

The Outpost

Published for the employees and families of Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma Test Center, U.S. Army Garrison - Yuma, Cold Regions Test Center, and Tropic Regions Test Center

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground, Yuma, Arizona 85365

YPG Website: www.yuma.army.mil

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CRTC's long-term storage tests ensure equipment remains ready

by Mark Schauer

Yuma Proving Ground tests virtually every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal in extreme environments to ensure it will work wherever in the world American forces are serving, and takes pride in its well-known ability to conduct evaluations of new items in a thorough and timely way. Just as important to Soldiers, however, is knowing that their gear will work whenever they need it, even if it has been stored in theater for long periods of time in less-than-ideal conditions.

U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center is renowned as the premier cold weather test facility in the Department of Defense, a place where extremely frigid weather is the most coveted commodity for the majority of tests. While evaluation of new sys-

tems gets the bulk of attention in the testing community, the Army is still interested in ensuring the usability of all of its equipment, especially items that may be stored overseas for years or even decades through all kinds of weather. With temperature variations of as much as 150 degrees in a year, CRTC is an ideal location for punishing long-term storage tests.

"A given test could last 30 or 40 years," said CRTC test officer Dan Coakley, who has conducted these types of tests for the past decade.

One of the many items of equipment on which CRTC has conducted such testing is the lightweight and easily portable Stinger shoulder-fired missile, a lethally effective anti-aircraft weapon with numerous parts that must function together for the weapon to be usable.

(See CRTC on page 8)

Warning: YPG — A haven for coyotes

submitted by Laura Merrill

If there is a born survivor among mammals, it must be the coyote. After all, this animal has thrived and expanded its range despite decades of devoted efforts to eradicate it from urban and agricultural areas.

Coyotes exist in every state except Hawaii and have learned to coexist with humans in more and more cities and towns. Some people welcome this invasion about as much as Atlanta welcomed Sherman. Others celebrate the ability of coyotes to survive in an environment filled with buildings, fences, concrete and cars.

Audiences at community meetings held when coyotes are observed in a neighborhood or when a few cats mysteriously disappear are usually divided into coyote lovers and coyote haters. Each side is insistent about whether the coyotes should stay or go. Yet when all is said and done, the only possible resolution to this conflict is for us to learn to coexist with the coyote.

The campaign against coyotes has demonstrated that if a habitat will support coyotes, coyotes will occupy it. When widespread eradication efforts reduce coyote numbers, the coyote

population responds by producing larger litters and breeding at an earlier age. Within a few years, populations decimated by poisons, traps and aerial hunting recover to levels equal to, or higher than, those that existed before the eradication attempts were made.

On Yuma Proving Ground, coyotes thrive because food is plentiful and natural predators are few. Removal efforts are doomed to fail. Fortunately, living with coyotes is not difficult. It all boils down to a few simple actions:

- Don't give coyotes an easy meal by leaving out food or water for pets, unprotected garbage, or small pets such as cats or dogs weighing less than 50 pounds.

- Don't create large puddles of water in areas where there have been coyote problems (especially in the summer months).

- Threaten (haze) coyotes by shouting at them while throwing pebbles at them whenever they approach human property. Using an air horn or shaking a can with pebbles in it will also frighten the coyote. At an informational meeting for YPG housing residents, Scott Fisher, Arizona

(See Coyotes on page 8)



Cold Regions Test Center ammunition accountable officer Jimmy Shelley (left) and ammunition supply technician Gordon Plute (center) inspect battery coolant units as part of an ongoing storage test this past summer. Storage tests, which can last decades, help ensure that vital equipment works wherever and whenever Soldiers need it. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

DoD: 'Conservation Organization of Year'

by Yolie Canales

Yuma Proving Ground, along with its partner services, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Ariz., are well known within Arizona and across the country for providing top-notch military testing and training in support of our nation's warfighters.

What may not be realized by some people, however, is that these three military installations also provide outstanding stewardship of our nation's natural resources. In addition to providing the best equipment, weaponry, and training possible to our troops at home and abroad, the installation's workforce fully understand that they have an equally important responsibility to protect our natural resources at the same time. How well do they balance military mission and natural resources stewardship? Well enough if you ask the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD).

In October 2010, AGFD selected the Department of Defense (DoD) as the

"2010 Conservation Organization of the Year." The Commission awards are given annually "to recognize Arizonans that have contributed to the welfare of Arizona's wildlife, its outdoor heritage, and the mission of the AGFD." As part of a trio of installations, collectively referred to as DoD, YPG was recognized by the Commission based on a long history of natural resources conservation efforts. According to the nomination submitted by the AGFD IV (Yuma) Office, over the years, YPG has contributed significantly to enhance the sound management of natural resources in the region in many ways.

