

YTC commander shares thoughts on test center's future

By Mark Schauer

He has several months left in command before a permanent change of station, but Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews is still hard at work positioning Yuma Test Center to accommodate the Army Renaissance far into the future.

Matthews believes the YTC workforce is the key to all of the test center's success.

"We have the most faithful, hardworking civil servants that I have ever seen in my 20-plus years in the Army. Their can-do attitude is awesome: they will do anything for the customer. If you ask for it, it will be delivered, and done safely."

Matthews believes this ethos will serve YTC well as the Army Futures Command's cross functional teams (CFTs) fundamentally reform the Army's test and evaluation process.

At the moment, the highest profile test project in support of the CFTs relates to the Army's top modernization priority: long range precision fires. The Army aspires to field systems capable of

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Yuma Test Center commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews believes the test center will remain the Army's busiest into the foreseeable future. "Long range precision fires, Next Generation Combat Vehicle, and Future Vertical Lift by themselves will vastly impact Yuma Test Center in the next three to five years," he said. (US Army photo)

Busiest test center, busiest highway: Highway 95 danger likely to remain far into the future

By Mark Schauer

What is 32 miles long, traversed by upwards of 25,000 vehicles per week, and has had 119 vehicle accidents in the past three years?

If you answered the stretch of Highway 95 that bisects the Cibola and Kofa ranges of YPG, you are, unfortunately, correct.

The aforementioned length of

Highway 95 has the highest traffic density of any two-lane roadway in Arizona. For comparison's sake, the Phoenix metro area has multiple four-lane streets that accommodate

significantly fewer cars.

Aside from being a major thoroughfare for winter visitors traveling from points north and an

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spend a day at YPG /Page 2



Travel camp residents
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Visual Information specialist has travelled far /Page 8



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Future Soldiers spend a day at YPG

By Casey Garcia

With less than 1% of the population joining the Armed Forces, recruiting can be a difficult task.

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is doing their part to assist in the United States Army Recruiting Command's (USAREC) mission to recruit the enlisted, noncommissioned and officer candidates for service in the United States Army and Army Reserve.

In an attempt to raise awareness of what the Army can offer, Staff Sgt. Christopher Rivera, Yuma recruiting station commander, brought a mix of 21 applicants and those already enlisted awaiting to ship for basic training onto the installation for an up close and personal view of life in the Army.

These young men and women had a jam-packed day of exciting and educational opportunities which started with watching the Military Freefall School, a joint forces training school covering all aspects of military freefall parachuting, jump into Cox Field. Next they toured the base gym, housing, medical clinic, pool, bowling alley, restaurant, and commissary. After this came the

eight-wheeled armored fighting vehicle, the Stryker. Each person was able to don a helmet after a safety brief and take a short tour of the hills of the desert terrain inside the Stryker.

Next came the inner workings of the Airborne Test Force. The applicants viewed different parachutes, packs, and learned some interesting details of the occupation of parachute rigors and parachutist's. Shortly after, they were off to take a closer look at weapons systems consisting of a variety of small arms.

Identified as stand outs from Gila Ridge High School, Zachary Contrabasos ships to basic training on June 17 and will become a supply specialist while Dixzzy Fernandez from Cibola High School will ship on July 1 to become a logistics specialist.

It has been said that recruiting for military service is difficult during one of the most challenging labor markets since the inception of the all-volunteer force, and approximately 71% of youth do not qualify for military service because of obesity, drugs, physical and mental health problems, misconduct,



In an attempt to raise awareness of what the Army can offer, Staff Sgt. Christopher Rivera, Yuma recruiting station commander, recently brought a mix of 21 applicants and those already enlisted to YPG for an up close and personal view of life in the Army.

and aptitude. Couple these statistics with the fact that 50% of youth admit they know little to nothing about military service and you can see why recruiting the most highly qualified candidates for our nation's military is a tough job. Yuma Proving Ground

made accomplishing this mission a little easier by showing applicants that life in the Army is exceptional and that serving will give you the pride that you are doing something bigger and better, and for the greater good.

