

The Outpost

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

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M1A2 upgrades tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

The M1 Abrams is the premier tank in the ground combat arsenal of the United States and several allied countries, renowned for its survivability and superior weaponry, and ability to negotiate challenging desert terrain.

The platform has undergone testing at Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) since its inception in the late 1970s and has continually returned for upgrades ever since.

YPG testing has touched virtually every aspect of what remains the world's most capable battle tank, in a variety of situations that simulate the less-than-ideal conditions Soldiers might encounter in combat. The most recent example of this is a test to verify new fire control software meant to improve the



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground testing has touched virtually every aspect of the M1 main battle tank. The most recent example is a test to verify new fire control software meant to improve the speed and accuracy of the platform's 120mm gun, .50 caliber and 7.62 machine guns, and grenade launchers, all while ensuring other aspects of the vehicle's performance are not degraded. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

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U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson speaks at Foothills Community Park during the dedication of Arizona's first Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker on Nov. 7, 2024. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



YPG Commander Col. John Nelson (center) and Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse (left) speak with Yuma County Supervisor Jonathan Lines before a dedication ceremony for Arizona's first Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker on Nov. 7, 2024. Yuma County Supervisor Darren Simmons is visible in the background to the left.



Yuma Orchid and African Violet Society President Patricia Carpenter (left) and Treasurer Myra Lader (right) unveil Arizona's first Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker at Yuma Foothills Community Park.

YPG commander helps honor Gold Star Families

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson provided keynote remarks at a ceremony dedicating Arizona's first Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker on Nov. 7, 2024.

YPG Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse provided the ceremony's invocation

and benediction.

The marker, placed by the Yuma Orchid & African Violet Society, is part of the longstanding tradition of American garden clubs honoring families who lost a Soldier in war that dates to World War II. About 100 spectators attended the ceremony dedicating the marker in

Yuma's Foothills Community Park.

"I've seen since I first arrived in Yuma in June of last year that the Yuma community is the most military-supportive of any I've ever encountered," said Nelson in his remarks. "Even more impressive to me is the people here at this ceremony to mark the occasion. Presence counts for a lot, and I've seen repeatedly that Yuma County shows up for military personnel and their families."

Nearly 3,000 servicemembers from Arizona have been killed in action since statehood in 1912, more than half of which were in World War II. In Vietnam, 390 Arizonans were lost, including Sgt. Bravie Soto, Yuma County's first casualty, for whom YPG's Armaments Operations Center is named. Soto's service was

mentioned by Nelson in his remarks.

"His service and sacrifice have, remained an inspiration to all who have worked in that building since it opened nearly 30 years ago," he said.

In more recent times, 170 Arizona servicemembers were killed in action during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Having served in the Army for nearly 30 years, it's my bittersweet privilege to personally know more Gold Star Families than I would like to," said Nelson. "As commander of Yuma Proving Ground, which exists primarily to test the equipment Soldiers and Marines use before their lives depend on it in theater, I'm humbled to know that the efforts of the men and women on the YPG team kept that number from being even larger."

The Outpost

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Price Elementary School at YPG earns an A for excellence

By Ana Henderson

PFC James D. Price

Elementary teachers and staff have a lot to be proud of.

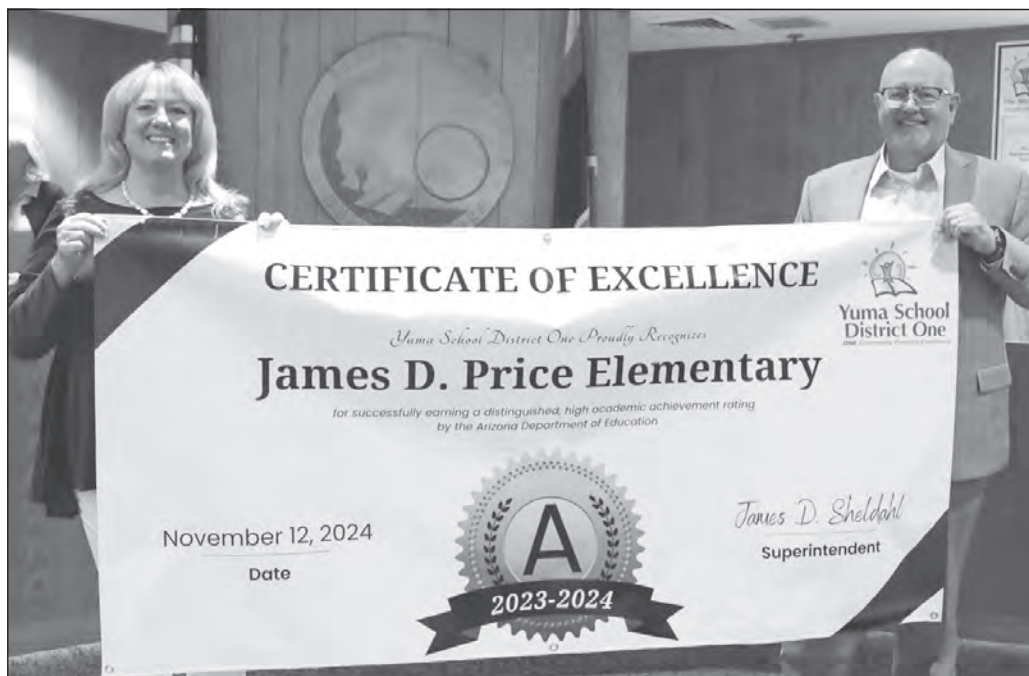
The Arizona State Board of Education gave the school an A rating for the 2023-2024 school year. Price is the only District One school to earn this coveted grade.

