

## Punishing tropic testing ensures Stryker reliability

By Mark Schauer

When Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan were threatened by the destructive power of improvised explosive devices, a variant of the armored Stryker combat vehicle sporting a specially-designed blast-diffusing hull saved countless lives.

The vehicle's stellar performance is doubtless related to the extensive evaluation it had undergone at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and its three subsidiary test centers since 2002, including a six month stint in the jungles of Suriname in 2008.

Recently, the vehicle underwent a punishing mobility test conducted by U.S. Army Tropic Regions Test



The Stryker combat vehicle recently underwent a punishing multi-month mobility test conducted by U.S. Army Tropic Regions Test Center (TRTC) in Panama, the first test of its kind conducted by the United States in the Central American nation in decades. Ensuring military equipment works as it should in an extreme tropical environment is crucial, and Panama is an ideal locale to conduct this testing. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Center (TRTC) in Panama, the first test of its kind conducted by the United States in the Central American nation in decades. This evaluation followed a significant amount of durability testing at YPG facilities in Yuma, Arizona and Fort Greely, Alaska over the previous year.

Boasting an upgraded chassis and drivetrain along with a variety of mechanical, electrical and digital improvements to enhance performance, the latest Stryker variant was driven more than 2,000 miles across rugged terrain by the time testing concluded at the end of the tropical rainy season in

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## Higher command ushers in new commander

By Courtney W. Gilbert

Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton assumed command of the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, or ATEC, from Maj. Gen. Daniel L. Karbler, outgoing commander, Dec.

9 during the change of command ceremony held inside the ATEC Headquarters at Aberdeen Proving Ground, or APG.

"Ruffles and Flourishes" from the Brass Quintet from the 229th

Maryland National Guard Band and the firing of rounds from the Presidential Salute Battery Old Guard set the tone of the opening of the ceremony.

After greeting the attendees in

opening remarks, the 35th Vice Chief of Staff for the United States Army, Gen. Daniel B. Allyn emphatically stressed the importance of ATEC's mission.

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## ATEC

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“ATEC plays a fundamental role in our Army’s preparation and ultimate readiness for war,” Allyn said. “Put simply, ATEC is critical in affirming that we’re placing the best equipment in our Soldiers’ hands so that when we are called upon, and the call will come, we can move to the sound of the guns with confidence.”

Allyn praised Karbler’s success for leading the charge of readiness during his 18 month tenure as the ATEC commander.

“He focused his efforts on managing all test and evaluation assets to verify the effectiveness of Army material for the current fight while remaining abreast of emerging technologies and test methodologies for future acquisition,” Allyn said.

Allyn stated how proud he was of Karbler’s achievements and wished him luck as he moves into his new position as the Chief of Staff of the United States Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Upon bidding farewell to Karbler as the outgoing commander, Allyn provided a warm welcome to Charlton who comes to ATEC from the Joint Staff in Suffolk, VA where he served as the Vice Director for

Joint Force Development.

According to Allyn, Charlton is a seasoned combat leader who brings over three decades of leadership experience in critical command and staff positions throughout the Army.

“The most important reason behind John’s success is that throughout his career, he has demonstrated repeatedly an ability to focus on people while doggedly pursuing excellence,” Allyn said. “Leaders of character build trust within their units so that when the chips are down, Soldiers will continue to fight.”

Following behind Allyn, Karbler, expressed his gratitude to the ATEC team.

“In my 30 years of service, this job takes the cake being the most professionally rewarding job I have had because of what the ATEC family has taught me,” Karbler said. “Thanks to the ATEC staff for being the embodiment of one Army indivisible by expertly and effortlessly moving back and forth across the military and civilian processes.”

As the incoming commander, Charlton expressed that he was no stranger to ATEC due to his work with the team during previous operational exercises; namely the network integration evaluation



Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, Army vice chief of staff, passes the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command flag to ATEC Commander, Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton, during ATEC’s change of command ceremony, Dec 9, at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. (Photo by Sean Kief)

exercises.

“Everything that a Soldier could use or will use in combat has to come through this organization to get the stamp of approval before it goes into an operational environment,” Charlton said. “I am confident that this is the reason behind the

dedication of this organization.”

Charlton shared that he looks forward to the challenges ahead in working with the ATEC workforce.

