

Field artillery Soldiers test new laser targeting system at CRTC

By Chief Warrant Officer 4
Robert J. Stoll

Ten field artillery soldiers tested the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System at Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC)

recently.

The JETS-TLDS is a modular advanced sensor suite of three components, the hand-held target location module, precision azimuth and vertical angle module, and laser

marker module.

According to Staff Sgt. Timothy S. Phillips, a research, development, test and evaluation NCO from the U.S. Army Operational Test Command's Fires Test Directorate, forward observers

(FO) are an essential part of the modern battlefield.

"FOs have a critical role as a key element of a Fire Support Team; providing indirect fire support at the company/ troop level," said Phillips. "JETS-TLDS allows the FOs to quickly acquire and locate targets for any given fire mission."

Additionally, the system

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PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN SAARLOOS

Sgt. Richard Martinez (left) and Spec. Nicholas A. Whelan, Soldiers from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, detect, recognize, and identify a target using the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System (JETS-TLDS) while wearing chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and enhanced conventional weapons (CBRNE) equipment.

YPG Police Department practices proactive policing

By Mark Schauer

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 two of a series devoted to YPG's first responders, we take a special look at YPG's Police.

In terms of personnel and residents, YPG is relatively small compared to most Army posts.

Yet with over 2300 workers, about 600 residents, and over 1300 square miles of land, YPG's Police Department has an outsized amount of people and property to serve and protect.

"We run about 8,000 calls for service a year," said Donnie Lucas, chief. "That's everything from a cat in a tree to a burglary."

It amounts to a lot of work, but Lucas puts it in perspective, particularly as it

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engineer marks
20 years at TRTC

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YPG POLICE

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relates to YPG residents.

"We have very little property crime here," he said. "We don't have the graffiti or truancy problems that larger installations tend to have. Crimes against persons are very limited."

The low crime is in large part thanks to the professionalism and intuition of his force.

"I'm very pleased that my officers do a very good job of proactive policing," Lucas said. "I'm a big proponent of community policing. In the near future you will see our police officers on golf carts in the housing areas and out and about more, out of vehicles."

Looking out to the test range, one of the busiest the Army has, Lucas says constant vigilance is required.

"We have many challenges," said Lucas. "There are folks who like to hunt or wander in places they aren't supposed to be in, like impact areas."

In addition to being a federal crime, Lucas cautions, trespassing on an active artillery range where lethal munitions are test fired is extremely dangerous. Further, some parts of the range are home to culturally precious artifacts from hundreds or thousands



of years ago that the Army is sworn to preserve as-is. Trespassing signs, fences, and other barriers should be respected and adhered to by all who encounter them.

All members of the department take their duties seriously, said Maj. Sean Underhill, who joined the force in 2008.

"Our primary goals are protection and customer service," said Underhill. "We want to do our best to enforce the law and make sure people's rights are protected."

This ethos extends to everyone the police force encounters, including those who fail mandatory criminal background checks while trying to enter YPG and are denied entrance.

"Every single visitor gets that background check," Underhill said. "It's to protect our community,

but also to provide them with the proper procedures to correct their backgrounds. Some felonies can be dropped to a misdemeanor by the court system, so in the future they will be able to access and work at the installation."

Lucas says that out of necessity all elements of YPG's Department of Emergency Services work closely together to ensure the safety and well-being of all on post.

"You have to work cohesively all the time," he said. "There is little daylight between me and Fire Chief Ball. You can't run a directorate of emergency services operation without a constant communication flow between the physical security person, the police chief, and the fire chief."

Lt. William Clark, a former provost marshal in the Marine Corps, has

Sgt. Roger Mixon of the YPG Police Department hands out pencils to students on their way to class at Price Elementary School. "I'm a big proponent of community policing," said Donnie Lucas, chief. "In the near future you will see our police officers on golf carts in the housing areas and out and about more, out of vehicles." PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

worked for the YPG Police Department for 15 years.

