

What we do here matters: New YTC Commander ready to go

By Mark Schauer

Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson assumed command of Yuma Test Center on June 20 from outgoing commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews in a ceremony held in front of YPG's Heritage Center Museum.

Hailing from the Army Evaluation Center (AEC) at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Johnson pledged to continue the work that has made YTC the Army's premier test center.

"I really believe in the mission," she said. "I believe we make a difference getting capabilities out to the warfighter and are a critical part of the process. What we do here matters."

Having served as the military deputy director in the Survivability Evaluation Directorate at AEC, Johnson helped create full-spectrum survivability test and evaluation requirements for Army programs. As such, she knew of YTC's reputation prior to being slated for command.

"I had never been to Yuma before, but I had heard of Yuma. I know all the kinds of work done here at a very top level."

Earlier this spring, Johnson spent a



In command: Incoming Yuma Test Center commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson passes the command guidon to YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson moments after accepting it from YPG commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (left). Looking on is outgoing YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews. (Photo by Casey Garcia)

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Farewell to Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews

By Ana Henderson

Friends, current and former colleagues and fellow Soldiers packed the Garden Café, along with YPG and YTC leaders, during the farewell luncheon for YTC Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews.

There we lots of laughs, hugs,

unique goodbye gifts and sincere speeches. Matthews' wife, Lt. Col. Martrell Matthews, even surprised her husband with a speech and gift.

The message was clear that Matthews has done a tremendous amount of good for YPG and YTC. He also became a friend to many.

The love from Matthews is mutual, "This has been the most rewarding assignment thus far in my 20+ years of military service. What we do here is vital to our Army and our nation. Keep up the great job!

To all my YPG/YTC families, Soldiers, civilians and contractors

it's truly been fun!"

Matthews will officially hand over command of YTC to Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson, on 20 June.

Matthews is leaving YPG to attend Senior Service College at the Eisenhower School for Nation Security and Resource Strategy.



ABOVE LEFT: YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger and Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson present YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews with a frame filled with photographs of his time at YPG. ABOVE CENTER: YPG Technical Director, Larry Bracamonte presents Matthews with a Desert Rat. The framed certificate signed with well wishes is a tradition at YTC. ABOVE RIGHT: Omar Silva, Chief of Range Operations and Training Division, presented Matthews with a plaque which displays the coin Matthews designed. BELOW: Friends, current and former colleagues and fellow Soldiers packed the Garden Café, along with YPG and YTC leaders, to say their goodbyes to Matthews. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

THE OUTPOST

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YPG commemorates the 75th anniversary of D-Day

By Mark Schauer

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Normandy Campaign that ran from June 6 to August 30, 1944, Yuma Proving Ground honors the men and women whose efforts at what is now YPG played a vital role in freeing Europe from Nazi tyranny during World War II.

Of the 20 divisions of Soldiers that trained within the California-Arizona Desert Maneuver Area established by then-Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, seven participated in the Normandy Campaign, including the 8th and 79th Infantry Divisions who trained at Camp Laguna. As winter came, these men helped repel Hitler's massive, but unsuccessful, last gasp offensive in the Ardennes Forest that bitterly cold winter. As German resistance melted away with the spring thaw, they liberated Nazi death camps inside Germany.

As American Soldiers liberated Europe, their advance was greatly aided by the M2 Treadway Bridge, the Army's first modern tactical pontoon bridge, which had been rapidly tested at Yuma Test Branch (YTB) prior to the invasion of Normandy. YTB engineers also developed the cantilevered delivery system for the more versatile and robust Bailey Bridge, which enabled Soldiers to construct the bridge on the friendly side of a gap and push

it across before engaging the enemy. By the end of the war, Allied combat engineers had erected thousands of these temporary bridges as retreating Axis forces destroyed permanent bridges behind them.

The men who engaged in these heroics were made, not born. The destinies of 20 divisions, more than 200,000 men, were forged in the massive Desert Maneuver Area that spanned Arizona, California, and Nevada. They trained in the blazing hot desert to prepare for combat in North Africa, but the Allies defeated the Nazis there before their training was finished. Nonetheless, it served them well in their deployment to Europe: more than one veteran of Desert Maneuver Area training said that the intense hardships of combat in Belgium's raw winter were less grueling than a summer in southwestern Arizona subsisting on two quarts of water per day.

