

# The Outpost

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365

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## Maximum Impact



US ARMY PHOTO

In early March, YPG demonstrated a dramatic stride in artillery modernization during a demonstration attended by some of the Army's highest-ranking officials, as well as members of the local and national media. The visitors witnessed two separate test fires of both the Excalibur precision guided munition and the XM1113 rocket-assisted high explosive projectile from a Prototype 0 XM 1299 self-propelled howitzer. Both Excalibur projectiles achieved a 65 kilometer precision hit, as seen here. Please turn to page 6 for the full story.

## Hunters vital to YPG wildlife conservation efforts

By Mark Schauer

As a natural laboratory for testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has a vested interest in responsible stewardship of the land.

Though located in one of the nation's most extreme desert climates, the proving ground is still home to a vast diversity of wildlife, including Sonoran pronghorn, desert tortoises, and bighorn sheep.

YPG's environmental stewardship efforts have earned plaudits from within the Army and from agencies like the Arizona Department of Game and Fish. YPG officials are quick to note that the success of the installation's wildlife management program is in large part thanks to the steadfast support of area hunters and sportsmen.

"We get so much support from groups like the Yuma Rod and Gun Club and Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society for construction of wildlife water catchments and monitoring animal populations," said Daniel Steward, YPG wildlife biologist. "A lot of these things rely on volunteer labor to accomplish, and

it is our sportsmen who reliably help get these projects done."

Generations of Yuma-area sportsmen have hunted YPG's ranges—with over 1,200 square miles of land area, there is enough room to allow safe access to hunters.

"We have an obligation to have public use of some of our installation where it is not hindering our mission," said Steward. "The mission is always first, but where it is not a conflict we can bring in hunters."

Still, YPG's developmental test mission of virtually every piece of equipment a Soldier is likely to shoot, drive, or wear means that safety and security considerations make access here less liberal than on other public lands.

"We have restricted access because at YPG we are shooting things we have never shot before," said Steward. "We have safety buffer zones we have to observe for our tests. Periodically, if we have a test with a large safety buffer zone, we may have to close down specific hunting units."

YPG's hunting areas are divided into these small 'units' to ensure that any such closure is surgically

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# Technologies and Investments Directorate engineer serves as Soldier and civilian

By Ana Henderson

When Jonathan Olbert's time in the Army was up, he did not want to completely sever ties: he transitioned from active duty to an Army reservist. "You are leaving the only thing you have done as a profession and you kind of want to keeps ties to that," he explained.

For two years Olbert worked at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) as a test officer while continuing to serve the Army as a U.S. Army Reserve Engineer Officer. One day while working at YPG, then Capt. Olbert received a call from the Commanding Officer of his reserve unit.

"He said, 'You need to pack your bags, you are going to be in Iraq in two months.' It was a shocker, it's a lot to take in right away."

Olbert gives credit to his supervisor at the time, Dean Shimizu, and also the YPG Commander for reassuring him he was not losing his career at YPG. "Dean was very supportive and

he made sure I was not concerned about my position."

Any Soldier can be deployed, but as a reservist under stabilization orders it was unexpected.

The Army transferred Olbert to another unit. "When the 18th Airborne Corps needed an engineer to fill a construction position, they needed someone who was jump qualified."

Olbert is a Project Management Professional, has a civil engineering degree, a Masters in Engineering Management, and is Airborne qualified. All these factors made Olbert the perfect candidate for his position in his deploying unit.

As promised, Olbert deployed to the Middle East. His unit landed in Kuwait on Sept. 11, 2018. "It was an ironic date," he recalls.

Olbert severed in Kuwait and Iraq over the 12 months. "It was an incredible experience and opportunity. I was the Construction Effects Executive Officer for the Combined Joint Task Force for

Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR). We were the engineer headquarters element that controlled engineer operations throughout Iraq and Syria."

