



The Outpost

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

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YPG Machine Shop can make it or fix it to support military testing

By Ana Henderson

If you break it, most likely they can fix it. If you design it, most likely they can manufacture it.

"I honestly believe that there is absolutely nothing they can't make," remarked James Ingram the lead engineering tech at Yuma Test Center's (YTC) Machine Shop referring to the work his team does.

The talented team is made up of four machinist and eight welders. Their experience ranges from one year in the shop to more than 30.

For those not familiar with the trades, a machinist can take a piece of metal and using machinery and tools they create a part by removing metal. A welder connects multiple pieces of metal by melting and fusing them together.

These metal magicians work out of several open-aired warehouses that are split into sections for machinist and welders. Welder's work involves equipment that melts and fuses metal together causing an extremely hot working environment.

"Our mission is to support the testing at Yuma Proving Ground and that comes in all different forms. It could be something as simple as repairing a crack in a support vehicle or something as far as fabricating a test research and development type part that the engineers want made," explained Ingram.

Typical days for the crew vary from working on items for the Munitions and Weapons Division



James Ingram the lead engineering tech at Yuma Test Center's Machine Shop stands next to a large mobile blast shield his team fabricated. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

SEE **MACHINE SHOP** page 7

Providing support
from the desert
to the snow
/Page 2



YPG test officers
integral to
Tamale Fest
/Page 4



High stakes
training lends to
faster repair time
/Page 6



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Engineers thanked for their work overseas



Program Manager for Combat Ammunition Systems Col. Leon Rogers awarded Richard Bloomfield and Tyler Heagney a coin of appreciation after their support for a test supporting data collection efforts for compatibility and firing tables testing on a foreign howitzer in Poland. (Loaned photos)



Adam Hindes: Providing support from the desert to the snow

By Sebastian Saarloos

How does traveling from an average high temperature in the warm nineties to a destination with highs below freezing sound?

This was the question posed to Adam Hindes, who finished a six-week temporary duty tour at the Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC), in Fort Greely, Alaska in late 2022.

Hindes is a Systems Administrator with TRAX at Yuma Test Center who took on the challenge of traveling 2500 miles north to help fill a temporary void in the Information Management Office at CRTC.

Hindes was able to begin assisting CRTC almost immediately and helped with everything from traditional tech support to new system deployments.

Over the past couple of months Adam saw summer quickly turn into winter, experiencing temperatures below -20°F. Yet, he enjoyed working

in the different climate and was surprised by how closely he directly supported the CRTC commander.

The entire team at CRTC is appreciative for Hindes' professionalism, kindness, and his support of their mission.

CRTC Commander Lt. Col.

Jonathan Brown said, "Adam's support to the CRTC mission was greatly appreciated and came at a time when CRTC was short two personnel. I trust he is departing feeling as though he is part of the CRTC Team."

The CRTC team wish Hindes well in all his endeavors, personally and professionally as he reacclimatizes back in the Arizona winter.



Adam Hindes, a systems administrator with TRAX at Yuma Test Center, took on the challenge of traveling 2500 miles north to help fill a temporary void in the Information Management Office at Cold Regions Test Center. (Photo by Sebastian Saarloos)

The Outpost

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The Editor, Outpost, Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma, AZ, 85365
Phone: (928) 328-6149 or DSN 899
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Commander: Col. Patrick McFall
Public Affairs Officer: Mark Schauer
Public Affairs Specialist/Outpost Editor: Ana Henderson
Public Affairs Specialist: Brandon Mejia
Visual Information Manager: Eugene Garcia
Technical Editor, Cold Regions Test Center: Clara Zachgo



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By Ana Henderson

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has been serving the U.S. Army for 80-years this month. During those years it has been at the center of historic tests for the Army. However, its past was a bit uncertain and sorted at times.

Timeline: The making of Yuma Proving Ground

February 5, 1942- Desert Training Center (DTC) established with General Patton as commander. Expanded from California, Nevada, to Arizona. Camp Laguna within the DTC is the current location of Yuma Proving Ground's "Big Guns".



