

# THE OUTPOST

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

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## Smart artillery tested at YPG

By Mark Schauer

Field artillery is a key contributor to battlefield success, able to rapidly deliver a punishing barrage of steel across a wide radius of any battlefield.

Though rocket assisted conventional 155 millimeter rounds can easily reach targets 20 miles downrange, accuracy diminishes with distance. At long ranges, these shells can land as much as 850 feet off target, a potentially fatal outcome for both American Soldiers and civilians. The Precision Guidance Kit (PGK), currently undergoing developmental testing at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground, is designed to increase the accuracy of a round to within 50 meters, or about 150 feet, of a target.

“The threshold requirement of a probable 50 meters circular error provides precision capability, but our objective is 30 meters,” said Jessica Woo, test manager



PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

The M777 lightweight 155mm howitzer is the newest towed howitzer in the Army inventory. Testing of the weapon has always been centered at YPG. Gun crews at the proving ground are some of the most experienced and best in the Army.

for the PGK program. “We are providing new precision that will benefit Soldiers tremendously.”

A wide variety of factors can cause loss of accuracy at long ranges for a

conventional artillery round, from minor variations in the manufacturing process to weather conditions in the field.

“Nothing is perfectly standard,” said Ron Jackson,

test officer. “PGK was designed to compensate for these little variations. You still have to aim the round as if you are firing ballistically, but if you’re off a bit for any reason, PGK will steer it onto

target.”

PGK is a fuse with guidance capability that is screwed onto a conventional round in the same manner as an ordinary fuse. PGK has undergone a variety of tests at YPG since 2006, but a recent one involved firing rounds from a M777 howitzer at extreme elevations after the PGK fuses had been subjected to extreme cold and heat in conditioning chambers, as well as vibration that mimics the expected logistical and tactical transportation conditions the item would likely see in theater.

“To field the item, we have to make sure it is safe for Soldiers to handle,” said Woo. “The United States has the most stringent qualification process in the world.”

To make the testing even more extreme, rockets were added to the projectile. Whenever rocket-assisted cartridges are being used, the see **ARTILLERY** page 2

Soldier stationed at YPG finds creative way to give back

Page 2



Contractors critical component to YPG mission

Page 6



Viewpoints: What do you remember about your first newborn?

Page 3





# Natural born artist gives back to YPG, community

By Yolie Canales

Single Soldiers stationed at Yuma Proving Ground often find living 25 miles outside town a challenge. They must find interesting, fun things to do to prevent boredom and loneliness.

Staff Sgt. Maikeld Quarles overcame this challenge because of numerous interests, hobbies and skills he puts to good use in his spare time. If people were to drive by Price Elementary School in the afternoon or on weekends, they are sure to find Quarles perched on a ladder with paint brush in hand, putting his artistic talents to use on the enormous mural on the front of the school. It can be seen from Halo and Flame Streets in YPG's Main Administrative Area.

A parachute rigger for the Airborne Test Force (ATF), Quarles has been highlighted in the Outpost for the volunteer work he performs in the local community and, most recently, when selected to play shortstop for the Scrapulators, an all-Army softball team. In addition to this, he was selected as ATEC's Non-Commissioned Officer for the 4th quarter of 2011, a coveted recognition he earned for exemplary work performance, high evaluations on physical training scores and his volunteer work.

A self taught artist who drew greeting cards at the young age of

five while living in Panama, his native country, Quarles enjoyed the hobby so much that he has become a perfectionist in his work. "I'm a very neat person when it comes to drawing or painting," he said. "When I draw, I want to do a good job, therefore, I take my time and do it right the first time."

His grandmother, his number one mentor and role model, in addition to his mother, always praised him for his work and encouraged him to continue this natural gift. "My mother would love to see me pursue the career of an artist," said Quarles. "She encouraged and supported me all the way, but I paint for a hobby, not for a living. I find it satisfying and rewarding, for I put my inner feelings and creativity on display for everyone to enjoy."

