

The Outpost

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

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Airborne Test Force tests field radio ruck to survive airborne combat missions

By Ana Henderson

The U.S. Army Airborne Test Force (ATF) located at Yuma Test Center, Yuma Proving Ground, recently tested program of record Manpack radios, the AN/PRC-158 and AN/PRC-162, managed by the Product Manager Handheld, Manpack, Small Form Fit (PdM HMS) inside the Army's newest Radio Carrier Rucksack (RCR) solution. The RCR, developed and produced by the Natick Soldier Systems Center, was stressed in combat-realistic scenarios by the center to determine if the RCRs could safely support parachute operations without damage to radios or the ruck.

Soldier feedback using the legacy radio rucksack over several years of



The U.S. Army Airborne Test Force at Yuma Test Center recently conducted parachute jumps to test the survivability of Manpack radios inside the Army's newest Radio Carrier Rucksack. When jumpers were about 150 feet from the ground, they lowered the rucksack carrying the radio, making it about 15 feet below them when they landed. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

test events indicated that a solution with better weight balance, comfort, and heat dissipation was required for the user. PdM HMS initiated a competitive market research strategy, which brought a variety of industry and government rucksack solutions to Soldiers during 2022 and 2023 that led to the selection of the currently tested RCR solution.

"The competitive process really drove industry innovation, challenging the community to develop a best all-around rucksack solution in support of Army combat operations while carrying our modernized communications equipment," said Derek Harberts, deputy PdM HMS. "What we saw during this test are the results of

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Evaluation Command
Employee of the Quarter
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YPG partners to
conduct environmental
research at test sites
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YPG Soldier helps
football team
take home trophy
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Airborne Test Force Soldier earns promotion



Sgt. Kwame Scaife of Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) Airborne Test Force, who has served more than 15 years in the U.S. Army, was officially promoted to the rank of Staff Sgt. during a ceremony on Feb. 1, with YPG Commander Col. John Nelson and Yuma Test Center Lt. Col. Shane Dering both present. (Photos by James Gilbert)



Army Test and Evaluation Command Employee of the Third Quarter 2023

Name: Tyler Heagney

Job title: Mortar 1 Team Lead with Munitions and Weapons Division

Recognition: Heagney received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal and was named The Army Test and Evaluation Command Employee of Quarter for the fiscal year 2023 Third Quarter.

Reaction: Heagney has been with Yuma Proving Ground for 11 years and said, "Being ATEC Employee of the Quarter is incredibly humbling. ATEC has a wide umbrella and to be picked among everyone for my work ethic is pretty cool. However, I owe most of my success to the awesome people I work with at YPG and our 'can do' attitude and culture that we have built here. That attitude is why customers love coming to YPG and why it is easy as a test officer to get work done."



Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson presented Tyler Heagney with a Civilian Service Commendation Medal for being chosen as the Army Test and Evaluation Command Employee of the Quarter for the fiscal year 2023, Third Quarter on Feb. 1, 2024, during a town hall. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

Yuma Test Center Mission Employee of the First Quarter 2024

Name: Jason Brock

Job Title: Geodetic Technician

Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for helping to develop a program to use an unmanned aircraft system to survey and map ranges at Yuma Proving Ground. He was also part of a team that recently supported two tests for the Munitions and Weapons Division. Brock was named Yuma Test Center Mission Employee of the First Quarter for 2024.

Reaction: "This was a team effort, and we had a great team," Brock said. "I appreciate them."



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Geodetic Technician Jason Brock a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on Jan. 25, 2024. (Photo by James Gilbert)

The Outpost

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When: Tues. Feb. 13, from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Where: 13226 S Frontage Rd.

When: Tues. Feb. 13, from 3-4 p.m.

