

# The Outpost

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

VOLUME 71 NO. 10 MAY 09, 2022

## C-sUAS Demo returns to YPG

By Mark Schauer

As unmanned aircraft technology proliferates, America's adversaries are using it to target Soldiers and critical infrastructure, necessitating robust Counter-small Unmanned Aircraft System (C-sUAS) defenses for use where American forces are deployed.

The Joint C-sUAS Office (JCO), established in 2020 to tackle this threat, hosted two C-sUAS demonstrations at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) last year with the Army's Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office (RCCTO), to give industry the opportunity to show their latest technology.

"The counter UAS threat has evolved significantly over the past few years," said Maj. Gen. Sean



The Counter-small Unmanned Aircraft System demonstration was made up of a series of demo scenarios. The testers gave the competitors geographic boundaries for a notional forward operating base which the systems had to defend against incoming threats much like the UAS shown. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

SEE **DEMO** page 6

## Outgoing YTC commander reflects on three years in command

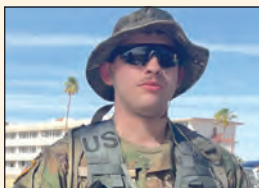
By Mark Schauer

From testing equipment for the Army's future fight to coping with a worldwide pandemic, Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson served in interesting times.

Among other things, during her tenure the test center hosted Project Convergence (PC) 2020 and 2021, the Army's largest capabilities demonstration in 15 years.

SEE **OUTGOING** page 5

Soldier  
spotlight  
/Page 2



YPG Safety: watch for  
venomous creatures  
/Page 3



YPG hosts  
WTI training  
/Page 4



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# THIS IS MY SQUAD

## Soldier spotlight

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Private 1st Class Nathan Britenfeld is currently serving at the Yuma Proving Ground Medical Clinic as an Allergy and Immunization Technician.

He says what he enjoys most about his job is serving the community. "I enjoy meeting new individuals. I give a variety of vaccines to Active Duty members, Retirees and their Families. I cherish learning new things every day and educating those I meet the process of the vaccines they are going to receive." Part of his duties involve providing coverage at the drop zone for the parachute jumpers.

Britenfeld who is originally from Berrien Springs, Michigan has been serving his country for nearly two years. Last month he was awarded the April 2022 Soldier of



U.S. Army Private 1st Class Nathan Britenfeld, is currently serving at the Yuma Proving Ground Medical Clinic as an Allergy and Immunization Technician. In April he was named the Soldier of the Month by Weed Army Community Hospital. (Loaned photo)

the Month by Weed Army Community Hospital.

He's currently working towards Associates in Criminal Justice from Southern New Hampshire University and in his spare time enjoys playing soccer, reading, archery, chess, camping and cooking.



