

The Outpost

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

VOLUME 73 NO. 11 MAY 20, 2024

Arctic Regions Test Center welcomes new commander



On May 16, 2024, Arctic Regions Test Center welcomed incoming Commander Lt. Col. Brian Karhoff and bid farewell to Lt. Col. Johnathan Brown in a change of command ceremony at Fort Greely, Alaska. In addition to welcoming a new commander the proving ground also changed its name from Cold Regions to Arctic Regions. Read more in the June 3 issue of the Outpost. (Photo by Sebastian Saarloos)

YPG tests cutting-edge turret system



Yuma Proving Ground is testing a cutting-edge Modular Turreted Mortar System to ensure it meets performance expectations for an upcoming demonstration. Turn to page 10 to read more. (U.S. Army photo)

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ARTC test officer excels with the rugged professionals / Page 7



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Standout Yuma Test Center employees

Employee of the Year Fiscal year 2023

Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Leroy Duarte a

Civilian Service Achievement Medal on May 8, 2024. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Name: Leroy Duarte Years of service: 6 years (contractor and government)

Job title: Operations Research Analyst, Data Processing Branch Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Employee of the Year for fiscal year 2023.

Reaction: "I appreciate the variety of work I get

to do."

Branch Chief of the Year Fiscal year 2023

Name: Jaysen Lockett Years of service: 34 years (contractor and government) Job title: Combined Maintenance Branch Chief Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Branch Chief of the Year for fiscal year 2023.

Reaction: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." -John Quincy Adams.



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Jaysen Lockett a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on May 8, 2024.

Division Chief of the Year Fiscal year 2023

Years of service: 30 years Job title: Division Chief, Flight Services Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Division Chief of the Year for fiscal year 2023.

Name: Patrick Franklin

Reaction: "I was surprised and speechless, but

extremely grateful for such an immense honor. However, the achievements for which I was recognized were not accomplished alone. The reason I was able to succeed in these endeavors is because of the privilege of having outstanding teammates in Flight Services Division."



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Patrick Franklin a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on May 8, 2024.

The Outpost

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Commander: Col. John Nelson **Public Affairs Officer:** Mark Schauer

Public Affairs Specialist/Outpost Editor: Ana Henderson

Visual Information Manager: Eugene Garcia

Cold Regions Test Center Photographer: Sebastian Saarloos

Employee of the Quarter: Mission Support Mission

Name: Laci Butz

Years of service: 17 years (contractor and

government)

Job title: Program Analyst

Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Mission Support Employee of the Second Quarter for fiscal

year 2024.

Reaction: "I was completely surprised and honored to receive this recognition. The work we do at YPG is extremely important and I am proud to contribute in any way I can."



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Laci Butz a Civilian Service Achievement Medal.

Name: Charlie Saltz

Years of service: 7 years (contractor and

government)

Job title: Engineering Test Technician, Aviation Systems and Electronic Test Division Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Mission Employee of the Second Quarter for fiscal year 2024.

Reaction: "It is an honor to be selected for an award in which I play such a small factor in helping keep our troops safe with the latest and greatest technology, instrumentation and munitions we are able to test at YPG."



Yuma Test Center Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering awarded Charlie Saltz a Civilian Service Achievement Medal.

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OUTPOST MAY 20, 2024 **3**

Coffee drive-thru fosters community togetherness

By Mark Schauer

Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) helping agencies hosted a S.A.F.E. Coffee Drive-Thru event for YPG residents to show what resources are available on post on April 30, 2024.

The event's acronym references the YPG offices that put the event together: the Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention office and the Army Substance Abuse Program, Family Advocacy Program, and Employee Assistance Program.

"We have some pretty robust individual programs for domestic violence prevention, suicide awareness and prevention, and sexual harassment and assault response and prevention," said Col. John Nelson, YPG commander. "This is a good opportunity to bring all of the resources available to one location for families to be exposed to."

Visitors enjoyed coffee and pastries, and along with table displays loaded with free books and brochures was a beanbag toss activity for kids. YPG's Fire Department, located adjacent to the event site, made sure a shiny fire engine and Sparky the Fire Dog were on hand.

"This is our fourth year doing it," said Arlene Moraga, YPG Sexual Assault Response Coordinator. "Little by little, we now have a lot more agencies out here providing information about their services."

