

Top YPG customer shares thoughts on future test challenges

By Chuck Wullenjohn

A huge percentage of the annual YPG workload is devoted to conducting munitions tests – large, small, conventional, precision guided, developmental, and futuristic. Nearly 70 percent of the tests conducted by Yuma Test Center’s Munitions and Weapons Division are centered around munitions.

One of the proving ground’s largest single test customers is based at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., and is known as “Program Executive Office (PEO) Ammunition.” The office is responsible for the life-cycle acquisition management of all Army conventional ammunition with the goal of providing high quality, reliable ammunition to America’s Soldiers.

Brig. Gen. Alfred Abramson, who entered the Army in 1990, assumed



Brig. Gen. Alfred Abramson, second from left, discusses the challenges of testing long range artillery systems with U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (right).

the topmost leadership role of the office this past December. A friendly, personable individual, he explains his role in a straightforward, unvarnished manner.

“As an acquisition professional, I have one agenda,” he said. “That is to provide capability to the warfighter – period, end of story.”

Abramson made a point of visiting Yuma Proving Ground late last month to gain a better appreciation of the proving ground’s capabilities and to get an in-depth look at its processes. He said he arrived with a blank sheet of paper, with no preconceived notions.

During his intensive overnight visit, he spent most of his time on the Kofa Firing Range where he visited

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The heat is on: ‘Burn-offs’ at YPG move ideas to the field for assessment

By Nancy Jones-Bonbrest

Taking an idea from paper to operational assessment can be a lengthy and costly endeavor.

Now, the Army Rapid

Capabilities Office (RCO) is offering a middle ground that could speed up the process of getting prototypes to the field.

Last year, RCO began a series

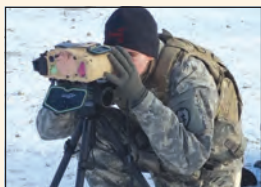
of “burn-off” events as a way of demonstrating whether a promising new technology works and if it is mature enough to close important capability gaps in areas that include

electronic warfare and alternative position, navigation and timing.

The burn-off brings together

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Carrying on the tradition: Tom Coz is a craftsman of observation, for test and music

By Mark Schauer

It's winter in Yuma County, Arizona, and you're walking through a crowded street festival in mild, sunny weather.

It might be Military Appreciation Day in downtown Yuma, or Somerton's annual Tamale Festival. The streets are full of people and food smells permeate the air. At the end of the street is a stage with pulsing amplifiers, drawing in the ambling crowd like an electromagnet, arresting their aimless movement and riveting their attention to a man in Ray Ban sunglasses playing a low-slung Fender Stratocaster.

They see plastic black and teal green, but are fixated on the lyrics and the voice, testifying about Mustang Sally and pride and joy, cold shock and the mountains crumbling to the sea.

The singer playing the guitar is Tom Coz, a long-time employee of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground, backed by the Drifters, who include YPG employee Tab Wilcox on bass.

"We all have fun and make sure we like what we are doing," says Coz,

and what they like doing most is playing the blues.

Coz, a Yuma native, first worked for YPG in the summer of 1974 while on summer break from Yuma High School. He returned for another summer stint the next year, before being hired on full time upon graduation. He spent a year working in ammo conditioning chambers before moving over to observation, tracking impacts from artillery and rocket test fires, along with airbursts from illuminating mortar rounds. Today he is the section lead—and one of the longest tenured personnel at YPG, showing the same enthusiasm for the mission throughout the decades.

"I like working with the people. The job is still a challenge, even now, and I really like that challenge."

He recalls surveying equipment from the 1950s that was still in use when he started, and marvels at the technological advancement the tools of the trade sport today.

"The way we do the job is still the same, but what we do it with is different. It is more electronic and

digital now, and better adapted to what we do. It's much more advanced now."

Even back when he was working summers at YPG, Coz was already playing guitar, sneaking into the music room at Yuma High after hours to rehearse with whatever lineup his garage band had in a given week. His tastes ran toward the blues even then, though his primary fare was rock and roll.

