

# THE OUTPOST

U.S. ARMY YUMA PROVING GROUND, YUMA, ARIZONA 85365 | VOLUME 66 NO. 23 NOVEMBER 27, 2017

## ★ Supporting the Warfighter for 75 Years ★ YPG boasts brand new fire station

By Mark Schauer

Local fires and medical emergencies can now be handled more efficiently than ever, partly due to a new fire station at Laguna Army Airfield. The new facility was dedicated in early November.

The ceremony consisted of a remarks from a variety of YPG senior leaders prior to the traditional roll-in ceremony of a fire truck by the distinguished guests and firefighters.

“Roll-in ceremonies are a long tradition dating back to the beginning days of the first organized fire companies,” said Gerald Ball, chief. “Fire companies responded to fires with manual fire pumps mounted on horse-drawn carriages. After hours of battling flames with leather hoses, they would return to the fire



YPG's Fire Station Number Four was dedicated in mid-November with a traditional roll-in of the first fire truck into the bay. Constructed for less than \$1 million in about a year, the new facility boasts sleeping facilities for seven, a kitchen and laundry, office space, and two large bays for fire trucks. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

house, unhitch the horses and board them in stables, then the entire company would participate in rolling the pumper carriage back into the station. We honor those forefathers with this roll-in of the first fire truck into the bay of our new fire station.”

In lieu of a ribbon cutting, lengths of fire hose suspended between each of the bay doors were uncoupled by YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger, Garrison Manager Gordon Rogers, Command Sgt Maj. Christopher Prosser, and Ball.

Constructed for less than \$1 million in about a year, the new facility boasts sleeping facilities for seven, a kitchen and laundry, office space, and two large bays for fire trucks. YPG's firefighters are on duty

SEE **FIRE STATION** page 2



## Big Day at YPG coming

By Chuck Wullenjohn

When 2018 rolls around, it will signify much more than simply the beginning of a new year. 2018 is U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's 75th birthday and a gala day-long

bash is set to take place Saturday, Feb. 3rd.

The day will be celebrated in appropriate fashion, with all the pomp and pageantry one would expect of a 75th birthday party.

The entire Yuma community is invited and, though it is impossible to predict how many people will show up, the number is bound

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New generation of  
armored vehicle  
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# FIRE STATION

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for a minimum of 144 hours every pay period, working 48 hours straight followed by two days at home.

"Firefighters will be here 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Ball. "Though technically it is a temporary station, we are very appreciative of the upgraded living conditions."

Given the climate of the desert environment, the new facility will provide extra protection to trucks and other equipment from the ravages of extreme heat.

"Another huge benefit is that we get two vehicles under cover that weren't previously beneath cover," said Poppenberger. "Being able to maintain our fire trucks and the capabilities our firefighters need ties in to Army readiness."



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger (right) and Garrison Manager Gordon Rogers uncouple a length of fire hose to dedicate YPG Fire Station Number Four. The new facility will provide extra protection to trucks and other equipment from the ravages of extreme heat. "Being able to maintain our fire trucks and the capabilities our firefighters need ties in to Army readiness," said Poppenberger.



YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser (left) and Fire Chief Gerald Ball uncouple a length of fire hose across the first bay at the new station. "Though technically it is a temporary station, we are very appreciative of the upgraded living conditions," said Ball. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

In addition to being responsible for protecting the residents, workers, and infrastructure of one of the geographically largest installations in the Department of Defense, the YPG Fire Department responds to vehicle accidents on a 60-mile stretch of US Highway 95, and performs fire

and emergency medical response to the communities at Senator Wash, Hidden Shores, Martinez Lake, Fisher's Landing, Bard, and the Imperial Irrigation District housing area. They assist in fighting fires in Yuma, the Foothills, and Winterhaven when requested.



## US ARMY NAF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PROGRAM



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# THE OUTPOST

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# BIG DAY

FROM PAGE 1

to be substantial, with the crowd numbering in the thousands. Everyone is advised to circle the date on calendars now.