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In addition to visits with the Soldiers in the Airborne Test Force and Military Free Fall School, the recruits also had the opportunity to take a ride in a Stryker Combat Vehicle during their visit. (Photos by Casey Garcia)

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BUSIEST

important road for a variety of farm equipment that tills and harvests nearby farmland, Highway 95 is the main artery into YPG, the busiest of the Army's six test centers for the past nine years. Aside from the majority of YPG's 2,400 personnel commuting to and from work on the highway, in excess of 21,000 cargo shipments bound for YPG also rely on the highway each year, as do the post's 35,000 annual visitors.

"You have roughly 25,000 vehicles per week on Highway 95," said Donnie Lucas, YPG Police Chief. "That's a lot of vehicles for what was supposed to be a two-lane farm road. To keep that in perspective, the turnpike in Miami does 15,000 to 18,000 vehicles per week."

In addition to being a cramped two lane road, Highway 95 has poor lighting, multiple blind curves, and wild horses and burros that pose hazards to motorists despite the best efforts of wildlife officials to keep them away from the road. The morning and evening commutes to and from the proving ground have long been dubbed the 'YPG 500,' an amusing sobriquet if not for the grim list of lives the road has claimed over the years. An increase in accidents last year led Lucas to vow in a YPG town hall meeting to "break the YPG 500."

"We started being a presence on the roadway, which we hadn't been in the past," Lucas said. "Currently our citations aren't payable citations, though enough of them could lead the garrison manager to suspend your driving privileges on post. If we move to concurrent jurisdiction in the future, the citations will be payable to the federal government and be adjudicated by a federal magistrate, with fines of between \$100 and \$500."

As is usually the case, funding is the principal impediment to fixing the longstanding road deficiencies. All told, Arizona's counties alone have in excess of 20,000 miles of paved and unpaved roadways to maintain. Arizona's gasoline tax is the seventh-lowest in the nation, hasn't increased in 27 years, and has lost nearly 35% of its original value due to inflation.

Yet according to the Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization, Yuma County's road allocations have been chronically underfunded for over two decades. YMPO cites Yavapai and Mojave Counties as jurisdictions of comparable size that collect similar amounts of tax money on gasoline and diesel sales, yet claims that Yuma has received less than a quarter of Yavapai County's allocation and less than a third of Mojave County's. YMPO predicts this trend will last at least until 2024.

Despite the presence of a completed design concept report meant for the Highway 95 expansion to four lanes, thus far the only recent progress has been a \$4 million allocation to add turn lanes at the intersection of Highway 95 and Dome Valley Road and \$1.8 million to install rumble strips in the center and shoulders of Highway 95 between mile markers 60 and 80.

The imminent projects are welcome improvements for Highway 95 commuters, but still far short of the work that remains to be done. As it stands now, no additional Highway 95 improvements are listed in the State of Arizona's tentative five-year highway plan, despite a \$1 billion surplus in the state's budget. In fact, the tentative plan actually reduces projected highway spending in Yuma County by more than 50% from the current plan.

Meanwhile, all signs point to YPG, actively supporting six of the Army Futures Command's Cross Functional Teams, maintaining its position as the busiest of the Army's six test centers, a designation it has held for the past nine years.

Chaplain's Corner —

God delights in people who are truthful

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

Long ago, there lived a woodcutter in a small village. He was sincere in his work and very honest. Every day, he set out into the nearby forest to cut trees. He brought the wood back into the village and sold it to a merchant. He earned just enough to make a living and was satisfied with his simple life.

One day, while cutting a tree near a river, his axe slipped out of his hand and fell into the river. The river was so deep, he could not even think to retrieve it on his own. He only had the one axe, and became very worried thinking how he could possibly earn his living now. He was very sad and prayed to God.

He prayed sincerely, so God appeared in front of him and asked, "What is the problem, my son?" The woodcutter explained the problem and requested God to get his axe back.

God put his hand deep into

the river and took out a silver axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" The woodcutter looked at the axe and said, "no." So God put his hand back deep into the water again and showed a golden axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" The woodcutter looked at the axe and said. "no." God said, "Take a look again son, this is a very valuable golden axe, are you sure this is not yours?" The woodcutter said, "No, It's not mine. I can't cut the trees with a golden axe. It's not useful for me".