Over the last five years, YPG has provided nearly \$500,000 in direct support to AGFD management objectives. These funds facilitated research on coyote and desert bighorn habitat use and movements; responses of desert bighorn to test and training activities; the effects of new water catchment designs on bat use; the importance of developed water sources to nongame

(See DoD on page 8)

News Notes

Social Security benefits change update

A provision of Social Security law previously allowed you to begin payments at age 62, invest the payments you received, and as late as age 70, pay back the principal you received (keeping any interest earned) and then refile to claim a higher payment rate. If you were considering this in your retirement, please note, it is gone.

As of now, you still have the option to start receiving lowered payments as early as age 62, but the option to change your mind and reset the amount has disappeared. For more information on this change, contact your Social Security Administration.

NFL stars to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro with wounded warriors as a fundraiser

Ken Huff and Joe DeLamielleure (National Football League Hall of Famers) are putting together an event to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Foundation. Along with several wounded warriors, they are going to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro — a 10-day expedition from New York City to Tanzania, Africa, featuring a seven-day climb of the continent's tallest mountain.

This professionally-guided trek approaches Kilimanjaro from the south, through dense tropical rainforest all the way up to the mighty snow-capped summit at 19,341 ft. for breathtaking views from the roof of Africa.

You can learn more about this exciting event and this project at bootsandcleatsonthesummit.com.

Congratulations to YPG Price Elementary School December Go-Getters



The Outpost proudly recognizes the following students: Tyler Granger (left), and Alivia Pakkala (right) for their hard work and performing at their very best at Price Elementary School.

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Three events on tap for 2011

by Mary F. Flores

With the holidays behind us and the new year here, excitement and anticipation fill the air as YPG personnel prepare for three major community outreach activities coming soon.

These events will highlight the history and mission of Yuma Proving Ground and bring awareness to the public of how the proving ground has and will continue to support servicemen and women all over the world.

Several months ago, personnel from YPG met with members of the Yuma Visitors Bureau for the planning stages of a new event that will take place in downtown Yuma's Quartermaster Depot on January 21-23. The Quartermaster Depot was an active Army installation between 1864 and 1883.

The Yuma Visitors Bureau, which is sponsoring the first Spirit of Yuma Military Festival, plans to give a broad overview to the public of how local military installations support American forces. The event will also celebrate the partnership the Yuma community enjoys with Yuma Proving Ground and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma.

Local residents will have the opportunity to view displays of military equipment, witness demonstrations and aircraft fly-overs, take a bus tour to YPG's Heritage Center, hear a Navajo code talker and other military subject matter experts, and much more. There will be something for all ages, including food vendors.

In February, YPG personnel are gearing up for the trek to Phoenix for another grand event at the state capitol at the second Yuma Legislative Day exhibit on Wednesday, February 23. This one-day event requires untold hours of planning all geared toward educating Arizona's elected officials about the important national defense responsibilities of the proving ground.

The full day of activities will include guest speakers, interviews, military equipment displays from both the ground and air support directorates on the state capitol lawn. Large photographic exhibits will highlight the three major test centers that make up YPG – Yuma Test Center, the Cold Regions Test Center and the Tropic Regions Test Center.

After everyone packs up and heads back to Yuma, planning coordinators will be hard at work preparing for the annual MCAS Air Show scheduled for Saturday, March 26. Making improvements each year for a bigger and better show, more than 10,000 spectators are expected. Military systems tested at YPG such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, mortars, and unmanned aerial systems will be on display.

Spectators will be dazzled with high flying aerial acrobatic performances to include food vendors and military souvenirs and memorabilia for sale. In addition, there will be a kiddie section with rides and games for children.

Admission to all three events is free to the public. For more information, contact the Public Affairs office at (928) 328-6533.



United States Army

Yuma Proving Ground

Service Winter Formal



ALL YPG MILITARY, CIVILIANS, & CONTRACTORS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

LOCATION: ARIZONA WESTERN COLLEGE (BLDG. 3C)

WHEN: SATURDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2011

TIME: 1800 - 2300

Note: If you have a CDC requirement please let us know by 10 Jan 2011

TICKET COST (MEAL INCLUDED IN COST)

\$40.00 (When purchased 1-20 January 2011)

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT:

CMD GRP BLDG 2105	X6110
PAO BLDG 2100	X6533
EEO BLDG 303	X2733
LAAF BLDG 3021	X6102
M&W BLDG 3185	X6127

Note: If purchasing tickets with a check, please make check payable to: F M W R
 Checks for payment maybe mailed to: Ms. Gabby Ochoa, 301 C. Street, Yuma AZ 85365-9498

MEAL CHOICE:

#1: Tri Tip Dinner (Sliced beef sirloin with au jus & baked potato, House salad, Green Bean Casserole, Fresh Baked Rolls, Coffee, Iced Tea, Water and Lemon cake)

#2: Chicken Cordon Bleu (Boneless Breast of Chicken rolled w/imported ham and Swiss Cheese, House salad, Basmati Rice and Green Bean Casserole, Fresh Baked Rolls, Butter, Brewed Coffee, Decaf Coffee, Iced Tea, Water, Lemon cake)

ATTIRE:

MILITARY - MILITARY SERVICE UNIFORM / MESS DRESS OR CLASS "A" WITH WHITE SHIRT & BOW TIE
 CIVILIAN - FORMAL (SUIT WITH TIE). appropriate adornment of the medallions may be worn

FREE  **Come Socialize, Eat, Dance & have fun!**  **FREE**



Employment and Family Support

by Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch

As the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, I have an important responsibility to oversee the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) process, which is a program that enables Soldiers, civilians and family members to communicate quality of life issues to Army leaders. Information provided through this process allows leaders the opportunity to affect changes that will lead to a more satisfied and resilient Army community.

Every month, subject matter experts from across the Army meet to analyze recommendations submitted through the AFAP process to determine if they are achievable. These recommendations will then be presented at the next annual General Officer Steering Committee in January 2011. I have promised to regularly communicate our progress throughout the process. This month we reviewed recommendations related to employment and family support.

Issue number 617 recommends providing greater visibility of qualified Wounded Warrior job applicants to federal hiring officials. The Civilian Human Resource Agency (CHRA) has made much progress with this issue. One accomplishment is their partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to integrate the use

of their Veteran Resume Inventory (VetSuccess.gov) into Army recruitment business processes. Additionally, CHRA has developed—

The Civilian Personnel On-Line (CPOL) Wounded Warrior webpage.

The Wounded Warrior Referral Process.

The Wounded Warrior and spouse web-based resume inventory.

A briefing that explains how to direct-hire wounded warriors. This briefing is now included in the mandatory New Supervisor's Training Course.

Department of Defense (DoD) State Liaisons and the Army have also made progress on **Issue number 524**, which recommends granting unemployment compensation to military spouses that leave their jobs when accompanying service members on a permanent change of station (PCS) move.

To date, 38 states provide unemployment compensation while the District of Columbia and Maryland evaluate eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Ohio and Tennessee have active legislation in progress to provide unemployment compensation. Outreach efforts are being focused on the remaining states to solicit their support for these dedicated military spouses and their families.

Issue number 556 is a recommendation to eliminate the financial inequities in the DoD Child Care Fee

Policy due to a limited number of Total Family Income (TFI) categories. Work on this issue resulted in the addition of three new categories and an expanded fee range in each category. We are on track to achieve our school year 2012-2013 goal of reaching an Army-wide single fee in each TFI category, which will result in more consistency and predictability for families as they move from post to post.

Issue number 639 recommends that Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Soldiers who require Exceptional Family Member (EFM) services and have received an overseas assignment remain at their current installation until notification of EFM service availability and command sponsorship is granted by the overseas travel approval authority. As a result of this recommendation, a rapid revision to AR 608-75, which governs the Army Exceptional Family Member Program, is in the process of being published. The revision directs that all Soldiers with EFMs will remain at their current installation pending notification of EFM service availability and command sponsorship from the overseas command.

Although we have made progress with some issues, we still have work to do on others. This month we will continue to analyze the attainability of the following issues:

Authorizing 100 percent of the



Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch

death gratuity to any person designated as a beneficiary by a Department of the Army Civilian killed in a military contingency operation (regardless of their relationship). Currently, the law only recognizes spouses, children, parents or siblings as eligible survivors (**Issue number 634**).

Establishing a centralized Department of Defense leave donation bank for civilian employees (**Issue number 615**).

Aligning compensatory hours with standard overtime rates for Army civilians (**Issue number 649**).

Standardizing and enforcing the Total Army Sponsorship Program (TASP) by providing trained and available sponsors equipped with the information and referral resources needed for Soldiers and families during times of transition (**Issue number 609**).

Accounting for the unborn children of pre-existing pregnancies when calculating the transitional benefits for Family members of military personnel who were separated and discharged due to domestic abuse (**Issue number 625**).

Coordinating with U.S. citizen and Immigration Service for approval of DoD-administered fingerprinting and physical examinations (**Issue number 515**).

Providing EFMP enrollment eligibility for Reserve Component Soldiers (**Issue number 650**).

Conducting a holistic review of Family Readiness Group fundraising in the Active and Reserve Components (**Issue number 652**).