## The Outpost

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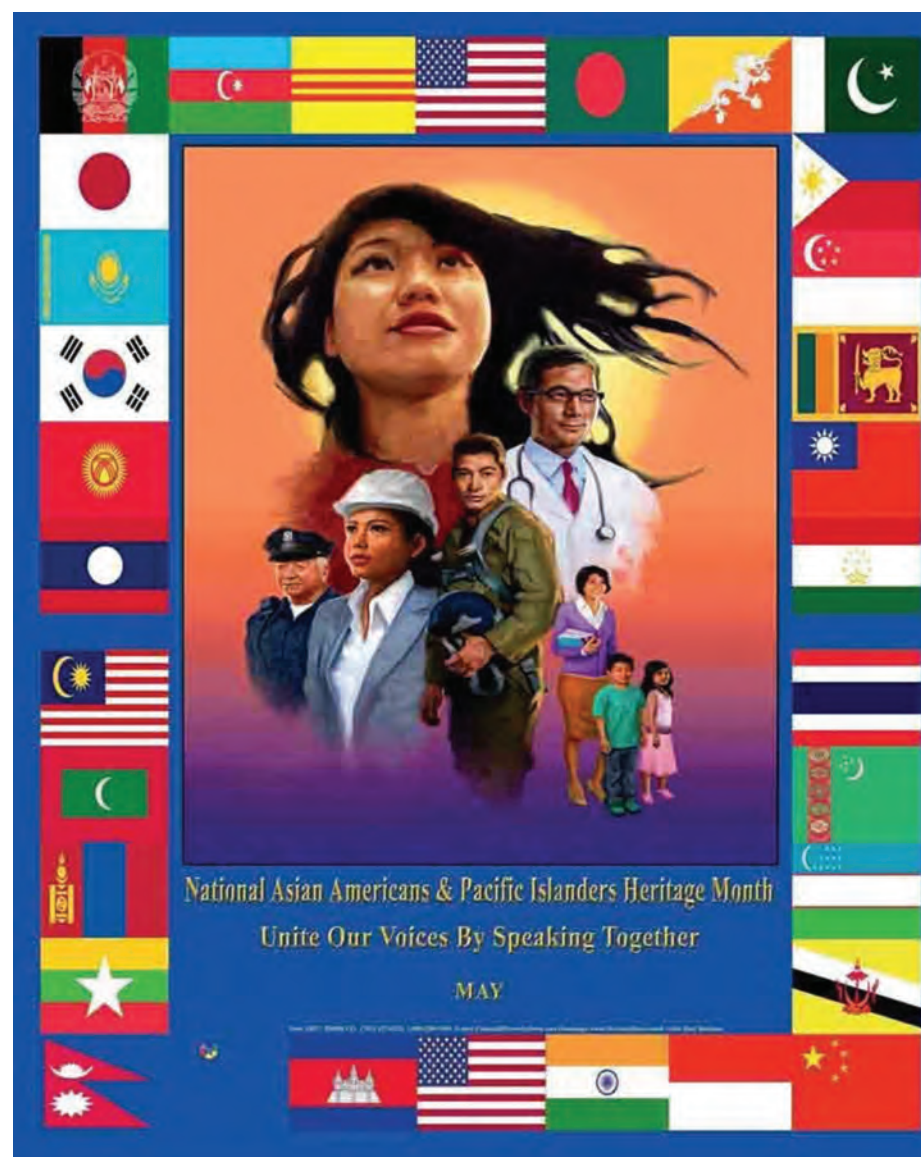
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# YPG Safety: With the change of temperature comes the return of venomous creatures

By Brandon Mejia

As the temperature throughout Arizona begins to tick upwards this time of year, so too comes the return of venomous snakes, spiders, and scorpions.

“We have the most encounters with venomous snakes here in the spring because it is warm enough for them to be active in the day, but it is not so hot to force them to shelter where they are hidden,” said Daniel Steward the environmental sciences wildlife Biologist at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG). Arizona is home to 17 different types of rattlesnakes - all of them venomous. Five of those species live within the YPG boundaries. Common species include Sidewinder, Diamondback, Mohave, and Specked rattlesnake. Blacktail Rattlesnake were recently discovered on the range, but they are extremely rare on this side of the state.

Regardless of species, safety is of the upmost importance for those working out on the ranges or even living in housing.

“The really important thing for our rattlers is to give them space because their main point of defense is camouflage and that is why they are always hidden.” Snakes tend to linger in brushy or shady areas, underneath piles of lumber or rocks, Steward shared. “In the rare event that you do get bit, it doesn’t matter



If you run across a snake in housing or on the range and it is in a natural area, it will more than likely slither off - if left unprovoked. If it's at your home or the park where it poses a risk to someone, then you should call 928-328-3005 for proper removal and relocation of the snake. (Loaned photo)

what species you got bit by, just get to the hospital.”

Thankfully with modern medicine, fatalities from reptile bites are extremely rare. According to the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center the recent death rate has dropped to less than 1%, however serious symptoms are possible, and any bite victim must be seen in a medical facility without delay.

“Everyone’s body reacts differently to venom so they can vary in severity, regardless get checked by a medical professional,” he said. “The new modern anti-venom works for all rattlesnakes.”

For the YPG personal who work down range in areas where venomous critters are more likely to be lingering, proper personal protective equipment can help avoid a bite. Be situationally aware of your

surroundings, watch where you put your hands and feet.

Bees or other stinging insects are very common in our area. Allergic reactions to stings can be very serious. Make sure to tell your coworkers if you have allergies to bee or other insect stings.

“If you are down range and are bit by a venomous creature let your work team know what’s happened, let range control know, and get yourself back as quickly as possible and safely,” Steward said.

Remember, all our wildlife serves an important ecological role and part of the stewardship responsibly we have for this range is to preserve this balance while we safely achieve our mission.

If you run across a snake in housing or on the range and it is in a natural area, it will more than likely just slither off - if left unprovoked. But if it is at your home or at the park where it poses a risk to someone, then you should call 928-328-3005 for proper removal and relocation of the snake.