Where: 2951 S 21st Drive



YPG Commander hosts town hall



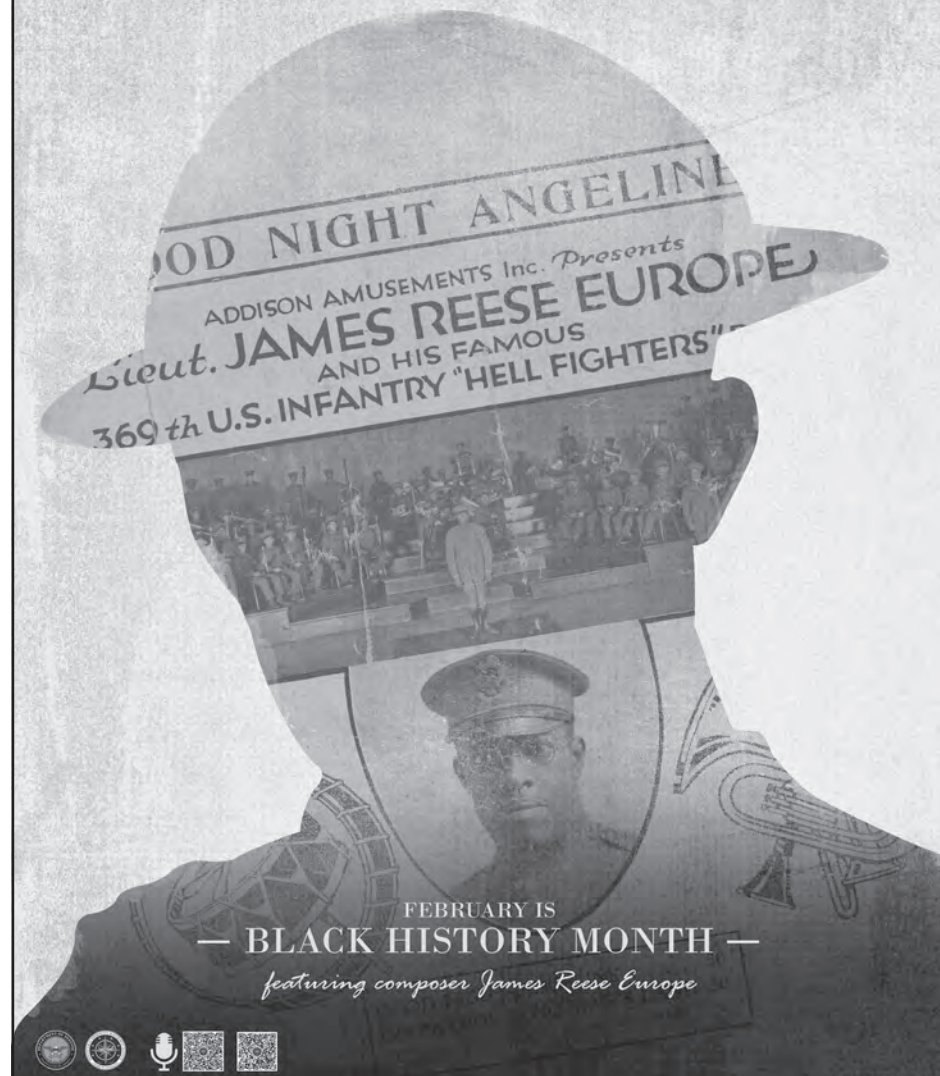
Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson hosted a town hall at the Post Theater on Feb. 1, 2024. During the all-hands event the commander announced YPG's new vision and mission statements. The mission statement reads, "Execute world premier extreme natural environment testing that supports the delivery of capabilities to the Army, Joint Service, and International Partner Warfighters." Nelson said, "I wanted to be a little more concise and something everybody can rally around." (Photo by James Gilbert)

YPG and Garrison leaders recognize Housing Department for helping Soldiers



Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson and Garrison General Manager Kenneth Musselwhite recognized Housing Chief Jessica Trelease and Housing Manager Annette Branch who coordinated and assisted YPG Soldiers with their move from barracks in to on post housing. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE ARTS



YPG partners to conduct environmental research at all three test sites

By James Gilbert

No matter how much a combat system has been developed within a laboratory, or tested through virtual or simulated environments there will be unforeseen issues arise when that system is subjected to military operations in the extreme climactic conditions of arctic, tropical, or hot desert environments.

This is why the U.S. Army conducts developmental testing at the test centers of Yuma Proving Ground (YPG). According to Technology Investments Manager Jonathan Olbert, it is important to have scientific evidence that relates its test centers to the extreme natural environments of the potential future operating environments.

In doing so, YPG has utilized world-renown scientific organizations such as the Desert Research Institution (DRI) to conduct environmental research at areas across all three test centers.