“You know what impact you have across the Army,” Charlton said. “I look forward to working with you all. Army Strong. Truth in testing.”



(Left to right) Maj. Gen. Daniel L. Karbler, outgoing commander; Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, Army vice chief of staff; and Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton, ATEC Commander, sing the Army song at the conclusion of ATEC’s change of command ceremony. (Photo by Lamont Harbisson)

# THE OUTPOST

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# From the CSM's cupola — Army civilians vital for Soldier success

By Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher A. Prosser

Since arriving at YPG in July, I have witnessed many actions that continue to keep my faith in our Army and nation. I have had the opportunity to spend a lot of time at YTC, but have also had the opportunity to travel to the Tropic Regions Test Center in Panama to meet many Army professionals testing the Stryker fighting vehicle and Fort Greely where the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle is being tested. The dedication of every test officer, maintenance technician, crew member and leader echo the Creed of the Army Civilian. While I am not one for gimmicky acronyms or sayings, I do believe that a few sentences define our dedication to the greatest army in the world. Below is that creed that motivates us to provide the end user, the Soldier in the field, with the best possible equipment to deter our adversaries from making an aggressive move on our interests.

## The Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army civilian – a member of the Army team.  
I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and civilians.  
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I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.  
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I live the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service,



honor, integrity, and personal courage.  
I am an Army civilian.

Army civilians have been an integral part of the Soldier's success both in garrison and in war since 1776. I challenge leaders of our organization to take time to use this creed to develop subordinates and encourage professionalism in YPG through counseling and leader development programs. We have an outstanding reputation throughout the Army, but if the most junior civilian is not being developed, we are not excelling to our full potential. Some leaders have said that time is a finite resource, however, high performing organizations understand that time invested in professional development creates efficiencies which saves time.

Again, I am proud to serve each Soldier and civilian here at Yuma Proving Ground and am extremely proud of what you accomplish every day.

# Shoot'in the Breeze Zzzzzzz

By David J. Horn

So, here I am at my house and it's 8:30 p.m. As a member of the YPG workforce that needs to be here early because of our long 10-hour shifts, that means for me, but not for my family or other Yuma friends, it's time I call it a day so I can get enough sleep before that alarm goes off again at 4:15.

Before going any further, I have to say that I really like YPG's four-day work schedule. Back when my kids were in school, it was so nice to get all the yardwork done on Fridays, so when their weekend rolled around, we could all go out and do family things together. It's nice to be able to schedule doctor's appointments on Fridays, save the wear and tear on the car, and so on. When you're stationed far out of town, four day workweeks are great.

But... I've never been a morning person. I remember when I was a kid growing up on a Midwest dairy farm, where I had to help milk 40 cows every morning before trudging through the snow on the way to school, one morning I defiantly told my dad, "Someday I'm going to get off this farm and get a 'town job' where I won't have to get up at 5:30 anymore!" You see how well that worked out.

Many of us here have been around long enough to remember when we worked five eight-hour days. Although we worked Fridays, we did get off at 3:30 each afternoon, which gave us time to get back to Yuma before

the stores closed and so on. And with a start time of 07:00, we could stay up late enough every night to watch the first few minutes of the KBLU TV 10:00 nightly news. Does anybody else out there remember newscasters Mel Parker, Cindy Dole, and weatherman Paul Kochis?

One memorable disadvantage to everyone working that 7:00 a.m. start time schedule was that for several weeks twice a year (March and September), the daily commute was timed just perfectly so when we were driving east out of Yuma, the rising sun came up right in our faces as we headed down Highway 95. So for ten miserable miles, no matter how hard you squinted your eyes, tried to just barely peer under your car's visor, or hide in the shadow of that big truck just ahead of you, it still seemed like by the time you got to the turn by the cattle pens, you had two holes burned all the way through the back of your head. At the time, I was driving an old Chevy Nova with a pitted windshield, where it was almost impossible to see through that sparkling glass.

In spite of not being a morning person, I do think that the early mornings are actually the nicest part of the day. I imagine that when I retire, I'm going to miss out on a lot of picturesque sunrises and a lot of the coolest hours of those desert summer mornings. Oh well, in the meantime, we'll see all you folks ready and raring to go, tomorrow morning at 0-dark thirty.