That number operates Monday through Thursday 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If it is after hours, emergency services can assist and be reached at 928-328-2720. For more information and resources pertaining to venomous snake, spider, and scorpion bites visit <https://azpoison.com/venom> and <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/livingwith/>.

## NOTICE: Full scale exercise at YPG

On Tuesday May 10, 2022, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground will conduct a full scale exercise. The exercise will result in testing various force protection condition levels and measures and impact all access control points (ACP)

at various times throughout the duty day (6 a.m. -5 p.m.). First Responders will be moving to and from exercise location(s) and may close roads, access points, and access to some buildings.

Notification of activities

will appear variously on mass warning notification systems such as ALERT and Giant Voice and may be sent via email or appear on social media. All exercise related traffic will be preceded with “Exercise-Exercise-

Exercise.” All personnel are asked to cooperate and cautioned to use care when approaching exercise scenes and ACP. Traffic delays will occur in some areas and all personnel should plan accordingly.





U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Roberto Ceballos runs for cover during a Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain town exercise as part of WTI course 2-22 on April 11.

# YPG hosts WTI training

A portion of the annual Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course took place at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG). The seven-week training event, hosted by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One, emphasizes the development of small task-organized unit experimentation across all warfighting functions, as well as enhance the battalion's ability to conduct command and control, fire-support planning, intelligence functions, and logistical support to distributed company level operations.



U.S. Marines enter a building during a Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain town exercise as part of WTI course 2-22. (Photos by Pfc. Sarah Pysher)



Teammates,

In every message I've addressed you as teammates because I wanted you to know that we collectively, Civilians, Military, and Contractors make up this mighty Yuma Team. Collectively, we give our talents and time to support the Warfighter.

Today, I want to publicly tell you that it has been my absolute honor serving with you as the Yuma Test Center Commander. When selected in 2019, I couldn't have imagined the impact and joy this assignment would bring me. Yes, we've had our challenges and obstacles, highs and lows but through it all, we overcame them together.

Hopefully, this isn't the first time that you've heard me say how proud I am of our workforce. I truly believe that the YTC workforce is "second to none". Throughout my time here, I've received emails and phone calls praising your dedication, your passion, and your commitment to provide the best support and service for our customers. For the past two years, we've been in the spotlight with our support for Project Convergence. Senior Leaders across the Army and Department of Defense traveled here and witnessed your commitment and expertise. Every day, I watched it displayed in everything we do. Everything from instrumentation to flight services, maintenance to nondestructive testing, ballistic testing to electronic warfare testing, automotive performance testing to aerial delivery, logistics and contract support to aviation testing, artillery, mines, and mortars to range safety, met/sim support to ammunition, administrative and resource management to range scheduling. Each teammate trusted the battle cry, "What we do here matters" and gave their very best. You rock!

I'm heading to the Pentagon, then to Senior Service College. One day, I'll be a Colonel and hopefully, given another opportunity to lead men and women. Thank you for making me a better leader and listener. Yuma Proving Ground will always have a special place in my heart. May God continue to watch over you and yours.

Lastly, for the record, I want to make sure everyone remembers that the Dallas Cowboys are America's team and they're the best football team. I know some people may disagree, but I believe those few people are suffering from dehydration, please drink water and say it loud and proud, "How bout dem Cowboys!!"

Again, thank you for everything!

God Bless,

LTC Alicia J. Johnson



Please join us to bid a fond Farewell to

**Yuma Test Center Commander  
LTC(P) Alicia J. Johnson**

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“For me, it was like the blink of an eye,” she said. “It was a fast-moving train and an amazing experience.”

The test center was also the busiest in the Army testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal. YTC hosted the first major Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team test with a demonstration of the SPIKE air-to-surface missile in Sept. 2019 and a 70-kilometer test fire of the Extended Range Cannon Artillery in Dec. 2019. Before the pandemic struck, in early 2020 YTC personnel supported the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) 2020 open house that drew over 23,000 people, the largest public event in YPG history.

“To say we are busy is an understatement, but, more importantly, we are relevant,” Johnson said. “Yuma Test Center has been the tip of the spear of Army modernization for years and has done a remarkable job.”

Johnson credits the expertise and experience of the YTC workforce with meeting these heavy demands.

