

## The Outpost

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

**VOLUME 71 NO. 7 MARCH 28, 2022** 

## U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground: Ensuring the proper mortar for the Warfighter

By Brandon Mejia

Whether it is destroying targets, illuminating rounds to light up areas at night or projecting white phosphorous rounds to provide smoke screens for American troops, the mortar has proven capabilities in America's wartime arsenal that date back to its inception in 1951 at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG).

However, with any wartime capability, accurate testing can only ensure the Warfighters success in a mission to defeat the adversary, and that highly-complex and rigorous testing starts at YPG.

The U.S. Military uses three calibers when it comes to mortars: 60mm, 81mm, and 120mm. The muzzle-loaded weapon consists of a ballistic tube attached to a base plate



The 120mm Mortar is equipped inside a military grade vehicle so the rounds can be tested in an environment that simulates its real-time use in battle. (Photo by Brandon Mejia)

that is propped up by a bipod. But what is said to be more important is the projectile used within the mortar to assist in battleground combat. The cartridge for a mortar is multifaceted and made up of many

SEE MORTAR page 8

#### Yuma Proving Ground hosts Arizona Commanders Summit

**Bv Mark Schauer** 

Effective communication is a vital commodity, something of which one can never have too much.

With the purpose of sharing information and building relationships, military commanders from across Arizona gathered for a day of discussions at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) on March 9.

The Arizona Commanders Summit is a semi-annual

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## THIS IS MY SQUAD

#### Soldier spotlight

#### By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cody Shew is currently serving as a Test Jumper/ Inspector Tester and Air Delivery non-commissioned officer for the Airborne Test Force at Yuma Proving Ground.

The Texas native joined the military in 2008 and has since served tours of duty in Afghanistan and Kosovo.





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### The Outpost

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His military occupations specialty is a parachute rigger and his education includes; parachute packing, air assault, air drop load inspector, static line jumpmaster course, free fall jumpmaster courses and special operations instruction course.

Outside of the Army, Shew who is married and has a family is also enrolled at the University of Phoenix and is well on his way to earning a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science.



#### **Congratulations Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson!**



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson has been selected for a promotion to Colonel. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

#### By Ana Henderson

The U.S. Army has selected Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson for promotion to Colonel.

"Selection to the rank of Colonel 'Below Zone' is a rare accomplishment," said Col. Patrick McFall Yuma Proving Ground Commander in an email to the workforce. "Alicia's remarkable contribution to the U.S. Army has made her the most deserving candidate for this selection."

"Below the zone" promotion

is a program that accelerates promotion for officers who have demonstrated outstanding performance and who show superior potential.

Johnson has served as the commander for YTC for since 2019 and will move to her next assignment in late May of this vear. She led the workforce at YTC during the COVID-19 pandemic and testing continued despite the worldwide shutdown. Upon hearing the news Johnson said, "It's an honor and humbling experience to be recognized for my past performance but also faith in my abilities as a potential leader at a higher level. I am very thankful for all the teams I have been a part of. YPG and YTC, has been a wonderful experience and great leadership opportunity with a phenomenal team. God has been good to me. This is a tremendous blessing, and I am really thankful."

McFall added, "I was overwhelmed with joy and pride for LTC(P) Johnson and her family. Alicia's exceptional contribution in serving our nation has brought her this much-awaited honor in her career."

#### **YTC commander swears in new employees**





Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson welcomed and performed her first swear-in ceremony for five new employees March 14. Facing the American flag Johnson recited the Oath of Office to officially welcome them as part of the YTC division at Yuma Proving Ground. (Photos By Brandon Mejia)



## PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU

SAAP M Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month

RESPECT. RESPONSIBILITY. TRUST.

