

The Outpost

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

VOLUME 70 NO. 10 MAY 24, 2021

New commander at Special Operations Aviation Command Unit

By Mark Schauer

The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command held a change of command ceremony at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) on May 17 with Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Jones assuming command of the Yuma Flight Detachment from Capt. Jarod Steen.

The flight detachment has supported training operations of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Military Free Fall School (MFFS) at YPG since 2014. The MFFS has utilized the proving ground's vast ranges to train thousands of the military's most elite paratroopers since opening in 1996.

Jones assumes the post as the detachment's third commander. The detachment safely flew in excess of 2,000 flight hours during Steen's tenure, which earned high praise.

"If I had to describe him in three words, I would say dedicated,



The Special Operations Aviation Command at Yuma Proving Ground welcomed new commander, Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Jones during a small change of command ceremony May 17. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

humble, and innovative," said Maj. Bryan Pierce, company commander. "During his tenure as the detachment commander, the

unit maintained an over 98% mission success rate with a reputation known coast to coast."

Jones said he is ready to hit the ground running.

"It's an honor to command here," he said. "I've spent the majority of my career working in small groups and small units. I've witnessed firsthand how great things often come from small packages."

The flight detachment maintains and flies the C27J, formerly used as a niche cargo plane to supplement the larger C-130. The aircraft was extensively tested at YPG prior to being fielded and is regarded by many as a high performance aircraft. It achieves altitude more quickly than the aircraft formerly used to support the MFFS prior to the creation of the flight detachment, and also accommodates two to three times as many jumpers at a time, which has contributed to a significant expansion of MFFS training opportunities in recent years.



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Soldier spotlight

By Ana Henderson

Army Staff Sgt. Charlie Brooks is currently serving at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) as a Special Operations Combat Medic for the Military Free Fall School.

Brooks joined the U.S. Army in 2008 and has served overseas in Germany and in the states in Washington and currently in

Arizona. During the last 12 years he has deployed to Afghanistan, Korea, and Thailand.

In his spare time, Brooks is a volunteer for the American Red Cross and recently organized a blood drive at YPG. He's also an avid outdoorsman. Brooks is married to Amber and they have two small children.



Army Staff Sgt. Charlie Brooks is currently serving at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground. (Loaned photos)



The Outpost

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Commander presents West Point certificate



Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Patrick McFall attended Cibola High School's senior award night May 13, to present certificates of appointment to two students accepted to service academies. Juan "Johnny" Sierra, will attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, and Liam Hoffmeyer, has received a letter of assurance from the United States Air Force Academy. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

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Health Clinic expands services to better care for community

By Ana Henderson

The Yuma Proving Ground Health Clinic has recently made numerous improvements that are going to make treating the community much more efficient.

The largest investment is the new, much more capable x-ray machine, according to Maj. Joshua Chase, the YPG Health Clinic officer in charge (OIC).

“It was a culmination of more than two years of effort to upgrade our 12-year-old machine to our fully digital machine,” he explained.

Clinic personnel can now perform x-rays to detect sprains or broken bones, and chest x-rays to assess, diagnose, or rule out illnesses.

The x-ray machine comes in handy for occupational health assessments and allows the clinic better ability to assess and treat foot and back injuries, such as those that can occur to students of the Military Free Fall School, without having to refer to off-post radiology services.

Clinic administrators are working on getting accessories for the machine that will increase capabilities.

The digital machine can interface with MHS GENESIS, the new

electronic medical record system, and the images can be accessed at other Department of Defense (DoD) medical centers.

Adding to the expanded diagnostic tools, health clinic personnel now have two new machines to provide on-site laboratory results.

In the past, specimen samples were sent to a laboratory in Yuma resulting in a waiting period of several days for the results.

“There are certain tests that by the time we get the results they are no longer useful,” said Chase, citing the flu as an example. “By the time you get the flu results, it’s either recovered or too late to take Tamiflu.”

The swab rapid tests eliminate that issue and provide solid data for diagnosis and treatments of Respiratory Syncytial Virus, flu and strep throat.

“It allows us to distinguish between conditions that have very similar symptoms,” said Chase.

In addition, the clinic now has a blood glucose meter and urine pregnancy test capability.

After a year and a half, the clinic fully transitioned to using MHS GENESIS in April.

The transition began with several DoD medical facilities on the west coast and will continue until all DoD medical facilities have transitioned to the new record system.

Once complete, Service Members’ medical information will be easily transferable to other medical facilities in DoD and also the Department of Veterans Affairs once the Service Member transitions out of the military.

