

## Train how you fight: Realistic training keeps YPG firefighters ready for battle

By Casey Garcia

‘Train as you fight’ is a familiar concept among Soldiers in the U.S. Army.

Whether they are preparing for a mission or keeping their skills intact, to have the ability to go into a situation and naturally perform in the manner they were trained is crucial.

This statement also holds true for our firefighters and first responders.

Gerald Ball, YPG fire chief, invited YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger and YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews to witness and participate in live fire training on Laguna Army Airfield in late March. Live fire training allows firefighters to gain valuable knowledge and practical experience while operating in a safe environment that closely resembles

real life.

Within a few seconds of the flame-up the fire easily spread from the can in which it was lit to more flammable objects which in this case happened to be mock wall furnishings which then ignited spreading the flames. Now, imagine your office or home with all of the synthetic materials, after the flame-up the fire would travel to wooden cabinets and countertops, combustibles like paper towels, paper or cardboard packaging, curtains, and dry dish towels nearby would begin to smolder or burn.

Within the 1-2 minute mark the hot, smoky air would instantly burn the inside of your breathing passages. In addition, fires generate

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Wherever and whenever a fire occurs, the YPG Fire Department is ready for battle, and stays in a state of readiness with regular training. Here, YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger trains on use of the high-pressure hoses utilized by YPG firefighters during a recent exercise. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

## New gun tube storage building dedicated

By Mark Schauer

For most of its 75 year history, YPG’s bread and butter has been testing tube-launched artillery.

Generations of gun tubes and

artillery shells of all calibers have been put through their paces in extreme conditions here, yet oftentimes the tubes have been stored in facilities that are partially or fully

exposed to the elements.

Now, a new storage structure is available to extend the service life of these vital pieces of test equipment.

The over 6,000 square foot facility

is lean and spare, but will extend the life-span of all manner of gun tubes.

“It’s a very utilitarian structure that does exactly what they want it to do:

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Garrison employees  
recognized for  
excellence

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YPG employee  
inspires elementary  
school students

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YPG Commander  
briefs military  
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# STORAGE

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keep the tubes out of the elements,” said Bryn Butler, project engineer.

The brainchild of team leader Steve Wilson, a 35-year veteran of the proving ground, the facility is particularly vital now given YPG’s position at the forefront of testing long-range precision fires, the Army’s top modernization priority.

“I felt we needed something to protect these assets for use at Yuma Test Center,” said Wilson. “The attrition rate of gun tubes from the natural environment takes its toll, so it was necessary to protect them from the environment by bringing them indoors.”

“There is a significant workload investment to maintain these assets:

Yuma Test Center spends about \$166,000 annually for labor hours, materials, and other means of support for gun tubes,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews, YTC Commander. “We have an attrition rate of five to 10 percent for all gun tubes stored outdoors.”

As a result, Matthews continued, the test center has heretofore spent upwards of three-quarters of a million dollars annually on new gun



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews speaks at the recent dedication of a new gun tube storage facility at YPG. Long-range precision artillery fires are the Army’s top modernization priority, and YPG testing is at the forefront of this effort. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

tubes.

In addition to reducing this figure, officials see multiple additional benefits to the facility.

“This is for gun tubes of all calibers, small and large,” said Wilson. “It definitely opens up our capabilities to serve the test community with these important assets.”

“It allows us to consolidate gun

tubes in covered storage out of the elements,” added Wayne Schilders, chief of weapons operations. “It helps logistically and security-wise, too.”

Officials were also impressed by the rapid completion of the project. The Army Corps of Engineers broke ground last July, and construction was completed in December.

“Once they got started, it was constructed really fast,” said Kelly Merritt, YPG Facilities Manager. “We built this to save money in labor hours and maintenance on gun tubes.”

Matthews is pleased by the long-

term positive impact the new facility will have on YPG’s test mission.

“For over 50 years we have stored the nation’s gun tubes in an extreme desert environment,” said Matthews. “We are pleased to see the new facility that will house all of our current and future gun tubes, which will improve the life span of those materials.”

“It says that YPG’s mission supporting long-range precision fires is here to stay and that we are investing significant resources in labor and dollars into preparing to sustain this effort,” added Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG Commander.

## THE OUTPOST

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## Safety Corner

# Snake awareness critical as temperatures rise

By Ron Van Why

As the temperatures begin to rise, so begins the time of year that the creatures begin to stir.

Please be mindful while working, hiking, sporting or walking your pets in or around YPG.

As you all know, YPG is built in the middle of their habitat. Snakes pose a significant danger to workers at YPG, almost as much as driving in the YPG 500, but not quite.