Activities will be many. These include displays of military equipment tested at the proving ground, historic exhibits, parachuting, a play area for young people, musical entertainment, food and drinks, evening fireworks, and much more. Best of all, it will cost nothing to attend.

Special parking lots are being laid out and YCAT will offer bus service to and from downtown Yuma and the Foothills. Keep your eyes open in future months for more details.

Though the Army first came on a permanent basis to the desert southwest in 1850 when Soldiers constructed Fort Yuma overlooking the Yuma Crossing of the Colorado River, it wasn't until World War II that the beginnings of today's Yuma Proving Ground formed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opened the Yuma Test Branch below Laguna Dam on the Colorado River in 1943. This location was considered the most desirable spot in the country for testing portable combat bridges because of the abundance of swift flowing water that engineers could control as they wished. Dozens of bridges were constructed over the

river, much of the labor performed by former Italian prisoners of war. Some of the tested bridge designs were successful, others needed improvement and a few were outright failures – collapsing into the river or breaking apart into segments. In late 1944, rice and hemp plants were grown next to the Colorado River to establish realistic conditions for testing troop and vehicle movements in preparation for the expected invasion of Japan.

At the same time the test branch began operating, the Army established Camp Laguna a few miles to the west to train troops in mechanized warfare. Camp Laguna was one of 12 major U.S. Army desert training camps in the California-Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA). An 18,000 square mile area chosen by General George S. Patton, this became the training ground for over one million Soldiers eventually deployed to combat areas overseas

Upward of 15,000 troops were stationed at Camp Laguna at any one time for periods generally lasting six months. The purpose of the challenging training was to prepare soldiers for a severe life of combat in the deserts of North Africa or one of World War II's other combat fronts. Camp Laguna and the other CAMA installations were crucial in preparing Army personnel for combat. Camp Laguna was deactivated and demolished in 1944.



Opened alongside Yuma Test Branch in 1943, Camp Laguna was one of 12 major U.S. Army desert training camps in the California-Arizona Maneuver Area. An 18,000 square mile area chosen by Gen. George S. Patton (seen here), this became the training ground for over one million Soldiers eventually deployed to combat areas overseas. YPG will celebrate its 75th anniversary with a gala open house on Saturday, Feb. 3. (US Army photo)

After the war, the Yuma Test Branch remained in operation, but testing activities were turned toward the effect of the desert environment on engineering equipment, such as high-speed tractors, semi-trailers and revolving cranes. In 1950, the test branch closed, only to reopen one year later with a new name, Yuma Test Station, and a greatly expanded mission.

This new mission saw the testing workload greatly expand beyond its river and desert environmental roots. It became a multi-purpose test center that took on the lion's share of the nation's artillery testing workload, with the longest overland artillery range in the country. In

addition, many types of armored vehicles, armored systems, and air delivery systems began to be tested.

As one of the geographically largest military installations in the western world, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's 75-year history has witnessed a huge and varied workload. Today's mission, as throughout its history, is to ensure that weapon systems and equipment issued to American Soldiers function safely and as intended -- all the time, without fail. This workload directly contributes to America's national defense, a source of intense pride for each of the 2400 Yuma County residents who work at the proving ground.

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## Shoot'in the Breeze

# The Ghosts of Christmas

By David J. Horn

Christmas time is nearly here, and my kids who were born in Yuma are living back east. They grew up so fast. This time of year my house, empty except for me, is full of ghosts.

Some of those ghosts, are the Ghosts of Christmases Past. Of little kids all excited about putting lights on the house, and the newly decorated Christmas tree in the living room. There was the fun of spending a day in Phoenix at the Metro Center or Fiesta Mall (now empty and full of ghosts themselves), back in the day when they were crowded with holiday shoppers and all decked out for the season. There were the office Christmas parties here at YPG, where can you remember back to some of the people you worked with years ago. There were the Christmas Pageants and all the activities at church. There were the house parties with Grandpa and Grandma, friends and neighbors. There was the chaos around the house after the presents were opened, as the kids excitedly played with their new toys in a sea of crumpled wrapping paper. The best of times.

