



Photo by Ana Henderson, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

**Project stakeholders gather to break ground on site for a two-bay freefall hangar Dec. 7 at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona, for the Special Operations Aviation Command flight detachment that has supported training operations of the Military Freefall School, part of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, for the past seven years.**

## Officials break ground on Yuma freefall hangar

By Mark Schauer  
U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground

Testing virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal is U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's primary mission.

Yet for more than a quarter of a century, the Military Freefall School, part of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, has utilized the proving ground's vast ranges to train thousands of the military's most elite paratroopers.

Since the opening of one of the world's largest vertical wind tunnels here in 2014, the MFFS's mission has increased significantly. Earlier today, ground was broken for the construction of a two bay hangar for the Special Operations Aviation Command flight detachment that has supported training operations of the MFFS for the past seven years.

"The C27 that will be housed in this hangar is nearly perfect for the MFFS mission," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Jones, the detachment's commander. "I'm excited for this hangar. I can't think of a better way to really solidify the future of this USASOC flight detachment than the construction of this hangar."

The flight detachment maintains and flies the C27J, formerly used as a niche cargo plane to supplement the larger C-130. The aircraft was extensively tested at YPG prior to being fielded and is regarded by many as a high performance aircraft. It achieves altitude more quickly than the aircraft formerly used to support the MFFS prior to the creation of the flight detachment, and also accommodates two to three times as many jumpers at a time, which has also contributed to a significant expansion of MFFS training opportunities in recent years.

"This is a symphony," said Maj. Nicholas Garver, MFFS commander. "We could not

do it without the world class knowledge and expertise the flight detachment brings every day. This hangar will make the symphony even more efficient."

The hangar is the first of three new buildings that that will ultimately bring all of the MFFS' activities into one campus.

"What we do here every day is very dynamic in nature," said Garver. "Having everyone consolidated in one area helps with efficiency and with a sense of community. As we transition to great power competition, these facilities will help us reach the goal of providing a greater capability for the Army enterprise."

"Everything we do here is tied to time and efficiency," added Sgt. Maj. Christopher Bauer. "After nearly 30 years here on the ground at Yuma Proving Ground, we've gotten pretty efficient, but this new construction will give us a place of our own and increase our efficiency."

**Continued on Page 2**






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Continued from Page 1

The hangar, built by Harper Construction, is scheduled for completion in 2023. “Any time we add facilities to our installations, we have to think further down the road,” said Ron James, YPG Garrison Manager. “Sustainment goes into the planning process. It’s not just breaking some ground and the great people putting up these buildings, it’s the sustainment of the buildings

and the extra effort that goes into our support of it.” The remaining two buildings that will constitute the MFFS campus, along with the construction of access aprons and improved taxiways, are expected to be finished by 2026. “Our largest Soldier population is the Military Freefall School,” said James. “We’re thankful that the Special Operations community brought this construction to YPG to enhance their mission. It’s a real demonstration of commitment.”

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Send an email to  
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Wishing everyone safe, happy holidays!



Col. Julie Balten, District Commander

Hello, SPL Team!  
I want to take this time to wish you all a very happy holiday, and a peaceful and prosperous new year.  
It is kind of exciting that the holidays fall on the weekend this year, which allows us a couple of extra days of leave. I hope you are taking full advantage of this time to reunite with your family and friends and come back refreshed for a new beginning in 2022.  
I am looking forward to spending that extra time with my family.  
I know the last couple of years have been challenging – not just for the Los Angeles District – but for our nation, as we continue to navigate through our second year of the COVID pandemic, while also trying to gain back some normalcy into our lives.  
I just want to say I am so very proud of each and every one of you. You’ve all stepped up to the plate, learning how to communicate in a virtual world, developing new technologies to stay connected, and continuing to give this district 100 percent every day to accomplish our mission.  
I see your hard work firsthand as I travel to our project sites and continue to hear stories about the great work you are doing.  
As we look toward the New Year, I want to share my vision for the district and the direction I would like to see for us moving forward.  
My new vision is for us to be the district that delivers quality, on-time engineering and construction to the American Southwest, and by doing so, delivers a legacy with impact.  
We all have one common goal in mind: to make our communities better places to live, work and play. This is our time and our opportunity to do deliver a legacy with impact!  
But this also means getting back to the basics of how we do business.  
Think of it as building a house. Everything

starts with a foundation. Once the foundation is set, the house starts to take shape. It’s about building a strong foundation and then building it even higher.  
I’ve identified 10 lines of effort I’d like us to focus on moving into the new year:

- IMPLEMENTING PDBP through training, implementing processes and analytical tools.
- TALENT MANAGEMENT, which means IDENTIFYING new recruitment methods to recruit and retain excellent staff.
- DEVELOPING creative support for supervisors with performance, feedback, leading and training for supervisors.
- COMMUNICATION: Improvement of PMP and PGPMP.
- TRAINING for processes (BCOES, ITR).
- CONDUCTING DISTRICT-WIDE TRAINING on integrating environmental commitments into P&S.
- REVIEWING AND UPDATING old QMS documents; POC nominations is a mandatory requirement.
- SCHEDULING and IMS scheduling: How do we do better with data quality, expertise, accessibility and sharing of information.
- PROMOTING positive culture change to support strong project delivery teams; and,
- EXPLORING funding efficiencies.

Getting back to the basics also means that it’s not just about building structures; it’s about building people. And people – all of you – are our greatest assets!  
Many of you have faced personal challenges these last couple years, whether that’s navigating your children from distance learning to adjusting to physically being back in school, continuing to be caregivers for family members, working remotely away from coworkers, dealing with life changes, and, for some, dealing with illness or the loss of family members and friends.  
Although the holidays are meant to be a joyous time, they also can be a particularly tough time of the year for those who have experienced life changes.  
I want you all to know you are valued members of this team, and you are not alone.  
If you are struggling and would like some assistance, please reach out to our Human

Resources Department. Our HR specialists can provide you with resources through the Employee Assistance Program.  
We are a resilient workforce, we are a team, and we will get through this together!  
Our mission here at the Los Angeles District is that we provide world-class project management, engineering, environmental, contracting and construction services that respond to the needs of the nation, our environment and the communities we serve.  
And we do – every single day. But we can’t do it without all of you!  
Through the work that you do, you are making positive impacts in our communities that will affect generations for years to come. I couldn’t be prouder to be the commander of such a professional and dedicated team.  
I also want to take this time to remind everyone to continue to protect yourselves and your loved ones against the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Here are safer ways to celebrate the holidays, from the CDC:

- Wear well-fitting masks over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings and you are not fully vaccinated.
- Even those who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask in public indoor settings in communities with substantial to high transmission.
- Outdoors is safer than indoors.
- Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces.
  - If you are sick or have symptoms, don’t host or attend a gathering.
- If you are considering traveling for a holiday or event, visit the CDC’s Travel page to help you decide what is best for you and your family. The CDC still recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated.
  - Everyone, even people who are fully vaccinated, are required to wear a mask on public transportation and follow international travel recommendations.

With that, I am wishing you all a safe and happy holiday and look forward to us all coming back STRONG in the new year!

Sincerely,  
Col. Julie Balten

We all have one common goal in mind: to make our communities better places to live, work and play. This is our time and our opportunity to deliver a legacy with impact!

– Col. Julie Balten,  
LA District Commander





# Year in Photos

Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Milhorn, deputy commanding general for military and international operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, center left, made a site visit to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VA Long Beach Healthcare System medical complex April 27 to see the progress of the Corps' projects there, totaling \$350 million.



Photo by Dave Palmer, LA District Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District is working with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, Arizona, to repair five levee systems using the Public Law 84-99 Rehabilitation and Inspection Program. Work is currently underway in the New River Dam outlet channel in Peoria. Here, Jim Terstriep (right), an LA District construction representative and Victoria Jurado, a district geologist, discuss the channel subgrade Sept. 28.



