

THE OUTPOST

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365 | VOLUME 67 NO. 20 OCTOBER 15, 2018

Airborne Test Force Soldiers remember those who came before



September 29th had perfect weather for Yuma's annual remembrance of the Bushmasters, the men of the Arizona National Guard's 158th Regimental Combat Team who earned international acclaim waging tenacious jungle warfare in the Pacific Theater during World War II. On hand to serve as a color guard for the moving ceremonial roll call for these heroes were Staff Sgt. Avram Collins, Staff Sgt. Gregory LaFleur, Staff Sgt. Steven Lunn, and Sgt. Sean Gilchrist of YPG's Airborne Test Force. As is custom, this year's ceremony ended with a moving roll call with surviving family and friends standing behind legacy crosses and answering for their loved one. Large Army installations often have designated personnel specifically assigned to perform color guard duty full time. YPG does not have this luxury, however, as all of our Soldiers are fully engaged performing the proving ground's demanding test mission. Nonetheless, YPG's Soldiers volunteer to serve as a color guard when possible, and practice the crisp precision expected of a military color guard on their own time. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

YPG Commander addresses workforce in all-hands meeting

By Mark Schauer

Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG commander, addressed personnel across the command via video teleconference in late September.

More than 200 members of the YPG team were present in the Post Theater to hear his vision for the command and ask questions as personnel at Cold Regions Test Center watched by video link.

Also speaking at the event were YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson, Chief of Staff Minerva Peters, test officer Mike Dickerson, Mission Resource Management Director Ruth Krasnosky, budget analyst Minda Federmeier, who discussed the Enterprise Emerging Leader (EEL) program, and YPG Police Chief Don Lucas.

A major part of Poppenberger's address concerned medium-to-long term objectives to keep YPG. Since 2010, YPG has been the busiest of the Army's six tests centers.

"I want to make sure that YPG continues to be at the forefront," he

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ALL-HANDS

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said. “We want to position YPG to remain on the forefront well into the future.”

Poppenberger was mostly impressed by the results of the latest command climate survey, particularly the fact that the question ‘I find the work I do full of meaning and purpose’ drew a greater than 80% agreement rate from participants.

“Every single day you come to work, you have more purpose than many people in the world,” he said. “The lives of American Soldiers depend on the work you do every day.”

Poppenberger expressed disappointment that participation in the most recent annual survey had declined from last year’s, but pledged to perpetuate them and stressed that he takes all comments seriously. He also emphasized that there are other opportunities for members of the workforce to express themselves throughout the year.

“All leaders in this organization have an open door policy,” he said. “There will be no retaliation to those who utilize it.”

On the budget front, Krasnosky



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger addresses the audience at the YPG All-Hands meeting in September. A major portion of Poppenberger’s talk concerned efforts to keep YPG viable in the medium and long term. “I want to make sure that YPG continues to be at the forefront,” he said. “We want to position YPG to remain on the forefront well into the future.” (Photo by Mark Schauer)

said that civilian and contractor labor has been funded at the same level as last fiscal year and that the test workload is steadily increasing. However, this year’s budget includes a significant cut in funding for non-labor expenditures.

“We have to be disciplined,

conservative, and efficient in our spending,” she said.

YPG Police Chief Don Lucas discussed further ramping up efforts to patrol and issue citations to speeders on the portions of Highway 95 that bisect the proving ground. According to Lucas, the 33 mile span of the highway under YPG control is traversed by 1.3 million vehicles per year and averages 45 vehicle accidents annually. In contrast, he said, the stretches of Interstate 8 and Interstate 10 that connect Yuma to Tucson average 12 accidents per year. Lucas stressed sensible, defensive driving is vital on the stretch of road that has the highest traffic density of any two-lane thoroughfare in the state:

weaving in and out of slow-moving military convoys travelling along the route was a particular hazard he called out.

“We all think we’re the best driver in the room until it happens to us,” Lucas said. “Most of us here know each other by first name. If I have to respond to an accident you’ve been in, you’re not just another call I’m going to.”

Lucas also stressed the importance of child car seats, both using them consistently and ensuring that they are in good condition and not past their expiration dates.

“If you have a child, a trip to the grocery store can be just as hazardous as a trip from here to San Diego,” he said.

