

Drone technology achieves new heights at YPG

By Mark Schauer

Humanity's first powered flight in 1903 lasted for 12 seconds.

In 2010, the Zephyr unmanned aircraft stayed aloft for two straight weeks high in the airspace above U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), setting a world record.

Last summer, an upgraded Zephyr returned to YPG and flew continuously for 25 days, 23 hours, and 57 minutes. Perhaps more significantly, the craft was able to spend its entire flight well above the altitudes normally achieved by commercial airplanes.

"Unlike previous flights when the aircraft had to come down to between 25,000 and 35,000 feet at night, this time we were able to stay above the weather," said Lori Slaughter, test officer. "Our lowest altitude during the flight itself was 55,000 feet."

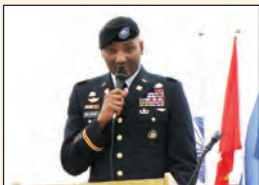
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YPG rides in Silver Spur Rodeo Parade



A Yuma tradition for nearly as long as YPG has existed, the Silver Spur Rodeo Parade has delighted generations of spectators. For the first time ever, YPG's participation brought a prestigious award-- for details, please turn to page 11. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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YTC Commander provides keynote speech at Camp Bouse commemoration

By Bill Heidner

Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews, YTC Commander, was the guest speaker at the 23rd annual commemoration of the men and units associated with a top secret World War II-era test program of the Canal Defense Light (CDL) on February 9.

In his well-received speech, Matthews drew connections between the historical events of then to the current role that the Yuma Proving Ground and the Yuma Test Center provide today.

Proudly pointing out the important role his test center has in testing for six of the top eight priorities of Army modernization, he held the crowd of nearly 200 in rapt attention.

His personable style and special brand of humor made the speech all the more enjoyable.

Located northeast of Quartzsite, Ariz., the town of Bouse hosted the 9th and 10th Tank Groups, and the local railhead lent its name to the top secret base within the Butler

Valley. The site was selected due to its remoteness and the ease in which activity could be constrained within the secured operational area. It was also hoped that the activity the Army could not hide from prying eyes would be thought of as just another unit preparing for the on-going maneuvers at the Desert Training Center / California – Arizona Maneuver Area. (DTC / C-AMA).

What some have called the “attack by illumination” was always seen as a one trick pony, easily countered. Therefore secrecy for what would likely be a one-time employment of the tactic was absolutely essential. Many say that the secrecy maintained was second only to the atomic bomb.

The CDL was based on an M3 Lee tank. This tank was modified by removing the 37 mm gun and turret on top, leaving the 75 mm cannon in the side sponson box. A special turret was built to contain a special Arc Light that produced 13 million candlepower. A polished

parabolic mirror projected the light through a slit in the turret. A special shutter was installed that opened and closed 6 times per second, producing a strobe light effect which was thought to produce disorienting

effects. In addition, colored filters would alter the perception of distance to the tanks. The idea was that the defenders would be rendered senseless, allowing for an easy penetration of their defenses



Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews, Yuma Test Center commander, delivers the keynote address at the 23rd Annual commemoration of Camp Bouse, a secret World War II-era operational testing and training program in the Butler Valley of Arizona. “I’m very impressed that the Bouse community honors the service of these Soldiers even after many generations, and I hope that the people of the future will remember the sacrifices our men and women in uniform today make in a similar way,” Matthews said. (Photo by Bill Heidner)

THE OUTPOST

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followed by an exploitation by a larger, follow-on force.

A demonstration was put on in England for Generals Dwight Eisenhower and Jacob Devers. They were impressed enough to recommend that the American Army should adopt a similar program. Beginning in February 1942, a scant two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, American troops would receive their basic training at Camp Rucker with advanced operational testing and crew training within General Dever's Armor Center at Fort Knox. Strict security procedures were developed that would follow the Soldiers all the way to the CAMA to their new home at Camp Bouse, established in August 1943.

The program was cancelled once the 9th and 10th Tank Groups arrived in England. The tank

battalions were converted to medium tank battalions, many designated as "special" while the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion came under the operational control of Gen. Omar Bradley, who used them as his own version of a quick reaction force throughout the war in Europe.

During a tour and terrain walk of the actual Camp Bouse location the day after Matthews' speech, Luis Arroyo, chief of the YTC Training Exercise Management Office accompanied Museum Curator Bill Heidner in order to pave the way for future training opportunities. Thirty-five car loads of people also made the trek as John Bennet of the Bouse Chamber of Commerce shared first-person accounts of Veterans and locals who had previously been regular attendees of the annual Commemoration. With a blessing

