

# Joint Light Tactical Vehicle tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

What do you call a new lightweight vehicle capable of monitoring its own vital signs, lowering itself to within inches of the ground, and providing Soldiers with a high level of scalable protection and improved sustainment?

For the Army, the vehicle is the sleek, agile and fortress-strong replacement for at least some of the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) fleet -- the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV).

The JLTV's position is not an easy one, for the HMMWV is one of the most iconic wheeled vehicles in military history. Since its introduction in 1984 as the replacement for the equally influential Jeep, the versatile HMMWV has seen action in every



The Joint Lightweight Tactical Vehicle incorporates a long list of upgrades that will make it significantly more advanced than the current tactical vehicle fleet. It sports a height-adjustable, off-road racing inspired suspension, allowing the high-profile vehicle to be lowered to within inches of the ground to facilitate boarding and stowage on ships. Other notable improvements include embedded diagnostics, smart display units, and an automatic fire extinguishing system in the event the vehicle is subject to an improvised explosive device. (US Army Photo)

theater of operations the U.S. military has since served in. More than 150,000 of the venerable vehicles have been used by American Soldiers.

Though rugged and remarkably fast for a military vehicle, the HMMWV's lack of armor proved fatal to many Soldiers when confronted with the horrific

destructive power of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the early years of combat in Iraq. Added

SEE **VEHICLE** page 6

# Student wounded three times in massacre shares tale

By Mark Schauer

September is National Preparedness Month, and the prospect of workplace or school gun violence is an incident authorities want to be ready for.

To raise awareness about antiterrorism in general and active shooter threats in particular, Gary Simpler, lead program analyst, wanted a speaker that would connect and resonate with the general public.

Having heard Kristina Anderson, a survivor of the Virginia Polytechnic mass shooting of 2007, Simpler spent months arranging to bring her to Yuma, for the benefit of both YPG personnel and people in the broader

community.

"As a former tactical guy, I love to hear the FBI talk about blowing holes in walls and eliminating the threat, but most people do not

SEE **STUDENT** page 2

**Walk-run  
commemorates 9/11,  
honors responders  
/Page 5**



**Senator  
visits YPG  
commander  
/Page 11**



**A day of  
deep-sea  
fishing fun  
/Page 11**





# STUDENT

FROM PAGE 1

want to hear those details,” said Simpler. “Kristina was a 19-year-old freshman at Virginia Tech. What I got from her presentation was that she was a normal person going to school who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

Soberingly frank and deeply personal, the talks featuring Anderson and Columbine High School shooting survivor Heather Egeland were hosted at Arizona Western College on September 11. A morning session was attended primarily by first responders and education officials, while an afternoon session was open to the general public. YPG personnel were encouraged to attend either session.

“The world of mass shooting survivors is both too large and very small,” said Anderson. “It’s a club you don’t want to be a member of.”

That fateful day in 2007 began like any other for Anderson, who was running late to her morning French class at Virginia Tech’s Norris Hall. A venerable fortress-like structure with only three points of entry and exit, the mass shooter likely chose the location to kill as many innocent victims as possible. Unfortunately for those in the building, warning

signs were overlooked. When the shooter chained the doors shut prior to embarking upon his murderous rampage, no one reported it to authorities. In the days and weeks leading up to the shooting, there was remodeling work in progress in portions of the building: some people rationalized away the sound of gunshots as construction noise. Even as he entered the classrooms toting two handguns, his soon-to-be victims could not process the reality unfolding.

“For a few seconds, I thought it was a prank,” recalled Anderson. “I thought it was a paintball gun at first.”

Of the four classrooms and hallway the gunman fired shots in, Anderson’s class was the smallest space with the least opportunity to escape. All but one of the 19 individuals inside were shot multiple times—only seven survived. Shot three times, Anderson sustained multiple internal wounds and would have likely died without a quick response from the police and paramedics. When the shooter killed himself rather than face police approaching the building, he had more than 200 rounds of unspent ammunition.