January 1943- Army Corps of Engineers identified area west of Camp Laguna near Colorado River for the newly created Yuma Test Branch's research on combat bridges. Its long name was Special Bridge Test Section of the Engineer Development Board - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

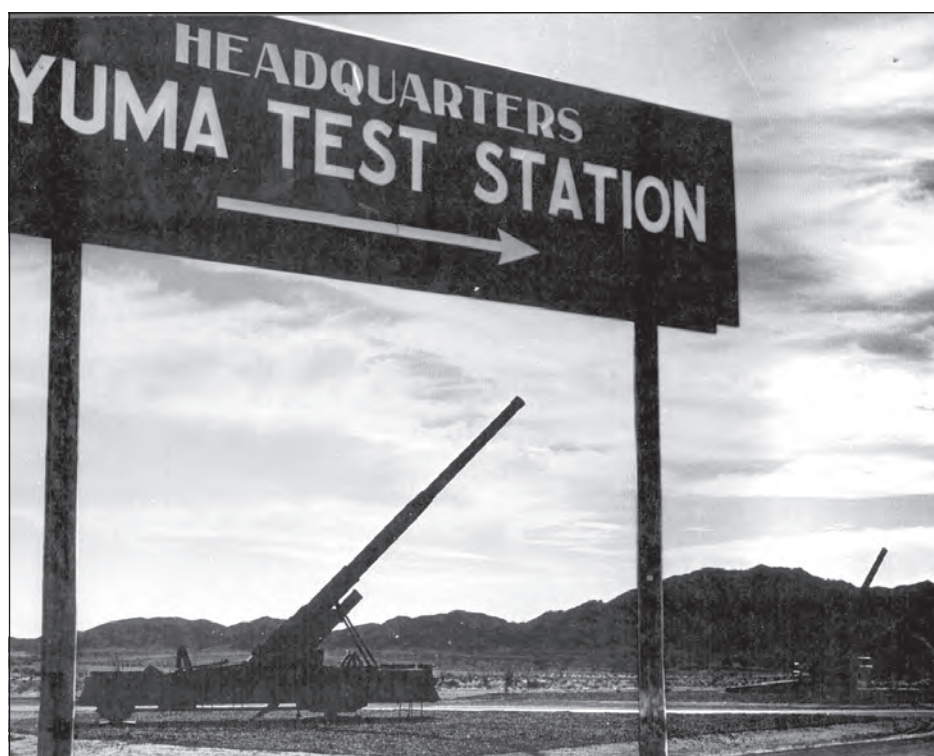


1944/45- Testing expanded to include mobility and equipment.



1949- Yuma Test Branch closed.

1951- Yuma Test Branch reopened as Yuma Test Station.



1963- Yuma Test Station renamed Yuma Proving Ground. And the rest, as they say, is history! Happy 80th anniversary YPG and all those along the way who made it what it is today.



Local tamale festival has YPG-flavor

By Mark Schauer

Tamales are an integral part of the desert Southwest's culinary and social fabric.

It is only fitting that Somerton, Arizona's biggest annual event is a 12-hour long street festival dedicated to the tasty delicacy.

More than 30,000 people filtered through two blocks of downtown Somerton the weekend before Christmas to purchase and eat thousands of beef, chicken, pork, and green chile and cheese tamales from

dozens of vendors, mingle, and listen to live bands across the day and evening on two stages at either end of the event area.

The event is 15 years old, the brainchild of members of the El Diablito Arizona State University (ASU) Alumni Chapter, of whom brothers Carlos and Arturo Anaya, Somerton natives and longtime U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) test officers, were charter members.

"We got the idea after graduating from college," said Arturo Anaya,

who chairs the entertainment committee. "We were roommates and came back to Somerton and decided we wanted to do something for the community. We spoke to the city of Somerton and they liked the idea."

The El Diablito Alumni chapter retains a portion of the event's proceeds to fund ASU scholarships for local youth.

"All the proceeds from the event go to scholarships," said Arturo. "Our goal is to give anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000 in scholarships."

Carlos Anaya, Chief of YPG's Simulation Branch and president of the organization, says YPG personnel have been staunch supporters, as both volunteers and patrons.

"We never thought it was going to get this big," he reflected. "But every year it got a little bigger, and the bigger it got, the more motivated we got. We have over 200 volunteers helping out now. We couldn't do it without them, and without the sponsors."