The mural was an idea brought to his attention by Amy Milton, wife of the former YTC commander. She had seen some of Quarles' artistic work at ATF and approached him about the school's mural. "Amy came to me and asked what I could do to make the existing eagle painted on the wall look better, Quarles said. "I agreed and went to work on it. I now think about coming back to visit YPG ten or 20 years from now to see the mural. It's a great feeling."

In addition to painting, he also designs body tattoos. "I've had many individuals come up to me and say what they want in a tattoo," he

shields housing test personnel, and was watched by a wide variety of test personnel. High speed camera operators used three cameras to capture the round's first 200 feet of flight at more than 2,000 frames per second, while four trackers operating kineto tracking mounts filmed the round's distant flight and



Staff Sgt. Maikeld Quarles stands proudly by the mural he painted at Price Elementary School. Quarles is gearing up along with fellow Soldiers from Airborne Test Force to volunteer as servers for the holiday meals at the Crossroads Mission.

PHOTO BY YOLIE CANALES

explained. "I sit down and sketch it out—if they like it, they go out and have it tattooed on their bodies."

Despite his artistic talent, Quarles, first and foremost, is a disciplined and dedicated Soldier. "I just reenlisted

for seven more years," he said. "I'm committed to serving my country and intend doing it with lots of pride and dedication. Just like my artistic hobby, I apply the same passion to my military career."

## ARTILLERY

FROM PAGE 1

gun crew leader gives the rocket's cap to the test officer, an extra precaution to ensure there is no doubt of what type of round is being fired. The actual firing of the powerful round shook the trailers behind blast

also gathered telemetry data from the PGK fuse aboard it.

The PGK may be fielded to troops in less than two years, but will likely continue to undergo testing at YPG.

"We always test at YPG," said Woo. "It has the range space and support we need. We have a good relationship going back decades."

### Next Outpost deadline

is noon December 1st

Sexual Assault Hotline:

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## VIEWPOINTS

Having a baby for the first time is a life-changing experience. We ask, "What are your memories of your first-born's first weeks?"



**Barbara Rocha**  
Health clinic

My daughter is 15 now, but I remember being nervous and excited when she was born. I couldn't stop looking at her and thinking how I was going to be responsible for her for the rest of my life. I couldn't wait to get started with being a mom. The first few weeks were exhausting—with even the littlest whimper I would wake up to see what she needed—most of the time it was because she was hungry. It was a beautiful experience.

**Scott Wegge**  
Metal working branch chief

My oldest daughter didn't sleep nights at first. I remember taking her on drives in my 1966 Ford pickup truck to lull her to sleep. The bottles and diapers came easy: my wife at the time was a really good mother: we worked together, and doing all of that was a snap. I think having a baby made me more serious and see the value of going to college.



**Brian Zigenbein**  
Test engineer

The hardest part was the first two months: having to wake up with him three or four times a night was the first time I had lost so much sleep since I was in uniform. Once you have a schedule established, it gets easier, but that is a matter of them getting used to being in the world and you getting used to having a baby. Now, everything at home is around his schedule, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.



**Carmen Juarez**  
Ammunition manager

The first few weeks were nerve wracking. With your first child you don't know what to do or how to handle them when she is crying her head off in the middle of the night. Every day is a learning experience: they get to know you and you get to know them. You are each other's guinea pigs. A baby changes everything: even something simple like going to the store becomes a challenging process.



**Amanda Hagedorn**  
Ammunition manager

It was an emotional rollercoaster. You don't realize how big it is until you see the baby and realize it is your child and somebody you will be linked to for the rest of your life. It is a scary, but awesome, feeling that was way better than I imagined. I think the first child is easier on you. My firstborn was very calm, nothing like the horror stories I had heard about newborns.

**Kenrick Escalanti**  
Graphic designer

I remember a lot of joy and many sleepless nights. Diaper-changing was my responsibility for the first week. The bonding process was very moving, to see something that looks like you and is a part of you. I think one of life's biggest joys is when your newborn grips your finger for the first time.