YPG is the last active Army installation in the Desert Maneuver Area, and within its boundaries lies what once was Camp Laguna. Today, the camp's legacy lives on in a free Europe, not in architectural remains: all that is left on the desert floor are concrete pads, rock-lined pathways that were once flanked by hundreds of tents, and scattered detritus of camp life: badly rusted tin ration cans and cups, and the occasional glass Coke bottle.



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Of the 20 divisions of Soldiers that trained within the California-Arizona Desert Maneuver Area, seven participated in the Normandy Campaign, including the 8th and 79th Infantry Divisions who trained at Camp Laguna. (Army photos)

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Shootin' the Breeze It's Better to be Safe...

By David J. Horn

One of the not-to-be-ignored aspects of working out here at YPG, is our daily commute. Or, as what we fondly call it, the "YPG 500." It doesn't matter if you're from Yuma, the Foothills, or Wellton, there's no escaping the necessity of having to squeeze your vehicle into that long line of traffic heading north on Highway 95 that hopefully will get you, and all the rest of us, safely to our offices, cubicles, and tool boxes.

It doesn't take too many trips down that road, before you start seeing some odd stuff going on. Like, why is traffic so crazy in the mornings, but not so much in the evenings? I mean, wouldn't people be more excited about going home from work, than going in?

Anyway, back to the crazy stuff.

While it may not be possible to eliminate all the risks we face during our commute, we still need to at least try to reduce as many of those risks as we can.

We've all seen fast cars screaming by us in the left lane passing numerous cars, only to barge back into the right lane again at the last millisecond. I imagine the driver of that car is now thinking, "I bet all those slow-pokes, none of whom recognized my car, are now really impressed at the power of this vehicle and the precision of my driving skills." I don't know about

you, but that's not what I'm thinking. Hey impatient driver...just relax. Just stay with the flow and you'll get to work OK and things will be fine.

We also have a lot of folks that get really upset when they see a gap of 30 or 40 feet in front of the car ahead of them, where they feel that they just have to pass that car to fill that gap. Everyone in the vicinity has their safety put at risk, just because one person feels cheated out of not being able to start their day three seconds sooner. Hey...that gap in front of the car ahead of you is not a big deal. Don't let it bother you. You'll get to work just fine.

It's not about dissing slow drivers, or making up time because we got delayed by the train, or acting aggressively because somebody pulled a move we didn't like. The only thing that matters, is getting to work and back home again without something happening to you or someone else that really ruins everybody's day.

When I started working at YPG back in 1985, a group of us in the office had a little contest where we all shared our guesses when a four-lane road would be built from Yuma to YPG. It was my guess, that a four-lane would be put in right after I retired. Too bad I'm the only one left from that group, because I think I would have won. Anyway, in a few minutes, it will be time to drive home.

Military Spouse appreciation ceremony



The job of a military spouse is never easy and their efforts are not unnoticed. Recently, Yuma Proving Ground held its annual Military Spouse appreciation ceremony. One by one the spouses were called by name and given a certificate of appreciation from Col. Ross Poppenberger and Garrison Manager Gordon Rogers. The ladies were also given a red rose, gift bag and MWR provided a cake and hors d'oeuvres. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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COMMANDER

FROM PAGE 1

week at the proving ground visiting the vast test ranges and meeting the personnel that make testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal possible.

She said she was impressed by the breadth of YTC's instrumentation and the experience of the workforce.

"It's a tremendous workforce. There is so much expertise and specialization here. Even being familiar with the mission, talking with people about the work and innovation they are responsible for is beyond impressive."

A native of Texas, Johnson entered active duty in 1997. She served a tour in Iraq from 2004 to 2005, and was twice deployed to Afghanistan.

She holds a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University and is currently pursuing a second Master's in System Management.

"I believe my mission is to align with Col. Poppenberger's vision, remove obstacles for the workforce, and tell the world about all the great things we are doing here. I want to be a champion of Yuma Test Center."

Outgoing commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews thanked the YTC workforce for their devotion and stressed that the test center is in good hands with Johnson.

"YTC's successful outcomes are entirely

the result of the expertise, passion, and dedication that the workforce brings to all they do," he said. "I appreciate you all, and am confident you will support Lt. Col. Johnson and every commander who comes after

"I believe my mission is to align with Col. Poppenberger's vision, remove obstacles for the workforce, and tell the world about all the great things we are doing here. I want to be a champion of Yuma Test Center."



