



THE OUTPOST

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365 | VOLUME 65 NO. 13 MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2016

Latest howitzer shows what it can do at Cold Regions Test Center

By Mark Schauer

Soldiers depend on self-propelled howitzers for mobility and punishing firepower in combat situations.

This winter, a high impact, multi-month evaluation at U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center is helping ensure the latest generation of self-propelled howitzers works even in the world's coldest environments. The Paladin Integrated Management (PIM) evaluation is a massive effort verifying the effectiveness of a host of improvements to the venerable M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzer, the most common platform of its kind in the world.

With a wider stance than its predecessor, the M109A7 variant is more stable and adept at absorbing the howitzer's powerful recoil as it fires. Beneath the armor, a new engine identical to that found in the Bradley Fighting Vehicle puts out nearly 200 more horsepower than the power plant in the last version of the Paladin. The engine delivers power to the tracks via a transmission that also comes to the platform from the Bradley, an interchangeability of components that helps mechanics. The platform's stowage capacity for artillery shells has been increased and

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Heritage Center outreach to Yuma community valued

By Chuck Wullenjohn

As a publically-funded institution that greatly benefits from the patriotism of the American people and the energetic support of community leaders, Army installations around the nation conscientiously nurture positive relations with outside communities.

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is no different, going out of its way to participate in major community events like parades and festivals that garner headlines and media coverage. Much of what YPG contributes to the outside community, however, makes few headlines, for it has become part of the fabric of local life. Such is the case with YPG's Heritage Center Museum.

Most employees are familiar with the Heritage Center Museum itself, which has operated since the mid-1990's in the proving ground's original headquarters building. The Heritage Center, however, is much larger than a single building. Historical exhibits are



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

Tammy Snook, interpretative park ranger at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot (right), discusses the YPG historical exhibit that Heritage Center Director Bill Heidner (left) designed and installed within an 1870 adobe building at the depot. The intent of the exhibit is to enlighten members of the public on the vital national defense work performed at Yuma Proving Ground and to "entice" them to visit YPG's Heritage Center Museum.

located in the newly opened Visitor Control Center and in the Range Operations Center, and all YPG historical displays of artifacts (such as the "big guns" YPG entrance) are managed by Heritage Center personnel. Director Bill Heidner even designed and installed a YPG exhibit within an adobe building constructed in 1870 at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot to explain the YPG story and "draw"

visitors to the proving ground.

Yuma Visitors Bureau Executive Director Linda Morgan oversees an organization with the mission of promoting Yuma to visitors from around the world and providing Yuma information to anyone requesting it. She says the many public tours offered at YPG each winter are among the most popular activities on the

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Emergency preparedness is no mean feat

By Chuck Wullenjohn

All military installations throughout the United States, large or small, are concerned with the proper management of emergencies.

Emergencies can take many forms, from natural disasters, such as storms and wildfires, to acts of terrorism, such as an active shooter. While emergency plans do not avert or eliminate threats, proper emergency planning reduces vulnerability, improves response and decreases the effect of the incident. It can save lives and prevent injuries.

Yuma Proving Ground has been active for many years in emergency management planning, especially so since the dawn of our new century when terrorism became a more imminent threat.

The Directorate of Plans, Training and Mobilizations (DPTMS) operates an emergency operations center (EOC) that serves as the central heart of any emergency response at the proving ground, especially if the emergency was to extend into days or weeks. When called into activation, key staff meet at the center to manage event response activities,

gather information and provide senior leadership with the most current and accurate recommendations possible. EOC personnel, while not on the ground at the incident site, maintain up-to-date situational awareness and operate closely with outside agencies whenever necessary.

"It was what happened on 9-11 that pushed and accelerated federal and state agencies to improve emergency response and create more robust emergency operations centers," said recently retired DPTMS operations officer Gordon Wiborg. "Though we have a fairly small EOC at YPG, our electronic communications, monitoring and communications capabilities rival many of the larger installation EOCs I have seen."

A six year YPG veteran and a chemical weapons treaty compliance officer for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency before that, Robert Barocio is the proving ground's current Chief of

Operations and Emergency Manager. He says YPG's EOC contains dozens of permanent computers, multiple telephone lines, audio-visual equipment and more.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) fills with representatives of numerous YPG mission essential functions to properly coordinate response activities during an emergency. The EOC acts as the central heart of the proving ground's response effort.