At any given time the coalition had between 120 and 180 ongoing construction projects on U.S. and Iraqi bases. "Our main goal was force protection, bunkers or blast protection at control points, guard towers that increase the survivability of troops."

When the news of the attack on U.S. forces by Iran aired, the news showed footage locations where CJTF-OIR Engineers had worked on force protection efforts to protect U.S. troops.

"You work hard day in and day out and wonder 'what impact did I have' and when something like [the attack from Iran] happens and you may have helped prevent soldiers from being injured."

Once returning home, this opportunity ended up giving Olbert the experience for the job he earned soon after returning to YPG. Olbert is now working in the Technologies and Investments Directorate, which is tasked with looking into the future and anticipating investment requirements for YPG's test centers.

"Future planning, and having a



LOANED PHOTO

For two years Jon Olbert worked at YPG as a test officer while continuing to serve the Army as a U.S. Army Reserve Engineer Officer. His colleagues and supervisors were supportive when he was unexpectedly deployed to the Middle East to serve in Kuwait and Iraq over 12 months in 2018-19. "It was an incredible experience and opportunity," he said. "We were the engineer headquarters element that controlled engineer operations throughout Iraq and Syria."

strategic level way of thinking. My skills from portfolio management and a field grade level of prioritization of resources play into that position I am at now."

Olbert continues to support both the missions of the U.S. Army Reserves as a Maj. and YPG as a civilian. He believes the mission and the relationships with colleagues motivates him to continue to serve.

"Where ever you go whatever you are doing, the people around you is what makes the experience positive. That was the case while I was over there and here at YPG. The people have made all the effort you put into the mission worth it."

## THE OUTPOST

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# Defense Department combating coronavirus

By Jim Garamone

The Department of Defense (DOD) is making plans to combat the coronavirus, DoD leaders said at a recent news conference.

For the past six weeks, defense leaders have been meeting to plan for any possible scenario with the virus that first surfaced in China.

"We've issued a variety of (memoranda) and directives advising the force on how to deal with coronavirus," said Dr. Mark T. Esper, defense secretary.

The DoD civilian and military leadership, including all the service secretaries and combatant command commanders, have worked together to ensure the department is ready for short- and long-term scenarios, domestic and international situations. Esper stressed commanders at all levels have the authority and guidance they need to operate.

"My number one priority remains to protect our forces and their families; second is to safeguard our mission capabilities and third is to support the interagency, whole-of-government's approach," said Esper. "We will continue to take all necessary precautions to ensure our people are safe and able to continue their very important mission."

Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said military research laboratories are working feverishly to try to come up with a vaccine.

DoD is communicating regularly with operational commanders to assess how the virus might impact exercises and ongoing operations around the world, the general said. An exercise in South Korea has been postponed, but Exercise Cobra Gold in Thailand is continuing.

Commanders are taking all necessary precautions, because the virus is unique to every situation and every location, Esper said. "We're relying on them to make good judgments," he said. As new issues come up, DoD planners will work with all to combat the virus' spread.

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Protect Yourself and Your Family

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick



- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and water



- Ensure all immunizations are up to date, including your seasonal flu shot

- Stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with Family members and pets



- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth



- Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable

- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash; cough/sneeze into your elbow if tissues are unavailable



- Create an emergency preparedness kit



TA-505-0320  
03/04/20

For more COVID-19 information:

<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/diseases/Pages/2019-nCoVChina.aspx>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Emergency Kit Checklist for Families:

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The Military Health System Nurse Advice Line is available 24/7 by phone, web chat, and video chat. Visit <https://www.health.mil/1-Am-A/Media/Media-Center/NAL-Day-at-a-glance> for more information.



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## Chaplain's Corner

# There is a battle going on within each of us

By Chaplain Maj. Ronald Beltz

Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote an unforgettable story about a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde. Most of you know the story well. Dr. Henry Jekyll was respected in his community--a gentleman in every respect. But Dr. Jekyll had some secret vices which he kept carefully hidden from public view. Thus Dr. Jekyll had a dilemma faced by some people today--he wanted to maintain his reputation in the community, but be free to practice the vices that he knew would be repulsive to his neighbors.