“I’m eternally grateful the police arrived as quickly as they did,” said Anderson. “There is no doubt he



Kristina Anderson, a survivor of the Virginia Polytechnic mass shooting of 2007, talks about her experiences at a YPG-sponsored event hosted by Arizona Western College on September 11. To raise awareness about antiterrorism in general and active shooter threats in particular, Gary Simpler, lead program analyst, wanted a speaker that would connect and resonate with the general public. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

would have kept going otherwise.”

Other classrooms fared better. In one, before being fatally shot, a professor managed to hold the door shut against the gunman while a number of his students jumped from the second story windows. In another, quick-thinking students barricaded the door with a table and desks and held them firm even as the gunman fired through the door before giving up and moving on.

“If you can create any kind of time, distance, or barrier, they aren’t going to try that hard,” said Anderson.

Fortunately, preparedness for these situations has increased dramatically in the last 10 years. Today, all schools are expected to have an all-hazards plan that outlines how to respond to an active shooter. Organizations like Anderson’s Kashka Foundation and Egeland’s The Rebels Project seek to provide solace and healing to survivors and prevent future tragedies by raising awareness.

In remarks at the morning session, Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG

commander, stressed the importance of vigilance in preventing terroristic attacks and community cooperation to be able to respond to acts of violence should they occur.

“The main concept is, ‘see something, say something,’” said Poppenberger. “The focus is to try to stop tragedies before they happen. Unfortunately we know that won’t always happen, which leads us to Ready Army Month and National Preparedness Month to discuss how the community can respond, deal with, and recover from these tragedies.”

Poppenberger praised Yuma’s community strength, saying it was the most impressive he has seen in his Army career.

“Communication coordination is an important aspect of readiness,” said Poppenberger. “Better partnerships lead to better reaction times: if something were to happen, somebody’s phone number is already on speed dial. I can’t overemphasize the importance of collaboration within the community.”

## 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.



News may be submitted to:  
The Editor, Outpost, Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma, AZ, 85365.  
Phone: (928) 328-6149 or DSN 899.  
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**Commander:** Col. Ross Poppenberger  
**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



# September is National Suicide Awareness Month

Submitted by Christopher Lee

September is National Suicide Awareness Month. This September the Army highlights the importance of Suicide Prevention, Awareness, and Intervention with the theme #BeThere: Your Actions Could Save a Life. Each person's reason for experiencing thoughts about suicide or engaging in suicidal behaviors is as unique as the person. The underlying theme of every survivor of a suicide attempt, and of every suicide prevention or intervention program is someone was there. Someone listened. Someone cared.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is currently the 10th leading cause of death. There are an average of 121 deaths by suicide every day and for every suicide, there are approximately 25 attempts. It is estimated that in the United States more than 5 million people have been directly affected by suicide. Experts believe that most suicidal individuals do not want to die, they just want an end to pain. There is evidence of successful interventions in the stories of people that have had thoughts of suicide and attempted suicide. In each case it was because someone was able to "BeThere."

Many people impact the lives of friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and sometimes even strangers, without ever knowing it. Their presence, the connection they made, the conversation that was held or the act of kindness shown, may not

have had anything to do with the topic of suicide. Because you were there for that person, physically and emotionally, a life may have been changed.

As we go about our daily duties, at work and at home, be mindful of the people we interact with. If you are aware of warning signs or risk factors in that person's life, be there. If you know someone is struggling, be there. You never know when being present and available to someone, and really listening to them could have the effect of saving a life. If you have questions about suicide prevention or are concerned about yourself or someone you know, contact the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator, Mr. Christopher Lee, 928-328-2249, for more information, or email: Christopher.a.lee24.civ@mail.mil. #BeThere

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# Two ways to get your Medicare benefits

By Greg Dill

At a family reunion last month, my Aunt Abby and Uncle Glen got into a squabble over the best way to get their Medicare benefits.