When the EOC is activated in response to an emergency, a variety of staffers representing mission essential functions and senior leaders descend on the center and report to designated work stations. All computers are linked through a commercially-available computer software program that allows everyone to share information and develop a common operating picture.

"In essence, this program is a virtual emergency operations center that acts as a portal in everyone's computer that allows us to share maps, data, memos, news releases, and excel spread sheets," said Barocio. "It gives us the means to create and share information to ensure all EOC personnel share the same operating picture."

The EOC gathers people of numerous disciplines and skill areas into one room and enables them to work collaboratively to make decisions together.

There have been numerous EOC exercises in recent years, as recently as this past January, in which realistic emergency situations require EOC activation and response. Scenarios

have included wildfires, electrical power outages, active shooter situations, and more. The purpose of this training was to ensure everyone knows what to do to ensure the multitude of responsibilities that would be required in an emergency are considered, planned for and properly executed. Personnel accountability and robust communications are response are of absolute importance.

There have also been several "real world" emergencies over the years in which suspicious packages and flood situations caused EOC activation.

Everyone at YPG has been offered the opportunity to participate in the "AtHOC Mass Notification System" that alerts workers to an emergency via cell phone or personal home telephone line, as each individual chooses. DPTMS is YPG's "master" notifier.

"We plug a message into the system and send it to any group of employees or proving ground residents, as appropriate," he explained. "It can be sent to one office or everyone. Personnel at YPG are the proving

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THE OUTPOST

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News may be submitted to:
The Editor, Outpost, Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma, AZ, 85365.
Phone: (928) 328-6149 or DSN 899.
Visit our website at: www.yuma.army.mil
or email to: mark.a.schauer.civ@mail.mil

Commander: Col. Randy Murray
Public Affairs Officer: Chuck Wullenjohn
Public Affairs Specialist/Editor: Mark Schauer
Technical Editor, Cold Regions Test Center: Clara Zachgo
Marketing Specialist: Teri Womack
Visual Information Manager: Riley Williams



PIM

FROM PAGE 1

sophisticated digital communications, fire control, and navigation systems have been improved. While previous incarnations of the Paladin used a hydraulic system to operate such components as the cab and ammunition rammer, the PIM uses a generator that pushes out a whopping 70 kilowatts of electricity, enough power to run an entire 40 house neighborhood block.

Though the weather this past winter at CRTC didn't reach the jaw-dropping temperatures of -50 degrees Fahrenheit or more below zero that are typical, the variation didn't faze the testers.

"Early on we knew it was going to be a relatively warm winter, but it was determined we would still get worthwhile data," said Elizabeth Palm, test officer. "We can't control the weather, but we can adjust to it to take advantage of the coldest times."

The coldest times still saw the

mercury plunge below -25 degrees Fahrenheit, and Palm and the crew had much to do. The PIM accumulated hundreds of miles on CRTC's punishing road courses, and undertook braking and acceleration tests at CRTC's automotive test track. Throughout the course of the evaluation, CRTC testers fired

hundreds of rounds from the howitzer's 155mm cannon at multiple angles and with varying propelling charges. The firing tests were not gentle, but simulated the kind of rapid firing that Soldiers in combat depend on for survival.

Further, the engine was subjected to

cold starts in temperatures well below zero, oftentimes after having cold air blown on its engine from tubular fans to ensure a maximum of frigidness.

"The convective flow assists in cooling the component fluid temperatures more quickly than cold soaking alone," explained Palm.

For the testing at CRTC, skilled mechanics from Yuma, Az., capable of rapidly repairing both the



Capable of taking out targets that are out of sight dozens of miles away, artillery is known as the "queen of battle" for a very good reason.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN SAARLOOS

With a wider stance than its predecessor and featuring a huge number of improvements, a M109A7 155mm Self-Propelled Howitzer under test comes to a quick stop on a test course at the Cold Regions Test Center, Alaska.

