incident where a test customer needed a part fabricated quickly and the design drawings he received were low resolution and

difficult to decipher. Saarloos quickly enhanced the drawings' resolution and printed up copies for Porter and his colleagues to work with.

"It sounds like a simple thing, but when you don't have them it becomes very difficult to work around," said Porter.

Though Delta Junction-native Saarloos has had an interest in digital photography since he was a junior high school, he didn't own a professional-grade single-lens reflex camera until 2009, and didn't take up the profession in earnest until two years after that.

"I was juggling working with my dad's surveying company and photography," he said. "Since it was a family business, I was able to do that, especially in winter when business

was slow."

There were adversities at first for the self-taught photographer using a used camera as he sought out Alaska's immense beauty.

"I was up on the Denali Highway once and there were rainbows all around me in two different directions," he recalled. "I was taking all these pictures and the shutter broke."

Yet he continued, and his perseverance trekking into remote areas and waiting hour after hour in interior Alaska's long winter nights for the perfect photo paid off. Aside from capturing a wide variety of dazzling aurora shots, he snagged photos of even rarer phenomenon like paraselenae or "moon dogs," where moon light is refracted off of ice crystals in cirrus clouds, forming a duo of mock moons flanking each side of the real thing, which is surrounded by a radiant halo. His crisp shot of one such occurrence over mountains looming over Lower Miller Creek was featured in a photo of the day article on the Space.com website in 2013 and was later reprinted in a National Geographic book called *Illustrated Guide to Nature*.

"The editors said this was the best known example of it they could find," he said.

His Alaska nature photography routinely reaches hundreds of thousands of viewers on his personal Facebook page, and one image shared by NASA topped four million: more than five times the population of Alaska. His work has appeared in places from the Wall Street Journal to



Photographer Sebastian Saarloos has earned high plaudits from his fellow rugged professionals at Cold Regions Test Center for his tireless support of the test mission. "He has raised the standard for photography support and is an excellent credit to the test support division," said Richard Reiser, test officer.

PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER



the interior of a Japanese weather calendar, a copy of which hangs in his office. Aside from the demands of his job at CRTC, he and his wife have a growing family to think about now, including a toddler son

and a daughter on the way.

"I don't have much extra time on weekends, so I pick and choose the times I go out to do aurora photography now," he said. "I miss it, but I enjoy being with my family a lot more."

He keeps busy in his church and occasionally helps out with jobs in his father's surveying business on weekends, but every Tuesday night you will find him in Delta Junction's



PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN SAARLOOS

Saarloos' crisp photo of the rare atmospheric anomaly called paraselenae was used in National Geographic's Illustrated Guide to Nature. "The editors said it was the best known example they could find," he said.

city hall, where he is currently serving his second stint on the town's volunteer, non-partisan city council. In his last election, he ran unopposed and drew 69 votes.

"I just do it because I like having a say in how our

town runs," he said.

Delta Junction may be a small community, but the city council faces weighty issues not uncommon to other towns across the country. Low oil prices of late mean lower tax revenues for the State of Alaska, and Delta Junction has no municipal

In his free time, Saarloos (center, right) serves on Delta Junction, Alaska's volunteer, non-partisan city council. "My job as an elected official is not to impose my own personal views, it is to represent my constituents," he said.

PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER



taxes. Aside from these bread and butter issues, there are controversies over quality of life and social issues, too. One example involved a recently approved statewide ballot measure that legalized recreational use of marijuana in a citizen's home, but allowed municipalities to ban its retail sale within city limits. Saarloos drafted an ordinance to do this, but ended up voting against it after intense public comment at a city council meeting.

"Even though I personally don't want to see it sold in retail stores, my job as an elected official is not to impose my own personal views, it is to represent my constituents," he said. "That's my philosophy, anyway."

Saarloos hopes to spend his career at CRTC, but, no matter what, intends to stay in Alaska.

"I'd rather stock grocery shelves than live somewhere else. This is home for my wife and I, and our families."

## VIEWPOINTS

By Mark Schauer

Many of Cold Regions Test Center's rugged professionals are transplants from other parts of the United States. For this viewpoint, we asked Alaskan transplants about their first impression of the state.



**Dan Wozniczka, meteorologist**

The size and expanse of everything was overwhelming. I arrived in May, which was a great time of year to come. I was taken aback by how beautiful everything was, and that really grabbed ahold of me. Unless you are a winter person, it is good to see the summertime first.