"In high school we all have a band, but we were just messing around. We thought we were good, but it didn't really sound good."

He began playing the guitar seriously 20 years ago, upgrading his guitars and taking a student's ear to the music of guitarists he admired, from Robin Trower and Billy Gibbons to B.B. King and Carlos Santana.

"I didn't want to play them perfectly, but I wanted to pick up how they did it," he explained. "You could tell that when they played a lead or a note, it was the way they felt—it came from the heart."

There were hardships and heartbreaks along the way, from lugging heavy speakers and organs to gigs to losing a treasured white Fender Startocaster to gravity when his guitar strap snapped as he left the stage at the California Bakery. But Coz remained committed to being an evangel of the blues, regardless of how unlikely a genre it was for the desert southwest.

"When I first started kind of edging toward the blues, a lot of folks said, 'you won't get many gigs.' But we did, after a while. You'd be surprised how many people in Yuma like this



Yuma native Tom Coz, one of YPG's longest-tenured employees, spends his free time playing electric blues at gigs all over Yuma with his band, the Drifters. Here, Coz sings "Jumping Jack Flash" at the 2018 Yuma Air Show. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

kind of music."

Aside from the public festivals, he has played new year's eve gigs at establishments in Yuma and Quartzsite, at the opening of music stores, and throughout the year at most of the community's best known restaurants and bars that boast live music.

Though he has no plans to retire from his day job, he still considers how being freed from the constraints of his demanding job would enable him to play gigs more often, and further afield than the Yuma area—there are a finite number of miles a band can travel on weekends and be back for work on Monday morning.

"Las Vegas is good, but they contract bands by the week."

But all of that is for sometime in the future. For now he is content to play to his committed fan base in Yuma, particularly with son Brandon, a music teacher at Yuma Catholic High School, on drums.

"I'm trying to get people to like the blues," he said. "There are a lot of folks who enjoy it, and I love playing it."

THE OUTPOST

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YPG improving security posture



By Vince Avanzini, Physical Security Branch chief

There are many changes coming to Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) that will further bolster our already-robust security posture.

All one needs to do is pick up a newspaper or turn on a television set to see that we live in a dangerous world. It is the intent of the leadership of this Command to further improve the security posture on YPG to protect our personnel, Families, and way of life.

One of the changes currently in progress is the installation of "Dragon's Teeth," better known as traffic spikes, and additional security cameras at all our access control points (ACPs). The spikes will be installed at all of our outbound lanes on YPG.

Traffic spikes are used in a multitude of locations around the world. You have probably seen them at airports and car rental agencies, among other places. If a driver pays attention to the warning signs when approaching the spikes, obeys the recommended five miles per hour speed limit, and does not back up, there will be no damage to their vehicle. The purpose of these spikes is to prevent rear entry onto our installations by those that might want to do us harm.

We will continually update the YPG community on changes to come. Below is the scheduled construction schedule at each gate. During this construction there will be revised traffic patterns entering and egressing from each access control point. Delays are expected, so please be cautious and pay attention to re-routed traffic patterns and detours. Construction for the installation of the spikes and additional cameras at ACPs is expected to be completed in a very timely manner. Security is never convenient but must occur in order to keep us safe.

The scheduled construction dates are:

Laguna Gate: Construction ongoing, to be completed April 4

Kofa Gate: April 6 through April 13

Howard Gate: April 20 through May 2

Walker Gate: May 9 through May 17

Thank you in advance for your understanding. YPG has been recognized for excellence in security measures multiple times, and these current projects will help us adapt to evolving threats. Though these physical security initiatives are important, our greatest security asset continues to be our personnel. Remember: If you see something, say something.

BURN-OFFS

FROM PAGE 1

commercial capabilities in an operational demonstration to size them up against a set of criteria and determine if the Army can use a new technology--either by itself or in combination with existing technology--to meet a specific need. For industry, the events provide a chance to showcase capabilities and receive formal and informal feedback. For the Army, they yield a greater awareness of what promising new technology is available now and how it performs.

