

# The Outpost

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

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## Electro Optical Maintenance Lab has wide impact at YPG

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) tests virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal in some of the world's most extreme environments.

Likewise, the equipment YPG needs to conduct its test mission is subject to the same extreme natural elements as the items under test.

Giving sensitive test equipment extra protection from heat and dust are major concerns of test crews across the proving ground, as ensuring they are as rugged and portable as possible for treks far downrange, which usually means modifications become necessary. Further, some highly specialized items are not commercially available at all and would be cost prohibitive to attempt to have built outside the proving ground.

YPG's Electro Optical



Electro Optical Maintenance (EOM) Lab Supervisor Drew Trujillo uses the lab's recently-acquired router table. The EOM lab is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and even design of a variety of equipment, from cameras and lenses to bomb-defusing robots. It also designs and fabricates custom items to support the testing work force. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Maintenance (EOM) lab is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and even design of a variety of equipment, from cameras and lenses to bomb-defusing robots. It also designs and fabricates custom items to support the testing work force.

"The lab fixes and repairs electronics and optical objects you find downrange," explained Steve Taylor of YPG's Engineering Support Branch, who oversees the lab's work. "They also build new equipment for those who want a new item to help with a test."

The lab includes a machine shop that can refurbish venerable equipment by manufacturing replacement parts that are no longer available on the open market, separate trailers to splice and repair fiber optic cable, and a

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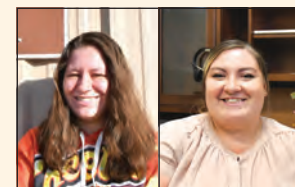
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# Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program being energized

By James Gilbert

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare said he learned some valuable information at the week-long Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (BOSS) Training forum he recently attended.

The BOSS program is an Army-wide program run by the Directorate for Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation and serves as a tool for commanders to gauge the moral and welfare of single Soldiers, who happen to make up the largest percentage of enlisted personnel.

Millare explained that the program, which also aims to increase retention and sustain combat readiness, uses three core components, which are quality of life, recreation and leisure, and community service to help single Soldiers maintain a balanced life.

“My goal is for this to be a priority for the garrison. Utilizing a program like this, which is catered to take care of single Soldiers is, in my view, very important,” said Millare, who serves as the senior enlisted advisor



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare speaks with several single Soldiers during a recently held Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (BOSS) meeting. The BOSS program is an Army-wide program and serves as a tool for commanders to gauge the moral and welfare of single soldiers, who happen to make up the largest percentage of enlisted personnel. (Photo by James Gilbert)

for the program. “The bottom line is that I intend to execute a program that is not passive. We are going to engage all the single Soldiers and find time to do things of interest to the group.”

The program also functions as a tool for Soldiers to address the chain of command in a face-to-face

format about any issues they are facing, needed improvements, or any concerns they may have while living on base.

Although the only money that is available in the BOSS program is tied to the quality-of-life component and comes from Installation Management Command, Millare doesn't think it being underfunded is an obstacle.

“We will be limited in resources, but I intend to utilize the two things we can do, which is fundraising activities and sponsorship, to mitigate that,” Millare said. “Even with the limited means we have here I want to make the most of it so every single Soldier who comes to YPG will have an opportunity to experience some of the great things the YPG and Yuma community can do for them.”

With relatively few single Soldiers currently assigned to YPG, lack of participation will have a direct impact on the program, especially when it comes to covering the cost of activities, events, and other types of functions.

Millare went on to explain that while he does not think it will be too expensive to operate the program, based on the number of single Soldiers he is worried that if enough

do not participate it will drive up the cost for those who do.

The training, which was held in-person for the first time in three years, took place in Leesburg, Va. at the National Conference Center from July 17 – 21 and provided information on how to plan, develop, execute, and support a successful BOSS program.

It also included workshops and fitness activities for the attendees, in addition to guest speakers on various related topics.