#### Building a Safe, Positive Command Climate Starts with You.

Everyone deserves to work and live in an environment where they are respected, can communicate openly, trust one another and leadership, succeed, and feel safe. Building a positive, safe command climate combats sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Trust is paramount in creating this type of environment. It is the bedrock of the Army profession. Leaders at every level must work to build and sustain mutual trust with their subordinates, peers, and superiors. Respecting others, leading with integrity, and communicating and engaging openly builds trust, influences positive behaviors, and allows Soldiers and DA Civilians to have the confidence to report sexual harassment or a sexual assault.

#### DO:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Promote and encourage open, honest, and transparent communication.
- Take all reports seriously and hold offenders accountable.
- Engage, support, and listen to survivors.
- Be equally supportive and engaged with every teammate.
- · Ask for feedback and listen, avoid judgment.
- If you see something inappropriate, say something.
- Check in with your team regularly.

#### DON'T:

- · Hold activities that exclude team members.
- . Ignore or allow inappropriate behavior.
- Disregard reports of discipline issues.
- Embarrass or intimidate survivors.
- Be dismissive of prevention programs.

"Every leader has to ensure a command climate in which we take care of Soldiers as if they were members of our own family."

> - Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth



Women in the military have experienced sexual assault.

Women in the military have experienced sexual harassment.



Men in the military have experienced sexual assault.

Men in the military have experienced sexual harassment.

(Source: 2021 RAND Corporation Report)

#### FINDINGS

Organizations where incidents of sexual harassment go unchecked demonstrate a higher risk for sexual assault and vice-versa. (Source: 2021 RAND Corporation Report)

Underreporting of sexual harassment or sexual assault is in part due to a feeling that reports are not taken seriously and a lack of confidence in leadership. (Source: Fort Hood Independent Review Committee)





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#### **Women's History Month**

Submitted by the YPG Equal Employment Opportunity Office

Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society and has been observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987.

The National Women's History Alliance theme for this year is "Women: Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," paying tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and a recognition of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and throughout history. Women as healers harken back

to ancient times. Healing is the personal experience of transcending suffering and transforming it to wholeness. The gift of hope spreads light to the lives of others and reflects a belief in the unlimited possibilities of this and future generations. Together, healing and hope are essential fuels for our dreams and our recovery."

#### Words of wisdom for inspiration from some phenomenal women

"I just love bossy women. I could be around them all day. To me, bossy is not a pejorative term at all. It means somebody's passionate and engaged and ambitious and doesn't mind leading." — Amy Poehler

"Each time a woman stands up for

#### YPG employee made history





Back in 1988 Paula Bostwick, now known as Paula Rickleff, made Yuma County history when she became the first woman from Yuma County to attend and graduate from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point Academy. The first female governor of Arizona, Rose Mofford, recognized Rickleff for her achievement. Now, Rickleff works as the Workforce Development and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics Outreach Manager at Yuma Proving Ground. Scan the QR code on page 5 and listen to episode 8 starting April 4 to hear Rickleff's interview. (Loaned photos)

herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." — Maya Angelou

"Find out who you are and do it on purpose." — Dolly Parton

"Women and girls can do whatever they want. There is no limit to what we as women can accomplish." — Michelle Obama

"I am too intelligent, too demanding, and too resourceful for anyone to be able to take charge of me entirely. No one knows me or loves me completely. I have only myself." — Simone de Beauvoir

"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent." — Madeleine Albright

"My mother did not raise me to ask for permission to lead." — Ayanna Pressley

"Don't waste your energy trying to educate or change opinions; go over, under, through, and opinions will change organically when you're the boss. Or they won't. Who cares? Do your thing, and don't care if they like it." — Tina Fey

"Step out of the history that is holding you back. Step into the new story you are willing to create." — Oprah Winfrey

"I could not, at any age, be content

to take my place by the fireside and simply look on. Life was meant to be lived. Curiosity must be kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life."—
Eleanor Roosevelt

