

Groundbreaking test enables airborne troops to fight faster

By Mark Schauer

In achieving battlefield victory, the United States has relied upon air superiority as a vital means of delivering equipment, supplies and troops to remote areas.

Mass combat parachute jumps are ideal for missions like seizing isolated air fields deep behind enemy lines, which can then be used to receive and deploy more troops and armament. This tactic has been used since World War II and remains relevant today, yet safely getting airborne combat troops into a fight is a complex task.

Testers at YPG are in the midst of an intense multi-year study focused on reducing the amount of time and distance necessary between each



Mass combat parachute jumps are ideal for missions like seizing isolated air fields deep behind enemy lines, yet safely getting airborne combat troops into a fight is a complex task. Testers at YPG are currently in the midst of an intense multi-year study focused on reducing the amount of time and distance necessary between each element of a combat parachute mass insertion and providing the airborne community with an easy-to-use, portable app to model risk in varying scenarios. (US Army photo)

element of a multi-element combat parachute mass insertion and providing the airborne community with an easy-to-use, portable app to model risk in varying scenarios.

“There’s a long history of accidents attributed to wake-vortex contact,” said Keith Allen, team leader of the Air Delivery Systems Test Branch. “It’s a very real problem with a lot of time and money, as well as, lives involved.”

The air disturbance left by massive cargo aircraft speeding through the sky is extremely turbulent and fast: if an aircraft comes into contact with one of these vortices, the result could be

SEE **AIRBORNE** page 7

Progressive YPG Fire Chief lauds his people, seeks improvements

By Chuck Wullenjohn

Editor’s note: All Americans treasure their first responders, most often thinking of city firemen or local government law enforcement personnel. YPG has its own first

responders, however, who also deserve credit. In part one of a series devoted to YPG’s first responders, we take a special look at YPG’s Fire Department.

Gerald Ball remembers the

events of 9/11 as if they took place yesterday.

He was on duty at YPG Fire Station 2 as a fire captain and received a phone call from an assistant chief telling him to quickly turn on the

television. He clicked it on in time to watch a giant passenger aircraft impact the second of the World Trade Center towers amid fire and flame. Mesmerized and terrified at the same

SEE **CHIEF** page 6

Chaplain brings
wealth of
experience to YPG
/Page 2



Frontier Army Brass
marks final Yuma
appearance
/Page 8



Fire Prevention
Week,
October 8-14
/Page 9



Chaplain brings wealth of experience to YPG

By Mark Schauer

For Maj. Ronald Beltz, the gospel and the Army are ways of life.

Hailing to YPG from Fort Rucker, Ala., where his wife Rebecca is the director of the aviation technical library, Beltz has already impressed parishioners at the YPG Chapel with his dedication.

"I want them to hear the gospel and glean something from what we're preaching that will help them in their journey of faith."

Beltz was born and baptized at West Point while his father, a graduate of the academy, was a mathematics professor there. When his father deployed to Vietnam, the rest of the family lived in Chula Vista, Calif. Once out of the Army, his father worked for the Army Corps of Engineers and engineering firms in the private sector. The family ultimately settled in Bettendorf, Iowa, but spent time living in Iran in the late 1970s, just prior to the fall of the Shah and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini. The country was tense even then, but Beltz and his family coped.

"My experience in Iran was that people in other countries may disagree with your government, but on an individual basis they are

friendly," he said. "They were interested in American culture and wanted to practice their English."

As his father worked on a steel manufacturing plant under construction, Beltz and his younger sister went to an expatriate school.

"The school was made up of British and American kids from the oil industry. My sister was in kindergarten and went to the British kindergarten—she had a charming English accent for a long time as a six year-old."

After graduating from high school in Bettendorf, Beltz went to college, where he met his wife, then to a seminary in Chicago. For over 13 year he was pastor at two Lutheran churches in Indiana, before answering the call to join the Army.

Throughout his life he had stayed in touch with James Ford, the Lutheran minister at West Point who baptized him and ultimately became the Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. Ford encouraged him to join, but the final impetus was a dinner visit from his brother-in-law, who told him about a buddy in the Indiana National Guard.

"He said they could use chaplains in the National Guard," said Beltz.

