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## Orion space capsule parachutes tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

The mock-up of the Orion space capsule was in the cargo bay of a C-17 flying 35,000 feet over one of YPG's isolated drop zones, but at least part of one ground observer's attention was far away.

It was December 13th, the 45th anniversary of the Apollo 17—the last manned mission to the moon—landing on the lunar surface. Humanity has left the bonds of the planet numerous times since, but never beyond low-Earth orbit, something astronaut Barry “Butch” Wilmore is intimately familiar with. The seasoned astronaut, with a resume that includes a stint as commander of the International Space Station, was eager to see the latest test of the Orion's Capsule Parachute Assembly System (CPAS), which represents one step closer to human flight in the Space Shuttle's successor—less than two years away, if all goes well here in the Yuma desert.

“Low Earth orbit is a wonderful place to be and we have had a lot of accomplishments there, but the Orion capsule will take us beyond

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NASA successfully conducted the fifth in a series of eight tests to qualify the parachute system for crewed Orion space capsule missions at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground in late December. Orion's parachutes help slow the capsule from about 300 mph to less than 20 mph in under 10 minutes and are critical to the safe return of the spacecraft and its future crews after deep-space missions. (US Army photo)

## Community leaders wowed by YPG

By Mark Schauer

On any given day, scores of tests of military equipment vital to the success of American Soldiers are underway at YPG to ensure quality and reliability.

Yet much of YPG's activities and dramatic impact on the national defense and local economy are unknown to the general public. In late December, the proving ground hosted community leaders on a tour that took them to YPG's airfield, a working gun position, and a vehicle test course. They also received an extensive briefing from YPG commander Col. Ross Poppenberger.

Deputy Yuma Mayor Gary

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# LEADERS

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Knight, a local native, has been to YPG in an official capacity on two previous occasions, yet still felt his most recent visit was fruitful.

"Every time I've been out here, I've seen something different, something new" he said. "What

goes on out here is not the same as it was 20 years ago: technology evolves, and it is great to be updated. I've always realized how important YPG is to the entire region: in fact, it's pretty important to the entire state."

Knight feels the information he gained from this visit will make him a better advocate in the future for improvements such as widening



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger briefs community leaders on YPG activities during their visit. "I want them to know what kind of capabilities exist right in their backyard and what we bring to the community," he said.

## THE OUTPOST

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Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews (left) shows visitors a gun position during their tour. Artillery testing is a major component of YPG's test workload. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Keith Allen (left), team lead in the Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division, discusses parachute testing at YPG with the visitors. Personnel and cargo parachutes of all shapes and sizes are tested on YPG's vast ranges.



Highway 95.

"If we can get it done, I envision it like Highway 85 between Gila Bend and Buckeye: divided most of the way with turnouts," he said.

On the other side of the spectrum, the tour was the first visit to YPG for Dr. Daniel Corr, president of Arizona Western College since 2016.

"It gave me more insight into the importance of YPG to the Yuma area and the economic multiplier effect this base has," he said. "As a college president, it reinforces the notion that we need to continue developing a pipeline of qualified workers: this place is filled with engineers and other highly skilled workers, and we need to be part of the solution supplying them to YPG."

Corr was particularly proud that many YPG employees are alumnus of AWC.

"The sophistication of these weapons is amazing," he said. "The advancements tested here that will ultimately keep



Gabriela Siqueiros-Herwig, veteran services coordinator at Arizona Western College, enters a Stryker Combat Vehicle as Yuma Chamber of Commerce director John Courtis, Yuma Test Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews and Marco Nixen, team lead, look on. YPG has over 200 miles of road courses to accommodate vehicle testing.



Engineer Ross Gwynn shows visitors one of YPG's mission control rooms. From here, YPG testers can monitor and gather data from parachute drops many miles downrange.

our Soldiers safer make me feel proud as a citizen that this work is being done right here in my neighborhood."

"I think it was a good visit," said Poppenberger. "We took the

opportunity to show the local community leaders a little bit more of what we do. I want them to know what capabilities exist right in their backyard and what we bring to the community."

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## Shoot'in the Breeze

# It's not from New York City

By David J. Horn

Change. It's one of those things in life that's usually not optional. Here at YPG, there are constantly new faces, new buildings, and new hoops to jump through to get our jobs done. With all that change going on, it's nice to have at least one thing that you can depend on to be there day after day, year after year, decade after decade. Keeping the machinery lubed and the gears turning. Of course what I'm talking about, is what's found in every food service facility on post... YPG's homemade salsa!