Also attending the BOSS Program training was Dylan Black and Staff Sgt. Ahmed Elinbabi, who received a coin from the Installation Directorate-Readiness Senior Enlisted Adviser after being one of two runners who bested him during a sprint challenge.

Monetary awards were given in four categories as well – Community Service, BOSS Campaign Video, BOSS in a BOX and BOSS Program of the Year.

Although YPG did not participate in any of the contests last year, Millare said he plans to change that in the coming year in order to showcase the garrison's BOSS program.



Yuma Proving Ground Airborne Test Force Soldier Staff Sgt. Ahmed Elinbabi, received a coin from the Installation Directorate-Readiness Senior Enlisted Adviser after being one of two runners who bested him during a sprint challenge while attending a BOSS program training opportunity last month. (Loaned photo)

## The Outpost

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# September is Suicide Prevention Month

## You Are the light in somebody's life

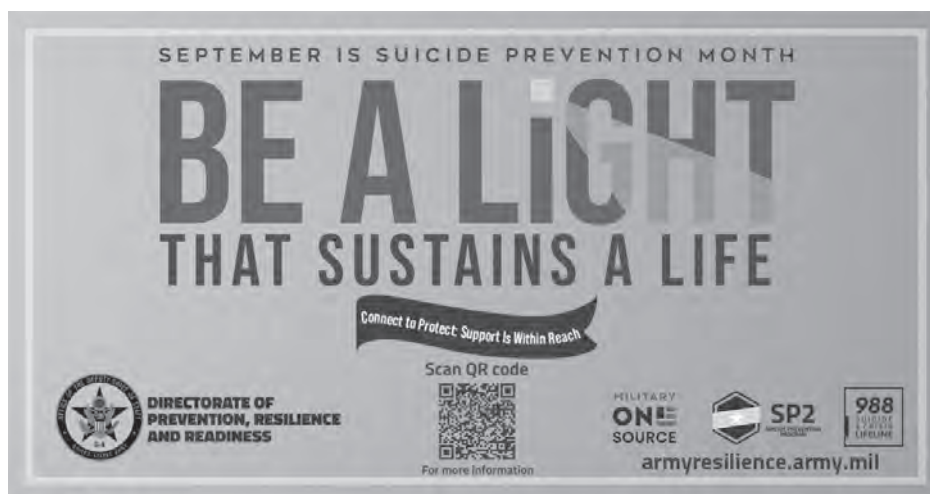
By Scott Zaehler

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness of suicide and to promote suicide prevention efforts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports over 48,000 people died by suicide in 2021, making this a leading cause of death in the United States. This is an issue that affects us all.

The 2023 Army Suicide Prevention month theme is "You are the light in somebody's life," which nests within the Department of Defense's theme of "Connect to Protect: Support is within Reach." We can be the person that recognizes a person at risk and intervene. Training is available in the, "Ask, Care, Escort" method of intervening with a person at risk. Contact your Suicide Prevention Program Manager at (928) 328-2249 for information and training.

There are many factors that can contribute to suicide, including mental health disorders, substance abuse, trauma, and social isolation. However, suicide is preventable. There are many things that people can do to help prevent suicide, including:

- Talking to someone about suicidal thoughts. If you are having suicidal thoughts, it is important to talk to someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, therapist, or doctor. Talking about your thoughts can help you to feel better and can also help you to get the support you need.
- Seeking professional help. If you are struggling with suicidal thoughts, it is important to seek professional help. A therapist can help you to



understand your thoughts and feelings, and can develop a plan to manage your suicidality.

- Connecting with others. Social isolation is a risk factor for suicide. It is important to connect with others, whether it is through friends, family, or a support group. Spending time with others can help you to feel less alone and can provide you with support.

- Taking care of yourself. It is important to take care of yourself physically and mentally. This includes eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and exercising regularly. Taking care of yourself can help you to feel better overall and can also reduce your risk of suicide.

