

New commander to lead YPG into future

By Mark Schauer

On a day of record breaking temperature, Col. Ross Poppenberger assumed command of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground on June 20, accepting the guidon from Army Test and Evaluation Command Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton.

A native of Minnesota who spent his formative years in Arizona, Poppenberger said he sees the posting as a homecoming, and pledged to continue YPG's longstanding reputation for excellence.

"It's a phenomenal opportunity to work for some great people and a great community," he said.

Hailing from the Missile Defense Agency in Huntsville, Ala, where he served as deputy program director for the Ground-based Midcourse Defense program, Poppenberger said YPG's work is widely known.

"Almost all of us in the acquisition

community are familiar with YPG and its reputation. When there were 25 different commands to choose from and I saw Yuma Proving Ground was on the list, I put it as my number one choice. Everyone across the service talks about the proving grounds and what great value they add."

Poppenberger credited the efforts of the military personnel and civilian workforce here with YPG's acclaim and notoriety within the Army Acquisition field.

"YPG wouldn't have the reputation it has if the civilians who work here weren't 100% dedicated to the mission. People want to test here because of the customer service YPG provides."

During his command, Poppenberger wants to ensure that

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Col. Ross Poppenberger accepts the YPG guidon from Army Test and Evaluation Command commander Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton in a change of command ceremony on June 20 as outgoing commander Col. Randy Murray (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser (right) look on. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews assumes command of Yuma Test Center

By Mark Schauer

Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews assumed command of Yuma Test Center in mid-June from outgoing commander Lt. Col. James DeBoer in a ceremony held in front of YPG's

Heritage Center museum.

Hailing from the Defense Information System Agency at Fort Meade, Md., Matthews pledged to continue the work that has made YTC the Army's premier test center.

"From what I've seen so far, we have very talented, smart folks here and I'm excited to be their leader," he said. "I'm just here to continue in that light and provide guidance and direction for the main purpose

of making sure we provide the best capability to our Warfighter."

Earlier this year, Matthews spent two weeks touring the test center's

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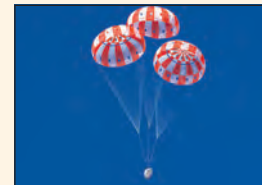
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242nd Army Birthday celebrated at Yuma Proving Ground

By Chuck Wullenjohn

The year was 1775 when our nation's leaders established the Continental Army as a unified armed force to fight Great Britain in order for the 13 colonies to form a new country. Since that time, the Army has been a vital part of the American scene.

Sharing the same day as Flag Day, June 14, the date is somehow appropriate. The United States would not have become a free nation

without the Army, nor would it have maintained its independence without it. The life and destiny of our nation's red, white and blue banner is fully intertwined with that of the Army.

YPG held three activities to celebrate the day – a morning flag raising ceremony, a five kilometer run/walk competition that attracted over 50 participants, and a ceremonial birthday cake slicing (with a sword) that featured the



The five kilometer walk-run that proceeded the flag-raising ceremony had more than 50 participants. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



From left, Patty Jones, Jason Irr, Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser, Col. Randy Murray, Master Sgt. Jose Cevera, and Pfc. Irene Jaime cut the traditional birthday cake. This year's Army birthday paid particular attention to the sacrifices of World War I Soldiers.

youngest and oldest members of the YPG workforce.

"I'm proud to be a Soldier and a combat veteran," said Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser. "I feel a connection with those who came before me. Conditions and situations change, but the fact of the matter is the Army has always had the same mission-- to fight and win our nation's wars-- and that's what we're here for."

Sgt. 1st Class Dawit Gebregiorgis was involved with many aspects of the ceremony. "It feels great to be a senior leader representing the Army Birthday in front of all our Soldiers," he said. "They see the honors and traditions we have to pass along to each other as we senior non-commissioned officers phase out."

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground has played a vital role in the support of the Army and our nation's other military services since it began in 1943. As one of the largest military

installations in the entire western world, 1300 square miles in size., the proving ground's test and development facilities are capable of testing nearly everything in the Army's combat arsenal. This includes main battle tanks and artillery systems to unmanned aircraft, cargo and personnel parachute systems, and technologies that defeat roadside bombs.

The official theme of this year's Army Birthday was "Over There! A celebration of the World War One Soldier." It was 100 years ago in 1917 that the United States joined its allies to fight in Europe. More than two million Americans served overseas, and the Army fully honors the sacrifices of the more than 300,000 killed, wounded or captured as part of the American Expeditionary Forces.

"The ground work those troops put in for us allows us to be the Army we are today," said Gebregiorgis.