THE OUTPOST

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Shootin' the Breeze

The Mission

By David J. Horn

The year was 1980. I was working as a design engineer up in Minneapolis at a company that not only built tank parts, but also air filtration systems for helicopters. Originally designed back in the 1960's during the Vietnam War, the company built the air filters (a type of sand separator) for the Sikorsky CH-53 helicopter. When first fielded to Vietnam, the CH-53A had no filters to protect the engines. Due to all the foreign objects blown up by the rotors and ingested into the air intakes, the engines would typically last only 10 hours. Adding filters to the engines increased their service life to over 100 hours. Since later versions of the CH-53 fleet then needed less replacement engines to support the war effort, the state-side production lines building the engines were then able to supply more engines to the domestic airline industry and planes like the new Boeing 707. Thus, in a way, the air filters for the CH-53 facilitated getting the new jet-powered airline industry off the ground.

Due to the retirement of the old engineers that designed the original CH-53 air filters, in the late 1970s, I had been assigned design responsibility for the assemblies. The newest CH-53s were "E" models, which not only had filters, they also had three engines instead of the original two. Since the design of the filters was "mature", most of the engineering activities that needed to be done involved managing engineering change orders, incorporating minor component improvements, etc.

A world away at that time, Iran was holding 52 American hostages in what had been the American Embassy in Tehran. The Jimmy Carter Administration had ordered a secret mission, named "Operation Eagle Claw", be conducted to rescue the

hostages. The aircraft involved in that rescue mission included three C-130 transport planes and eight new CH-53E Sikorsky helicopters. What a lot of people working today at YPG may not know, is that some of the mission planning and practicing for the mission was conducted here at YPG.

Planners of the mission came to YPG and, on one of our test ranges, secretly constructed a replica of the American Embassy. It allowed the military personnel involved in the mission to practice landing around the building, where they could then kick-in doors, run down hallways, and go into the specific rooms where the hostages most likely would be found. All went well with the training at YPG.

On 24 April 1980, all of America woke up to the terrible news of the failure of the then revealed rescue mission. Three of the eight CH-53Es had to return to base shortly after departing. One helicopter had hydraulic problems, another experienced a cracked rotor, and a third one had to turn back after simply becoming overwhelmed in an airborne dust storm. After those three helicopters had turned back, at a refueling stop in the desert where a C-130 loaded with jet fuel was positioned on the ground, the pilot of a CH-53E departing the area became blinded by all the airborne dust and accidentally impacted the C-130, resulting in both aircraft being destroyed by fire, and eight personnel killed.

The mission was ordered aborted at that point and the remaining aircraft returned to base. With

the news of the mission and its failure breaking nationwide, every American just felt heartsick.

Hearing about the failed mission on the TV news like everyone else, I went to work that day contemplating the loss of life, the loss of the aircraft, the failure of the mission, and the fact that I was now in the hot seat at the company as the person with engineering responsibility for the equipment that was supposed to protect those engines. All morning I sat in the office waiting for the phone to ring, where I expected I would find out how much trouble the company and I might be in.

That phone call finally did come in. But what I learned during that phone call surprised a lot of people, including me. What we learned at that time was that the three air cleaners on each of the eight CH-

53Es, which in total weighed about 250 pounds (per aircraft), had been removed just prior to the mission. The logic for that decision was that if each CH-53E was 250 pounds lighter, they could carry more hostages or other equipment. Also, the mission was expected to be under the 10-hour service life of the unprotected engines.

While I was relieved that I wouldn't be spending a lot of time in an angry courtroom, we were still left shaken and saddened by the failed mission. Many people feel that the failed mission, which only added to the national dismay over the Iranian Hostage Crisis, also affected the presidential election only seven months later where Jimmy Carter was beaten by Ronald Reagan.

Here at YPG, the old replica of the embassy was torn down years ago. The whole effort still stands as a reminder, however, of just how close YPG employees are to supporting the men and women in our armed forces who are being asked to conduct dangerous missions. That support includes the workforce of the Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division, which are currently testing the newest equipment that can help pilots flying the newest generation CH-53K helicopters, operate safely in huge clouds of airborne dust.