District One officials recognized Principal Donna Franklin and staff during the Nov. 12, 2024, Governing Board meeting. The school received a banner to proudly display in the cafeteria, where they plan to celebrate the success with a school-wide celebration.

"It just kind of confirms that all their hard work paid off. I think that is a really good feeling to know the sacrifices that you make, the time that you dedicate to put together rigorous and effective lesson plans paid off," said Franklin.

Franklin stepped into the role of Price's principal in Aug. of 2024 yet, in those short months, she has seen why the school earned an A and credits an integrated approach.

"They definitely deserve it. It is a



On Nov. 12, 2024, at the monthly Governing Board meeting, District One officials recognized James D. Price Elementary School Principal Donna Franklin and staff for the school's A grade from the Arizona State Board of Education. The school received a banner to proudly display in the cafeteria where they plan to celebrate the success with a school-wide celebration. Franklin is pictured with District One Superintendent James Sheldahl. (Photo courtesy of District One)

hard-working team out there. Kids work hard, staff works hard, and the parents work hard. I think all that support came together and definitely showed through with some excellent scores."

It reflected in students' performance as well. Price had

one of 23 students in the district who earned a perfect score on the 2023-2024 statewide standardized mathematics test.

The elementary school is located on post at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground and serves the children of military and civilian families living

and working on post. The quaint school employs four teachers with an average class size of 20 students in combined-grade classes. Franklin credits the size of the school for some of its success.

"I think that has a lot to do also with them being able to have a really good opportunity to work individually with students to meet their needs and to really differentiate instruction."

In a press release announcing the grades, the Arizona State Board of Education notes that an A letter grade means, "Distinguished performance on the statewide assessment, significant student growth, high four-year graduation rates, students on track to proficiency; overall performance is significantly higher than the state average."

The memo goes on to detail how the board determines the grades.

"A-F Letter Grades use state test results, English learner test results, attendance, special education metrics, graduation rates and progress towards graduation."



YPG supports inaugural annual Yuma event

By Mark Schauer

Though the United States Army's presence in Yuma dates back to 1850, some in the local community are surprised to learn that Army Soldiers are stationed in Yuma.

For students and parents who attended the first annual Mesquite Elementary School Community Fair on Nov. 13, 2024, however, the community's Army presence was clear as can be.

Staff from the post's public affairs office talked about U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG)'s vital mission conducting developmental testing of equipment used by Soldiers and Marines, shared a dynamic video of the test mission in

action, and handed out copies of the YPG post newspaper, The Outpost, along with other giveaway items.

Other community agencies in attendance included the United States Border Patrol, the Yuma County Sheriff's Office, and the Yuma Fire Department.

YPG personnel participate in a variety of major community events throughout the year, from the Yuma Air Show to the Yuma Military Appreciation Day and others. YPG Commander Col. John Nelson and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare will participate in both local iterations of the annual Wreaths Across America event on Dec. 14, 2024.