THE OUTPOST

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Live music comes to Child Development Center

By Chuck Wullenjohn

Every three years an Army Band visits to provide critical music support to the YPG commander's change of command ceremony. It enlivens the event, adds pomp and circumstance, and is greatly enjoyed by the large audience gathered for the occasion.

It has become YPG's custom to add other local events to the band's schedule when coming for a change of command, which the members of the band are always willing to do. This has typically meant public band concerts in downtown Yuma.

2017, however, was different. Instead of performing in downtown Yuma, the band performed a full slate of Dixieland jazz in the YPG Post Theater before an audience numbering some 200 mostly made up of employees, Soldiers and their families. Earlier in the day they stopped by YPG's Child Development Center for a thirty minute program of live music and show and tell.

The gathered group of about 30 children, mostly ranging below five years of age, but with some older kids as well, danced and sang along, talking to the musicians at the conclusion of the performance and touching their instruments, which

included a massive tuba, other brass instruments and a set of drums. Several took drum sticks in hand to show their rhythm on the drums or to tinkle the cymbals. Others operated the valves on saxophones and trombones.

"I'm really grateful that the band stopped by," said Tina Leslie, Child Development Center director. "Live music is a new experience to many of the children and it adds a fresh dimension to their young lives."

Leslie explained that activities in which young children can personally participate are the bedrock of their growing personalities.

"Kids see, hear and touch, using all their senses when engaging in activities like this," she said. "Children, especially when young, learn best by doing and experiencing things."

In the hours after the band had left, Leslie spied one preschooler walking down a hallway pretending she was operating a trumpet while making horn-like sounds with her mouth. "That was fun to see," said Leslie with a laugh.

It also showed that the musicians had made a positive impact on 30 young lives.



Sgt. Travis Myers shows youngsters the mouthpiece from his saxophone after the Frontier Brass' performance. "Kids see, hear and touch, using all their senses when engaging in activities like this," Leslie said. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

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The Frontier Brass combo of the Military Intelligence Band gave a special concert to students at YPG's Child Development Center on June 19. "I'm really grateful that the band stopped by," said Tina Leslie, Child Development Center director. "Live music is a new experience to many of the children." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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A view without a point

Fore! The adventures of a golf course neighbor

By Teri Womack

I've never had any desire to play golf. My only exposure to the game was when my husband watched the weekend tournaments on the Golf Channel and I stretched out on the couch for a nap because those announcers speak so softly their voices lulled me right to sleep.

Ironically, when we were searching for a home, the one I fell in love with and ultimately purchased was located on a golf course. I believed that fate and opportunity were calling me - literally right in my own back yard, just over that cement block fence. After purchasing brand new golf clubs and some snazzy golf shoes, I thought who better to teach me the game than my own significant other who is an avid golfer?

Apparently, golf is a sport that is played slowly, requires intense concentration and (here's the important part) to stay still and remain completely silent when your partner is hitting the ball. I don't happen to carry any of those personal attributes in my arsenal of life skills and I started to have flashbacks of that time he took me fishing on his bass boat. Apparently loud entertaining conversation and constant witty chatter scares away

fish... and golf balls.

While he was completely focused and concentrating on perfecting his swing, I was honing my four wheeling skills on the green wanting to gain his attention and appreciation that I could do 'donuts' in the golf cart. It didn't take long for his patience to run out and me to just want to run away. I was thankful when we finally arrived at the tee-box that backs up to my house before I began using my golf club as a weapon. To avoid jail time and an imminent divorce, I hoisted myself over that cement block fence, took my golf clubs and went home. Coincidentally, my husband has never invited me to go golfing with



him again. That was my first and last golfing experience.

Interestingly, I have learned more about the game of golf just sitting on my back porch.

Our house is located directly on a tee-box, so I assumed there was a slim to none chance that we would find golf balls in our back yard. Not true. Like business cards,

golf balls are also used as marketing tools - printed with company names, phone numbers and point of contact information, and tossed into the backyards of houses on the golf course. So, if you are ever on the tee-box and need a plumber or your air conditioner serviced, just let me know and I'll pitch one over the wall to you.

Although I have heard that there is no crying in baseball, there is definitely a lot of swearing in golf! I've heard colorful language filled with curse words strung together so

well, they may have invented some new compound words and phrases.

There is literally nobody policing clothing options and golfing attire. Although golf requires a quiet disposition, it doesn't apply to fashion. The louder and brighter the color the better, and there are bonus points for polka dots and stripes—in the same outfit! Personally, I don't think wearing a shirt that is the same color as the flags they put in the hole is a good decision. Why make yourself a target? I haven't heard back from the network, but there is a very small chance that you will see me on your local cable network in my new show "Golf Course Fashion Police". Or maybe not...