“It makes it easier for the patient for continuity of care across the services,” said Chase.

The benefit locally is that the clinic can send prescription orders directly to the Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma pharmacy as well as other pharmacies in Yuma.

Using MHS GENESIS to fill prescriptions has affected the speed of how prescriptions are filled because the system verifies a multitude of information. Due to the added time, using the YPG drive-thru to fill prescriptions became inefficient and was closed on May 14.

Still, Health Clinic Non-Commissioned OIC Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Bray said the clinic’s prescription fill time is relatively quick.

“When you talk about medical treatment facilities, 25-30 minutes is a quick turnout,” he said.

Patients can log on to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal to request a refill and pick up their medication at the clinic once it’s ready.

In addition, to expanding diagnostic services, the clinic has a few procedural changes.

In person appointments are available and patients are still able to use the virtual visit format.

“We will always have virtual,” Chase explained. “That is one of the initiatives of the Defense Health Agency.”

The clinic has increased the number of phone lines to four with two lines dedicated to advice lines and two for appointment scheduling.



Radiology Technician Spec. Alex Scarbrough inspects the new digital x-ray machine at the Yuma Proving Ground.

Staff also answer phones during the clinic’s lunch hour, meaning a live person will be answering phone calls between 7:30-4:30 p.m.

Overall, clinic personnel are looking forward to better serving their community.



Clinic Medic Spec. Kiley Keswick is now able to test for various illnesses using two newly acquired specimen test machines at the Yuma Proving Ground Health Clinic. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

U.S. Army YPG Health Clinic services

- Primary Care
- Flight Medicine
- Occupational Health
- Immunizations
- Radiology
- Pharmacy
- Women’s Health
- Referral Management
- Medical Records
- Industrial Health
- Preventive Medicine
- Medical Supply
- Trauma/First Aid Training
- Drop-zone coverage
- Physical Therapy
- Behavior Health

Appointment line:

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COVID numbers continue to fall

Arizona passes three million mark in vaccine doses administered

By Mark Schauer

The end of the COVID-19 pandemic was in sight in early May, with new cases plummeting and anti-COVID vaccines widely available in the local area.

As of May 13, Arizona averaged 649 new cases per day. More than three million Arizonans had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine, and greater than 2.5 million of those were fully vaccinated.

In Yuma County, the daily number of confirmed new cases tended to be in the single digits most days. The percent positivity rate of COVID-19 tests, which had exceeded 30% during the worst days of the pandemic, was now less than 1%.

Despite the dramatic gains in defeating the pandemic, Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) senior leaders still urged caution.

"COVID is still active, and we have to keep being safe so we can do our

mission," said Col. Patrick McFall, YPG Commander. "We are trying to get back some form of normalcy—it's going to be slow, but it is something we are talking about every day."

COVID vaccines were still widely available on post, even to those who initially opted out of receiving one.

"We have administered approximately 1,200 doses across the community," said Maj. Joshua Chase, Officer in Charge of the YPG Health Clinic. "We have plenty of doses available for all Tricare beneficiaries, Department of the Army Civilians, and certain eligible contractors. If you were previously offered one and declined and changed your mind, you are still eligible. We want to make sure we put these to the best use possible and get them in arms."

"We have vaccines to give, if you're interested," said McFall. "Regardless of who you are on this post, if you want a vaccine, I'm here



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Health Clinic personnel have administered approximately 1,200 COVID vaccine doses across the YPG community during pop-up clinics in the last few months. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

to support you."

McFall emphasized that receiving a COVID-19 vaccine was still completely optional, but touted the benefits the vaccines have shown to date.

"From my perspective, I have seen that the COVID numbers have been going down," said McFall. "Do I think there is a correlation to the vaccine being given to the public? The data says yes."

As the COVID numbers continued to decline, the normal routines of post life returned. For the first time since 2019, YPG's Kahuna Lagoon Swimming Pool was open to post residents, with soft openings on successive Friday afternoons in May leading up to a grand opening bash with live music and free refreshments scheduled for Saturday, May 22. The children's splash pad outside the Desert Oasis Community Center reopened on 14 May, albeit with some COVID restrictions.

"What I see happening over the next month or so is more back to normal," said Ron James, garrison manager. "We still have some tables blocked in our food facilities to comply with COVID restrictions, but as COVID continues to dwindle we will continue to expand seating."

Likewise, several satellite gyms in remote locations around post that have been closed for more than a year

will reopen in the coming weeks.