“They have been out here on and off for quite a while, as different requirements come up, or different money comes available,” Olbert said. “We like to study and research our environments in order to be better prepared, and to draw an analogous to possible future locations where we might have threats.”

DRI, which conducts cutting-edge environmental research and is a part of the Nevada System of Higher Education, was awarded its most recent contract in September of 2023. The nonprofit organization has been assisting YPG with environmental research and terrain characterization, along with soil and imagery data since the early 1990s.

Over the years YPG has been incorporating the findings garnered from this type of research into its knowledge base, which has led to having a greater understanding of the types of challenges posed by the combined effects of extreme environments on combat systems.

“We have many different types



No matter how much a combat system has been developed within a laboratory, or tested through virtual or simulated environments there will be unforeseen issues arise when that system is subjected to military operations in the extreme climactic conditions of arctic, tropical, or hot desert environments. This is why it is important for Yuma Proving Ground to have scientific evidence that relates its test centers to the extreme natural environments of the potential Future Operating Environments. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

of soil and terrain formations across the range that have different characteristics and physical, chemical and biological properties,” Olbert said. “They can all interact with vehicles and weapons systems differently.”

One of the most important concerns when it comes to the developmental testing of current and future military equipment is that it must function as intended in all three of the extreme natural environments in which YPG conducts testing: desert, cold regions, and tropic regions.

“If there is a piece of equipment that is going to get fielded to the Soldiers, typically it will undergo testing at the three test centers to make sure it can withstand those extremes, so we need to understand our environments really well,” Olbert said.

Olbert added that future plans at YPG call for using drones with special sensors to examine the landscape at certain sites so customers will have as much

information as possible about the composition of the environment where they have chosen to conduct their test.

“If you look at the soil using hyperspectral imagery there are certain physical characteristics or mineral deposits on the surface that can affect different radio waves and frequencies,” said Olbert, who manages DRI’s contract. “That type of detailed understanding of the environment is exactly what we need.”

DRI has also conducted aerial surveys using drones to map out YPG’s vehicle test tracks, many of which consist of unimproved dirt and gravel roads that have been used for decades.

“Some of test courses we have used to be rocky and bumpy and have steep slopes but have degraded over time from the natural terrain,” Olbert said. “The aerial surveys have helped us make developmental decisions as to whether we should realign our test courses to improve the roughness or difficulty of them.”

Olbert added that it’s not just about understanding the effects the environment, but also the need to assist customers on developing solutions based on the analysis.

For example, during the 1991 Gulf War, M1A1 Abrams crews complained about sand getting into the tank’s air filtration system, which led to additional testing at YPG that solved the problem, as well as other improvements being made.

“Research done in the past by DRI has shown that the soil we have here is similar to the soil in Iraq, which is called moon dust,” Olbert said.

When soil particles mixing with the lubricants used to clean the M-16 began causing the rifle to jam, DRI was able to, based on research it had conducted at YPG, make some good scientific recommendations for what a good cleaning protectant would be to use in a desert type environment.

Research done by DRI was also crucial to overcoming the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) s. Researchers worked extensively with the countermining team at YPG to build sensor calibration sites to support the developments in ground penetrating radar and cameras to detect disturbed soil patterns.

“If you were to look overhead at an IED site with a thermal imagery camera you would be able to say there was a disturbed soil pattern, which meant munitions could be buried there,” Olbert said. “Or maybe that it was buried at some point prior so it is not immediately disturbed, but there could be a temperature gradient between the surrounding soil and the location of the IED.”

Olbert concluded by saying that the relationship with DRI has been so positive that YPG has established an Educational Partnership Agreement which would allow them to coordinate on future research requirements of YPG and explore future educational opportunities in STEM fields.

YPG employees receive awards during February town hall

Meritorious Civilian Service Medal



Bryant Hamilton was awarded the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal for leading the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) Multi-Domain Operations Distributed Live, Virtual Constructive Initial Operational Demonstration in late 2023. ATEC Commanding General Maj. Gen. James Gallivan signed the certificate and Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson presented it to Hamilton on Feb. 1, 2024, during a town hall. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Civilian Service Commendation Medals



Victor Baez-Ruiz, Sean Franklin, John O'Donald, Bob Morse, Jorge Valdez, Bob White and Coty Wright received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal for their contributions to the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) Multi-Domain Operations Distributed Live, Virtual Constructive Initial Operational Demonstration in late 2023. ATEC Commanding General Maj. Gen. James Gallivan signed the certificate and Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson presented the honor on Feb. 1, 2024, during a town hall. Not pictured Marcus Neal.