God smiled and finally put his hand into the water again and took out his iron axe and asked, "Is this your axe?" To this, the woodcutter said, "Yes! This is mine! Thank you!" God was very impressed with his honesty so he gave him his iron axe and also the other two axes as a reward for his honesty.

From the Bible, Proverbs 12:22 reminds us: "God detests lying lips, but delights in people who are truthful."



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Understanding lead in drinking water

By Sergio Obregón

In recent years, the potential for lead in drinking water has become a topic of public concern.

Let's break it down and see if it affects us at YPG.

First, a little history about lead. Lead is a naturally occurring metal found in places such as soil, dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain, pewter, and in water. Since Roman times and well into the late 20th century, lead was commonly used in water distribution and plumbing materials, such as pipes, valves, and more recently lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, and brass faucets. Many of these plumbing materials made from lead were primarily used to distribute water to homes and other buildings.

It's true that lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. This is because over time, the gradual consumption of lead can negatively affect your brain, red blood cells, and kidneys. While some amounts of lead will not hurt adults, children 6 years and under and pregnant women are at a higher risk from lead poisoning. In children lead poisoning can impair mental and physical growth.

When lead is found in drinking water, it can contribute up to 20% of a person's total lead exposure according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Fortunately, lead is not typically naturally occurring in our water sources, such as rivers, lakes, and ground water. Instead, the common source of lead contamination in drinking water is from the normal wear and tear of materials containing lead within water distribution systems and plumbing. Once this became known and confirmed, the government banned the use of lead solder and restricted the lead content



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger tours the water treatment plant on Howard Cantonment Area. Over 2,000 personnel and several hundred residents depend on YPG's extensive water supply system for clean drinking water, fire suppression, and evaporative cooling in summer. (US Army photo)

of pipes, faucets, and other plumbing materials in 1986.

At YPG, we have a good history of sample data from our public water systems with results consistently below the EPA's 15 parts per billion (ppb) allowable limit. On rare occasions, we have had results above the EPA limit at a single tap location during our routine sample collections. This has occurred once in the past on the Kofa Firing Range (KFR) water system in 2016 and once at the Walker Cantonment Area (WCA) water system in 2017, but has not occurred on the Howard Cantonment Area (HCA) water system. The detections at KFR and WCA were relatively low and none of the follow up samples detected level above the allowable limit.

The reason why we have had elevated levels of lead in couple of past samples is because the lead is leaching from the lead solder and certain plumbing fixtures in buildings built before 1986. Per regulation requirements, Public Works

conducts various follow up actions, including additional sampling to try and determine the source of the contamination. Public Works then replaces fixtures and or internal plumbing as required. At the same time, our water treatment operators in cooperation with the state regulatory agency will adjust the water treatment to minimize the corrosion potential in water which contributes to the leaching of lead.

The slightly elevated levels of lead at these individual tap locations is likely due to the potential change in water chemistry. Changes in water chemistry such as temperature, pH, and alkalinity can affect the corrosion potential of the water. Our water treatment process includes adjustments to the water chemistry to reduce the corrosion potential of water as much as possible. Other reasons that could have contributed to these sudden changes include routine maintenance, upgrades and adjustments to the treatment process, human error, etc. While the goal is to maintain consistency with the quality of the product water, situations do arise that may momentarily cause a slight change in optimal corrosion control treatment.

On HCA, we recently completed our routine lead sampling. Following regulation requirements, a total of 10 locations were sampled at a tap located within the building or home. Three of these sites were the Child Development Center, the Health Clinic, and the Cactus Café. The other seven sites were homes built before 1986, with 5 in upper housing and 2 in lower housing. Half of the 10 total samples came back negative with no detection of lead. The remaining samples all had levels of lead that were barely detected at less than 1 ppb (see HCA Results Table). Homes built after 1986 on HCA do not have lead containing fixtures or other components containing lead within the household plumbing, and therefore would not contribute to the leaching of lead.