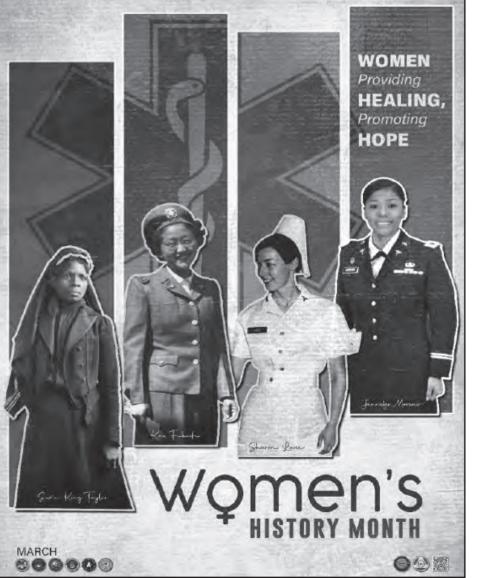
"I am learning all the time. My tombstone will be my diploma." — Eartha Kitt

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear." –Rosa Parks

"Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and, above all, confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing must be attained." — Marie Curie

"Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you." — Ruth Bader Ginsburg

"You have trust in what you think. If you splinter yourself and try to please everyone, you can't. It's important to stay the course. I don't think I would have lasted this long if I'd listened to anyone. You have to listen somewhat and then put that to the side and know that what you do matters." — Annie Leibovitz



#### **Pi Day celebrated**







Members of Yuma Proving Ground's command team had a small gathering to mark Pi Day March 14. With several members of the team being mathematicians, they could not let the day celebrating the mathematical constant 3:14 pass without pies, pie hats, pi shirts and pi tablecloths. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



#### **National Incredible Kid Day**





The Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Library celebrated "National Incredible Kids Day" March 17. YPG families plus children from the Child Development Center and Youth Services attended. The children, parents and teachers listened to stories on empowerment, courage, and resilience. Staff read, "I am Courage", "Loving Kindness" and "The Day I Lost My Superpowers." After the stories, the children designed their own superhero capes and masks. Library staff encouraged the children to be heroes in their communities by being kind, courteous, and spreading unity among everyone. (Photos courtesy of the YPG library)



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#### SUMMIT FROM PAGE 1

event in which commanders and senior leaders from YPG, Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma, Fort Huachuca, Luke Air Force Base, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the Arizona National Guard's Papago Park Military Reservation, and other Arizona-based military units gather. Also attending were representatives

from the Office of the Arizona Governor, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and bases in California and New Mexico.

The participants felt the exchange of information and ideas was fruitful and gave YPG an opportunity to shine.

"I think it is critical for our YPG Family," said Col. Patrick McFall, YPG Commander. "Our mission is different from everybody else, and it is hard to explain that mission:



To promote an environment of cooperation among military installations in Arizona, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) hosted the semi-annual Arizona Commanders Summit March 8. (Photos by Brandon Mejia)



Commanders and senior leaders from YPG, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Naval Air Facility El Centro, Luke Air Force Base, Davis Monthan Air Force Base, the Arizona National Guard as well as a representative from Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's office were in attendance.

people have to come to see it."

Brig. Gen. Gregory Kreuder, Commander of the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base, visited YPG for the first time to attend the summit.

"It's a great place that has pride in their mission," he said. "Their focus is on people: I appreciate Col. McFall articulating that his best resource is his people. We feel the same way at Luke Air Force Base." The forum was also an opportunity to compare challenges and network to share assets. For example, although YPG's primary mission is to support developmental testing of military equipment, the post also has the ability to support training exercises on its vast ranges.

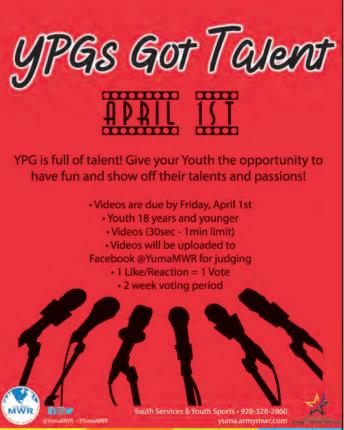
"You can't get things done unless you develop partnerships across the state and across the different military services," added Maj. Gen. Kerry Muehlenbeck, Adjutant General of the Arizona National Guard. "Any time you develop partnerships across the state it is a force multiplier."