Civilian Service Commendation Medal



Laci Butz received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal for her outstanding work as a program analyst in the Business Administration Division of Yuma Test Center in 2023. She served as a key member of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Account team. Col. John Nelson presented Butz with the certificate on Feb. 1, 2024.



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Richard Gillmor (BELOW)



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YTC Commander recognizes workforce during mini town halls

Over the course of a few weeks, Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering visited several test divisions for small town hall like

discussions and to recognize the teams for their years of service to the government and excellent work.

Flight Services Division

Frank Timke



Lt. Col. Shane Dering presented Frank Timke with a Civilian Service Achievement medal for this excellent work with the Aviation Resource Management Survey known as ARMS which is a major inspection. Timke also received a certificate and medal for his 15 years of service to the U.S. government. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

James Walk



Airfield Manager James Walk received three certificates during the meeting. He earned a Certificate of Appreciation for this work helping with ARMS inspections. A Civilian Service Achievement Medal for his role in Project Technology Gateway and a third for his years of service to the government. Between military service and civilian service, he's served the government for 45 years.

Jorge Vanegas



Lt. Col. Shane Dering also presented, Jorge Vanegas with a Certificate of Appreciation for his contribution to the ARMS inspection. Also, receiving this award but not pictured are Michael Stoltenberg, Scott Myers and Jaysen Lockett. Dering said of the inspection results, "We did a phenomenal job on the ARMS inspection. Commendable actually and that's a good reflection on the division."

Patrick Franklin



Flight Services Division Chief Patrick Franklin received a Civilian Service Achievement Medal for his role in Project Technology Gateway. Also, recognized for this award but not pictured are Robert Takett, Scott Myers, Timothy Graves, and Jerry Young. The Army Test and Evaluation Commanding General Maj. Gen. James Gallivan personally signed each of the Gateway certificates. Franklin also was recognized for these 30 years of service to the government.

Munitions and Weapons Division Length of Service Awards

20 Years

Kevin Pond



Not pictured: Ariel Melchor, Arturo Anaya, Juan F. Elizarraras

Shari Hillsbery



15 Years

Jered Ford



10 Years

Tyler Heagney



Not pictured: Jorge Amaya (Photos by James Gilbert)

Brett Bowman



Instrumentation Division Engineering Support Branch

Commander's Coin recipients

Length of Service

20 Years

Lance Kerestes



(Photos by James Gilbert)

Michelle Brown



John Allen was recognized for his work on the QA/QC Monitor and Mission Complete application that will speed up ballistic data processing and call attention, in real time, to data in the field being collected that may have issues: prompting leads to investigate and course-correct when necessary. (Photos by James Gilbert)



Ray McGowan (center) and Robert Stonum (right) along with Jason Brack (not pictured) have been creating YPG's UAS survey and map capability. They recently supported two tests for the Munitions and Weapons Division as the explore capabilities of the UAS and how it can benefit the mission. Their efforts are directly improving the geodetic mission.



Shawn Sonnentag has been developing an extensive confluence space detailing all the capabilities and products that come through the Data Processing Branch. These pages serve as a knowledge base for the team and will be available for test officers and commodity areas interested in learning about how support requested in terms of instrumentation leads to date products generated on their programs.



Jaime Coronado has excelled as a subject matter expert in YPG's Instrumentation Optics support, especially in high speed. He has been a key resource to refining and validating the processes for implementing high-definition improvements into Optic Height of Burst Capability used by YPG mortar testing.

TEST

FROM PAGE 1

a successful competitive process providing the all-around best-value to the Soldier and the taxpayers.”

The current design leverages modifications to the existing design of the Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment assault pack currently fielded across the Army. Compared to the legacy RCR, the improvements allow securing the radio to the pack frame for better weight, balancing, and cooling. Modifications to the ruck allow better access if the radio needs to be carried and operated inside the bag as well as improved stowage and access for radio ancillary and mission equipment.

