

# The Outpost

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

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## Yuma Proving Ground looks to artificial intelligence for data efficiency gains

By Mark Schauer

The U.S. Army wants to reduce sensor to shooter timelines, react to threats faster, and combine all of the systems and effects available at their disposal to be ready to defend against near-peer symmetric warfare.

Army senior leaders say that successful deterrence against near-peer adversaries with the ability to conduct large-scale combat operations will require multidomain operations and leveraging new technologies across all military branches.

It is a tall and complex order, and U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is at the forefront of conducting developmental testing of the equipment likely to be relied on by the future force.



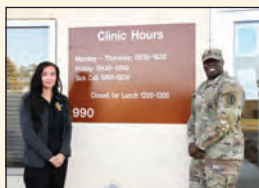
The decades of historical data U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground has is extremely valuable for training artificial intelligence models to automate or expedite data reduction and analysis. A recent successful example involved developing a workable algorithm to help facilitate the acoustic trilateration of air to surface missiles and other helicopter rounds collected from arrays of microphones and hydrophones on the post's highly instrumented ranges. (U.S. Army photo)

Data has always been YPG's chief product for the Army, and in conjunction with the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) the post is developing the local architecture and data governance procedures in advance of more practical case uses for artificial intelligence (AI) in support of the test mission. The working groups mapping out the future of both test data and enterprise data are likely to have impact across ATEC.

"Yuma's been in a position where we have a pretty broad mission area because we are testing in extreme natural environments," said Ross Gwynn, YPG Technical Director. "All the processes that take an

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# New faces around post

## YPG's Medical Clinic welcomes medical provider and NCOIC

By Ana Henderson

The Medical Clinic at U.S. Army Proving Ground (YPG) would like to introduce Capt. Emily Carmody as its new physician assistant (PA).

Carmody comes to YPG from Fort Campbell, Ky. where she worked as a PA for Division Headquarters with similar patient empanelment, she'll care for here, at YPG. Carmody will serve the YPG community for the next three years and brings a wealth of experience in women's health services.

Prior to her arrival in October, there was a gap in provider care, causing many patients to seek care outside of the clinic. She hopes to get the patients back on track with their medical needs.

"I want to provide accessible, good healthcare for the community."

Carmody is familiar with Army life. "I was an Army brat growing up," she remarks, noting that joining the Army is a family tradition. Her



Capt. Emily Carmody joined the Medical Clinic at U.S. Army Proving Ground as its new physician assistant in October of 2024. Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Siwemuke joined in the summer of 2024 and serves as the Clinical NCOIC where he manages the Soldiers and ensures the facility is running as it should. Note, hours on sign are not current. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

father retired from the Army and her sister recently served.

Another fairly new face at the clinic is Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Siwemuke. He serves as the Clinical NCOIC where he manages the Soldiers and ensures the facility is running as it should.

"I hope to continue to provide access to care for the community, so they have a place for medications, pharmacy or occupations help."

He joined the team in the summer of 2024 and is excited to be here with his family.

"It brings me back closer to home. I am originally from Sierra Vista, Ariz. I love the desert community and the weather because I ride motorcycles."

In his 18-years in the Army, Siwemuke has served in Washington, Pennsylvania, Germany, California, Georgia, and Italy. For the next three years YPG will be his duty station, and he hopes to retire after this assignment.

In case you are having trouble pronouncing his name as many do, he explained its phonetically pronounce, see-we-moo-key.

### Medical Clinic hours of operation:

**Monday — Thursday**  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Friday**  
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**\*Closed from 12-1p.m.  
for lunch\***

**Sick call: 8 – 8:30 a.m.**

## The Outpost

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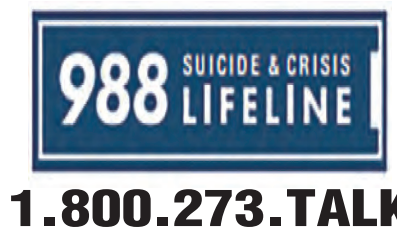
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# New faces around post

## New vet joins the team at the YPG Veterinary Clinic

By Ana Henderson

Capt. Lauren Johnston stepped into the role of Officer in Charge of Yuma's Veterinary Section in August 2024. Johnston previously worked at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs for a year, performing veterinary work.

Johnston is a West Coast native. She grew up in Northern California and graduated from UC Davis Veterinary School. Her interest in infectious diseases, she says, "mostly involving the spread from animals to humans," is what led her to join the field. Johnston adds, "The Army is an excellent place to be able to explore that."

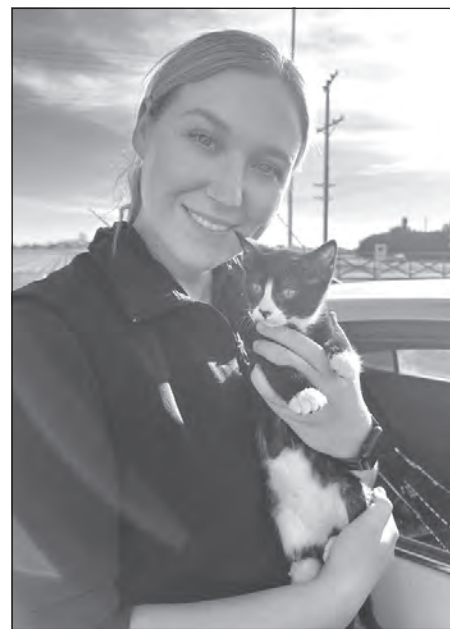
Johnston is committed to serving the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) community and surrounding areas for the next three years. The YPG and Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma (MCAS-Yuma) community spent several months without a vet. She is making more appointments available for surgeries and dental needs to meet the



LEFT: U.S. Army Capt. Lauren Johnston stepped into the role of Officer in Charge of Yuma's veterinary section in August 2024. (U.S. Army photo) RIGHT: Capt. Lauren Johnston plans to do community outreach. In fact, the clinic recently held a rabies vaccine clinic for two local tribes, vaccinating over 160 pets over the course of two days. She's also working on reestablishing service at the Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma clinic. (Photo courtesy of Veterinary Clinic)

community's needs. Plans are in the works to restart services at MCAS-Yuma.

She also plans to do community



outreach. In fact, the clinic recently held a rabies vaccine clinic for two local tribes, vaccinating over 160 pets over the course of two days.

"That was a really awesome experience, getting to work with the tribe members, see the tribal community, and witness how much of an impact we can have locally."

Despite arriving in the middle of Yuma's heatwave, Johnston is enjoying her time at YPG.