Then, there's the Ghost of Christmas Future. The malls are gone. Black Friday is just whatever day happens to be the day after Labor Day. Instead of Christmas cards, we'll all just forward holiday-themed posts to each other on social media. Santa, his sleigh and all

the reindeer, have been replaced by that guy who drives that brown truck through your neighborhood to deliver everything you bought online. Oops... maybe that's the Ghost of Christmas Present.

Oh well, it's time to get into the Christmas spirit here, even if it is just me and it's sunny and 70-degrees outside. Earlier this morning, I hung a wreath on the outside of the front door, and dragged the lighted 4-foot fake palm tree from the backyard by the pool, up to the front patio, to add some resemblance of Christmas lights to the front of my old-guy house.

Now...time to hook up the old belt-drive turntable to the stereo, and unpack my collection of LP records. It's hard to believe this old turntable actually still works. Let's see...here's a really old record of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas." My dad always liked that one. Here's one of Dan Fogelberg singing "Same Old Lang Syne." Don't we all wish we could meet a special someone from our past and spend a couple of hours talking with them? OK, this is the record I was looking for...Karen Carpenter singing "Merry Christmas Darling."

Wow...listening to that song really brings back memories from a time in the early 1980s when I was out of town just before the holidays, all while thinking about my new fiancé. And now, it's hard to believe that today is

almost 2018. Back to the Ghost of Christmas Future...all of a sudden just now, a notion just popped into my

head...that I need to make some airline reservations.

Have a Merry Christmas.

## Chaplain's Corner

# Thanksgiving Proclamation

**By the President of the United States of America, a Proclamation. (New York, 3 October 1789)**

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor-- and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be-- That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks--for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation--for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war--for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed--for the peaceable and rational man-

ner, in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted--for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us. and also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions-- to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually--to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed--to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord--To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and us--and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789. George Washington

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## YPG supports Yuma Veterans Day Parade



Veterans Day is celebrated each year in downtown Yuma with a gala parade, always attended by thousands of onlookers who line the sidewalks. "This is the biggest Veterans Day parade that I've ever been a part of," said Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Prosser. "The crowds are four or five people deep for almost the whole route. That's typical of the support we get from the Yuma community." Yuma Proving Ground played a big role by contributing a HMMWV towing a howitzer, with Soldiers marching and waving alongside as YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger rode in an open-topped convertible up front (Top photo). The parade's theme was 'honoring our women veterans,' and a large contingent of YPG personnel rode in the main float (second photo). At the 11th Hour Ceremony, Sgt. Jamie Luna of the YPG Chapel delivered an invocation and benediction (bottom photo). "To me, Veterans Day means celebrating the service of people before us who answered the nation's call to serve and honoring the tradition," said Prosser. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



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# New generation of armored vehicle tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

The M113 Armored Personnel Carrier and its variants are iconic vehicles in mechanized infantry history.

First fielded in 1962, the M113 was ubiquitous during the conflict in Vietnam and has seen service in virtually every American military action in the ensuing decades.

Though largely surpassed in both use and operation by the M2 Bradley, variants of the M113 continue in operation to this day.

Nonetheless, the M113 was built for a different generation of warfighting, and the recently developed Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle (AMPV) is intended to dramatically increase Soldiers' transport capabilities. The AMPV's five variants—a general purpose vehicle, mission command vehicle, mortar carrier, and medical evacuation and treatment vehicles--have nearly 80% more interior

volume than their predecessor, and significantly more power and survivability. Cooling and electrical systems are also upgraded to accommodate both existing and future upgrades.

All variants of the vehicle are slated to undergo extensive testing at YPG.

"We have a wide array of testing going on in Yuma," said Shelton Raine, program manager. "We'll be doing all the mortar firing on the mortar carrier variant as well as reliability and performance testing on the other four variants. We're trying to do a lot of testing in parallel to meet a very aggressive test schedule."

Presently, the mortar carrier variant is being tested by YPG's Munitions and Weapons Division.