The fear of lead in drinking water has largely been attributed to events occurring throughout the nation in recent years, such as the water crisis at Flint Michigan. The Flint water crisis was largely attributed to their numerous water main and service connection pipes made of lead, as well as improper water treatment, which evidently resulted in large amounts of lead leaching. Needless to say, at YPG, we do not have the underlying factors that could cause a water crisis. We do not have lead in our source water, nor do we have any water mains or service connections used to distribute our water made of lead. The only concern we have are buildings/homes built before 1986, and we continue to do our best to monitor and prevent from having lead in drinking water problems arise.

From a compliance stand point, we ensure all required notices are

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provided to consumers within the required timelines. These notices include posting of individual lead sample results near the sampled tap and public notices required to be distributed to customers in the event of a lead level above the EPA allowable limit. We strictly follow the federal rules to identify potential sources of lead and maintain an optimum water chemistry to minimize the leaching of lead where it may be found. We not only have our high tech state of the art water treatment systems in place, but we also have a great team operating and maintaining our water treatment facilities and distribution systems.

If you are still concerned about possible lead consumption in your drinking water, we recommend that you take the following actions. These practices can be used not only on YPG but anywhere else in buildings or homes built before 1986 where the original plumbing is still in place. These are standard

and highly recommended as routine practices.

1. Flush Your System. Run the water before using it for drinking or cooking, especially if it has not been used for more than 8 hours. For fast running taps, flush for about 15 to 30 seconds. For slower running taps, flush up 2 minutes or more.

2. Use Only Cold Water for Cooking and Drinking. The hot water tap can cause

sources of lead to dissolve more quickly than cold water.

We hope this information provides you with a better overall understanding on the topic of lead in drinking water. Remember, the drinking water at YPG is completely safe to drink. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sergio Obregon, Safe Drinking Water Program Manager at 928-328-2015 or by email at sergio.obregon. civ@mail.mil.

Our continuing commitment is to keep you informed and to respond to any questions you may have regarding the drinking water supplied by YPG. We will continue to provide future articles that will provide additional information about our water resources. For a comprehensive overview on information related to safe drinking water, including information on applicable federal rules, please visit the EPA webpage at: https://www.epa.gov/sdwa.

2018 HCA Lead Results	
Location	Result in ppb
Health Clinic (990)	Not Detected
CDC (1102)	Not Detected
Housing Unit #1	Not Detected
Housing Unit #2	Not Detected
Housing Unit #3	Not Detected
Cactus Café (451)	0.29
Housing Unit #4	0.33
Housing Unit #5	0.33
Housing Unit #6	0.38
Housing Unit #7	0.49

The table above provides a listing of lead levels detected from our recent routine lead sampling event conducted during August 2018 at Howard Cantonment Area. The results are presented in order from lowest to highest.

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accurately firing at targets 100 kilometers away in the next four years, a dramatic increase over the 30 kilometers a currently-fielded 155mm howitzer shell is capable of when fired at top zone with rocket assistance. Matthews projects that the large surface danger zones required of these test shots will eventually force firing schedules into the weekend to allow other testing to continue during the week without interruption.

"I see Army Futures Command shaping the Army in a direction it has never been before. All the test centers are going to have to move afoot and get ahead of that. Opportunities for future work will increase vastly by 2021 or 2022: long range precision fires, Next Generation Combat Vehicle, and Future Vertical Lift by themselves will vastly impact Yuma Test Center in the next three to five years."

Further, the Army Futures Command's expectation that these new platforms be tested thoroughly, but far more swiftly than in previous decades will keep YTC busy for a long time to come.

"The old Army paradigm took 10 years to actually field any major kit to the Soldiers. They are trying to shift that very quickly to the left so Soldiers get the gear much faster than that."

To position YTC for this future, Matthews reorganized the test center during his tenure, which coincided with the promotion of new directors for both of YTC's directorates following the promotion and retirement of their respective predecessors. He believes that the conversion of all of the test center's wage grade employees, more than 70 in all,

to General Schedule was another significant background move that will serve both the employees and the organization well in the new test and evaluation environment.

"They'll have vast improvements in their career in terms of opportunity for promotions or for future assignments in other areas."