“The radio harness allows the radio to be connected to the existing assault frame, while the side pouches allow for individualized space to store antennas away from other equipment and gear,” explained Bob Cohen, HMS Manpack Lead Test Engineer.

“There’s additional space in the bottom compartment that can be used to individually store spare batteries and other ancillary equipment for ease of access,” added Cohen.

In all, the RCR will carry the radio, a battery, an antenna, and the



The harness single point release is the equipment that secures the ruck close to the jumper’s body and is designed to be lowered on a release line away from the jumper just prior to landing. When the Soldiers were about 150 feet from the ground, they lowered the rucksack carrying the radio, making it about 15 feet below them when they landed. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Soldier’s basic load of individual equipment.

Leading up to the test, Soldiers with the ATF team started by packing the rucks as they would operationally under the direction of ATF Soldier Sgt. 1st Class Cody Lavalla.

“The configuration of these rucks is slightly different then the currently issued rucks,” tells Lavalla, “We are going through the process of figuring out how to rig the harness single point release to the ruck so all the

equipment will survive the jump and is safe for the jumpers.”

The harness single point release is the equipment that secures the ruck close to the jumper’s body during most of the jump and is designed to be lowered on a release line away from the jumper by pulling a release handle just prior to landing.

When the Soldiers were about 150 feet from the ground, they lowered the rucksack carrying the radio using the lowering line, making it about 15 feet below them when they landed.

“We don’t want the ruck still attached to us when we prepare to land on the ground, or we risk injuries as we do our parachute landing falls,” explained Lavalla. “We pull on the release handle and the ruck falls away from our body but is still attached to us via the lowering line so the equipment is out of the way when we are ready to land. It is nearby to have access to the equipment quickly if needed once we are on the ground.”

ATF Soldiers performed several jumps throughout the week for the safety confirmation tests. A team met them on the ground to ensure their safety and monitored the jumps.

Afterwards, Air Delivery Test Officer Faith Harbolt, ATF and members of the HMS team inspected the radios to see how they held up to the test.

“The test went well. The results of the test demonstrated that the rucksacks successfully secure and protect the radios during airborne operations. There was no damage to the rucks or radios observed during the inspection that occurred after the test was complete,” said Lavalla.

The improved rucksack will be fielded to units receiving Manpack radios starting early next calendar year. When fielded, these items will be used by units such as the 82nd Airborne during combat operations.



Modifications to the Radio Carrier Rucksack allow better access if the radio needs to be carried and operated inside the bag as well as improved stowage, access for radio ancillary and mission equipment. Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force (ATF) packed the rucks as they would operationally. ATF Soldier Sgt. 1st Class Cody Lavalla and Test Parachutist Program Manager Joe Castillo are pictured.



On jump day, Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force geared up. They carried their parachutes on their backs and the Radio Carrier Rucksack (RCR) in front of them. Compared to the legacy RCR, the improvements allow securing the radio to the pack frame for better weight, balancing, and cooling.

YPG Soldier helps football team take home trophy

By James Gilbert

Sgt. D.J. Suggs, who serves as a Religious Affairs noncommissioned officer at Yuma Proving Ground, has won more football championships in Las Vegas than the professional team that now plays in that city.

Playing for the Texas All Stars, Suggs' team absolutely molleywhopped their opponent, the Boykins Youth Foundations (BYF) Elite All Stars last month, by a score of 34-19 to secure the Dick Suess Trophy.

"I have been playing football for 14 years and this was the first All-Star game I have ever played in," Suggs said. "This meant a lot because I have been waiting for it for a long time. I finally got my chance, so I took it."

The game was played on Dec. 2,



A nightmare to block and constantly in the backfield, Suggs (standing on defensive line) finished the game with five tackles, two sacks, one strip sack, one forced fumble and at least eight quarterback hurries. He also had two punts of more than 40 yards.

2023, at Jack Mannon Stadium in Las Vegas, and was one of three games played that day as part of the Minor League Football's Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

"We had one goal, and that was to win the trophy and take it back to Texas," Suggs said. "The game was just like the Hall of Fame Game for professional football, just for the minor leagues."