"I love it, I love the heat!" she adds, "being so close to California and to home is so important to me."

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Building: 226**

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9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**and Friday  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

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from 12-1 p.m.**

**Closed, Saturday, Sunday and  
Thursday**

## YPG welcomes new MWR director

By Mark Schauer

Meet U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's new director of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, Christopher Reitman.

Born in Virginia and hailing from a family with multiple generations of active duty service, the Marine Corps veteran has 30 years of combined active duty and federal civilian service.

His most recent positions prior to arriving here was as marketing manager and business and recreation chief at the Army's Carlisle Barracks.

"I was looking for the next growth

opportunity, and everyone was presenting Yuma Proving Ground as a challenge," he said. "I like a challenge and enjoy the experience of leading people and watching them grow. There is so much untapped opportunity right in front of us."

For more, listen to an interview with Reitman on the Season 7 premiere of Outpost Outspoken on Jan. 13. All episodes are available at <https://dvidshub.net/r/k8gm7b> as well as on popular streaming services such as Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Pandora, Spotify, Stitcher Radio, and YouTube Music.





# YPG hosts special visitors

## Operational Test and Evaluation Land and Expeditionary Warfare Deputy Director visits YPG



In early December, Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. John Nelson and other YPG senior leaders gave a comprehensive briefing and tour of YPG's capabilities to Garry Bishop, Deputy Director, Operational Test and Evaluation Land and Expeditionary Warfare. A decorated armor officer who served multiple deployments to Iraq, Bishop has deep experience at YPG, having come here in support of test activities for more than 15 years. Following spending the day on the range, he served as keynote speaker at YPG's first Army Ball since 2012 the following day, praising YPG's developmental testing of virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal in multiple natural environments at three test centers. "These efforts ensure that when our Soldiers say, 'this we'll defend,' they do so with confidence in the tools and technology at their disposal," he said in his remarks. "The challenges of modern warfare are ever-evolving, and so is YPG." (Photos by Mark Schauer)

## IMCOM Director thanks local employees



Patrick Appelman, Director of the US Army Installation Management Command-Readiness, made his first visit to Yuma Proving Ground in December of 2024, holding a town hall with IMCOM employees at the post chapel and participating in the post's annual Installation Planning Board. During the town hall, Appelman presented challenge coins to several honorees and discussed the outlook for the command in the new year. Appelman was named IMCOM-Readiness director in March 2024. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



## Throwback: Steve Montenegro visited YPG in 2015

As he takes the speaker's gavel in the Arizona State House of Representatives, The Outpost looks back to August 2015, when then-House Majority Leader Steve Montenegro visited Yuma Proving Ground in August 2015, receiving comprehensive briefings from senior leaders and getting up close and personal with an M1 Abrams running miles on one of YPG's more than 200 miles of punishing road courses. "It was an amazing experience," he said at the time. "It is really neat to know this type of operation is right here in Yuma. It's not only a strong economic driver for our community, but something that is having a global impact." (Photo by Mark Schauer)





# From student employee to career: YPG welder makes his mark

By Mark Schauer

As the busiest test center in the Army, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) evaluates virtually every piece of equipment a Soldier is likely to put their hands on.

It does this in the natural environment in as realistic a manner as possible. Since items under test are oftentimes inherently dangerous weapon systems, the safety of evaluators is a key factor.

Many of the fixtures and components to support this rigorous testing are not available on the commercial market or need to be extensively modified for YPG's needs. Whether it is a mock helicopter to serve as a target or a specialized mount to hold a machine gun under test, YPG oftentimes has to conceive of and build elaborate test fixtures to make possible a critical evaluation that Soldiers are counting on. Test fixtures or the items under test themselves sometimes break, too.

One of the people counted on to rapidly repair such items is welder Andy Pinkerton. After serving an enlistment in the Marine Corps, he stayed in his final duty station in Yuma looking for a trade.

"There was this guy I was kind of friends with, and he suggested I check out welding," he recalled.

He started taking classes at Arizona Western College under instructor Sam Colton, who had worked at YPG for many years. Pinkerton had heard of the proving ground while in uniform but knew little about it.

"I knew of its existence, but he introduced me to the SCEP program where I would actually have a chance to work out here."

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) in place at that time gave students the opportunity to work at YPG full time while pursuing their degree. After graduation, the Army had the option to convert the SCEP participant to



Marine Corps veteran Andy Pinkerton has worked as a welder at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground since 2005. He started as a Student Career Experience Program employee who was made permanent after graduating from college (Photo by Ana Henderson)

a permanent employee. Pinkerton started here in 2005 and has remained ever since.

He's seen his share of the post's intense developmental test mission in the years since, from the busiest days of the surge in Iraq to YPG's current position at the forefront of Army modernization efforts. The shielded metal arc welding he likes best remains the same, but he's seen technology improve in his shop over the past two decades.

"We have a much better plasma cutting table now," he said. "The cutting surface is nearly twice as big as our previous one. We can fit a 10-foot by 20-foot sheet on there if we want to, and it also has the ability to drill and tap threaded holes."

He enjoys working here and has no plans to leave any time soon.

"I'm on the retirement path—if they'll have me, I'll keep showing up."

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# Garrison Employee Recognition Ceremony

## Garrison Professional of the Quarter



U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground's Garrison Manager Kenneth Musselwhite presented Sgt. Henry Moats with a Civilian Service Achievement Medal for selection as Garrison's Professional of the Quarter for the third quarter on Dec. 5, 2024. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

## Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Alexander McNeely



Sgt. Vincent Ricci

U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground held its employee recognition ceremony on Dec. 5, 2024, at the Cactus Café to recognized employees for their years of service and exemplary work.

## Years of Service

35 years



Charles Johnson

15 years



Shannon Schmidgall

15 years



Shauna Wells

5 years



Gentry Davis

5 years



Jacob Kuntzelman

5 years



Raquel Overstreet

Not pictured: Jose Arguelles (40), Donna Goodman (30), Craig Grabowski (20), Brad Gray (15), Dusti Rinehart (5).  
(Photos by Ana Henderson)

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# Employees recognized for efforts in EDGE

On the afternoon of Dec. 16, 2024, Yuma Test Center (YTC) Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks visited the Air Combat Systems Test Directorate offices to recognize employees who had a hand in making the EDGE demonstration successful. The event brought more than 400 personnel from the Army and industry to collaborate on unmanned aircraft. YTC

was selected to host the event for its subject matter expertise, instrumentation, and range space among other capabilities, however it was the personnel who made the demonstration successful.