If you are concerned about someone who may be at risk for suicide, there are things you can do to help. Here are some tips:

- Talk to the person about your concerns. Let the person know that you are worried about them and that you want to help.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help. If the person

to help you, including hotlines, support groups, and therapy.

Suicide is a serious issue, but it is one that can be prevented. By talking about suicide, seeking professional help, and connecting with others, we can all help to save lives.

### Here are some additional resources for suicide prevention

In a crisis:

- Utilize emergency services, such as 911
- The National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or 1-800-273-8255
- The Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Take them to the Emergency Room, doctor or health care provider

For non-crisis counseling and information:

- Contact your primary health care provider
- The Employee Assistance Program at (928)328-2249

is open to it, help them to find a therapist or other mental health professional.

- Be a supportive listener. Let the person know that you are there for them and that you care about them.
- Don't judge the person. It is important to remember that suicide is a complex issue and that there is no one right way to think about it.
- Get help if you need it. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, it is important to get help for yourself. There are many resources available



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On the morning of Aug. 22, YPG Commander Col. John Nelson and Antiterrorism Officer Robert Barocio handed out antiterrorism trinkets to employees at the entrance of the Walker gate to raise awareness about Antiterrorism. Leadership visited gates at all three cantonments and reminded employees, "If you see something, say something." (Photos by Ana Henderson)



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering joined Department of the Army Security Guard Dianna Arellano at the Kofa gate to welcome employees and remind them to keep vigilant.

# August marks 14th observance of Army Antiterrorism Awareness Month

By James Gilbert

"See something, say something" has been a perennial message of the Army's annual Antiterrorism Month, and since its inception 14 years ago Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) personnel have sought to raise awareness as creatively as possible.

One example of these efforts was the recent raising of the YPG-designated Antiterrorism Awareness Flag in front of the Range Operations Center building by Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) Antiterrorism Officer (ATO) Robert Barocio.

The purpose of the flag, which is adorned with a griffon-in-a-shield official logo of the Army's antiterrorism efforts, is to remind members of the workforce about vulnerabilities that can be exploited and to help strengthen their situational awareness.

"Antiterrorism Awareness Month

is basically a huge information campaign. Our mission is to gather information about what could harm us," Barocio said. "It is important to know what a threat is and have the ability to recognize and detect it."

Barocio explained that "simply put," antiterrorism refers to measures used at home or in the workplace to reduce the risk to people and property from a terrorist attack. That also includes developing and implementing a preventative safety plan.

For example, people manage their risks at home all the time by locking their doors and windows, having antivirus programs installed on their computers, and not leaving their passwords lying around.

"These are all also the same steps for the installation. My approach to antiterrorism is the same on base as it is in the home," Barocio said. "I take those same measures and expand them on a larger scale here for YPG."

In addition to banners having been set up at all the entrances, YPG Commander Col. John Nelson, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering and Barocio handed out antiterrorism trinkets on the morning of Aug. 17 at each gate.

Although August has been designated as Antiterrorism Month, Barocio said that doesn't mean that members of the workforce shouldn't be paying attention each and every day of the year and reporting anything they consider unusual or suspicious.

He also added that YPG and ATEC's antiterrorism measures owe their success in part to the partnership they have established and to the dedication, resilience and vigilance of the workforce.

"It is probably the pinnacle of antiterrorism from my standpoint," Barocio said. "Since there are more than 2,000 employees here, they are our eyes and ears because they are

more likely to see something and prevent an incident. They are vital to the effort."

ATEC, on any given day, faces a wide array of potential threats that could affect its ability to test in the future, which is why Barocio says the work of antiterrorism he does alongside the Garrison Antiterrorism Officer never stops.

"It is about creating a team mindset and delivering this message together as one voice," Barocio said. "We work daily to further the posture of the base and share information."