So Dr. Jekyll hatched a plan. Late at night in his laboratory he devised a mystical potion that would allow him to transform his physical features at will. In other words, after he drank this potion, he became a different person altogether. Thus he was able to move around town and practice his unsavory vices without his neighbors knowing anything about it. During the day, he was the amiable Dr. Jekyll, a credit to his community. At night he was transformed into a sociopathic monster called Mr. Hyde caring for no one at all and wreaking havoc everywhere he went.

Initially, Dr. Jekyll was able to control these transformations, but

such unrestrained evil could not be kept in check for long. One night in his sleep, without any intent on his part, he was transformed into the infamous Mr. Hyde. Even worse, the evil monster within began dominating his life and eventually took over completely. Dr. Jekyll disappeared completely; only Mr. Hyde was left.

Stevenson's point was that there is a battle going on within each of us. Each of us carries around within us a little of Mr. Hyde and if we do not pay constant attention to our character, we too, can be dominated by our lesser selves.

But why should this be? Only God can free us from the power of sin! That is the first thing we need to realize. Personal discipline is helpful, but there are many disciplined persons who are still captive to their sins. Good intentions are a starting point, but there is much time-proven truth in the adage that good intentions are the paving material for the road that leads to hell. There is a flaw in the fabric of human character that only God can mend. There is only one way that we shall ever be free from the sin that does so easily beset us, and that is to open ourselves to God's grace, His forgiveness, His love.

## HUNTING

FROM PAGE 1

targeted, not a wide swath of land well beyond the needs of hunter safety and mission security.

"It's kind of a balance between safety and security when we establish these hunting areas," said Steward. "They are in places that avoid our busy impact areas and where people can be relatively safe without being a security issue for our testing."

Steward says that the goodwill of YPG's hunting population is invaluable in preserving and perpetuating the installation's wildlife.

"Hunters have been helpful to our program: They help be our eyes and ears on the range. Under the North American model of wildlife management, fees that our sportsmen pay in large part fund all wildlife conservation efforts nationwide."

### Hunting at YPG

The biggest communication and administrative tool used is an online system called ISportsman, and the web address to YPG's is [www.yuma.isportsman.net](http://www.yuma.isportsman.net). A similar system is used to gain access to the Barry M. Goldwater Range, though YPG's procedure is more rigorous due to the post's primary purpose as a developmental test facility for military equipment as opposed to a bombing range.

"YPG's system is a little different than the Goldwater Range," said Steward. "To access YPG requires a

background check."

As such, hunters must submit their full names, driver's license number and state of issuance, and the last four digits of their Social Security Number. Steward stresses that all members of a hunting party coming within YPG's boundaries must undergo this step, even if they don't personally plan to participate in the hunt. Folks must also watch a range safety video and sign a hold-harmless agreement as part of the process. Upon completion of the background check, all members of the party will receive a free hunting permit.

Hunters must also register any and all weapons they bring onto YPG, from long guns and pistols to bows, whether they own the item or are borrowing it from someone else.

"If you're quail hunting and might use two or three different shotguns, or deer hunting with a rifle and a sidearm, you have to register them all," said Steward. "You can get an unlimited number of these free permits."

Most importantly of all, the final step once a hunter has acquired access and weapons permits is to call YPG's range control at the first moment of entry into YPG's boundaries.

"It's always important to call in for a range clearance any time you come to hunt on YPG," said Steward. "It is equally important to close your clearance when you depart the range. For safety reasons, it is absolutely vital that our range controllers be aware of your location and plans while here."