## YTC Coin recipients

(Left to right) Glen Pinnell, Jaime Coronado, Alejandro Juarez, Sean Lomorena, Michael Stoltenberg, Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks.



## Certificate of Appreciation recipients

(Left to right) Lt. Col. Kevin Hicks, Walter Aims, Jason Anderson, David Bates, Brandon Cushman, Shawn Devoe, Michael Diehl, Ruben Hernandez, Salomon Sanchez, Daniel Schoenborn, Spencer Schultz, Yogendra Shrestha. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

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# Know before you go

## Imperial Dam Road improvement project wraps up in early 2025

By Ana Henderson

The project on Imperial Dam Road (IDR) that is the access way to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is expected to wrap up in late February.

Project Engineer Eric Jimenez with YPG's Directorate of Public Work detailed the steps that still need to get done before drivers can enjoy a construction free zone.

Jimenez explains, that in early

January, crews will build up the shoulder evening out the roadway. Drivers will see temporary striping and new road signs at this time.

In early to mid-January the detours will be removed, and the speed-limit will increase to 45 mph miles per hours.

The final task to wrap the project will be adding the permanent striping, which is scheduled for Feb. 26, 2025.

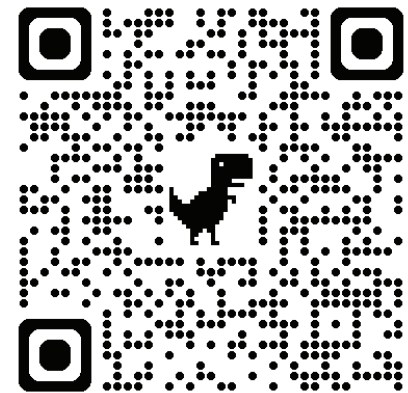
Drivers may recall construction began Sept. 10, 2024, to install culverts to avoid flooding after heavy monsoon storms.



A road improvement project has been on-going since early September 2024. The project is nearing the end. The final task to wrap the project is adding the permanent striping, which is scheduled for Feb. 26, 2025. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

## Yuma Proving Ground visitor access

Only individuals with official business or a sponsor can enter the post after having credentials verified. A sponsor can be an active-duty service member or a federal employee with an active Common Access Card commonly known as a CAC card. Contractors with a CAC card cannot be sponsors. Scan the QR code for details on visiting YPG or call 928-328-6689.



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# Coyotes among wildlife at YPG

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is a natural laboratory in which equipment Soldiers use is tested to ensure it works as it should wherever in the world they are called upon to serve.

As such, YPG has a deeply vested interest in being good stewards of the environment, and wildlife abounds here.

The proving ground is home to one of the largest and most genetically diverse populations of bighorn sheep in Arizona. The Sonoran Pronghorn, virtually extinct in the early 2000s, has dramatically increased in population thanks in part to state and federal wildlife officials intentionally introducing the creature into YPG as a safe haven to help it regenerate. A fringe-toed lizard that is threatened in most of the American West thrives at YPG, as does the Sonoran tortoise.

Coyotes are among the many animals here and are usually somewhat elusive.

“Coyotes are always going to come through at night when we’re not looking,” said Daniel Steward, YPG wildlife biologist. “It’s been that way ever since there has been a YPG, and for several thousand years before there was a YPG. We are in a very good piece of habitat for all kinds of wildlife.”

Coyotes are nocturnal, foraging at night. The desert’s primary predator, they eat rodents and rabbits and are seen more often during the wintertime.

“Coyotes are going to be really active before the sun comes up,” said Steward. “In the winter, we are pulling into our parking lot or leaving our front doors before the sun comes up. During the summer, nobody sees coyotes anymore—they haven’t gone away, they’ve just gone back to shelter before the sun comes up.”

YPG’s proximity to the Colorado River makes it attractive for a wide variety of species, including



Coyotes are among the many animals that roam YPG. Coyotes are typically not a problem for human communities if people refrain from feeding them. Removing other sources of food can help deter them from wandering in yards. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

coyotes, Steward said.

“Anywhere in the state that I’ve ever been, when I hear coyotes yip and howl at night, it’s usually near water systems. Coyotes are going to be in the best habitat where there is lots of cover and forage, and there’s nothing better for habitat than the Colorado River corridor.”

Coyotes are typically not a problem for human communities as long as people refrain from feeding them.

“When coyotes are fed by humans, they lose their fear and start to expect to be fed,” said Steward. “There have been cases across the country where people get bit in communities where people are feeding coyotes.”

If a coyote makes repeat appearances at a work site, Steward said, the likeliest explanation is that

someone in the area has fed it before.

“If somebody is handing that coyote a sandwich every morning, that coyote is going to keep coming back, and won’t necessarily know one person from another.”

Steward stresses the importance of educating visiting test personnel about the dangers of feeding coyotes or otherwise contributing to their loss of fear of humans.

“Our facility managers and test officers have reported having issues with visiting customers not being aware of our efforts to keep work sites clean of things that could attract coyotes,” he said. “If you see something, say something. Make sure that our visitors and customers are following our rules to keep everyone safe.”

Landscaping in housing areas can

also attract the creatures: palm trees, date palms, and even pods from mesquite trees could serve as forage for a coyote. Nonetheless, removing other sources of food can help deter them from wandering in yards.

“The best way to guard against that type of behavior is securing garbage, making sure pet food is put away, and limiting the amount of open water,” said Steward.

Though coyote hunting is legal in Arizona with a hunting license, doing so in residential areas is not.

“We have about 250,000 acres on YPG that are available to hunting with a YPG hunting access pass,” said Steward. “Our hunting units are very specifically chosen to make sure they are in areas that are not going to interfere with our test mission or in any areas that would cause a security issue. It’s easy to control coyotes in our hunting units, but not as easy to control them on our test sites or cantonment areas.”

Steward says that coyotes’ intelligence makes trapping them difficult.

“Coyote trapping is extraordinarily challenging. A coyote knows its environment and knows when you are doing something that doesn’t fit in.”

The best way to deal with coyotes is to ensure they maintain their natural fear of humans.

“If a bighorn sheep walks up to you, I want you to be quiet and let the sheep pass on its own,” Steward said. “If a coyote walks up to you, I want you to be big, scary, and loud. When I see a coyote in a parking lot, I’ll bang things around and yell until I see the coyote run.”

Steward says filling a soda can with gravel and shaking it vigorously is a good noisemaker. He stresses keeping a safe distance from coyotes and other wild animals.

“They’re a wild animal. We have to keep our distance from any wild animal, for the animal’s safety and ours.”