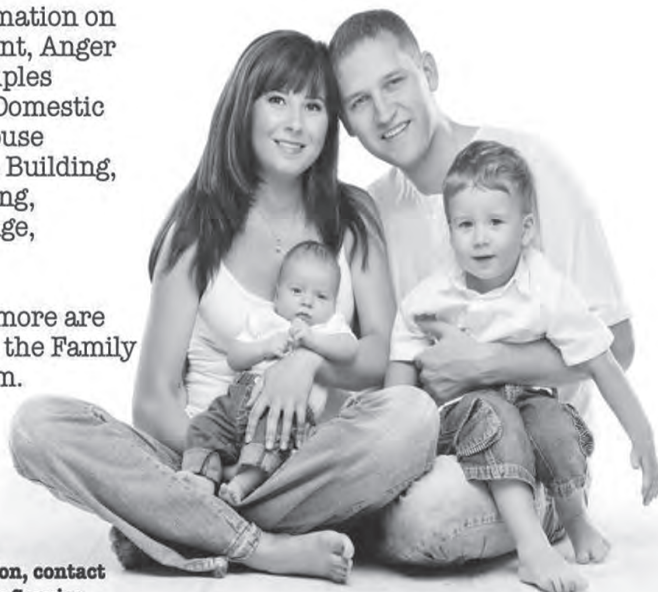


Attended by over 150 people, Matthews' speech was well-received at the ceremony. "In 1943, this was a bustling training center working on an important, sensitive mission for the war effort," Matthews said in his remarks. "To me it sounds a little bit like the Yuma Test Center that I know today." (Photo by Bill Heidner)

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from a La Paz County Supervisor and the Chamber of Commerce of Bouse, the effort to develop a staff ride – like training event will commence so that personnel from

YPG and other tenants and visiting training units may benefit from learning about Operation Cossack, the developmental training mission at Camp Bouse.

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Chaplain's Corner

None of us live for ourselves alone

By Maj. Ronald Beltz

A rat looked through a crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife opening a package. What food might it contain? He was aghast to discover that it was a rat trap.

Retreating to the farmyard the rat proclaimed the warning:

"There is a rat trap in the house, a rat trap in the house!"

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said: "Excuse me, Mr. Rat, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it."

The rat turned to the pig and told him:

"There is a rat trap in the house, a rat trap in the house!"

"I am so very sorry Mr. Rat,"

sympathized the pig, "but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured that you are in my prayers."

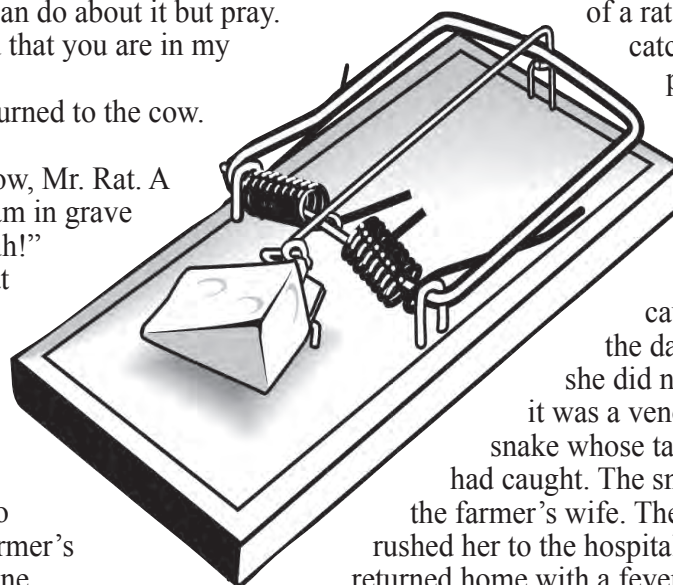
The rat turned to the cow.

She said:

"Like wow, Mr. Rat. A rat trap. I am in grave danger. Duh!"

So the rat returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's rat trap alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the



house, like the sound of a rat trap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see that it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital. She returned home with a fever.

Now everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup,

so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient.

His wife's sickness continued so that friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them the farmer butchered the pig.

The farmer's wife did not get well. She died, and so many people came for her funeral that the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide meat for all of them to eat.

The next time you hear that someone is facing a problem and think that it does not concern you, remember that when there is a rat trap in the house, the whole farmyard is at risk. Romans 14: 7 reminds us that "None of us lives to himself alone."

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Annual Safety Week event gets kudos



'Nobody gets hurt' is the ethos at YPG, and it's a challenging ideal to accomplish given the inherently dangerous nature of our test mission. A contributing factor to YPG's sterling safety record is the post's Safety Awareness Week, an annual event since 1993. In addition to refreshers on first aid, venomous wildlife, and safety aspects relevant to each employee's particular type of work, a Safety and Wellness Expo includes over 40 vendors with health and safety related services was available for personnel to visit. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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DRONE

FROM PAGE 1

The Zephyr's intended purpose is to serve as a low-cost, more-capable alternative to a spy satellite, able to loiter over the same vicinity for hours or days at a time. It still has the same name and mission as its original iteration, but boasts a slew of upgrades.

"We have brand new avionics that are a lot more efficient and better-controlled," said Sarah Bassett, project manager. "We have also updated all the solar panels and batteries with increased performance. We've also lightened the airframe."

The construction of the Zephyr is minimalist. Built of composite carbon fiber, the craft weighs a feather-light 100 pounds and has no wheels or landing gear—it is launched off of the shoulders and from the hands of five running individuals. Virtually every square inch of the 80-foot wingspan is covered by lightweight solar cells

that charge batteries that power twin electric motors. Also onboard are sophisticated electronics that allow the craft to be monitored and steered from a ground control station. All of this runs on the electrical power equivalent to that needed to light a single commercial light bulb.

