

# The Outpost

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

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## Advanced running gear tested at YPG



YPG has been testing the Ground Vehicle Systems Centers Advanced Running Gear for potential use on the future NGCV Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle. Turn to page 6 for more photos and details. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

## YPG's vital mission continues despite COVID-19 fears

By Mark Schauer

From the beginning of the nation's mass mobilization to arrest the spread of the COVID-19 virus on March 16, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger emphasized that the safety and security of YPG personnel was the highest priority of the proving ground's leadership, and that YPG's vital mission in support of the warfighter would continue.

"YPG will remain open and conduct business as applicable given the constraints outlined in senior-level guidance," he said. "Although we will use

SEE **FEARS** page 3

Coronavirus'  
impact on YPG  
/Page 4



YPG's rain day  
aftermath  
/Page 8



Sexual Assault  
Awareness Month  
/Page 11





# Gold Star Families: Survivors find easier access to Army installations

Certain Gold Star and next-of-kin survivors are expected to find it easier to visit Army installations since a new process went into effect in January.

The new survivor's access policy allows qualified survivors to get through gate security more easily and travel on post without an escort to attend events, view memorials, receive services and similar activities using their survivor's access card.

"The Army values people, especially our Gold Star spouses and family members," said Lt. Gen. Douglas Gabram, commanding general, U.S. Army Installation Management Command. "This change allows them to more easily receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled, and helps enable them to remain connected to the Army."

Eligible survivors are those who



meet the criteria to receive the Gold Star lapel button or Gold Star Next-of-Kin Lapel Button, including widow or widower, parent, child, stepchild, child through adoption, brother, half-brother, sister and half-sister.

Eligible survivors may apply for and receive a survivor's access card

through the Army's Automated Installation Entry (AIE) system at their local garrison. Installations without AIE will use DA Form 1602 for survivor's access.

Among the services available to Gold Star spouses and next-of-kin family members is the Army Survivor Outreach Services program, which provides dedicated and

comprehensive support through a network of civilians serving as advocates for survivors. SOS staff can assist survivors to access benefits available to them at their local installation, such as career and financial counseling.

To track survivors' feedback on the new process, the Interactive Customer Evaluation survey added new questions to help determine customer satisfaction with outreach efforts.

"The Army honors our surviving Family members by ensuring their access to our installations and Army-led joint bases," said IMCOM Provost Marshal Col. Kevin A. Comfort.

IMCOM is directing policy compliance and training for its 75 garrisons and installations.

The new process resulted from Section 626 of Public Law 115-232, the John S. McCain National

Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. The law recognizes survivors as having a valid requirement for long-term, unescorted access to Army installations.

Survivor's access cards will be consistent across the Army and will be valid for three years. DOD leaders are determining policy to provide reciprocity for survivor's cards across all services.

For more information on Survivor Outreach Services, visit <https://www.armymwr.com/programs-and-services/personal-assistance/survivor-outreach>.

## THE OUTPOST

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The new survivor's access policy allows qualified survivors to get through gate security more easily and travel on post without an escort to attend events, view memorials, receive services and similar activities using their survivor's access card. (Army Photos)

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## FEARS

FROM PAGE 1

extreme caution, implement better hygiene practices, and practice social distancing, we will remain open and do the hard work we do every day.”

The YPG workforce met the opening weeks of the panic with calm, flexibility, and creativity, and their resiliency was readily apparent. In the first week, 30% of the workforce utilized telework, a number that increased to 40% by the second week. Increased hygiene and social distancing measures were implemented among those personnel for whom telework wasn't practical or possible. Soldiers were restricted to local leave only, and civilian personnel were encouraged to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and not travel outside of the local area.

“We're working as hard as we can to keep people safe without losing sight of our mission,” said Jeff Rogers, Air Combat Systems Director.

In-person meetings were limited to 10 participants or fewer, with six feet of distance between those physically in attendance. Phone bridges and video teleconferencing were utilized to minimize the number of in-person participants. On the range, weapons operators and other test personnel who routinely hold after-action huddles at the end of the day conducted the briefs by email instead. Lunchrooms in workshops were empty.

“We're keeping the lunchrooms clear,” said Wayne Schilders, weapons operation chief. “Most of our guys like eating outside in the nice weather, anyway.”

In the first week, there was an 18% decline in expected versus actual tests conducted at the proving ground, largely as a result of a Department of Defense-wide official travel restriction that prevented



“We are open for business and continue to conduct testing,” said YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger. “Once we are beyond this hopefully short-term crisis, our program customers will still have a lot of work they will be counting on us to perform.” He reiterated the message during an interview with the local NPR radio station via a phone interview. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

testers from other parts of the country from journeying here. To make up for the shortfall, wherever possible YPG planners took the opportunity to move ahead with work such as routine lot acceptance tests of already-fielded munitions.

