

# The Outpost

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

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## U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground conducts major test to increase parachute capabilities

By Mark Schauer

In a combat theater, ground troops in the most isolated areas depend on airlifts for resupply.

In the worst conditions, time can be a matter of life or death.

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is home to all manner of parachute testing, with spacious and instrumented ranges large enough to accommodate even the world's largest cargo parachutes.

YPG has long been on the cutting edge of developmental and operational testing of new airdrop capabilities, and recently conducted a complex test to expand the effectiveness of currently fielded cargo parachutes by helping them function at higher altitudes to protect pilots from ground fire.



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground is the Army's primary personnel and cargo parachute tester, and recently conducted a complex test to expand the effectiveness of currently fielded cargo parachutes by helping them function at higher altitudes to protect pilots from ground fire. (U.S. Army photo)

## Honoring the ultimate sacrifice



Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson, Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare and Soldiers with the Airborne Test Force participated in annual Memorial Day ceremonies on May 27, 2024. Turn to page 8 for more photos. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

"The main goal of the test is to increase the capability, to drop at a higher altitude to have a higher offset from whatever location you are trying to drop to," said Ervin Rosales

testing on all currently fielded parachutes, everything from G12s that come down on drogue and then open up to systems like the JPADS."

YPG is the Army's primary

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unveils new  
crest  
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YPG's only female  
firefighter was inspired by  
accident she witnessed  
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Summer fun for  
Yuma Proving  
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# New commander takes reins at U.S. Army Arctic Regions Test Center

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC) held a change of command ceremony on May 16, 2024 with Lt. Col. Brian Karhoff assuming command from Lt. Col. (promotable) Jonathan Brown.

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson presided over the ceremony, with dozens in attendance as scores more watched a live stream on ARTC's Facebook page.

"I know that Lt. Col. Karhoff will build upon the ARTC team's extraordinary successes under Lt. Col. Brown," said Nelson. "He is a great fit for this historic organization."

Karhoff assumes command as ARTC recently changed its name from Cold Regions Test Center to better emphasize the extreme climactic conditions items in the ground combat arsenal are subjected to during testing at the facility. In remarks at the ceremony, Karhoff pledged to continue the test center's vital work in support of Army modernization efforts, and thanked ARTC personnel for their



On May 16, 2024, Arctic Regions Test Center welcomed Commander Lt. Col. Brian Karhoff (left) in a change of command ceremony at Fort Greely, Alaska. Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson (right) passed the guidon to Karhoff during the ceremony. (Photo by Angela Glass)

longstanding rugged professionalism in conducting testing in brutally cold natural environments.

"The organization is very impressive, and your passion for our mission is very noteworthy," Karhoff said. "I look forward to joining you on this journey and earning your trust over the next few years."

A graduate of the United States

Military Academy commissioned as an aviation officer in 2006, Karhoff's Army career includes three deployments to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Following his earning a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Washington's Foster School of Business, he transitioned into the acquisition corps, where he led the M109A7 self-propelled howitzer and M992A3 ammunition supply vehicle's initial operational test and evaluation, materiel release, and first unit fielding efforts as Assistant Product Manager for PM Self Propelled Howitzer Systems. He also served as the Acquisition Advisor and Strategic Fires Systems Requirements Officer on the Long Range Precision Fires

Cross Functional Team at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. His decorations include the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and he is a member of the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara, the prestigious honor society for those associated with artillery in the United States Army and Marine Corps.

Outgoing commander Brown received widespread praise for his engaged leadership and rapport with the workforce in a period that saw a major tests of the Army and Marine Corps' Next Generation Squad Weapon.

"Lt. Col. Brown is a thoughtful and deliberate leader who always made sure things were done right and safely," said Nelson. "He never did anything in a vacuum, but in consultation with his technical director and subordinate leaders. It was a superb command."



Arctic Regions Test Center (ARTC) leaders, members of the workforce along with Yuma Proving Ground's command team gathered for the unveiling of the new command crest and to celebrate the 75th ARTC Anniversary. The event on May 15, 2024, also served as the farewell party for former ARTC Commander Lt. Col. Jonathan Brown (right) pictured alongside Technical Director Jeff Lipscomb (left). (Photo by Sebastian Saarloos)

## The Outpost

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# Yuma Test Center Commander recognizes employees

Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering spent time in May recognizing employees for their years of service to the government and gave them accolades for dynamic work. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

## — Metrology and Simulation Division — Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Lt. Col. Shane Dering presented Adolfo Noriega with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal for his extraordinary performance executing the conversion of a vibration table from December 2023 to February 2024, while serving as an Engineering Technician.