"I like it because YPG is similar to a big family," said William Clark. "It grows on you."

Is being a civilian police officer at YPG very different from being a Marine Corps provost marshal?

"It's not a big difference at all," Clark said. "It's still the same structure and you enforce the rules and regulations that exist. You have to have a lot of interpersonal communication skills to interact with civilians."

His thoughts were largely seconded by Sgt. Roger Mixon, YPG's traffic investigator and a former Army Military Policeman, who one recent morning handed out pencils to youngsters on their way to another day of classes at Price Elementary School.

"Our kids go to this school," he said, indicating the venerable edifice as he handed out pencils to three patiently-waiting students. "We're a bit more invested in the community here."

THE OUTPOST

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PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

Lt. Kilipaki Harris and Sgt. Steven Houll interact with YPG winter visitors as part of their duties. With over 2300 workers, about 600 residents, and over 1300 square miles of land, YPG's Police Department has many people and much property to serve and protect.

Shoot'in the Breeze

The power...is intoxicating

By David J. Horn

NOTE: Life seems to have a way of going full circle. After starting my career in the old Tank-Automotive Division, then spending many years of working in the Electronic Warfare Branch, I was able to spend about six months during the spring and summer of 2017 back in the Combat Systems Branch, helping test tanks. Here's a copy of an article I wrote for the YPG Outpost back in 1988.

To conduct vehicle performance tests. This is the mission of the Combat Systems Test Branch. The life of a test officer here in the branch is tough. We eat stress. Everyone here has their own way of dealing with the pressure. I'm not talking about those times when everything is going according to the test plan, but those times when things get complicated and everything's bouncing off the blades. Some of us display total control and incredible reserve. Some of us lash out and eat flesh. As the support people close to the projects know, it has nothing to do with

the personality of the test officer... it depends strictly upon the priority of the project. Give somebody a high priority test and that test officer gets calluses from snapping their fingers, or they have to get a bigger cap. The test officers out there testing gas cans just have to be nice to everybody.

Here in the Combat Systems Test Branch, I test tanks. The power...is intoxicating. Just like where WWII fighter pilots put little insignias under their canopies when they shot down an enemy fighter, I put a little Bradley or HMMWV sticker on my briefcase

every time I kick one of those guys off the Dyno course. At the motor pool, my tanks have valet parking. At the maintenance shop, my tanks have reserved stalls marked off with desert tan colored ropes, with tank silhouettes painted on the shop floor, all under the "big" crane. AND I LIKE IT!!!

Well, here comes my boss now, probably to tell me what a great job I've been doing. What's that? Another new project? No problem! Huh? Would that be a five-gallon or a 10-gallon can, sir?



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Chaplain's Corner

Anger does not lead to righteousness

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

One morning a successful businessman was getting ready to go to his office. When he reached his car and opened the door, a stray dog sleeping under his car suddenly came out and bit him on his leg! The businessman got very angry and quickly picked up a few rocks and threw them at the dog but none hit the dog. The dog ran away.

Upon reaching his office, the businessman calls a meeting of his managers and during the meeting he put the "anger of the dog" on them. The managers also got upset by the anger of their boss and they put their anger on the employees working under them. The chain of reaction keeps going to the lower level employees and finally, the anger reaches to the lowest employee.

Now, there was no one working under him! So, after the office closes, he reaches his home, and his wife opens the door. She asks him, "Why are you so late today?"



He is upset due to the anger thrown at him at work so he growls at his wife, and said, "I went to work so don't irritate me with your stupid questions!"

So, now the wife is upset that her husband growled at her for no reason. She put her anger on her son who was watching TV and growled at him, "This is all you do, you have no interest in studying! Turn off the TV now!"

The son got upset now! He walked out of his house and saw a dog passing by looking at him. He picked up a rock and threw it at the dog in his anger and frustration. This was the same dog that bit the businessman earlier that morning. (moralstories.org)

The Bible has something to say to us about anger: My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for your anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20

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Medicare open enrollment season is here

By Greg Dill

When you shop for a new car, you don't just buy the first one you see, do you?