Snakes, both venomous and non-venomous, can be a major concern

and it is important to consider what steps you should take to prevent any type of injury or incident.

Snake bites in the United States: the different types of venomous snakes found in and around YPG include rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths/water moccasins, and coral snakes. It is estimated that 7,000 to 8,000 people are bitten each year in the United States. However, due to effective anti-venom and medical treatment only an average of five people per year die as a result

of a bite.

Other hazards of snakes in the workplace: Not all snakes are venomous. However, there are still hazards created by non-venomous snakes. One hazard is the surprise or fear that they can create. For example, you are moving a piece of sheet metal, a piece of plywood, or something stored outside of your building. You pull up or move the item and "BAM" you find a five-foot-long snake inches away from your hand. You jump back, trip over a pipe, and smack your head requiring stitches.

Safeguards to protect yourself from snakes: The main way to avoid a snake bite is to just leave them alone. If removal is necessary, contact a professional. Always wear protective shoes or boots,

long pants, and a long shirt when working in areas where snakes are normally found. Clothing will help reduce the impact of a snake's bite. Always do a work area inspection prior to starting work. Look for signs of wildlife in your work area and always be careful when moving materials outdoors where wildlife can live.

More information can be found at the following links.

[tps://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/livingwith/razzgsnakes](https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/livingwith/razzgsnakes)

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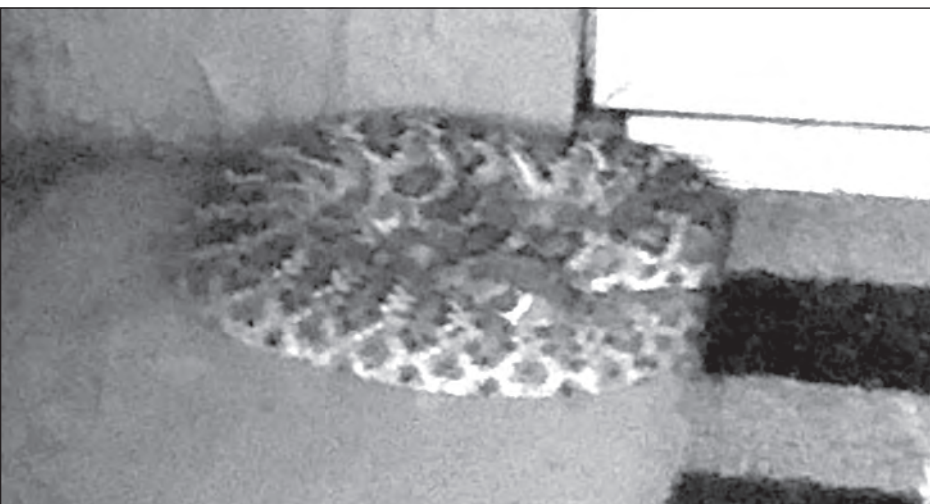
As always, if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the YPG Installation Safety Office at 328-2214, or stop by building 2091 on the Walker Cantonment Area.



ABOVE: Due to effective anti-venom and medical treatment only an average of five people per year die as a result of a bite.

However, be mindful that the shock of seeing any snake unexpectedly can be a safety hazard. (Photo by Tina Villalobos)

BELOW: The different types of venomous snakes found in and around YPG include rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths/water moccasins, and coral snakes. It is estimated that 7,000 to 8,000 people are bitten each year in the United States. (Loaned photo)



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# Build a strong foundation of learning for your child

By Mardy Clark

Supporting a child's education is one of your most important responsibilities a parent can do. By cultivating a love of learning and knowledge at a young age, you can set up your child for success. Here are some strategies to help you build a foundation of learning for your child.

## Nurture learning at home

Learning doesn't stop when the school day ends. A child absorbs as much or more at home and through his or her experiences and play as through a textbook. Try some of these tips to encourage learning at home:

- Keep to a routine. Make homework part of the routine by sticking to the same spot and time of day. Make sure your child has a quiet place to study.
- Monitor homework. Check your child's homework every night, not just to see whether it's done, but also for quality. Help your child carve out chunks of time to tackle larger projects.
- Praise your child's efforts. Children learn best by positive reinforcement. Whenever you have an opportunity, praise your child for a job well done.
- Encourage learning at home. If your child is interested in insects, buy an ant farm. Talk about something in

the news or a book he or she just read. Fostering full-time learning is one of the best ways you can equip your child for life after graduation and future success.

- Start Reading to your child at an early time. Some studies have shown even reading to them in the womb has helped.