Earlier this spring, Johnson spent a week at the proving ground visiting the vast test ranges and meeting the personnel that make testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal possible. She said she was impressed by the breadth of YTC's instrumentation and the experience of the workforce. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

her in the same manner. Your support makes a big difference for our mission and for the Warfighter."

After accepting the command guidon, Johnson expressed her belief that YTC's best days are yet to come.

"We have capabilities no one else has. We are going to remain at the forefront of the Army's next wave of modernization efforts. More people are going to start tapping in on that and testing here."



After accepting the command guidon, new YTC commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson expressed her belief that YTC's best days are yet to come. "We have capabilities no one else has," she said. "YTC is going to remain at the forefront of the Army's next wave of modernization efforts." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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GEMS students get hands-on learning in YPG summer camps

By Ana Henderson

Launching rockets, performing ultrasounds, testing for microscopic germs and testing the abilities of remote control vehicles...these were all part of the Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science (GEMS) summer camp.

GEMS is part of the Army Outreach Program and is designed for students who are interested in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"Our intent with providing the GEMS program to the local community is to bring STEM exposure and

Enrichment" says Program Analyst and YPG STEM Outreach Administrator, Paula Rickleff.

Making the program fun and educational was not a problem for Rickleff and STEM Outreach Manager, Iris Espinoza. They had the help of local teachers, YPG Engineers and Soldiers to lead the group of approximately 70, sixth through eighth graders.



Up, up and away! GEMS students at YPG launched rockets from Cox Field early one morning as part of their STEM lab project. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

One morning the students gathered at Cox Field to launch rockets and Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger and YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews took part in the fun by launching their own rockets.

Launching rockets was just one of

the many labs during this free two week program hosted at YPG.

The hands-on learning laboratories including robotics, optical high-speed imaging, veterinary science and projectile catapults all of which touch the minds and imagination of these students,

"This will plant the seed to help educate and inspire our youth to consider occupations in STEM disciplines and possibly attract them to pursue STEM related employment with YPG, Department of the Army, or any Department of Defense organization" added Rickleff.



Launching rockets was just one of the many labs during this free two week program hosted at YPG. GEMS is part of the Army Outreach Program and is designed for students who are interested in STEM. The group of approximately 70, sixth through eighth graders took part in hands-on learning labs including robotics, optical high-speed imaging, veterinary science and projectile catapults (Loaned photos)

Youth Services summer camp is in session

By Ana Henderson

The YPG summer camp program is in full swing. The nine-week program has approximately 30 school ages kids.

The summer curriculum is made up of fun creative actives including swimming lessons, arts and crafts, sports, nature studies and gardening. Each week has a theme. The first week's theme was Wild West and the children made solar ovens, painted a western theme piece of art and churned butter.

Another perk of the program are the weekly field trips. The children will travel to the San Diego Zoo, the Science Center, iFly, Lego Land and also fun local spots like Waylon's Water World and Jump up.

Youth Services also offers Teen Tuesday for students in grades sixth through twelfth grade.

If you would like to know more about Youth Services contact, Youth Services Facility Director, Sommer Cloinger at 928-328-2860.



Aiden Cabalbag, summer camp student prepares his solar oven where he and his classmates will melt s'mores, it's just one of the many projects the children will work on this summer.



Youth Services teacher, Ms. Kassie Bedoya helps Chole Harris (left) and Hailey Henderson (right) assemble their solar oven project.



Students grab a quick snack before they prepare to paint a western themed piece of art.



Arihaan Shrestha, a summer camp student is happily shaking his container filled with heavy- whipping cream and salt. He's churning butter as part of the Youth Services weekly themed projects. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

YPG celebrates the Army's 244th Birthday

By Ana Henderson

Soldiers and civilians alike woke up bright and early on the morning of 13 June with one purpose—to celebrate the Army's 244th birthday.

At Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) that included a 5K competitive/fun run, flag raising and cake cutting ceremony. YPG celebrated one day early, 14 June is the Army's actual birthday.

The crowd made up of Soldiers and their families along with civilians ran alongside YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger, former YTC Commander Lt. Col. Timothy Matthews, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson. There were even some Great Danes who joined in on the fun.

Afterwards, Poppenberger and Nelson handed out metals to the winners of each running category.

The top overall winners in the men's and women's categories were Meteorologist, Gabriel Langbauer and Staff Sgt. Vencislava Watters, with the Airborne Test Force (ATF). Langbauer crossed the finish line at 19:55 minutes and Watters at 26 minutes flat.