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Be mindful of energy usage

By Gregory Skaggs

October is Energy Action Month. While the word "action" is often directed at the Installation Energy Manager, the reality is that if we are to achieve our energy and water conservation goals, everyone at YPG needs to take action. The Army's current goals are to reduce energy intensity by 2.5 percent per year, water use by 3 percent, and energy costs by 5 percent. Although we were making good progress toward our goals for YPG in Fiscal Year (FY) 16 and FY17, we experienced an increase in energy use and costs during the summer of FY18. Our last two electric bills were the highest in YPG's history, caused by an increase in energy use and record high "spot market" prices for electricity. July and August of 2018 cost us over \$227,000 more than for the same period last year. As a result, rather than reducing our energy costs by 5 percent from FY17, our FY18 increase was about 15 percent. Energy conservation funds are limited, and completion for limited funds will continue to be keen, so we won't be able to achieve our goals by facility retrofit alone. The only way we will achieve our energy and water conservation goals is through our collective conservation and reduction actions.

What actions do we all need to take? There are primarily four things that we need to do to save the Army's

energy and money:

1. Thermostats. The Army temperature standard for an air-conditioned space (comfort cooling) is 78 degrees. When an area is unoccupied, such as nights and weekends, the temperature standard is 85. The number one action to save energy and money at YPG is to set thermostats to the Army policy. What happens if you want your office to be a cooler than Army policy? Setting the temperature lower uses much more electricity. A setting of 72 degrees will use roughly 30 percent more energy than setting at 78. A setting of only 76 will still use 13 percent more energy.

2. Turn off the stuff that you don't need. Do you remember to turn your lights off when you leave your office? Do you leave the lights on in conference rooms and other common areas when no one is there? Do you leave equipment on when you are not using it? If you don't need the lights or equipment to be on, and they don't have a sleep mode, just turn them off.

3. Buy energy efficient equipment. DoD policy is to purchase only Energy Star-rated equipment, when available. So, if you are purchasing



equipment, first check to see if Energy-Star versions are available.

4. Stop Waste. Keep doors and windows to air-conditioned areas closed. Are there any problems in your building that cause energy or water to be wasted? Can you see light streaming

in around outside doors and windows in air-conditioned areas? You might need new weather stripping or caulking. Any holes in walls or broken windows? Do you have any leaking fixtures or toilets or faucets that drip or run? Does your air compressor run when no one is using it? Just call extension 3005 and put in a Service Order to have it fixed.

If we all pay attention to these four actions, we will be able to save Army funds and meet our energy and water conservation goals.

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Potential dangers require extensive safety program

By Chuck Wullenjohn

An unbelievable quantity of explosives are handled safely by Yuma Proving Ground workers in hundreds of test programs each year. These explosives hurl projectiles dozens of miles downrange and propel missiles at supersonic speeds.

But what if something went awry? What if a powder bag functioned prematurely or a missile blew up in its launching pod? These are situations that would cause not just material damage, but could also take a life.

Needless to say, the topic of safety is not taken lightly at the proving ground.

“As one of the largest and busiest test centers in the world, everyone at YPG comes to work with a safety mindset,” said Ron Van Why, director of safety for YPG garrison activities. “Our intention is to ensure that everyone is sent home safely at the end of each day.”

When it comes to explosive safety, Durred Francher in YPG’s mission safety office is the resident expert, says Van Why. He boasts years of experience in the field of explosives and has become a model around the Army of the type of knowledge a person in his field should have.

“I’ve been at YPG for ten years and there have been no explosive incidents at all that I’m aware of,” said Van Why. “This reflects volumes about the character and commitment of the people at YPG, but I also give credit to Durred Francher.”

YPG has two safety offices – one strictly for mission activities and another, Van Why’s, to cover garrison activities. Mission activities take place on the huge test ranges, as well as at the ammunition magazines and the activities that occur there.

Garrison activities include properties owned by the government, such as buildings and roads, and also water treatment facilities, and police and fire activities.



YPG has two safety offices – one strictly for mission activities and another to cover garrison activities. Mission activities take place on the huge test ranges, as well as at the ammunition magazines and the activities that occur there. Garrison activities include properties owned by the government, such as buildings and roads, and also water treatment facilities as seen here. (US Army photo)

“The two offices work well together,” says Van Why. “We meet frequently and reach out to each other whenever we need to.”

He points out that all drinking water at the proving ground comes from wells and is purified at water treatment plants located at YPG. “We recently spent millions of dollars to upgrade and modernize the plants,” he explained. “We have expert employees who constantly test and check the water to ensure safety each day.”

A challenge somewhat unique to YPG is caused by herds of wild burros and horses that call the area home. They frequently wander onto roads, including highway 95, most often during the early morning or evening hours. They typically migrate many hours each day in search of food and water, and return to the same place at night, where they feel safe. Burros and horses most often travel to the same areas where they have located food or water in the past.