# Antiterrorism Awareness Corner

## Traveling to and through the Mexico border

By Robert Barocio

Traveling to the Mexico border presents several risks primarily due to high levels of criminal activity and violence.

### Key concerns

- Organized crime: Drug cartels and criminal groups are active, leading to violent clashes and kidnappings. The border areas

between Mexico and the U.S. are particularly dangerous, with frequent confrontations between criminal groups and security forces.

- Crime and kidnapping: Many states, especially those bordering the U.S., have “do not travel” advisories due to crime and kidnapping risks. Carjackings, robberies, and shootings are

common in these regions.

- Road safety: Poor road conditions, lack of enforcement of traffic laws, and crime on highways pose significant dangers.

### Steps to mitigate dangers

To reduce risks while traveling to the Mexico border, consider the following precautions:

- Stay informed: Regularly check travel advisories from reliable sources like the U.S. State Department or local government websites for updates on safety conditions.
- Travel by air: Consider flying instead of crossing by land to avoid dangerous border areas.
- Choose safe areas: Stay in well-known tourist areas where security measures are stronger, though still

exercise caution as crime can occur anywhere.

- Avoid night travel: Travel during daylight hours only, especially in rural or high-risk areas.

- Use toll roads: Opt for toll roads over free highways as they are better maintained and patrolled.

- Secure valuables: Keep a low profile by not displaying signs of wealth and using hotel safes for valuables.

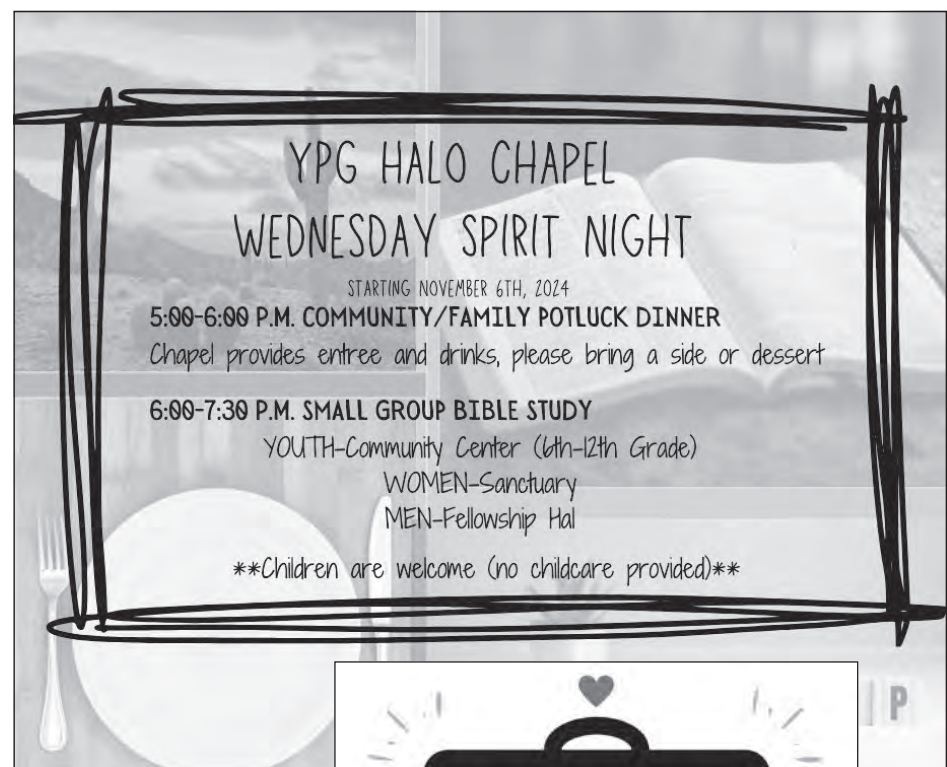
- Travel with others: Avoid traveling alone; it’s safer to be in groups or with trusted companions.

By following these guidelines, travelers can better navigate the complexities and dangers associated with visiting the Mexico border.

## Religious Service Office

Halo Chapel’s mission statement is to serve the YPG service member, their family, and the community. The chapel provides family, couples, youth, and children events. There are two services every Sunday morning:

a Catholic service at 9:30 a.m. and Contemporary Christian at 11 a.m. Every Wednesday evening there is a community potluck dinner from 5 to 6 p.m. and multiple Bible studies between 6 and 7:30 p.m.



The YPG Garrison Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse and the Religious Support Office team, Staff Sgt. Nicole Covington, and Sgt. DJ Suggs are available to help the YPG community. Chaplain Pearse is available for pastoral counseling by calling 928-328-3465. The Chaplain and staff are bound by 100% confidentiality, no mandatory reporting. (Photo by Ana Henderson)





# YPG spreads cheer over the holidays

## Annual Tree Lighting ceremony wows the community



The annual Community Tree Lighting, on Dec. 12, 2024, brought the Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) community together. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) team transformed a section of Cox Field into a magical area for Santa and his elves. Once the tree was lit Santa and the Grinch not too far behind, parachuted from the sky with the help of the Military Free Fall School. Santa then made his way to his chair to welcome children, with the help of the YPG Fire Department. MWR hosted the event along with the help of sponsor Candlewood Suites an IHG Army Hotels which provided raffle baskets and sugar cookies. (Photos courtesy MWR)