Folks who drove through got



Sparky the Fire Dog and McGruff the Crime Dog both mingled with event goers. The morning time event fostered community togetherness and emphasized YPG's commitment to the well-being of its Soldiers and their Families.



On April 30, 2024, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) hosted the fourth annual S.A.F.E. Coffee Drive-Thru event. The initiative aimed to show the resources available on post for YPG Soldiers and their Families. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

a chance to interact with people from offices like Army Community Service, the post chapel, and health clinic.

"We want our families and Soldiers here to know there are people willing to help at the drop of a hat," said Moraga. "We have people who will help you in-process and out-process, provide you resources to childcare, information for substance abuse awareness and prevention, and suicide prevention."

The suicide prevention table had a large display to raise awareness about the 988 national 24-hour suicide prevention hotline and on how to use the steps of ACE—ask, care, and escort—for those in need of help.

"One suicide affects at minimum 135 people," said Minda Federmeyer, a program analyst who assists YPG's suicide prevention coordinator as a collateral duty. "One suicide is too many: you ask, you care, and escort



The S.A.F.E. Coffee Drive-Thru event featured table displays which provided free books and brochures. Representatives from various helping agencies on post mingled with the attendees including the Health Clinic which provided flushots, promoting preventative care.

if someone is having any concerns about suicide. If they even have one little thought, we want to make sure we are addressing it and providing support."





Grateful for community support



Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson was guest speaker at the weekly meeting of Yuma Rotary on May 7, 2024, talking about recent test activities that put the post at the forefront of Army modernization efforts and thanking the Yuma community for their support. "I've never seen a community like this, with this level of cooperation," he said. "I'm a people person, and really appreciate that." (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Media leaders tour YPG for better understanding







Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson hosted leaders from local media companies for a tour of some of the mission's facilities. The group received a command overview briefing, visited a gun position and vehicle testing facility, and saw an instrumentation display and mission control room. "I never get tired of telling the YPG story," Nelson said. "It is an important story that needs to be told." (Photos by Mark Schauer)

YPG Command teams hosts workforce town hall



The Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) workforce came together for a town hall on May 2, 2024, in the Post Theater. YPG Commander Col. John Nelson and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare addressed the crowd and presented awards. Turn to pages 7 and 8 for award photos. (Photo by Ana Henderson)





LEFT: The commander then introduced the new Chief of Staff Omar Silva who was named in late April. Nelson also, went over the Initial Command Inspection performed by YPG's higher headquarters and some best practices that came out of that inspection. (Photo by James Gilbert) RIGHT: Various staff members presented on topics including safety and self-reporting. The workforce then had the floor to ask questions. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

Arctic Regions provides capabilities tour for brigade



The newly renamed Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC) hosted Col. Dani Williams. the incoming 100th Missile Defense Brigade commander on May 9, 2024.The brigade operates the ground-based midcourse defense system and functions as a component of the missile defense enterprise of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command. Williams and her brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Jeremy Christensen received an ARTC capabilities brief and environmental chamber demonstration to assist with conceptualization of extreme cold and its impact on personnel and equipment. Williams braved minus 56-degree temperatures as part of the demo and was thankful for the experience. (Photo by ARTC)

YPG participates in Woodard Jr. High School's STEM Day

By Ana Henderson

Students at Woodard Jr. High School had the opportunity to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics also known as STEM from members of Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) workforce and other local organizations and businesses. The school hosted a STEM Day for nearly 600 students.

YPG's STEM Outreach Manager Janett Rios enlisted the help of Hailey Vergara the chief of the Manpower and Workforce Development Division, and two engineers from the Combat and Automotive Systems Division, Michael Torres, and Tracy Haifley for an interactive activity that

simulates testing conducted at YPG's road courses.

Rios explained, "The engineers that we have onsite do this daily in testing the tanks to make sure they are reliable and do what they are supposed to do. This is just a small portion of what they do on a larger scale."

Students sat behind a partition and used a tablet and remote to control a remote controlled (RC) toy combat vehicle equipped with a camera. They had to drive the vehicle up a ramp and around a track. Students excitedly lined up for a turn.

"It was fun, and it was really sensitive. I mess up a lot," said seventh grader Tristan Palacios.