The Zephyr's ability to fly at extremely high altitudes means it can safely evade bad weather while aloft. However, it is vital for the aircraft to perform its ascent and descent in favorable conditions. An unexpected deviation in the jet stream had forced testers to land the craft after 48 hours during a test at YPG in 2013, and all concerned were keen to avoid the same thing this time around.

When the team finally achieved a favorable window on July 11th, the craft was run down the runway by Airbus personnel and began its slow and steady ascent into a record-breaking flight. All was going smoothly until the weather situation deteriorated in Phoenix, about 175 miles away. Though this weather pattern had no direct impact on Yuma Proving Ground,



While aloft, YPG personnel monitored the craft's flight at all hours of the day and night. Ensuring the complex test went smoothly took the support of a multitude of YPG offices and shops.

Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport was closed for landings and had multiple commercial airliners circling in the skies above. The Federal Aviation Administration asked for permission to use some of YPG's restricted airspace to help alleviate the aerial

traffic jam that was accumulating in the skies above Phoenix, and YPG readily agreed to help. To accommodate this, the Zephyr's ascent path had to be moved to the extreme southern border of YPG's 2,000 square mile of restricted



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airspace, and the craft was confined to a small box to continue its climb. The deviation in the plan was completely unexpected, but testers took it in stride, ultimately seeing it as another positive test data point.

"We proved that we could stay away from commercial aircraft," said Bassett. "We managed quite easily to stay in a very small strip of air space and avoid the storms as we gained altitude."

Though YPG averages 360 days of clear weather annually and boasts stable air that is perfect for aircraft testing, testers had to cope with other effects of the intense summer heat. To achieve optimal performance for a test baseline, the Zephyr's batteries had to be kept at a constant cool temperature prior to flight, which meant YPG personnel had to maintain a portable conditioning chamber at all times. YPG personnel also erected targets across YPG's desert ranges to give the Zephyr's optics suite things to seek while aloft. Even erecting the aircraft's ground control station prior to the flight took place in extreme temperatures.

"Our ground control system has a lot of dishes and antennas that need to be assembled on top," said Bassett. "You can't do it at night because it's dangerous. Even early in the morning, it is very hot outside."

While aloft, YPG personnel monitored the craft's flight at all hours of the day and night, and the Zephyr may have been stay aloft for an astonishing three months had other commitments not forced the crew to land and transport it for other testing elsewhere.

Making the test successful took the efforts of a multitude of YPG offices and shops, and the seamless interaction to achieve the mission impressed both the customer and the test officer.

"It's phenomenal how everyone works together," said Slaughter. "Everyone just comes together for the mission."



The Zephyr spent its entire flight within YPG's 2,000 square miles of restricted airspace at altitudes well above those normally achieved by commercial airplanes. (US Army photos)

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YPG Command Sgt. Maj. visits with Yuma community



YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson gives a YPG overview to patrons at the Yuma County Main Library on February 7. Nelson touched on YPG's efforts in support of six of the Army Futures Command's cross functional teams and how YPG testing ensured the equipment he used while deployed worked wherever he was called upon to serve. "I enjoy opportunities to tell the public about YPG," remarked Nelson. "It is important they know that this great resource is helping our Warfighters. If we don't tell the story, others will make it up." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

National news takes notes of YPG's prominence



Yuma Proving Ground's position in the forefront of the Army's modernization efforts was the subject of an NBC Nightly News piece aired on February 9. Long range precision fires are the Army's top modernization priority, and YPG testing of the Extended Range Cannon Artillery (ERCA) program is critical to the Army's goal of fielding systems capable of accurately firing at targets 100 kilometers away. YPG actively supports six of the Army Futures Command's Cross Functional Teams building the Army's future force, which seeks to retain overmatch with near-peer adversaries in a high intensity conflict while maintaining the competency in waging irregular warfare that has been achieved since the 9/11 attacks. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

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Tour groups roll through YPG



YPG participates in multiple community events throughout the year, but nothing brings the reality of the proving ground's impact into focus quite like seeing it in action. Air Delivery Branch Chief Ryan Tiaden gave visitors on the February 5 Behind the Big Guns Tour a special look at where cargo and personnel parachutes are rigged and maintained for developmental testing. Two more of the Yuma Visitor Bureau-organized tours remain this winter, on February 26 and March 19. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

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YPG rides to Chairman's Choice trophy at Silver Spur Parade



YPG shined at Yuma's 74th annual Silver Spur Rodeo Parade on February 9, delighting spectators of all ages and winning the coveted Chairman's Choice trophy for best parade entry: An all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle pulling a M119 105mm howitzer, easily the biggest gun in the parade. In keeping with the parade's theme of 'Honor our Heroes,' YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger, Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson, and Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Engelman, Staff Sgt. Gregory La Fleur, and Staff Sgt. Brandon Hunter from YPG's Airborne Test Force were joined by Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma Commander Col. David Suggs. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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