OK, so it may not be the fanciest. I don't care whether it's ever won an award from snobbish salsa connoisseurs, or not. I'm just saying, that there's no better morning meal, than to have two or three of those little plastic containers of YPG salsa, with a breakfast burrito on the side. Salsa with just the right flavor. Salsa with just the right consistency to be poured, dipped, or mixed in. Salsa with just the right amount of spicy burn.

Now, I could go on and on talking about this, but since the Outpost is here to inform and provide a service to all its readers, the good news is here, that I'm going to...yes, you guessed it...SHARE with all of you, the actual recipe for authentic YPG



salsa! By the way, several brave patrons of the Rock Garden Café had to fork over huge bribes to get this information. So, here it is. Take the following ingredients and split them into two batches that you can run through your kitchen blender:

5 cans of diced tomatoes

2 cans of jalapeños  
1 white onion  
1 Tsp of Salt (adjusted to taste)  
1 Tsp of Pepper (adjusted to taste)  
1 Tsp of Garlic Powder (adjusted to taste)  
Cilantro (adjust to taste)

Now, the bad news. I took this recipe home, and have tried to make it over several batches to get it just right. The problem is, what I've been able to make myself has come close, but it has just never tasted as good as the real enchilada. I finally got to the point where I went back to

the kitchen staff at the Roc Garden to ask them what I was doing wrong. The lady, without saying a word, just looked at me...and smiled.

Wow. The guards that protect the secret recipe for Coca-Cola, have nothing on these folks. Oh well, I guess there's only one thing left that I can do at this point.

(After short delay)

"Good Morning to you, too. Yes, I'd like to have a Breakfast Burrito, with bacon. Sure...here you go. Thanks. By the way, can I get extra salsa to go with that?"



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## Chaplain's Corner

# A new year is a new beginning

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

A pastor named Patricia Farris tells about being in Mexico one year with her husband on New Year's Eve. They found themselves in the middle of something they didn't understand at the time.

It was late in the evening, not yet midnight, and the central square was full of people, lights, music, kids, old people, and families. Stands were set up and people were selling, in addition to all the usual souvenirs and food and so forth, an array of very inexpensive pottery, mostly simple clay plates. What was interesting was that people were buying these simple clay plates and then standing back and throwing them

with full force against one wall of the great cathedral in the community square, smashing the plates into smithereens.

It was loud and raucous and exciting, according to Ms. Farris. Only later did she learn that this tradition grew out of a deep human need to throw out the old, to start the New Year free of old resentments, old fears, old prejudices, old sins. "Throw them out!" says Patricia Farris, "Let them smash against the strong fortress of faith and be done with it. God is ready to offer healing and new life."

So as we say goodbye to 2017 and welcome 2018, may God give you healing and a new beginning!



# Self-harm and cutting

Self-harm is when people hurt their bodies as a way of dealing with painful feelings and emotions. It is also called self-injury.

There are many reasons why people hurt themselves. Some people hurt themselves to relieve emotional pain or stress. Emotional pain can be caused by fights with parents or friends, physical or sexual abuse, eating disorders, work or school problems, or loneliness.

There are different ways people harm themselves. These include cutting, burning, scratching, hitting themselves, punching walls or other hard surfaces, preventing wounds from healing, banging their heads or choking themselves. They are not trying to kill themselves but are trying to relieve emotional pain. It is very important for people who self-harm to get help. The same feelings that lead to self-harm can cause people to become suicidal in the future.

Self-harm may lead to infections or permanent scars. In some cases, people may accidentally kill themselves. Some people also become dependent on self-harm. They cannot stop even when they really want to.

People keep self-harm a secret. They may hide self-harm for many reasons. Some people feel guilty and ashamed about what they have done to their bodies. Others fear they will be labeled "crazy" or sent away for treatment. Most people

who hurt themselves are just struggling with tough feelings and situations. Some people are also dealing with depression or anxiety. It is important for them to talk with a doctor or a therapist before things get worse.

How does someone stop hurting themselves? The best way to stop is to tell someone and ask for help. You can get help from a professional such as a therapist. If you do not

have a therapist, ask a parent, teacher, coach, counselor, doctor or nurse to help you find one.