"First the health team has to go through and make sure everything is set up right," said Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill. "As they re-open, I ask the workforce that will be using them to be good stewards of the gym and the equipment. The supplies to keep it clean are being provided—wipe down your stations as you go through and make sure you are helping keep it open. If they become a health risk, they will have to be shut down again, COVID or no COVID."

Through it all, YPG's test and evaluation workload remained busy.

"As of 30 April of this year, YPG has done approximately 987,000 reimbursable hours," said Larry Bracamonte, YPG Technical Director. "As far as comparing it to last year, right now we're on track to slightly exceed last year's value. Last year we were at 1.7 million reimbursable hours: I predict we will be somewhere in the neighborhood this year."

Though Project Convergence 21 falls outside of this fiscal year, YPG's workload will still be robust.

"Even though the demonstration will occur in FY22, there are a lot of events leading up to it that have to be executed," said Bracamonte. "We're still busy with other cross-functional team work, other Army work, and other private industry work. It's going to be a busy summer."

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Integrators: breaking new ground

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Test Center (YTC) at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) recently created three new positions for cross-functional teams (CFT) integrators.

YTC has an integrator for the long-range precision fires (LRPF), next generation combat vehicles (NGCV) and future vertical lift (FVL). These CFTs tested at YPG are part of the Army's Modernization priorities.

All hired in late 2020 and early 2021, the three integrators-- Steve Flores for LRPF, Justin Croutch for FVL and Jake Obradovich for NGCV-- are all walking into uncharted territory.

"We have the opportunity to mold them to what we think they need to be," said Flores, who formerly worked as the Artillery Branch Chief at the Munitions and Weapons Branch, about the position.

"We are trying to develop what that position is going to be as we are in it," adds Croutch, the former Engineering Support Branch Chief.

You might ask what exactly does an integrator do? Obradovich explains, "The integrator, no pun intended, integrates all the various CFT efforts supported by YPG to one clear sight picture for YPG leadership."

YTC at YPG supports six of the



Yuma Test Center's three cross-functional team integrators, (left to right) Justin Croutch, Jake Obradovich and Steve Flores are all walking into uncharted territory being the first to hold the positions. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

eight CFTs that make up the Army Modernization Priorities. Each CFT has milestones and goals to meet, which means there are countless tests performed daily by numerous different YTC test officers.

"We are going to help bridge the gap between today's test and how it supports the bigger picture of where the Army is going," explains Flores.

CFT integrators have their eye on the overall modernization effort for which they are responsible; not just one or two tests. This allows them to keep a pulse on how the CFT's efforts as a whole are progressing. The integrators are able to keep in synch

with the test programs to determine if the schedules and milestones are on track, see trends and evaluate their significance, and ensure the overall mission is accomplished.

Obradovich said, "I am working to take the breadth of the NGCV support in CASD, integrate it, understand the details, make assessments, and evaluate that information. This allows one unified message to get passed up to YPG leadership to provide a succinct assessment of programmatic issues. This information provides early assessments of issues observed and allows YPG leadership to pass the info along to ATEC and help inform senior

leaders early on in test programs."

YPG is a developmental test center meaning in addition to testing fielded items, its workforce also test developmental items. That's where the integrators' expertise also comes into play.

"YPG does testing every day and we are good at it but what we are doing with modernization is kind of an overhaul in respect how we test. We are pushing the envelope with every system across all the commodities at YPG. So it's going to be the role of these positions to figure out how we are going to do that. What instrumentation, what ranges, going down those lines to prepare to test things we've never tested or can't comprehend yet because we've never heard of it," explains Croutch.

In addition to coming up with the concept for administering these new tests for those industry partners working with YPG, integrators give them a central contact.

"For the FVL perspective we are still in the middle of establishing those relationships and there are already folks who are starting to reach out. I think it will be helpful for them to have a liaison between their testing requirements and how YPG is going to execute it," said Croutch.



Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The Yuma Proving Ground Equal Employment Office set up displays in several common areas around the installation to promote awareness about Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. (Photo by Ana Henderson)



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Yuma Proving Ground's economic impact is significant, longstanding

By Mark Schauer

For nearly 80 years, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has tested virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal.

The impact of YPG's vital work towards the safety and effectiveness of America's Soldiers and Marines is widely known, but what about the economic impact on the Yuma community?