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, second from left, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general and chief of engineers, talks to Col. Julie Balten, center, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, during his visit to project sites Jan. 13, 2021, at the Veterans Affairs Long Beach Healthcare System medical complex in Long Beach, California.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander Col. Julie Balten with two members of her team, follow a contractor into the construction zone at the mouth of Oceanside Harbor, April 12. Sand dredged from the harbor will be piped to a section of Oceanside Beach, California. The annual maintenance dredging of Oceanside Harbor is contracted and supervised by the LA District.

Photo by John Reese, LA District Public Affairs



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Milhorn, deputy commanding general for military and international operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, right, receives a brief about the Corps and its contractors work during an April 27 tour of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs VA Long Beach Healthcare System medical complex.



# Year in Photos



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

A team that includes subject-matter experts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the California Department of Public Health and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services conduct a final inspection of work at Beverly Community Hospital in Montebello, California, March 19, 2021, as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's support to California in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Photo by John Reese, LA District Public Affairs

Col. Julie Balten, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, right, and Brig. Gen. Paul Owen, commander of the Corps' South Pacific Division, left, pause for a quick discussion March 19 after viewing construction progress of the Corps and its contractors work on an alternate care facility at Adventist Health White Memorial Medical Center in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Milhorn, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Military and International Operations, second from left, got a close-up look April 28 at the finished additions to two hospitals in the Los Angeles District area of operations — Adventist Health White Memorial Medical Center in Boyle Heights and Mission Community Hospital in Panorama City, California.



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Milhorn, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for Military and International Operations, center left, listens as Brig. Gen. Paul Owen, the Corps' South Pacific Division commander, center right, talks about the Corps' FEMA mission in support of LA-area hospitals during an April 28 tour of an alternate care facility the Corps built just outside of Adventist Health White Memorial Hospital in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles.



Photo by Dena O'Dell, LA District Public Affairs



Photo by Robert DeDeaux, LA District Public Affairs

Christopher Luna, left, shakes hands with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil engineer Neil Tugaoen, right, at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society National Conference Sept. 24 in Phoenix.

LA District Park Ranger Henry Csaposs reminds an off-highway vehicle driver that OHV use in the Mojave River Dam Basin is prohibited during a county-wide OHV enforcement operation Oct. 23 at the Mojave River Dam and its surrounding area in San Bernardino County, California.



Photo by Stephen Baack, LA District Public Affairs

Professionals of the LA District comprising diverse specialties host an information and outreach booth at the Día de los Muertos community event and procession Oct. 26 at the LA River Center and Gardens in LA's Cypress Park neighborhood. Hundreds of community members attended the event, which was organized by Mujeres de la Tierra, a nonprofit group whose mission is to "inspire, motivate and engage women and their children to take ownership and leadership of their neighborhood and local community issues."



# Tips to keep your holiday season safe

Los Angeles District  
Safety Team

Many of you may have travel plans for the holiday season, going to distant destinations or welcoming travelers into your homes. Help keep these visits free of injury and illness with the following safety and health tips.

**If You’re the Guest**

- Carry your doctor’s emergency contact numbers and medical information, such as your blood type and health history.
- If you’re taking medicines, pack enough to last several days longer than you expect to be away.
- If traveling by train, identify emergency escape routes from railway cars.
- If driving, ensure your tires can handle wintry roads. Have your car winterized by your mechanic and be prepared for blocked roads. Take outdoor clothing, boots, flashlight, some food, and water.
- Whether staying in a hotel or your sister’s new house, note the escape routes.
- Turn off portable space heaters when you leave your room or go to sleep. Keep heaters three feet (one meter) from anything that can burn.
- Monitor your alcohol intake. Many will be drinking at some point during the holiday season, and there is nothing wrong with that.
- Just be sure to pay attention to how much you and others are consuming. Drinking too much alcohol can have lethal affects. Be responsible and never drink and drive.
- Avoid scalding; hot water heaters may be set higher than you’re accustomed to.
- Stay healthy by avoiding people who are coughing and sneezing. Remember to wash your hands frequently.