**Julie Brennan, administrative assistant**

An exhausting two week trip from Michigan, driving alone with five children under nine years old with my husband traveling in front of me with all of our household items to a place I had never seen before was quite an experience. Delta Junction was the place that

I would finally call home for the next 30 years with many new challenges, but I was very pleased raising my family here.



**Robyn O'Halloran, resource manager**

I first came to Alaska as a naval officer in May 1992, and never dreamt I would ever live here. Adak, in the Aleutian chain, is on the same latitude as Seattle, so the weather wasn't very much different from there. It was windblown and treeless, but the weather was good by Alaskan standards, there were good schools, and beautiful views of the ocean and mountains.

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# 10 things everyone should know about depression

Submitted by Paul J. Kilanski

More than 20 million people in the U.S. suffer from depression each year. Depression is not simply feeling sad. Like heart disease or diabetes, depression is a medical illness. The good news is that depression can be treated.

Depression affects the mind and the body. It affects a person's thoughts, feelings, actions and health. It affects the way a person sleeps and eats. Depression can make it hard to go to school or work and can also affect relationships with other people.

There is no single cause of depression. Depression can be

triggered by changes in the brain, stress, illness or a painful life event. It can run in families and sometimes the

cause is not always clear.

Depression is not a passing mood. If not treated, depression can last

for weeks, months or years. People who are depressed cannot "make" themselves get better.

Anyone can become depressed. Depression can affect men, women, children and older adults of every ethnicity and background.

Some people have only a few symptoms of depression. Others have many. Symptoms can come on suddenly or happen gradually over time. Some common symptoms are: Feeling sad or irritable for no specific reason; extreme tiredness; changes in sleeping or eating habits; a loss of energy or enthusiasm; trouble thinking, concentrating and

SEE **DEPRESSION** page 12



## Shooting the Breeze Li'l Red Trucks

By David J. Horn

I like old trucks. I like Detroit cast iron, a no-nonsense dash panel, and a bench seat where you can sit up and drive with an elbow out the window. I feel fortunate to have grown up on a farm in the day of the Chevy Apache and the old Dodge Power Wagon.

Now, one of the things I've noticed about YPG is that for a lot of folks out here, the higher your grade and salary, the poorer your vehicle. That new Ford F-150 you saw entering the parking lot was just purchased by some wet-behind-the-ears kid who just started his third week on the job, and it ended up parked next to his boss's 2001 Toyota pickup with the peeling clear coat, the sun-rotted interior, and 350,000 miles on the clock.

As for me, since I'm now a town

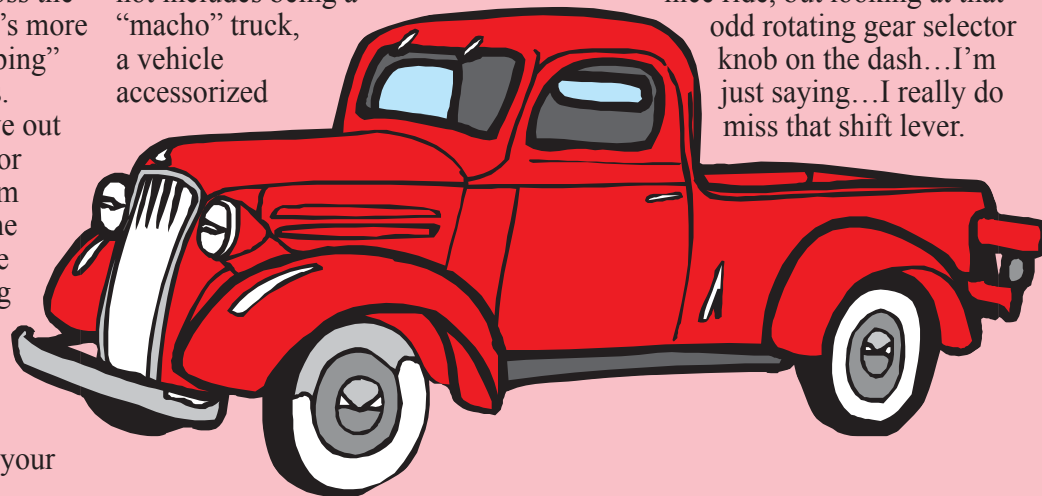
guy and I like my vehicles to easily fit inside my two-car garage, I currently drive a 1993 Ford Ranger. A six-cylinder extended cab with four-wheel drive, a hitch for my trailers, with about 245,000 miles on it. Faded red paint where...as a result of a lot of trips out across the Kofa Wildlife Refuge...there's more than a little "Arizona pin striping" running down along the sides.