The good food and good fun are also a major boon for the city of Somerton, and the brothers credit their work experiences at YPG with helping them make the event a consistent success.

"Being test officers at YPG has helped us with the coordination of this project," said Arturo. "We coordinate tests at YPG, and that is what we do here: the skills we use at YPG translate directly to planning and executing an event like this."



More than 30,000 people filtered through two blocks of downtown Somerton Dec. 17 during the Somerton Tamale Festival. The event is 15 years old, the brainchild of members of the El Diablito Arizona State University Alumni Chapter, of whom brothers Carlos and Arturo Anaya, Somerton natives and longtime U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) test officers, were charter members. (Photos by Eugene Garcia and Mark Schauer)



Trees for Troops



The holiday season is the time for giving, and Yuma Proving Ground's Army Community Services (ACS) is providing real trees to active-duty Soldiers and their Families thanks to the Trees for Troops program. Fifty fresh noble fir trees were up for grabs yesterday afternoon, and several are still available today (first come, first served). ACS Director Jamie Amon and Military Family Life Counselor Penny Collins were on hand to help shoppers make their selection. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



YPG supports Wreaths Across America



Members of the Yuma community gathered to honor veterans by laying wreaths at their graves during the local Wreaths Across America event held across the nation on the morning of Dec. 17. Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering had the honor of giving remarks during the event. He thanked all the volunteers for participating and everyone present for their, "thoughtfulness towards those who have kept us free," adding "they all deserve to be remembered." The ceremony included a rendition of Amazing Grace, firing of three rifle volleys over the graves, Taps on bagpipes and the laying of the wreaths for each branch of service. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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At Yuma Proving Ground, the team that oversees various types of communication across the range became certified to climb communications towers for maintenance and repairs. (Photo by Ana Henderson)



The four learned about the roles and duties of being the climber and the ground support. The training included rescue maneuvers so they can act during an emergency. Lorenzo Duran is pictured helping Leonardo Lopezflores with his dorsal ring.

High stakes training lends to faster communication repair time

By Ana Henderson

We are in the digital age and communication is everything.

At U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG), the team that oversees various types of communication across the range received high stakes training in early December.

Bob Vogt, safety quality assurance/continuous process improvement manager, initiated the training to get range communications teams members certified to climb communications towers for maintenance and repairs.

"If something were to go wrong on one of these towers, the wires, a light,

cabling or antenna, these people now will be qualified to go up and replace or work on that equipment, without having to call an outside entity to have it done."

This ability has the potential to minimize down time when there are communications issues.

While some of the team members have previous climbing experience like Lorenzo Duran, who climbed while working for a cable company, none could climb without being certified.

The first portion of training was in-class instruction then the four men geared up for hands-on instruction. They got familiarized with the

hardness, carabiner clip, ropes, and knots while on the ground. Then it was time to put their skills to the test. With hearts pounding the men took turns climbing the tower.

"I feel a little tired and winded, but I feel good," recounted Duran who made the climb look easy after two-decades of not climbing.

Jim Gray, the only non-range communications technician in the group, is a safety quality assurance specialist. His job entails accident investigations and accident/incident reports among other duties. He was the first to go up, while admittedly feeling "very nervous," but he pushed past the nerves.

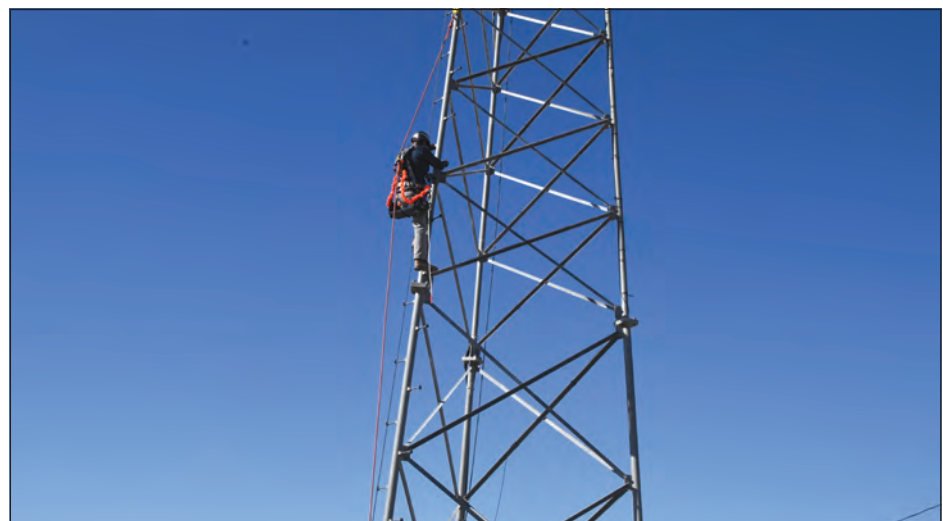
"This was overcoming a fear and learning something new at the same time," said Gray once he had two feet firmly on the ground. Gray volunteered to become certified to have a better understand of the requirements.