Talk to others when you are in pain. No one can handle all of life's problems on their own. Find other ways to deal with pain besides hurting yourself. Call a friend and talk about your feelings. Distract yourself by going for a walk. Exercise to relieve stress.

Draw or write in a journal to express your strong emotions. Listen to or play music that makes you happy. This can help change your mood.

If you know have a friend that is hurting themselves, talk to them and let them know that you care. People who self-harm often feel guilty about what they are doing. Knowing that someone cares can make a difference. Make sure a family member, doctor or therapist is aware of what is going on. You may need to tell someone what your friend is doing.

Offer to be a safe person to talk to when your friend is thinking about hurting themselves.



# ORION

FROM PAGE 1

low-Earth orbit into destinations unknown,” Wilmore said.

Though Wilmore and his colleagues long for the approaching day when humanity takes further strides into the solar system, they assure that the intervening years since the heady days of Apollo have been fruitful ones that will lay the groundwork for future success.

“We’ve learned how to operate in space for long periods of time,” he explained, noting that space station deployments are far longer than were those of the days-long Apollo missions. “Human physiology is such that if you don’t keep stress on the body, you will lose muscle mass and bone mass. We’ve learned to mitigate those losses with pretty intense

workout regimes every day.”

Most people associate space travel with tremendous speed, yet this is only half the equation of manned space exploration. Whereas a spacecraft has to travel at approximately 20,000 miles per hour to escape the Earth, and hurtles at upwards of 25,000 mph when returning from deep space, to lower its occupants safely to the ground the same capsule needs to be decelerated to speeds slower than most people drive an automobile on a residential street.

“There is no model for that,” said Koki Manchin, chief engineer for the CPAS system. “The only way we know it works is because we’ve tested it and done it a bunch of times over a broad range of conditions.”

The rope that makes up the CPAS’ parachute cords is made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber used in



Astronaut Barry “Butch” Wilmore talks with the media at an isolated YPG drop zone prior to the latest test. “Low Earth orbit is a wonderful place to be and we have had a lot of accomplishments there, but the Orion capsule will take us beyond low-Earth orbit into destinations unknown,” he said.



During the test, a mock-up of the Orion spacecraft was dropped from a C-17 aircraft flying at 35,000 feet. The evaluation was of a simulated scenario in which one of the three main parachutes failed to open after the deployment of several drogue parachutes that help slow and stabilize the spacecraft. (US Army photo)

body armor. Each main parachute consists of 10,000 square feet of fabric: the CPAS system is designed to deploy sequentially and pass 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 languid landing speed of 17 miles per hour. Further, the parachute system is designed to compensate for a variety of failures in the hope that astronauts can still return to Earth safely if something goes wrong.

“I have returned to Earth in a winged vehicle and in a capsule, and it’s quite a ride,” said Wilmore with a smile. “It’s a good feeling when the parachutes open.”

For this test, evaluators intentionally rigged one of the main parachutes to not deploy, hoping that the remaining chutes could withstand the additional stress of speed and mass the failure would cause. The capsule was dropped from the C-17 flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet, extracted from the cargo bay on a pallet with two 28 foot parachutes



attached to it, then separated from the palette with the parachutes deploying as dozens of personnel watched from the drop zone and mission control room. Among them was YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger.

"I'm excited that NASA chooses YPG to do these missions," he said. "It's a feather in the cap for the Yuma community and really shows the value YPG provides the nation. Our technical competence allows these other agencies to bring their equipment out here to test."

Less than five minutes elapsed between the capsule's touchdown and successful landing, but the test represented weeks of preparation and years of design and construction work.

Once the drop was completed, personnel fanned out and methodically recovered the massive deployed parachutes and lines from the desert floor: testers want to evaluate any damage that may have occurred to the parachutes, and know that it was not 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. As for the scores of channels of data collected during the relatively brief drop, full processing it will take months.

YPG has tested military equipment and trained troops for 75 years, and has supported NASA testing virtually since the inception of the space program in the late 1950s. The Mobility Test Article, tested extensively on YPG's ranges in 1966, was the precursor of the lunar rover that traversed the moon in 1971.

"We've proven over and over against our capability of providing good, independent assessment," said Poppenberger. "Every day in our core and in our culture we believe that what we are doing is vital to the nation."

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# First Organization Day in over seven years a hit

By Mark Schauer

The serious business of YPG's mission normally precludes a carnival atmosphere on post. Yet maintaining morale requires at least one day of relaxation for the workforce.