For example, last year RCO participated in a burn-off at YPG to assess dismounted electronic warfare systems. The data shared from that event helped mature and advance electronic warfare prototypes that RCO moved forward to field in Europe beginning in January.

"With burn-offs, we'll be able to determine if the technology is tangible now," said Rob Monto, head of RCO's emerging technologies office. "We'll demonstrate it and see how well it works. For industry, this could potentially lead to additional demonstrations, prototyping and, if [the technology is] mature enough, limited production opportunities. Most importantly, it's a way to find solutions to capability gaps faster,

by placing small bets in several different technology areas. It may only be a 70 or 80 percent solution, but it meets an urgent need, while helping to inform long-term programs in the months or years to come."

This year RCO is participating in several burn-offs. The first came last month, when RCO partnered with the REF and the Project Manager for Electronic Warfare and Cyber on a burn-off at YPG. This event assessed immediate, short-term and long-term capabilities for mounted, tactical electronic warfare systems that can provide electronic support and attack capabilities to enable freedom of maneuver in the electromagnetic spectrum.

Later in the year, RCO will hold additional burn-off-type events, to look at artificial intelligence for electronic warfare and at aerial electronic support and electronic attack capability.

"The burn-offs support a new concept we are evolving this year," said Douglas Wiltsie, RCO director. "What we want to be able to do is address a capability gap in terms of decompose the problem, engineer the problem, and see if there's technology that will allow us to get started very, very quickly. The intent is to put the problem out there and find the best of breed that is available today, and move out."

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YPG has full slate of activities for National Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Melissa Gomez

April is a beautiful time of year here at Yuma Proving Ground, the chance to get out and enjoy this unique area and all it has to offer. April is also a month full of opportunity...a month for personal growth and growth together as a family.

April is the National Child Abuse Prevention Month, Month of the Military Child, and the Army Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month just to name a few.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month originally started as National Child Abuse Prevention Week in 1982. However, many quickly realized that one week just wasn't enough to raise awareness for child abuse and neglect prevention. So, in 1983, Congress decreed that April would be National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The goal of this month is not only to acknowledge and assist victims of child abuse/neglect, but to also educate ourselves and become empowered as communities to prevent others from becoming victims of these crimes. Child abuse prevention is possible through partnerships amongst families, social service organizations, schools, religious/civic groups, law



enforcement agencies, and having an entire community devoted to the safety of our children.

Here at YPG the Family Advocacy Program wishes to spread the message of prevention through planned family activities, classes, events and our partnerships with

supporting agencies such as Amberly's Place and the Marine Corps Air Station FAP. Please contact the YPG FAP office at (928) 328-3224 for more information on upcoming events and free resources available to children and parents!

We also invite you and your little ones to join us on April 12 for our "Pinwheels for Prevention" event! This event highlights our commitment to the education and prevention of child abuse in our community. The event takes place at

Desert Oasis Play Area from 0900-1000.

The problem of child abuse/neglect is too big for any one organization to solve. We all must present a unified front to raise awareness and create change. Try some of these activities with your friends and family to help promote awareness and prevention.

- Read a book with your child and share time with them. This ensures the communication bridge between child and parent is always open and builds trust.

- Believe children if/when they report any type of abuse or neglect.

- Hold, cuddle and hug your child often, teaching them the difference between good and bad touches from others.

- Find a local parenting class or workshop to learn more skills that can help address your specific child's needs. Help other parents who may need help do the same.

- Get involved! Consider volunteering for your local crisis intervention center or in programs that foster recovery and growth for children/youth. i.e. Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc.

Wear blue on 19 April to raise awareness for child abuse prevention. Explain to your children how wearing blue helps others know they care about keeping children safe. Share your photos on the Yuma Proving Ground FAP Facebook Page with the #YPGWearBlueDay for a chance to win a prevention prize.