The most recent comprehensive study of all of Arizona's military installations was released by The Maguire Company in November 2017. According to this study, commissioned by the State of Arizona, YPG's annual direct, indirect, and induced economic impact is in excess of \$1.1 billion annually. Of the nearly \$700 million in direct annual impact, nearly \$250 million was the product of wages paid to the more than 2,000 civilians who work here.

While impressive, these numbers were compiled prior to the creation of the Army Futures Command (AFC) in 2018. Since then, YPG has actively supported six of AFC's Cross Functional Teams building the Army's future force, which seeks to retain overmatch with near-peer adversaries in a high intensity conflict. In the summer of 2020, YPG's hosting of Project Convergence (PC), the Army's largest capabilities demonstration of the year, brought in well over 900

visiting support personnel for as long as six weeks. The 2021 iteration of PC promises to be even larger.

Yuma's community leaders understand the tremendous positive economic and social impact YPG's presence has on the local area, and support the post accordingly.

"YPG's economic impact has a profound impact on our community through our sales tax dollars, housing, gas tax dollars, and the hospitality sector," said Julie Engel, director of the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation. "YPG's impact touches every one of those things."

Most military installations receive base funding dollars through military appropriations. YPG, on the other hand, receives funding through a combination of Army appropriated dollars and test customer reimbursement. YPG's customers come from other parts of the military and other government agencies, private industry, and friendly foreign nations.

Despite the pandemic, YPG continued its test and evaluation mission with a diversified workload that consisted of virtually every piece of equipment a Soldier or Marine is likely to use, along with significant effort towards testing the most cutting-edge equipment for Army modernization efforts.

"We never stopped working during



Yuma Proving Ground hosted Project Convergence in late 2020. The Army's largest capabilities demonstration brought in more than 900 support personnel who stayed in local hotels, rented cars, and dined at local restaurants. (U.S. Army photo)

the COVID-19 pandemic," said Larry Bracamonte, YPG Technical Director. "YPG was always open and able to execute its mission."

The feat was accomplished while scrupulously maintaining the safety and test quality standards that are YPG hallmarks, be it in the desert ranges of Yuma, the frozen arctic of Alaska, or tropical locales on leased land in Central and South America. In addition to its normal workload, the transient support personnel from PC 20 stayed in local hotels, rented cars locally, and patronized local restaurants and stores, all of which was a boon to the local economy.

"It put Yuma in a much better position to weather the COVID storm than we would have otherwise had," said Kimberly Kahl, Executive Director of the Yuma County Chamber of Commerce.

The economic uncertainty that followed in the wake of the pandemic underscored how vital the military, second only to agriculture in terms of economic impact, is to the region: and how acutely it would be missed if it ever went away.

"Diminished isn't a strong enough word," said Kahl. "We would be damaged."

"The ripple effect of losing so many civilian jobs would be devastating," agreed Engel. "YPG is base industry.

For every one base industry job YPG has, there are five support jobs created. If we lose one base industry job, we will lose five other jobs: multiply that by 2,000 and that is pretty significant."

YPG's economic impact is also felt indirectly in such things as the presence of the General Motors Desert Proving Ground, which entered a long-term lease with the post in 2009 that will last until at least 2059. General Motors relocated to YPG's ranges after their once-rural facility in Mesa, Ariz. was surrounded by urban sprawl that allowed their competitors to surreptitiously photograph vehicles under test from houses built adjacent to their test track.

"If YPG wasn't there, General Motors wouldn't be there," said Engel. "YPG was the catalyst behind that industry sector that chose Yuma."

Agriculture, the military, and tourism make up the three legs of Yuma County's economy. Yuma's impact on the future Army force is immense, as is its local economic impact.

"I can't stress enough how much our economic viability relies on the military here," said Kahl. "Our businesses can't survive here without the military bases and the jobs that they provide and other things they provide in terms of economic opportunity."

YPG HOUSING RESIDENTS

WHO: All YPG HOUSING RESIDENTS

WHAT: Resident Sensing Session led by Dept. of the Army (DA) Inspectors General.

WHERE: Palm Garden (Library Conference Room)
BLDG 530 – Howard Cantonment/Main Post

WHEN: Session #1: June 7 @ 1130-1300 hrs
Session #2: June 7 @ 1730-1900 hrs
Session #3: June 8 @ 1130-1300 hrs
Session #4: June 8 @ 1730-1900 hrs

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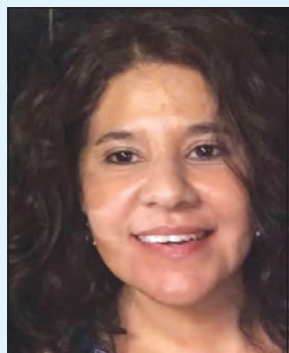
2021

DA IG Wants to Hear From You!