## Build a relationship with your child's day care/school

Your relationship with the day care/school will demonstrate to your child and the staff the importance you attach to education. Even if you relocate often or are temporarily deployed/TDY, there are ways you can build a relationship with the school and your child's teachers to help your child perform as well as possible:

- Meet the teacher. Allowing your child's teacher to put a face with your name is a great way to show your investment in your child's education.
- Attend events. Being present at special events, back-to-school nights, school board meetings, open houses and school fairs can help both you and your child feel more connected to the day care/school.
- Volunteer. There are dozens of ways to give your time to your child's school, so it's just a matter of finding a way to volunteer that suits your schedule.

- Join the parent/teacher/advisory group. Attending parent meetings can be a great way to stay in the loop about what's happening at the day care/school and how you can get involved.

## Tap into support and resources

Providing the best possible education for your child is not a one-person job. Be sure to tap into the support and resources of your military community.

- Resources on your installation, such as school liaison officers; child, youth, and teen programs.
- Strong Beginnings Program - the year before your child attends

Kindergarten, gets your child ready for school at this part day program at the Child Development Center.

- Military OneSource education consultants can assist you with questions about your child's education. These one-on-one sessions are free, confidential, and can provide you with referrals to in-home tutors and tutoring centers in your area as well as public and private school information. Call 800-342-9647 at any time to schedule an appointment.

Give your child the best chance for success. Foster an appreciation for learning - it can help your child meet his or her potential and develop life skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

## Chaplain's Corner

### Spend all the time you can with loved ones

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

While at the park one day, a woman sat down next to a man on a bench near a playground. "That's my son over there," she said, pointing to a little boy in a red sweater who was gliding down the slide. "He's a fine looking boy", the man said. "That's my daughter on the bike in the white dress." Then, looking at his watch, he called to his daughter. "What do you say we go?" The little girl pleaded, "Just five more minutes, Dad. Please? Just five more minutes." The man nodded and she continued to ride her bike to her heart's content. Minutes passed and the father stood and called again to his daughter. "Time to go now?"

Again she pleaded, "Five more minutes, Dad. Just five more minutes." The man smiled and said, "OK." "My, you certainly are a patient father," the woman responded. The man smiled and then said, "Her older brother was killed by a drunk driver last year while he was riding his bike near here. I never spent much time with him and now I'd give anything for just five more minutes with him. I've vowed not to make the same mistake with my daughter. She thinks she has five more minutes to ride her bike. The truth is, I get five more minutes to watch her play."

Life is all about making priorities, and family is one and only priority on top of all other, so spend all the time you can with loved ones.

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## Garrison employees recognized for excellence



The most recent Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony 17 employees for length of service that combined for 295 years of service. Susan Mikami of the Directorate of Public Works was recognized as Civilian of the Year for her efforts in ensuring the accuracy of YPG's real property records. Sommer Cloinger, director of YPG's youth services facility, was honored as third quarter civilian of the quarter, and Samantha Enriquez of Directorate of Operations was recognized as fourth quarter civilian of the quarter. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

## Keeping faith with Army heritage



Park ranger Tammy Snook (left) and Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Executive Director Lowell Perry (right) shows YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger, Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews, and other YPG senior leaders the former office of the depot quartermaster during a visit to Yuma's historic Quartermaster Depot in late March. The depot, used by the Army from 1864 to 1883, was the supply lifeline to all military posts in the Southwest during its years of operation. Today, it is part of Yuma's Colorado River State Historic Park. With a history in Yuma dating back to 1850, the U.S. Army has played an integral role in making the area what it is today. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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# TRAINING

FROM PAGE 1

highly-poisonous gases, including carbon monoxide. In just two or three breaths you could pass out. At this point, Poppenberger, Matthews, and two firefighters were up the stairs on the second floor with the host beginning to fight this fire.

As time progressed to the two and three minute mark more and more heat was generated. The temperature quickly rose from 260°F to 400°F—hot enough to kill people. Compounding the heat was a very thick smoke that contained toxic components like arsenic (used as a wood preservative) and lead (from old paint), as well as irritants like ammonia, oxides of nitrogen, hydrogen chloride and isocyanates. The smoke was initially burning light and quickly turned into a black fog that loomed into the air.

At the three minute mark the temperature in the room where the fire began reached temperatures over 500°F, escaping would be very challenging, with the upstairs halls filling with smoke. At the 4:33 minute mark the smoke ventilating from the building was black and



Though the burns were strictly controlled for safety, temperatures inside the fire on the upper floor of the simulation building approached 900 degrees Fahrenheit and visibility was severely impaired by acrid smoke.

water was visibly exiting the exterior of the building. The temperature gauge was now at 647°F.