The Army is working the issues, but the Army Family Action Plan is your program. I encourage you to learn more about the AFAP process and follow the progress on issues that are currently being worked. I invite you to visit the Army OneSource website at www.myarmyonesource.com and select the Family Programs and Services menu to activate the AFAP active issue search feature. Once there, you can search by keyword or issue number. You can also search by subject area, demographic group or geographical area to see what we are doing to improve the quality of life for Soldiers, civilians and families.

Mountaineer brings unique experience to test mission

by Mark Schauer

The employees of U.S. Army Cold Region Test Center (CRTC) near Delta Junction, Alaska, have to be rugged to carry out extreme weather testing of military equipment in one of the coldest places in the world. But even among this group of hardy men and women, test officer Dave Hoffman stands out.

"He's incredible," said CRTC director of test Greg Netardus. "The wealth of knowledge he has in cold weather survival is extraordinary. If I had to get stranded in the wilderness in winter, Dave is one person I hope would be around."

Hoffman came by this experience after a career as a member of the U.S. Army Mountaineering Team, an elite group whose passion and skill for the grueling feat of summiting the world's most forbidding peaks seemed a natural for Hoffman.

"My real love is technical rock climbing," he said. "To me, being alone on rock and having to solve problems while holding onto nothing is very relaxing."

Hoffman's passion for the climber's art dates back to his earliest adolescence. Having moved frequently as a child, Hoffman says he was headed for trouble until exposure to the sport gave him direction.

"My first experience with climbing was at a boy scout camp in New Mexico when I was 14," Hoffman said. "It lit a fire in my heart and I took courses whenever I could. I went up from there."

It wasn't his love of mountain climbing that led him to pursue a

career in the military, though. He was working in construction when a co-worker who was a retired sergeant major piqued his interest with elaborate stories of all the places he had seen during his military career.

Hoffman ended up on the U.S. Army Mountaineering Team which took him on climbs all over the world with allied armies. In the United States, he climbed in a variety of locales, including Yosemite National Park, and participated in six expeditions on

Denali, the Alaskan mountain that is the tallest in North America, where he participated in sled races with his buddies when bored and supported rescue operations during a storm. He also climbed in Chile, Argentina, and several countries in Europe. His skill with extreme mountains was put to the ultimate test at Nilkantha, a snowy Himalayan mountain in India with an elevation of nearly

(See Hoffman on page 6)



CRTC test officer Dave Hoffman's wealth of knowledge in surviving extreme cold weather conditions makes him someone you want around if you should get stranded in the winter wilderness. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Next Outpost
deadline is
noon Jan. 13

Looking to the sky: Guided pa

by Mark Schauer

Soldiers in combat often look to heaven for deliverance, which may soon be coming to them not on the wings of angels, but strapped to sophisticated, lightweight self-guided parachutes.

Effective and timely medical care is a crucial component of success in any long term military campaign, and quickly getting wounded combat Soldiers to field hospitals can be an extremely daunting challenge in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan. But systems tested at YPG as part of the Joint Medical Distance Support and Evacuation (JMDSE) Joint Capability Technology Demonstration (JCTD) project seek to help out by bringing medical care to Soldiers, wherever they are.

"This program is meant specifically to deliver medical supplies to Soldiers when they are down," said Sanjay Patel, a project officer for U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (NSRDEC). "The first hour when they are hurt is when they really need the help."

JMDSE uses a variety of global positioning system (GPS) guided parachutes of various sizes to drop medical supplies and equipment to Soldiers from both conventional cargo airplanes and unmanned aerial systems in a very precise manner. Whether it is a monitoring device, ventilator, medications, or units of blood, JMDSE aims to rapidly and accurately deliver the items to Soldiers in the field. Another goal of the technology is to make the process easy: testers believe the parachutes and equipment can be re-used as many as 30 times, and be packed and rigged in a matter of hours by personnel with only a few days of training.

Using unmanned systems, especially for small payloads, has a variety of advantages, from obvious ones like being more economical and



Systems tested at YPG as part of the Joint Medical Distance Support and Evacuation (JMDSE) project are designed to do so no matter how precarious and inaccessible their position is. Here, a Tigershark unmanned aircraft prepares to drop a payload over a vast range during a test. (Loaned photo)

keeping pilots out of harm's way to less apparent ones, such as a rotary-wing unmanned aircraft being used to evacuate a sample in response to a biological attack on a remote village or forward operating base. Air superiority is the rubric of success, and it is measured in altitude: the higher a plane or unmanned aircraft can drop a payload with precision, the less likely it is to encounter interference from enemy forces. During previ-

ous conflicts, many airdrops failed to reach their intended recipients. Today, sophisticated, multi-stage guided parachutes dropped from high altitudes from miles away can land within yards of their target and YPG is the premiere location for their developmental and operational testing.