"I gave him my business card and somebody called the next day."

He talked over the opportunity with his wife and prayed for guidance. Ultimately, he chose to enlist. He started his chaplain's basic course in June 2001, finished in August, and reported for duty at Fort Hood, Texas, the first week of September. Then, the world changed.

"I remember standing in my battalion sergeant major's office watching what was happening in New York City on television," he said. "I felt like God put me in the right place at the right time."

He deployed to Iraq out of Fort Hood in March 2003, leaving a newborn son behind. His year-long deployment coincided with the first wave of the invasion, and he was out of communication with his family for months.

"We made it outside Baghdad on Good Friday," said Beltz. "I remember celebrating communion service on the hood of a Humvee with flames and smoke of war all around us. The communion service's familiarity provided some relief and solace."

Yet by Easter Sunday, he recalled, the unit was in the sunny rural countryside north of Baghdad.

Back from Iraq, Beltz deployed to Germany and went to Afghanistan with a cavalry squadron, which flew Apache helicopters and piqued his interest in aviation. In addition to the ever-present realities of war, tragedy struck when 17 Soldiers were killed



Chaplain (Maj.) Ronald Beltz describes his approach to his chaplain duties as ecumenical and holistic given the wide variety of Protestant faiths within the Army. "There will be something in our Protestant services for everyone. I'm a Lutheran chaplain, but I also realize this isn't a Lutheran service." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

in a Chinook helicopter crash during a change-of-responsibility ceremony. Beltz officiated at the grim ceremony when the Soldiers' remains were reverently put aboard a C-17 for their last journey home.

The deployments were searing, but Beltz had plenty of experiences stateside, too. He counseled recruits at Fort Jackson and was stationed at historic Rock Island Arsenal, right across the river from his adopted hometown, for two years. Back at Fort Hood, he earned a Masters degree in Psychology and Counseling in 2009.

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THE OUTPOST

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



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"There will be something in our Protestant services for everyone," he explained. "I'm a Lutheran chaplain, but I also realize this isn't a Lutheran service. There will be some characteristic Lutheran things that don't cross the line—I was taught to prepare sermons in a Lutheran seminary, that's just who I am."

Beltz has new programs on tap, too.

"We're trying to start a women's ministry. Many other Army chapels have Protestant Women of the Chapel and Catholic Women of the Chapel groups. It's a once or twice a week opportunity for women to get together in fellowship, share a meal, and study scripture."

Beltz also reminds YPG personnel that he has a graduate degree in counseling, and that he is available in this capacity to people of any—or no—faith.

"You don't need to be a Christian to seek out the services of the chaplain," he said. "I'm going to meet you where you are spiritually—if you want to talk about spiritual things, it is up to you to bring it up. It's not about proselytizing or evangelizing."

Further, anything shared with him in this capacity is completely confidential.

"Army chaplains have 100% confidentiality," stated Beltz. "If you tell me something in confidence, I'll take it to the grave with me."

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Chaplain's Corner

Having lunch with God

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six-pack of root beer and started his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. She was sitting in the park just staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed that the old lady looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Once again she smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word.

As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was, and he got up to leave but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old woman and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever. When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was

surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But, before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face and he asked, "Mother, what did you do today that made you so happy?" She replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." But, before her son responded, she added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

This short story reminds us that we can find God in the simplest acts of kindness! The New Testament book of Ephesians 4:32 urges us to; "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."



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Army CID warns of disaster fraud scams

QUANTICO, VA.— The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command is cautioning the Army community to be on the lookout for charitable schemes and scams associated with “Disaster Fraud” donations.

With these scams, criminals will use man-made or natural catastrophes, such as the recent damage and flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey, to get individuals to donate to charities claiming to support affected victims. Some of these organizations are fraudulent, or misleading at best because they do not have the infrastructure to support the affected disaster area.

Disasters can also lead to an increase in fraudulent fundraisers, monetary and charitable donations. Scams and scammers will use various methods to seek “charitable donations.” According to CID officials, “scammers exploit those wishing to assist people in need by soliciting fictitious charitable donations, making phone calls, sending fraudulent emails or creating phony websites to solicit contributions or personal information resulting in identity theft.”