“We're trying to execute programs that were in the queue as lower priorities to fill any gap,” said Omar Silva, Range Operations and Training Division Chief.

YPG's leadership emphasized that the vital work in support of Army modernization efforts would ramp back up in due course.

“We are open for business and continue to conduct testing,” said Poppenberger. “Once we are beyond this hopefully short-term crisis, our program customers will still have a lot of work they will be counting on us to perform.”

“Our number one priority is our workforce,” added Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson. “Without our workforce, we can't meet our mission. It's in times like these that you define for your personnel how you feel about them through your

actions.”

So far as the general public was concerned, disruptions such as the temporary closing of the Heritage Center Museum and the cancellation of various Yuma-based community events that YPG routinely participates in, such as the Yuma Air Show and Yuma's Military Appreciation Day, were sorely noticed.

Efforts to prevent COVID-19 transmission also impacted the workforce's and post residents' community life. The post library and gymnasium closed for the

duration of the crisis, and all restaurants on post closed dining rooms and converted to carry-out orders only. YPG personnel looking forward to the post's Women's History Month luncheon, in which Deputy Mayor Karen Watts was to have served as keynote speaker, were disappointed in its cancellation after months of planning. Likewise those looking forward to the annual best pie competition for Pi Day, the celebration of the mathematical constant so important to technical work, which was also cancelled.

Though these are difficult times, Yuma County and Arizona's intense efforts to halt the spread of the virus that began prior to even a single presumptive case being identified in Yuma County puts the community in a strong position to weather the storm, provided hygiene and social distancing guidance is followed.

“I truly believe in the processes the Centers of Disease Control have been advocating,” said Poppenberger. “These measures are in place to buy us time in developing solutions to this problem. We will carry on and get through this together.”

Links to the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 and the federal, Department of Defense, State of Arizona, and Yuma County efforts to arrest the spread of the virus can be found at:

<https://www.atec.army.mil/ypg/corona.html>



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# Army Education Center Open by Appointment Only

**By Lindsay Kelly, Test Examiner/  
Multi-Use Learning Facility  
Coordinator, IMCOM**

We understand that this is an unsettling time as the ongoing news unfolds surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19) and we extend our sympathies to the affected communities and individuals.

Like many of you, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Army Education Center has been closely monitoring COVID-19 updates and the effect on our Service Members (SM), community, employees, and visitors. Our priority is to keep you, your families, and our employees safe.

Following guidance from the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our

employees are instructed on proper hand washing and staying home if they feel sick or if returning from an area that poses a COVID-19 exposure risk.

The Multi-Use Learning Facility (MLF) and Army Education Office will be open upon appointment only. We will continue to provide services via email and telephone.

Scheduled Army Personnel Testing will continue as planned and all future testing will continue to be conducted one SM at a time until further notice.

Out of the respect for our YPG and Yuma communities, not to mention global one, social distancing is encouraged and limits occupants in the computer and testing rooms. Please contact us for location options

to complete new hire/annual training. Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, if you have testing or training to be completed and feel sick or have recently traveled, please reach out to us to reschedule.

Unfortunately, our previously scheduled visit for 30 March from an Army Education Counselor with live Credentialing Assistance Program briefing has been postponed.

The YPG Army Education Center's commitment to Service Members and their Families is at the heart of our center and I look forward to continuing our services remotely as we navigate through these uncharted days together. Stay safe and take care of one another.

Email: Lindsay.M.Kelly5.ctr@mail.mil

Office: 928-328-3926



The Army Education Center initiated new operating procedures, including heightened disinfection of our computer stations, office equipment, and shelves in the Multi-Use Learning Facility and the Army Personnel Testing office. Disinfecting wipes will also be provided upon your prior to and/or at the conclusion of use. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

## Commissary changes implemented to stop the spread of germs



To prevent customer-to-customer spread of germs, commissary cashiers no longer handle patron ID cards. Instead, customers will be asked to scan their own ID. Cashiers can use the handheld scanner if available or have the customer scan their own card. Where available shoppers will use the self-checkout lanes. (Photo by Mike Cerny, DeCa)

**By Kevin L. Robinson, DeCa  
Public Affairs Specialist**

The Defense Commissary Agency announced several operational policies to help stores better serve customers during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.

- A 100-percent ID card check at all commissaries, so that only authorized customers – this includes disabled veterans with VHIC cards – will be able to shop. While this policy is in effect visitors will not be allowed to enter the commissary..

- To prevent customer-to-customer spread of germs, commissary cashiers no longer handle patron ID cards. Instead, customers will be asked to scan their own ID.

- All commissaries will suspend early bird shopping to allow more time to clean and restock the store.