"With airdrops you can get materiel to virtually anywhere in the world," said Adam Goldenstein, test officer with YPG's Air Delivery Division. "It

isn't always possible to truck items around."

YPG's nearly 2000 square miles of restricted airspace, favorable weather, and highly instrumented ranges make it an ideal location for airdrop testing. The presence of a multiple of unmanned aircraft testers working on



Tracking the flight of tiny pods dropped from unmanned aircraft at altitudes as high as 25,000 feet is accomplished with sophisticated tracking mounts like the one seen here. "If you go somewhere other than YPG, the riggers, test officers and equipment aren't available, so you would have to build them up," said project officer Sanjay Patel. "Coming here allows us to focus exclusively on the test." (Photo by Mark Schauer)



Test coordinator Noralee Taylor (right) notes the location of its intended target as part of the test data collection. "Even when dropped from nearly 15 miles away, the parachutes used by the program can land a few feet from the target," she said. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Parachutes provide medical aid



safely airlift medical equipment to Soldiers and pack with medical supplies over YPG's

a variety of test projects concurrently on also provides unique opportunities to share platforms and equipment in a mutually beneficial way.

"YPG has the biggest range and highest altitude we can get for drops," said Kristen Lafond, an NSRDEC project officer on JMDSE. "We try to



How far the guided parachute landed from collected for the JMDSE program. The guided payload within 300 feet of its intended target way. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

drop as high as 25,000 feet, and this is the only location where we can get that altitude with the offsets we must have for our systems."

Drops of medical supplies are also complicated by the delicateness of equipment and the precise conditions in which blood or vaccines must be stored to remain viable. Prior to a test drop, each payload is carefully prepared in conformance with exacting medical procedures and standards. If blood is being dropped, constant temperature readings are collected from the moment the payload is rigged to when it is recovered. Once in the air, the parachutes must deploy and land as softly as possible to protect glass vials and fragile medical monitors.

"Following test drops, the customer has the blood analyzed," said Goldenstein. "The results so far, have indicated the altitude, temperature changes and landing shock has not had a negative effect and these products can be used safely."

This makes recovering the dropped items in a timely manner even more important than usual and YPG's range support workers are up to the task. Testing is expected to continue



Given the perishable nature of blood and other medical supplies, recovering the dropped items in a timely manner is even more important than usual. Once data relating to the airdrop is collected, the carefully packed blood is sent for testing and analysis at Fort Detrick, Md. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

through next year and test personnel characterize YPG's support as second-to-none.

"YPG has a great deal of airdrop experience," said Patel. "If you go

somewhere else, the riggers, test officers and equipment aren't available, so you would have to build them up. Coming here allows us to focus exclusively on the test."



The Provider supply pod can carry supplies from blood transfusions to vaccines, be re-used as many as 30 times, and be packed and rigged in a matter of hours by personnel with only a few days of training. Here, the pod is steered into a soft landing by a guided parachute that is part of the JMDSE test program. (Loaned photo)

Viewpoint

'They don't make 'em like they used to' is a common refrain about many things in life, including television shows. We asked members of the workforce, "What was your favorite TV show when you were a child?"



Shawn Sonnentag, IT specialist, technical services: My favorite show was "Gilligan's Island." It was very innocent and the characters seem like they were having fun in a situation everyone dreams of being in: paradise with a little adventure, but no one ever gets hurt. The absurdity of the professor being able to make everything except gear that would enable them to be rescued never occurred to me when I was young.



Donald Calabro, computer scientist, technical services: I used to love "The Rat Patrol." It was a late 1960s show about a WWII commando unit in North Africa. They sped around the desert in Jeeps shooting .30 caliber machine guns. It was a very exciting show for a kid. I was a cavalry scout for 20 years, so maybe the show inspired me subconsciously.



Crystal Simpson, engineering technician: My favorite show was "Full House," because the little girl, Michelle, would say, 'Oh, man,' in a really cute way. It was a nice family show about everyday life and what a single parent has to deal with.



Joe Aiello, engineering technician: "The Fall Guy." I especially liked Heather Locklear, as well as Lee Majors' truck. It was a brown Chevy K series 4-wheel drive. It had nice painting on the hood, and as a kid, when you saw it jumping, you thought, 'wow, I wish I could drive like that.' I think the show inspired me to be a mechanic.



Al Hart, general engineer, technical services: I really liked "The Prisoner" with Patrick McGoohan. He played a British secret agent who quits and then wakes up on an island in a village full of other prisoners. He tried to escape frequently, but was always thwarted by his captors' high technology. The secret agent had no idea who has kidnapped him, and part of the fun was speculating who it was—the British, the Russians. My brother insisted it was aliens.



