

# The Outpost

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

VOLUME 72 NO. 14 JULY 03, 2023

# Have a Safe & Happy 4th of July!

# New commander to lead YPG into future

#### By Mark Schauer

Col. Johnathon Nelson took command of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) from Col. Patrick McFall on June 29, accepting the guidon from Army Test and Evaluation Command Commander Maj. Gen. James Gallivan.

The son of a career Soldier, Nelson pledged to continue YPG's reputation for excellence at the forefront of Army transformation efforts.

"Yuma Proving Ground has a really good reputation," he said. "Every project manager I have ever spoken with told me that Yuma was the place of choice."

Prior to his recent stint at the Army War College, Nelson served



New U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson (left) accepts the command guidon from Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General Maj. Gen. James J. Gallivan as YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Herbert Gill and outgoing commander Col. Patrick McFall look on. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

as Product Manager for Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Systems Integration, and at the Army Evaluation Center (AEC) prior to that. YPG was his top choice for command prior to being selected.

"I chose Yuma Proving Ground primarily because I wanted to be around people in the test community that I was so impressed with before," he said. "They are really professional people who are experts in their field, and I wanted the opportunity to work with them again."

During his command, Nelson wants to ensure that YPG's culture for safety and excellence is sustained. He also stressed he wants

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# U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground celebrates Army's 248th Birthday

#### By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

(YPG) celebrated the Army's 248th birthday on June 14 with an early

# The Outpost

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Visit our website at: www.yuma.army.mil or email to: ana.c.henderson.civ@army.mil **Commander:** Col. Patrick McFall **Public Affairs Officer:** Mark Schauer **Public Affairs Specialist/Outpost Editor:** Ana Henderson **Public Affairs Specialist:** James Gilbert

Visual Information Manager: Eugene Garcia Cold Regions Test Center Photographer: Sebastian Saarloos

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For nearly a quarter of a millennium, the United States Army has courageously fought our country's wars and served honorably in peace. Thanks to American Soldiers, freedom's light shines as a beacon throughout the world.

"The battle streamers on the Army flag represent more than just



combat: they represent the sacrifices of the millions of individuals who have defended our way of life," said YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall in remarks at the morning ceremony. "They represent the families who supported their Soldier. They represent the Army Civilians who have stood side by side with us. Most importantly, they represent an unbroken commitment to the Constitution of the United States and the American people that will endure for all time."



Family Morale Welfare and Recreation hosted a Soldier's BBQ and Army Birthday cake cutting ceremony later that day during lunchtime at the Fitness Center.

## Army Birthday Fun Run top 3





Chaplain Capt. Ryan Pearse placed first in the annual Army Birthday Fun Run. He clocked in at 23:13, his son rode in just behind him providing moral support. Later in the day, Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Patrick McFall presented winners with a ribbon. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

#### Scan QR code for video of the Army Birthday's sights and sounds.





Airborne Test Force (ATF) Solider Sgt. Brannon Schieman placed second with a time of 23:43 and ATF Soldier Sgt. Richard Simmons came in third with a time of 28:08.

#### Leadership thanks Resource Management team



Members of the Resource Management Directorate team at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground were awarded Certificates of Achievement on behalf of then Commander Col. Patrick McFall and Technical Director Larry Bracamonte for their work completing multiple complex contracting actions in support of the YTC and CRTC Mission Support Contracts. Left to right: Larry Bracamonte, Cesar Reta, David Krieger, Shellie Authery, Tom Cook, McFall (Photo by Ana Henderson)

### **Length of Service Awards**







TOP LEFT: Yuma Test Center (YTC) employee Frank Garcia was recognized by YTC Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering for his 35 years of service to the U.S. government. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

TOP RIGHT: Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) employee Aida Houghton was recognized by then YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall for her 35 years of service to the U.S. government (Photo by Ana Henderson)

BOTTOM LEFT: Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) employee Mark Schauer was recognized by then YPG Commander Col. Patrick McFall for his 15 years of service to the U.S. government. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

#### <sup>4</sup> JULY 3, 2023 Safety Director is first at YPG to earn prestigious award

#### By James Gilbert

The U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has achieved unprecedented success over the years under the watchful eye of Director of Installation Safety Ronald Van Why.

As such, the post just recently earned an unheard of 12th consecutive Army Safety Streamer, which was preceded by an Accident Avoidance Award the year before.

The Installation Safety Office also had a perfect score during the most recent Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Directorate Readiness Organizational Inspection.

On top of all that, a Collateral Duty Safety Officer program and an Additional Duty Safety Officer program developed by Van Why both garnered recognition and are now being used at other garrisons.

Accidents and injury rates have decreased as well under Van Why's tenure. By the end of Dec. 2022 YPG had gone 182 consecutive months without an at fault Class A or Class B accident.