Bradley and M109A7, spent weeks supporting the test in Alaska, as did vehicle operators whose previous experience on the vehicle was gained in the desert southwest. All told, more than 25 individuals traveled from Yuma to the frigid interior Alaska winter to support the test. Likewise, Palm spent five months in Yuma last summer assisting with testing of the system in the extreme heat, and felt the experience was useful.

"I liked working on the system there and knowing what was coming up," she said. "That made the

test a lot easier."

The test was in progress during a site visit from Army Test and Evaluation Command commander Maj. Gen. Daniel Karbler, who saw firsthand the critical importance of natural environment testing.

"It's almost impossible to drive something in a conditioning chamber," he said. "You can certainly chill it down to a certain temperature, but that's about the extent of it. When you want to put it in operation, put loads on it, and use it in the whole of the environment, it is totally different. A cold chamber has a place in initial testing, but once you put something into operation, you have to take it out into the environment."

Working in the dead of winter, amid temperatures that plunged far below zero, workers put the improved howitzer through a variety of tests to learn about its ability to cope in an extreme cold environment.

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VIEWPOINTS

We asked members of the Environmental Sciences Division what are the strangest or most interesting things you have seen while working in the great outdoors?



Erin Goslin, Archeologist: During the summer of 2010, I was on a Forest Service Enterprise Crew working in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest doing an archaeological survey ahead of a proscribed burn. It was a fun three weeks. I saw my first moose, got treed by my first moose, shared a transect with a bear, and saw a massive set of mountain lion claw marks and fur way above my head on a tree but archaeologically it was a bust. So in the midst of nothing, my colleague and I come across a random garden gnome under a tree next to some water. The sheer randomness of a garden gnome in this wild area struck us both as incredibly amusing.



Daniel Steward, Wildlife Biologist: I have always been partial to the Zebra-tailed lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*) which are very common in our area and fun to watch. With the black and white striping of the tail, yellow tinting and stripes along the belly with (blue patches on males) this is a beautiful lizard. You can sometimes see them lifting their feet off the hot ground in the heat of the day and they are fast! When it sees a predator approaching, they will sit and watch, often wagging their tail nervously, but before danger gets too close, they are off like a rocket. They continue to hold the tail in the air as they run possibly to attract the predator to the tail which will simply break off if grabbed. I wouldn't advise trying to catch one. They are very fragile and can be injured easily, and you may get injured in the chase...did I mention they are FAST!



Jessie Crawford, Environmental Specialist: The most interesting thing I have seen so far was two birds fighting. I was out doing inspections near Cox Field and happened to see a phainopepla flying sporadically back and forth from a tree to the ground. As I looked closer, I saw a pigeon on the ground that seem to be the target. It was apparent that the two birds were fighting. It was a weird sight because I have never seen those two types of birds in that close proximity to each other.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

Emergency Manager Robert Barocio, a six year YPG veteran, prepares throughout the year for the proper response of YPG organizations to various emergencies that can come up, from natural disasters like floods or wildfires to acts of terrorism, such as an active shooter.

EMERGENCY

FROM PAGE 2

ground's number one asset, so communicating accurate, timely information that allows them to act is a priority."

Through the many training exercises that have occurred, Barocio feels YPG's response capabilities have significantly improved. "People have become more aware of what to expect, but, at the same time, workers in the EOC have learned that many times it's the unexpected that gets you."

He says EOC responders need to always look forward and plan hours-and-hours beyond what they're doing at the time. "Sometimes it's necessary to slow down a little and act methodically," he said. "This comes about through taking part in training and exercises."

Working closely with outside agencies is particularly important for YPG in emergency situations, for the proving ground does not have complete capability to handle everything that can occur during all emergencies, especially is they are large or catastrophic. "We work hand-in-hand with the Yuma County Emergency Management Office, as

well as the Yuma County Sheriff's Office and others," said Barocio. "We strive to have a good relationship with all of them. YPG also boasts a strong proactive relationship with local media."

Emergency exercises at YPG generally occur a minimum of three times each year, some being full scale exercises with role players and actual responders, with others being tabletop exercises where situations are simulated. One full scale exercise each year makes use of outside controllers from other military installations who provide feedback.

"During an emergency, the EOC provides a common operating picture to key YPG staffers for the purpose of providing the YPG commander with the best, most accurate and clearest information in order to make decisions," said Barocio. "Whatever the problem is, EOC personnel help solve it."