Cheryl Brand, data collector: "The Simpsons." I like the old and new ones both, and it is interesting to see how the animation and voices of the characters changed over the years. Homer was louder and more obnoxious in the earlier ones. I also liked "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air." It was a good clean family show that was funny. Will Smith was funny and a good actor, but he was kind of dorky back then. He got cuter with age.

Safety tips when using laser pointers

submitted by the Safety Office

Most of us are familiar with office laser pointers. They are inexpensive and widely available at office supply and department stores. When used properly, office laser pointers are an effective way to highlight talking points at meetings. But when intentionally aimed at a colleague's eyes, a laser pointer could lead to either real or perceived eye damage.

The word LASER is an acronym for Light Amplification by the Stimulated Emission of Radiation — a fancy way of saying that laser light waves are in phase and all of a single wavelength. Wavelength is the key factor in determining how the eye will react to a given laser, and is important for evaluating potential hazards. For example, common office laser pointers all have an output power of about five milliwatts, but green laser pointers seem to be considerably brighter than red laser pointers. This is a consequence of the human eye's increased sensitivity to the 532 nanometer green wavelength versus the 650 nanometer red wavelength, and therefore, eye-safe green laser pointers are often bright enough to cause viewing discomfort even though they have a very low output power.

Soldiers on the battlefield are using the characteristics of low-power green lasers to their advantage as non-lethal force "dazzler" weapons. However, this increase in dazzler laser use has been accompanied by a troubling increase in blue-force on blue-force laser eye incidents. Although the majority of these dazzler incidents have not resulted in permanent eye damage to the Soldiers involved, the situation has been deemed serious enough to warrant the issuance of a warning from Multi-National Corps Iraq Headquarters in June 2008.

In the U.S. Central Command area of operation, all reported incidents of suspected laser overexposure were due to improper and inappropriate illumination of friendly forces, resulting in degraded night vision, migraine headaches, temporary flash blindness and blurred vision. While none of these effects are permanently debilitating, they can cause a great deal of fear in the exposed person if he or she does not immediately know that the laser in question is eye-safe. Temporary loss of vision can also be extremely hazardous if the exposed individual is operating a vehicle or performing a dangerous task, as even a momentary distraction may lead to a lethal accident.

Office laser pointers, like many fielded laser dazzlers, may be rated as eye-safe but are still capable of causing discomfort and temporary loss of vision. The most important rule to remember when handling a laser of any power is to avoid pointing it directly at personnel. If we use military and commercially-available laser systems properly, we will accomplish the mission of sending everyone home safely and making sure that "Nobody Gets Hurt."

Hoffman (Continued from page 3)

22,000 feet above sea level, a feat he attempted with a multi-national group of Soldier mountaineers. Their successful summit of the notoriously challenging mountain in 1993 earned the attention of the first man to climb the world's tallest mountain.

"We got to meet Sir Edmund Hillary at a reception after the climb," Hoffman recalled. "He had said Nilkantha couldn't be climbed, and using the equipment that was available when he was in his prime, it probably couldn't have been."

Alaska

Hoffman has been married for 31 years and has two children. His son is in the Air Force and his daughter is a former videographer at CRTC. He and his family first came to Alaska in the 1980s when he was stationed with the 172nd Infantry at Fort Wainwright.

"I knew as soon as I stepped off the plane that one day I would retire in Alaska," Hoffman said.

After retiring from the Army as a master sergeant in 1995, his premonition came true. He worked as a hunting guide and as a laborer in a power plant. While eating lunch at work one day, he saw a newspaper ad for a project engineer to conduct tests on indirect fire weapons. He applied for the job, and became the first contractor hired by CRTC. He converted to government employment in 2001.

With a small workforce and a large mission, employees of CRTC have to be versatile, and Hoffman fits the bill. In addition to being able to drive a forklift and a backhoe, he is a certified unexploded ordnance technician. In

his 15 years with the organization, he has tested everything from boots and gloves to combat vehicles and artillery. Hoffman enjoys the variety of items that come his way.

"As a test officer at CRTC, you don't get locked into a single commodity group," he explained. "If you have the technical proficiency, you can get the assignment."

These days when he is on the test range, he can still see the same mountains that were visible from his quarters at Fort Greely when he was in uniform. For recreation, Hoffman hunts and fishes. His love of bluegrass music led him to take up the banjo.

"I had a mid-life crisis," Hoffman said. "I couldn't afford a Ferrari, so I bought a banjo. It's challenging, for there are no real instructors around here."

Since he began working at CRTC, he picked up another hobby which seems unlikely for a mountain man and cold weather enthusiast: scuba diving. While in Hawaii to support a test of the M777 howitzer early in the last decade, a group of test Soldiers induced him to try the sport, and he was instantly hooked. The man who has scaled mountains more than 20,000 feet above sea level now dives 130 feet beneath it, the limit for recreational diving.