“Do not respond to unsolicited email (spam), links or attachments from these fake groups because in addition to stealing your identity, these links may also contain computer viruses and/or hijack your

computer files for ransom,” CID agents warn.

The scammers will also focus on getting their victims to become emotionally invested to help those in need. Special Agents from CID recommend that people who want to give do research before donating. Ask detailed questions about the charity or organization, which includes basic information such as their name, address, telephone number, and if the charity is registered. Also request proof that a contribution is tax deductible or if the organization is tax exempt. Be cautious of out of state organizations – especially if their address is a post office box.

Officials also urge would-be-givers to ensure monies are donated to trustworthy organizations and make contributions directly to known and verified organizations rather than relying on a third party to do so.

Experts also advise that copycat websites are very active during natural disasters. Copycat websites will have links that will appear authentic to similar known web addresses. It’s the same for some social media platforms. An increased use of social media platforms using copycat websites and accounts of trusted organizations will be used to display devastating and emotional images combined with a link in an effort to get you to donate to those in

need.

If you decide to donate, go directly to the organization’s website and do not donate using a link that has been sent via email or social media, CID advises. Be sure to check the organization’s verification. Most sites use a check mark behind the name to let you know that you are on or viewing a verified account.

Additionally, some crowdfunding and fundraising websites and accounts may not be used for the intended purpose of helping disaster victims, so beware of solicitations from these sites posing as legitimate and fake organizations. It is important to verify all organizations before donating.

If you think you’ve been the victim of a charity scam, you can file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.

Resources

National Center for Disaster Fraud: (866) 720-5721

Department of Homeland Security / FEMA Fraud Hotline: (800) 323-8603

<https://www.oig.dhs.gov>
Federal Trade Commission:
<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/#&panel1-1>

State:
TX: FraudReport@tdi.texas.gov
1-888-327-8818

Helpful Links:

- <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0074-giving-charity>
- <http://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/how-to-avoid-hurricane-harvey-charity-scams-and-make-sure-your-money-gets-to-victims-who-need-help>

• FTC Consumer information release:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/08/wise-giving-wake-hurricane-harvey>

• Directory of national charities:
<http://give.org/charity-reviews/national>

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Shoot'in the Breeze Just one of those days....

By David J. Horn

Every time I go to a grocery store, it always happens. No matter how many grocery carts I take for a test drive before I go into the store, running them back and forth to see if all the wheels are round and smooth, when I finally pick what I think is the best cart, the instant those front wheels enter the store...it's BANG...BANG...BANG. Here are a couple more "grumblings" of mine:

Whenever I get a little spare cash (from a tax refund, etc.) everything around my house from the air conditioner to the washing machine, the lawn mower, the fridge, the garbage disposal...finds out about it and decides that now is the time to go belly up.

At work, if I don't decorate the walls of my cubicle, I can sit in that plain, unadorned space for years. But, whenever I decide to decorate my cubicle, within hours of hanging up that first poster, I'm told I have to move.

I bought a house with a pool surrounded by lots of trees and bushes. It should have had a sign on it that read, "For every minute you spend in this pool, you will spend 10 hours cleaning it."

I need to quit saying to myself,

"I'll have plenty of time to put gas in the truck in the morning."

Isn't it frustrating that your weight will quickly go up by two pounds by eating only two ounces of potato chips?

Never, ever tempt fate by thinking to yourself, "Compared to other people my age, I'm actually in pretty good physical shape." Or, "My 1993 Ford Ranger has sure been running great lately."

After putting in tons of time watering and fertilizing the lawn in the backyard, I still can't get the grass to look nice. But, there's a lush, green jungle of grass which I can't kill growing up out of every crack in the driveway.

In spite of decades of scolding from doctors and other health professionals, in addition to the dire warnings plastered all over the little box they come in, I absolutely refuse to stop using Q-Tips to clean the wax out of my ears.

There used to be a saying that went, "He who dies with the most toys wins." I think it should be changed to, "He who has the most toys will spend his weekends fixing busted stuff."

Thanks. I needed that.

OK...so, what's wrong with this stupid dishwasher?