Carrying about 40 pounds of gear, they each made their ascent climbing halfway up the tower and then climbed across.

The four learned about the roles and duties of being the climber and the ground support. The training included rescue maneuvers as well. While the men are not first responders, they will be able to act quickly if one of their team member slips.



The first portion of training was in-class instruction then the four men geared up for hands-on instruction. They got familiarized with the hardness, carabiner clip, ropes, and knots while on the ground. Benjamin Megui is pictured testing his gear.



With hearts pounding the men took turns climbing the tower with nearly 40-pounds of gear.

MACHINE SHOP

FROM PAGE 1

for the Excalibur and Precision Guidance Kit. Other work could be fabricating unmanned aerial vehicle loading tables, metal silhouettes for the targets team, and payloads for test vehicles.

The length of time per project varies on the work needed to be done. A project can take a few minutes or a few months. The size varies too, often requiring tolerances less than a thousandth of an inch.

"It can be anything from an eighth of an inch diameter to breeches," remarked Machinist Matt Keddy.

Ingram added, "The only thing that has ever stopped us from making something is size."

A recent large-scale project was a mobile blast shield. The shield that stood 12 feet tall, had hinges that could fold out and make it even taller. They referred to it as the transformer blast shield. The request for the unique item came from a test officer.

Project requests typically come from test officers who need a component to complete testing.

Jason Trepanier a welder, machinist, and welding teacher at Arizona Western College explained the process.

"Test officers will talk with the leads, then the leads will talk to us on how they want us to manufacture the product based on the materials we have available and the machinery we have to make the product."

The team then gets blue-prints or drawing or other times they create a plan based on discussions.

"Sometimes we visualize it when we talk with the customer and figure out what they want. Or we will draw it up on CAD [computer-aided design], show them, and make sure we are on the same page," explained Keddy.

The work does require a great deal of measuring by hand and attention to detail. While the team creates a large majority of projects with their hands, they are aided with computers for some projects. The shop recently added two more computer numerical control machines.

Ingram explained using those machines is a skill in itself.

"The enclosed machines are computer operated so a program must be created to make the part versus the old manual machines. It's a totally different skill set to create something by hand."

Using their skills to fabricate essential pieces for YTC provides the team with a daily dose of challenge and adventure they say they enjoy



Machinist Matt Keddy is working using a computer numerical control (CNC) machine. The enclosed CNC machines are computer operated — a program must be inputted to instruct the machine what to do.

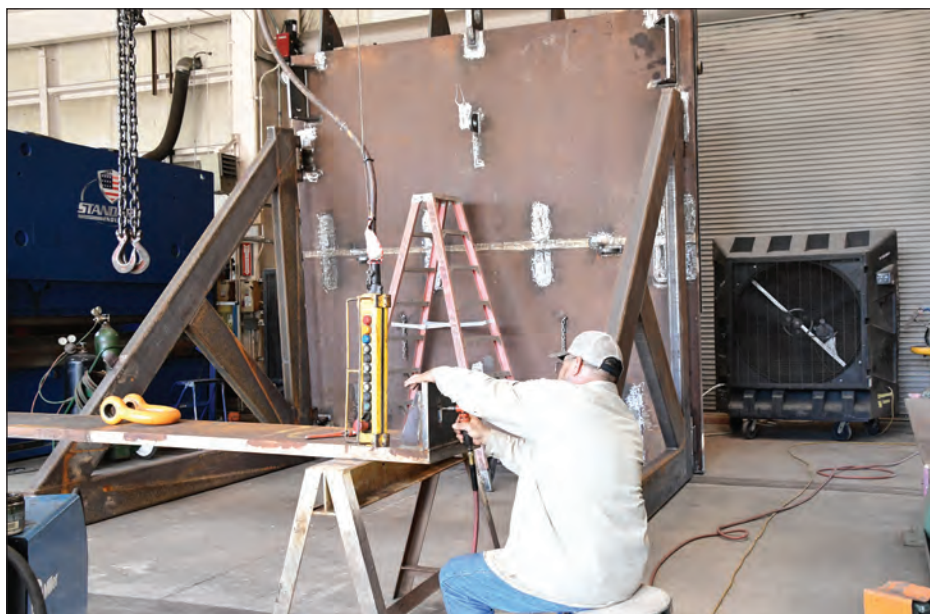
and don't get bored.