"We're verifying the integration of the M121 mortar system on our vehicle," said John Portaro, mortar carrier test lead. "We want to ensure



Integrating the M121 120mm mortar into the vehicle takes extensive work, requiring a punishing test fire regimen to insure the system performs as expected. "The M113 mortar carrier weighs about 30,000 pounds," said Chad Bloomingdale, test officer. "This vehicle is 80,000 pounds. We're conducting all this testing to see if that has any effect on performance or firing."

there are no surprises and everything functions normally."

Integrating the 120mm mortar into the vehicle takes extensive work, requiring a punishing test

fire regimen to insure the system performs as expected.

As they do so, testers pay close attention to the effects of firing each round.

"The M113 mortar carrier weighs about 30,000 pounds," said Chad Bloomingdale, test officer. "This vehicle is 80,000 pounds. We're conducting all this testing to see if that has any effect on performance or firing."

YPG supports the test firing with a wide variety of personnel, from weapons operators and observers to high speed camera operators, data collectors, and conditioning chamber personnel. Some of the test rounds are conditioned to various temperatures and brought to the mortar immediately prior to being fired.

"Yuma has the infrastructure and tough environment to really stress the vehicles and give us a more thorough test," said Raine. "It gives us confidence in its technical



The mortar carrier variant of the recently-developed Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle is being tested by YPG's Munitions and Weapons Division. Meanwhile, the Combat Automotive Systems Division will conduct reliability and performance testing of the other four variants. "We're trying to do a lot of testing in parallel to meet a very aggressive test schedule," said Shelton Raine, program manager.



YPG supports the test firing with a wide variety of personnel, from weapons operators and observers to high speed camera operators, data collectors, and conditioning chamber personnel. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

maturity coming out of this phase.”

The test firing of the mortar carrier variant is only the start of evaluations of all aspects of the AMPV's performance that will last for more than a year.

“We get excellent support at YPG,” added Portaro. “Everybody here will go out of their way to do whatever is necessary to get the job done. We work together really well.”



Some of the test rounds are conditioned to various temperatures and brought to the mortar immediately prior to being fired. “We get excellent support at YPG,” said John Portaro, mortar carrier test lead. “Everybody here will go out of their way to do whatever is necessary to get the job done.”

# All Soldiers and Army Civilians of

# TEAM



## Organization Day

### 7 December 2017

### 0830-1545 at Cox Field

(No family or pets allowed)

**POINT OF CONTACT: Steve Ward,  
Fitness Center, ext. 2400**

**Sign up your team (Branch or higher) to compete in  
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**Hot dogs,  
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alcohol or coolers allowed)



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the Pin



**Contractor employees may attend YPG Organization Day at no cost to the  
government and must make arrangements with their employers for their attendance**

# Commander addresses workforce in all-hands meeting

By Mark Schauer

Col. Ross Poppenberger, YPG commander, addressed personnel across the command via video teleconference in mid-November.

Over 200 members of the YPG team were present in a hangar at



YPG Commander Col. Ross Poppenberger announced that YPG was the busiest test center in the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) for the eighth consecutive fiscal year, and praised the YPG workforce for making it possible. "Product managers choose YPG because of the high level of expertise and outstanding long-term relationships," he said. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

Laguna Army Airfield to hear his vision for the command and ask questions as personnel at Cold Regions Test Center watched by video link.

Also speaking at the event were Technical Director Julio Dominguez and Safety Director Mike Demcko.

Poppenberger announced that YPG was the busiest test center in the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) for the eighth consecutive fiscal year, and praised the YPG workforce for making it possible.

"We have high customer satisfaction ratings," he said. "Our rates are better and our turnaround times are better. Product managers choose YPG because of the high level of expertise and outstanding long-term relationships."

Poppenberger said that he and all levels of ATEC are aware of how busy the proving ground is and that many workers are required to work overtime to achieve the mission. He pledged to make every effort to avoid excessive overtime in the interests of safety and morale, but observed that YPG's test schedule driven in large part by its sterling reputation for excellence within the test and evaluation community.

"The workload is high-- that is the drawback of being great."

A major part of Poppenberger's address concerned results of the most recently conducted command climate survey. Garnering a 54% participation rate, Poppenberger was mostly impressed by the results, particularly those that indicated an overwhelming majority feel discrimination is not tolerated within the command and that all personnel are treated with respect.