Eight grader Korina Ramos, said



Students at Woodard Jr. High School's had the opportunity to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics also known as STEM from members of Yuma Proving Ground's workforce and other local organizations and businesses. The school hosted a STEM Day for nearly 600 students.

"I just tried the RC cars, and it was so fun!"

The team shared YPG's testing mission with students who didn't know about the proving ground and had a video playing showing various tests conducted on the installation. They also educated students on the role of Army civilians which make up the majority of YPG's workforce.

Exposing students to STEM at an early age sparks an early interest in STEM related career opportunities. That was certainly the case for these

When asked if this event would make her consider a career in STEM Ramos said, "Yes, most likely, I probably am."

If an educator is interested in having YPG's team visit their school Rios can be reached at Janett.E.Rios. civ@army.mil or call at 928-328-3648.







Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) STEM Outreach Manager Janett Rios enlisted the help of Hailey Vergara the chief of the Manpower and Workforce Development Division, and two engineers from the Combat and Automotive Systems Division, Michael Torres, and Tracy Haifley for an interactive activity that simulates testing conducted at YPG's road courses. (Photos



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Lu Nguyen: Nearly four decades of testing ammunition

By Ana Henderson

When one door closes, another opens. That was the case for the career of Lu Nguyen, a test officer in the Munitions and Weapons Division at Yuma Test Center (YTC). He had only been working for the government about two years when his employer at the time, Jefferson Proving Ground in Indiana, underwent a base realignment and closure, known as a BRAC in 1988.

"I felt disappointed," said Nguyen. He and a group of employees transferred to YTC following the BRAC.

Nguyen said, "I wasn't quite sure how long I would be here. I thought I would be here two or three years and see how it goes. Next thing I know it has been 30 years."

Now, decades of service later, Nguyen is hailed as one of the test officers with the highest percentages of rounds fired at YTC and a subject matter expert in Lot Acceptance Testing (LAT).

Nguyen said the first round he tested at YTC was the M829E3 when it was being developed and was later designated as the M829A3.

He has primarily performed mortar testing the last decade or



Lu Nguyen, a test officer in the Munitions and Weapons Division at Yuma Test Center (YTC) is hailed as one of the test officers with the highest percentages of rounds fired at YTC and a subject matter expert in Lot Acceptance Testing (LAT). He's conducted nearly 1,500 LATs throughout his career. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

so, and before that tested artillery and tank rounds, "He's been testing ammunition his whole career," remarked Munitions and Weapons Division Chief Kermit Okamura.

Okamura said, Nguyen has had the "highest number of rounds fired and number of days with open firing clearances," among the division's test officers. Test officers request an open firing clearance for each test day they intend to fire. Okamura estimates Nguyen opens more than 200 firing clearances yearly and has conducted nearly 1,500 LATs throughout his career.

"I tell him he's a machine, because he just churns out work" joked Okamura.

LAT's directly affect mission readiness he explained, "The work he has done, affects the readiness levels of the war reserve, as well as training operational load. As manufactures produce mortar rounds, he would be the one to test them."

As division chief Okamura as seen Nguyen's work ethic and comradery with his colleagues.

"People have a respect for Lu, he's helped train a lot of folks."

Test Officer Brett Bowman met Nguyen in 2013 and calls him a mentor. Unbeknownst to Bowman, this led to him mimicking mannerism that signaled to others he was "Lu trained."

"When we would go back to the gun, I would say 'all stations' basically meaning all stations ready. I learned that from Lu. That's how people knew because, Lu was the only one that said, 'all stations.""

He picked up Nguyen's high-paced, high-round count firing style too.

Bowman boasts, "He's a hard charger. Even til this day, he'll still

go out there and shoot 120 mortars in a day it's no problem for him."

Perhaps Nguyen's stamina can be credited to table tennis. He's been Yuma Proving Ground's (YPG) champion for 15 years beating out competitors, including Soldiers decades younger than him during both the Family Morale, Welfare, and Recreation tournaments and the Organizational Day tournaments at YPG.

In addition to his sport accolades, Nguyen has been selected as YTC Employee of the Quarter, earned a Civilian Service Achievement Medal, and inducted to the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.