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or email to: [yolanda.canales@us.army.mil](mailto:yolanda.canales@us.army.mil)

**Commander:** Col. Reed F. Young

**Public Affairs Officer:** Chuck Wullenjohn

**Public Affairs Specialist/Editor:** Yolanda Canales

**Public Affairs Specialist:** Mark Schauer

**Technical Editor, Cold Regions Test Center:** Clara Zachgo



## —November Go Getters



Congratulations to Kashiell Cowan and Noelia Vargas Palafox both 5th grade students from Mrs. Edwards' class, for being selected Price Elementary School "Go-Getters" for the month of November.

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## Stryker on parade



PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN

Riding in a Stryker vehicle and waving to crowds lined up along 4th Avenue, are left to right (front) Yuma Proving Ground Commander Lt. Col. Reed Young, Staff Sgt. Arron Englemen, (rear) Command Sgt. Maj. Forbes Daniel and Sgt. Robert Little. Both Englemen and Little are from the Airborne Test Force.

## What's happening in Yuma

**DECEMBER 1**, at 7 p.m: Yuma Orchestra Association presents the AWC Christmas Gala at Cibola High School Auditorium, 4100 W. 20th Street. For more information go online at: [www.yumaorchestra.org](http://www.yumaorchestra.org)

**DECEMBER 2**, at 5 p.m: Rotary's Annual Walt Kammann Sausage Fry at Yuma Civic Center. For tickets and for more information, call 376-0100.

**DECEMBER 2**, at 7 p.m: Broadway Today at the historic Yuma Theatre. Tickets can be obtained online at: [www.YumaAZ.gov/events](http://www.YumaAZ.gov/events).

**DECEMBER 2** starting at 7 p.m. to 9 p.m: Yuma Jazz Company performs at Julienna s Patio Café. For more information log onto: [www.yumajazz.com](http://www.yumajazz.com)

**DECEMBER 3**, at 12 p.m: AWC hosts the El Toro Bowl at Veterans memorial Stadium, Gila Ridge High School, 7150 E. 24th Street. Tickets are available at Caballeros de Yuma Office, 180 1st Street. For more information log onto: [www.yumasun.com/eltorobowl](http://www.yumasun.com/eltorobowl)

**DECEMBER 3**, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m: Yuma Jazz Trio performs at Arizona Sweets Café, 11411 S. Fortuna Road. For more information, log

onto: [www.yumajazz.com](http://www.yumajazz.com)

**DECEMBER 3** at 7 p.m: Racing at Cocopah Speedway, Highway 95 and County 15th St. Main gate opens at 4 p.m; Racing starts at 7 p.m. Call 376-0100 for more information.

**DECEMBER 5**: Country Christmas Concert at Yuma Civic Center. Call 376-0100 for more information.

**DECEMBER 10**: Dorothy Young Memorial Centennial Electric Light Parade. The theme is "Yuma... 100 years in the making." Parade entry fees are \$30. For more information, log onto: [www.visityuma.com](http://www.visityuma.com)

**DECEMBER 16-23** starting at 5 p.m. to 9 p.m: Centennial Christmas Village at Quartermaster Depot State Historic park. The event will feature a sledding hill with real snow, activities in each of the Christmas-themed playhouses, live entertainment, food and beverages. For more information, log onto: [www.VisitYuma.com](http://www.VisitYuma.com)

**DECEMBER 17**: Somerton Annual Tamale Festival, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m: Call 376-0100 for more information.

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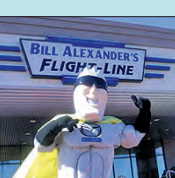
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# YPG contractors critical to mission accomplishment

By Chuck Wullenjohn

Most people think of contractors as workers temporarily hired to perform specialized tasks that, when accomplished, result in their moving on to other jobs. The Yuma Proving Ground workforce, however, includes hundreds of contractors who work 12 months of the year performing jobs essential to the proving ground mission. Many have worked at YPG for many years, even decades, and are major contributors to the Yuma community's year round economic health.

The YPG workforce consists of about 3000 employees, over half of whom are contract workers. These employees own homes, pay local and state taxes, vote in elections, send their children to local schools, and support Yuma businesses. Of the proving ground's annual economic impact of over \$160 million salary dollars, a gigantic portion comes from contractors. They represent a vital component of the Yuma community.