## — Years of Service — 30 years



**David Le**

## — Years of Service — 20 years



**Brad Cox**



**Perry Ramirez**

## — Commander's Coins —



**James Green**

James Green is one of three individuals that were directly involved with the execution of the Yuma Proving Ground's Environmental Radiological Monitoring program.



**Dwain Frazer  
Greg Campuzano  
Larry Nelson**

YTC Commander Lt. Col. Shane Dering (right) recognized (left to right) Dwain Frazer, Greg Campuzano, and Larry Nelson for their contributions to Yuma Proving Ground's Environmental Radiological Monitoring program.

## Army Family Action Plan

**By Paula Alarcon**

The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) is a platform to voice quality-of-life issues, give ideas, and feedback. It gives everyone the opportunity to let Army leadership know what works, what does not, and give suggestions on how problems can be solved. It's a tool for active- and reserve-component Soldiers, Army Civilians, retirees, survivors, and Family members to help identify issues and concerns and shape the Army standard of living.

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(IMS) by scanning the QR code. AFAP's IMS allows registered and unregistered users to submit online issues regarding their communities or other aspects of Army life. ACS staff reviews and manages issues, and IMS can be used to track issue status and view items currently under review.



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## 'Yuma 50' tours Yuma Proving Ground



Arizona boasts a large military presence and is home to numerous defense contractors. Though Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) has been part of the landscape for more than 80 years, some may not realize that the proving ground also conducts tests for private industry in addition to tests for Department of Defense projects. YPG is a Major Range Test and Facility Base, and The National Defense Authorization Act of 2003 makes facilities with this designation available to other users who have a valid need for them.

May 22, 2024, YPG Commander Col. John Nelson and other senior leaders hosted members of the 'Yuma 50' military support group along with some Arizona industry partner representatives for a briefing and tour of the proving ground and its capabilities.

"Telling the YPG story is one of my favorite parts of the job," Nelson said. "We want to ensure our Army retains overmatch against any aggressor nation in the world, and we can't achieve it without industry partners being on our team."

(Photos by Mark Schauer)

## New Highway 95 tank crossing



Motorist using Highway 95 between Imperial Dam Road and Martinez Lake Road will drive through a construction zone for the next couple of weeks. Yuma Proving Ground's Directorate of Public Works said the work is part of a project for a new tank trail crossing. The tank trail will be a 16-foot-wide smooth concrete transition road across Highway 95. The 12-inch-thick concrete cross section will be the same elevation as the current highway asphalt and should be seamless in transit. While the project is on-going traffic speed will be reduced to 35 miles per hour in the detour location. The estimated completion of the project is June 21, 2024. (Photo courtesy of DPW)

## The Army's AML uses Human-Machine Integration to boost mass fires



Scan the QR code with your photo camera to read more about AML test and learn what this demonstration displayed.



In a groundbreaking event on April 24, 2024, the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, in collaboration with the DEVCOM Ground Vehicle Systems Center and the Tennessee National Guard's 1st Battalion, 181st Field Artillery Regiment, showcased the Autonomous Multi-Domain Launcher (AML) in a live-fire demonstration launching three Reduced Range Practice Rockets (RRPR) in a successive ripple fire mission. Over the two weeks leading up to the live fire event, the team successfully fired three RRPRs. In total, including the live fire demonstration, there were six RRPRs fired at Yuma Proving Ground. (Photo by Lucas Hunter)

## YPG's meteorologist talks monsoons



Yuma Proving Ground Meteorologist Orren Keane served as a guest speaker for The Optimist Club on the morning of May 22, 2024. Keane made a visit to the Freedom Library to present about monsoon as a general phenomenon, and about his duties as a Meteorologist at the proving ground. The club president Larry Lebsock then presented Keane with a certificate of appreciation. (Loaned photos)



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# YPG developing STEM kits for schools

By Mark Schauer

Many times, careers are more a matter of chance and inspiration than destiny.