“There have been quite a few strikes and near misses over the years,” said Van Why. “Drivers need to keep a close look-out.”

He says he has experienced en-

counters with the animals himself. “It’s terrifying,” he said, “for burros and horses can do a huge amount of damage to a vehicle, aside from hurting you. Everyone needs to think

about this.”

Signs have been erected along roads in many areas of YPG to warn of wildlife crossings. Since burros and horses normally follow paths with which they are familiar, experts can identify areas in which they cross roads.

“That’s where the warning signs go up,” said Van Why. “We just don’t put up these signs randomly – we look for tell-tale paths.”

He says people sometimes chuckle or laugh when hearing it, but there has not been a day he hasn’t wanted to come to work during his more than 10 years at YPG. “By far, this is the best place I have ever worked,” said Van Why. “People care about what they do and I have management support. Plus, there’s no better satisfaction than knowing I am supporting Soldiers in the field who are fighting for our freedom.”

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Long-range precision fires a top modernization priority for Army

By Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins,
RDECOM

To prepare for the battlefield of the future, the U.S. Army must be ready to fight in a very different operational environment from any wars previously fought. The character of war has changed significantly, and the Army, along with its joint service partners, must be ready to deploy and fight in a high-intensity environment where all domains will be challenged.

To rebuild readiness and modernize the force, the Army has focused on six modernization priorities: long-range precision fires, next generation combat vehicle, future vertical lift, the network, air and missile defense, and Soldier lethality.

In response to the Army's shift, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command, or RDECOM, reviewed previously approved funding strategies and shifted emphasis from planned and ongoing work to focus on the new modernization priorities. While RDECOM's Armaments Center leads the long-range precision fires (LRPF) modernization effort, the nature of the threat, the technologies and the environment of future battlefields dictate that only a truly integrated approach will meet the Army's requirements.

A number of potential adversaries have missile systems that exceed the range of the Army's currently fielded systems, so the Army has identified LRPF as its No. 1 modernization priority. This effort includes new artillery weapons -- missiles, howitzers, shells and rockets -- that are more precise and more lethal over a longer range. These new systems must have the capability to target and destroy or degrade the enemy's anti-access and area denial, or A2AD, systems to enable the joint force's freedom of maneuver and action. This makes LRPF an excellent example of RDECOM's threat-informed development, as well as an early test of the command's ability to supply overmatch



A number of potential adversaries have missile systems that exceed the range of the Army's currently fielded systems, so the Army has identified long range precision fires as its top modernization priority. A next-generation Extended Range Cannon Artillery, or ERCA, prototype is being developed for fielding in 2025. The ERCA consists of two parts -- a new rocket-boosted shell, the XM1113, and a longer howitzer barrel. The XM1113, which has a current range of 30 km when fired from the Paladin, was tested at YPG in April. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

capabilities for Soldiers fighting on an as-yet-undefined multi-domain operations battlefield.

While the Army has fielded the Paladin howitzer for more than 25 years with only minor improvements, a new system has been developed to meet the needs of the current force. The updated Paladin Integrated Management System is much faster than its predecessor, enabling it to keep pace with the maneuver formations that it was designed to support. The range of the new Paladin self-propelled howitzer will increase from 22 km with standard rounds to 30 km with rocket-assisted projectiles.

While the state-of-the-art howitzer addresses critical issues of its earlier

variants, a next-generation Extended Range Cannon Artillery, or ERCA, prototype is being developed for fielding in 2025. The ERCA consists of two parts -- a new rocket-boosted shell, the XM1113, and a longer howitzer barrel. The XM1113, which has a current range of 30 km when fired from the Paladin, was tested at Yuma Proving Ground in April this year.

The prototype was tested using the currently fielded Precision Guidance Kit, which is a fuze that turns a conventional artillery round into a semi-guided one. During testing, the XM1113 projectile exceeded 60 km; the Army is working toward fielding systems that are capable of accurately striking targets 100 km away. The

advanced hypersonic cannon shells that will reach 100 km will provide lethal options for commanders and reduce the need to shoot rockets that cost substantially more.

In addition to longer range, ERCA will have a longer cannon rifle tube, a fully automated ammunition loading system and a communications system that will work in GPS-denied environments. RDECOM's Ground Vehicle Center is developing high-voltage components that will give the ERCA system more power to maintain overmatch against evolving threats. For example, by replacing a four-channel distribution box with a 12-channel high-voltage power controller, ERCA will not only have significantly more capability, but also improved reliability and safety. These changes will enable the system to distribute all of the electrical power that it can generate without negatively impacting space and weight.