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CRTC tests new precision targeting system to find friend or foe on battlefield

By Staff Sgt. Timothy Phillips

Twenty Field Artillery Soldiers are testing the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System (JETS-TLDS) at the Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC).

The JETS-TLDS is a modular advanced sensor suite of three components: the hand-held target location module (HTLM), precision azimuth and vertical angle module (PAVAM), and laser marker module (LMM).

Soldiers from Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery stationed at Fort Wainwright, Alaska and Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 377 Parachute Field Artillery Regiment stationed at Anchorage, Alaska, are teaming up in a rigorous operational test on this new precision targeting device in the rugged Alaska terrain.

The teams used the system in a wide spectrum of operations. They used the infrared imager (IRI) and color day imager (CDI) to detect, recognize, and identify vehicles and personnel at various distances to determine whether they are friend or foe.

They also used the system in a simulated urban environment, where the Soldiers cleared multiple

buildings and occupied rooftops and rooms to observe opposing forces in the city.

"Since the system is smaller you don't have to worry about bumping it around when clearing a building," said Sgt. Nicholas Apperson of Battery D, 2-377 PFAR. "If you have to switch buildings, disassembling and reassembling the system is much quicker than other targeting devices."

When it came time to use the LMM to mark targets for a live-fire with an AH-64 Apache from 1st Battalion, 25th Infantry Division Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, all of the test unit Soldier volunteered at once.

Unfortunately, there was only enough ammo to have four teams participate.

"With the push that the Army is making for all Fire Support Specialists to become Joint Fires Observers (JFO), the LMM provides a tool at the platoon level that allows us to designate and mark targets for aircraft," said Pfc. Anthony Greenwood of Battery D, 2-8 FA.

"Its light weight makes it easy to take it out on a mission and utilize it to its fullest capability."

During the last three weeks of the test, all 10 teams exercised the system's ability to determine target location.

Soldiers were set at randomized objective rally points (ORPs) ranging from 500 meters to 2 kilometers from their observation posts (OPs). They then conducted a tactical movement from ORP to OP.

After occupying their individual OPs, they would find targets all around them and determine exactly where they were at using the JETS TLDS.

The Soldiers would then use the Precision Fires-Dismounted (PF-D), which is an application used on NET Warrior by fire supporters to digitally transmit fire missions, to



Pfc. Anthony Greenwood (left) finds a target in his area using the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System (JETS TLDS), while Pfc. Jose Montiel utilizes Precision Fires-Dismounted (PF-D) to send a fire mission to higher headquarters. (Photos by Scott McClellan)

develop a fire mission and send it to a simulated company fire support team (FIST).

On average, they sent 40 fire missions each 10-hour day."The JETS system is definitely much lighter and a lot easier to pick up and learn all the functions quickly," said Staff Sgt. Christopher McKoy of Battery D, 2-8 FA.

"It is so simple that you can pick it up and learn it in five minutes."

Other real-world training was forward observers conducting movement with a maneuver unit. Here, they would walk a ridge line and receive simulated intelligence reports of enemy targets at certain

points along their route. After receiving the reports, the teams would be forced to establish a hasty OP and acquire targets quickly.

After spending a month with the targeting systems, most Soldiers were ready for the system to be fielded.

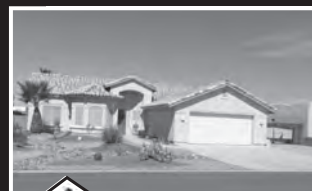
"This system is definitely a major jump from what forward observers are used to and makes our job much more efficient," said Spc. Tyler Carlson of Battery D, 2-377 PFAR.

"I believe that this system would be an effective tool to detect and acquire targets of opportunity in many of the theaters that we are fighting in today," McKoy said.



Spc. Tyler Carlson scans his sector for targets using the Joint Effects Targeting System Target Laser Designation System during operational testing at CRTC.

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FUTURE

FROM PAGE 1

numerous test facilities, listened intently to briefings and shook hands. Abramson presented coins to several people providing what he considered unheralded but excellent test support.