Although there are numerous contract firms at the proving ground, the largest is TRAX Test Services, which supports a wide variety of test activities. With some 1400 employees, TRAX workers can be seen at nearly all YPG test ranges, performing a huge variety of tasks. They drive tracked and wheeled vehicles on test courses, fire artillery pieces, collect data, prepare test reports, service and operate highly sophisticated electronic systems, and much more.

"Our customers at Yuma Proving Ground say they could not get the job done without our support," said Tom Foltz, TRAX program manager at the proving ground. "We provide flexibility to the test equation, for



PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

TRAX employs personnel from Yuma Proving Ground to Cold Regions Test Center in Alaska to the Tropics Regions Test Center in Panama, Suriname and Hawaii. Positions range from administrative positions to ammunition handlers, drivers, mechanics, high speed photographers, consultants, test officers, engineers and much more.

we can react quickly to changes in workload."

Foltz says most of the TRAX workers were hired locally but others relocated from other areas of the nation. This is because of the specialized technical skills and knowledge many positions require.

Turning the clock back ten to 15 years, the forerunner of modern-day TRAX counted far fewer employees, only about 400. "That's because the YPG workload wasn't nearly as large then as it is today," he explained.

TRAX Test Services operates at YPG but also supports testing taking place at Alaska's Cold Regions

Test Center and the Tropic Regions Test Center, both of which are YPG subordinate organizations.

Sometimes employees in Yuma are asked to "safari" to these far off locations when needed to support particular tests. For instance, a multi-month test of a military armored vehicle taking place right now in the nation of Suriname, located on South America's northeastern coast, incorporates workers from both Alaska and Yuma, as well as the contractor workforce from Panama.

TRAX typically has job openings throughout the year and encourages people to apply. All position

openings, both at YPG and other locations at which the firm operates, are advertised on TRAX's web page: [www.traxintl.com](http://www.traxintl.com)

Foltz has a message for young people in school. "Education is a must," he says, "particularly given today's economy. TRAX is a service company and what we have to offer customers are the services our people provide and the knowledge they possess. The more highly trained and better educated our people, the better the service."

In other words, stay in school and get yourself the technical skills needed to stay competitive.



# In observance of Native American Heritage Month Code talkers: Key to success in WWII

*Editor's Note: In observance of Native American Heritage Month, The Outpost is highlighting the Navajo code talkers role during World War II. During the 2011 Spirit of Yuma Military Festival, one of the few code talkers left was invited as a special guest to the event.*

The Navajo code talkers were key to America's success in World War II. They were Navajo Marines who created a secret code that made it possible for the United States to defeat the Japanese in World War II.

Before World War II, every code that the United States had created for warfare had been broken. Known as experts at code deciphering, the Japanese were never able to decipher the Navajo's secret code.

The success of the code was due, in a large part, to the complexity of the Navajo language. At the outbreak of World War II, there were only 30 non-Navajos who could speak the language, and not all of them could speak it fluently. Philip Johnston, had grown up on the Navajo reservation, and could speak Navajo very well.

He was a veteran of World War I and had heard about a battle in that war, in which several Choctaw Indians were talking to each other by radio in their native language. It completely fooled the Germans, who were listening. The tide of the battle turned around and the Americans won. With his knowledge of the Navajo people and their language, Johnston thought that the Navajos could easily devise a way of talking that no one would be able to understand.

With the somewhat skeptical approval by the U.S. Marines of Johnston's idea, recruitment for code talkers began in the spring of 1942. Two recruiters from the Marine Corps went to the Navajo reservation and met with Chee Dodge, chairman of the tribal council. He liked the idea and sent out word by shortwave radio



Navajo Code Talker Bill Toledo of New Mexico signs an autograph at the Spirit of Yuma Military Festival in January of this year.

PHOTO BY YOLIE CANALES

to the reservation. There was an immediate, excited response. The candidates had to be fluent in both English and Navajo. Many of them were just school boys and lied about their age, just to have the opportunity to go and fight for their country. Twenty-nine Navajos were inducted.