I have witnessed people hit the ball so perfect and so far that they should be on the PGA tour. I have also seen people whirly bird their golf clubs so hard that they actually went further than the ball they just hit. I once observed a guy chuck his whole golf bag full of clubs into the lake, and unless he snuck back and retrieved them in the dark of night, they are still there today.

As for those spanking new golf clubs and bag I had purchased with such high hopes? Not surprisingly, I was never invited to go golfing with my spouse again, and a few months later I sold them at a yard sale for a hundred bucks and went shopping for a new purse.

I think it ended the best way possible for both of us...

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MATTHEWS

FROM PAGE 1

vast ranges and meeting personnel from the various support groups that make testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal possible. He said he was impressed by the breadth of YPG's instrumentation, range space, and personnel.

"The command climate is awesome," he said. "On my first day, I shook almost 300 hands and personally spoke to every individual I met. We have great institutional

knowledge here with some of the most premier talent in the nation."

Matthews was commissioned as an officer in 1999. He has served multiple tours in Iraq and his numerous awards and decorations include the Bronze Star and Meritorious Service Medal. He holds a Master's Degree in Procurement and Acquisition Management from Webster University. His wife Martrell is an active duty Army Maj.

Departing YTC commander Lt. Col. James DeBoer stressed that YTC is well-positioned for the future and in excellent hands with Lt. Col. Matthews holding the reins.

"Most people don't know how much we do here every day," DeBoer observed. "We're seeing the workload go up, and a lot of it has to do with the professionalism, customer service-orientation, and attention to detail that everybody has here."

DeBoer, departing for the Eisenhower War College, told the assembled crowd that he and his family would miss Yuma, but that there was no sadness in his departure.

"There are no goodbyes in the Army, only next time," he said. "I look forward to the next time we cross paths."

With early morning temperatures approaching triple digits, Matthews kept his remarks brief following accepting the command guidon and before leading the audience in the singing of the Army Song.

"My wife Martrell and I are happy to be here," Matthews said. "All orders and regulations continue in effect. Truth in testing."



Newly installed Yuma Test Center commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews addresses the YTC workforce. "We have the most state-of-the-art instrumentation to ensure the Warfighter is given the best equipment to prepare for the future fight," he said. "We have great institutional knowledge here with some of the most premier talent in the nation."



At the conclusion of the ceremony, Matthews leads attendees in a rousing version of the Army Song. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Accompanied by his wife, Maj. Martrell Matthews, Matthews greets Cold Regions Test Center commander Lt. Col. Gina Adam in a post-change of command reception line in YPG's Heritage Center.

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COMMANDER

FROM PAGE 1

YPG's range instrumentation and other infrastructure remains on the cutting edge to support testing of the next generation of military equipment.

"Across the force, readiness is our goal. Our equipment has been in combat for 15 years and is aging. Now is the time to prepare for the next fight. We need to improve the readiness of our equipment and YPG provides the answer of whether

equipment is ready for use by the Soldier."

Poppenberger also stressed that he wants the installation to continue it's nearly 75 years of outstanding rapport with the local community to the maximum extent possible.

"I really want to focus on what we do for the community and support for the overall community, but first and foremost is our testing mission and providing good, quality results testing for the Army and other branches. I look forward to meeting with the community and getting involved as much as I can."



From left, outgoing commander Col. Randy Murray, ATEC commander Maj. Gen. John Charlton, and new YPG commander Col. Ross Poppenberger prepare for the change of command ceremony. More than 200 people attended.



Poppenberger emphasized the key role YPG testing plays in ensuring Army readiness. "It is time to prepare for the next fight. YPG provides the answer of whether equipment is ready for use by the Soldier."



YPG's weapons operators fire a 13-gun salute as part of the ceremony. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



YPG's color guard braved triple digit temperatures during the ceremony. The day's high temperature set a new record.



Military Freefall School instructor Jose Reyes jumped in the American flag to kick off the ceremony.



ATEC Commander Maj. Gen. John W. Charlton praises the significant accomplishments of outgoing YPG commander Col. Randy Murray during remarks to the audience. He also expressed his confidence in Poppenberger: "There is no doubt in my mind that he is the right person for the job and someone who is also committed to continuing YPG's important mission."



YPG commander Col. Ross Poppenberger speaks with Yuma Mayor Douglas Nicholls prior to the ceremony as retired Coast Guard Admiral Robert Sloncen and Yuma City Administrator Greg Wilkinson look on.