**THE OUTPOST**  
Groundbreaking test enables airborne troops to fight faster

By Mark Schauer  
The Yuma Air Depot is a major hub for the Air Force's 15th Air Force, which is responsible for the maintenance and repair of military aircraft. The depot is located in Yuma, Arizona, and is one of the largest and most complex of its kind in the world. It is a major center for the Air Force's maintenance and repair operations, and is a key part of the Air Force's readiness and support structure.

Progressive YPG Fire Chief lauds his people, seeks improvements

By Chuck Wollinger  
The Yuma Air Depot is a major hub for the Air Force's 15th Air Force, which is responsible for the maintenance and repair of military aircraft. The depot is located in Yuma, Arizona, and is one of the largest and most complex of its kind in the world. It is a major center for the Air Force's maintenance and repair operations, and is a key part of the Air Force's readiness and support structure.

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YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (right) visits with members of the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club at a recent meeting. "We get so much support from groups like the Yuma Rod and Gun Club and Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society for construction of wildlife water catchments and monitoring animal populations," said Daniel Steward, YPG wildlife biologist.

PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER





## Stars shine on YPG



PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

Maj. Gen. John George (left, foreground), Commanding General of the Combat Capabilities Development Command and Maj. Gen. Patrick Burden (center), Deputy Commanding General of Acquisition and Systems management for the Army Futures Command, visited YPG in early March to tour the proving ground's infrastructure, including the ammo plant and weapons maintenance facility. Here, test officer Casey Scharenbroich (right) discusses Extended Range Cannon Artillery testing with the visitors.

## Final Behind the Big Guns tour of the season at YPG



PHOTO BY CASEY GARCIA

The last of seven Behind the Big Guns tours came through YPG in early March, taking 55 visitors through parts of YPG rarely seen by the general public. Here, tour-goers try the remote operation capability of a Kineto Tracking Mount. "It's a huge draw," said Linda Morgan, Visit Yuma director. "People are so interested and supportive of the military and want to know what is going on." The highly successful tours are expected to resume in the fall.



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# Latest successful ERCA demo draws top brass

By Mark Schauer

It has become well-known that U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) testing actively supports six of the Army Futures Command's Cross Functional Teams (CFTs) building the Army's future force.

The immense size of YPG's range space, larger in area than the state of Rhode Island, makes the proving ground an ideal place for testing long-range artillery shells, which just happens to be the Army's top modernization priority.

The Army intends to field systems capable of accurately firing at targets 100 kilometers away in 2023, dramatically farther than the currently-fielded 155mm artillery round's maximum range of 35 km.

"It's the whole capability in 2023," said Brig. Gen. John Rafferty, Director of the Army Futures Command's Long-Range Precision Fire CFT. "It's the platform, the projectile, the supercharged propellant, and the course-correcting fuze."

In early March, YPG demonstrated a dramatic stride in achieving this goal in a demonstration attended by some of the Army's highest-ranking officials, as well as members of the local and national media who watched both in person and via video feeds at the Pentagon and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Among the numerous officials who travelled to YPG to witness the test were Army General Counsel James McPherson; Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Martin; Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General



PHOTOS BY MARK SCHAUER

From one of YPG's mission control rooms, visitors including, from left to right, Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General Joel Tyler; Brig. Gen. John Rafferty, Director of the Army Futures Command's Long-Range Precision Fire CFT; Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Martin; and Army General Counsel James McPherson watch the first of two Excalibur rounds strike a target 65 kilometers away.

Maj. Gen. Joel Tyler; Maj. Gen. Patrick Burden, Director of Ground Combat Systems for the Army Futures Command; and Rafferty.

The visitors witnessed two separate test fires of both the Excalibur precision guided munition and the XM1113 rocket-assisted high explosive projectile from a Prototype 0 XM 1299 self-propelled howitzer. Both Excalibur projectiles achieved

a 65 kilometer precision hit, and both XM 1113 projectiles achieved a 65 kilometer range. The performance of the XM 1299, outfitted with a 58 caliber tube on a PIM chassis with loader assist, was the centerpiece of the test.