"There is opportunity for everybody at YPG. We will continue working to sustain YPG as a solid and diverse organization.

Addressing feedback about communication, Poppenberger said he and the proving ground's entire senior leadership have open door policies and that communication is a two-way street.

"If you see me anywhere, ask me a question. I'm approachable."

Poppenberger concluded by encouraging the workforce to participate in the upcoming Organization Day on December 7th, the proving ground's first such event in a number of years, as well as the 75th Anniversary event on Saturday, February 3, 2018, saying he sees both events as morale-building rewards for a job well done.

"We're going to give back to you and give back to the community," he said.

In his remarks, Dominguez announced his upcoming retirement and praised the remarkable progress YPG has made in creating a more diverse workforce during his tenure: whereas when he started working here in 1985 YPG had one Hispanic supervisor, today 26% of supervisors are Hispanic, mirroring closely the 27% of the workforce



YPG Technical Director Julio Dominguez praised the workforce, saying YPG will continue to be a premier test facility far into the future provided the installation maintains its flexibility and can-do spirit. "I've always considered myself a partner to this magnificent workforce. This workforce is magnificent—I don't say it to make you feel good."

that is Hispanic. However, more work remains to be done, he said, particularly in the recruitment of female engineers.

Dominguez praised the workforce, saying YPG will continue to be a premier test facility far into the future provided the installation maintains its flexibility and can-do spirit.

"I've always considered myself a partner to this magnificent workforce. This workforce is magnificent—I don't say it to make you feel good."

Demcko shared a variety of holiday safety tips in his presentation, both in traditional areas like driving and Christmas tree maintenance, and in areas such as guarding against identity theft and credit card fraud.

## Rob Turner

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# Being Thankful Is Good For You

**Submitted by Melissa Gomez, Family Advocacy Program Manager**

This time of year leads many to ponder on what they are thankful for in life. It's a time of friends and family gathering around the table together to share in traditions. However, the holidays are about much more than just presents, turkey, and tradition...they are an opportunity to exercise gratitude.

Gratitude is an expression of being grateful. This response is one that we often overlook as we go on about our daily lives. However, there are many benefits to the expression of gratitude and the holiday season is a great time to practice having an "attitude of gratitude".

Research studies show that gratitude has a number of positive health effects on both adults and children. Being grateful/thankful has been linked to the following:

- Heart Health- People with high levels of gratitude show less inflammation in tests and better circulation. Those who kept gratitude journals showed improved heart rates and reduced their cardiac risk.
- Better Sleep- Writing down a few things to be grateful for before bed helps quiet your mind and allows for a more restful slumber.
- Physical Health Benefits- People who practice gratitude techniques self-report healthier behaviors and more interest in physical activity such as daily exercise.
- Optimism & Friendships- Studies found that expressing gratitude daily helps with your outlook on life. This in turn attracts more positive people your way and forges stronger, longer-lasting friendships.

Practicing gratitude may seem like a chore but here are some easy ways to make gratitude a part of your

daily routine. Be sure to include your children in these techniques as well; the benefits of gratitude help children to process the world around them more positively and lead to healthy development and perception.

- Focus your attention outward- According to studies, gratitude is defined by your attitude towards the world and yourself. Try your best to focus on the positives in life, this will help you find things to be grateful for throughout the day. Subsequently, it will help your interactions with others become more positive as well.

- Keep a gratitude journal- Record what you are grateful for daily and watch your world change for the better! This is a great quality time activity to share with children too.

- Thank someone everyday- Whether at home, in public, or at the workplace, this activity can boost morale, relationships, and interpersonal skills. Thanking someone has ripple effects that make the surrounding environment a better place! Teaching children to thank someone each day helps promote a healthy family at home and good manners as well.

With so much to be thankful for, let us challenge ourselves to be the change in our families and our community. Practice gratitude as much as you can and enjoy the many benefits that come your way. For more information on gratitude and healthy families, or for any questions please contact the Yuma Proving Ground Family Advocacy Program at (928) 328-3224.



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Find out more at [www.tricare.mil/changes](http://www.tricare.mil/changes).

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