“I am amazed by the professionalism and resiliency that this workforce has displayed over the last three years,” she said. “I can’t



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson shown here as the guest speaker at the annual Camp Bouse Memorial Ceremony is set to relinquish command on May 26. (Photo Mark Schauer)

emphasize enough how impressive this workforce is.”

When COVID struck, Johnson and YTC’s civilian directors faced the challenge of keeping the Army’s vital test mission running. Testers sent live video and data feeds back to personnel on the East Coast who were prevented from participating in person as a result of Department of Defense travel restrictions, and YTC personnel unable to maintain six feet of separation were required to wear cloth face coverings at all times. As the number of COVID cases in Yuma County rose dramatically, YTC personnel developed COVID safety protocols to ensure the Army Futures Command’s PC 20 capstone testing proceeded as planned in a safe manner. Johnson had no doubt that the YTC workforce would meet the challenge successfully.

“They selected us to host Project Convergence for a reason. They chose Yuma Test Center for its technical expertise and understanding, and our terrain.”

Johnson praises the YTC workforce for accepting the safety measures necessary to continue the mission. To protect both YPG’s resident workforce and the hundreds of visiting personnel during PC 20, a key safety concept was keeping those directly supporting PC in so-called ‘bubbles’ that were separate from each other. Visitors working on PC remained in several remote locations around YPG’s vast ranges during duty hours, and were asked to restrict their off-duty activities to only essentials like grocery shopping or purchasing gasoline

“The workforce understanding and buying in to the protective measures was critical to our success,” Johnson said. “A ‘bubble’ is only effective with the cooperation of everyone in it.”

Johnson believes that YTC’s can-do culture made the workforce resilient throughout the challenging COVID environment, as well as the normal daily operations at the Army’s busiest test center.

“I believe in our mission of



“My team has made me a better person and a better officer. They have invested in me as I have invested in them,” remarked Johnson about the YTC workforce and Soldiers. She’s shown speaking with Soldiers before a fun run and to the workforce during the last town hall before the post discontinued in person gatherings due to COVID. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



protecting the men and women who protect and defend our country. When you look at the developmental test mission, it takes the initiative and expertise of so many people to accomplish. We have embraced the team concept and understand how to collectively link our time and talents to make the team better.”

As she prepares to relinquish command on May 26, she is grateful for her time leading YTC.

“My team has made me a better person and a better officer. They have invested in me as I have invested in them.”

As for advice to her successors, she offers the following:

“Invest in relationships and people. When I say invest in people, it isn’t just money: it is understanding people’s desires about what they want to do in their lives and how you can help them achieve their dreams.”

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Gainey, Director of the JCO. “The way to evolve C-sUAS technology to meet this threat is to constantly re-look our current capabilities. To support the warfighter, the demonstrations give us the opportunity to work with industry and bring out all of the latest and greatest capability to get ahead of the threat.”

The first two demonstrations were so successful that YPG was tapped again to host a third multi-week event in April.

“Every JCO event so far has shown higher levels of difficulty because every event has been different,” said Hi-Sing Silen, YPG test officer. “This event has two focus areas, as opposed to one last time. It was a crawl-walk-run approach to find out what we needed to support testing.”

“We’ve expanded the time horizon from the first demonstration being a week, the second being two weeks, and this one is three weeks,” said Col. Greg Soule, Acquisition and Resources Division Chief for the JCO. “There are some pretty significant capabilities that we are looking at this time.”

During the first week of the demonstration, testers evaluated systems that utilized high powered microwaves to defeat threat systems.

“Because it is new to us, we had to make sure that the test plan was flexible enough to be able to collect frequencies, power levels, and distances,” said Silen.

In weeks two and three, the demonstration was open to any C-sUAS system that demonstrated how Contractor Owned Government Operated (COGO) capabilities could detect, track, identify, and defeat sUAS threats. This COGO concept is referred to as Counter-sUAS as a Service (CaaS). A Company’s successful demonstration of the CaaS concept could potentially result in them signing a service contract with the government.



The two primary data points that testers sought were the range of effectiveness—how close could a threat get before the Counter-small UAS system stopped it—and how long it took to defeat the threat system. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



“The DOD normally buys things and owns it for the life cycle: you have to put it to rest at the end, and in between you have to maintain it and upgrade it as necessary,” said Soule. “We could potentially pay an industry partner to perform this as a service to the DOD with the responsibility to maintain and upgrade it, and to a certain extent operate it.”