In remarks to the media following the successful test fires, Rafferty indicated that autoloader capability currently under development will be

demonstrated in the XM 1299 next year.

"The autoloader will give us the ability to fire at a rate of six to 10 rounds per minute and deliver the volume of fire to create effective mass in large-scale ground combat," he said.

Martin discussed the ERCA's position in the large picture of Army modernization efforts and the



accelerated timetable these efforts are following.

“This particular capability, and all the other capabilities we are developing, are a full expression of rigor and analysis that we’ve done over the course of the past five years now-- all beginning with a study of warfare which allowed us to see the direction we needed to go, with the way that we needed to fight in the future that we envisioned,” he said. “That allowed us to see which capabilities we needed to field to become competitive in that environment, and so we are continually conducting exercises, operational tests, developmental tests and experiments against this concept and the environment that we envision, and we are continuing to look at these capabilities. Every single one of them will provide us over match in the end state over our adversaries.”

Tyler noted YPG testing’s importance to Army modernization efforts, and praised the steadfast support of the community for the proving ground’s mission.

“The relationship with the community is outstanding,” he said. “I have had the pleasure of being involved in many communities throughout a long Army career, and

I will tell you that the support we get from the Yuma community is just outstanding. I think the impact on the community is measured in the pride of place—in knowing that what we do here is important.”

Tyler also noted the cooperation of the Marine Corps and Air Force in sharing range space at the Barry M. Goldwater Range to accommodate ERCA-related test fires that exceed the 66 km. distance YPG can support.

“In conjunction with our partners at the Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and Luke Air Force Base that control the Barry M. Goldwater Range, we really see a Department of Defense approach in utilizing what resources we have to best effect and the best cost to the taxpayer. We’re leveraging off of each other’s capabilities and experience.”



Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General Maj. Gen. Joel Tyler (left) and Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Joseph Martin talk with media representatives following the successful demonstration. “In conjunction with our partners at the Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and Luke Air Force Base that control the Barry M. Goldwater Range, we really see a Department of Defense approach in utilizing what resources we have to best effect and the best cost to the taxpayer,” said Tyler.



US ARMY PHOTO

On March 6, YPG conducted two separate test fires of both the Excalibur precision guided munition and the XM1113 rocket-assisted high explosive projectile from a Prototype 0 XM 1299 self-propelled howitzer. Both Excalibur projectiles achieved a 65 kilometer precision hit, and both XM 1113 projectiles achieved a 65 kilometer range. The performance of the XM 1299, outfitted with a 58 caliber tube on a PIM chassis with loader assist, was the centerpiece of the test.



The performance of the XM 1299 self-propelled howitzer, outfitted with a 58 caliber tube on a PIM chassis with loader assist, was the centerpiece of the test.



# YPG's STEM program aims to inspire students

By Ana Henderson

There are two types of students, those who love math and science... and those that do not. The Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) program at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is trying to reach both of those types of students to expose them to how exciting a career in the STEM field can be and show them what opportunities are available.

Recently about 100 middle and high school students from Gila Visa Middle School and Cibola, Kofa, Yuma Catholic and San Luis High Schools visited YPG to get a glimpse of the work our engineers and Soldiers and everyone in between does and how it relates to the STEM field.

Artillery Test Officer Ashely Locketto who earned a Mechanical

Engineer degree spends her days overseeing artillery testing at YPG, "There is a lot of science in anything you do. You can be a welder or a gunner, you still have to know a lot of the math and the science background and apply."

Cibola student Abraham Flores-Cuen is already taking engineering and technical classes, "I thought it would be a good opportunity to see what kind of work engineers do behind the scenes beyond the paperwork. A lot of their work is more hands-on than people think."

He really enjoyed the instrumentation inspection demonstration which shows students how engineers inspect the inside of cannon barrels using high tech equipment.

Students also had the chance to learn about and see combat vehicles up-close, see a projectile fired from a howitzer and fire off a water balloon of their own. The students visited Air Delivery and tested out throwing mini-parachutes to see how they would land and take down drones using catapults.