"I go outside of Alaska periodically, and my visits reaffirm why I live in Alaska," Hoffman said with a smile. "I do like to take trips to the tropics to go scuba diving, though."

Christmas activities highlight community generosity

by Yolie Canales

Every year, residents from the Yuma Proving Ground community unite as one big happy family and participate in numerous Christmas holiday activities. The Christmas holiday is the best moment to share activities between adults and children. It's a time for families to decorate the family Christmas tree, houses, front yards, visit shopping malls and get in the mood for the magic and festive spirit of Christmas.

The scene of the nativity is also the opportunity to educate children about the birth of Jesus and the meaning of Christmas; and a fun way to learn history.

As a tradition, the holiday activities at YPG kick off with the annual Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in the Main Administrative Area of the installation. This event drew over 200 attendees to light the tree, sing Christmas carols, greet Sant Claus and enjoy the refreshments offered and sponsored by YPG's Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation Directorate.

In addition to this event, the Post Chapel also held a Christmas program for the families of YPG and the surrounding area residents.

Also, a "Toys for Tots" collection is held by members of the workforce from different directorates. This year, members from the Combat Systems Directorate, collected over 350 toys that were distributed to underprivileged children of the Yuma community. "Toys for Tots," is a project coordinated and run by the U.S. Marine Corps throughout the country.

For the families of YPG, the best part of the Christmas holiday activities are the memories that are created that will last a lifetime!



Taking requests from the children is Santa Claus along with one of his helpers.



Singing along with attendees at the YPG Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony is Chris Saucedo, deputy manager for Garrison, and Rick Bessett, manager of the Cactus Cafe.

Photos by Mark Shauer & Kellie Pacella



Members of the YPG Post Chapel Christmas Pageant pose a photo.



Generous employees of the Ground Combat Systems Directorate collected 350 toys for underprivileged children as part of the "Toys for Tots" program. This is the fifth consecutive year the group has conducted this collection and are planning to do it again next year. Employees are boxing up the toys for Santa to deliver.

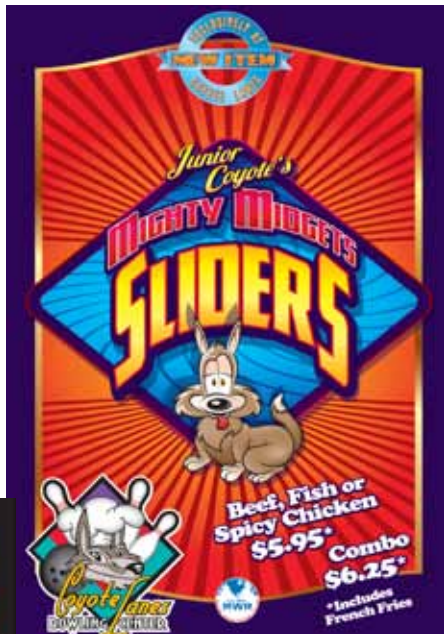


Bundled up in their warm jackets and sweaters, little children dressed up in Santa suits, children and adults alike sit patiently in the bleachers to enjoy the festivities.



Reaching to put his ornament on the Christmas tree at the tree lighting ceremony is Bradford Walk. However, the most exciting part of this event for Bradford was the arrival of Santa Claus.

Family, Morale, Welfare & Recreation Happenings



Coyotes (Continued from page 1)

Game and Fish Department wildlife manager, emphasized the value of hazing coyotes.

- Pick up fruit that falls off trees and excess bird seed, since coyotes are omnivorous.

- Always remember that coyotes are wild animals and should remain that way. **Never** try to feed or pet them.

The more free meals coyotes find and the more non-threatening people they encounter, the more coyotes will lose their fear of humans. Coyotes that adapt to human settlements become bolder and often appear in daylight. On YPG, coyotes are seen at dawn and dusk in the housing areas – normal times for coyotes to forage.

Sadly, there are reports of employ-

ees and contractors feeding specific coyotes, and of coyotes that have found access to food waste and unsecured garbage. A coyote that approaches humans and begs for food is a danger to traffic, people and the mission. Such an animal cannot be relocated but instead must be euthanized. Do not feed these beautiful animals. A fed coyote is a dead coyote.

For more information, please visit the Arizona Game and Fish Department website, http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/urban_wildlife.shtml or call

DPW, Environmental Sciences Division, at 382-6009 or to Zia Engineering at 382-4804.

Editor's Note: Prepared by Environmental Sciences Division, Department of Public Works, Yuma Proving Ground based on "Living with coyotes" written by the Environmental Division, DPW, Fort Irwin.

