

THE OUTPOST

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365 | VOLUME 68 NO. 12 JUNE 10, 2019

YPG Soldiers honor the fallen



Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force helped commemorate Memorial Day in solemn ceremonies at Yuma's Gateway Park and Desert Lawn Cemetery in late May. Memorial Day honors the more than 1.1 million Americans who gave the ultimate sacrifice to secure and preserve the liberty our country enjoys. For more photos, please turn to page three. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

YPG commander reflects on two years in command

By Mark Schauer

Nearly two years into his command, it is clear that Col. Ross Poppenberger took the reins at a pivotal moment in the Army's— and YPG's—history.

At present, the proving ground actively supports six of the Army Futures Command's Cross Functional Teams (CFTs) 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.

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 accurately firing at targets 100 kilometers away in the next four

SEE **COMMANDER** page 6

Brazilian aircraft
tested at YPG
/Page 2



Hawk released
into the wild
/Page 5



Substance abuse
training opens eyes
/Page 11



Brazilian Air Force tests new plane at YPG

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Test Center (YTC) is the Army's premier test center for air delivery testing.

There are several factors which account for this, Air Delivery Test Officer Carlos Anaya explains. "YTC has the facilities, manpower, instrumentation, and great weather year round for Air Delivery Operations."

YPG also has dedicated Air Test Force jumpers which play a large role in these types of test.

"YTC's Soldier, Operator, Maintainer, Test and Evaluation (SOMTE) riggers are experienced Soldiers who were selected to be not only riggers, but also test parachute jumpers for the military."

These resources are the primary reason why other countries look to YPG for aircraft certification.

Recently YPG hosted approximately 70 customers from Brazil, which include maintainers, test pilots, and engineers, who were here for the airdrop testing certification of the Embraer KC-390 aircraft.

The Embraer KC-390 is a twin-engine jet-powered military



The Embraer KC-390 is a twin-engine jet-powered military transport aircraft with multi-functional use that the Brazilian Force is looking to use in the near future. Personnel at YPG supported Embraer in the air delivery testing. Anaya explains, "YPG's role for this project was to rig all the payloads, pack parachutes, collect instrumentation data, photographs, video, and coordinate range support." (Loaned photo)

transport aircraft with multi-functional use that the Brazilian Force is looking to use in the near future. However, the certification part must be complete before the aircraft is cleared for employment.

Personnel at YPG supported Embraer in the air delivery testing for the KC-390. It was a certification process which included conducting several tests to certify the system. The Brazilian Airforce set the requirements and YPG supported Embraer in conducting

every critical test.

Anaya explains, "YPG's role for this project was to rig all the

payloads, pack parachutes, collect instrumentation data, photographs, video, and coordinate range support."

Roberto Becker, is the chief flight test engineer for Embraer, where he has worked for 30 years. While this is not his first time at YPG, it's the first time he's come here for this test. After the test, he is confident about the aircraft's capabilities.

"The airplane is fantastic," he said. "The airplane is working perfectly, no malfunctions, the system is operating very well."

Becker explains that the aircraft has undergone basic certification and now YPG is supporting military mission certification. He's been pleased with the process. "The YPG staff is really professional and they know what they are doing."

THE OUTPOST

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A reverent Yuma honors Memorial Day



LEFT: Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force helped commemorate Memorial Day today in solemn ceremonies at Yuma's Gateway Park and Desert Lawn Cemetery. Multiple color guards from around the Greater Yuma area participated in the annual events honoring the more than 1.1 million American Soldiers who have defending our liberties and way of life. ABOVE: For more than 70 years, Yuma has commemorated Memorial Day with a moving ceremony that involves dropping wreaths of flowers into the waters of the Colorado River from the Ocean to Ocean Bridge. Multiple color guards participate in formation along the banks of the river in Gateway Park as hundreds of solemn spectators look on. The Airborne Test Force Soldiers who represented YPG, spit-shined and well-practiced, did the proving ground and Army proud. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

Flag Day facts

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson officially established June 14 as Flag Day. As you celebrate the anniversary of the Stars and Stripes, here are some fast facts about Old Glory:

- Bernard Cigrand, a small-town Wisconsin teacher, originated the idea for an annual flag day, to be celebrated across the country every June 14, in 1885. That year, he led his school in the first formal observance of the holiday.