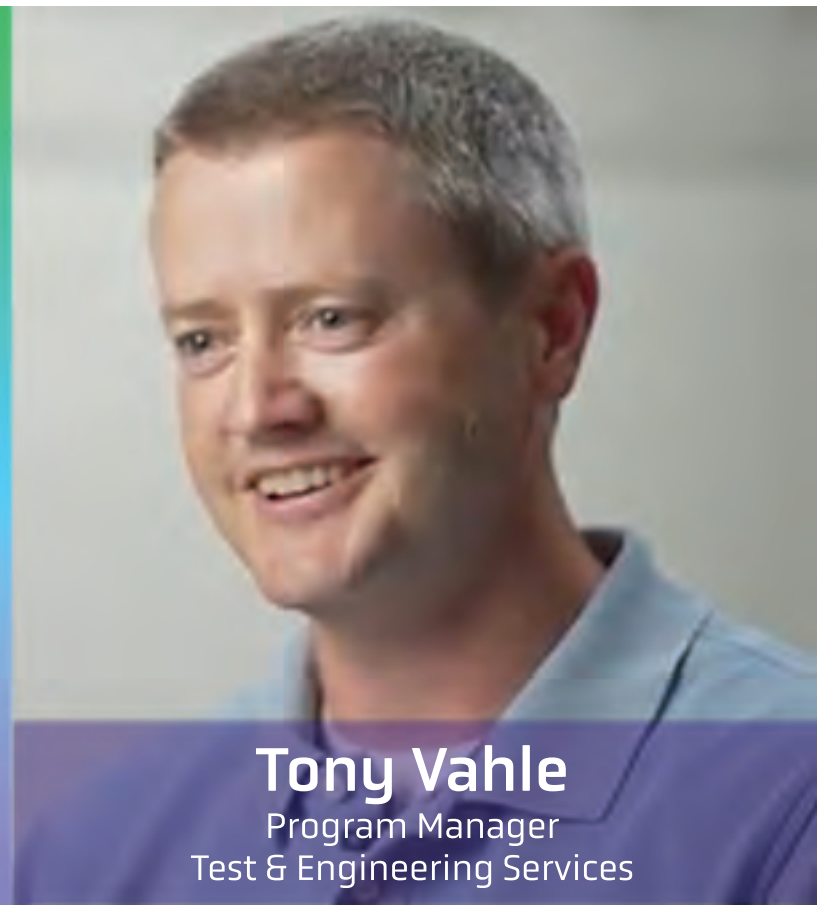


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# YPG spreads cheer over the holidays

## Winter Ball returns thanks to Desert Committee

By Ana Henderson

The ballroom at the Four Points Hotel transformed into a winter wonderland for the 2024 YPG Winter Ball.

The Desert Committee and three major sponsors hosted the ball on Dec. 6, 2024. Desert Committee President Joel Ramirez explained, what motivated the committee to take on this event.

“The Desert Committee was looking to host an event for the YPG community to celebrate the men and women who serve, those who serve.”

The committee reached out to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground leadership who said YPG hadn’t hosted a ball since 2012.

“What better opportunity to highlight the YPG community. That’s why we were delighted to host it,” remarked Ramirez.

The ball was open to those who support the mission at YPG. This was important because most of the workforce is civilian, there’s a large portion that are contractors and community organization also support YPG’s mission.

Ramirez said more than 200 people attended including Yuma Mayor Douglas Nicholls, members of the Yuma 50 a local group who supports the military, Gladys Brown the Yuma International Airport



The Desert Committee hosted the winter ball on Dec. 5, 2024, after reaching out to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground leadership who said Yuma Proving Ground hadn’t hosted a ball since 2012. Garry Bishop the Deputy Director of Operational Test and Evaluation Land and Expeditionary Warfare flew in from the East Coast to serve as the guest speaker. (Photos by Cindy Hernandez from Sweet IV Photo Booths)

Director, Tom Rush founder & wealth advisor of Yuma Investments Group, Reetika Dhawan the Arizona Western College Chief Executive Officer of Entrepreneurial College and Vice President of Workforce and Healthcare as well as former YPG Commander Ross Poppenberger and Command Sgt. Maj. Jamathon Nelson.

“We were able to get the YPG community as well as local leaders together under one roof which was great opportunity for all to enjoy a night of tradition, honor, and of course dancing,” said Ramirez.

Patrick Franklin served as the

master of ceremonies and Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse the performed benediction. YPG’s Color Guard, made up of Soldiers from the Airborne Tests Force kicked off the formal ceremony. Garry Bishop the Deputy Director of Operational Test and Evaluation Land and Expeditionary Warfare flew in from the East Coast to serve as the guest speaker.

“Mr. Bishop is really well known within the test community,” said Ramirez, and also extremely busy, yet the committee still extended the invitation. “He said he would be honored to. He set everything aside

and came out. He’s definitely a firm supporter of the YPG community,” said Ramirez.

The all-volunteer committee each tackled a duty to ensure the event became an experience. Ramirez recounted, “I had a decorating committee ran by Amanda Chavis, a committee specifically for soliciting for sponsorships ran by Grace Connor, Jeff Tatar, Emma Almendarez working tirelessly on the weekends and days off, and we had another committee volunteer who helped me run the entire thing. Stefanie Jacobs, she was great in helping me facilitate everything that happened during the event.”

Attendees arrived at an arch made by the committee and walked onto a red carpet for photos with a winter themed background and given a glass of champagne. While inside they received a commemorative YPG Winter Ball coin and had wine waiting for them for a toast. The highlight of the night had to be the mixture of the grog with Command Sgt. Mark Millare appeared to enjoy leading.

Attendees were given raffle tickets with the option to purchase more. The raffle prizes were donated by local companies like PHD Plumbing, Stranded Ink Tattoo, BGD Custom Creations, Dandy, Fretworks, Amara



More than 200 people attended the 2024 YPG Winter Ball, including Yuma Mayor Douglas Nicholls, members of the Yuma 50 and former YPG leaders. The majority of attendees were YPG employees.



Staff Sgt. Daylon Tittle manned the POW/MIA also known as the Missing Man table during the ceremony.



Rejuve, JBT Designs, Hooters, Famous Dave's, Prison Hill Brewery, Crazy Earl's, and Desert Committee LLC.

Ramirez expressed his sincere gratitude for making the inaugural event successful.

"I would like to give a special thank you to Yuma Investments Group, Yuma International Airport and the Yuma 50 who were our top sponsors. Without them we couldn't have made this event an experience."

*\*\*This information is provided for the purpose of informing the YPG community about an event in which YPG participated. Any mention of a non-federal entity is not intended as an endorsement, stated or implied, by DoD, the U.S. Army, or YPG of that federal entity.\*\**



LEFT: YPG's Color Guard, made up of Soldiers from the Airborne Tests Force kicked off the formal ceremony. Staff Sgt. Xavier Rey, Staff Sgt. Daylon Tittle, Staff Sgt. Angel Viveros, Sgt. Briana Corona, Sgt. Christian Ramirez made up the color guard. RIGHT: One of the highlights of the night was the mixture of the grog with Command Sgt. Mark Millare appeared to enjoy leading.



## YPG Soldiers spread holiday cheer

By Mark Schauer

The residents of the Arizona State Veteran Home Yuma are having cheerier holidays after a visit from Soldiers from U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG).

Among the visitors to the residents' Christmas gathering on December were YPG Commander

Col. John Nelson, Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare, and Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse.

"I think it's really important as a still-serving active-duty officer to show my appreciation for veterans that came before me, especially during the holidays," said Nelson. "Once a service member, always a

service member."

"I want to as much as I can show our veterans that they are not forgotten," added Millare. "You're a Soldier for life."

Six Soldiers from YPG's Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program also attended, sharing fellowship with residents.