Thinking clearly and remaining calm under the stress of an emergency situation when lives are at stake and every second counts is

the difference between life and death. Fire waits for no one. All the while I could hear radio communications and extremely loud beeps. I later found out that there was an instrument attached to each firefighter and after a few minutes without movement the device would beep allowing others to locate them and ensure their safety. The final temperature reached a scorching 880°F.

So if it only takes 30 seconds for a small flame to turn into a full-blown life-threatening fire take a second and look at your workspace whether it be an office, hanger, or garage. What do you see? Aerosols, disinfectants, heaters (even space heaters), styrofoam, cords if they have damage, soft furnishings like a couch or chair, and paper to name a few are some of the most combustible items you could have. Computers play a fundamental role in our ability to get the job done and generally speaking they are safe, but be sure that you do not have a pile of papers next to it and that other

combustibles are kept at a distance from your monitor.

YPG's motto Truth in Testing, Nobody gets Hurt holds true for our firefighters and first responders as just as much.



YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews trains on use of the high-pressure hoses utilized by YPG fire fighters. "I definitely have a greater appreciation for our first responders," Matthews said.



"Today was eye-opening," said Poppenberger. "What goes on inside a building with flames, heat, and smoke completely obstructing your vision is a whole other world. I'm amazed by what these folks do." (Photos by Casey Garcia)





Wherever and whenever a fire occurs, the YPG Fire Department is ready for battle, and stays in a state of readiness with regular training. YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger and YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews recently joined them as they participated in a multi-scenario training session that involved two mock structure fires and one mock crashed aircraft.

"Today was eye opening," said Poppenberger. "What goes on inside the building with the flames, heat and smoke when you cannot see is a whole new world, you have no idea. I am amazed at what these folks do."

"I definitely have a greater appreciation for our first responders," added Matthews.

My closing thoughts are simple. These guys are AWESOME! I am totally enamored by what they do. I

know our military members sign a blank check payable to the United States of America for up to their life but these guys do as well and do not get the recognition they deserve. I was sweating my tail off outside the building just taking the photographs so I cannot imagine donning the gear and running into a building at nearly 900°. These guys definitely train how they fight and I was privileged to be allowed to photograph it.



Within a few seconds of the flame-up the fire easily spread from the can in which it was lit to more flammable objects such as these mock wall furnishings, which then ignited, spreading the flames.



At YPG, the fire department is responsible for protecting hundreds of buildings and thousands of personnel and residents from flame. The department also frequently responds to calls outside the borders of YPG, extinguishing brush fires or giving assistance to mutual aid partners like the City of Yuma.

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# YPG employee inspires elementary school students

By Mark Schauer

A group of students dreamed of being radio stars. The students, fourth and fifth graders at YPG's Price Elementary School, wanted to produce a podcast to enter in a student competition sponsored by National Public Radio, with the winning entry being aired on the network's national broadcast. But to do so, they needed a subject matter expert in the Information Technology field to interview. Lewis Grable, chief of the policy and plans division of YPG's Network Enterprise Center, took time from his busy schedule to help the students with their project. "I remember being a kid and being inspired by some folks who shared their life story," he said. "The kids are our future—you don't know whose life you can touch or influence by just being yourself and sharing

some of your past." The Sparta, Georgia native enlisted in the Army to earn money for college, and expected to leave after a single enlistment. Nearly a quarter of a century later, he retired as a Sgt. 1st Class. "For me, four years turned into 24 years," he said with a laugh. At YPG for about a year, the former Airborne Soldier shared his career highlights with the students and marveled at the advances in technology across his own lifetime. "IT is a growing field," he said to the students. "Dream big—don't be afraid to take chances, but the backup is you must have a good education. Math and science are the heart and soul of a lot of those things." With the recorder rolling, Claire Dean, fourth grader, served as host, earnestly asking Grable about his

experiences in IT and advice on how kids can position themselves educationally to enter the field once they are adults. "Find a way to make learning interesting," he said. "Many of the

things we thought were unimportant when I was growing up are now career paths, especially in the IT field." The contest's winners will be announced on April 23.