In addition to the daily drive out to YPG, the Ranger is great for hauling stuff to the house from hardware stores, playing in the mud after a rain as long as the mud isn't too deep, and taking whacks from shopping carts in stride. There's no better place to take a coffee break while on a job outside than sitting on the tailgate of your

truck. Since it runs just fine, the air conditioner works great during our toasty Yuma summers, and the annual license tabs cost only 19 bucks, I'm going to keep it around a little while longer. But, what my old Ford Ranger definitely is not includes being a "macho" truck, a vehicle accessorized

with all the latest high-tech gadgets, or a vehicle with the type of look that grabs people's attention when it passes by. Maybe that's why it fits into my lifestyle so well.

Well, time to head down range in my department's GSA truck. It's a nice ride, but looking at that odd rotating gear selector knob on the dash...I'm just saying...I really do miss that shift lever.



# DEPRESSION

FROM PAGE 11

remembering; lack of interest in activities that once brought pleasure; physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment such as headaches, stomach problems and pain; feelings of guilt and despair; thoughts of death or suicide. If symptoms persist for longer than a few weeks, depression may be the cause.

Talking to a health care provider is the first step in treating depression. The health care provider will give a physical exam and ask questions about symptoms. A physical exam can rule out other causes such as another illness or medications that can cause depression-like symptoms.

With treatment, most people find relief from depression. There are a variety of treatment options. Sometimes more than one approach is needed. Common treatments include:

**Antidepressant medication-** There are many types of antidepressant medications. You will need to work with a health care provider to find the medication that works best. It may take several weeks or longer for the antidepressant to start working.

**Psychotherapy or counseling-** Therapy can help people change thought patterns and

manage stress.

Healing from depression takes time. While a person with depression cannot make himself get better, he or she may be able to help the process. Set small goals. Break big tasks into smaller ones. Stay active. Physical activity can help lift spirits. Eat three meals a day. Get plenty of sleep. Stay away from alcohol and other drugs. Try to be around supportive people.

Family and friends can help. The most important thing anyone can do for someone with depression is to help them get treatment. It is also important to show care and concern. Do not ignore comments about suicide. Stay with the person until they get help. For people who are depressed, the hardest thing may be to reach out for help. This is, however, the first step toward getting better.

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

# Community Strengths & Themes Assessment in progress

By **Connie Everly**

YPG HEALTH PROMOTION OFFICER

Yuma Proving Ground deployed a Community Strengths and Themes Assessment (CSTA) last month.

Fifty-five assessments have been completed to date, so let's keep up the momentum!

Our goal is to achieve 100% participation!

For those who may not have seen the original article in the 22 Mar issue of the Outpost, please read on!

The assessment will be open from one to three months, depending upon how long it takes to receive 95% confidence of responses to the assessment.

Current army regulations direct installations to assess communities for health risk factors and needs on an annual basis. No personal health information is collected. All U.S. Army Public Health Center surveys meet the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) enacted by Congress in 1996.

The Vice Chief of Staff's Gold Book specifically states "Leaders and Healthcare providers must engage in an interdisciplinary approach, comprised of several lines of effort, with an aim to: (1) increase effectiveness of health surveillance, detection and response efforts to identify, refer and treat Soldiers and

Families at risk; (2) reduce cultural stigma associated with seeking behavioral healthcare; and (3) develop resiliency, coping skills and encourage help-seeking behavior among our Soldiers and Families."

The CSTA is a holistic approach to assessing the community for needs. It is designed to capture the pulse of the community member's feelings on quality of life, health, safety, and satisfaction within the environment of an Army installation. This assessment will establish a baseline for health promotion.

The benefits from taking the assessment are many. One is to support the five pillars of the Ready and Resilient program, i.e., physical, social, family, emotional, and spiritual. Others are: for the YPG community to find its voice regarding health and wellness education, issues; be able to assess strengths and weaknesses based upon the data for making improvements where needed; acknowledging best practices; Subjects include but are not limited to:

Tobacco free living; nutrition; sleep physical activity, support for nursing mothers, weight management, stress management, depression, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, signs, symptoms and emergency response to heart attack and

stroke, occupational health and safety, vaccine-preventable diseases, occupational supports, worksite background information, etc.

Assessment intended audience is Active Duty Soldiers, DA Civilians, Family members, retirees and contractors. In other words, anyone that lives and/or works at YPG, to include tenant units.

From the assessment, the senior commander identifies top issues, and in turn tasks them to the Community Health Promotion Council, which meets quarterly. This is a part of developing a strategic plan for health promotion.