As such, a variety of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) outreach efforts encourage local youngsters to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in hopes they eventually become members of the workforce.

“We’re trying to get more outreach and community engagement and expand upon our future generation of scientists, engineers, and innovators,” said Janett Rios, YPG STEM Outreach Coordinator. “We want to give these students some growth and encouragement in STEM fields.”

YPG tests virtually everything in the ground combat arsenal, a mission that requires many highly trained engineers and math-savvy support personnel to ensure a Soldier’s equipment works exactly as it is supposed to. As the advanced equipment Soldiers depend on continues to evolve, inspiring students within the local community to pursue STEM careers is crucially important to the future of YPG and its highly technical test mission.

YPG’s outreach efforts in this area have become a model for the Army Test and Evaluation Command as a whole. In the past year, YPG has entered educational partnership agreements with Arizona Western College, the Desert Research Institute, and the University of Arizona. Through the latter, YPG officials have interacted with the Arizona Department of Education and the Yuma County School Superintendent’s Office.

“I pitched the idea of doing a pilot program to get STEM kits to high schools and, eventually, lower grades as well,” said Todd Hudson, Director of the YPG Technology and Investments Directorate. “This is our first effort to gauge interest



Garry Rosene, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Development Division Chief (right), speaks at a public presentation of a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics kit for educators at the main branch of the Yuma County Library on May 9, 2024, as YPG Test Officer Jose Ramirez (left) looks on. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

from the local high schools: if they are interested, we hope to take the kits to classrooms at least once per quarter.”

Toward this end, YPG personnel involved in STEM outreach held a public presentation of a STEM kit for educators at the main branch of the Yuma County Library in early May.

“We’re looking for district engagement for us to make sure we are aligned with Arizona curriculum and understand what the teacher perspective is,” said Rios. “Would they prefer us to go inside the school, or would they feel comfortable taking on a kit we develop by themselves?”

Participants saw an existing kit developed by the Desert Research Institute regarding desert riparian areas, as well as components of a 3D printing kit currently being developed by YPG, which is geared toward high school sophomores. Kits for elementary students developed by YPG’s STEM outreach program are also in the works.

“The 3D printing kit more aligns with the test and evaluation community and what YPG does,” said Garry Rosene, Development Division Chief. “It is more focused

on engineering design, the process of going through evaluation, and doing statistical analysis and material properties.”

Three additional kits adapted from the Army Educational Outreach

Program concerning electric vehicle testing, solar energy, and a catapult design kit were also discussed.

“We want the students to actually do the experiments, get jazzed about math and science, and then do the test and evaluation spin about why it is important to the Department of Defense and why you need these skills to be a test officer, or a radar technician, or someone in financial management,” said Hudson.

The kits add to an already-robust STEM outreach program from YPG, including such well-received programs as the annual Gains in the Education of Mathematics and Science summer science camps that enthrall 80 local sixth through eighth grade students each June.

“My division is the Development Division, helping YPG complete its future mission, and part of that is the future workforce,” said Rosene. “Getting more young people enthusiastic about STEM is right in line with what we should be doing.”

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# Yuma Proving Ground's only female firefighter was inspired by accident she witnessed

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Firefighter Heather Banda is currently the only female firefighter in the Fire & Emergency Services Operations Branch. She's been in the career field for four years and at YPG for three years.

An accident she witnessed is what initially intrigued Banda with the role of a first responder.

"It all started when I was 12. I witnessed an accident and I remember running to this car accident — me being 12, I didn't know what to do but I saw a fire truck and the EMS come and work that call. I thought, 'wow, this is amazing.'"

Banda admits she was inspired but didn't immediately follow her dreams. It took her another two decades.

"I told myself, 'You have to try it. It's now or never,'" recalls Banda.

So, she signed up for the emergency medical technician program and the fire academy. Once she started learning she said, "I just fell in love with it."

"Firefighter Banda is an outstanding firefighter who takes a great deal of pride in her profession," remarked YPG's Chief for Fire & Emergency Services Gerald Ball.

Banda says not seeing many other women in the field never deterred her from pursuing her goals.

"I did look around and there was only one or two females. But I wanted to do what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a firefighter, so I just kept with it. I didn't care who was in the class."