It is also possible that each of these systems has sub-components manufactured by different companies.

“That brings additional challenges to ensure we can accommodate

every component that a customer brings,” said Silen.

In the demo scenarios, the testers gave the competitors geographic boundaries for a notional forward operating base (FOB) that the systems had to defend against incoming flying threats.

“The profiles are straightforward, but challenging,” said Silen. “They are designed to make sure customers are tested in a similar way so we are comparing apples to apples.”

The two primary data points that testers sought were the range of effectiveness—how close could a threat get before the C-sUAS

system stopped it—and how long it took to defeat the threat system. In some cases, a threat system wasn’t completely destroyed, but was impacted to an extent that it couldn’t get close enough to pose a threat to the mock FOB.

“We could spend a whole year trying to assess every little component of the systems,” said Silen. “This is a very compressed data matrix that collects essential, key aspects of how the systems are performing.”

Truth data—the real location of a threat—was a key aspect to verifying each systems test performance. In the second and third weeks of the CaaS demonstration, the performance data was tailored to the system depending on what types of components were present—a camera or jammer, for instance.

“YPG provides a great opportunity [to test systems] because of the range structure and standardization it provides,” said Gainey. “We’re able to bring out all of the different capabilities from the Services and industry, put them on a common range, and measure the effects equally across the systems.”

YPG is among the most capable of a limited number of test ranges able to accommodate this type of work. The proving ground’s clear, stable air and extremely dry climate along with vast institutional UAS testing knowledge makes it an attractive location to testers, as does the ability to control a large swath of the radio frequency spectrum. YPG has more than 500 permanent radio frequencies, and several thousand temporary ones in a given month.

“We’ll continue to enhance what we’ve built,” said Gainey. “We’re investing in the YPG ranges to be able to provide the data collection we need from the different capabilities we’re testing, whether it is high powered microwave, directed energy, or electronic warfare effects. This range can accommodate all of that, and we want to continue to improve upon it so we can get after the future threat.”



## Month of the Military Child



April is Month of the Military Child, and as the month came to an end, Yuma Proving Ground's Child Development Center hosted a fun day for the children, many of whom are Army dependents. On the morning of April 28, the children enjoyed water play, hung out with Sparky the Fire Dog, and YPG firefighters. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



## Standing against child abuse

In support of Child Abuse Prevention Month, members of Yuma Proving Ground's Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Child Development Center and Youth and Child Services

departments wore blue. Wearing blue on the second Wednesday of April signifies staff supports positive childhood experiences and support for preventing child abuse and neglect.



ABOVE: Audrey Wilson, Shannon Schmidgall, Dale Devore, Shauna Nunn and Melissa Anderson. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

RIGHT: Chester Wilton the Child and Youth Services Administrator wore blue to support the cause. (Loaned photo)

## Supporting women by wearing denim



The Yuma Proving Ground Army Community Services team, Cathynn Robinson, Gisela Robles, Paula Alarcon and Arlene Gentry showed their support on National Denim Day. Wearing denim expresses visible support for sexual assault survivors. The observance stems from when a 1999 Italian Supreme Court decision overturned a 1992 rape conviction based on the victim's clothing. The Justices argued that, because the woman was wearing tight jeans, she must have given consent. This decision led to protests where women wore jeans showing support for the victim. (Loaned photo)



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# YPG celebrates Earth Day 2022

By Mark Schauer

At U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), every day is Earth Day.

As a natural laboratory for testing virtually every piece of equipment in the U.S. Army's ground combat arsenal, YPG has a vested interest in responsible ecological stewardship.

Located within North America's most diverse desert, the proving ground is home to a vast array of wildlife, including Sonoran pronghorn, desert tortoises and one of Arizona's healthiest and most genetically diverse populations of bighorn sheep. More than a hundred unique bird species pass through or call YPG home.

Recently, YPG's Environmental Sciences Division has begun a pilot project to plant native species of plants and trees around populated areas of post and sustain the saplings without irrigation systems. Toward this end, the workers have planted the saplings using Groasis Waterboxxes, three-gallon lidded polyurethane buckets that slowly wick water onto the plant's

roots over the course of months and are refilled by rain water or condensation. Planting saplings in vertical shafts in the center of the devices also shields them from the intense heat of the desert floor until they grow hardier. The first batch of trees were planted around YPG's Travel Camp in March.