# Small shop keeps YPG moving

By Mark Schauer

Tanks, fighting vehicles and howitzers.

YPG tests them all in realistic military environments, and testers count on the proving ground's contractor, Infinite Services and Solutions (ISS) Equipment Pool, to safely deliver scores of test items to points all across the vast test ranges and beyond.

"It could be anything from moving tanks and equipment for air delivery to moving weapons, setting generators and recovering GSA vehicles," said Edward Pierson, ISS Equipment Pool supervisor. "There is never a dull moment. We try and stay prepared for pretty much anything."

The Equipment Pool operates anywhere testing or training occurs, contending with dusty gravel roads, scrub-strewn desert pavement and deep washes.

"Just driving to a site can be tricky. We go up and down hills on unimproved roads for long distances on a regular basis."

The tools of the Equipment Pool's trade are a variety of tractor trailers and flat beds, and tactical wreckers to transport towed howitzers. Even general maintenance is a challenge, but losing a vehicle even temporarily to a more significant mechanical problem can delay



YPG's Equipment Pool operates anywhere testing or training occurs, contending with dusty gravel roads, scrub-strewn desert pavement and deep washes. The tools of the Equipment Pool's trade are a variety of tractor trailers and flat beds, like the one seen here, as well as tactical wreckers to transport towed howitzers. "It could be anything from moving tanks and equipment for air delivery to moving weapons, setting generators and recovering GSA vehicles," said Edward Pierson, ISS Equipment Pool supervisor. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

critical tests. Test schedules change frequently for a variety of reasons, too, and the Equipment Pool needs to be nimble to accomplish the mission, even if it means working evenings or weekends.

"We're easily adaptable," said

Pierson. "It's just a matter of calling guys at home."

Night operations in support of testing or training have additional hazards, too.

"It's a whole new ballgame being out here at night. Your visibility is lower and your room for error is a lot less, especially with the animals out."

The Equipment Pool's support of the YPG mission extends beyond the proving ground's boundaries.

They have transported vehicles and artillery pieces for display at public events such as the MCAS Air Show and Spirit of Yuma Military Festival, and even to the lawn of the state capitol in Phoenix in support of YPG's Legislative Day events in years past.

"We're a small shop compared to some places, but we're an important piece of the pie," said Pierson. "Our guys take pride in what they do and rarely complain. They enjoy it."

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# 2016 YPG Christmas tree lighting spreads yuletide spirit



The Yuma Proving Ground community gathered at Cox Field for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 8th. A perfect cool evening with over 250 people in attendance brought out Christmas spirit as the party began. Excitement could be felt in the air as children, parents and grandparents alike enjoyed cookies, hot cocoa and coffee provided by YPG's Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation Directorate. Children ranging from babies to teenagers waited anxiously for the lighting of the tree, but, most importantly, the arrival of Santa Claus, who journeyed to YPG all the way from the North Pole. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Tina Villalobos, 305th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



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# STRYKER

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December.

"If a young Soldier is ambushed while driving a combat vehicle in a dense jungle, his reaction will be to immediately extricate himself from that situation," said Ernest Hugh, TRTC director. "The question is, is this feasible under those conditions? What are the vehicle's capabilities and limitations in an extreme tropical environment?"

With tropic regions comprising nearly 40% of the world's land surface and serving as home to more than half the world's population, ensuring military equipment works as it should in this extreme environment is crucial, and Panama is an ideal locale to conduct this testing.

Drenched by well over 100 inches of rain per year, the consequences of a tropical environment can be disastrous to gear. Thick vines and vegetation can rip exterior components off passing vehicles, insects can eat through Kevlar, and high humidity and salinity in the air can rapidly corrode even



Drenched by well over 100 inches of rain per year, Panama is one of the world's wetter locales, and the Yuma-based crew saw far more rain than they are accustomed to. (Photo by Carlos Mora)

stainless steels. Vehicles face their own special challenges: mud and other jungle biomass can degrade

performance, if not stop a vehicle in its tracks.