The first post-wide Organization Day since 2010 brought together workers from across the proving ground in December to participate in a variety of fun activities designed to build unit cohesion.

Comprised of 173 registered teams



Teamwork is vital to accomplishing YPG's mission, and to winning a three-legged race. (Photos by PAO staff)



The tire flip relay was not for the faint of heart, and cheering spectators sustained the competitors.



Test officer Adam Rinne and CRTC Technical Director Jeff Lipscomb sling beanbags in the finals for the corn hole toss. The team from the north won the event.

and individuals, many employees took a day off from their normal duties to determine how many people it takes to pull a Humvee, who was most adept at a three-legged race, and which organization had the best volleyball players.

The friendly competition in the

buildup to the event was intense as each team eyed the coveted Commander's Cup, which was presented to the winner of the day's activities.

"We've been the busiest test center in the Army for eight years in a row," said Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG



Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser smashes a hard single during the softball tournament as YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger looks on from on deck. "I'm so impressed with the vision CSM had on having an organization day," Poppenberger said.





Combat Automotive Directorate test officers have plenty of experience with HMMWVs, and showed it in the popular HMMWV pull event.

commander. “This is a small way of saying thanks and get people off the ranges to have some fun.”

The day had something for everyone, from bowling and poker to egg-relays and beanbag tosses.

“YPG is filled with incredibly talented, intelligent and driven individuals who give their best every day to accomplish the mission,” said Tina Manns, manpower chief. “That focus and drive doesn’t come without a price—it takes a toll on us. That makes it even more important to take time for recreation.”

Other popular events included the volleyball tournament and a closest-to-the-pin golf competition. An especially spirited basketball tournament was also a big hit, as was a homerun derby and softball tournament. Though strictly for bragging rights, impromptu tug-of-war matches near the end of the day drew out the competitive spirit of many.

At the end of the day, Poppenberger presented the Commander’s Cup to Team Air Delivery, which won by a single point in the overall rankings.



Bragging rights were motivation enough for Combat and Automotive Directorate employees to give their all during the tug-of-war.



The competition was fierce in the final bracket of the three-on-three basketball tournament, with YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews and Munitions and Weapons test officer Jonny Clark leading their respective teams.

Whether playing or watching, all who attended had fun, reacquainted with people in different divisions, and ate delicious food prepared by Family Morale, Welfare, and Recreation. The beanbag toss area

was filled with impromptu matches before and after the scored event.

“I got the impression that everyone enjoyed themselves,” said Poppenberger. “We’re going to continue to do these kinds of things.”



The Soldiers of Team Air Delivery raise the Commander’s Cup in triumph at the end of the day. “I got the impression that everyone enjoyed themselves,” said Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG commander.



# YPG Color Guard dedicates Bushmaster Memorial Park



YPG Soldiers served as lead color guard at the dedication of Bushmasters Memorial Park in Somerton on December 16th. The park honors Company L of 158th Regimental Combat Team of the Arizona National Guard, which earned international acclaim in waging tenacious jungle warfare in the Pacific Theater during World War II. In the world of formal military color guards, large installations often have designated personnel specifically assigned to perform this duty on a full time basis to handle the large volume of requests that come in each year. YPG does not have this luxury, however, for everyone is fully employed executing the proving ground's demanding test workload. Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force, Health Clinic and other organizations volunteer whenever possible. It doesn't mean "light" duty, though, for they have to practice as a group on their own time to develop the crisp precision expected of a military color guard. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



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# Yuma during the Great Flu Epidemic of 1918

By Mark Schauer

This winter has seen the worst flu season of the last decade.

This year's virus has been responsible for significant misery and loss of productivity, but pales in comparison to the ravages caused by Yuma's deadly encounter with the worldwide flu pandemic of 1918.

In October of that year a century ago, most of the American public was preoccupied with World War I, a conflict nearly five million American Soldiers were deployed to help end.

On the home front, Americans bought Liberty Bonds to finance the war, rationed and grew their own food, and prayed for an end to the deadly conflict. But in October, just weeks before the armistice, the entire world suddenly fell prey to a devastating outbreak of influenza and its frequent companion, pneumonia.