"We have to be able to coordinate and solve joint challenges because we all have a piece of terrain or air space that could help the Department of Defense accomplish its mission," added McFall. "We have range space that we can use to help the land component commander out. I want to give them every chance I can to accomplish their mission."

Attendees also noted the support the proving ground enjoys from the greater Yuma community, as well as the important role YPG plays in ensuring our nation's defense.

"This is something that is an incredible economic driver in the state and something that brings a lot of pride to the state," said Megan Fitzgerald, military policy advisor to Arizona Governor Doug Ducey. "We're happy to be supportive of it."











LEFT: The ATAX airdrop system was tested at the U.S. Army Yuma Test Center between November 2020 and May 2021. The DEVCOM Soldier Center team used ballast weight for the first three airdrop tests and a High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle for the fourth test. CENTER: The ATAX airdrop system is modular and consists of eight-foot platforms connected by hinges. It can be adapted to different lengths, typically between eight and 32 feet, and it is surrounded by a self-contained structure where the parachutes are mounted and attached. The vehicle is loaded onto the ATAX platform with an under-mounted airbag system. The ATAX airdrop system has significant advantages over traditional systems because it uses reusable airbags to soften the impact when the vehicle lands and is quicker to free the vehicle from after landing. (U.S. Army photos)

#### **DEVCOM** tests airdrop system for rapid deployment in the field at YPG

#### By Argie Sarantinos

For U.S. Army Soldiers on the move, getting a vehicle in the field increases their survivability and mobility. Safely airdropping the vehicle and quickly de-rigging it is important to reduce Soldiers' exposure to threats. As a measure to increase operational readiness, the Army recently tested the ATAX land airdrop system, an off-the shelf prototype.

The Foreign Technology
Assessment Support program
provided funding that enabled the
U.S. Army Combat Capabilities
Development Command, or
DEVCOM, Soldier Center to test
the ATAX system, manufactured by
United Kingdom-based IrvinGQ.
The system was originally designed
for British and NATO standards,
which are similar to the U.S. but not
identical.

The funding enabled the DEVCOM team to ensure it meets U.S. airdrop and air transportation specifications and to address any issues gathered during the testing. A follow-on Foreign Comparative Testing program, sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense Comparative Technology Office, enabled detailed integration, prototype fabrication and additional airdrop flight testing.

The U.S. Army Yuma Test Center at Yuma Proving Ground conducted four live airdrop tests between

November 2020 and May 2021. The team used ballast weight for the first three airdrop tests and a High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle for the fourth and last airdrop test, which they drove off the ATAX platform at the conclusion of the test.

"Overall, the project was a success. At the final demonstration, we derigged the HMMWV and drove it off the platform without any issues," said Sean Wellman, DEVCOM SC engineer and ATAX project lead.

The ATAX airdrop system is modular and consists of eight-

foot platforms connected by hinges. It can be adapted to different lengths, typically between eight and 32 feet, and it is surrounded by a self-contained structure where the parachutes are mounted and attached. The vehicle is loaded onto the ATAX platform with an under-mounted airbag system. In a typical low altitude airdrop, it takes between two to three minutes

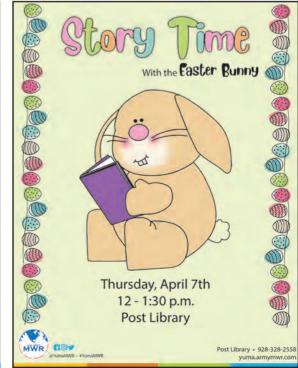
for the vehicle to drop from a height of 1,500-2,000 feet. Airdrop systems can weigh up to 42,000 pounds including the payload and airdrop equipment.