Uncle Glen is an Original Medicare man, and has been for nearly a decade. Aunt Abby prefers Medicare Advantage, which is similar to a health plan she had before enrolling in Medicare last spring.

When they turned to me, asking me to referee and declare which form of Medicare is better, I gave them a big smile and answered, "Well, it depends."

Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage have different benefits and costs that you should consider based on your personal needs. So grab a cool drink and I'll go over some of the differences. Medicare open enrollment season runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, and it's a good idea to know how the two types of Medicare work before you select one.

With Original Medicare, you can choose any doctor, hospital, or other healthcare provider you want, as long as they accept Medicare. When you receive medical services or goods, Medicare pays the provider directly. About 70 percent of all people with Medicare have Original Medicare.

The other way to get your benefits is Medicare Advantage, which is a form of managed care, like an HMO or PPO. Medicare Advantage

is provided by private insurance companies approved by Medicare. If you're in Medicare Advantage, you generally must go to doctors and other providers in the company's network.

If you go outside the network, you may have to pay more.

On the other hand,



Medicare Advantage plans may offer some services – such as dental, hearing, vision, and prescription drug coverage – that Original Medicare doesn't.

Most people with Original Medicare pay a monthly premium. If you're in Medicare Advantage, you may pay an additional monthly premium to the private insurer that covers you.

With Original Medicare, you or your supplemental insurance must pay deductibles, co-pays, and coinsurance.

To cover these "gaps" in Medicare, some people buy a type of supplemental insurance called

Medigap. If you have a Medigap policy, Medicare pays its share of the covered costs, and then your Medigap policy pays its share.

Original Medicare doesn't cover prescription drugs. If you want drug coverage, you can buy a Medicare Part D plan. Such plans are sold

through private companies approved by Medicare. You have to pay an additional monthly premium for Part D.

Medicare Advantage companies must cover all of the services that Original Medicare covers. (However, Original Medicare covers hospice care, some new Medicare benefits, and some costs for clinical research studies, even if you're in a Medicare Advantage plan.) In all types of Medicare Advantage plans, you're always covered for emergency and urgent care.

You can join a Medicare Advantage

plan even if you have a pre-existing condition -- except for End-Stage Renal Disease. People with ESRD usually are covered through Original Medicare.

Keep in mind that Medicare Advantage plans can charge different out-of-pocket amounts and have different rules for how you get service.

For example, you may need a referral to see a specialist. And you may need to stay in the plan's provider network, unless you're willing to pay more to go outside the network.

You should always check with the plan before you get a service to find out whether it's covered and what your costs may be. If the plan decides to stop participating in Medicare, you'll have to join another Medicare health plan or return to Original Medicare.

How can you decide whether Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage is better for you?

There's a good comparison of Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage in the "Medicare & You" handbook. "Medicare & You" is mailed to all Medicare beneficiaries every fall. You can also find it online, at <https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-and-you/>.

If you have any questions, call Medicare's toll-free number, 1-800-MEDICARE.

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## Walk-run commemorates 9/11, honors first responders



The proving ground remembered 9/11 with an early morning five kilometer walk-run in early September (top photo). YPG meteorologist Gabe Langbauer led the pack from the start (middle photo), completing the five kilometers at an impressive 19:17 clip. Tying for second place were YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenger and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser, with top overall female winner Maria Cabral steps behind (bottom photo). (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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# VEHICLE

FROM PAGE 1

armor helped blunt the impact of the explosions, but the extra weight impacted the vehicles' balance and stability. Additionally, when the HMMWVs were outfitted with sophisticated electronic counter-IED devices, many of which were tested at YPG, the electricity necessary to power the items overwhelmed the vehicle's dated electrical system. To bridge the capability gap, JLTV has been designed to provide increased electrical power, both moving and stationary.