Probably not. You usually shop around, looking for the best deal you can get on a vehicle that fits your driving needs as well as your pocketbook.

Well, it's the time of year when you should think about shopping around for a Medicare health or drug plan.

Medicare's open enrollment period begins Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7, 2017.

If you have Original Medicare, meaning that you can choose any doctor or hospital that accepts

Medicare, you don't need to think about open enrollment.

But if you have a Medicare Advantage (Part C) health plan, or a Medicare (Part D) prescription drug plan, you may want to see whether there's another plan on the market that would be a better match for you, at a lower price.

If you're enrolled in a plan and you're happy with it, you don't need to do anything.

But Medicare health and drug plans – run by private insurers approved by Medicare – can change from year to year. A plan can raise its monthly premium or drop a medicine that you need.

So it makes good sense to review your coverage each year. Make sure your plan still is a good fit for you in terms of cost, coverage, and quality. If it isn't, look for another plan.

During open enrollment, you can sign up for a Medicare Advantage health plan or Part D prescription drug plan, or switch from one plan to another. Your new coverage will take effect Jan. 1, 2018.

How do you shop for a new plan?

One way is the "Medicare & You" handbook, mailed each fall to every Medicare household in the country. This booklet lists all the Medicare health and drug plans available where you live, along with basic information such as premiums, deductibles, and contacts.

There's also the Medicare Plan Finder, at www.Medicare.gov

Look for a green button that says, "Find health & drug plans." Click on that, plug in your zip code, and you'll see all of the Medicare Advantage and Part D plans available in your area. You can compare them based on benefits, premiums, co-pays, and estimated out-of-pocket costs. Contact information for the plans is listed.

If you don't have access to a computer, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Our customer service representatives can help you with questions about Medicare health and drug plans. The call is free.

Another terrific resource is the State Health Insurance and Counseling Program (SHIP).

SHIP is an independent, nonprofit organization that provides free, personalized counseling to people with Medicare. You can make an appointment to speak with a SHIP counselor in-person or over the phone.

SHIP counselors are well-trained volunteers who often are enrolled in Medicare themselves, so they know the issues. They can help you sort through different health and drug plans and help find one that's right for you.

To contact your local SHIP office, go to www.shiptacenter.org

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan as of Jan. 1, 2018 but you're not satisfied with it, you have a 45-day window to dis-enroll. Between Jan. 1 and Feb. 14, 2018, you can drop your plan and return to Original Medicare. You can also sign up for a Part D drug plan during that time.

Having trouble paying for your Part D plan? You may be eligible for the Extra Help program, which helps cover your premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. Medicare beneficiaries typically save about \$4,000 annually with Extra Help.

For more information on Extra Help, go to www.SSA.gov/prescriptionhelp.



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Computer science engineer marks 20 years at TRTC

By Mark Schauer

YPG's customer base and areas of operation are both international.

The proving ground hosts testing for a wide variety of friendly foreign nations, and Tropic Regions Test Center, in particular, conducts testing

in countries as varied as Panama, Suriname, and Australia.

Among the personnel in TRTC's Panama office is Luisa Wong, a computer science engineer by training who has worked for the facility for more than 20 years.

Though Wong is Panamanian born,

massive geopolitical disruptions in the wake of World War II forced her father's family to flee a newly Maoist China.

"My father got out of China on a boat, but he couldn't take my mother or my older siblings," she explained. "He ended up here in Panama because one of his

brothers was here."

The family was estranged for about 10 years before there was a glimmer of short, but false hope.

"My mom was finally able to get permission to leave China, but not her children. She said 'no,' she would not depart without them."

Wong's mother, and older brother and sister eventually reunited with her father in Panama in 1960. Luisa and her younger brother were born thereafter. Life was better in Panama and the family was together, but things were never easy making a go of their modest restaurant.