As the ATO Officer responsible for force protection measures it is Barocio's job to track and identify trends while working with state and federal law enforcement agencies to identify threats that threaten ATEC's test mission; assess potential risks; develop mitigation measures and recommend any Course of Action changes to reduce vulnerability.

## Construction at Walker Gate likely to affect traffic entering post

By James Gilbert

Civilian employees, contractors and Army personnel are asked to pay attention to traffic signs and lane closures for the next several months when entering Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) at the Walker Access Control Point.

Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 5 until the end of November the Walker Access Control Point will be under construction and signs will be placed to direct inbound traffic.

According to YPG Physical Security Officer Clinton B. Stone the inbound lane closures are necessary because

two of the three guard shacks at the gate are being replaced.

Those two guard shacks were originally built in 2011 and do not have running water or toilets.

"The guards are currently using port-a-johns and bringing their own water" explained Stone.

While inbound lane closures may vary based on the phase of the construction, at least one lane will always be open.

"We will have plenty of signage in place to direct traffic," Stone said.

While outbound lanes will most likely not be affected, there is a small

possibility they could be closed for a short period of time.

"The outbound lanes could be affected when the guard shacks are removed and replaced, but that will probably be for a short period of time or possibly done on a weekend," Stone said.

Guard shacks at the Howard and Kofa Access Control Points have already been replaced.

Delays in the inbound lanes can be expected during times of high traffic volume, which Stone said is typically between 5:30 a.m. and 6:30 a.m., when a majority of the workforce arrives.



Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 5 until the end of November the Walker Access Control Point at Yuma Proving Ground will be under construction and signs will be placed to direct inbound traffic. As such, at least one inbound lane will be closed periodically during the entirety of the project. Delays are expected during high traffic volumes. (Photo by James Gilbert)



# Proving Ground crews cleanup after Topical Storm Hilary

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) like the rest of the desert southwest braced for the worst while preparing for Hurricane Hilary.

By Saturday it was downgraded to a tropical storm, but still brought steady rain up to one inch in some locations. Sunday, winds as strong as 59 miles per hour blew through YPG.

Tyler Pitts with the Directorate of Public Works received updates throughout the weekend on the situation on post from YPG's range controllers and dispatchers. Pitts coordinated with Shearwater Mission Support (SMS) to have their crews respond once it was safe. The proving ground lost power on the Kofa Cantonment briefly when a pole toppled over.

"We had two-high voltage techs respond," he said. "Two or three crew members checked on the downed pole, we sent carpenters to try to stop roof leaks at Child Development



Most of the damage noticed by those driving around were broken tree branches on the Howard Cantonment. Shearwater Mission Support crews were out early cleaning up the debris quickly to ensure the safety of the installation. Chris Rico and James Roberson are picking up branches near Price Elementary School. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Center, and sent Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning technicians out to restart air conditioners such as the chapel's."

The Child Development Center sustained the most damage with water leaking through the ceiling into the toddler and infant rooms. YPG's Child and Youth Services

Coordinator Sommer Cloinger analyzed the room ratios and decided the center could continue to provide childcare.

"I spoke to each parent individually on Sunday, when we made the decision that we were going to be open," she said. "They were grateful. Others chose to keep their kids home. We had a lot of forgiving parents. The most important part was that our parents were very supportive with the actions that we took."

By Monday morning there was little evidence that the powerful storm had passed through. Most of the damage noticed by those driving around were broken tree branches on the Howard Cantonment Area. SMS crews were out early cleaning up the debris quickly to ensure the safety of the installation.

"We've picked up branches and

broken trees" explained Chris Rico with SMS's grounds maintenance team. "We are cutting trees into little pieces."

In all, a few trailers full of tree debris were hauled away to the landfill.

The YPG Public Affairs Office shared more than a dozen social media post and push notifications informing post residents and employees about storm predictions and road closures in the Yuma area.

Due to the diligence of the YPG team and the crews who worked over the weekend, the mission of testing equipment for the warfighter continues.