Having successfully conducted

tests of the Stryker and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle in the nation of Suriname in recent



Extremely rugged in the best of circumstances, the profile of the facility's roads changed as the rains flooded and washed out trails more and more with each passing day. Roads had to be regularly reinforced with gravel material to keep them usable, as water-saturated soil will no longer compact. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



There was concern prior to the test that a relatively tame El Nino rainy season was in the offing. However, these predictions did not come to pass. "The difference between the dry and rainy season is night and day," said Omar Silva, test officer. "When I returned after being here in the dry season, I couldn't believe it." (Photo by Carlos Mora)





As the rainy season progressed, some roads became too-saturated to support the Stryker's weight and were shut down. "We wanted to make sure we weren't just down here getting stuck," said Omar Silva, test officer. "That's not the goal of the test." (Photo by Carlos Mora)



Keeping the Stryker operational in the punishing tropical environment kept the Yuma-based crew continually busy. "We are a team and all help each other out, which makes things go a lot smoother" said Paul Wilson, heavy mobile equipment mechanic. "It's been a good experience." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

years, TRTC testers were excited to gain permission to test the latest upgrades to the Stryker in Panama, a global transportation hub where personnel and equipment can arrive faster.

"We have a better range of different types of roads here, and logistically you save a good two or three days of shipping this way," said Julio Zambrano, test officer. "Testing here means fewer stops in-between for materials and personnel."

These advantages were helpful to the test, but there was still a great deal of preparation necessary.

"We set up everything from zero here," said Carlos Mora, civil engineer. "In Suriname we had something predefined, but here took a lot more surveying work."

Personnel came from Yuma Test Center to assist in this painstaking process, and worked to define and characterize vehicle trails as other workers were remodeling a dilapidated 5,000 square foot building to serve as an office and vehicle maintenance bay. As the visiting personnel were returning to Yuma, there was concern that a relatively tame El Nino rainy season

was in the offing. However, these predictions did not come to pass.

"The difference between the dry and rainy season is night and day," said Omar Silva, test officer. "When I returned after being here in the dry season, I couldn't believe it; I couldn't recognize it. The soil gets so soft and the vehicle is so heavy."

Extremely rugged in the best circumstances, the profile of the

facility's roads changed as the rains flooded and washed out trails more and more with each passing day.

"We had to reclassify certain secondary dirt roads as cross-country all the way," said Zambrano.

Nonetheless, the testers got exactly what they hoped for: an unforgiving tropical rainy season on a punishing jungle road course.

"We expected the vehicle to

get stuck," said Silva. "We made sure we came up with a good methodology to progressively try to get the vehicle unstuck. That way, you can characterize the performance of the vehicle."

When the vehicle got bogged down by slick, gripping mud that was formerly a road, testers first attempted to extricate it with a single-line pull utilizing the vehicle's built-in recovery winch. Failing that, they attempted to pull it out with engine assist and a double-line before resorting to a bulldozer.

"We do a lot of data collection when it happens," said Silva. "We try to characterize the terrain, how the vehicle ended up, and the angles of the winch line. We also take soil samples and check the moisture of the soil and other characteristics of its composition."

The testers also took a measurement of the slope of the vehicle with sophisticated instrumentation, as well as the longitudinal and lateral grade of the stretch of road, and made comparisons of how the terrain originally looked with the conditions



Regardless of the weather or road conditions, the Stryker needed fuel to accumulate the 2,500 miles the mobility test called for. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



# STRYKER

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in which it got stuck.

“We measure the distance from the vehicle to the trees the winch was attached to, and how far away it was from the tractor, if that was necessary to retrieve the vehicle from the muddy spot,” said Mora.

“It’s a lot of work, but I think we collected good data that can be used later in field manuals,” added Silva.

Throughout the test, TRTC’s highly skilled, multi-functional staff was augmented by personnel who normally work at Yuma Test Center.

“We have the ability to flex folks from Yuma Test Center when a large test comes here,” said Col.

Randy Murray, YPG commander.

“It keeps costs down and provides the benefit of sending engineers who have worked on the same system in Yuma.”

“We are a team and all help each



Throughout the test, TRTC’s highly skilled, multi-functional staff was augmented by personnel who normally work at Yuma Test Center. The mobility test saw the Stryker drive 2,500 miles through one of the world’s harshest environments. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

other out, which makes things go a lot smoother” added Paul Wilson, heavy mobile equipment mechanic. “It’s been a good experience.”

All involved agree that natural environment testing is a critically important component to ensuring Soldiers’ equipment works as it is supposed to in the unforgiving crucible of ground combat.