The JLTV incorporates a long list of upgrades that will make it significantly more advanced than the

current tactical vehicle fleet. It sports a height-adjustable, off-road racing inspired suspension, allowing the high-profile vehicle to be lowered to within inches of the ground to facilitate boarding and stowage on ships. Other notable improvements include embedded diagnostics, smart display units, and an automatic fire extinguishing system in the event the vehicle is subject to an IED. Like the HMMWV, the JLTV will be available to serve a variety of combat missions in several configurations, from infantry carriers to armed escort vehicles. All of its variants have a detachable trailer capable of pulling the same payload as the vehicle it is attached to.

During the initial technology development phase of testing that

began in 2009, three vendors each provided three vehicles to be put through rigorous testing across YPG's punishing road courses, as well as on the test track operated jointly by the Army and General Motors. The final selection was made last August, and YPG is currently conducting performance and reliability qualification testing as the vehicles roll off the assembly line.

"We're doing reliability and maintainability testing, and a whole slew of performance testing," said Isaac Rodriguez, team leader.

In addition to running the vehicles across 36,500 miles of paved, secondary, and cross-country roads at YTC, YPG testers are testing everything from the overhead

gunner's protection kit to the vehicle's active suspension system. For example, YTC is assessing if the vehicle parked on a 25% side slope can be leveled out using the JLTV's adjustable height suspension to allow occupants to open and exit from the vehicle's heavy armored doors safely and effectively.

"We're doing simulated missions for reliability qualification testing," said Rodriguez. "We're exercising out all of the onboard systems, operating the vehicle over the JLTV's mission terrain profile and documenting all of the vehicle maintenance activities."

The Services are in the process of developing and refining their respective tactical wheeled vehicle strategies, therefore a final



In addition to running the vehicles across 36,500 miles of paved, secondary, trails and cross-country roads at YTC, YPG testers are testing everything from the overhead gunner's protection kit to vehicle's active suspension system. (US Army photos)



planned quantity has not yet been determined. Currently, the Army intends to purchase 55,000 JLTVs within the next 15 to 20 years, with the Marine Corps adding an additional 5,500. YPG testing is performed with the dual branch use in mind.

“This is a joint program between the Army and Marine Corps, so it has to accommodate both services’ onboard systems, radios, and other equipment,” said Rodriguez.

The Multi-Service Operational Test & Evaluation (MOT&E) event for the JLTV program is scheduled for earlier next year, and Rodriguez praises the efforts of all YPG personnel involved in the test, from the test officers to the support groups who worked long days to ensure the test execution was performed as required to support entry for the MOT&E event. “It’s all hands on deck,” he said. “The entire team is making a valiant effort to meet the program’s schedule expectations while ensuring all test requirements are fully assessed safely and as efficiently as possible.”



The JLTV is a powerful vehicle that can overcome large obstacles with ease. Currently, the Army intends to purchase 55,000 JLTVs within the next 15 to 20 years. (US Army photo)



The ravages of sand and dust are daily realities that must be planned for in places where American Soldiers are currently deployed. Though YPG has both in abundance, test items are subjected to controlled and sustained exposure of blowing silica powder or sand for six hours at a stretch, and are often put through their paces on the test range as soon as the punishing sand and dust blasting is completed.



Among other things, the JLTV undergoes frosty conditioning in a cold chamber on post. The chamber itself is contained within a transition environment that buffers test personnel rooms from the extreme temperatures inside, and is outfitted with items such as cameras and air quality monitors.



In addition to running the vehicles across 36,500 miles of paved, secondary, trails and cross-country roads at YTC, YPG testers are testing everything from the overhead gunner's protection kit to vehicle's active suspension system. The JLTV has also undergone testing at Cold Regions Test Center, as seen here. (US Army photos)



# *A View Without A Point*

## Northern exposure

By Teri Womack

Have you ever looked forward to going somewhere for such a long time that when you finally get there, the reality can be disappointing? That definitely did NOT happen to me when I visited the Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) in August! After three decades and numerous cancelled trips, I was finally able to put my newly purchased three pairs of boots (and one pair borrowed from a friend) on the ground in Alaska.