YPG Public Affairs Specialist Ana Henderson (left) helps a delighted youngster appear on the front cover of an oversized cut-out of the post newspaper, The Outpost, at the first annual Mesquite Elementary School Community Fair. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Kids loved posing with the oversized cut-out of the post newspaper, The Outpost, at the first annual Mesquite Elementary School Community Fair. The Outpost has been published continuously since 1951, and a new edition is available every two weeks. (Photo by Ana Henderson)



YPG Public Affairs Officer Mark Schauer (right) narrates a dynamic video of the post's developmental test mission to attendees of the first annual Mesquite Elementary School Community Fair on Nov. 13, 2024. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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YPG Soldiers get warm Veterans Day reception from parade crowds



American Legion Post #19 has staged Yuma's large Veterans Day parade for decades, and U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) personnel always appear in full force. Led by YPG Commander Col. John Nelson with wife Gina and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare, Soldiers from YPG's Airborne Test Force marched through the crowded streets on Nov. 11, 2024. Col. and Mrs. Nelson rode in a 1992 Pontiac Trans Am convertible modeled after KITT in the original "Knight Rider" TV series, driven by Craig Higgins. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



YPG Commander participates in Salute to Service panel



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson took part in Arizona State University's annual Salute to Service panel discussion for Arizona Commanding Officers on Nov. 8, 2024. Nelson (second from left) and his daughter Lorlena (left) also attended the annual Salute to Service football game that pays tribute to military veterans, first responders, frontline workers and their families. (Photo courtesy of ASU)

Phoenix Suns host Military Appreciation Night

Two Soldiers serving at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) were recognized during the Nov. 10, 2024, Phoenix Suns basketball game. Spc. Mekhii McTerry (left) and Sgt. Jason Yang (right), who serve at the YPG Medical Clinic and are part of the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program walked out with the NBA players and were recognized for their service in front of the crowd. (Photo courtesy of the Phoenix Suns)



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WWII veteran is honored guest at Yuma Proving Ground's Halo Chapel

By Mark Schauer

A full congregation at the Yuma Proving Ground Halo Chapel's Protestant service was enthralled the Sunday before Veterans Day as Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse chatted with Jimmy Robinson from the pulpit.

The public chats are common with Pearse, but not for his guest, a 103-year-old World War II veteran of the Army Air Corps' 8th Air Force, talking about his experiences in the European Theater.

A mechanic who kept P-51 Mustang fighters flying during the invasion of Normandy, Robinson served in uniform from 1942 to 1948 and numbers among the 0.6% of World War II veterans who are still living.

"I'm so proud I got to serve," Robinson said to the congregation. "I feel so grateful that you people would be here just to talk to me. I feel almost inadequate to do this."

The youngest of 17 children and the last of his siblings living, Robinson grew up in Arkansas and was in Oregon building power lines on Dec. 7, 1941.

The attack on Pearl Harbor is the most notable of that day, but Imperial Japanese Forces were simultaneously attacking the American territory of Guam, the then-American territory of the Philippines, and the-then British



World War II veteran Jimmy Robinson speaks at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Halo Chapel on Nov. 10, 2024. Robinson was a mechanic in the 357th Fighter Group and served in uniform from 1942 to 1948.

territories of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaya, and also invading Thailand.

A mere 11 days past his 21st birthday, on Monday, Dec. 8, 1941, Robinson attempted to enlist in the Army.

"They said, 'we don't know what to do with you, come back in 10 days,'" he recalled. "I said, 'mom and dad live in Little Rock, I'll go home and see them and enlist back there.'"

He did so early the next month, and was sent to March Field, Calif.

"When I went into the service, I wanted to see and experience everything I could, so any time they asked for volunteers, I'd do it," he said.

His volunteer spirit saw him tracking Soviet aircraft in Seattle, working on P-38s at Paine Field in Everett, Wash., then to Pendleton, Ore. where B-17 Replacement Training Units operated. He was next sent to San Raphael, Calif., but desperately wanted to get into the real fight.

"I knew a captain, and I went to him and said I was going to go over the hill if he didn't get me to an outfit that was going overseas," he recalled.

He got his wish and was assigned to the 357th Fighter Group, which after training in Tonopah, NV and Casper, Wyo. deployed to the European Theater in November 1943. The group sailed to England on the ocean liner-turned-troop transport Queen Elizabeth with 20,000 other Soldiers. Consistent with his cravings for new experiences, Robinson answered the call for volunteers to unload the massive troopship when it arrived.

He was assigned to the group's 363rd Fighter Squadron, whose pilots included Chuck Yeager, who after the war achieved international fame as the first pilot to break the sound

barrier, and Bud Anderson, a triple ace who died earlier this year at age 102.

"We had some of the best pilots of the war," he said. "I took care of the P-51s and the B-17s."

In the run-up to the invasion of Normandy, the P-51 Mustangs flown by the group's pilots served as escorts to bombers and attacked German-controlled airfields, and on D-Day itself flew well over 100 sorties.

"We lost 97 men and had 57 who were prisoners of war, but we also killed 650, so our record was pretty good."