Participants will be able to take the assessment in a variety of ways. By using the link in this article, HousingGram, Facebook, Twitter, email, etc.

The Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP) Manager will give service members and DA civilians credit for one (1) hour of ASAP training. If you are interested, contact Mr. Chris Lee at 928-328-2249 or email to [christopher.a.lee24.civ@mail.mil](mailto:christopher.a.lee24.civ@mail.mil), once you have completed the assessment.

To take the assessment, please go to: <https://usaphcapps.amedd.army.mil/Survey/se.ashx?s=2511374566FF1DCF>.

For more information, please contact Ms. Connie Everly at 928-328-2167 or email to [Connie.f.everly.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Connie.f.everly.civ@mail.mil).





Drinking too much alcohol increases people's risk of injuries, violence, drowning, liver disease, and some types of cancer. This April during Alcohol Awareness Month the YPG Army Substance Abuse Program encourages you to educate yourself and your loved ones about the dangers of drinking too much. To spread the word and prevent alcohol abuse, YPG is joining other organizations across the country to honor Alcohol Awareness Month.

If you are drinking too much, you can improve your health by cutting back or quitting. Here are some strategies to help you cut back or stop drinking:

- Limit your drinking to no more than 1 drink a day for women or 2 drinks a day for men.

- Keep track of how much you drink.
- Choose a day each week when you will not drink.
- Don't drink when you are upset.
- Avoid places where people drink a lot.
- Make a list of reasons not to drink.

The YPG Army Substance Abuse Program reminds you that if you, or someone you know, is making alcohol drinking choices which are causing problems in relationships, at the workplace, at home, financially, physically or legally, it's time to get "Help for Today, Hope for Tomorrow." For more information about alcoholism and recovery

contact your local ASAP office at (928) 328-3090 or stop by building 303, second floor. Help is available right now.

## Alcohol Awareness Tips and Facts

Alcohol acts as a central nervous system depressant drug which is rapidly absorbed by the stomach and small intestine into the bloodstream and then circulated to every organ in the body.

The Centers for Disease Control reports 88,000 deaths are attributed to excessive alcohol consumption which makes alcohol the 3rd leading lifestyle-related cause of death for the nation.

A standard drink is any drink that contains 0.6oz of pure alcohol which is equivalent to:

12 oz. beer

5 oz. of wine  
1.5 oz. of distilled  
spirits of liquor

Limit your drinking to no more than 1 drink per hour, no more than 2 drinks per day, and no more than 3 drinks on any special occasion to ensure you don't encounter any negative health or legal side effects.

People who drink regularly and over the 1-2-3 guidelines develop tolerance over time causing the drinker to have to drink more to fill the effects. However, higher tolerance does not protect against the ill-effects such as health and legal consequences.

For more information and materials, contact: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (<http://samhsa.gov/>) at [ncadiinfo@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:ncadiinfo@samhsa.hhs.gov). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/> at [niaaaweb-r@exchange.nih.gov](mailto:niaaaweb-r@exchange.nih.gov). YPG Army Substance Abuse Program – 928-328-2249/3090

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## SAFETY CORNER

# Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness?

- **THIRST:** When you feel thirsty, your body is telling you it is already dehydrated. Make sure to drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- **HEAT EXHAUSTION:** According to the Arizona Department of Health, heat exhaustion occurs when the body loses a lot of fluids through heavy sweating usually because of a strenuous activity or working in a hot environment. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin; heavy sweating, headache, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, and fatigue.
- **HEAT STROKE:** HEAT STROKE IS LIFE-THREATENING. Call 9-1-1 if you think you're experiencing heat stroke. Heat stroke occurs when the body's internal temperature rises to a dangerous level that can cause brain damage or death. Signs of heat stroke include hot, red and dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid or weak pulse and shallow breathing. The body's normal temperature is 98.1 degrees. A very high temperature is considered 105-degrees, according to the Arizona Department of Health.

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE HEAT:

When the temperatures get hot, it's easy for us to get dehydrated, and suffer from heat exhaustion. In

For more information, contact the YPG Safety Office, x2660. Remember: "NOBODY GETS HURT."