It is no wonder why Van Why recently won an IMCOM 2022 Stalwart Award for demonstrating the highest standard of exceptional performance. He was one of nine civilian employees recognized at a June ceremony in San Antonio.

"It is a very humbling reward for me," Van Why said. "It shows that Lt. Gen. Omar Jones, who is the commanding general of IMCOM, trusts and believes in what I'm doing."

Van Why is the only civilian employee from YPG to receive a Stalwart Award and at the time of his nomination that streak of no at fault accidents had been extended to an even more impressive 184 consecutive months.

"Van Why epitomizes the Installation Management Command professional," Garrison Manager Ken Musselwhite wrote in Van Why's nomination. "No task is beneath him, and no challenge too great. His positive attitude, subject matter



Director of Installation Safety at U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground Ronald Van Why. (U.S. Army Photo)

expertise and dedication to mission, coupled with selfless service and pride in ownership make him an IMCOM stalwart."

When YPG lost its Industrial Hygienist in 2022 and the building remained vacant, Van Why took steps to ensure the installation remained safe by creating a campaign to educate the post's workforce of more than 1,200 employees on the identification and hazards associated with lead, asbestos, and mold.

He was also able to purchase lead, asbestos and mold sample kits and found a local laboratory with a three-day turnaround on results that was willing to test the samples at a reduced cost.

"Having the background and expertise in Industrial Hygiene turned out to be a benefit for the Army," Van

#### Why said.

A huge proponent of coaching and mentorship, Van Why added that he thinks it is important that everyone on his team knows how to do his job, and he is training them to do so. As a result, in late 2022 every member of his team had received their professional certifications in occupational health and safety.

Additionally, some team members went on to earn their certifications in courses such as mold remediation, protocols, environmental specialists, lead abatement worker, radiation officer, capturing critical information during the investigation process, and permit-required confined space to name a few.

Recognizing there was a need, Van Why also taught a 30-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration Construction Training Course designed to help newly-hired contract officer representatives and engineering technicians recognize violations and improve safety at job sites where contractors may not have done the work correctly.

"They did not have the background, knowledge or training they needed to oversee construction contractors," Van Why said. "As an authorized OSHA Outreach Instructor I chose to train them myself,"

Other initiatives Van Why undertook included working with YPG's Directorate of Public Works and local Mission and Installation Contracting Command office to complete 32 task orders on a timeline drastically reduced by continuing resolutions, delays in funding and changing deadlines.

He is also credited with fully implementing the newly-released Army Safety and Occupational Health Management System a full two years ahead of schedule, as well as being a member of the IMCOM-Readiness Organizational Inspection Team.

His contributions don't end there. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic Van Why took it upon himself to come up with new and innovative ways for employees to continue their training during the lockdown. Many of his methods are still used today.

As a 2022 Stalwart Award winner Van Why has been selected to be part of a talent management team tasked with retaining and recruiting civilian employees, which is something he is very proud of.

"It is going to be our job to come together every quarter and brainstorm some ideas that we can present to Lt. Gen. Jones.

Van Why's commitment to his profession extends well past the garrison's gate. Locally, he is a Yuma Area Safety Council member; interacts regularly with his counterpart at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and the various federal, tribal, and state agencies; and stays in contact with several construction companies that do business in Arizona.



Van Why recently traveled to San Antonio, Texas to accept the Installation Management Command 2022 Stalwart Award for demonstrating the highest standard of exceptional performance. He was one of nine civilian employees recognized at a June ceremony in San Antonio. (Loaned photos)

# YPG wraps up another successful GEMS summer camp

#### By Ana Henderson

A whooping 80 students received specials access to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) to take part in the week Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science (GEMS) summer camps.

This year students from around Yuma County and as far as Somerton traveled to YPG for the camps. In years past they've had students from East County and Imperial Valley attend.

"The more kids we can reach and give exposure to YPG and to STEM concepts and tie them together with what we do out here and educate our community youth on what test and evaluation means and give them this opportunity to a free STEM camp the better," explained GEMS Coordinator Paula Rickleff.

Most of these kids have no connection to YPG however a few do have parents who work at YPG like Addison Head.

"It's pretty fun. You learn a lot."











U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground hosted two, one-week Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science Army sponsored camps. The first started on June 5 and the second on June 12. A total of 80 students were exposed to the world of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. (Photos by PAO staff)

Head was impressed with the static displays and enjoyed climbing inside the vehicles.

Kyndall Wallace's father also works at YPG, and she said now she understands a bit more about what he does.

"It's all super interesting."

Hearing these types of compliments makes hosting the two weeklong camps all worth it says Rickleff.

Because the number of students keeps rising the number of support personal needed does too.