Following the run, the YPG Color Guard made up from members of the ATF conducted the Flag Raising ceremony. The light breeze and overcast skies made for a scenic background for the flag as it billowed and slowly raised to the top of the pole.

The day's celebrations ended with the cake cutting at the Heritage Museum, which included the youngest and oldest soldier at YPG. The saber used to cut the cake belonged to Col. George W. Howard, the first commander of the Yuma Test Branch.



The YPG Color Guard made up from members of the Airborne Test Force conducted the Flag Raising ceremony.



The 5k run brought out the competitive spirit in everyone. Soldiers and civilians alike woke up bright and early on the morning with one purpose—to celebrate the Army's 244th birthday. The top overall winners in the men's and women's categories were Meteorologist, Gabriel Langbauer and Staff Sgt. Vencislava Watters, with the Airborne Test Force. Langbauer crossed the finish line at 19:55 minutes and Watters at 26 minutes flat. (Photos by Casey Garcia)



The cake cutting ceremony included the youngest and oldest soldier at YPG. The saber used to cut the cake belonged to Col. George W. Howard, the first commander of the Yuma Test Branch. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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Chaplain's Corner

Finding a source of strength

By Chaplin Ronald Beltz

There is a story about a man who is all-alone in a hotel room. The man is in a state of deep depression. He is so depressed that he can't even bring himself to go downstairs to the restaurant to eat.

He is a powerful man usually the chairman of a large shipping company but at this moment, he is absolutely overwhelmed by the pressures and demands of life... and he lies there on a lonely hotel bed far from home wallowing in self-pity.

All of his life, he has been fastidious, worrying about everything, anxious and fretful, always fussing and stewing over every detail. And now, at mid-life, his anxiety has gotten the best of him, even to the extent that it is difficult for him to sleep and to eat.

He worries and broods and agonizes about everything, his business, his investments, his decisions, his family, his health, even, his dogs. Then, on this day he hits bottom. Filled with anxiety, completely immobilized, paralyzed by his emotional despair, unable to leave his room, lying on his bed, he moans out loud: "Life isn't worth living this way, I wish I were dead!"

Then, he wonders, what God would think if he heard him talking this way. Speaking aloud again he says, "God, it's a joke, isn't it? Life is nothing but a joke." Suddenly, it occurs to the man that this is the first time he's talked to God since he was a little boy. He is silent for a moment and then he begins to pray. He describes it like this: "I just talked out loud about what a mess my life was in and how tired I was and how much I

wanted things to be different in my life. And you know what happened next? A voice!! I heard a voice say, 'It doesn't have to be that way!' That's all."

He went home and talked to his wife about what happened. He talked to his brother who is a minister and asked him, "Do you think it was God speaking to me?" The brother said, "Of course, because that is the message of God to you and every one of us. That's the message of the Bible. That's why Jesus Christ came into the world to save us, to deliver us, to free us, to change us and to show us that 'It doesn't have to be that way.' A few days later, the man called his brother and said, "You were right. It has really happened. I've done it. I've had a rebirth. I'm a new man. Christ has turned it around for me."

Well, the man is still prone to anxiety. He still has to work hard. But, now he has a source of strength. During the week, he often leaves his work-desk and goes to the church near his office. He sits there and prays. He says, "It clears my head. It reminds me of who I am and whose I am. Each time as I sit there in the Sanctuary, I think back to that day in that hotel room and how depressed and lonely and lost I felt and I hear that voice saying, 'It doesn't have to be that way.'"

YPG Health Clinic

Hours of Operation

- Monday – Friday 0730-1630
- CLOSED 1200-1300 for lunch (unless you have an appt)
- Saturday – Sunday/Federal Holidays CLOSED

Updates

- Part 1 Flight and Occupational Health Physicals by appt only.

• Part 2 Flight and Occupational Health Physicals are only available on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons by appt only.

• Tricare Prime enrollees are the **PRIORITY**

• Appointments for other Tricare non Prime enrollees are seen on a space-available only basis.

• All Tricare enrollees may use the Health Clinic Pharmacy.
*Availability of meds are based on formulary on stock.

• No Influenza or Smallpox vaccines available

Limitations

- Health Clinic does not provide urgent, weekend, or overnight care
- One provider assigned to YPG-HC
- Current PCS gains/loss may decrease ATC
- No current MOA/MOU with installation or other tenant units or civilian entities



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