"These guys worked hard. They are always on call, and they are always willing to respond. A big thank you goes to them," said Pitts.



Shearwater Mission Support crew members Jesus Torres saws tree limbs as Everaldo Castro Sr. and James Roberson pick up the debris.

## Project Manager Combat Ammunitions Systems recognizes team for excellent support



Col. Leon Rogers, Project Manager Combat Ammunitions Systems (PM CAS) awarded Metrology and Simulation team members along with Munition and Weapons Test Officer Kevin Irr Certificates of Appreciation for their work supporting a PM CAS program. Deputy PM for PM CAS Pete Burke presented the certificates on the morning of Aug. 17 to the team recognizing them for their, "dedication and ability to adapt to a rapidly changing guidance and requirements in the execution of a safety qualification effort." Left to right: Pete Burke, Chadron Mitchell, Kevin Irr, Albert Ortiz, Adolfo Noriega, Lindsey Carter, Frank Aguilar. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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# U.S. Army empowers Delta Junction students through STEM event

By Angela J. Glass

Twenty-one middle school students from Delta Junction, Alaska are one step closer to realizing their dream professions thanks to U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC).

The Army, via a grant to CRTC's higher headquarters at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) in Arizona, empowered the youth during the weeklong- Achieving Widespread STEM Outreach using Mission Experience (AWSOME) Program at Fort Greely Aug. 1-4, focusing on age and grade appropriate hands-on activities, the students participated in activities in the fields of science and mathematics.

Aden Mccarick, 13, walked away from this camp with a new-found passion for science, having enjoyed the daily experiences while gaining a possible glimpse into his not so distant future career.

"We learned a lot about how they test equipment, and it was fun driving around remote-control cars," Mccarick said. "I love science ... I want to join the military when I grow up and want to incorporate science into my job."

The daily activities provided meaningful experiences for the students. They learned about engineering, coding, robotics,



LEFT: Delta Junction student Peyton Wright shoots a water balloon as part of a high-speed optics experiment during a weeklong science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) camp hosted by U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center and administered by Yuma Proving Ground's STEM outreach team Aug. 1-4. RIGHT: Delta Junction students Oliver Javalera, Keegan Enderle, Aubrey Bialik and Michael Davis, team mentor, enjoy a remote-control car race as part of a vehicle acceptance experiment during a weeklong STEM camp hosted by U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center administered by Yuma Proving Ground's STEM outreach team Aug. 1-4. (Photos by Fort Greely Public Affairs)



high-speed optics, and mathematic concepts throughout the week. Being taught by engineers and scientists employed by the hosting organizations, some of whom graduated from Delta Junction High School, gives a whole new meaning to the term giving back to the community.

"There's so much pressure on kids when they enter high school, 'What do you want to do? Where do you want to go to college?'"

said Paula Rickleff, workforce development and STEM outreach manager for U.S. Army YPG. "The more exposure we can give them to different disciplines allows them to spark an interest, or realize they aren't interested."

The importance of a STEM outreach program is not at all lost on CRTC Technical Director Jeffrey Lipscomb, who provided oversight to the week's activities.

"The need for STEM literacy is

growing exponentially, and these children are the answer to our nation's most complex problems," said Lipscomb. "I am so grateful to work for an organization who cares about bringing a program like this to our small, tight-knit community."

The AWSOME program was funded by the Army Educational Outreach Program which offers our nation's youth and teachers opportunities for meaningful, real-world STEM experiences.



## Government Accountability Office Audit Team visits Cold Regions

On 25 July, Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) hosted seven members from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Audit Team. The visit was part of the GAO Team's overall visit to the Ft. Greely Garrison and Missile Defense Complex. The visit began with an Arctic test mission overview and discussion on recent test events with the CRTC Commander Lt. Col. Jonathan Brown. CRTC's Technical Director Jeff Lipscomb then led the group through an interactive, hands-on environmental chamber demonstration. (Photos by CRTC)





# Army Fellows program allows participants to gain professional experience

By James Gilbert

Being in the Army Fellow program at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) for the better part of the past year and a half has allowed Emily Mickel to get an early start in her chosen profession.