Rob Turner

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CHIEF

FROM PAGE 1

time, the vivid memory remains alive in his resoluteness today in maintaining the preparedness of YPG's Fire Department.

YPG boasts a total of 40 firefighters and paramedics who perform duties both on the installation and throughout a large geographic area off the proving ground. This includes responding to vehicle accidents on highway 95 as far south as mile marker 35 and north to mile marker 95, as well as communities at Senator Wash, Hidden Shores, Martinez Lake, Fishers Landing, Bard, and Imperial Irrigation District housing.

Members of the department have assisted in putting out fires in downtown Yuma, and travel to the Foothills and Winterhaven when requested. Firefighters have dealt with all kinds of fires, from structural, to chemical, to vehicle, to wildfires in natural terrain.

A huge part of the fire department's workload isn't putting out fires at all, however. It is in emergency medical response. Ball estimates that over 90 percent of the daily calls have to do with medical emergencies, through it varies by the time of year. The

department is the sole provider of ambulance services to the installation and acts as first responder for emergency medical incidents in the surrounding area. For the past six years, these medical services have been provided at the advanced life support level, which greatly improves pre-hospital care.

"YPG is fortunate to have one of the best fire departments around," said Ball, "made up of people who work hard and love their mission. The morale is high. They're proud to be first responders who contribute to the readiness of YPG and the overall Army."

Describing himself, Ball says he grew up in Yuma and developed an interest in becoming a firefighter at a young age. When the opportunity came in 1989 to become a GS-3 firefighter at YPG, he jumped at it.

"I've had opportunities to move elsewhere over the years, but I grew to like it here, as well as the mission of the overall proving ground," he explained. "Yuma is a good place to live and I still see no reason to change that."

The work schedule for people in the fire department is different than other YPG employees, since their services take place around the clock, seven days per week. Each



YPG boasts a total of 40 firefighters and paramedics who perform duties both on the installation and throughout a large geographic area off the proving ground: from Highway 95 as far south as mile marker 35 and north to mile marker 95, as well as communities at Senator Wash, Hidden Shores, Martinez Lake, Fishers Landing, Bard, and Imperial Irrigation District housing. (Loaned photos)

person is on duty for a minimum 144 hours each pay period, working 48 hours straight followed by two days at home. The schedule calls for at least two hours of formal training each day, with lots of equipment maintenance.

"Hoses cannot sit aboard our trucks for any length of time without being checked and exercised," Ball said, "and the trucks themselves require a tremendous amount of preventive maintenance. This includes the engines and surfaces, but also all the equipment stored on each. The people on each shift are busy every day."

One of the things Ball points to with pride is that there is that little personnel turnover has taken place in the fire department over the last ten to 12 years. He says this is because more hiring takes place on a local basis than ever before and workers are trained in-house.

"Hiring people with roots in the Yuma community means we retain good employees," he said with satisfaction in his voice.

The quality and high morale of YPG's firefighters and paramedics can be seen by their voluntary participation in outside competitions. The proving ground had one of its firefighters compete in the recent Fire and Police Olympic Games in Los

Angeles, John Lidington, who ran, swam and bicycled in the triathlon. He finished among the top ten – an outstanding achievement, considering this was his first time competing in a triathlon. Hundreds of people from fire departments throughout the world participated in the games.

Three firefighters, Daniel DeCarlo, Joseph Rochester and Alexander McNeely, traveled to San Diego on their own time in early September to take part in the city's annual 9/11 stair climb, which attracted hundreds of participants. Firefighters don all their emergency gear and breathing apparatus, just like the New York City firefighters did on 9/11 when responding to the World Trade Center disaster, then climb the same number of stairs those firefighters did – before having to retreat or face death.

"It takes place to raise money for charity," said Ball, "and I think it's a great remembrance. I hope to do it myself sometime."

Having been department fire chief for a little over one year, he is on the lookout for things he can do to benefit the organization, including automating some of the department's response systems and updating training. As for his own duty schedule, he typically works 60 hours each week including one overnight stint as a shift supervisor.