After his discharge in 1948, he worked on electrical towers at Parker Dam in Ariz., then electrical and telephone wires all over the country, including Alaska.

"It made me a living. I could go anywhere and get a job."

He first came to the Yuma area in the early 1960s and wound up returning frequently ever since. When a Halo Chapel congregant told Pearse that Robinson frequented the Yuma Foothills AMVETS post, he didn't want to miss the chance to meet him.

"When I heard he was a World War II vet, I had to meet him," Pearse said. "I know this could be one of the last opportunities for my kids to meet a World War II veteran. I don't know if they fully understand or appreciate it yet, but someday they will."

Robinson's 104th birthday will be on Nov. 27.



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse talks with 103-year-old World War II veteran Jimmy Robinson from the pulpit of the post's Halo Chapel.



Young congregants at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's Halo Chapel greet 103-year-old World War II veteran Jimmy Robinson. "I know this could be one of the last opportunities for kids to meet a World War II veteran," said Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse. "I don't know if they fully understand or appreciate it yet, but someday they will." (Photos by Mark Schauer)

St. Michael award recipient surprised with ceremony

By Ana Henderson

Tab Wilcox thought it was just a regular day when he arrived at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) the Thursday leading into Veterans Day weekend. What he did not know was that the Aviation Branch had secretly planned a ceremony to name him YPG's 13th inductee into the Honorable Order of St. Michael.

Wilcox walked into the hangar heading to his office where dozens of people were waiting for him and Flight Services Division Chief Patrick Franklin announced the surprise ceremony. Brian Thompson and Randy Polage of TRAX International presented Wilcox with the Order of St. Michael certificate, medallion, and lapel pin.

Thompson, Polage and Jeffery Rogers, director of Air Combat Systems spoke on behalf of Wilcox, thanking him and highlighting his work ethic and impact.

Wilcox, who was overcome with emotion, is known for being a man of few words. He said only of the award, "Thank you very much. It's a great honor."

The Order of Saint Michael recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to the promotion of Army Aviation in



On the afternoon of Nov. 7, 2024, telemetry subject matter expert Tab Wilcox became U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's 13th inductee of the Honorable Order of St. Michael. Brian Thompson and Randy Polage of TRAX International presented Wilcox with the Honorable Order of St. Michael certificate, medallion, and lapel pin in a surprise ceremony. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

ways that stand out in the eyes of the recipient's seniors, subordinates, and peers. These individuals must also demonstrate the highest standards of integrity and moral character, display an outstanding degree of professional competence, and serve the United States Army Aviation or civilian aviation community with distinction, says the Army Aviation Association of America website.

In his 40 years of service Wilcox, a telemetry subject matter expert, has proved worthy of the distinction. He's supported the Army's aviation developmental test and evaluation mission of helicopter weapons and sensors systems by meticulously collecting critical data.

Franklin told the crowd "His diligent work has contributed materially to ensuring our aviators

have the finest equipment possible for our nation's defense."

He's also shared his knowledge by training and mentoring telemetry engineers and technicians.

Franklin went on to say, "Tab has always been mindful that he is part of a team ultimately in support of and having a direct impact on the aviation Soldier."

YPG Honorable Order of St. Michael recipients at YPG

Gene Walters

Walter Lopez

Mike Diehl

Bert Evans

Patrick Franklin

Bestowed at YPG but no longer here:

Chuck Ramsdell

Bob Clark

Steve Stone

Col. James DeBoer (retired)

Ralph Arnold

Col. Scott Pacello (retired)

Col. Chris Miller (retired)



Cibola students learn firsthand from paratrooper



Junior and senior students from Cibola's School to Work class got an up-close look at the job of paratroopers. The students met the instructors from the Military Free Fall School (MFFS), a training program offered by the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School based in Fort Liberty, NC. The MFFS is run out of Yuma Proving Ground because of the climate in Yuma allows for year-round training. The high school students learned about the roles of those on the ground like the safety officer and medic and how jumpers navigate the parachute. The students even had the opportunity to try on the parachutes. As part of the Career Exploration Club, an extension of their class, students learn about different careers in the community. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