These 29 men were sent by train to boot camp at Fort Elliot in California where they became the 382nd platoon. There, they had to learn to survive the harsh environment they would encounter in the Pacific. Due to their ancestral background and way of life, the Navajos proved to have outstanding physical endurance and qualities. The challenge in their training came when staff officers who were worried that there might be someone who could understand Navajo, asked them to encode the Navajo language. Hence, the creation of the unbreakable code. After this code was created, it was tested on some Navajos who weren't code talkers and they were unable to understand it. The Marines then decided to start training 200 more code talkers.

The 382nd platoon, was sent

to Guadalcanal to begin fighting. When they first arrived, some field commanders were confused about the role the code talkers were to play. But as they paired with communication specialists their value became apparent.

They handled all major battlefield communications while the Americans were fighting the Japanese in the Pacific. Not one of their messages was deciphered. In the last battle of the war, the fight for Iwo Jima, they sent more than 800 critical messages. By the end of the war, there were 540 Navajo Marines and about 420 of these were trained as code talkers. When they returned home after the war, most of them participated in the "Enemy Way" ceremony, a native ritual, performed for getting rid of evil spirits.

It is almost certain that America would not have been able to win the war without the Navajo code talkers, and it is hard to estimate the number of American lives they saved. It is believed that their code is the only truly unbreakable code in the history of warfare.

# Longtime Tropic Regions Test Center employee wears many hats

By Mark Schauer

Data collector. Security officer. Safety officer. These are just three of the hats longtime employee Federico Dixon wears at the Army's Tropic Regions Test Center.

"It's a one-of-a kind organization," Dixon explained. "Because of our size, all of us need to multitask to accomplish the mission."

Dixon holds a variety of job titles at TRTC's Panama office, where he has worked for nearly ten years, but none surpasses his favorite: Soldier.

"I enjoyed every minute of my career in the military," Dixon said. "Working for TRTC, I feel that I am still part of it, for we test the equipment Soldiers depend on in the field."

A native of Paraiso, Panama, Dixon was the son of a Jamaican father and Columbian mother. Growing up he spoke Jamaican at home, English at school, and Spanish in the street. Though he now holds dual American and Panamanian citizenship, at that time, Dixon said, residents of what was then the Panama Canal Zone were all-American in all ways.

"In the past, we were never considered Panamanians," said Dixon. "We were born under the American flag and lived under American laws. We were Americans."

He grew up within sight of the Panama Canal and, as a child, rode his bicycle past an old French cemetery that holds the remains of ill-fated workers from the first attempt

see **TROPIC** page 10

# Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation December Events

## CYSS FLAG FOOTBALL

December 3 – 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### COX FIELD

The YPG Youth Flag Football teams of 5/6, 7/9, 10/12 will be playing the teams from Marine Corps Air Station. Please come and support our teams. There will be refreshments and baked goods for sale at the field.

Location Details: Cox Field, Yuma Proving Ground

POC: Youth Sport, ext. 2860

## YPG CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

December 7 – 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### COX FIELD

YPG's annual Christmas Tree Lighting, Wed, Dec 7 at 6 p.m. at Cox Field. Enjoy live entertainment, refreshments, caroling, lighting of the tree, and a visit from Santa!

Location Details: Cox Field, Yuma Proving Ground

## YOUTH SOCCER REGISTRATION

Starts December 8 – 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### CDC

Soccer Registration starts Dec 8. Registration

fee of \$40 includes uniform shirt, photo, and award ceremony. Registration ends, Jan 9. Register at CDC, Mon – Thurs, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. Ages 3-12.

Location Details: Child Development Center, Yuma Proving Ground

POC: CDC CENTRAL REGISTRATION: 328-3130

## BREAKFAST & BOWLING WITH SANTA

December 10 – 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

### COYOTE LANES

Buy any adult breakfast and children can get a free picture with Santa. Santa is going to hang out and bowl with the kids.

Location Details: Coyote Lanes Bowling Center, Yuma Proving Ground

POC: COYOTE LANES 928-328-2308

## OUTLET SHOPPING TRIP TO LAS AMERICAS

December 13 - 8 a.m. -8 p.m.