"My parents really had difficult times. They worked very, very hard."

So did Wong, and by the time she finished school it was obvious to all who knew her. She graduated first in her class at the Technological University of Panama and worked for a software company for nearly a decade until they abruptly ceased operations in Panama. She was doing freelance consulting work when she saw a job opening at TRTC in 1997.

"There was an ad in the newspaper looking for a technical writer," she recalled. "I'm a computer science engineer and speak English, so I applied. I went to two interviews and got hired."

She was initially a technical writer

focused on report and plan writing, but, like most TRTC personnel, Wong soon found herself wearing many hats. She began doing duty as a data collector and, eventually, as a test officer.

Wong likes to dance and read as hobbies, but neither takes precedence over her delights in the accomplishments of her two children.

"I love to travel to new places and meet new people. I really enjoy family time."

Both of her children spent part of their academic careers in the United States: her daughter earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Louisville before getting a Masters of Business Administration at Panama's Victoria International University, and her son graduated from the Notre Dame Academy and the University of Central Oklahoma after attending both schools on baseball scholarships.

"I'm glad they both had the opportunity to live, learn and work in the United States," she said. "They had great experiences."

As for travelling, Wong's efforts to travel somewhere every year has taken her to multiple countries in Europe and South America. She hopes to visit Asia again in the future, too.



Luisa Wong, test officer, has conducted a variety of tests for Tropic Regions Test Center over her 20 years there. Born in Panama and a computer science engineer by training, she graduated first in her class at the Technological University of Panama. PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

Rob Turner

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Matt Fischer
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JETS

FROM PAGE 1

provides 24/7 all-weather precision targeting and target-acquisition to support dismounted operations.

Phillips explained that Soldiers from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment with military occupational specialty 13F (Fire Support Specialist), were selected for the test to gather operational data because of their experience and knowledge detecting targets for fires.

After spending several weeks training and testing, the Soldiers seemed confident in their ability to employ the JETS-TLDS system.

"I was excited about the amount of missions we processed each day with the JETS-TLDS," said Spec. Dallas A. Mason, of Battery D. "I was proud to be able to participate in the testing of this system."

Each test day involved 10 hours of operational use and averaged 40 target acquisitions per FO team.

The test provided the FO teams an operationally realistic approach to detect, recognize, and identify targets in a tactical environment. Soldiers were dropped off at a release point where they began a tactical foot movement over the mountainous Alaskan terrain at elevations between 1,000-2,500



PHOTOS BY SEBASTIAN SAARLOOS

Spec. Dallas A. Mason (left) and Spec. Israel C. Wallace, Soldiers from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, set up the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System (JETS-TLDS) at the Cold Regions Test Center, Fort Greely, Alaska, to conduct a self-location check.

meters at several different observation posts.

Upon arriving at their OP, they set up the system and established their location by using system self-location methods.

JETS-TLDS also assists in determining the category of accuracy for

each target location acquired by the FO.

The current legacy system issued to FOs is the Vector 21 Laser Target Locator, Mark VII, and the Target Reconnaissance Infrared Geolocating Range Finder.

JETS-TLDS provides a designator

and marking device in a system that has a total weight of approximately 20 pounds which includes a tripod,



The test provided forward observer teams an operationally realistic approach to detect, recognize, and identify targets in a tactical environment. Soldiers were dropped off at a release point where they began a tactical foot movement over the mountainous Alaskan terrain at elevations between 1,000-2,500 meters at several different observation posts.



Sgt. Gregory W. Caplan (left) and Spec. Joel C. Lemmon, Soldiers from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, get ready to transmit a call for fire using a Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System (JETS-TLDS) on the top of Donnelly Dome.

and batteries.

Several test unit Soldiers agreed that the JETS-TLDS is a hybrid of the two current systems -- Vector 21 and LLDR -- all in one module.