Earlier this year Banda participated in Camp Inferno hosted by the City of Yuma Fire Department. The camp is for female teens interested in learning about the career field.

"They are high schoolers, so they were timid and didn't know anybody. By the end of the third day everyone was high fiving each other. We all



On May 22, Garrison Manager Kenneth Musselwhite recognized Yuma Proving Ground Firefighter Heather Banda with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal during the Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony for her community involvement and participation in Camp Inferno. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

had a blast."

While fun, the camp was also intense with realistic scenarios and training.

"They had ladder climb, a bucket brigade challenge, they descended from a three-story building."

Adding, "They got to extinguish fires with the hose and learned different techniques."

The also learned CPR and had first aid training. Banda wishes she had an opportunity like the camp when she was a teen and that is why she wanted to be involved.

"For one to show them what we do as firefighters, and as female firefighters. I showed them techniques I had to modify to make the job a little easier because I am not a 6-foot, 250-pound man who can pick up tools easily. I have to take extra steps" she added, "I am happy to show them my techniques."

Ball recognized the impact Banda's participation in camp made. He said, "She provides a tremendous amount of inspiration for young people who

may be interested in a future career in the fire service. We consider ourselves fortunate to have her as a member of our organization."

On May 22, 2024, Garrison Manager Kenneth Musselwhite recognized Banda with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal during the Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony for her community involvement and participation in Camp Inferno.

Banda wishes she hadn't waited to pursue her career as a first responder because she loves her job at YPG and all the training the position has provided. She encourages others to fearlessly follow their dreams.

"Just go for it. Do what makes you happy. Don't let anything stop you. It can be challenging; it takes heart and grit for this job. Don't stop trying."



Earlier this year Yuma Proving Ground Firefighter Heather Banda participated in Camp Inferno hosted by the City of Yuma Fire Department. The camp is for female teens interested in learning about the career field. While fun, the camp was intense with realistic scenarios and training. Banda wishes she had an opportunity like the camp when she was a teen and that is why she wanted to be involved. (Loaned photo)



## TEST

FROM PAGE 1

personnel and cargo parachute tester, with decades of institutional knowledge in both rigging and evaluating these complex airdrop systems, as well as coordinating multiple sorties safely. The post's nearly 2,000 square miles of restricted airspace and favorable weather make it an ideal location for air drop testing: Testers need plenty of room when testing these systems to ensure the safety of those below.

"The surface danger zones become fairly large because some of the parachutes we are using have a large glide ratio," said Rosales. "They can fly for 20 or 30 kilometers to each side, so we have to make sure we contain all of our land and air space and ensure we aren't encroaching elsewhere, particularly on the highway."

YPG's ranges typically host dozens of unique tests on a given day, which required careful coordination in advance of the airdrops: the drops had to occur on a strict time schedule, for example, and be careful to not allow radiofrequency interference with different testing in progress at the proving ground.

"We're not the only ones on the range, so there is a lot of deconfliction that has to take place to accomplish this testing," said Rosales.

Flying at altitudes typically used by commercial airliners required additional considerations: it is harder



Wind speeds above and below can also alter a test plan. In one instance, high surface winds caused the testers to change to a different parachute system for the day for the safety of the crews recovering the parachutes at the drop zone. (U.S. Army photo)

for an aircraft to make a turn in the air density at the higher altitude, so approach paths were carefully delineated before the drops.

"There's also other restrictions on operating at the high altitude," explained Rosales. "There's a certain amount of time we have to drop at that altitude because of the exposure to lower oxygen for the crew."

The testers also had to collect data

on safety systems prior to beginning of the test.

"There are new hazards to this," said Rosales. "We've had multiple safety boards to get our eyes on the technology and set parameters in order to mitigate those potential hazards."

The higher altitude the testing required meant the evaluators needed to use a C-17 cargo aircraft as opposed to the C-130s typically

utilized here.

"Fortunately, we got two, so we could drop every day of the week," said Rosales. "If we only had one, we would have to wait a 24-hour period between sorties."

Wind speeds above and below can also alter a test plan. In one instance, high surface winds caused the testers to change to a different parachute system for the day for the safety of the crews recovering the parachutes at the drop zone.