As RDECOM transitions into the new Army Futures Command, it will continue to support the modernization effort by working on projects with internal and external partners to sharpen the Army's competitive advantage. Leveraging the Army's modernization strategy to fail early and fail cheaply, the centers and labs promote continuous experimentation and prototyping that reduces risk, demonstrates technical maturity and evaluates technical solutions to inform requirements for near- and far-term capabilities.

RDECOM uses the lessons learned from experimentation and prototyping to refine technology for capabilities that the warfighter will need to fight and win in multi-domain operations. It has long shared those lessons learned with the Army Capabilities Integration Center and other partners. RDECOM is now deeply involved in helping the Army design the new Army Futures Command to maximize its core competencies while achieving the greatest possible synergy with its new partners in that command.



YPG display at Getting Arizona Involved In Neighborhoods event a hit

Yuma's annual Getting Arizona Involved In Neighborhoods (GAIN) took place October 6th, and YPG personnel led by Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson had a spectacular time interacting with an estimated 2,000 Yumans who stopped by. YPG's exhibit consisted of an M119A2 105 mm howitzer, an all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle, an ambulance from YPG's Health Clinic, and two vehicles from YPG's Police Department. There were also cargo bundles and personnel parachutes rigged by Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force, and a variety of the tools of the trade of YPG's Health Clinic medics and police officers. The Soldiers and first responders themselves were the real star attractions, however, especially with youngsters. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Stormy weather comes to YPG



YPG is the Army's busiest test center and specializes in testing equipment in extreme desert conditions. In a typical year, the proving ground receives less than four inches of rain, and the remnants of Tropical Storm Rosa dumped nearly that much on portions of the post, forcing a suspension of normal operations on Monday, October 1st. Though the parts of the installation that the public is most likely to interact with were largely unscathed except for intermittent power outages, downed tree limbs, and scattered instances of damage to things like roof tiles and awnings, more remote parts of the range were rendered entirely inaccessible by water raging through normally-dry desert washes. Once clear, roads on parts of the proving ground's ranges were covered with significant amounts of mud, gravel, and rock that took a great deal of effort by YPG public works employees to remove. A few stretches of these roads were seriously damaged from water erosion and will need more significant repairs. Thanks to the hard work of YPG's emergency services and public works personnel, operations resumed on Tuesday, October 2nd. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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So long after 30 years at the proving ground

By Chuck Wullenjohn

I first set foot on U.S Army Yuma Proving Ground in November 1989, nearly 30 years ago and a seeming lifetime away. I'm retiring at the end of this month – October 31st. Halloween!

Three decades is a long time, but the years have passed at an unbelievably fast pace. It's hard to believe I'm even at this point – that I'm on the verge of retiring. The things I've done, the people with whom I've worked -- all have come together to create memories that will live within me for the remainder of my life.

One of the things I always liked about working in Army Public Affairs is that no two days are the same. When getting up in the morning, it's impossible to predict the questions, circumstances and challenges that will arise in the course of the day, which, to me, makes it always stimulating and challenging.

I'm not cut out to be the kind of person who lives his life in a routine rut who believes regulations are the be-all and end-all of decision-making. My belief has always been to do what is ethically right and to apply common sense, even when creeping outside the bounds of technical regulations.

An immense part of my life has been devoted to working with the media, either escorting reporters at the proving ground, providing information by phone or email, or making arrangements for future visits. I personally consider media the vital "link" between the American people and the Army, and place great importance on being responsive and open. This has paid dividends, too, for media news stories over the years have generally been positive and fair. Even when reporters called me about a negative rumor they heard, they always listened to the proving ground side of the story and gave us the benefit of the doubt.

It's well for everyone in society to remember that the U.S. Army is "America's" Army. The American people pay for it through their tax dollars and, unless classified, have an inherent right to know what goes on within it.

My 30 years at YPG have been a swirl of individual activities that changed and evolved, or even went away, as the years passed. The number of remembrances I have are incalculable, and I have forgotten many. But a few stick out.

In the lead up to the first Gulf War in 1990, YPG hosted a media group made up of reporters from throughout the world -- Germany, Britain, Japan, national U.S. outlets, and many others -- to witness and learn how Army testing takes place of military equipment amid desert conditions. It took a huge amount of coordination, and the visit went off without a hitch. News coverage was positive and it was an eye opener for me -- YPG is a hugely complicated place!