- During the Vietnam War era, some demonstrators burned American flags as an act of protest. The Flag Protection Act of 1968 was enacted in response, making it illegal to burn or otherwise deface the Stars and Stripes. In two landmark decisions 20 years later, the Supreme Court ruled that the government couldn't curb individuals' First Amendment rights by prohibiting desecration of the U.S. flag. Respectful burning

of damaged flags according to established protocol has always been acceptable.

- Unlike setting an intact flag on fire, flying one upside-down is not always intended as an act of protest. According to the Flag Code, it can also be an official distress signal.
- The practice of draping coffins in the American flag is not reserved for military veterans and government officials. On the contrary, any burial may incorporate this tradition.



The American flag flies on the Howard Cantonment Area in front of the Heritage Center. It's one of two proudly flown at YPG. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

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Farewell town hall meeting for Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews

By Ana Henderson

During his final town hall meeting at Yuma Test Center, Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews presented an impressive amount of awards to civilian employees. The awards ranged from one Humanitarian Award, to Civilian Service Commendation Medals, Achievement Medals, Certificates of Achievement, Commander's Coins, and recognition awards for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 Years of Government Service.

One by one the civilians happily accepted their medals, pins, and certificates as well as a handshake from Matthews.

Matthews also said his farewells and introduced Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson, who will be taking over command of YTC on June 20.

attend Senior Service College at the Eisenhower School for Nation Security and Resource

Strategy. His farewell luncheon is 17 June at the Cactus Café from 1100-1230 and everyone is

invited. For tickets contact Emma Almindarez at extension 6226 or Sue Simpler at extension 2163.



Congratulations to Jeff Beck (left) and Sidney Okulovich (right) for an impressive 40 years in government service. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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Young red-tailed hawk rescued at YPG is released back into the wild

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is made up of 1,300 square miles, around the same size as the state of Rhode Island. Within those miles a variety of wild animals inhabit the land, one of which is the red-tailed hawk.

Recently a family of red-tailed hawks were nesting above the water tower near Laguna Airfield. Two young hawks fell from their nest. A member of the Military Free Fall School discovered them and called YPG's Wildlife Biologist, Daniel Steward.

"He was hopping around pretty healthy," said Steward of one of the creatures. Unfortunately, the other young hawk did not survive the fall.

The surviving hawk was approximately four to six weeks old, and found just before fledgling, which is when a young bird has developed preliminary flight feathers and is ready to leave the nest.

The team rescued the hawk

and looked to Linda Winchell, a Customer Service Representative at the Arizona Department of Game and Fish who also rehabilitates birds, for her skills.

"Our first priority is to keep it wild" explained Winchell. "But in this situation it was not safe for him to be there."

Winchell cared for the hawk, keeping him in a bird cage and feeding him animals he would find in the wild. After about four weeks of rehabilitating the hawk she saw indicators that it was time for him to go back into his natural habitat.

"He was getting nervous to have me by the cage and he was eating well."

Normally the team would re-release the hawk in the location where he was found, but since the area on the airfield was not a safe zone for the hawk they found another spot nearby.

"Looking at this area, its close

SEE **HAWK** page 8



As they opened the gate, he bounced once or twice before taking flight. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



Normally the team would re-release the hawk in the location where he was found but since the area on the Laguna Airfield was not a safe zone for the hawk they found another spot nearby, "We wanted to find someplace with a good wash, plenty of vegetation, ground squirrels, all kinds of prey animals here for him" explained Steward.

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COMMANDER

FROM PAGE 1

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. YPG testing has already achieved significantly increased distances in test fires conducted at both the proving ground and the nearby Barry M. Goldwater Range.

“Right now we are at twice the range of conventional artillery, and we’re looking to go way beyond that,” said Poppenberger.

The effort is called Extended Range Cannon Artillery (ERCA), and YPG conducts developmental testing of multiple facets of it, from the artillery shells to the longer cannon tube and larger firing chamber the improved howitzer will need to accommodate them. YPG’s ammunition plant has been instrumental in building multiple experimental formulations, shapes, and configurations for new propelling charges to accommodate



Two years into Col. Ross Poppenberger’s tenure as commander, YPG is heavily involved testing Extended Range Cannon Artillery (ERCA), an important part of the Army’s top modernization priority: long-range precision fires. “Our customers want to come to YPG because they know the test officers we employ have years of experience,” he said. “When they look at a piece of equipment, they’re not going to spend that program manager’s dollars trying to figure out how to test it.” (US Army photo)



Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark Esper visited YPG in the last week of November, where he paid particular attention to testing related to the Extended Range Cannon Artillery program, the Army’s top modernization priority. “The work that is happening here at Yuma by our military and a large cadre of civilians is critical to our nation’s security,” Esper said at a press conference with YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger at the conclusion of the visit. “It is important because we want to make sure we deploy weapons that work as we expect them to, that deliver to the Soldiers what they need and when they need it.”

the improved projectiles. Upon completion, the new systems will be integrated into both towed and self-propelled howitzers. It’s a dramatic effort, and one of many that Poppenberger must think long term about.

“My daily challenge is not to pull the lanyard on a howitzer, but how to position my test center well into the future and meet the needs of the Army,” he said.

This means planning for both the increased range space and air space use long-range munitions testing requires, as well as ensuring the proving ground’s infrastructure and test instrumentation across all commodity areas are evolving to meet the test customer of the future’s needs. For example, it is quite likely that other CFT programs like the next generation main battle tank

and Future Vertical Lift unmanned aircraft will make appearances here in the next several years.

YPG—with jurisdiction over all the Army’s extreme weather testing, and with testing conducted in Yuma, Alaska, and the tropics--has been the busiest of the Army’s six test centers for the past nine years, and Poppenberger is keen to maintain this excellence.

“It is a national treasure. Essentially every piece of kit that gets fielded to Soldiers goes through Yuma Proving Ground. We have some of the world’s finest engineers and technicians that deal with this equipment day in and day out.”

Poppenberger stresses that the most important element of the proving ground’s successful outcomes is the personnel who work here, oftentimes for entire careers.



ABOVE LEFT: Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan visited YPG in November, and met with YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger. "The Yuma Proving Ground is critical to our national defense," Shanahan said. "I witnessed first-hand the critical development and testing the Yuma team undertakes every day." ABOVE RIGHT: Poppenberger believes community relations is vitally important to ensuring the proving ground's long-term viability, and he has been an active presence in the community throughout his tenure. Here, he and Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force participate in one of Yuma's largest Veterans Day parades in recent years. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



"Our customers want to come to YPG because they know the test officers we employ have years of experience. When they look at a piece of equipment, they're not going to spend that program

manager's dollars trying to figure out how to test it. There are subject matter experts across all aspects, from spectrum management to indirect fires to air delivery systems."

One notable individual among many is YPG Technical Director Larry Bracamonte, who has impressed Poppenberger with his test-related insights as ERCA testing has ramped up.

"He has 33 years of experience with field artillery: that's more experience than any Soldier in the Army will ever have shooting artillery. When someone like him speaks about a piece of equipment, that is the voice of a lot of experience."

YPG's work with private industry customers has

increased during Poppenberger's tenure, a success story he says is in part thanks to organizations

like the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation and the Yuma 50 military support group.



YPG's work with private industry customers has increased during Poppenberger's tenure, a success story he says is in part thanks to organizations like the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation and the Yuma 50 military support group.

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HAWK

FROM PAGE 5

geographically,” said Steward. “We wanted to find someplace with a good wash, plenty of vegetation, ground squirrels, all kinds of prey animals here for him.”

The time had come to release the little guy. As soon as they opened the gate, he bounced once or twice and flew to a nearby tree and stayed on a low branch.

Everyone was elated to see the hawk in nature again.

“He did exactly what I expected him to do,” exclaimed Winchell. “I thought he would either bounce to get up off the ground or he would fly.”

“It’s a great thing to see, that’s what we ultimately want to see for all of our fledglings,” added Steward. “We want to see them become part of the population and the ecosystem.”

The hawk will most likely practice flying between branches in low areas for a few days until he is ready to fly. The hawk will not be tracked-- It’s on its own now.