Members of the department have assisted in putting out fires in downtown Yuma, and travel to the Foothills and Winterhaven when requested. Firefighters have dealt with all kinds of fires, from structural, to chemical, to vehicle, to wildfires in natural terrain. YPG Firefighters train for all contingencies, but a huge part of their workload is emergency medical response. The department is the sole provider of ambulance services to the installation and acts as first responder for emergency medical incidents in the surrounding area.

AIRBORNE

FROM PAGE 1

an engine stall, or even a wing or tail ripping off. The danger is even more acute for a paratrooper.

"These disturbances can rip a wing off an aircraft, so imagine what they can do to a parachutist under a piece of fabric," said Allen.

The wings of military cargo planes are equipped with specially shaped finlets to help dissipate this vortex and push it down, but the extreme turbulence cannot be completely eliminated. The high and low pressures over the wings created as a requirement to lift an aircraft tends to roll up in a circular flow near the aircraft wing tips where it is shed. This results in powerful vortices that can remain in the air and over a drop zone for several minutes before dissipating. As a result, formations of C-17s carrying jumpers are required to keep a minimum distance from each other to prevent injuries and fatalities.

"This distance is based on a very conservative estimate, simply because there is so much uncertainty about the behavior of wing-tip vortices and not enough historical data to model the way they are going to behave in a given scenario," said Allen.

If this distance could be safely shortened, however, more paratroopers could reach the ground and enter a battle faster. One example is a high-stakes attempt to take possession of an enemy airfield.

"If you aggregate two and-a-half minutes times 15 or 20 aircraft elements, you're taking 45 minutes to one hour," Allen explained. "The enemy is there all the while, so you have to get enough troops on the ground, get them on the objective and into the fight. Meanwhile, you have other aircraft carrying cargo and other resources to help the operation sitting up there waiting, and they're exposed to potential

enemy fire."

For three years, YPG testers have sought to model how a C-17 aircraft generates wing-tip vortices in real-world conditions. In the latest test in July, the aircraft ran 125 passes exactly as it would in an actual airdrop of paratroopers as a small Twin Otter aircraft equipped with Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), a surveying technology that measures reflections of particulates in the air by illuminating an area of regard with eye safe laser light, flew above scanning the wake the C-17 left behind. The testers flew missions across all hours of the day and night, during different weather conditions and over different terrain features. Two more ground-based LIDAR systems tracked low level vortices near the ground and ambient meteorological conditions. At present, the testers are

processing the data, separating out huge amounts of extraneous data in an effort that could take months.

Allen says this summer's test was the most successful yet, gathering quantities of useable data with fewer aircraft sorties and less test time. Further, the expense of conducting the test was perhaps a quarter of what doing so under simulated conditions in a wind tunnel would have cost.

"We had much less of a learning curve this time. We improved the way we had the LIDAR set to optimize the collection of the data."

Going forward, YPG testers hope to conduct similar testing in a different natural environment, such as a high humidity marine climate. This data combined with that collected at YPG should give a broad set of data to make scientific judgements for other conditions.

Future tests will also eventually incorporate mannequin and live jumpers.

"You don't have infinite time and resources to capture data in all conditions," he said. "You have to make an assessment of what the boundaries of the customer's operational environment are and try to hit the boundaries of that."

Allen says the information learned in this testing is beneficial to other air drop activities, both at YPG and elsewhere. Data collection techniques developed at YPG may have far reaching impacts on how wing tip vortices of both military and commercial aircraft may be studied in the future.

"This isn't just an Army effort: it effects the entire military community, and likely the entire aviation community as a whole," remarked Allen.



The wings of military cargo planes are equipped with specially shaped finlets to help dissipate this vortex and push it down, but the extreme turbulence cannot be completely eliminated. This results in powerful vortices that can remain in the air and over a drop zone for several minutes before dissipating. (US Army photo)

Frontier Army Brass marks final Yuma appearance



The Frontier Army Brass provided a great program of musical entertainment the evening of Friday, Sept. 15, to a packed house of over 600 people in Yuma's Historic Yuma Theater. The audience was enthusiastic and wanted more, clamoring for two encore numbers. Unfortunately, the Military Intelligence Corps band (of which the Frontier Brass is part) is in the process of being inactivated, as are three other active duty Army bands. Nonetheless, there is a chance that the band may return to Yuma for a Christmas performance in December. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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Manage stress with success

Submitted by **Melissa Gomez**

Stress... a familiar word to many. When you think of stress what comes to mind? For most, stress is a perceived as mostly negative and harmful but have you considered that some stress can be good? Contrary to popular belief, we all need some healthy stress in our lives to move and function, which is why stress management is more important than stress elimination. In fact, finding the right balance between too much and too little stress is an essential part of your overall well-being.