CRTC (Continued from page 1)

One day in late summer, for example, CRTC testers conducted a check of the voltage readings on encased lots of battery coolant units that power the Stinger missiles. These particular cases had been in continuous storage since 1983 and were kept in a large building without any artificial climate control system. Checking voltage readings on the stored equipment takes place regularly to observe and record changes that may occur.

Other items in long-term storage include Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) protection suits in the sixth year of an evaluation to confirm the 20-year shelf life of each stored suit. CRTC conducts tests on literally thousands of such items and meticulously collects data on each. In most cases, this information is gathered on a monthly basis and, sometimes, items are sent to outside

laboratories for additional testing.

The scope of storage testing extends to components most people think little about. A pad close to the storage facility is used to check the navigation systems inside large guided missiles like the MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile that won acclaim in the first Gulf War. The navigation system must be able to align to true north even after years in storage in order to be functional, and CRTC storage testing ensures this is always the case.

Whether the equipment is large or small, CRTC testers are well-aware of the value of this type of testing.

"It is critical to know if the items the Soldiers are using will last 20 or 25 years in the natural environment," said Coakley. "The small equipment they use can be just as vital to their well-being as the large things."

YPG tax service program available after January 20

As you know, a fresh tax season is just around the corner and once again your Command Judge Advocate (JAG) office will be doing taxes under the military VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program. Many of you will be returning customers and the JAG Office looks forward to serving you again. For those of you who have not yet heard, the YPG Installation Tax Program is part of the Army Legal Assistance Program and is here to help you for FREE!

Who is eligible: If you are active duty, retired military, 100 percent disabled veteran (with ID card), or a family member/dependent, you are eligible to receive your tax services free at the JAG Office.

What is the benefit of using the legal office instead of preparing your taxes yourself:

- It's FREE.

- Although some commercial agencies and tax programs offer to do your federal taxes for free, the services are limited. For example, you may only be able to file a Form 1040EZ or simple federal tax return for free.

What if you also need to file state:

- If so, you can expect to pay a commercial tax preparer or accountant in excess of \$120 (or more), for the same service that we provide for free.

- Your taxes will be prepared under the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program by a volunteer trained in preparing your income tax return, using IRS approved professional income tax preparation software.

- With electronic filing and direct deposit you can get your refund within 10 days. No costly Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) to get the money you're entitled to. (Did you know that the get-your-money-now type loans can have an annual percentage rate (APR) of more than 100 percent?)

**** Note to active duty personnel:** Did you know that most commercial tax preparers will not offer RALs to active duty personnel? Under the Military Predatory Lending Act, which limits the annual percentage rate (APR) a military person is legally allowed to be charged on a loan, most commercial tax preparers cannot offer this service to active duty personnel without violating the law. What does this mean to you? It means that they cannot get your tax refund any faster to you than we can!

The YPG Income Tax Program should be taking appointments on or about January 20th. Once you get all of your Forms: W2, 1099, interest statements, child care statements, etc., call Lisa Miller or Daniel Schifrin at ext. 2608 to schedule your appointment.

Sexual Assault Hotline:

920-3104 or 328-3224

Report Domestic Violence:

328-2720 or 328-3224

DoD (Continued from page 1)

wildlife (birds and bats); wildlife use of mesquite bosques; and improving survey techniques for desert mule deer. Not only do these projects support the sustainability of the testing and training environment for current and future military missions, but also directly support the attainment of AGFD conservation objectives on the installation and have also benefitted wildlife elsewhere across southwestern Arizona.

On the regional management side, YPG provided over \$100,000 to build two bighorn sheep waters in an effort to mitigate potential impacts to bighorn sheep resulting from the construction and operation of the JERC 3 facility. YPG staff completed the environmental review documents for 10 collaborative water projects involving YPG, AGFD, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club, and Desert bighorn Sheep Society. YPG also provided approximately \$30,000 towards the capturing and radio collaring of bighorn sheep to investigate the effectiveness of mitigation features designed to lessen the impacts on bighorn sheep associated with the cantonment area security fence. YPG assisted the department's bighorn sheep translocation program, providing both bighorn

sheep and personnel to help capture and transport the bighorn to other areas on Arizona. They have also been extensively involved in the proposed reintroduction of a second population of the endangered Sonoran pronghorn onto Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, YPG staff has provided logistical and personnel support for a multitude of conservation efforts and worked tirelessly to facilitate AGFD access for survey and management activities in restricted areas of the range and airspace.

As recipients of the AGFD Commission Conservation Organization of the year Award, YPG, MCAS and Luke AFB, join some pretty outstanding company. Past winners include organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Arizona Mule Deer Association.

Congratulations to all the employees of YPG on being selected for such a prestigious award and thanks for the continued commitment toward the testing and training mission and the conservation of our precious natural resources. "One Team — One YPG — Army Strong!"