The support personal come from various branches of Yuma Test Center and are the experts who create the labs and facilitate them.

"They are the ones who makes GEMS work," remarks Rickleff. Adding, "They make the programs succeed with their labs. They do the preparation and provide the supply list. It's because of their expertise and knowledge."

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the installation to continue its 80 years of outstanding rapport with the local Yuma community.

"I believe in a sense of community. If it is already there, let's enhance it. You can take care of people and



YPG Commander Col. John Nelson makes remarks after taking over command. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

accomplish the mission: you don't have to sacrifice one for the other." Nelson is also eager to show the YPG workforce the impact the developmental testing they do has on Soldiers in the field.

"I know I'm going to be so humble every day being around people that have those skillsets that are so



Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General Maj. Gen. James J. Gallivan thanks outgoing Col. Patrick McFall for the work he's done at YPG and welcomes Col. John Nelson



YPG Airborne Test Force's CW3 David Minnis, Sgt. First Class Cody Shew, Sgt. First Class Cody Lavalla and TPCP Manager Joey Castillo jumped onto Cox Field to open the ceremony.

selfless at the same time," he said. "It is very rewarding to be around people like that."

In recent years, YPG has achieved an unprecedented prominence within the Department of Defense. The proving ground hosted Project Convergence 2020 and 2021, the latter being the largest capabilities demonstration in the Army in the preceding 15 years, as well as Project Convergence 2022 Technology Gateway and the 2023 iteration of the Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE) in April and May. The last three Secretaries of the Army have visited the test ranges, and ambitious Army transformation efforts will continue apace for the foreseeable future.

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## **Civilian Service Commendation Medal recipients**

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Patrick McFall took time during his farewell luncheon to recognized two members of the Command Group who have provided him with support during his tenure at YPG. He also recognized directorate leaders for their superior contributions to the organization. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



Larry Bracamonte Technical Director



Minerva Peters Chief of Staff



Iris Espinoza S1 Director



Jeffrey Tatar S-2/3/4/5 Director



Nick Carlson S-8 Director



Todd Hudson Technology and Investments Directorate, Director



Michael Demcko Mission Safety Director



Ernest Hugh Tropic Regions Test Center, Technical Director



Mark Schauer Public Affairs Office, Chief

# **Royal Netherlands Air Force participates in EDGE 23**

#### By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) was the epicenter of the Army's future force in Project Convergence 20 and 21; and continues to support the Army Futures Command's campaign of learning this year.

The Army Futures Command's Future Vertical Lift (FVL) Cross-Functional Team (CFT) held the annual Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE) 23 here over the course of multiple weeks in April and May.

The FVL CFT is aggressively testing most every facet of the Army's Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) and FVL, as well as advancing knowledge on electronic warfare. Unmanned aircraft, launched effects, and all manner of ancillary technologies to expand communications capabilities and Soldier survivability were all being tested simultaneously here.

This year's iteration featured participation from 10 international partners, including the Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF).

"We are focusing on joint multidomain operations and how to implement that physically," said Maj. Martin Diego, of the RNAF's Aerospace Warfare Center. "We are working on how we connect all the higher tier of the air domain and lower tier of the air domain and make sure that everyone has the same shared situational awareness."

YPG's vast size—more than 2,000 square miles of restricted air space allows testers to execute missions at tactically relevant distance, range, and scale.

"We simulated an air assault where you can have a lot of players in the air and a lot of data going over the networks and see if it still works," said Diego. "That's the good thing about EDGE: We are able to see if our thoughts on future operations are feasible, workable, and interchangeable with the United



Gen. James E. Rainey, commanding general of U.S. Army Futures Command, speaks to Dutch, German and Italian service members about the multi-national air assault operation that occurred during Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event 23 at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. (Photo by Nelson Ballew, Jr.)

States."

During the air assault scenario, pilots in a cutting edge fifth generation fighter aircraft were able to feed digital information to a hand-held device being used by a Soldier in the back of a helicopter. The imagery and data were also displayed on the helicopter cockpit's monitors, despite the differences in communications and network architecture of each airframe. This allowed each element of the exercise to talk to each other, a capability not previously possible due to system differences.

"It's been demonstrated before, but it is a real first at the level we've done it here, with the number of players we have here," said Diego. "This is exactly what FVL wants: multiple nations bringing their assets and integrating that into a big ecosystem."

The proving ground's clear, stable air and extremely dry climate combined with an ability to control a large swath of the radio frequency spectrum makes it a desired location for the type of testing EDGE was interested in: counter-unmanned aircraft solutions, extending network access, and flying autonomous and semi-autonomous aircraft. YPG's vast institutional UAS and counter-UAS testing knowledge and the presence of a wealth of other infrastructure meant for other sectors of YPG's broad test mission were utilized to support the aviation evaluations: YPG is home to things like technical and tactical targets, as well as generator and combined maintenance shops.