I also remember the parachute jump of President George Bush (the first one) in 1997, which was his first parachute jump since World War II when he bailed out of a flaming fighter plane. When his advance team arrived at the proving ground, they announced that no local media would be allowed to cover it and only one member of the national media was welcome -- a friend of his from CBS. I responded that, since YPG is a publically-funded U.S. military base, they could not restrict media the way they wished. I also explained that Yuma is a relatively small community and that excluding the local media from one of the year's biggest local stories would give the proving ground a big black eye. They relented. Yuma media was invited and a pool was set-up for national media in which one member from television, print and radio would



YPG Public Affairs Officer Chuck Wullenjohn caps his 29 years at the proving ground and 34 years of overall service with a fond farewell to all the people he has worked with through the years. "The things I've done, the people with whom I've worked -- all have come together to create memories that will live within me for the remainder of my life," he said. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

cover the story and freely share information with others. President Bush went on to make subsequent parachute jumps in the years afterward, but never again at a military base.

Remember the fears in 1999 that computers would stop functioning when the new century began? That was the Y2K problem and, although it completely fizzled, we had quite a drill out here making preparations.

I'll never forget the events of Sept. 11, 2001, when planes flew into the World Trade Center and our world changed forever. Media speculation was rampant about what we would do and I spent a large chunk of the day on the phone. YPG, which had previously been an open post, saw security posts spring-up at access gates that were subsequently improved and made permanent. Access to YPG today is tightly controlled because of the threat that reared its ugly head that day.

One amusing incident occurred two weeks later when I travelled to Washington, D.C., for meetings with Congressional staffers. A travel agent worked at YPG at the time and sternly told me to arrive at Yuma International Airport two hours before my flight.

It was scheduled for 7 a.m. and I arrived two hours early. The problem was that the airport didn't even open until 6 a.m. No one was there!

Much of the work performed by the Public Affairs Office occurs behind the scenes. One weird incident occurred in 2004 in Washington, D.C. An envelope was mailed to an Arizona U.S. senator that contained the deadly substance Anthrax, and I happened to visit his office that morning. There were fears that I might have been exposed, so I went to Walter Reed Medical Center to be checked out. They didn't find anything, but I had to take an antidote each day for several weeks.

Another time a federal elected official representing our area wanted to add money to the federal budget to concrete-line the multiple sewage lagoons we operate at YPG. (I know, not an exciting project, but needed at the time.) His staff asked me to complete the necessary forms that detailed and justified the project for them to submit. When the federal budget was released later that year, an extra \$1 million was allocated to YPG! That's the only time I ever did this kind of thing.

The first decade of the new century saw the YPG workload greatly expand as more and more equipment slated for use in Southwest Asia came for testing. Multiple urban areas consisting of paved roads, buildings and telephone poles were constructed in remote areas to realistically test technologies aimed at countering the threat of roadside bombs, the biggest danger to our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some of those technologies didn't work reliably and we uncovered them here, before they were deployed and Soldiers placed their faith in them. We suggested improvements to others. YPG became a key player in this world – an untold number of Americans owe their lives to what took place right here.

The YPG workload today is just as vital. The Army is currently emphasizing the role of extended range artillery capable of firing much farther than ever before. YPG is on the forefront of this effort and will continue to be. Even tried and true systems such as the M1 Abrams Main

Battle Tank first deployed in the early 1980's is constantly being upgraded and retested. More effective tank, mortar and artillery munitions are being developed and more are on the way. Unmanned aircraft and advanced parachutes are filling the skies. We still test technologies to defeat the threat of improvised explosive devices. The future has many challenges, but YPG is not going away.

As my work career ends and the retirement years begin, I must honestly admit I have mixed feelings. My job was more than a job, for I loved it. It's difficult to leave behind something that made up such a huge portion of my life. It brought me to Yuma and caused me to stay.

I was an upwardly mobile guy when I arrived – I figured I would be here no longer than a couple of years before another career opportunity elsewhere came my way. Those opportunities presented themselves, but I was determined to remain at Yuma Proving Ground. It was the right choice and I'd do it again.

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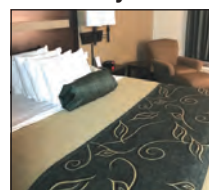
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