Yuma Test Center's work with private industry customers has increased during Matthews' tenure, a success story that Matthews says is in part thanks to organizations like the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation and the Yuma 50 military support group. Matthews agrees with the oftmade observation that Yuma's support of the local military is unparalleled.

"The Yuma 50 does an awesome job. All the folks from Yuma proper reached out to me from the moment I took the guidon. Our partnerships with state and local officials helps to keep us so busy."

As for thoughts he intends to share with his successor in command, Matthews offer this:

"My advice to that individual is to listen to your leaders and subordinates. I did that from day one, because they've been doing it for 20-plus years in many cases here. If you provide good mentorship and guidance to them, everything else will work out."

Matthews also projects that YTC will remain the busiest of the Army's test centers into the foreseeable future.

"I take no credit for it: YTC's outcomes are entirely the result of the workforce's good work. It definitely is rewarding to be the commander of Yuma Test Center."

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Travel camp residents help restore Army artifact

By Mark Schauer

On April 2, 1962, the LeTourneau Overland Train arrived at Yuma Test Station for evaluation.

Built for a crew of six, the 572-foot long, 13 unit land train could haul 150 tons of cargo, from personnel carriers and Jeeps to construction equipment and cargo containers.

At the time, the 54-wheel drive welded aluminum beast was the longest rubber-tired vehicle in the world. The result of logistical support problems encountered in World War II in areas without adequate highway and rail networks, the land train performed well during testing, but was rendered obsolete by heavy lift helicopters like the S-64 Skycrane before it could be fielded. The overland train was sold for scrap in 1968, but the prime over survived, serving as a unique advertising piece for a local RV dealership before returning to the proving ground in the late 1990s

Today, the land train's prime mover is a crowd-pleasing display item parked across the street from YPG's Heritage Center museum, but, until recently, it was one that could only be enjoyed from the outside: from all appearances, the land train's cockpit, crew compartment, and other interior spaces hadn't known the touch of a mop or vacuum cleaner in 50 years.

Enter the large hearts and indefatigable elbows of several committed volunteers who winter in YPG's Travel Camp. Led by retired Army NCO Mark Sandercock, travel camp residents Lyle Becht, Jim Stockford, Mary Stockford, Patricia Gustafson and Gerald Sanders all lent a hand to clean and paint the interior of the land train over the course of several weeks, restoring it to near new condition.

"It gives me something to do," said Sandercock. "I retired when I was 53 years old, and I'm not sitting down and growing old."



With a crew of six, the 572-foot long, 13 unit land train could haul 150 tons of cargo: if you look closely, you can see the full compliment of cargo cars loaded with a M113 armored personnel carrier, a bulldozer, a Jeep, and multiple cargo containers. (US Army photo)

After a thorough cleaning and polishing, Sandercock contributed two gallons of paint and his labor

to make the old cabin crew-ready. Others re-stitched the dry rotted curtains that once shielded the land



It hasn't run in over 50 years, but thanks to some elbow grease and time volunteered by YPG Travel Camp visitors such as Mark Sandercock, the interior of the LeTourneau Land Train's prime mover is now fit for visits from the public. "It gives me something to do," said Sandercock. "I retired when I was 53 years old, and I'm not sitting down and growing old."



After a thorough cleaning and polishing, Sandercock contributed two gallons of paint and his labor to make the old cabin crew-ready, down to the stove and sink. During their labor, the volunteers found multiple items that date back to the days it was tested at YPG, from wrapped bars of soap to boxes of cereal, all of a 1960s vintage.

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Among those to visit the newly-restored interior of the land train are YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (right) and Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews.

train's sleeping berths from sunlight and added solar-powered nightlights to make the vehicle look less forlorn at night. Aside from a desire to re-canvas the seats in the cockpit, the volunteer crew feels their work is mostly done. Lucky Heritage Center visitors willing to climb a tall stepladder to enter the vehicle have already seen the results of their work, and also some found sundry items that date back to the days it was tested at YPG, from wrapped bars of soap to boxes of cereal, all of a 1960s vintage

"I think they feel a connection

to the artifacts," said Bill Heidner, Heritage Center curator, of the volunteers. "This is part of the landscape of their adopted winter home."