### SAN DIEGO, CA

Shop your favorite outlets for great prices. Stores include BCBGirls, Loft, Michael Kors, Victoria's Secret and many, many more. Trip includes transportation to and from San Diego,

CA.

POC: STEVE WARD, 328-2400

## YPG COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

December 14 - 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

### PALM GARDENS

Participate! Everyone welcome! Bring your questions!

YPG Community Council Meeting meets on the second Wednesday every month at 9 a.m. at the Palm Garden Conference Center.

For more information, call 328-2332.

Location Details: YPG Palm Garden Conference Center, Yuma Proving Ground

POC: MARDY CLARK, 328-2332

## YOUTH SERVICES WINTER BREAK

Winter break begins Thursday, December 22 and ends Friday, January 6, 2012.

POC: CYSS/DEBBIE RICKARD, 328-2860

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 25 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### CACTUS CAFE

Enjoy Christmas dinner at the Cactus Cafe!

Cost: \$14.95 adults, \$7.95 children under 12.

Roast beef, ham, mashed potatoes, rice, green bean almandine, carrots, rolls, salad bar, apple crisp, carrot cake - all your holiday favorites!

POC: CACTUS CAFÉ, 328-2333

## NEW YEAR'S DINNER

December 31 – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

### CACTUS CAFE

Ring in the new year with friends and family at the Cactus Cafe!

All dinners will be served with a fresh garden salad, choice of baked potato or wild rice almandine, vegetable du chef, rolls and butter.

Slow Roasted Prime Rib - King Cut \$19.95,

Queen Cut - \$17.95

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POC: CACTUS CAFE 328-2333

## NEW YEAR'S DAY "FOOTBOWL"

January 1 – 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### COYOTE LANES

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POC: COYOTE LANES, 328-2308

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# Chaplain's Corner

## A Christmas 'sacrifice'

By Chaplain Douglas Ball

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of driving to the airport during a December blizzard (not in Yuma).. It wasn't the most enjoyable trip, except for the brief rush of adrenaline I got when the car next to me on the Interstate went into a 40 mph spin and I felt like a NASCAR driver hoping to make it through the pileup! All of this 'sacrifice' was just to take my sister-in-law to the airport. I also had to 'sacrifice' by moving most of her earthly belongings to my crawlspace for storage and by letting her park her car on my lawn.

I use 'sacrifice' in quotes, because I didn't really give much compared to my sister-in-law. She had received news that a hospital in Togo, West Africa, would be shorthanded during December and January. She had spent three months earlier that year on a medical missions trip to this third world country, and wanted to continue to help the Togolese people. So, in a few short weeks, she applied for a visa, shelled out around \$2000 for plane tickets, and gave up Christmas with her family to volunteer as a nurse in Togo. That's 'sacrifice'.

Thinking about that pulls me out of the normal December holiday stupor. It yanks me away from wondering if

somehow a new guitar really could fit in that box under the tree. It makes me realize that we in America rarely 'sacrifice' for much of anything. My sister-in-law wasn't rich. She was only a couple of years out of college and that trip cost her most of what she had - but she came back thankful. Because, in Togo, there are kids in orphanages who run around in their underwear most of the time - because they have one set of clothes and they save them to go to school in! In Togo, there are people who don't have the medical treatment options and facilities we take for granted. She was willing to sacrifice, because she saw the need.

Philippians tells us that 'although Christ existed in the form of God... He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of man'. This idea of sacrifice is at the heart of Christmas. Jesus sacrificed what He had as God to come to earth as Man, and then to sacrifice again on the cross to offer forgiveness for our sins. In the midst of the Christmas blitz that has been in full-swing since Halloween, we need to remember that true Christmas spirit looks less like the marketing all around us, and much more like my sister-in-law. What will you do this year to truly celebrate Christmas?

### VETERAN NEWS FLASH

Disabled American Veterans needs drivers to take veterans from Yuma to the Tucson Veterans Hospital and back. If interested, call the VA Tucson Volunteer Services, at 520-629-1822, Monday through Friday.

### CHRISTMAS TRUCE OF 1914 PRESENTATION

YPG historian Bill Heidner will present information about the "Christmas Truce of 1914" that saw troops on both sides informally lay aside their arms to celebrate the holiday between the opposing lines of trenches.