As he prepared to depart, he judged it as time well spent.

“My main takeaway is that I had not been fully cognizant how much Yuma Proving Ground is part of the process,” he said, “and I cannot underscore or say it enough. YPG’s workforce is absolutely critical to our ability to provide quality rounds to the joint service warfighter.”

The makings of a successful organization

All military installations consist of brick and mortar buildings, all built or reconfigured to perform a particular mission. Abramson believes that what truly sets an organization apart from others is the quality of the workforce. What he saw in visits to YPG test facilities seems to have made an impact.

“It was obvious that folks at YPG absolutely love what they do and are fully dedicated to providing capability to the warfighter,” said Abramson. “I met people who have served 30 or more years, which is a testament both to good leadership and their commitment to the important work performed



Brig. Gen. Abramson discusses the challenges of firing and maintaining a wide variety of artillery systems with Wayne Schilders, chief of Yuma Proving Ground’s Weapons Operation Division. (Photos by Chuck Wullenjohn)

at YPG, both of which have created a great organizational culture.”

Abramson said he had several “aha” moments at the various locations he visited. One related to the Precision Guidance Kit (PGK) lot acceptance testing taking place. He witnessed the complex, thorough process that takes place to validate the fired rounds in whatever ambient temperature each test requires.

“The group of men and women who come together at YPG to do this is amazing,” he said. “They’re efficient and effective. Seeing it added to my perspective of YPG’s capability in terms of validating, confirming and qualifying the munitions we at PEO Ammunition provide to the warfighter.”



When conducting early development testing of artillery projectiles, x-rays produce invaluable information. This photo shows Brig. Gen. Abramson studying x-rays of a precision round on a computer monitor.

Inflection point

As program executive for ammunition, Abramson is responsible for ensuring the quality and dependability of munitions for the Army as well as other services, depending on the caliber. It’s a big responsibility and, fortunately for him, the environment seems to be subtly changing.

He feels the Army today is at an inflection point in which the resource-constrained environment of the recent past is changing. He believes resources are beginning to move in the Army’s direction, particularly regarding readiness and modernization.

“Munitions today are getting more lethal, have greater range, and are more precision and accurate,” said Abramson. “We are in the development stage of developing munitions that will carry us into the next 15 to 20 years.”

The test infrastructure must be present to test these new munitions that have greatly increased capabilities. Not only that, but the development timetable has shortened.

“We are improving at breakneck speed and YPG is absolutely critical to the effort,” he said.

An aggressive schedule

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley has laid out carefully defined priorities for the Army, establishing eight cross functional teams to carry them out. Of these teams, long range

precision fires is the number one focus. PEO Ammunition is inextricably linked to this tip of the spear effort.

“We intend to bring about these new capabilities much quicker than the traditional acquisition process,” said Abramson. “We plan to demonstrate an initial capability within the long range/precision context in two years, which is an aggressive schedule.”

He went on to say that there will be numerous partners in this effort, organizations that will work shoulder-to-shoulder to ensure everyone’s expertise is included.

“YPG needs to be prepared to test, validate and qualify these long range rounds,” said Abramson. “YPG is in the process of getting there, which is refreshing.”

He believes the intent of the Army Chief Of Staff will be achieved, and a partnership in which a village of people together build a capability that leads into the future will grow and prosper.

But he also believes all organizations need to honestly ask themselves a question.

“The primary mission of the Army is to defend the nation. What are those things we are doing to achieve this goal and carry us into the future?” asked Abramson. “Those decisions are being made today.”



A friendly, personable individual, Brig. Gen. Alfred Abramson, Program Executive Officer Ammunition, boils down his responsibilities as an acquisition corps professional to one thing -- to provide capability to the warfighter. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)

YPG display a hit at Yuma Air Show

By Minna Hernandez

The excitement Yuma brings never fails, especially with the events held annually here in the country's most military-friendly town.