Mickel, a mechanical engineer and graduate of Cornell University, is currently assigned to the Engineering Support Branch, where she was able to solve an ongoing file transfer problem shortly after she started in the program.

At the time she was working on the Geographic Interface System to populate maps with data when she was approached by the Geodetics Department to write them a very specific type of widget.

"They needed to be able to convert between file types. I had to solve it with my limited programming experience," Mickel said. "They had an Excel file and needed to convert it to be able to use it in Google Earth, so I designed a widget that would automatically do it."

A widget is a small application or program that provides a specific way for a user to interact with an operating system or website.

The Army Fellows program, which has different levels and durations, depending on the applicant's qualifications and career goal, is designed to attract, recruit, and hire top civilian talent and develop future Army civilian leaders.

The two-year program also blends work assignments, formal training, and self-development as the participants progress from entry-level to more advanced key positions within the workforce.

"I said I wanted to do some type of design work and that I wanted to see what test officers did, so (the program) took that into account when determining where to send me," said Mickel, who turned down an offer with the U.S. Patent Office in Washington D.C. to come to here. The Florida native also went on to



Emily Mickel, a mechanical engineer, and graduate of Cornell University has been working at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) the past year and half under the Army Fellows program, which is designed to attract, recruit, and hire top civilian talent. Once her two-year program ends, Mickel, who is currently assigned to the Instrumentation Division, can be hired at YPG as a permanent civilian employee if any positions are available. (Photos by James Gilbert)

say, "I chose YPG because I thought the work would be interesting. I thought to myself, hey they blow things up in the desert and that sounds like fun. I had never been to this part of the country, so I decided why not?"

With about four more months remaining in her program Mickel is now back with the Engineering Support Branch. She also spent time with Metrology and Simulation, and Munitions and Weapons.

Looking back so far on her time at YPG Mickel said she really appreciated the rotational aspect of the program and some of her highlights include performing computer aided design, simulation and modeling, shadowing test officers, overseeing her own test and taking trips down range.

"I know YPG is big, but it is kind of hard to visualize. We were sent to a test site, and it took us over an hour to get there," Mickel said. "We were really, out in the middle of nowhere. There was no phone service or electricity. It was just a



Kylie Kime, another Army Fellows program participant at YPG, is currently with the Safety Directorate and has been in her position since May 22. Prior to being accepted into the program she was civilian employee with the Coronado Naval Base Fire Department for three years.

tiny little shack, me, the test officer and three gunners."

According to the Fellows program, rotating through different departments helps the participants to understand all the things that go into completing projects and exposes them to types of work they may not have otherwise experienced.

Kylie Kime, another Army Fellows program participant at YPG, is currently with the Safety Directorate. Only two months into her program, she excitedly added that she is looking forward to the wide range of experience she will get by moving around.

"It is a really cool way to learn and progress my professional

development. It's been enriching. I have learned so much," Kime said. "I'm a very goal-oriented person, so when I have a finish line to get to, I do everything I can to get there."

Kime, who was a civilian employee with the Coronado Naval Base Fire Department for three years, moved to Yuma from San Diego with her husband in January after he got out of the U.S. Air Force.

Prior to being accepted into the Army Fellows program in May she was working as an Emergency Medical Technician for the Rural Metro Fire Department here in Yuma.

"Before moving out here my husband and I would go camping at the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge," Kime said. "We would drive right past YPG."

With an eye to pursuing a career as a Safety Specialist, Kime explained that it is a way that she can make a difference in people's lives each and every day.

"When you get educated about safety you start to look at things differently, not just in a workplace, but in your personal life," Kime said. "I get to make sure accidents don't happen and that is important."

While neither Kime or Mickel are permanent employees, they could have the opportunity to be hired by the Army and work at YPG if there are any positions available once their programs end, which is something both would like to do.