Pearse gave the invocation for the luncheon before sitting down to visit.

"I very much think of veterans as a continuation of ministry to current active-duty Soldiers," said Pearse. "Veterans of World War II, for instance, are few and far between now. When I see veterans, I want to meet them and hear their stories."



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson (right) speaks with veterans at the Arizona State Veterans Home Yuma Christmas luncheon for the second consecutive year. "I think it's really important as a still-serving active-duty officer to show my appreciation for veterans that came before me, especially during the holidays," he said.



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare (right) speaks with veterans at the Arizona State Veterans Home Yuma. "I want to as much as I can show our veterans that they are not forgotten," he said. "You're a soldier for life."



Chaplain Maj. Ryan Pearse (second from right) speaks with veterans at the Arizona State Veterans Home Yuma. "I very much think of veterans as a continuation of ministry to current active-duty soldiers," he said.



Soldiers with the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program (left) speak with veterans at the Arizona State Veterans Home Yuma on Dec. 19, 2024. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



# YPG spreads cheer over the holidays

## An enduring commitment to honor service

By Mark Schauer

The U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) command team served as keynote speakers at both of Yuma's

local Wreaths Across America ceremonies on Dec. 14, 2024.

YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare appeared at Desert Lawn

Cemetery in the morning and YPG Commander Col. John Nelson spoke at Sunset Vista Cemetery in the afternoon.

The annual ceremony holds a seasonal significance by remembering the fallen, honoring those who have served, and teaching the next generation the cost of freedom.

Both men noted that in decades past most Americans either served in uniform themselves or had at least one immediate family member who did, which changed after the adoption of an all-volunteer force in the early

1970s.

"I personally feel a close affinity to American service members of all eras," said Nelson in his remarks. "Whether they were the most highly decorated combat veterans or peacetime conscripts who never left this nation's shores, they all ran the risk of giving what Abraham Lincoln called, 'the last full measure of devotion' to protect our country and what it stands for. All are worthy of our respect and gratitude for their service, and all deserve to be remembered."



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson keynotes the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Sunset Vista Cemetery on Dec. 14, 2024. (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Earlier in the day, YPG Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Millare (right) keynoted the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Yuma's Desert Lawn Cemetery. (Photo by Gene Garcia)



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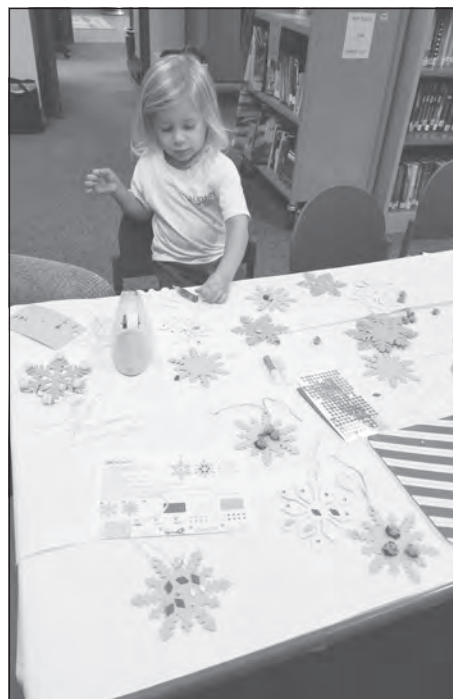
# YPG spreads cheer over the holidays

## ACS spreads holiday cheer with stocking stuffers for military families



The upper level of Army Community Services looked like Santa's workshop on Dec. 17 and 18, 2024 when the directorate provided stocking stuffers for Active-Duty Families. The toys came from the Operation Homefront Program, which is made up of customer donations to Dollar Tree. Dollar Tree uses those donations to provide toys from its stores. In total more than 1,500 toys were donated to Yuma Proving Ground and over 70 children received toys. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

## Story time celebrates togetherness



The Post Library hosted Storytime on Dec. 3, 2024. The story read by Logan Threas was about a celebration of friendship, community, and the magic of snow. Participants also made snowflakes during arts and craft time. (Photos courtesy of the Post Library)

## Santa makes a stop at the YPG library



During a special story time on Dec. 12, Mr. and Mrs. Claus stopped by the Post Library. Mrs. Claus read to the children then Mr. Claus showed up to ask the kiddos what they would like for Christmas. (Photos courtesy of the Post Library staff)



# GAINS

FROM PAGE 1

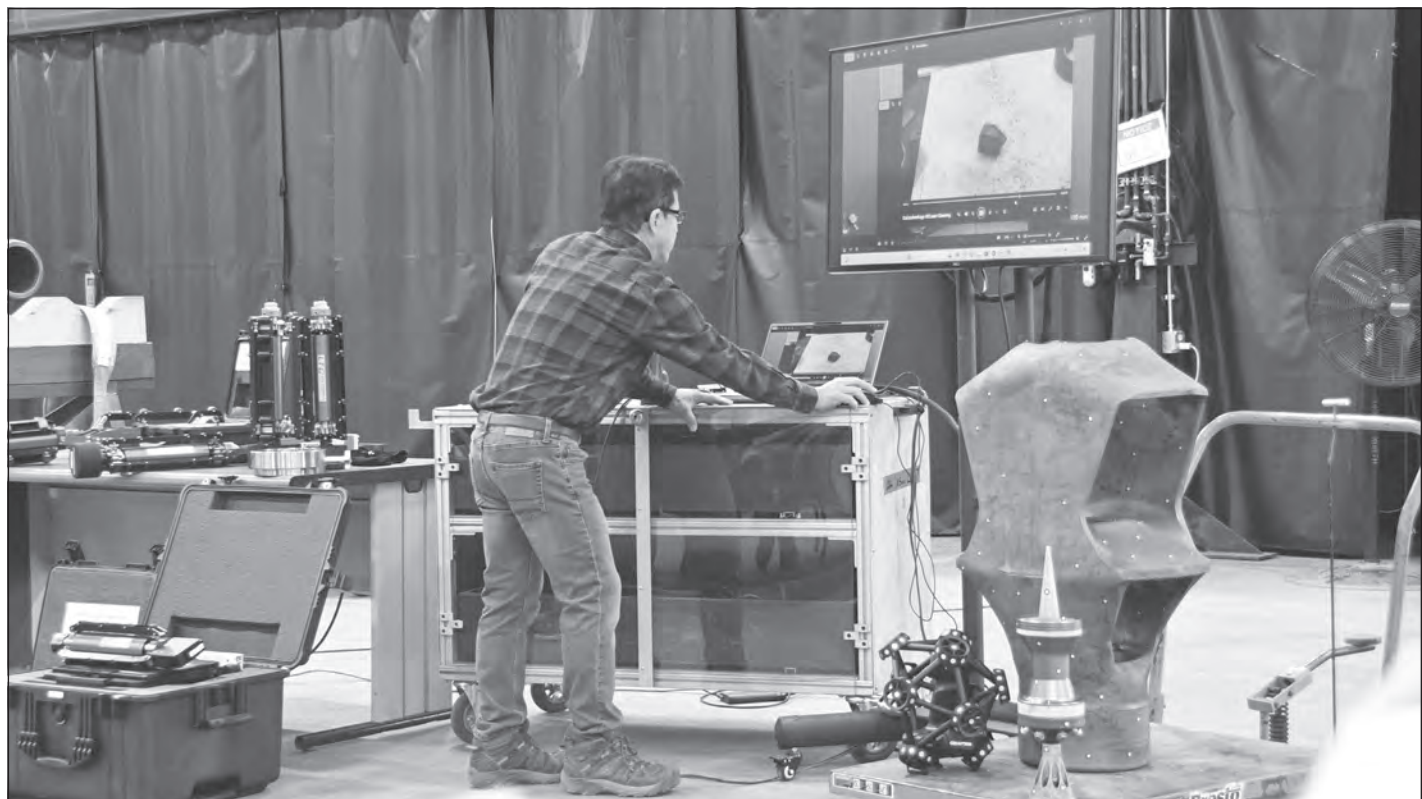
extensive amount of time on the front end to get a test set up or to get data cleaned after collection are being optimized. By doing so, we are thinking about the system under test and analyzing the data a little more as opposed to repetitive tasks taking the majority of an analyst's time."