U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) leaders gathered to recognize the Garrison workforce. While the event was hosted virtually for employees, leadership was present to conduct the ceremony. (Left to Right) Deputy Garrison Manager Ken Musselwhite, Garrison Manager Ron James, YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall, Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill. (Photo courtesy of Chris Lee)



Garrison Civilian of the Year Award
Deborah Campbell



Garrison Civilian of the Quarter Awards 3rd quarter
Sandy LaLonde



4th quarter
Danielle Madrill

Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony

Civilian Service Commendation Medal

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Benjamin Rix

Civilian Service Achievement Medal

Officer Austin Howard
Jhony Roman Rementeria

Certificate of Achievement

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Raul Carlos Jr.
Keanu Nakasawa
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Length of Service Awards

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Sasha Monge
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Paula Alarcon

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Susan Mikami

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Dale Devore
Rhonda LaRose
Christopher Lee
Gregory Skaggs

Military Spouse Appreciation Day

Military spouses are the backbone of Army families, as they balance family life, deployments, frequent moves and professional careers



In a ceremony May 6, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. Patrick McFall, Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill and Military Free Fall (MFF) Commander Maj. Derick Taylor thanked YPG spouses for their unwavering support for their Soldier. Their spouses, Heidi McFall, Amanda Gill and Emily Conner, also spoke on how they navigate the Military lifestyle. As a thank you, the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Army Community Services, Desert Oasis Housing and the MFF Family Readiness Group teamed up to provide breakfast and gifts for the spouses. (Photos by Mark Schauer and Casey Garcia)



YPG thanks Price School teachers



Teachers at James D. Price Middle School received a heartfelt thank you from the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) leadership during teacher appreciation week. The entire school looked on and clapped as each teacher and Principal Jarrod Norris were personally recognized. YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall, Heidi McFall, Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill, Military Free Fall (MFF) Commander Maj. Derick Taylor, MFF Family Readiness Group representative Emily Conner and YPG Police Chief Donnie Lucas handed out certificates of appreciation and gift bags. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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YPG and AAFES leaders meet

In early May, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. Patrick McFall and Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill joined representatives from YPG's Family Readiness Group and housing office in a meeting with West Coast Regional Vice President Robert Rice and other managers of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES). Among other topics, the group discussed having more promotional events with new products and the possibility of establishing AAFES "micro markets" in remote locations around post. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



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Chaplain's Corner Memorial Day

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It is a good, right, and honorable thing to remember those that have passed from this life into the next. Based on who you are remembering, and which particular moment you focus on, there's a wide range of responses. Ecclesiastes chapter three is well known for having a song made with the lyrics, and because it is often used at funeral services.

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

As we honor our family member or friend by remembering them, it's okay to acknowledge the good and the bad of their lives. While thinking about those who are no longer with us is sometimes painful, we can appreciate the contributions they made to our lives and making us the people that we are.

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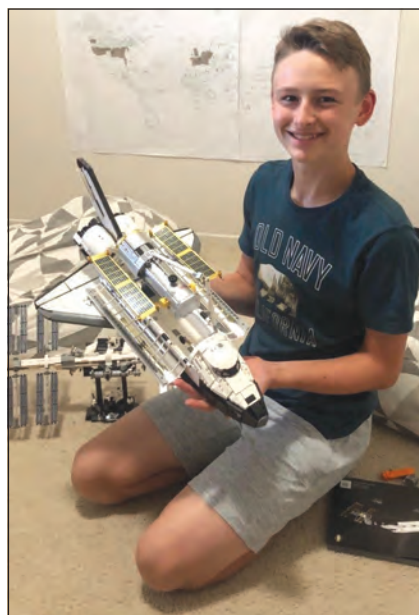


Jennifer Blackwell and Theresa Straub welcomed Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Patrick McFall and Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill on Z93 FM radio on the morning of May 11. McFall and Gill spoke about YPG's important work and how it aligns with the Army's Modernization efforts. They also discussed how large test events bring in visitors who fill local hotels and make a positive economic impact. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Out of this world win for military child



Cypress Swett was all smiles after being named the winner of a NASA Lego set. Swett's father is in the Army and his family is stationed at Yuma Proving Ground. Desert Oasis Housing received the Lego set as a donation. (Photos courtesy of Desert Oasis Housing)



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