The ATAX airdrop system has significant advantages over traditional systems because it uses reusable airbags to soften the impact when the vehicle lands. Traditional airdrop systems use multiple layers of stacked paper honeycomb that is three inches thick to soften the landing. The paper honeycomb, which is crushed by the impact, is left in the field and can take up to an

hour or more for Soldiers to free the vehicle from the paper honeycomb. One of the goals of the project is to reduce de-rigging time by 75 to 80 percent, which will reduce the amount of time that Soldiers are in the drop zone.

"Airbags minimize or avoid the need for paper honeycomb, saving time during preparation and recovery. The risk of becoming stuck in a stack of honeycomb is eliminated when airbags are used. Basically, when the vehicle is dropped, everything comes off, and the vehicle is ready to execute the mission," Wellman said.





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parts such as an ignition cartridge, propellant, propelling charges, which ultimately leads up to the full encapsulated cartridge that is fired out of the tube.

Each part is produced, tested, and issued in batches according to Test Officer Kayleigh Caparulo with YPG's Munitions and Weapons Division. Phase one of the testing typically starts with the propellant followed by the ignition cartridges and propelling charges.

Batches of M47 propellant from private industries working with the federal government can consist of a few thousand pounds. But before it can be used towards battle efforts, a team of more than a dozen at YPG are responsible for making sure it maintains the same quality as the previous batches used in the past.

"Once we reach the end of that propellant lot, we have to test it again," Caparulo said. "Scientifically it is exactly the same, but as with anything made out of chemicals the balance is just a little different and that is why we have to test it again."

Using wax projectiles, the team is able to focus solely on how the propellant is reacting when the round is ignited. To stay consistent with its real-time use in the battlefield, the 120mm mortar being used for this test is planted inside a military grade vehicle. Simulating how it would be used by Soldiers on the frontline.



To test the M47 propellant, a wax projectile is used for firing out of the 120mm mortar. If the batch of propellant passes its round of testing, officers will move on to the ignition cartridges and propellant charges. (Photo by

The projectile is attached to a lanyard and placed within the tube from the top. This allows the test officers and gun crews to release the projectile from the lanyard from a safe distance to test round. For this specific test, the team is looking at how the batch of M47 propellant reacts when fired.

"The main things we look at are muzzle velocities at the right speeds, and are the chamber pressures within the expected parameters," Caparulo explained. Some of this data is also recorded from high speed video cameras placed around and on top of the 120mm mortar.

#### BUILD IT. TEST IT. FLY IT.



AT YUMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

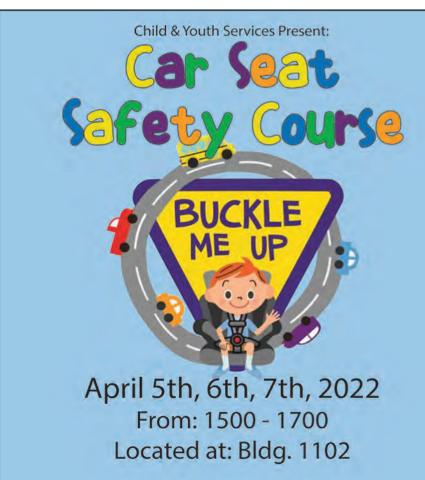
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To ensure accurate testing of the M47 propellant, the team fired 40 wax projectiles to get accurate sampling of the propellant. The team performed a second firing later in the week with 60 wax projectiles to confirm the amount of propellant calculated performs to specifications.

"Once the propellant gets tested we can go into making the propelling charges and ignition cartridges which then leads up to full cartridges," Caparulo said.

Test launches are conducted for each portion of the cartridge. Caparulo said it can take months and even as long as a year before the cartridge is finalized and used amongst American forces in combat situations.