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A View Without A Point

Have you experienced random acts of kindness?

By Teri Womack

Most of us have performed a random act of kindness for someone else at one time or another. Even if it goes unnoticed, it still feels good inside to do something nice for another. And sometimes, that one small act can add up to change the entire outcome.

I recently discovered that I was on the receiving end of an act of kindness several years ago and, at the time, I never even had a clue. A co-worker had made an effort to go out of her way to support me at a time when I expected it the least and needed it the most. Looking back, it didn't cause a huge impact that resulted in an immediate drastic change, but it was just enough to change my circumstances slightly enough to alter the outcome – for the better.

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I have the ability to recognize and appreciate that this one person, who acted from her heart and followed it up with action, made a choice to do something where she would get nothing in return -- not even recognition from an unknowing and unsuspecting me. What she did ended up being the catalyst that brought about many positive personal and



professional changes for me. The fact that I found out about it years later makes me even more grateful, as well as, humbled.

At a recent employee recognition ceremony, Col. Randy Murray, commander, spoke about the importance of showing appreciation to people we work alongside during our long ten hour days. Most of the time, we don't realize the impact we have on others or an awareness of how their actions can affect our own lives. Expressing kindness and gratitude, whether in the workplace or in our personal lives, can have more of an effect on others than you might realize. And, someday, when you have a chance to look back and reflect, you might wonder if those random acts of kindness are really so "random" after all.

HERITAGE CENTER

FROM PAGE 1

calendar. Nine tours with 52 visitors each visited last year and ten more are planned for next winter.

"Tickets for the tours go on sale at the beginning of November and, within eight hours, nearly all have been snapped up," she said. "I attribute this to patriotism and a sense of gratitude, but also because people want to personally see and understand what takes place at the proving ground."

Morgan and her staff routinely gather feedback from the tours and complaints have been rare. "Most people are absolutely thrilled to have visited YPG and are sobered by its national defense impact. The only complaint we have heard, if you can even call it that, is that buffet lunches at the Cactus Café don't include dessert," she said with a wide smile.

Heritage Center Director Heidner

is a frequent visitor to Yuma County libraries and service organization luncheons where he speaks on a variety of historical topics, from the Army Camel Corps experiment of the 1850's to Japanese-American internment that took place during World War II. (Many people don't know that the largest of all the internment camps was located in Yuma County.) Groups of school children tour the Heritage Center numerous times each year and a science camp operated for local kids was headquartered at the center several times.

"YPG's Heritage Center is a vital part of the local community and a great attraction to the over 100,000 visitors who spend their winters here each year," said Morgan. "It is very much loved and appreciated."

Statistics show that over 28,000 visitors visited the Heritage Center at YPG last year and 8500 more viewed the YPG exhibit at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot.

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U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

On June 7th, an ice cream social was held in the ROC building atrium to celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

YPG celebrated the Army's 241st birthday on June 14th, with the ceremony's highlight being the slicing of the celebratory (and delicious) cake with a gleaming sword. Doing the honors are, left to right, SPC Diamond Dewindt, Maj. (Chaplain) Steven Smith, Col. Randy Murray, commander, Charles Beck, and Paige Gresham. Dewindt and Smith are YPG's youngest and oldest Soldiers, and Gresham and Beck are YPG's youngest and oldest civilians.

FACES & PLACES



At a recent ceremony, a group of civilian employees were recognized for their exemplary performance during the recent command inspection. Left to Right: Julio Dominguez, COL Randy Murray, Samantha Howerton, Yvonne Kennedy, Shari Hillsbery, Debbie Gloria, Dean Shimizu, Ryan Tidwell, Stephanie Ridout and LTC James DeBoer. Front Left to Right: Marc Blood and Kelly Merritt.



Left to Right: COL Randy Murray and LTC James DeBoer presented ATF Soldiers the Army Achievement Medal at an award ceremony held on 15 June. Soldiers (left to right): Staff Sgt Aaron Ahn, Staff Sgt Jesse Robbins III, Spec Diamond DeWindt, Staff Sgt Jorge Nievesriera and Staff Sgt Cliff Warner.