Sandercock, in his third winter at YPG, is already planning on bringing the same spirit to cleaning the cockpit of the O2 Skymaster that is enjoying its retirement years on a pad in front of the Heritage Center after several tours in Vietnam and a full worklife supporting testing at YPG until earlier this decade.

"I like to tinker," he said with a smile.



Today, the land train's prime mover is a crowd-pleasing exhibit outside YPG's Heritage Center, which is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

Winter visitors departing YPG Travel Camp soon



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (right) lunches with winter visitors at the proving ground's Desert Breeze Travel Camp in early March as part of a farewell barbecue. The camp provides veterans with full hooks ups that include water, sewer and electricity, and repeat customers are commonplace. "I've really enjoyed the time I've been able to spend with you," said Poppenberger. "I really appreciate you guys coming and staying in the travel camp—making this a great facility for you is very important to us." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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A world of opportunities: Visual Information specialist has travelled far from hometown

By Alfred Hernadez

As a child we dream of faraway places and adventures we'd love to

We watched movies or read books that would propel us into a world of excitement and places we could only imagine.

Growing up in a small farming community in California, Robi Duke rode her bike through fields and read of places she just imagined of. Little did young Duke know that her life's journey would be full of adventure.

Duke, a graphic artist in the Visual Information Department at Yuma Proving Ground, was born in Porterville, Calif. Growing up in the farming community, Duke spent her days reading and eating fresh fruit

she would pick off trees on her way to school. Duke's father, an Army veteran, worked at a lumber mill and her mother worked as a psychiatric technician at the state hospital before taking a job as a dispatcher for the Porterville Police Department.

Duke spent her formative years reading and riding her bike through the fields with her brothers and cousins. She would also spend time helping her grandfather's crews in the fields picking grapes and walnuts when they needed extra help. Opportunities for young women growing up in Porterville were somewhat limited to becoming a secretary or hairdresser. Only girls in the top academic percentile were earmarked for college, if their parents



A YPG employee for nearly 30 years, Visual information Specialist Robi Duke's graphic design work can be seen all over the proving ground—and beyond. (Photo by Alfred Hernandez)





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Duke's first stop was Kentucky, then Kansas, Arizona, and Germany. At each duty station she met different families and created tight relationships as most military

could afford to send them.

"Mom wanted me to become a hairdresser. I didn't even comb my

own hair, let alone someone else's." Duke thought she would become

a veterinarian because she lived in

"I figured I would spend my life in

That all changed when she married

Billy Duke. She and Billy had been

together for a year before he joined

the U.S. Army. After boot camp and a tour in Vietnam, they got married.

"Being an Army wife set me on a

different path because of so many

That's when everything changed for

a farming community and loved

Porterville," she explained.

animals.

Duke.

opportunities".

families do. She worked at the gym in Germany and held many different jobs at the different duty stations.

Her military journey lasted 20 years and Yuma Proving Ground was the final stop of that journey. Along the way she had two children, Andrea and Ben. Once she and her family arrived at YPG in 1990, she took a job with the base post office before getting a job with the Visual Information department, where she works to this day. Duke works closely with the Public Affairs Office and the Command Group creating graphics that can be seen all around YPG.

Duke's journey is not much different from any other military spouse where a new world of opportunity is open to them along with getting to see the world first hand. She would have never known this if she had become a veterinarian and stayed in Porterville her entire life.

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THE OUTPOST MARCH 18, 2019 **11**

YPG display delights thousands at 2019 Yuma Air Show









More than 20,000 people visited the 2019 Yuma Air Show, and YPG's static displays had a steady stream of eventgoers throughout the day. Airborne Test Force Soldiers let kids of all ages try on parachutes and other jumping gear, Heritage Center curator Bill Heidner displayed a collection of replica Army small arms of the 20th century, and the members of the public affairs office staff greeted visitors and answered questions. On display for the first time ever at the Air Show was a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, recently fielded after years of testing at YPG, along with venerable platforms like the Stryker Combat Vehicle, the all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, and the M119 105 mm towed howitzer. (Photos by Mark Schauer)





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