As Nguyen nears his 40-year mark Okamura encourages his colleagues to learn as much as they can from him, "not just about how to test, but the wisdom of going through some stuff over the years."

When asked about his always positive dementor at work. Nguyen says, "I like to go to work. I am happy because I always enjoy working. I always like to keep myself busy. And it's a chance to do something for the country too."



(Left) Lu Nguyen is all smiles after being named the 2019 Yuma Proving Ground Table Tennis Tournament champion. He stands beside runner-up Don He (right), both smiling with their trophies. (Photo by MWR staff)



Lu Nguyen has been selected as Yuma Test Center Employee of the Quarter, earned a Civilian Service Achievement Medal, and inducted to the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara. He's pictured in July of 2020 with then YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger receiving the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara plaque. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

OUTPOST MAY 20, 2024 **7**

ARTC test officer excels with the rugged professionals

By Mark Schauer

At U.S. Army Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC) near Delta Junction, Alaska, the most important attribute for a potential employee to possess is ruggedness.

Tasked with testing military equipment in one of the world's coldest places, ARTC's employees spend countless winter hours outside in the natural environment, in temperatures where nostrils freeze shut and breathing hurts.

It is a tall order, and one that Marine Corps veteran and current Alaska National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Steven Prewitt has readily accepted.

After serving as an active duty Marine, Prewitt was a civilian test officer for the Corps. Recently recognized as ARTC Employee of the Quarter, he was only dimly aware of the test center's existence in his former work life.

"In my time working for the Marine Corps as a civilian I had heard of the cold natural environment testing that took place up here, but that was about the extent of my knowledge of ARTC."

The Georgia native never expected to reside in Alaska.

"My son had graduated high school, my brother-in-law was



Marine Corps veteran and current Alaska National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Steven Prewitt serves as a test officer for Arctic Regions Test Center in Alaska. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

retiring from the Air Force and he and his family were moving to Alaska. We saw it as an opportunity to look for a job in Alaska—we weren't really tied to anything at the time."

Making the decision even easier was the serendipitous job posting for a test officer at ARTC.

"In reading the position description, it was uncanny how it lined up with my experience. My wife was excited about it—it got us closer to the nieces and nephews."

His first winter working at the facility was an eye-opener. While

supporting a high-stakes multi-week test of the Army and Marine Corps' Next Generation Squad Weapon, for example, temperatures dipped below negative 50 degrees Fahrenheit, and one week never saw a minute above negative 30.

"Test officers, especially at Arctic Regions Test Center, touch all aspects of planning the test, as well as arranging the test support. Sometimes you are your own test support—snow has to be moved, or targets have to be moved. It's a small environment and we have limited resources, so we all tend to help one

another when possible."

Prewitt credits the tight-knit ARTC crew's willingness to help for the test's success, and for cementing his desire to stay at the test center.

"It's hard to say that I've ever worked with a harder-working or more caring group of people. I think everyone in our organization feels like they are part of a team. We're definitely stronger together and can provide more to the customers by working together."



In addition to being a test officer Steve Prewitt serves in the Alaska National Guard; so, the ARTC team was treated to an extra-special appearance of Staff Sgt. Prewitt during the luncheon where he was presented with as the Employee of Quarter by Test Operations Division Chief Greg Netardus. (Photo by Sebastian Saarloos)

YPG Commander recognizes employees during workforce town hall

— Years of Service —



20 years Walter Lopez



10 years Richard Gillmor

He was recognized for his 10 years of service and presented with a Civilian Service Commendation Medal for his role in multi-domination operation capabilities demonstration in October of 2023.



5 years Patricia Conley

Combat and Automotive Systems Division earns praise



A handful of Combat and Automotive Systems Division test officers were presented with a Commander's Coin for their involvement in setting up vehicle displays and briefing for the Staff Delegation visit on April 22, 2024. (Left to right) Col. John Nelson, Michael Naso, Jade Janis, Martin Velazquez, Cesar Ramirez, Marco Nixen, and Command Sqt. Maj. Mark Millare. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

Yuma Proving Ground Employees of the Quarter

— Fiscal year 2024, first quarter —

Name: Shaman Moats

Job title: Management Analyst
for Manpower and Workforce
Development Division

Recognition: Civilian Service

Achievement Medal for being named

the Command's Civilian Mission Support Personnel Employee of the First Quarter. Moats' effort was critical to YPG having 'no findings' during the ATEC inspection.