Let’s get a head start on holiday safety. It’s never really out of season! Whether you’re traveling, preparing food or decorating, safety considerations are more important now than ever. Follow the 12 tips above, and visit [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org) for some basic precautions to help you stay safe throughout the season.

**If You’re the Host**

- Light your walkway, porch, and stairs to prevent falls.
- Clear outdoor walkways of ice or snow.
- Keep hallways, stairs, and exits free of toys, furniture, and other clutter.
- Keep a sober eye on overexcited children; your partner may be distracted by cooking and guests.
- Keep children and pets out of the kitchen – for their own safety and to reduce tripping hazards for the cook and helpers.
- Test your smoke detectors. If you don’t have smoke detectors, install one on every level, especially near sleeping areas. Make sure the smoke detectors are listed by a testing laboratory and replaced if 10 years or older.

- If you are serving alcohol as part of your dinner party, be a responsible host.
- Excessive drinking leads to many accidents at home and on the highways during the holiday season.
- If you and your guests will be heading outside the home to enjoy other festivities, then remember to stick together: This way you can look out for your friends and family. Going out to parties and nightclubs means a fast-paced, crazy night; so be sure to travel in groups. Having a safety net around you in this environment, especially for women, is imperative.

Make sure you keep these safety tips in mind to keep your Holidays a joyous occasion for everyone!



Photo by Neil Mabini, Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division

Representatives with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division cut the ribbon signifying the opening of a new parking lot and adjacent turnstile at the naval center Nov. 30 in Corona, California. Pictured are, from left to right, Acting Infrastructure Division Head Annabel Aguilar, Acting Commanding Officer Capt. Christopher Cassano, Technical Director Dianne Costlow, all with the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Commander Col. Julie Balten, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Engineer David Van Dorpe, and Acting Facilities Branch Manager Jennifer Stevens, Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division.

## Corps, Navy celebrate partnership, opening of new parking lot at naval warfare center

By Dena O’Dell  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District

CORONA, Calif. – Representatives with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District traveled Nov. 30 to the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division to celebrate the opening of a new parking lot and adjacent turnstile on the base.

The \$2.3-million parking lot expansion project was a collaboration between the Corps, the warfare center and the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command and allows for an additional 236 parking spaces just inside the entrance to the facility.

Speakers at the event included Col. Julie Balten, commander of the Corps’ Los Angeles District, as well as Diane Costlow, technical director, and Jennifer Stevens, acting facilities branch manager, both with the Naval Surface Warfare Center-Corona Division.

“This is just a fantastic opportunity,” Balten said about the completion of the project. “There are four things we really touch base on with the Corps of Engineers – that’s people, partnerships, revolutionize and modernize, and delivering the program. We can’t do our mission without the great people on our team, as well as your team – all of the fantastic people who work here at the Naval Surface Warfare Center.”

It is because of that partnership, Balten said, that the construction of the parking lot went from a vision to a reality.

“Really, it’s that partnership between the Navy and the Corps that made this parking lot become a reality,” she said, “to ensure you

have safe and acceptable parking for years to come. It is fantastic to be here and support all of that.”

During her speech, she also emphasized the Corps’ focus on revolutionizing and modernizing projects, no matter the size.

“There’s a lot of opportunity here to expand and increase the amount of parking from the original (footprint),” she said. “You may say, ‘Well that’s not really revolutionary or modernizing,’ but sometimes it just goes back to looking at positional opportunities to make something greater than it originally was. This is a fantastic opportunity to go from a smaller opportunity to all of this now, and to increase the beautification of all of this.”

Costlow said additional authorizations by Congress a few years ago have allowed for greater flexibility and additional tools to be able to support the center’s facilities by allowing it to work with agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command and the center’s own organic contracting.

It’s really just a beautiful sight,” she said. “I can’t wait to start seeing cars parked in this beautiful parking lot.”

Stevens provided additional information about the project and said she looks forward to working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on future projects at the Naval center.

Prior to the ceremony, Balten toured the base with Costlow and others to learn more about its mission and needs.

“It is a really incredible mission,” Balten said. “For us to be able to support that mission is just a fantastic opportunity.”



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