"We have to be flexible with our plan and schedule," said Rosales. "You can't control winds; you have to deal with them."

During the drops, the testers gathered data such as descent rates and the effects of the larger opening shock at higher altitudes.

"In most cases this is the first time that the parachutes are being dropped from that altitude, so everything we are collecting is new data," said Rosales. "Each parachute has a maximum and a minimum weight, so we're trying to verify that everything between those ends works."

The sophisticated rigging configurations necessary for the test bundles and new parachute configurations largely depended on the expertise of the Soldiers and civilian personnel from YPG's Airborne Test Force and DEVCOM Soldier Center. In some cases, wholly different methods were required.

"Some parachutes are not designed to deploy at that altitude, so they use drogue parachutes to descend to an altitude that is appropriate to deploy the main parachute," said Rosales.





## In remembrance of the fallen



For more than 80 years, Yuma has paid a small part of the debt of gratitude owed to fallen members of America's armed forces with a solemn ceremony at the Ocean to Ocean Bridge. As usual, on Memorial Day 2024 a color guard from U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Airborne Test Force (ATF) consisting of (from left) Spec. Christian Ramirez, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Danisa, Staff Sgt. Daylon Tittle, and Sgt. Casey Simmons was front and center as ATF Noncommissioned Officer in Charge Master Sgt. Donald Bullock looked on. After the ceremony, YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare reflected on fallen comrades in Iraq and Afghanistan in an interview with KYMA news. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

## Honoring American heroes



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare participated in a Memorial Day ceremony at Yuma's Sunset Vista Cemetery on May 27, 2024, with Nelson serving as the event's keynote speaker. "Our true American heroes are not movie stars or internet celebrities, but the men and women resting here and at cemeteries like this throughout the nation," said Nelson in his remarks. "We owe a great debt of gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives so that we can live free. We can start to pay that debt by not forgetting their sacrifice, by remembering for all time what they did and what they stood for." (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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# Summer fun for Yuma Proving Ground

**By Ana Henderson**

Summer break is officially here. If you are looking for activities to keep your body and mind busy here's a look at activities this summer at Yuma Proving Ground.

The Splash Pad next to the Desert Oasis Housing office got new flooring in May and will be ready for its grand opening party on June 6.

The Kahuna Lagoon hosted its Kickoff to Summer Pool Party on May 31, that means the pool hours will be extended. June 5 through August 4, the community pool will be open Wednesday through Sunday from 11 to 6 P.M.



The Kahuna Lagoon pool hours are now extended to summer hours. June 5 through August 4, the community pool will be open Wednesday through Sunday from 11 to 6 P.M. Patrons can look forward to night swimming themed nights. The first being a glow night on June 14. (Photo by Dani Compton)

chosen by age categories. Compton explained, "They read as many minutes as they can. Then there is first, second and third prize winners for each age category."

There is also an overall winner. Last year's prize was a tablet. Compton said the end of the year party will take place on July 25, "After we tallied everything up, we will give out all the prizes and awards to the top readers there. Everyone who participates gets a summer reading goodie bag and certificate."

So, mark your calendar and get out there to enjoy the summer.

Patrons will see updates at the Kahuna Lagoon as well. Supervisory Recreation Specialist Dylan Black said, "We have repainted the ground at our splash pad and redone the volleyball court out there near the playground."

They are also opening the pool for themed night swimming. The first being a glow night on June 14 and another night swim is scheduled for June 28.

Black has lots planned at the Fitness Center as well. The Volleyball season starts the first week of June. A one-day cornhole tournament is planned for June 6 inside the gym.

If your vibe is more namaste, instructor Dani Compton is hosting a Friday night yoga session at the Cactus Café.

Compton tells there's also activities at the Post Library — the first event being Pops with Cops where the community will get to eat popsicles while mingling with YPG cops and learning about their gear. June 12 there will be a Father's Day themed activity.

The always popular summer reading program runs June 10 through July 23. The program is open to all ages and winners are

## YPG summer interns arrive



School is out of session, but the learning doesn't stop for summer interns at Yuma Proving Ground. The interns arrived at the end of May and will remain until August. On their first week the two new and the four returning interns took a tour of the Instrumentation Division. (Photo by Patty Conley)

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