Sgt First Class Dawit Gebregiorgis from ATF was also honored with the Army Accommodation Medal.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Ward received a number of gifts at his farewell luncheon in late June, including a collage of photos showing the wide variety of activities he busily engaged in during his time at YPG. He will depart the proving ground early in July.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY TERI WOMACK

Ms. Susan Crump, Resource Management receives her award as YPG Civilian of the Quarter (Mission Support) for 2nd Quarter FY-16. Mr. Keith Allen was selected as the YPG Civilian of the Quarter (Mission) but was not present at the ceremony.

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This is true even with a well-equipped vehicle, and a skilled driver—and was certainly true of an unskilled teenager in a poorly equipped vehicle. It's far easier to discover an alternate route than to find someone willing and able to come to your rescue. Walking the rest of the way is better than walking home.

RE-TIRE TO SUCCEED.

Even the most technologically advanced four-wheel-drive system can't make up for tires that are not meant for the job or lack adequate tread depth. Some original

equipment tires on SUVs and pickups can't conquer anything more rigorous than wet grass. Also, even the best mud tires become useless off road well before they run out of tread.

REMEMBER, SPEED IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.

The off-road driver's mantra is "As Slow As Possible, As Fast As Necessary." (The original author of this quote is uncertain, but I first heard it at a Land Rover driving school.) Sometimes a little speed may be required to climb a hill or conquer a hazard. However, if you think the obstacle requires even 10 mph, you're probably not going to make it. And you're going to damage something or get stuck. Bottom line,

to get the most out of your off-road adventure, you should always heed the off-road driver's mantra.

STAY ON THE TRAIL.

Trying to blaze my own trail not only got me stuck, but it left ruts that remained for years. Drive on previously used paths: You'll know it's possible to make it through there, and you'll do less damage to the environment. A warning: Just because somebody else made it doesn't guarantee you will. Maybe they had a better vehicle, were a more skilled driver or went through before it rained.

DON'T FORGET TO HELP YOURSELF.

If you're planning to regularly

travel the road less paved, bring along some things that'll help you out of small jams: a hand winch (a.k.a. "come-along"), tow strap, high-lift jack, shovel, some wood blocks, and a first-aid kit. If you're going further than you can walk out, bring enough stuff (extra clothes, water, sleeping bag) to survive until somebody finds you.

TELL SOMEBODY YOUR PLAN.

Tell somebody where you're going and when you expect to be back. At least they'll know when and where to start searching.

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

New website speeds Army Emergency Relief loans

Army Emergency Relief (AER) recently launched a new way for Soldiers, Retirees, and Family members to receive financial help. AER financial assistance can now be requested through the new easy six step "on-line" application on AER's new, improved website. This new feature allows those in need to apply anytime, anywhere, day or night, using a desktop, laptop, tablet, or smart phone.

A key aspect of the new "on-line" application is that it greatly expedites the assistance process. When an individual completes the application on-line, the information the AER officer normally types into the AER system is already prepopulated and available for action. The AER officer just needs to review the information,

validate documentation, and cut the check. This is a win-win on all accounts.

AER's newly redesigned website is designed for easier navigation and contains new and improved information like how people can access their account, apply for a scholarship, donate, and a new loan calculator where anyone can compare the savings from a no-interest no-fee AER loan to loan offers from others.

Over its history, AER has provided \$1.7 billion to our greatest asset, the American Soldier. AER is truly unique giving interest free loans, grants, and with no fees. There is no other organization like AER. Just last year the organization saved Soldiers and Families more than \$22.4 million in interest.

Show Off Your Yuman Flavor

Flavor of Yuma Recipe Contest

To enter, email your recipes to Contests@YumaSun.com

Include the name of your recipe, list of ingredients with measurements and preparation instructions. You can even include a photo of the dish, chef or your family and even share a Yuma story with the crew!

Captain David Gombo is calling for your recipes to serve the crew of the **USNS-Yuma!**

The City of Yuma will be honored this summer as the United States Navy has chosen to name a new military ship after "our community," with the christening of the "USNS Yuma" and you can be part of this history-making event.

Share your favorite family recipe and enter to win a **USNS-Yuma logo'd hat & gift card.**

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