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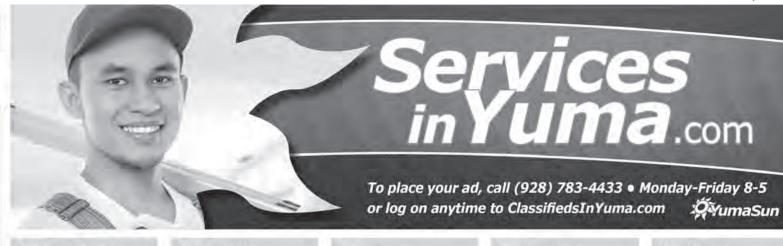
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Re-orienting in times of change,

Chaplain's Corner Chaplain Maj. Jeffrey Crispin

Hello Yuma Proving Ground family. As I write, the Center for Disease Control has listed Yuma County as a medium COVID level, removing the mask mandate. Hopefully this is something that you've been looking forward to as much as I have. I've missed seeing everyone's faces as masks have been required essentially since I arrived.

But as things start to adapt to the change in health condition status, that might impact the way you and I have been doing things. Changes can be dis-orienting. I heard someone say that "The only constant in the Army, (and life,) is change."

I wanted to share a helpful tool that I learned early in my time as a chaplain. Some people are familiar with Venn diagrams. For those who aren't let me try and describe a visual. If you have a sheet of printer paper and in the middle part, draw two circles about the size of a tennis ball. The two circles need to overlap a little bit, no more than 20% or so. In one circle write the word "Control" and in the other write "Matter." As I talk through the categories, feel free to write on your paper various things that apply to vour life.

Now you have the tool to divide whatever is going on in life into one of four categories. Most of the paper, like things in life reflect things that you can't control and that don't matter in your day-to-day life. For example, some country somewhere is having elections, or

how many people are on vacation this week are both examples that I can't control, nor can I think of a way that it impacts me.

Chaplain's Corner

a helpful tool

The next category is the circle that has "Control." It is areas that I can control but aren't particularly significant. My score on a game I enjoy or whether I folded my laundry are examples. I can control it, but this category doesn't impact me or anyone else in a major way.

The third category is for items that go in the "Matters" circle. As a government employee, the federal budget and tax rates or my supervisor's hiring actions are important, but not anything that I can control. This is where many people get stuck, feeling frustrated with things that matter that are beyond their control personally, professionally, or both.

However, the fourth category, that space where the "Control" and "Matters" circles overlap is the most important portion of the diagram. What are the things that I can control that really matter? I can control my attitude at work and at home, knowing that impacts others. I can do the routine things consistently like living by my values, keeping my spending within my budget, or taking vacation regularly to reset my resilience. And yes, there are some things that might be in the in-between areas that straddle more than one category.

When changes come that disorient me, or someone I'm advising, I ask them to walk through this exercise and to focus on the area where the two circles overlap. I hope that this is a tool that you will work with a few times to become familiar with it so you can use it effectively when you need it. Focus on the things that matter that you can control.

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#### Youth Services kids test their luck







Children attending the Youth Services program at Yuma Proving Ground tested their luck during a series of fun games March 14. The games included rolling lettuce, picking up Lucky Charms with a spoon, and tossing a coin on a rainbow. The winners received prizes as a reward for their good fortune. (Photos courtesy of Youth Services)



#### Let the good times roll!





Yuma Proving Ground community members let the good times roll during Skate Night March 18. People of all ages enjoyed as the Fitness Center transformed into a skating arena with the disco lights and music. (Photos courtesy of the Fitness Center)

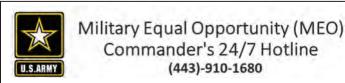
#### **Going away BBQ for travel camp residents**



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. Patrick McFall, Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill, and other YPG senior leaders attended a farewell BBQ for winter guests of YPG's Travel Camp March 17. Approximately 200 visitors reside in the camp during the winter months. Both the direct and indirect revenue generated from the travel camp helps support facilities such as the Cactus Café, Coyote Lanes, and the Post Exchange. (Photos by Brandon Mejia)















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