The presentation will be at the Yuma County Main Library on December 8th between 4 and 5 p.m. The presentation is free. An exhibit at the library that day will highlight the great American economic depression of the 1930's and the influence of New Deal programs on modern America.

# Welcome To The Neighborhood!



**MESA DEL SOL** - 4 Bedroom, 3 Bath pool home with finished basement. Outstanding features include Saltillo tile, large rooms and a great view overlooking the pond on the 3rd Fairway. \$449,900. MLS# 94727.

**MESA DEL SOL** - 3 Bedroom, 2 bath home with remodeled gourmet kitchen. You must see to believe! Desert landscaping, granite kitchen countertops, covered patio and split floor plan. Short sale - \$199,900. MLS# 94462



**FOOTHILLS** - 3 Bedroom - 2 Bath home with RV parking and hook-up. Large open living area with vaulted ceilings, split floor plan, bay window in dining area, ceramic tile flooring in living area and large covered patio. \$232,500. MLS# 93483.



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# TROPIC

FROM PAGE 7

to build the canal in the 1880's.

Interested in motorcycle racing from an early age, a teenaged Dixon planned on becoming a mechanic, but couldn't forget a longstanding dream of being a Soldier.

"When I was young, we used to see American Soldiers doing maneuvers on the west side of the canal," he said. "I told myself, 'I want to do that when I grow up.'"

In 1974, Dixon flew to New York for the sole purpose of enlisting in the armed forces. Despite his childhood fascination with the Army, he intended to enlist in the Air Force as an aircraft mechanic.

"I took their test and passed it, but there was no opening in their school," he recalled. "They said they would call me in a few weeks, but I didn't intend to stay alone in New York City for that long."

Instead, he enlisted in the Army and was sent to Louisiana's Fort Polk for basic training. His subsequent career sent him to a variety of posts in the

United States, Panama, Korea, and Germany. He served as a bilingual instructor in infantry and ranger tactics at the School of the Americas when it was located in Panama. After this, he was assigned to an aviation squadron, then an emergency operations center, and finally to the corps of engineers, where he ultimately became a deputy chief. Though he longed to return to the infantry, Dixon believes this wide variety of occupational specialties prepared him for the multipurpose nature of assignments at TRTC.

He retired from the Army as a Sgt. 1st Class in 1994. For the next nine years he guarded the Panama Canal as both a naval police officer and private security guard. He helped guard the canal on and after September 11, 2011, when the canal was presumed to be a major target for terrorist attack. His service didn't go unrecognized: Perceptive visitors to the Panama Canal Museum at the Miraflores Locks will see among the interpretive displays a vintage photo of Dixon radioing in a call from outside a patrol jeep as a Panamanian

police officer looks on.

"I'm a living legend," Dixon said with a smile. "Normally they won't put your picture anywhere until you're dead."

When he heard about a job opening at TRTC from a friend in 2003, Dixon was already familiar with the organization.

"I was a guinea pig for TRTC when in uniform years ago," Dixon said with a laugh. "When they introduced a new bulletproof vest, we had to put that thing on with all our gear and run through the jungle. That, in itself, showed me the value of tropic testing."

Among other things, he participated in TRTC's first vehicle test in Suriname in 2008, serving as the site's security officer. His position has also taken him to Honduras, Hawaii and Yuma Proving Ground.

In his spare time he continues to race motorcycles, but has no intention of leaving the test center.

"I appreciate working for TRTC," he said. "I'm able to give my input to the military to help them purchase good equipment to keep troops safe."



PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER

Federico Dixon poses for a photo at the Army's Tropic Regions Test Center in Panama, his native land. He wears, he is knowledgeable of the tropical environment, and the region's culture and traditions. In addition, Dixon is fluent in three languages, English, Spanish and Jamaican.

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## The financial readiness program for Soldiers and families

By **Connie Everly**

Personal Financial Readiness Specialist

The accreditation process is an important one, for it assures Soldiers and Families that they are receiving the same high level and quality of products and services – education, counseling and training – as available in the civilian world. Army Community Service (ACS) has been accredited several times, from March of 2006 to the present. ACS will be going through the accreditation cycle again in February 2012.