- In a move to lessen panic-buying, the agency instructed its store directors worldwide to use their discretion in placing the shopping limits necessary to help maintain stock availability.

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## Shootin' the breeze If The Shoe Fits...

By David J. Horn

One of the first things visitors notice about Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), is our dress code. While some high-heeled Goody-Two-Shoes city slickers may scoff at the fact that nobody around here wears a tie, you can bet your boots that we are properly outfitted to do our jobs. It's just that our dress code is heavily influenced by safety on the job.

Yep, and one of the most important parts of our safety gear, is our safety shoes. Whether they're the big ones that look like combat boots, or the smaller ones that look like sneakers, the goal is the same...provide protection in accordance with OSHA Standard 1910.136(a) to keep us on our toes, and our toes on us.

And, you may be interested to know that safety shoes are designed for all sorts of different purposes, from Class 1 level toe protection (where the shoe may have a little green triangle on it), to the shoes that have a little fir tree symbol on them because they're designed to provide protection against chain saws. And the best part is, because some of us are on a shoe-string budget, when we need a new pair our

employer helps foot the bill!

For almost everyone, it's a quick and easy step to go from your street shoes over to wearing your safety shoes. For others, their day can get off on the wrong foot and get a little awkward. Visitors that show up to the big maintenance shop without safety shoes who need to walk across to the hazardous side of the yellow lines, have to strap on protective duck-feet looking things over the top of their street shoes. Managers over there really put their foot down to enforce that safety rule. It's just my opinion, but those duck-feet looking things do not look cool. I've never known anyone who had to strap them on twice.

After a long day of staying safe on the range, the thing I look forward to the most, is taking my safety shoes off when I get home. Before I moved to the desert and started working at YPG, I had no idea how soaked in sweat your socks and shoes could get. Anyway, time to slip into my flip-flops, pour myself a nice cool beverage and maneuver my way past the coffee table to get to the door to the backyard and ....BAM!!!...OUCH!!!!

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# Advanced running gear tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

By now, it is widely known that U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is at the forefront of testing for the Army's top modernization priority, long-range precision fires.

In supporting most of the Army Futures Command's cross-functional teams, however, YPG has also been a vital element in testing for the Army's next priority, the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle (NGCV).

Since last May, YPG has been testing the Ground Vehicle Systems Centers (GVSC's) Advanced Running Gear (ARG) for potential use on the future NGCV Optionally Manned Fighting Vehicle (OMFV). The ARG system is using an existing Bradley Fighting Vehicle as a surrogate test platform. A robust suspension system is vital for a vehicle that tips the scales at more than 40 tons, and YPG has unparalleled test expertise and

hundreds of miles of road courses of various degrees of ruggedness that closely simulates what a Soldier might experience in theater. The novel track and suspension system has already yielded vital insights in evaluations done here.

"We're doing a proof of concept test for the road arms, road wheels, and track tensioner for the vehicle," said Jade Janis, test officer. "The intent is to improve the ride quality and durability."

The new running gear also provides more ground clearance and increased transportability and survivability, boasting an adjustable ride height that makes it easier to load on a trailer or navigate beneath bridges or other low-hanging obstructions. It also has a wider track than the currently fielded Bradley, AMPV and PIM platforms.

"The wider track should assist with soft soil mobility," said Janis. "The wider track results in less ground



YPG has been testing the Ground Vehicle Systems Centers Advanced Running Gear for potential use on the future NGCV Operationally Manned Fighting Vehicle. The ARG system is using an existing Bradley Fighting Vehicle as a surrogate test platform. (Photos by Mark Schauer)





During performance testing, the evaluators collect roughly 100 channels of data, including the displacement and temperature of each road arm as they are put through their paces.

pressure, so the vehicle is less prone to getting stuck in soft soil.”

During performance testing, the evaluators collect roughly 100 channels of data, including the displacement and temperature of each road arm as they are put through their paces. The testers monitor if the system deteriorates through use, and try to discern a trend that will help estimate the

normal rate of deterioration. As it runs, the exact location and terrain conditions of any possible anomaly can be identified.

“If you have a failure, you can narrow down which part of the course and when the incident occurred,” said Janis. “All of the road courses we have are characterized with a laser.”

With performance testing nearing

completion, next on tap is multiple months of endurance testing in which the running gear will be subjected to use across thousands of road miles of YPG’s rugged terrain. By running simulated missions across road courses featuring various conditions, from paved to gravel to punishing desert washboard that severely rattle vehicles, test-vehicle operators continually verify the running gear’s

performance.

“There are a few target areas the suspension system is designed to improve on, one being ride quality to make sure the Soldiers aren’t negatively affected by driving across rough terrain for long distances,” said Janis. “Another thing is reducing maintenance times to be able to get the vehicle out in the field faster and keep it in the field longer.”