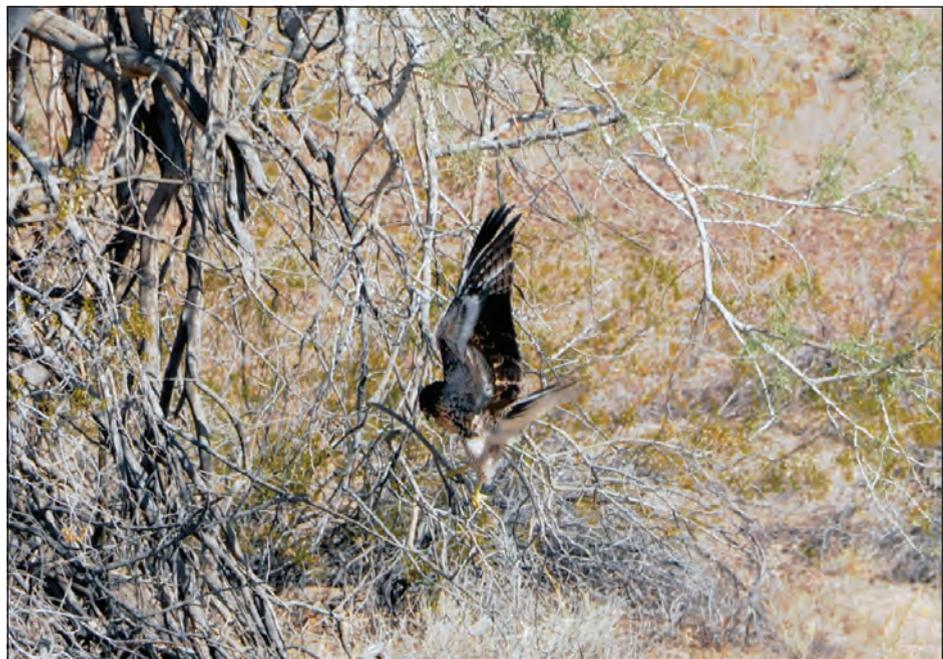
“It’s a disadvantage when a bird is not raised by his parents: in nature they will have that chance to be climbing the ladder of the trees while still being fed by the mother bird,” said Steward. “But he’s got a good head start. He’s strong, he just has to figure out where to perch, how to fly, and how to hunt.”

After successfully re-releasing the hawk into its new home, Steward explained that this type of work is what the team does as one of its many duties.

“We operate under an integrated natural resource management plan and one of the big parts of that plan is conserving migratory birds,” he said. “We try to avoid disturbing habitats and nests. If we do see animals having a problem, we try to intercede and rescue them.”



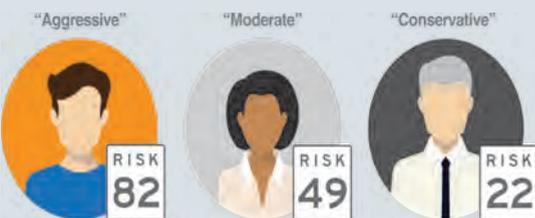
ABOVE: After release from the cage, he flew to a nearby tree and stayed on a low branch. “It’s a great thing to see, that’s what we ultimately want to see for all of our fledging’s, we want to see them become part of the population and the eco system” expresses Steward. BELOW: The hawk immediately perched on a branch. He will most likely practice flying between branches in low areas for a few days until he is ready to fly. The hawk will not be tracked. It’s on its own now. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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STOP CRASHING ON SOMEONE ELSE'S COUCH!

Mark your calendar for summer fun!

By Ana Henderson

School is officially out for the summer-- that means it's time for summer fun! Mark your calendar for upcoming events hosted by the YPG Chapel.



Kids who attended the Kid's Club at the Chapel had a great time at the end of the year party at the end of May. The Chapel has a variety of other activities to keep children busy this summer. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

Vacation Bible School

June 17-21, Mon.-Fri. 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Registration link: vbspro.events/p/ypg2019

Kid's Kamp

July 8-12, Mon.-Fri., for kids in grades second through sixth, contact meyingst@umail.iu.edu for information.

Sizing up drinking facts



Christopher Lee, Army Substance Abuse Program Manager, recently hosted a substance abuse training. Employees had the opportunity to take part in the Impaired Driving Experiential Activity with the Drunkbuster Kart and goggles. Lee spoke to the group about proper drink portions. Michael Henderson is shocked as Lee shows him the size of one drink portion. Luis Arroyo tried out the Drunkbuster Kart and goggles which simulate driving under the influence. A group of employees were surprised how impaired they felt wearing the beer goggles. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Asian American Pacific Islander food tasting event a tasty treat



May was Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month which recognizes the challenges faced by Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians and their vital contributions to the American story. This year the Resource Management office hosted a food tasting in the ROC Atrium and had a great turnout. (Photo by Casey Garcia)



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