"This whole effort has been to get trees that come from Yuma, that are hardy and ready for our climate," said Daniel Steward, YPG wildlife biologist.

To celebrate Earth Day, Steward and Natural Resource Specialist Reed Rider got a hand from school children at YPG's James D. Price Elementary School to plant a variety of Palo Verde, Ironwood, Honey Mesquite, and Desert Willow in a vacant lot near the school. The pair showed the kids how to assemble the plastic apparatus, topped with a protective sleeve to keep the saplings safe from nibbling rabbits and other creatures looking for a snack.

Steward won't speculate how long it will take the trees to mature and how likely they are to endure the



summer's intense heat over time but said a similar program at Arizona's Davis-Monthan Air Force Base has seen a better than 50% survival rate.

"It's going to be slow-growing like our regular native plants, but we'll hope for the best," said Steward.

YPG officials vow that the annual Earth Day events and efforts to reintroduce native flora will persist into the foreseeable future.

"One of the great things about having good native habitat around our housing area is getting to enjoy the wildlife," said Steward. "Things like our Vermillion Flycatchers and Says Phobes let us watch and relax, and hear their songs. If we can do things to help make our environment a little better for wildlife, we benefit: we're part of the environment, too."



To celebrate Earth Day, Daniel Steward and Reed Rider got a hand from school children at YPG's James D. Price Elementary School to plant a variety of native trees in a vacant lot near the school. The pair showed the kids how to assemble the plastic apparatus, topped with a protective sleeve to keep the saplings safe from nibbling rabbits and other creatures looking for a snack. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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# Chaplain's Corner

## Thanks Mom

### Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain Maj.  
Jeffrey Crispin



dependent upon for the first couple years of our lives, including the time in the womb. They sacrifice sleep, comfort, often the diet of their choice, sometimes their career, and undergo lasting physical changes and so much more for that title of "Mom."

I heard someone say that, "It's a good thing babies are so cute, 'cause otherwise they'd be in big trouble as helpless, demanding, smelly, noisy little beings." So, Moms by blood and/or Moms by choice put up with a lot. Some of us are privileged to have more than one Mom in our lives. They love us and do their best for

us to have life better than they did. They run into burning buildings to rescue their children, put their bodies between danger and their child, and sometimes go without – so their child/children have enough.

Moms are a modern-day miracle. They bring life into the world and do everything that they can to nurture a baby into a responsible and self-sufficient young adult. They don't charge for their services. They are often the rock that the child leans on. And we couldn't make life and society work without them.

You probably have a whole list of reasons that you are thankful for your Mom. Have you ever written that list down and considered sharing it? Share it with your Mom, and if

you are a parent, share it with your kids about how much your Mom influenced who you have become. It's an idea to think about.

For some, Mother's Day is bittersweet. Death, serious illness, distance, or something that caused damage to your relationship with your Mom can make the day challenging. There is no such thing as a perfect Mom. But "hunt the good stuff" and find those things that you can appreciate and a way to express it that fits.

So, in closing, we have lots to be grateful for about our Moms. Please take the time to find a way to express to the Mom(s) in your life how their lives have made your life so much better and that you appreciate them.

# Skate Night



Friday, May 13th  
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## YTC Commander visits students in Bouse



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Alicia Johnson spent the morning at Bouse Elementary School in La Paz County. Speaking to an assembly of the entire K-8 school for about an hour, Johnson engaged the students with questions and practical wisdom on success in life. "If you believe you can, you are halfway there," she said. "If you try hard, if you're honest, if you're a good citizen, if you ask questions, you can be whatever you want to be." (Photos by Mark Schauer)

## YPG law enforcement recruiting



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Protection Division participated in a Law Enforcement Job Fair hosted by ARIZONA@WORK in late April. The job fair consisted of local and surrounding law enforcement agencies and targeted people interested in a career in law enforcement. More than 30 individuals showed their interest in positions for YPG Police, Security, and 911 Dispatch. Sgt. Francisco Pacheco, YPG Security, DesiRay Garcia, YPG Dispatcher and Sgt. Joe Higuera, YPG Police represented the YPG PD at the booth. (Loaned photo)

## Soar into reading



The Yuma Proving Ground Library hosted a Soar into Reading event to mark National Go Fly a Kite Day. Story time consisted of the children making DIY kites and of course flying the kites outside afterwards. (Loaned photos)





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