The ACS financial readiness program provides prevention education, counseling and training.

Training may be conducted in a one-on-one or group setting. Authorized users include Soldiers, Family members, Department of Army civilians and anyone who lives and or works on the installation, including government contractors.

Under the umbrella of the financial readiness program, a personal financial readiness specialist provides mandatory training including but not limited to: Financial Readiness for First Term Soldiers (E-1 through E-4); Initial Permanent Change of Station (PCS) E-4 and below. If you have specific areas of interest for training, don't hesitate to let ACS know.

A command referral occurs when

the chain-of-command refers a Soldier for mandatory financial counseling. It is better if the Soldier seeks assistance before hitting critical mass with their finances. When the chain-of-command gives a Soldier a command referral, the financial readiness program manager must provide updates on the progress or lack of progress of the Soldier, although the specific details of the Soldier's personal financial information is kept confidential.

Family Subsistence Supplemental Assistance Program (FSSA) screenings may provide additional funds to families, but requirements are very stringent. The program

see **FINANCE** page 11



## Mrs Claus is ready for story time!

Children get ready for the 2nd annual Mrs Claus and her Elf's "Story Hour." The event will take place on Thursday, December 8th starting at 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Post Library, Palm Garden Center, Bldg. 530. Last year, the children enjoyed "story time" so much that this year, Mrs. Claus will make it extra special in appreciation for their interests and support. Plans are to have only one "story hour" in the morning, but if there is interest for more, Mrs. Claus will hold one in the afternoon. Parents can call Carol Cowperthwaite at 328-2558 if more information is needed.

PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER



## FINANCE

FROM PAGE 10

provides referrals for: Women, Infants and Children (WIC), food stamps, the Yuma Community Food Bank, and many other community resources as needed and/or appropriate.

Soldiers and Family members may also receive assistance with prevention education i.e., banking & credit union services; budget development & record keeping; credit use & abuse; consumer rights and obligations, and much more. Consumer advocacy services provide Soldiers and Families information in order to make educated decisions regarding their finances. One-on-one or group training is available.

Another type of emergency assistance is Army Emergency Relief (AER). Eligibility is comprised of active duty Soldiers, single or married, and their Family members; Army National Guard and Army

Reserve Soldiers on continuous active duty for more than 30 days and their Family members; Soldiers retired from active duty for longevity or physical disability, and their Family members; Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers who retired at age 60, and their Family members; surviving spouses and orphans of Soldiers who died while on active duty or after they retired.

Examples of typical requests for AER assistance include food, rent, utilities; emergency transportation and vehicle repair; funeral expenses; medical/dental expenses and much more.

Should you need AER assistance, bring your military ID card; leave and earnings statement; leave/PCS Orders; substantiating documents such as car repair estimate, rental agreement, utility bill, etc. If a spouse is seeks assistance, they need to bring a power of attorney, military ID card and substantiating documents.

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### About Dr. Aiello



**Patrick D. Aiello, MD**

Dr. Aiello received his MD degree from the University of Michigan. After completing both an Internship and Residency in Internal Medicine at the University of North Carolina, he finished a Residency in Ophthalmology at the world renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Ophthalmology.

In addition to caring for his patients at the Aiello Eye Institute, he is an examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology, and a clinical instructor for the Midwestern School of Osteopathic Medicine in Phoenix. He is a Senior Flight Surgeon and State Air Surgeon for the Arizona National Guard.

Having performed more than 15,000 surgeries, he is regarded as one of the state's leading eye surgeons.

### Aiello Eye Institute

Dr. Aiello organized the Aiello Eye Institute in Yuma in order to provide world-class eye care to the community. With a highly trained staff and associates utilizing only the latest technology and equipment, the Aiello Eye Institute provides the areas most comprehensive and patient-centered vision healthcare.

The Aiello Eye Institute has two offices to serve your needs:

- 275 W. 28th Street – Yuma
- 11551 S. Fortuna Rd. Ste E - Foothills



For additional information or to schedule an appointment call:

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