The most reliable contemporary reports of the pandemic came from Spain, a neutral country that did not have wartime censorship of news, and thus the illness was soon dubbed, "Spanish Flu." Though later research speculated that this particular strain of flu had originated at Fort Riley, Kansas, the current theory is that the original mutation occurred at a British camp in France. Regardless of where it started, over the next two years nearly a third of the world's human population was infected with the virulent strain, and a fifth of these unfortunates died.

In terms of the sheer number of victims, the death toll may have surpassed that of the so-called 'Black Death,' the worst incidence of bubonic plague that ravaged Europe and Asia during the Middle Ages. Though Army doctors had managed to successfully control or eliminate diseases like typhoid fever that had been common in previous wars, American Soldiers overseas were not spared from this scourge: the flu pandemic killed over 25,000 of them

and sickened nearly 400,000 more.

Yuma County's population was a mere 14,500 in 1918 and the influenza pandemic claimed over 400. Most

victims were young, with most of the dead under 18. Only 35 were over the age of 35 years. Whereas most strains of influenza favor those who have an undeveloped or weakened immune system, such as infants and the elderly, the Spanish Flu victimized the young and healthy by triggering an overreaction of the immune system, which would thus aggressively attack the robust virus as well as all other cells in the body.

The toll the illness took on Yuma's active civic life was swift and pronounced. Weeks before the flu got going, a dance on Main Street sponsored to promote the county's fourth Liberty Bond and enlistment drive drew a whopping 5,000 people, more than the total population of the city at that time. By the end of October, 63 Yumans had died during the month, an 800% increase over the previous October's tally. Over the long winter, all public gathering places or activity that accommodated more than six people were cancelled -- even the county fair was not held the following spring.

Yet the people of Yuma were not inert. Many locals volunteered time to the Red Cross, which helped supplement the county's rudimentary medical system. At the time, Yuma County had a mere nine doctors and nine nurses, most of whom suffered non-fatal bouts of the illness at some point during the epidemic.



"Things got so bad that all four doctors in the city of Yuma were sick and in bed," said Carol Brooks, a local historian. "I don't know who was treating who at that point."

Yuma County had one 50-bed hospital that was quickly overwhelmed by the sick. Civic leaders coped by re-opening the infirmary at the Yuma Territorial Prison, which had closed nine years earlier. Despite the best efforts of these men and women, the death toll continued to rise.

"In late October, Johnson Mortuary, which was the only mortuary here at the time, was reporting six funerals a day," said Brooks.

Meanwhile, state and federal health officials began inspecting impromptu villages of ranch and railroad workers in the southern and eastern portions of the county in an effort to identify sick people and force them to go to the hospital.

"Many workers refused, for they felt the hospital was a place you went to die," said Brooks.

The problem was that medical science's frantic efforts to find a treat-

ment for the killer flu were largely unsuccessful. The best results came from injecting a small amount of blood from individuals who had survived the illness into the sick, a method that modern researchers endorse if a crisis of this magnitude were to reoccur. Prevention was emphasized, with organizations like the Red Cross encouraging people to swab their nose and throat with antiseptic on a daily basis.

Though the epidemic was abating by May 1919, the monthly death tolls for Yuma County remained higher than normal through the first half of the following year. Businesses and other public places were allowed to re-open after undergoing a thorough cleaning and disinfecting. Though the world was at peace and the flu epidemic over, Yuma County's struggles continued for several more years. After the peace, the high wartime demand for cotton dissipated and the resulting price collapse sent the local economy into a deep recession that endured until the rise of citrus growing.

Though the nation has been struggling the last several years, Brooks feels that reflecting on the immense crises the United States has successfully faced in the past helps put our current troubles in perspective.

"Studying this cured my nostalgia for going back to the old days," Brooks said. "It was a tough period."

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# YPG employee forges hope - one refugee at a time

By Mark Schauer

Its lucky that James Schremp isn't a betting man.

After all, what are the odds the former Marine and veteran employee of YPG's aircraft armament section would ever wager that one day he'd serve as a volunteer helping Syrian refugees find skills and hope in a hardscrabble Jordanian border town? And on multiple occasions, to boot?

His first trip, inspired unexpectedly by hearing a missionary's harrowing stories of the situation in the nation of Jordan during his ordinary Sunday church service, was as nothing more than a willing heart connected to a pair of strong hands. He helped his church colleagues deliver food and other humanitarian supplies to refugees living in rudimentary conditions and still traumatized by the horrors of civil war they had escaped. The small church he stayed at did the best they could providing social services to the needy refugees, too: English courses and sewing and cooking classes, for example. Schremp wondered if he could offer something else.