Suggs started the game playing outside linebacker, but was quickly switched to defensive end, where he used his speed and quickness to wreak havoc, helping to keep the BYF offense from getting anything going.

A nightmare to block and constantly in the backfield, Suggs finished the game with five tackles, two sacks, one strip sack, one forced fumble and at least eight quarterback hurries. He also had two punts of more than 40 yards.

"I also tried to sneak in on offense, but the coach wouldn't let me," Suggs admitted. "He said maybe next year."

Adding another level of excitement to the game was that it also happened

to be part of a friendly rivalry.

Suggs explained that the manager of his team also happens to be the owner and commissioner of the Texas United Football Association, and she was challenged by her friend, who also manages a team in the semi-professional league to see which one of them could put the best team together.

"Every year she looks for players in Texas to join her team," said Suggs, who was a late roster addition. "She had never seen me play, but I had some guys on the team who vouched for me."

Suggs said that he trained for several months prior to the game doing shadow boxing, edge rushing drills and running wide receiver routes to stay in shape.

"I don't stop, I keep going," Suggs said. "The way I look at it, if you train now, you won't have to get ready when the time comes."

As sweet as this victory was for him, this is not the first time Suggs has won a championship in minor league football. It is actually his third in four years.

He won his other two in the state of Washington while stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord playing for the Northwest Hurricanes and the South Sound Seminoles.

"I could have had a third one while I was there, but we lost the game by seven points," Suggs said. "Plus, it was about 30 degrees when we played the game."

Although Suggs said he feels like he can continue playing for many more years, he will be hanging up the cleats for a while and will continue coaching all the youth sports on base. Youth Flag football starts in April, so parents are urged to sign up their athletes!

Youths interested in playing can sign up with the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program's Child Youth Services.

Suggs also plans to coach basketball and baseball later in the year.



Playing for the Texas All Stars, Sgt. D.J. Suggs, who serves as a Religious Affairs noncommissioned officer at Yuma Proving Ground, helped his team capture the Dick Suess Trophy on Dec. 2, 2023, at Jack Mannon Stadium in Las Vegas, in what was one of three games played on that day as part of the Minor League Football's Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



As sweet as the recent victory in Las Vegas was, this is not the first time Suggs has won a championship in semi-professional football. It is his third in four years. He won his other two in the state of Washington while stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord playing for the Northwest Hurricanes and the South Sound Seminoles. (Loaned photos)

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Chaplain's Corner

Rule No. 12, Be thankful for the little things

Chaplain's Corner
 Chaplain Maj.
 Ryan Pearse



Rule No. 12 in Dr. Jordan Peterson's book, "12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos," is "Pet a cat when you encounter one on the street."

If you've read all of Peterson's 12 rules either, in his book or in my past columns, you'll notice that there's always more to his rules than the title suggests. In his final rule, Peterson is not necessarily, and certainly not exclusively, telling us to pet random cats on streets. The bigger take-a-way, and what

he is really trying to say, is that we need to pay attention to our surroundings and be thankful for the little things we are blessed with each day.

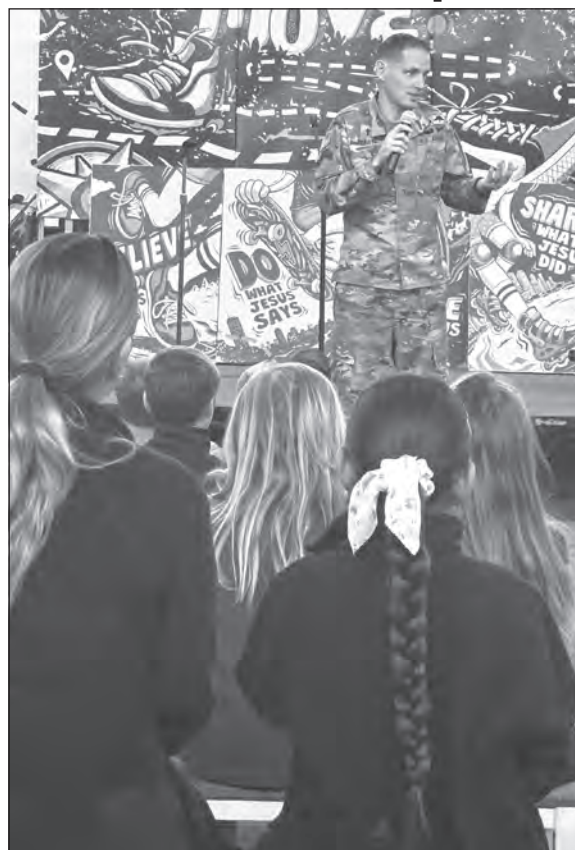
If we pay careful attention, even on a bad day, we may be fortunate enough to be confronted with small opportunities that we would have otherwise missed had we not stopped to smell the roses or pet a cat.