A diverse audience attended the ceremony, from family members and community officials to members of the workforce and leaders of local organizations. All came away impressed.



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NASA tests parachute contingencies at YPG

By Mark Schauer

A spacecraft has to travel at approximately 20,000 miles per hour to escape the Earth, and re-enters the planet's atmosphere at similarly stunning velocities.

To survive the descent, the human beings on board rely on their space capsule safely and reliably decelerating to speeds slower than most people drive automobiles on residential streets before touching ground.

On the reusable Orion Multipurpose Crew Capsule, the state-of-the-art reusable module that will eventually carry four astronauts to the moon and Mars, the device that will carry them home safely is the Capsule Parachute Assembly System (CPAS), a series of sophisticated parachutes sporting cord made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber used in body armor. Each of the three main parachutes consists of 10,000 square feet of fabric and deploys sequentially,

usually passing through two stages prior to being fully open: on re-entry, two drogue parachutes deploy to slow the hurtling 10-ton capsule prior to three main parachutes taking it down to a landing speed of 17 miles per hour.

During the most recent test of the system in mid-June, however, testers wanted to verify that the capsule's main parachutes could still land the Orion safely if astronauts had to abort a mission before there was time for the drogue parachutes to be deployed: for example, if some technical problem forced the crew to re-land shortly after ascending from the launch pad.

As is usual for these tests, which have occurred at YPG for over 10 years, dozens of personnel were present on the isolated drop zone where the capsule would be dropped. Dozens of miles away, however, other personnel were directing all conditions of the test from a mission control center.



As the Orion's Capsule Parachute Assembly System undergoes a pad abort scenario test miles downrange, testers watch the action with eager anticipation on a bank of monitors in the mission control room. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Two chase aircraft follow the C-17 cargo plane to get photos and video like this showing the moment the mock Orion capsule is extracted. The video feed is seen in real time from the mission control room. (US Army photo)

“We monitor everything right here,” said Ryan Fraser, test officer.

The personnel in the control room have multiple views of the test item from ground and aerial-based cameras flown on chase aircraft, on this day a UH-60 Blackhawk and a Casa airplane. They can communicate with the ground and air crews, and see air traffic from other tests on monitors.

As in previous tests, the mock capsule was dropped from a C-17 cargo plane flying at an altitude of 25,000 feet. The mock capsule was extracted from the cargo bay on a palette with two 28 foot parachutes attached to it. The capsule was then separated from the palette, and programmer parachutes deployed to correct the capsule’s speed to fit within the test parameters. At the proper altitude, the drogue parachutes that would slow the craft coming from space were left undeployed. Instead, the large main parachutes bloomed, carrying the capsule to a right-side-up landing on

the desert floor.

“It opened at exactly the right time,” said Carol Evans, project manager.

The test wasn’t complete yet, however. As video of the drop was played back on the screens, the C-17 circled around once more to drop a wind pack over the drop area. Once this item had landed and the aircraft had flown from the area, an on-site member of YPG’s meteorology team released a weather balloon.

“The wind pack gives us wind speed and direction,” said Fraser. “The weather balloon also gives us that, plus air pressure and temperature. We launch both to get more meteorological data.”

With these things done, the ground crew fanned out and carefully recovered the massive deployed parachutes and lines from the desert floor. The workers gathered the fabric slowly and methodically: testers want to evaluate any damage that may have occurred to the parachutes, and know that it was not



The mock Orion capsule was dropped from a C-17 cargo aircraft flying at 25,000 feet. Testers needed to use a programmer parachute that is not part of the CPAS system to slow the capsule to the appropriate speed for the test, which sought to verify that the CPAS could decelerate the capsule to a safe landing speed if for some reason a mission was aborted shortly after launching. (US Army photo)

incurred from the recovery efforts.

As the packed parachutes made the journey back to the Air Delivery Complex, where the parachutes were suspended from a high ceiling and carefully studied, workers from YPG’s motor pool used a large crane

to lift the massive test capsule onto a lowboy trailer for transport back to Yuma International Airport.

“It went really great,” said Evans. “It was an awesome drop. It’s a big team effort, and everyone did a great job.”

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Army Band jazzes up Post Theater



After entertaining students at YPG's Child Development Center earlier in the day, the Military Intelligence Band's Frontier Brass ensemble held a concert at the Post Theater attended by over 125 people the evening of June 19. The lively show, punctuated by plenty of exuberant showmanship and audience participation, lasted about 90 minutes. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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