“It’s one thing to see reports and photos, and another thing to be on the vehicle driving through the mud,

trees, and thick vegetation,” said Murray. “It’s definitely different from the other two environments we tested it in at YPG. Being at all three test centers gives us a better understanding of what the system is capable of, and that is important information for the warfighter to have.”



When the vehicle got bogged down by slick, gripping mud that was formerly a road, testers first attempted to extricate it with a single-line pull utilizing the vehicle’s built-in recovery winch. “We do a lot of data collection when it happens,” said Silva. “We try to characterize the terrain, how the vehicle ended up, and the angles of the winch line.” (Photo by Carlos Mora)

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# Dealing with stress

**Submitted by Paul J. Kilanski,  
Family Advocacy Program Manager**

Stress is a psychological or physical tension created by an action or situation like:

- Visiting the dentist
- Getting married
- Job deadlines
- Wanting the best golf score.

Stress is a perspective not an activity. It can be caused by any experience, because stress itself is neutral. When your body is under stress a number of things occur. Electrochemical messengers race to its various parts. The heart beats faster. Breathing quickens. The liver releases stored nutrients. Blood pressure rises. Pupils dilate. Muscles tense. On a limited basis, stress-or the body's state of "red Alert"-can help you respond to a special challenge. But your health will begin to break down if the body's "red alert" becomes chronic or you don't allow sufficient time to relax or regroup.

According to Dr. Peter Hanson, "The best way to deal with one kind of stress is to get more of another kind." Learn how to handle stress in your life: Reconsider how you view stress, stop trying to get rid of it all, make your life more interesting, take up a new challenge and give your life some excitement in sports, hobbies or other leisure activities.

The entire body operates on a 90-minute rhythm of activity followed by rest. Try to work along with your body and take breaks or switch job activities every hour and a half, even if it's just for a few minutes.

Your body's 24-hour "Circadian Cycle" governs sleep, heart rate, body temperature and elimination. This natural internal clock is mainly regulated by light and dark. In other words, your body naturally wants to be awake during the day and asleep



at night.

However, if shiftwork is part of your job, consider these hints: Try to sleep at the same time each day, don't sleep on a full stomach, use blackout shades or an eye mask if you must sleep during the day; wake up with bright lights, lively music, brisk exercise and a cool shower, relax by soaking in a warm bath

Paying attention to what you eat can go a long way toward controlling stress: Eat three balanced meals a day and eat a wide variety of foods. You'll get extra stamina from complex carbohydrates which can be found in cereals, grains, beans, fruits and vegetables. Eat fresh food, avoid processed food and stay away from fat-laden snack foods.

It's important to drink plenty of water, especially during times of stress. Experts recommend eight glasses a day. Drinking water will

help in preventing heart attacks, strokes and blood clots; keeping your skin smooth, regulating your body temperature, helping your digestive system run smoothly.

When it comes to battling stress, exercise delivers the one-two punch. Serving as a stress-proofer, exercise gives your body the energy required

to draw on in times of stress.

Exercise also dissolves muscle tension and releases your body's natural pain-killers to give you a general sense of well-being. With your doctor's approval, try walking, jogging, running or swimming. Any activity that vigorously and continually moves your large muscles for at least twenty minutes will do. Try to exercise three times a week, warm up before and cool down after exercising and include gentle stretching in your routine. If your schedule is jammed and you can't find time for a formal exercise program, don't stress out. There are easy and convenient ways to get exercise: have a salad and a brisk walk for the ultimate power lunch, park at the far end of the parking lot and walk to the office, use the stairs, use an exercise machine at home while watching the news.

Effective stress management has to do with trying your best to enjoy life and keeping a positive attitude about challenges that come your way. Some stress survival skills include: pacing your activities, switching tasks, getting enough rest, eating properly and exercising. These all work together to help you feel strong, rested and hopeful about future challenges. After all, you only have one life.

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## Wreaths Across America

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, wreath-laying ceremonies occur simultaneously at Arlington National Cemetery and over 1,100 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea, and abroad. YPG Command Sergeant Maj. Christopher Prosser, accompanied by daughters Liberty and Tyler, participated in the wreath-laying ceremony at Desert Lawn Memorial Park in Yuma, where over 300 wreaths were placed on veterans' graves. (Photo by Randy Smith)



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