These students had already expressed an interest in the field.

For those students who have yet



PHOTOS BY ANA HENDERSON

During the YPG STEM day students had a lot of hands-on opportunities, one of which was at the Air Delivery hanger where they tested throwing mini-parachutes to see how they would land safely.



Artillery Test Officer Ashely Locketto who earned a Mechanical Engineer degree spends her days overseeing artillery testing at YPG. Here, she's seen talking to students before firing an artillery round.

to discover the wonderful world of STEM, the U.S. Army's Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science (GEMS) program aims to enlighten them. Over the summer students will have hands-on projects such as shooting rockets, building robots, examining specimens and more science and math based projects.

Parents can log on to the website below and learn more about the program and the requirements for the summer GEMS program. Students must be entering 6th – 8th. <https://www.usaeop.com/program/yuma/>

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Info Page: <https://www.usaeop.com/program/yuma/>

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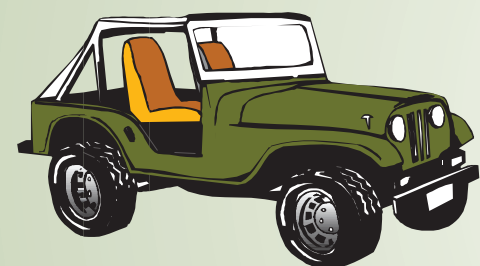
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PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

John Bacon (right), weapons maintenance test team lead, shows the weapons maintenance facility to Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark Esper (center) during a November 2018 visit as YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger looks on. The team works on numerous towed and self-propelled howitzers, along with hard mount firing stands throughout YPG's firing range.

# Weapons Maintenance Team helps keeps YPG mission rolling

By John Bacon

The mechanics of Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Weapons Maintenance Test Team include Army, Navy, and Marine Corps veterans, along with college graduate in mechanics and others with mechanical, electrical, and hydraulic backgrounds. Though a small section, their reach and efforts are boundless. They have a wide variety of workloads and skills, and average more than 50 work orders per week from weapons safety inspections to complete overhauls of weapons systems.

The team works on numerous towed and self-propelled howitzers, along with hard mount firing stands throughout YPG's firing range. Their skill set must be comprehensive, as they work on legacy systems dating as far back as World War II alongside developmental, prototype, and foreign systems where parts and manuals are not always available: When this happens, fabrication of parts and extensive practical knowledge in a variety of mechanical disciplines are vital. The team also maintains a large-inventory of YPG-owned howitzers that must be kept in ready shape, safe and available to support the test mission.

Work is performed in a time-critical environment where testing is rigorous. One minute a technician may be working on a simple brake job, then the next minute removing and rebuilding the complete recoil system of a howitzer. The team is always under

time constraints, as they are the last ones to touch a weapon prior to it going out to fire a test mission.

The Weapons Maintenance Test Team installs, troubleshoots, repairs and performs upgrades on computer software, and components. As well as a wide variety of electronical components and brushes. They also perform complete tear down of all howitzer hydraulic components for seal testing, evaluation of seals, rebuilding, and overhauling.

On any given day you can walk into the shop and see an assortment of task being completed, preventative maintenance, a gun mount or cannon assembly being removed and changed out, multi-meters and laptops plugged into the howitzer hydraulic component being rebuilt, or an entire weapon system being torn down to its trails or frame.

The Weapons Maintenance mechanics work under demanding time tables and all conditions, to ensure the test and program mission goals are met efficiently, safely and in a timely manner. These mechanics instill pride and professionalism in their job to ensure quality, safety and reliability. It is imperative they perform their tasks skillfully, detailed and selflessly to safeguard adequate test and reliability. Therefore if something goes wrong, it needs to be discovered here at YPG, in a controlled environment, versus on the battlefield where our Warfighters depend on the reliability and results every day.

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