"We have a good team here. Everybody works good together.

Good bosses. Everybody helps each other out to get things done," remarked Keddy.



Jason Trepanier is a welder, machinist, and welding teacher at Arizona Western College. He's pictured inputting a code so the machine can cut out silhouettes for the targets team.



These metal magicians work out of several open-ai red warehouses that are split into sections for machinist and welders. Here Fernando Godines welds a part for the mobile blast shield.

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Parachute system tested at Yuma Proving Ground returns Orion from 1.4 million mile space journey

By Mark Schauer

Most people associate space travel with tremendous speed.

Yet tremendous speed is only half of the equation of manned space exploration.

Whereas a spacecraft has to travel at approximately 20,000 miles per hour to escape the Earth, to return its occupants safely to the ground the same capsule needs to be decelerated from 24,500 miles per hour to speeds slower than most people drive automobiles on residential streets.

Meanwhile, the extreme friction generated by the capsule hurtling back into Earth's atmosphere at such a tremendous speed means it's exterior heats to more than 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Safely landing under these conditions is a tremendous undertaking, and large parachutes play an important role in accomplishing it. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) subjected the parachute system of the Orion space capsule to multiple developmental



NASA subjected the parachute system of the Orion space capsule to multiple developmental and qualification tests at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) in recent years. The rope that makes up the parachutes' cord is made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber used in body armor: the change was made from steel because of testing at the proving ground. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

and qualification tests at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) in recent years.

The Orion Multipurpose Crew Capsule is a state-of-the-art reusable module designed to take four astronauts to the moon and Mars, and the Capsule Parachute Assembly System (CPAS) parachute system that brings it safely back to Earth is just

as sophisticated. The rope that makes up the parachutes' cord is made of Kevlar, the strong synthetic fiber used in body armor: the change was made from steel as a result of testing at YPG. Each main parachute consists of 10,000 square feet of fabric: the CPAS system is designed to deploy sequentially and pass through two stages prior to being fully open: on re-entry, two drogue parachutes deploy to slow the hurtling 10-ton capsule prior to three main parachutes taking it down to a languid landing speed of 17 miles per hour.

Further, the parachute system is designed with redundancies meant to protect the safe landing of astronauts even in extreme scenarios such as two

parachutes failing, or a catastrophic mishap shortly after takeoff. In many of the tests at YPG, evaluators intentionally rigged one or more of the CPAS' parachutes to not deploy to ensure that the remaining functioning chutes could withstand the additional stress of speed and mass the failure would cause.

In addition to being able to outfit the test vehicle with far more instrumentation and cameras than would be possible if it was coming from space, testing over land at YPG made recovery and examination of the parachutes easier than when the capsule lands in the ocean following a real space mission.

The years of hard work paid off. Following a launch on Nov. 16, the uncrewed Orion took a 1.4 million mile round-trip journey that took it past the moon, reentering the atmosphere and splashing down safely in the Pacific Ocean after the CPAS deployed without a hitch on Dec. 11. NASA has announced plans to recreate the flight with a crew of astronauts on board in 2024, and make a lunar landing as early as 2025.

YPG has hosted developmental testing for NASA since the earliest days of the space program. The precursor to the lunar rover used during the last moon landings in 1971 and 1972, dubbed the 'mobility test article,' was tested at the proving ground in 1966.