I didn't want to jinx myself with the trip, so I wouldn't allow myself to believe it was really going to happen until the very last minute. That meant that the day prior to boarding a northbound plane, I had some serious recon to do in the form of a frenzied shopping excursion. I grew up in Massachusetts, so, I figured I had winter clothes shopping in the bag... or at least the shopping cart.

Well, apparently, living in the desert for so long had robbed me of my winter fashion skills, and the summer clothes sales in Yuma kept distracting me, so I haphazardly threw long pants and close-toed shoes in my cart, and hoped for the best. The best ended up with me being unable to fit everything in my suitcase which resulted with me standing in the Yuma Airport with borrowed luggage that looked like a can of biscuits ready to pop and eight pounds over the luggage weight allotment. It's a good thing this trip wasn't during the winter!

I am in no way complaining, but the three flights and long layovers seemed to take forever, but that could have been just me since I have a hard time sitting so long. Plus, I had 30 years of pent up anticipation stored up inside me and I'm pretty sure the pilots got tired of me

tapping them on the shoulders and asking "Are we there yet?" (Just kidding.)

We arrived in Fairbanks and then drove on an incredibly beautiful tree-lined highway as I kept my eyes on the landscape for a glimpse of a moose. When we arrived at CRTC in Delta Junction, it was time to get to work! For me, that included accompanying our new Commander with a camera as he toured the facilities and capabilities at the test center. I saw facilities that I had only seen as small photos in briefings and I was thrilled to meet face-to-face with people that I had previously communicated with only over the telephone or via email. It was all live and in color... and so much better in person.

I gained a better understanding of their mission and the rugged professionals that truly live and love their job in Alaska while I filled two camera cards with photos, and scribbled notes that didn't make sense when I got back. Luckily, I now know who I can contact to set me straight and confirm information for future articles about their test center.

Evidently, some of that 30-year pent up anticipation wasn't totally gone and I had to get this out of my system first...



## Chaplain's Corner

### Kindness can make you cry

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

Allan Emery in his book *A Turtle on a Fencepost* tells a moving story from his childhood. He was taking a train trip with his parents. On this trip he noticed a porter moving about with a decided limp. The porter told young Emery that he had an ingrown toenail. A chiropodist had worked on it the previous day, and it had become infected. Obviously he was in great pain. They talked about other subjects and Emery went to bed. During breakfast the next morning Emery's father commented upon the way the porter appeared to be in pain. Emery filled him in on the reason. After the meal, Emery went back to the observation car, returning to their car a half hour later to see the porter coming out of his parents' drawing room. As the porter walked toward him, Emery saw that the porter was distressed, great tears were cascading down his cheeks onto his white jacket. He went into the men's lounge, sat down upon the leather bench, put his hands over his face and cried. Emery sat beside him. He was particularly concerned because the porter had just left his parent's accommodations. He asked, "Are you crying because your toe hurts?"

The porter replied, "No, it is because of your daddy." He went on to tell Emery that his father had approached him, to ask about his toe. His father told the porter that he was not a doctor, but he felt he might be able to help him. The porter was reluctant but, at his father's insistence, he went into the drawing room and

exposed his toe, terribly inflamed and swollen. Emery's father suggested he lance it, clean it out, and bandage it to relieve the pain and expedite healing. The porter agreed and, as he told Emery of it, he burst out crying again. Emery asked, "Did it hurt that much?" He said, "It didn't hurt at all, and it feels fine now." "Then, why are you crying?" Emery asked.

"Well," said the porter, "while he was dressing my toe, your daddy asked me if I loved the Lord Jesus. I told him my mother did but that I did not believe as she did. Then he told me that Jesus loved me and had died for me. As I saw your daddy carefully bandaging my foot, I saw a love that was Jesus' love and I knew I could believe it. We got down on our knees and we prayed and, now, I know I am important to Jesus and that he loves me."