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## Child and Youth Services hosts #KeepingYOUSafe event



Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Child and Youth Services (CYS) Middle School and Teen Program hosted a #KeepingYOUSafe event on the evening of Aug. 11. CYS, with support from Army Community Services and YPG Police Department, discussed topics including cyber safety, date smart, and other age-appropriate discussions on at risk topics. The teens were able to try on the impairment goggles provided by the police. The 15 teens who attended enjoyed games, prizes, pizza, and specialty drinks. Youth Services Director Meghaan Flood said, "Thank you to ACS and the YPG Police department for their continued support of our programs." (Photos courtesy of CYS)



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# IMPACT

FROM PAGE 1

specially filtered cleanroom to accommodate the repair of electronic equipment sensitive to dust. It's hard to imagine a piece of test support equipment that the EOM lab's technicians haven't repaired or enhanced.

"Most of them have their own specialty, from optics and high-speed cameras to small surface mount circuit boards and small capacitors and resistors," said Taylor.

Among the most fascinating pieces of equipment in the lab are three-dimensional (3D) printers that use computer aided design to make virtual designs of products that are then printed in three-dimensions with an automated, additive process. The machines melt plastics like Thermoplastic Polyurethane in various thicknesses the user chooses to produce a particular part. The machines can even admix carbon fiber to add strength to the parts.

"If it has a lot of small parts that would take a lot of time to machine, they can be printed a great deal faster, especially something small like a lens

cap," said Taylor. "Plus, you're saving money by printing what you want instead of wasting material. In most cases, the part is so small we can have it in about 30 minutes."

The 3D printers, however, are merely a tool to help human technicians make a wide variety of equipment, from a gun-bore inspection tool that can illuminate the interior of a gun barrel with either light-emitting diode (LED) or ultraviolet light to replacement capacitors and safety upgrades for decades-old high-intensity lighting equipment. YPG has a longstanding reputation of making short-fuse tests possible and overcoming the obstacles that inevitably occur in testing in an expedited manner.

"If something breaks, we try to fix it as quickly as we can," said Taylor. "Sometimes in 24 hours if a test in progress has a critical need for it."

The shop has also recently acquired a large router table that allows for faster, more accurate cuttings of multiple parts out of a single sheet of aluminum held fast in place by a powerful vacuum compressor. The machine is fitted with eight different tools, which allows for

multiple facets of a piece to be milled in one go-round rather than in multiple iterations that require new programming of the machine.

Sometimes a solution goes beyond mere repair and requires intuition. When boxes carrying GoPro cameras dropped out of aircraft during tests were difficult to recover from the desert dun, the EOM lab began fabricating the boxes in fluorescent colors that more readily stand out. Taylor recalls a vehicle test that wanted to obtain footage of an engine belt that was expected to break under test, and their under-hood camera images were too dark for adequate study. The EOM lab replaced the halogen light under the hood with an LED one to much better effect. In another instance, the lab 3-D printed an adaptor for a new thermal imaging camera to make it compatible with lenses and other highly specialized--and expensive--accessories that were already on hand.

"It started with 3-D printing a prototype to prove it works," said Taylor. "If we need to, we could make it out of metal, but the plastic one is working right now."



The EOM Lab includes a machine shop that can refurbish venerable equipment by manufacturing replacement parts that are no longer available on the open market, separate trailers to splice and repair fiber optic cable, and a specially filtered cleanroom to accommodate the repair of electronic equipment sensitive to dust. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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# Test Officer's hobby as a stop motion creator takes patience and creativity

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's workforce is highly skilled and passionate about their work testing equipment for the warfighter.

Many of those employees also have unique skills, talents, and hobbies outside of work. Erik Alcala is no exception. His hobby as a stop motion creator takes patience and creativity.

If you are not familiar with the concept, Alcala explains.