Stress can manifest itself in many ways. In order to learn which stressors are healthy and which are not, we must first learn to recognize stress. Stress symptoms include mental, social, and physical manifestations. These can include exhaustion, loss of/increased appetite, headaches, depression, sleeplessness, and oversleeping to name a few. Increased use of alcohol or drugs, and other compulsive behavior are also signs of harmful stress. Additionally, feelings of alarm, frustration, or apathy may also accompany stress.

Let's take a look at good stress vs. bad stress:

Good stress:

- Makes you feel motivated, inspired and focused on doing your best
- Gives you energy, ambition and enthusiasm
- Strengthens your immune system

Bad stress:

- Harms your health and well-being, causing symptoms such as headaches, stomach discomfort

or insomnia

- Makes you feel frazzled, frustrated, upset, out of control or overwhelmed
- Makes even simple tasks become difficult or impossible to accomplish

Managing Stress

Managing stress is all about taking charge of what you can control and learning to become flexible regarding the things you have no ability to influence or change. To manage stress when the demands stack up, be sure to identify the triggers that cause you stress and resolve to make realistic, healthy changes. To be successful in this, it's important that you:

- Get the right amount of sleep.
- Schedule time for relaxation each day.
- Eat a balanced, nutritious diet and exercise regularly.
- Cultivate supportive relationships.
- Have fun and try to laugh more. Laughter is a great stress reducer and has the added benefit of increasing social support.

At the end of the day, stress, in the form of good and bad challenges, helps us to flourish and grow. Do your best to take life one day at a time and you'll find yourself living healthier and happier in no time.

If you feel that stress is affecting your life, your first option is to seek help. Talk with a trusted friend or professional, realize you are not alone and there is help out there for you. For more information on resources available, please contact the YPG Family Advocacy Program at (928) 328-3224.



You and your family are fast asleep when the smoke alarm sounds: Do you know what to do?

Consider this scenario: It's 2 a.m.. You and your family are fast asleep when you awaken to the smoke alarm sounding and the smell of smoke. What do you do? If you and your family don't have a plan in place, it could jeopardize your safety, or even prove deadly.

In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. That's why home escape planning is so critical in a fire situation. It ensures that everyone in the household knows how to use that small window of time wisely.

"Developing and practicing a home escape plan is like building muscle memory," said Chuck Beasley, fire inspector. "That pre-planning is what everyone will draw upon to snap into action and escape as quickly as possible in the event of a fire."

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" works to better educate the public about the critical importance of developing a home escape plan and practicing it. The YPG Fire Department is working in coordination with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the official sponsor of the Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, to reinforce those potentially life-saving messages. Fire Prevention Week is October 8-14, 2017.

"Home escape planning is one of the most basic but fundamental elements of home fire safety, and can truly make the difference between life and death in a fire situation,"

said Lorraine Carli, NFPA's vice president of Outreach and Advocacy.

In support of Fire Prevention Week, Fire Chief Gerald Ball encourages all YPG households to develop a plan together and practice it. A home escape plan includes working smoke alarms on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. It also includes two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window, with a clear path to an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole, or street sign) that's a safe distance from the home.

NFPA and the YPG Fire Department offer these additional tips and recommendations for developing and practicing a home escape plan:

- Draw a map of your home with all members of your household, marking two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit.
- Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- Close doors behind you as you leave — this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

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Watch out at the tank crossings!

Here's a highway safety sign drivers don't often encounter: a tank crossing. YPG tests armored vehicles, including M1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks, nearly every day of the year. Though the proving ground maintains over 200 miles of test courses, the vehicles occasionally have to cross civilian roads. Keep an eye out! (Photo by Mark Schauer)



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