With that he started crying again, happy and unashamed. When his sobs subsided, he earnestly burst out, "You know, boy, kindness can make you cry."

Maybe you have been watching the TV coverage of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. The destruction, the loss of life and property has been heartbreaking. But out of the dark and dangerous clouds- the shining light -the brightness of people helping people- total strangers. Politics, religion, skin color- everything that is supposed to be dividing us as a nation didn't matter! Just people helping people in need. What a beautiful and kind thing! So yes, sometime kindness can make you cry!



# Helping children cope

**Submitted by Melissa Gomez**

Children are a special part of our lives. They are little humans with big minds and even bigger imaginations. However, when faced with uncertainty and fear, a child's mind can make things bigger than they seem. As adults, we must be cognizant of how children interpret the world around them so that we are better prepared to take action and help them properly cope.

If you are noticing a child displaying symptoms of anger, stress, or fear, it may be time to further investigate the situation. Children should be encouraged to talk about their feelings and otherwise express their fears and concerns through play, drawing, and other age-appropriate methods.

Below are some methods of coping that can help parents, guardians and caregivers as well. These techniques are proven to aid children in both resilience and coping.

1. Stay calm. A calm presence gives reassurance to a child.
2. Talk with the child. Answer their questions with simple and accurate answers.
3. Talk honestly with children about your own feelings. This reassures them that it is okay to experience similar emotions.
4. Listen to what a child says and how the child says it. Is there fear, anxiety, or insecurity? Repeating the child's words may be very helpful, such as "You are afraid that...". This helps both you and the child clarify feelings.
5. Reassure the child and normalize their feelings. "We are together. We care about you. We will take care of you." You may need to repeat information and reassurances many times. Additionally, being an empathetic listener lets them know their



reactions are normal.

6. Hold your child. This tip is great for parents/guardians. Provide comfort. Appropriate touching is important for children during this period of uncertainty. Close contact helps assure children that you are there for them and will not abandon them.

7. Observe the child at play. Listen to what is said and how the child plays. Children express feelings of fear or anger while playing. Try not to discourage their play because it upsets you; instead observe it and interpret it. Play is an important way children cope.

8. Emphasize resiliency. Help children think about what they have done in the past that has helped them to deal with a situation when they are upset. This will help them to focus on their positive coping skills.

Children look to the important adults in their life for cues on how to manage their reactions to an

event. Do your best not to minimize a child's fears or concerns. To them, life is happening rapidly and they are learning as much as they can at any given time. Remember that children's fears may be intensified when adults discuss the topic with them. To help children cope, one of the most important steps adults can take is to make time to talk with them.

If you believe the time for a more professional level of help has come, YPG has a great resource in our Child and Youth Behavioral, Military & Family Life Consultant at 928-821-4702. Furthermore, the YPG Family Advocacy Office can provide several relevant resources to all YPG families. Call FAP at 928-328-3224 for more information.

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## Senator visits YPG commander



Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) visited Yuma the last day of last month, seeking input regarding the concerns of various economic leaders in the Yuma community. At a morning breakfast meeting hosted by the Yuma Chamber of Commerce, he met with Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser, to discuss current military issues and the future of the proving ground. He also met with MCAS Yuma Commander Col. David Suggs. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

## Fishing fun



Over 25 YPG personnel enjoyed a day of deep sea-fishing fun off the coast of San Diego in late August thanks to a trip arranged by Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Intramural Sports and Aquatics Coordinator Steve Ward. Among them were Moises Alvarez of the Plans Division (left) and daughter Marissa Alvarez, a student engineer in the Ground Combat Division (center), who were accompanied by friend Charity Hansen. "It was super," said Moises Alvarez. "For me, being on the boat with the kids was great- it was Marissa's first catch, and Charity caught two." Alvarez hopes to go with his son when the next trip occurs in May. "I would definitely do it again in the future and recommend it to anyone," said Alvarez. (Loaned photo)



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