ABOVE: Claire Dean, fourth grader at YPG's Price Elementary School, interviews Grable for the podcast. "Find a way to make learning interesting," he said. "Many of the things we thought were unimportant when I was growing up are now career paths, especially in the IT field." BELOW: Lewis Grable, chief of the policy and plans division of YPG's Network Enterprise Center, discusses his experiences in the Army and the Information Technology field with fourth and fifth grade students of YPG's Price Elementary School. "I remember being a kid and being inspired by some folks who shared their life story," he said. "The kids are our future—you don't know whose life you can touch or influence by just being yourself and sharing some of your past." (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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# Hispanic folklore endures across generations

By Alfred Hernandez

Have you ever been walking down a dark street late at night and get the feeling someone or something is following you?

Have you ever been near a canal or retention basin and hear the faint cries of a women in the distance, or was there a room in your grandparents' house you were afraid to go into when you were a child?

If so we have more in common than you think: you're either Hispanic, grew up in a Hispanic neighborhood, or had close Hispanic friends.

As a child I grew up hearing stories of La Lechuza, the witch's owl that is sent to spy on her victim; La Llorona, the woman who drowned her children because she was forsaken by her husband and now spends eternity searching for them; and the cucuy who lurked in the shadows and places little girls and boys should not be. These stories are universal in Hispanic culture, and in every region have a different twist.

My cousins and I were told if we misbehaved that the duende that lived in the walls would come out and scratch our feet at night while we slept. Our older cousin took advantage of our innocence and as we all laid on the floor in our grandparent's living room attempting to sleep they would scratch the walls and enjoy the sound of our panicked whispers.

The duende is a mythical creature that has a different tail across the Hispanic landscape. In Portugal, the duende lives in the forest and whistles a magical song luring girls



and boys into the forest causing them to lose their way home. In Belize they are called tata duende and attack the thumbs of children.

These are a small portion and the most popular Hispanic myths and folklore, and these stories have been passed down from generation to generation scaring children and creating community

amongst Hispanic families. As we grow up we realize our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles tell us these stories to frighten us into behaving and the sheer joy of watching us be overcome by fright. Like when my mother told us about the night my Tia Elena snuck out of the house to go to the street dance and she danced with a handsome stranger. They danced all night, he gave her his sole attention, then she accidentally stepped on his foot and when she looked down he had rooster feet.

My wife and I have warned our children of the cucuy and told them if they keep talking back the duende is going to scratch their feet at night. It's a joy to pass our traditions and culture to our younger generations and to share it with the world. Even though I know these myths are not true I can't lie when our friends and family are sitting around the table drinking coffee the way our parents did and tell these stories and it's time for me to make my rounds turning off the lights in the house I get spooked. Especially when I hear the gophers scratching my bathroom walls. Well, at least that's what I tell myself it is...

## YPG Commander briefs military support group



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger provides an update on proving ground activities to the most recent monthly meeting of Yuma's chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. (Photo by Chris Knight)

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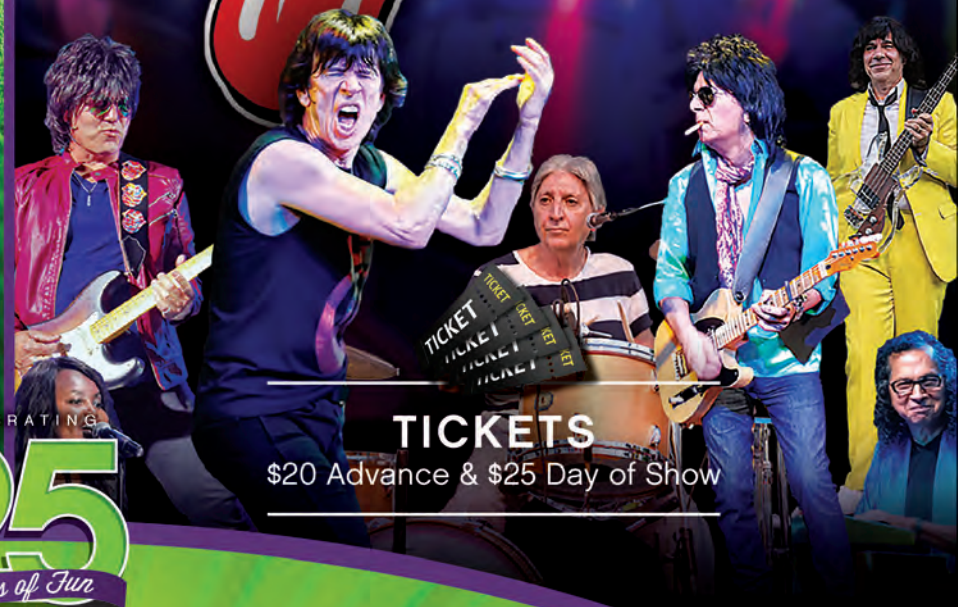
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