“We’re doing a proof of concept test for the road arms, road wheels, and track tensioner for the vehicle,” said Jade Janis, test officer. “The intent is to improve the ride quality and durability.”



# YPG's testing comes to a halt due to heavy rains

By Ana Henderson

With clouds looming over Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) and meteorologists forecasting heavy rains, YPG's Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger suspended testing operations for all non-emergency personnel on the morning of March 12.

While this move was not unprecedented-- in 2010 operations were suspended for three days due to heavy rains-- this action does not happen often.

YPG's command takes the mission of testing virtually every piece of equipment used by the Warfighter seriously but they also take the safety of their personnel seriously.

The decision proved to be the best. Once the storm moved through YPG's range, the moderate to heavy rainfall caused washes to run, collapsed dirt and asphalt roadways and pushed

debris in the roadways. Running washes and flooded roadways are always a top concern at YPG when heavy rain is forecasted. Most of the roads on the range are dirt roads.

YPG's Meteorology team reported up to two and a half inches in parts of the installation.

Shearwater Mission Support had a full crew working on repairing the damage,

"We went out on loaders and started pushing material around but it got so wet we had to be pulled off of it and come back Monday" described Heavy Equipment Operator, Tony Burrell.

Burrell who has worked at YPG for 20 years remembers the extreme flooding of 2010 and was glad preventative action was taken,

"The situations was about the same this time but a little worse in 2010 because people could not get across Aberdeen Road."



Once the storm moved through YPG's range, the moderate to heavy rainfall caused washes to run, collapsed dirt and asphalt roadways and pushed debris in the roadways. YPG's Meteorology team reported up to two and a half inches in parts of the installation. (Loaned photos)



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# Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

By Arlene Gentry, YPG Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

This year marks the 19th Anniversary of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). The 2020 SAAPM theme is "Protecting Our People Protects Our Mission."

Since 2014, the Department of Defense (DoD) has provided strategic-level sexual assault prevention guidance designated to ensure the DoD executes proactive and comprehensive sexual assault prevention programs to enable military readiness and reduce (to eliminate) sexual assault from the military. The Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, known as SHARP, exists so the Army can prevent sexual harassment and sexual assaults before they occur. Proactive steps require a personal commitment from both civilian and military members.

## Together, we can commit to:

- Reducing the stigma of reporting
- Protecting the victim
- Increasing prevention, investigation, prosecution and victim capabilities
- Increasing training and resources



• Refining and sustaining response capability

## What is sexual assault?

Sexual Assault is a crime. The DoD defines sexual assault as intentional sexual contact, characterized by the use of force, physical threat or abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Consent should not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance. Additionally, consent is not given when a person uses force, the threat of force, coercion, or when the victim is asleep, incapacitated, or unconscious. Sexual Assault includes rape, non-consensual sodomy (oral

or anal sex), indecent assault (e.g., unwanted and inappropriate sexual contact or fondling), or attempts to commit these acts. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender, spousal relationship, or the age of the victim.

## I have been sexually assaulted. What should I do?

If you have been sexually assaulted or think you have been, go to a safe location away from the perpetrator. If you want to talk with someone or want assistance, you have individuals who are ready to help. Make sure you understand the difference between a restricted and unrestricted report so that those you

reach out to will understand your needs and can best assist you.

## Restricted Reporting (confidential):

Let's you tell specific people (SARC, VA, Healthcare Provider) about the assault without triggering an official investigation

Unrestricted: Victims are entitled to, a military protection order, legal advice, Expedited Transfer (military only), and Law enforcement investigation into the incident.

## Who can make a restricted report?


Restricted Reporting is available only to military personnel of the Armed Forces, including members on active duty and reserve component provided they are performing Federal Duty. Members of the Reserve component not performing Federal Duty are not eligible. Retired members of any component, dependents, and DoD civilian employees are not eligible. However, those not eligible can seek assistance with Amberly's Place, located in Yuma at (928) 373-0849.

24/7 YPG SHARP Helpline: (928) 920-3104

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## COVID-19 UPDATE

**The YPG Fitness Center  
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**We apologize for any  
inconvenience.**



## COVID-19 UPDATE

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further notice.**

**We apologize for  
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**Until further notice, all MWR dining  
facilities will be open for call-in  
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closed for the duration of the crisis.**

**We appreciate your cooperation.**

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**Per new Defense Health Agency guidance regarding social distancing and COVID-19,  
routine care such as well child and adult physicals will now be deferred to a later date.  
All appointments will be triaged to determine if patient needs can be addressed virtually.  
Virtual appointments can be booked with the clinic directly at (928) 328-2666.**



If you have any questions regarding COVID-19  
please call the Army COVID-19 information hotline:  
**1-800-984-8523**

If you have a medical emergency, dial 911