"What a stop motion creator does is create a movie using stop motion, and that is a series of pictures joined together in order to make characters move."

Think back to those little stick figures drawn on the corner of a book and as you quickly flip through the pages the characters move. Some compare the concept to Claymation, the method that was used to create "The Nightmare Before Christmas" movie. As you can imagine, this takes an abundant number of photos.

"For example, if you are shooting 12 frames per second, it means you need 12 pictures per second so for a one-minute video you are going to need



Munitions and Weapons Test Officer Erik Alcala used stop-motion photography to create short films on YouTube. It started as a hobby with his oldest son and turned into a family hobby. (Screen captures from YouTube)

over 740 pictures," explained Alcala.

Between those hundreds of photos, the creators are moving the characters, in Alcala's case Legos.

"It can be a big move or a small move. Normally you are rotating their head so they can look around, rotating their arms and legs when they are walking."

Though he adds, "little motions require a lot of pictures. That can take a while, and a lot of patience."

Alcala first got into the hobby when his oldest son was 10 years old and saw a stop motion app. They begin by taking a few photos using the

millions of Legos they have and got instant results.

"He got really excited and said, 'let's make a movie.'"

So, they made a short movie and posted it on YouTube. Their first theme was Ghostbusters.

Because creating in this format takes an extraordinary amount of time, their longest video is about five minutes. Yet that time has become quality time with his family, with his wife and youngest son getting involved.

"My wife did some of the voiceovers. It was a good family activity to do, and that's why we kept

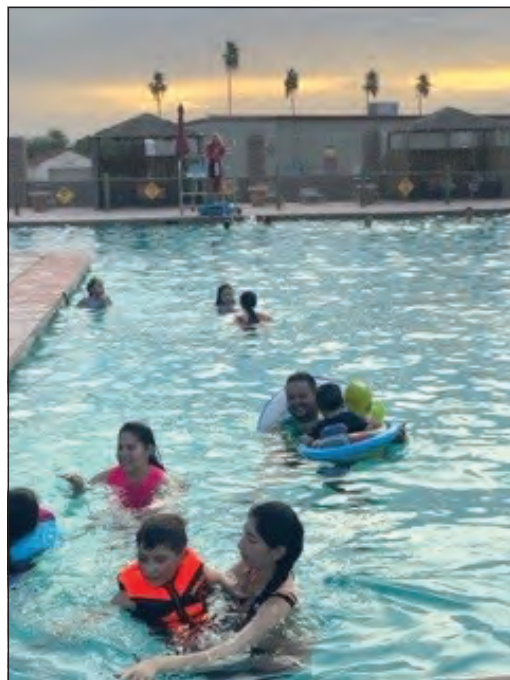
doing it."

Alcala has been a dedicated YPG employee since 2010 and is currently a test officer with YPG's Munitions and Weapons Division.

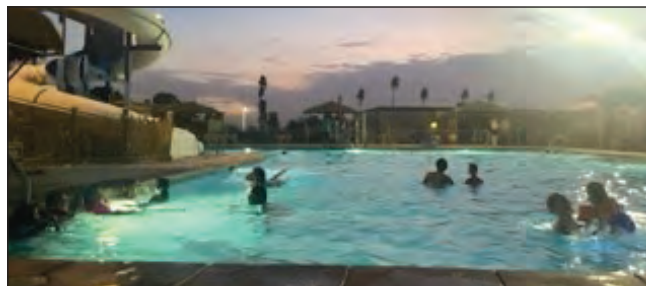
To learn more about Alcala's hobby listen to his podcast episode on Outpost Outspoken by scanning the QR code.



## Community enjoys nighttime swimming



The winds that came along with Tropical Storm Hilary put a damper on Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Dive-in movie night because the inflatable projector wouldn't stay up. However, all was not lost. Community members who showed up looking for a good time at the Kahuna Pool still enjoyed an evening of swimming under the stars which is a community favorite. (Loaned photos)



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