The bottom line is we need to have an attitude of gratitude. We need to be thankful for everything we have. What if God only gave us tomorrow — what we said, "thank you" for today? I read an article recently that claimed to have the key to

unhappiness. If you knew the key to unhappiness, wouldn't you do the opposite? The key to unhappiness is ungratefulness, which means the key to happiness is to be thankful. Be grateful for what you have and pet a cat when you encounter one on the street.

Peterson's final piece of advice is simple: aim to be the person at your father's funeral that everyone, in their grief and misery, can rely on. Bring order amid the mayhem. Follow the 12 Rules for Life and be the antidote to the world's chaos. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

YPG Chaplain visits Yuma school



Yuma Proving Ground Garrison Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse spoke at Southwestern Christian School, where his wife teaches and kids attend, on Feb. 1. He spoke to three different audiences, K-2, 3-5th, and 6-8th graders during their chapel time. Pearse spoke to them about patience and trust, emphasizing the importance of trusting God, parents, and teachers. (Loaned photos)

Price Elementary School Spelling Bee winner



Congratulations to 4th grader Capri Rippey for winning the annual spelling bee at James D. Price Elementary School on Jan. 26, 2024. Her winning word was yesterday. Rippey moves on the next round where she competes against students from around the district. (Loaned photo)

YPG employees take part in marathon



Great job to the Yuma Proving Ground employees who participated in the Yuma Marathon on the morning of Jan. 27, 2024. (Left to right) Joe Castillo (Air Delivery), Jorge Amaya (Munition & Weapons), Carlos Anaya (Air Delivery), Charlie Patel, Tyler Heagney (Munitions & Weapons), Aroon Patel and Mark Doss. (Loaned photo)



LEFT: Jorge Amaya and Arturo Anaya with the Munitions & Weapons Division. (Loaned photo) RIGHT: Jonathan Armijo with the Munitions & Weapons Division. (Photo by Ana Henderson)





Gains in the Education of Mathematics & Science (GEMS)





GEMS is a **free** summer enrichment STEM education program hosted by U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) that provides 5th – 7th grade students unique hands-on learning experience. Our program provides STEM exposure utilizing hands-on activities led by YPG engineers and scientists. Activities focus on age and grade-appropriate labs in areas such as science, robotics and coding, engineering, mathematics, environmental sciences, chemistry, and biology.

General Information

- YPG will be hosting (2) 1 week STEM Camps – 40 Students each week
- Student applicants must be entering 6th – 8th grade in '24 - '25 school year (currently in 5th – 7th grade) *military association not required*
- Transportation is provided to and from YPG (Pick up locations Week 1: Mary Otondo, Week 2: Gila Vista)
- Student Application window is from February 1 - 7 April (Only 80 applicants will be accepted)
- Selected students will be notified no later then April 19th
- Parent Meetings for selected applicants will be held May 1st & May 4th

Contact/Registration Information

(2) – 1 Week STEM Camp Dates

Week 1: 03 - 06 June 2024
Week 2: 10 - 13 June 2024



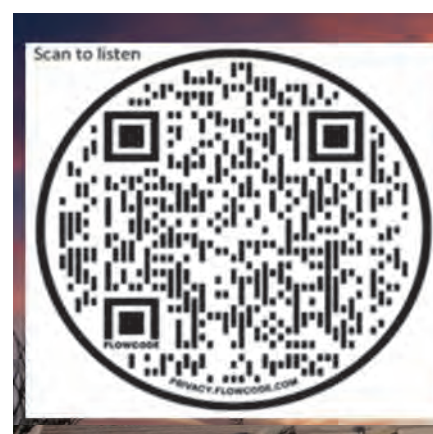
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