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YPG Community Tree Lighting



The Yuma Proving Ground the community celebrated the Annual Tree Lighting on Dec. 7. Chaplain Aaron Chicoine started the event with an invocation, followed by opening remarks from the FMWR Director Iselle Oquendo, Garrison Manager Ken Musselwhite and YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall. The fun continued with Mrs. Claus reading a story, cookies, and Christmas carols lead by Jason Meade and the Chapel Choir. Then Santa parachuted onto the field and later arrived by fire truck to greet the children. Jayden Black had the honor of placing the ornament on the tree as it was lit. The FMWR directorate hosted the event with help from Army Community Services, IHG Hotels and Michaels Military Housing. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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team, ignoring the players
dressed in black.

This task is difficult and
completely absorbing. Halfway
through the video, a woman
wearing a gorilla suit appears,
crosses the court, thumps her
chest, and moves on. The gorilla
is in view for nine seconds.
Many thousands of people have
seen the video, and about half
of them do not notice anything
unusual. It is the counting task
– and especially the instruction
to ignore one of the teams – that
causes the blindness. No one
who watches the video without
that task would miss the gorilla.

The authors note that the
most remarkable observation of
their study is that people find its

results very surprising. Indeed,
the viewers who fail to see the
gorilla are initially sure that
it was not there – they cannot
imagine missing such a striking
event.

The gorilla study illustrates
two important facts about
our minds: we can be blind
to the obvious, and we are
also blind to our blindness.
Though once rejected in the
world of psychology, the idea
that our minds are susceptible
to systematic errors is now
generally accepted.

Keep your eyes open and
don't miss the gorilla in the
room. Psalms 119:18 teaches us
to, "Open my eyes, that I may
behold wondrous things out of
your law."

YPG welcomes Travel Camp residents with BBQ



The Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Travel
Camp welcomed its winter resident
back with good food and lots of laughs
Nov. 29. Residents lined up to grab a
plate of BBQ and then enjoyed their
meal while hearing from YPG leaders
discuss the services and support they
provide for the residents. The YPG com-
munity is proud to serve and support
Veterans wintering at the Travel Camp.
(Photos by Ana Henderson)



Vacation Bible School makes a comeback at YPG

By Ana Henderson

For many kids Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a rite of passage and the memories made there are long lasting. Prior to COVID, Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Post Chapel hosted a weeklong VBS but when group events were cancelled VBS was on that long list.

This all changed the weekend of Dec. 10 when YPG's Post Chapel, Capt. Ryan Pearse and his team brought back VBS.

"I thought it was very successful especially since it's the first time that

we as a unit ministry team (UMT) had done this at YPG. I think for everyone on the UMT it was the first time ever hosting a VBS."

Pearse was determined to revive VBS even if it was just for one day. The key was all about timing. Pearse had to shorten the days and rescheduled the event once to make sure post residents were not on block leave or in school.

Nearly 30 children ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade participated in the Christmas-themed VBS which included arts and crafts, outdoor fun at the playground, and hot cocoa and

cookies. Afterwards many children returned home raving about the good time they had.

"We got reaction from some of the parents who told myself or my wife Kelly that they absolutely loved it, they want to go back, they had so much fun, and it was a great day."

Pearse adds that this would not have been possible without help from volunteers. About a dozen YPG community members, Travel Camp winter visitors, and youth pitched in to help run the program.

"Programs like this cannot be

successful without volunteers. We had adult volunteers and middle school and high school students who came. That was very helpful."

For those who want more VBS, Chaplain Pearse has good news: His team is working on a summer four-day program, tentatively set for the last week of July.

"This was a nice warm up, we will make some tweaks and adjustments, then great ready for July's VBS."

For updates you can visit the Chapel services or follow them on social media @YPG Chapel.



On the weekend of Dec. 10 Yuma Proving Ground's Post Chapel, Capt. Ryan Pearse and his team brought back Vacation Bible School on post. Nearly 30 kids attended and about a dozen volunteers helped. The Christmas-themed VBS included arts and crafts, outdoor fun at the playground, and hot cocoa and cookies. Pearse said that VBS would not have been possible without help from volunteers. About a dozen YPG community members, Travel Camp winter visitors, and youth pitched in to help run the program. (Loaned photos).

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