The annual Yuma Air Show is one of the events you don't want to miss, jam-packed with awing aerial acrobatics, live entertainment, fun activities for kids of all ages, and yummy food.



Staff Sgt. Nathan Newey helps a youngster try on a parachute just like the ones YPG's Airborne Test Force Soldiers use at the proving ground. (Photo by Minna Hernandez)

Chief among the things to do was visiting YPG's display area, which consisted of a variety of military equipment that most people never get a chance to see. For the first time in six years, visitors saw a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and part of YPG's exhibit, along with a M119 105 mm howitzer, the all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle, and a Stryker Combat Vehicle. Kids of all ages also had a chance to try on the parachutes and associated gear used every day by the Soldiers of YPG's Airborne Test Force, as well as try on some vintage Army helmets courtesy of YPG's public affairs office. Heritage Center curator Bill Heidner had an entire table of realistic replicas of Army rifles and side arms used from World War I to Vietnam.

This year's air show was an event with a great turn out from the participants to the vendors that were there. It was high energy all day. The ability to talk with military veterans and current enlisted military personnel at the event opened eyes to the many opportunities Yuma has to offer. Many of the folks who volunteer at these organizations



YPG Heritage Center curator Bill Heidner's display of replica small arms used by the United States Army in the 20th century was popular with kids of all ages. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Staff Sgt. Brandon Hunter lets delighted Civil Air Patrol cadets get up close and personal with a M-ATV at YPG's display at the Yuma Air Show. (Photo by Minna Hernandez)

while off duty are YPG employees during the work week.

For example, YPG pilot Scott Myers and Master Sgt. Anthony Dickerson, Air Force Liaison at YPG, are both dedicated volunteers of the Civil Air Patrol, an organization focused on the future success of youth in the program by offering after school activities and

helping them gain scholarships. Some of the organization's cadets were among the thousands of people who passed through YPG's display.

The air show lets people from all over the country see what Yuma as a town has to offer. YPG's exhibit and personnel were an important part of showcasing the best of our community.



YPG's display area was crowded throughout the entirety of the six hour Yuma Air Show. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



YPG celebrates Women's History Month



Lt. Col. Juliet Morah-Reeves, Officer in Charge of the YPG Health Clinic (left photo), was one of multiple speakers and presenters at a well-attended forum entitled "Empowered Women Empower Women" held at YPG's Palm Garden on March 22. The forum was followed by a Women's History Luncheon at YPG's Cactus Café where YPG Chief of Staff Minerva Peters served as keynote speaker. The month of events also included a sexual assault prevention training class and a cardio kickboxing class at YPG's Fitness Center. (Photos by Minna Hernandez)

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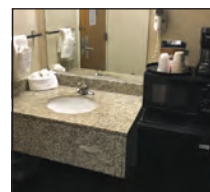
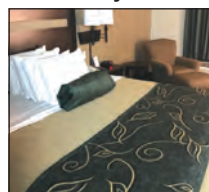


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The National Space and Aeronautics Administration (NASA) has been testing the parachutes to be used for the earth descent of the Orion space capsule for use in future space exploration at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground for several years. YPG maintains the largest parachute drop zone in the entire Western United States and controls most of the airspace over the proving ground from the ground into outer space -- a unique asset most military installations cannot boast. The most recent NASA test took place at the proving ground March 16th, with two more left to go before the system is completed certified. (US Army photo)

YPG celebrates PI Day... with pie

YPG employees celebrated National Pi Day March 14th by sharing 19 pies donated by employees and voting for their favorites in a variety of categories. Pies ranged from traditional fruit pies to chicken pot pies. A horde of people descended on the pies, all of which were delicious, when the highly popular event began. Pi Day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant "pi" (3.14159...) which we all learned about in school. Note that Pi Day occurs each year on March 14, which is 3/14 in the month/day date format. This scientific constant is something used by YPG technical personnel throughout the year when planning tests and analyzing data. YPG is Yuma County's largest single technical workplace. (Photo by Chuck Wullenjohn)



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