"On today's battlefield," said Sgt. Gregory W. Caplan, another Battery D Field Artilleryman, "it is imperative to ensure our Fire Support Teams have the newest most current digital systems available due to the continuous transformation of the battlefield."

Operational testing of equipment systems allow senior Army leaders to have the Soldier's opinion and recommendations to make an educated decision on full rate production, according to Lt. Col. Michael P. Frank, project manager.

"Putting this system into the hands of Soldiers in a realistic operational environment is critical to the operational testing process," said Frank. "Senior leaders require a Soldier's opinion."

At the Soldier level, Field Artillery troops understand their input is valuable to the Army.

"I was surprised that as a specialist in the Army, I would be able to provide feedback that could eventually impact the decision the Army would make concerning the future of our MOS and the JETS-TLDS," said Spec. Israel C. Wallace.

Besides offering readiness through training, Phillips said that testing JETS-TLDS in the environment Alaska provided was crucial to the test, to make sure it will be effective in a Soldier's hands and suitable for the environments Soldiers train and fight in.

"Often, FOs encounter extremely rough terrain that must be crossed with the threat of enemy combatants being near," Phillips said.

"Moving with full combat load not only stresses the system, but also provides realistic training for the FO and ensures they are able to put the system into action under realistic operational scenarios."

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YPG Commander visits Special Olympics breakfast



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YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (second from left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser (right) joined YPG test officer and long-time Special Olympics volunteer Adam Rinne (left) at the group's second annual Breakfast With Champions earlier this month. "The athletes were really excited and honored that Soldiers attended the event," said Rinne. The Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving more than four million athletes the opportunity to test their physical and emotional stamina and have fun while doing so.

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How fit are you – financially?

Submitted by Mardy Clark, Family Support Director

Most of us know how fit or unfit we are. We can get on a scale at home or go to the fitness center and find out we cannot pick up that 25 pound dumbbell anymore, or we cannot run that 5K in 15 Minutes anymore.

But, do you know how financially fit you are for retirement?

According to the 2016 statistics 35% of all adults in the US have only a few hundred dollars in their savings account, while 34% have zero savings. A full 50% have no retirement account savings.

Even older workers who can see retirement on the horizon aren't prepared for it. The median savings for families whose wage earners are between 50 and 55 years old is only \$8,000. For those who are between 56 and 61, it is \$17,000, reports the Economic Policy Institute.

Fortunately, most of us government workers will have a pension, and those in FERS Retirement will receive Social Security. Here is a Social Security calculator <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/quickcalc/> that shows you how much you will earn in your retirement years, whether the government says your full retirement age is 65 or 67.

Lastly, we have a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) where the government will match up to 5% of the money you invest. If you are not putting in at least the amount to get the

government matching contribution, you are losing money each paycheck, and I have not met anyone yet who likes to lose money!

No matter what your age, it is a good idea to look at your retirement fitness and see where you are. Visit www.SSA.gov to ensure all your earnings are being credited. Also, view your TSP at www.tsp.gov and ensure your investment mix is right for you. If you are in your 20s through 40s and all your money is in the "G" fund, you may find that your money is not working for you. Alternatively, if you are about to retire and find all your money is in the "S" and "I" Fund, you may find that combination too much of a risk.

Bottom line, it is never too early or late to start looking at your retirement plan. If you do not have a plan, now is definitely the time to develop one!



 A black and white photograph of a young man in a U.S. Army camouflage uniform and cap, smiling. He is being embraced from behind by a young woman with long hair, who is also smiling. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

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Gowan Science Academy third graders visit YPG



US ARMY PHOTO

Sgt. 1st Class Luis Feliciano, Operations Non-Commissioned Officer, takes third grade students from Yuma's Gowan Science Academy on a tour of the Airborne Test Force's facility at YPG. In addition to trying on parachutes, the students saw a weather balloon demonstration by YPG's Meteorology team, did a hands-on experiment with testers from the Combat Automotive Systems Division, and paid a visit to the Military Freefall School's vertical wind tunnel.

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