As fate would have it, Schremp, an avid hobbyist in the art of blacksmithing, thought the venerable art could give useful diversion and hope

to the despairing folks he met, not to mention the opportunity to make pocket money by turning discarded metal scrap into jewelry and other salable items. Back home in the States he made and shipped to Jordan two anvils and a forge for just this purpose, then journeyed back to Mafraq for another two-week stint at his own expense with his blacksmithing tools in tow to teach classes in a make-shift blacksmithing shop set up at the church.

He could have stopped there—he had already done far more than most people, and more than he had ever expected of himself. Yet the plight of the refugees he met and taught gnawed at him.

"They left Syria five years ago when the fighting started," he explained. "They've spent all that time in Jordan in a refugee status where they can't go to school or work. For five years they've done nothing—they're safe and don't have to worry about being shot in the street, but they're in limbo."

Then, another bit of serendipity intervened: the brother of a member of a group of Yuma blacksmithing enthusiasts Schremp belongs to had taken a metal casting class in the

Midwest with a Jordanian national who was now an art professor at the University of Jordan in Amman. This individual asked him to serve as a guest instructor in her classes to teach her students the rudiments of blacksmithing. Schremp agreed, in part for the love of blacksmithing, but mostly out of a sense that the university connection could help sustain his blacksmithing endeavors with the refugees in Mafraq.

"I had a feeling that if I could get them on board, it would be a help to the Mafraq group. They could actually go there and if any problems came up, if they needed a tool fixed or fabricated, they would have a university behind them."

When Schremp returned to Jordan for the third time in late 2017, he found that a long-term volunteer at the small church had turned his blacksmith shop into a woodworking shop. His first order of business was to clean the sawdust and re-set his anvils and forge. For the first week he taught the local refugees as best he could with the help of an interpreter, but found several challenges. For example, though his young students seemed eager to learn, their attendance was spotty.

"Very few people have a car," Schremp said. "You either walk or get a cab, and you have to have money to take a cab. You have to keep in mind that they are trying to eek out a living with very little money."

The young men lacked basic safety wear, too, so one of their first projects was fashioning canvas coverings to protect their sandaled feet from stray forge sparks. Nonetheless, the students made a variety of things once they got down to business, from an ornamental treble clef and decorative snail to eating utensils and portable coat and purse hooks.

When his offer to guest teach at the University of Jordan was finally approved, Schremp made the commute



Schremp used blacksmithing equipment he made and donated for his students. The students made a variety of things once they got down to business, from an ornamental treble clef and decorative snail to eating utensils and portable coat and purse hooks.

to the capital city of Amman, 45 miles distant but a world away from Mafraq. Here the large university had a predominately Jordanian student body, who helped make a forge that he left behind when his trip had concluded. Though art students, they took to blacksmithing quickly.

"The university students are used to long days, so they blew through projects really quick. I was amazed at how quickly they caught on."

He enjoyed the experience, but was disappointed in one aspect.

"We had wanted to bring the university students to Mafraq to have a combined class, but apparently some of their parents thought Mafraq was too dangerous because it has refugees and is right on the border."

Schremp says the church in Mafraq is expanding and that he plans to return for another missionary trip at some point in the future to lend a hand once again.

"It's amazing the more and more you learn about people: they're friendly, they're helpful. It's a help, but right now it's just a drop in the bucket."



In late October, James Schremp (right), a former Marine who has worked in YPG's aircraft armaments section for over 25 years, made his third trip to the nation of Jordan as a volunteer for his church. In addition to teaching the art of blacksmithing to Syrian refugees, he served as a guest instructor in a class at the University of Jordan in Amman. (Loaned photos)



# A very YPG Christmas



YPG residents gathered at Cox Field for the annual Christmas tree lighting on December 13th. The star of the show was Santa Claus, brought to the gathering aboard a fire truck courtesy of the YPG Fire Department, but Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews (top photo) helped youngsters put a patriotic topping on a smaller tree as they waited to tell Santa their Christmas wishes. A week later, Family Support Chief Mardy Clark (bottom photo) helped distribute Christmas baskets with all the trimmings donated to YPG Soldiers by volunteers from American Legion Post #19 as a small token of appreciation for their service. (Photos by Teri Womack)



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