Arizona, the heat can be dangerous. There are ways to protect yourself against the heat:

- **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER!** Water is the best way to keep your body's temperature cool. The National Weather Service says to keep yourself hydrated even if you don't feel thirsty. Drinking non-alcoholic fluids is ok, too. Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- **KEEP YOURSELF COOL.** Whether it is inside a restaurant or your home, spend time in air-conditioned spaces to keep yourself cool. This will protect your body, get you out of the sun, and you'll feel better.
- **WEAR LIGHT CLOTHING.** Light-colored clothing helps reflect the sun light and keep you cool. Wear a baseball cap or a big hat to keep the sun out of your face.
- **LIMIT SUN EXPOSURE.** Don't stay out in the sun too long. You won't be as hot, and you can protect your skin from getting burned.
- **SLOW DOWN.** Working out, running, bike riding or hiking are ways to keep your body healthy and active. Reserve strenuous activities when the temperatures are the coolest, whether that is early in the morning or into the evening. It may be good to take strenuous activities inside an air-conditioned facility, such as a gym.



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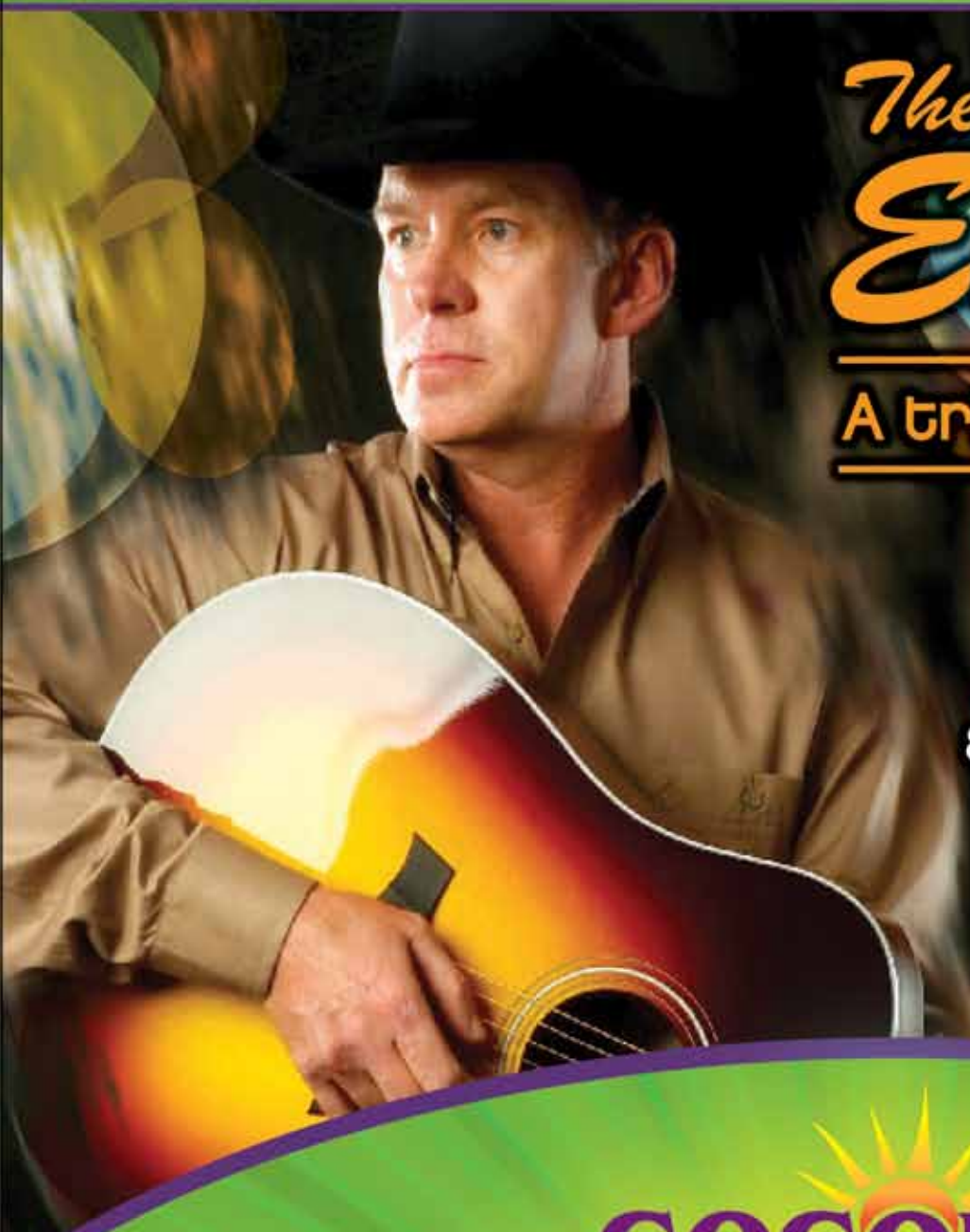
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