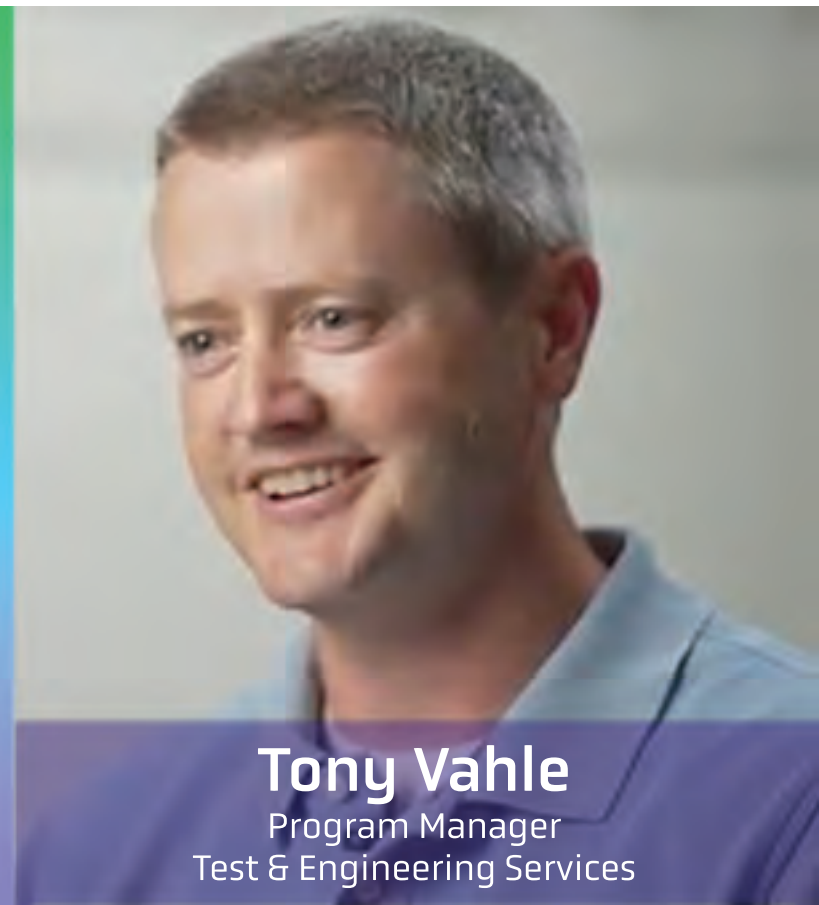


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M1A2

FROM PAGE 1

speed and accuracy of the platform's 120 mm gun, .50 caliber and 7.62 machine guns, and grenade launchers, all while ensuring other aspects of the vehicle's performance are not degraded.

"We verify that the software performs better than the previous version and that the vehicle computer will actually implement the correct parameters for proper projectile path when it is shooting and stable while it is performing other maneuvers," said Jose

Jaramillo, test officer. "The terrain on the course shouldn't affect the positioning of the turret."

Across two 50-mile simulated missions on YPG's punishing road courses, the testers verified the vehicle's positioning system using surveyed waypoints. For weapon performance, the evaluators used four firing scenarios: firing at a stationary target while stationary, firing at a moving target while stationary, firing at a stationary target while moving, and firing at a moving target while in motion. The testers fired inert rounds and scored the

impacts visually as well as acoustically with a microphone array. Across all the scenarios, the evaluators verified the turret's stability and accuracy of the weapons systems' lasing ability, all at different distances.

The testing occurred during the hot weather months in Yuma, where daily triple digit temperatures are ordinary.

"The ideal time to test is in the summer: you're putting a lot of stress on the systems in the natural environment," said Jaramillo. "You can really replicate how much stress it could encounter when being operated by Soldiers out in the field."

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Story time at library focuses on being thankful



The Nov. 5, 2024, monthly story time at the Post Library focused on being thankful, with the theme of "Thanksgiving is." The visitors listened to a Thanksgiving story read by MWR employee Logan Treas and created a tie-dyed turkey puppet. For information on the library's upcoming events call, (928)-328-2558. (Photos by Dani Compton)

MWR hosts inaugural Turkey Shootout



Just in time for Thanksgiving dinner, one skilled archer won a turkey. Yuma Proving Ground's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program hosted the inaugural Turkey Shootout on Nov. 15, 2024. Six people took their aim at the grand prize during the one-day program. The archers had three rounds to shoot three arrows each. The Commissary on post donated the grand prize turkey. John Bartlett placed first, John Meyer placed second, and James Stockford placed third. (Photos courtesy of the YPG Fitness Center)

Here's to you. Here's to life.

Yuma Regional Medical Center is changing our name to Onvida Health.

The spark that drives us to deliver the best health care is the same spark that inspires us to celebrate life's moments. It's seeing you as more than a patient, but as a neighbor and friend. Here, you can count on the same great care with a new name and look welcoming you to our next chapter. All so we can build a healthier tomorrow, together.

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