From vision-based AI learning to automating Kineto Tracking Mount-calibration processes, the proving ground is already reaping dividends from the most recent technology, and more benefits are expected as the impact of the efficiency gains continues.

"Now we have a little more time on our hands to think about how we could advance another part of some other process we use," said Gwynn. "We're starting to think in a more valuable manner and applying ourselves to finding ways to advance capabilities as opposed to just utilizing the current capability to keep the wheels moving around here. We're doing things better, smarter, and faster by applying recent technology to the right spaces."

One benefit that YPG has over other organizations is troves of historical data from decades of test events. This data is extremely valuable for training AI models to automate or expedite data reduction and analysis. A recent successful example involved developing a workable algorithm to help facilitate the acoustic trilateration of air to surface missiles and other helicopter rounds collected from arrays of microphones and hydrophones on the post's highly instrumented ranges. Additionally, the post's Air Delivery Branch is building a new test data structure with the collaborative efforts of longtime YPG analysts and a developer.

"It is very discreet, isolated data sources that we understand and subject matter experts that know that instrumentation really well to partner with the contractor and



A prime candidate to benefit from artificial intelligence is U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground's non-destructive testing capability, which has long been considered the premier facility within the Army. With decades of data from laser-bore measuring of artillery tubes as they wear, an AI could be trained to help assess possible problems and predict expected life of the tubes. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

get to a data structure where we're automating the front end of this process," said Gwynn. "If we really streamline the process from data collection, reduction, and analysis, we can get much more efficient and have additional time to apply more analytical thought to the testing we just did."

Business data is also an important component of data governance, particularly in things like tracking equipment lifecycles and utilization rates—for example, is a particular piece of equipment spending an excessive amount of time in maintenance?

"It's a huge advantage we would have as managers to use those resources," said Gwynn. "If we can automate that stream of business data in a similar manner as test data, it would have a lot of upside in efficiency gains."

Another prime candidate to benefit is YPG's non-destructive testing capability, which has long been considered the premier facility within the Army. With

decades of data from laser-bore measuring of artillery tubes as they wear, an AI could be trained to help assess possible problems and predict expected life of the tubes. Potentially, the capacity to precisely monitor gun tube wear could eventually be in the hands of soldiers operating artillery systems in theater.

"Using in-bore pictures, laser scans, and other physical measurements from various inspection technologies, an AI could analyze and correlate past and current failures across all these data sources, compiling them into a comprehensive report for our test customers," said Savanna Silva, YPG Metrology Branch Chief. "We're not stopping there: we aim to take it further by developing AI capable of performing predictive wear analysis on weapon systems. This would integrate data from both fielded and experimental ammunition test at YPG. The goal is to perfect this process and system here at YPG, and eventually provide

an all-in-one system solution that can be provided to soldiers at the depot level for use in their weapon inspections."

The metrology branch is also seeking to train an AI that can monitor the life cycle of piezoelectric pressure transducers used in testing artillery here.

"We've never fully characterized how tourmaline crystals in our piezoelectric pressure transducers behave over time or under repeated high-pressure events, as we've always assumed how they would perform," said Silva. "Our high-pressure tests have always been single use only for the transducers. Now, it's time to refine our approach. By leveraging our data and using AI to analyze it, we can gain a much deeper understanding of their performance."

The efforts are also reaping rewards in less measurable ways.

"It is a morale builder," said Gwynn. "People get excited when you are doing something different and making a difference."



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# Yuma Proving Ground community resources

## Army Community Services (ACS)

By Ana Henderson

U.S. Army Garrison Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) provides a variety of services for the YPG community.

Below are some of the services and programs offered and who you and your family can turn to in a time of need.



The Army Community Services (ACS) programs support Soldiers, civilian employees, and Families in maintaining readiness by coordinating and delivering comprehensive, responsive services that promote self-reliance, resiliency, and stability. Contact the ACS team at (928) 328-2332/2513. (Left to right) Paula Alarcon, Mariah Boykin, Gisela Robles, Clarissa Benavides, Arlene Moraga. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

**Clarissa Benavides**  
Director, Army Community Services

- Financial Readiness
- Army Emergency Relief

**Paula Alarcon**

- Relocation Readiness
- Army Family Action Plan
- Mobilization and Deployment
- Information and Referral
- Emergency Family Assistance Center

**Gisela Robles**

- Employment Readiness Program
- The Victim Advocacy Program
- YPG Volunteer Program Manager
- Army Family Team Building
- Survivor Outreach Services

**Mariah Boykin**

Family Advocacy Program Manager

- The Family Advocacy Program
- The Exceptional Family Member Program
- The New Parent Support Program

### Family Advocacy Program observances and events for the New Year

- January – Emotional Control Workshop
- February – Teen Dating Violence Awareness
- March – Exceptional Family Member Program Outreach Event
- April – Child Abuse Awareness Month Activities
- May – Couple's Communication Workshop
- May – Mother's Day Book Fair
- June – Father's Day Book Fair
- July – 2nd Annual Christmas in July Outreach Event
- August – New Parent Support Program Outreach Event
- September – FAP Outreach Table
- October – Domestic Violence Awareness Month Activities
- November – Active Parenting for Teens Workshop
- December – End of the year Newsletter

*\*Plans are subject to change. Please check the FAP Facebook page or call the FAP office at (928) 328-3224 for updates.*



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# Yuma Proving Ground community resources

## Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program (SHARP)

Arlene Moraga, Sexual  
Assault Response  
Coordinator

The SHARP office  
provides assistance to:

- Soldiers and their dependent Family members who are 18 years and older.