"It is really beneficial to be here to test stuff like this," said Diego. "We want to make sure that multi-domain operations is not just a buzzword, but an actual thing in five or ten years." The experience that YPG

personnel possess was a major influence on this year's iteration of EDGE.

"We got a lot accomplished last year and were really happy with what we got out of it," said Diego. "This year in the first week we already surpassed what we did last year in three weeks just because the basics were there already, we were used to working together with all of the teams. After two days of testing, we achieved a lot of our learning objectives just because everything we needed for support was in place."



# **Mission partners visit Cold Regions Test Center**



Mission partners from the Army Research Directorate, Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM), Army Research Lab (ARL) visited the Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) in late June, to establish a stronger relationship between ARL and Arctic stakeholders in Alaska. Following mission overview briefs from the ARL Team, and the CRTC commander and Technical Director, the ARL partners were given an environmental chamber demonstration and a tour of CRTC's Mobility Test Complex and the Bolio Lake Test Facility. (Photos courtesy of CRTC)

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## Chaplain's Corner -Rule No. 5, avoid building resentment

Chaplain's Corner Chaplain Capt. **Rvan Pearse** 

Rule No. 5 in Dr. Jordan Peterson's book, "12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos" is, "Do not let vour children do anything that makes you dislike them."

Peterson notes that some of his clients admit fighting with their children for large portions of time every night during bedtime. He rightly surmises that no matter how good your intentions, or how sweet and tolerant your temperament, you will not

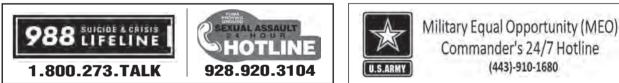
maintain good relations with someone you fight with for the equivalent of countless hours every year, even if it is vour child. Resentment will build.

Here are some other observations Peterson makes: It is the job of parents to teach their children how to behave so that other people will be able to interact meaningfully and productively with them. Furthermore, it is an act of responsibility to discipline a child. Correction is better sooner than later. Correction also helps the child learn that their misbehavior is a suboptimal solution. The job of a parent is to organize a

mind, and that is no simple matter. If a child has not been taught to behave properly by the age of four, it will forever be difficult for him or her to make friends. Finally, it is the primary duty of parents to make their children socially desirable.

Ephesians 6:1, 5 tells us. "Children, obey your parents. Subordinates, obey your leaders." Now, I want you to take a minute and replace parent with leader, and child with subordinate. Leaders: do not let your subordinates do anything that makes you dislike them. Subordinates: do not do anything that makes your leadership dislike you.

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# Library hosts Father's Day story time



The post Library gave parents and their children an opportunity to spend a bit of quality time together during the Father's Day story time. Library employee Bee Brimmage read "Daddy Speaks Love" to the more than a dozen attendees, followed by an arts and craft activity. (Photos by Dani Compton)

#### OUTPOST

# YPG's Garrison welcomes new Family Advocate

#### **By Ana Henderson**

Army Community Services added a member to the team who will provide a valuable resource to the U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) community.

Clarissa Ayala came on board in April as the new Family Advocacy Program Manager.

Prior to this position, Ayala worked as a social worker for a local hospice facility and mental health consultant with the Easter Seals Blake Foundation. The bulk of her career was spent as an advocate with Amberly's Place of Yuma which provides services to victims of abuse.

Ayala was born and raised in the Yuma community with family roots in Mexico. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Northern Arizona University both in Social Work.

She originally started schooling to become a nurse but life led her to this career.

"I have a traumatic background, as far as my upbringing, coming from a parent who was in a domestic violence relationship, that kind of pushed me into this without me event realizing it."

Acknowledging that being a social worker is a "difficult field" Ayala remarks, "I like to be that help and that support in those crisis situations. It's really difficult for people to reach out and to feel safe and I just like to be that comfort in anyway."



Clarissa Ayala came on board in April as the new Family Advocacy Program Manager with Army Community Services. She hopes to promote programs such as New Parenting Support program and the Exception Family Member for families of special needs children in her new role. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

Now, Ayala hopes to bring her help and understanding to the YPG community. "I just want them to feel comfortable and feel supported." She also would like the

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community to know that Army Community Services and the Family Advocacy Program has a variety of services and resources. Community members are welcome to swing by her office in building 301 to browse the resources material and books available and learn about the programs offered.

Two programs she wants to highlight are the New Parenting Support program. It's available for parents of newborns up to five years old. FAP provides a basket filled with informational books. Also, the Exception Family Member for families of special needs children.

Alaya loves the small town feel of YPG and hopes to add to that feeling.

"I want to be that safe space for them."

Ayala is available from 6am-4:30 p.m. or by calling extension 3224.

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