Shaman Moats was presented with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on May 2, 2024, by Col. John Nelson and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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— Fiscal year 2024, second quarter —

Name: Ryelle Pattuinan Years of service: 4.5 years (contractor and civilian) Job title: Operations Research Analyst in Strategic Planning Division

Recognition: Civilian Service Achievement Medal for being named the Command Staff Civilian Mission Support Personnel Employee of the Second Quarter. Reaction: "I am deeply honored to be this quarter's Command Staff Civilian Mission Support Personnel Employee of the Second Quarter! I'm grateful for everyone's support and collaboration in helping make this year's EMERGE Program a success. This recognition motivates me to continue striving for excellence and contributing to the overall success of YPG."



Ryelle Pattuinan was presented with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal on May 2, 2024, by Col. John Nelson and Command Sqt. Maj. Mark Millare for her work during a detail in the S-1 Manpower and Workforce Development Division.



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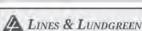
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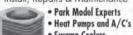
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Violent extremism awareness

Bv Robert Barocio

Violent extremism is a growing concern globally, with devastating consequences for individuals. communities, and societies. As of 2022, the Global Terrorism Index reports, there were over 14,000 terrorist attacks worldwide in 2021, resulting in more than 26,000 deaths. The economic cost

of terrorism is estimated to be over \$90 billion annually.

In the United States alone, the FBI reports that in 2020, there were over 450 active shooter incidents, resulting in 513 deaths and 1,354 injuries. The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that in 2021, there were over 700 hate groups operating in the U.S.,

promoting white supremacy, Anti-Semitism, and other forms of extremism.

The internet and social media have exacerbated the spread of violent extremist ideologies, with online platforms used to recruit, radicalize, and incite violence. A 2022 report by the Anti-Defamation League found that online hate speech and harassment have increased by 30% in the past year, with one in five Americans experiencing online harassment.

To combat violent extremism, awareness is crucial. Communities must be educated on the warning signs of radicalization, including

changes in behavior, language, and associations.

Governments organizations and the public must work together to:

- Counter online hate speech and propaganda
- Support communityled initiatives to prevent radicalization
- Provide resources for mental health and social services
- Encourage inclusive and diverse communities

By raising awareness and taking collective action, we can prevent the spread of violent extremism and build resilient, peaceful communities for all.

YPG tests cutting-edge turret system... continued



Testing is underway to ensure the Modular Turreted Mortar System meets performance expectations for an upcoming demonstration at the Maneuver Warfighter Conference at Fort Moore in September 2024.



about the Modular Turreted Mortar System testing at YPG.

ABOVE: The new mortar turret is a semi-automated, single-barrel 120mm breech-loaded mortar system developed by a prominent Finnish defense and security provider and installed on an Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle. RIGHT: The U.S. Army is interested in the Modular Turreted Mortar System' capability to shoot on the move, perform direct fire missions, and to conduct Multiple Rounds Simultaneous Impact missions.(U.S. Army photos)



to read more



OUTPOST MAY 20, 2024 **11**

Army Community Services hosts Military Spouse Appreciation event



Army Community Services teamed up with the founder of Cristina's Closet to provide Military Spouses the opportunity to create a vision board. The May 9 event coincided with Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 10. Attendees were treated to snacks and directions on how to create a vision board. (Photos by Ana Henderson)





Mother's Day story time and crafts



The Yuma Proving Ground Post Library hosted a Mother's Day story time and crafts event on May 7, 2024. Children happily worked on their project, painting, cutting, and stuffing flowerpots, to present to their mothers that following Sunday. (Photo by James Gilbert)

Home school students plant trees in housing area

The Desert Oasis Housing grounds crew teamed up with homeschoolers to demonstrate the importance of trees and proper tree planting techniques. The day began with an interactive discussion about the benefits of trees, including their role in producing oxygen and providing habitats for wildlife. The grounds crew demonstrated techniques for planting trees and the children eagerly participated, getting their hands dirty as they helped to plant two trees in front of the Community Center. (Photo by Desert Oasis Housing)



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