- Army National Guard and United States (US) Army Reserve Soldiers who are victims of sexual assault while performing active service.

- Department of the Army (DA) civilians and their Family members 18 years of age and older outside the continental US.

- DA civilians are eligible to file an unrestricted case with the SHARP office within the continental



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US.

All victims who contact SHARP professionals for assistance,

regardless of their military status, will be given all necessary assistance, support, and access to resources

permitted by law and policy. DoD SAFE Helpline 877-995-5247 or YPG Helpline 928-940-3104.

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# Military Family Life Counselor: offers a listening ear and more

By Ana Henderson

Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Military Family Life Counselor (MFLC) Penny Collins is active in the YPG community because she wants to make her services known to Active Duty and recently retired military (less than 180 days separated) members and their family members.

Collins' goal is to provide a listening ear to those who need to work through stress, grief, relationship issues, deployments, and daily life issues. She's been a licensed professional counselor since 1996 and is also a Certified Trauma Practitioner, so she has a wide variety of experience.

As a nationally certified counselor and nationally certified school counselor with a license in Arizona, Collins can provide counseling services to all ages.

Those looking for help don't have to embark on the journey alone. Collins provides one-on-one, couples, family, group, child, and youth counseling. She's flexible on where she can meet those who need to talk.

"I can meet them on base, off base, anywhere where they feel comfortable," she remarked.

She reassures those thinking of reaching out that all sessions are confidential unless it deals with cases of abuse. She can provide up to 12 free sessions per issue and they are not recorded or sent to command. Collins wants to help Soldiers and their family work through their issues. "It's more short-term and more solution-focused with strategies with how to move forward."

Contact Collins via her cell phone at (928) 430-8037. She is available for briefings and presentations as well.



Yuma Proving Ground Military Family Life Counselor Penny Collins wants to make her services known to Active Duty and recently retired military (less than 180 days separated) members and their family members. Collins' goal is to provide a listening ear to those who need to work through stress, grief, relationship issues, deployments, and daily life issues. She can be reached cell phone at (928) 430-8037. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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- Marriage, family and relationship issues
- Deployment and reintegration
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Non-medical counseling sessions are free and confidential\* (no records kept). Available sessions include:

- After-hours and weekend appointments
- Group or off-site meetings

Call your local military and family life counselor to make an appointment.

Discover what the Military and Family Life Counseling Program offers at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/mflc>.

**Penny Collins MS LPC MFLC**  
928-430-8037 | Bldg. 309 ACS Building

\*Exceptions to confidentiality include mandatory state, federal and military reporting requirements (including domestic violence, child abuse and duty-to-warn situations).

## The 2025 Transformation Challenge



The 2024 Transformation Challenge winners are pictured cheering after hearing they placed first in the challenge. The first place winners last year were (left to right) Jacob Kuntzelman, Shannon Fenzel, and Shannon Schmidgall. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

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# Programs available to help Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP supports civilian employees, and the community, with improving quality of life and productivity by providing, short-term, non-clinical counseling and education services to all civilian personnel and their family members

over the age of 18. The goal of the YPG EAP is to improve the mental health and well-being of the people and communities we serve. The EAP Coordinator William Lloyd can be reached at (928) 328-2249.

## Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP)

The ASAP provides training and education to prevent substance abuse related problems. Classes are conducted Quarterly to meet annual training requirements, and custom

classes can be created on request to address specific needs. The ASAP Manager William Lloyd can be reached at (928) 328-2249.

## Suicide Prevention Program (SPP)

The SPP is responsible for training and education for the Army Suicide Prevention Program. Training material is available for DA Civilians, Soldiers and Family members. Classes are available upon request. The SPP Manager William Lloyd can be reached at (928)328-2249.

**US Army Garrison  
Yuma Proving Ground**  
Army Substance Abuse Program  
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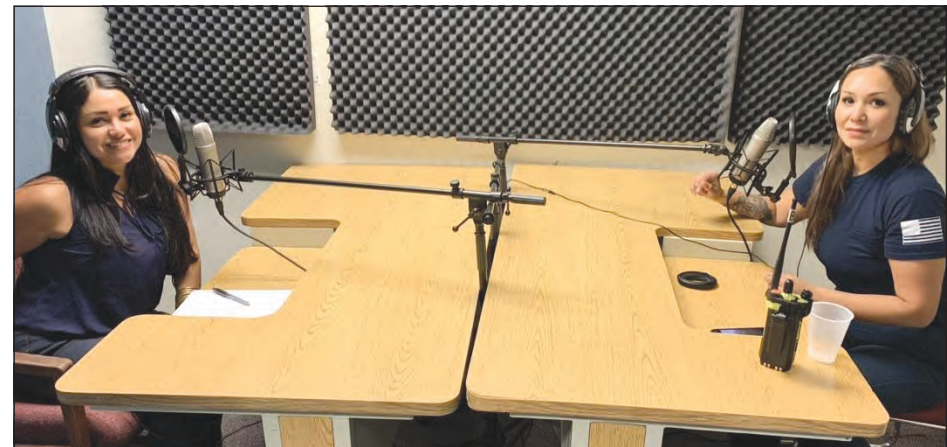
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Catch up with  
*Outpost Outspoken*



Outpost Outspoken host Mark Schauer (left) with Scott Fenstermacher and host Ana Henderson (left) with Heather Banda are pictured with two of the many guests featured on Outpost Outspoken, YPG's official podcast. (Photos by PAO staff)

## YPG employees complete half-marathon



A shout out to three members of the Yuma Proving Ground team who rose to the challenge of running in the Vail 50/50. Participants had the option between a 50-mile, 55km or half marathon race. The trio, (left to right) Brad and Harley Hogan took on the 55km (34 miles) race. Charlie Saltz supports the test mission as a test officer and Brad and Harley Hogan work as range controllers. (Photos courtesy of Charlie Saltz)

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