

The Outpost

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

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New commander to lead U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground into future

By Mark Schauer

Col. Charles Seaberry assumed command of U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) from Col. Johnathon Nelson on June 11, accepting the guidon from Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon, Commanding General of Army Test and Evaluation Command.

The son of Non-Commissioned Officers, Seaberry pledged to continue YPG's reputation for excellence at the forefront of Army transformation efforts.

"My command philosophy will be to rely hugely and heavily on the workforce," he said. "I give minimal direction. I like that what I see of the workforce that surrounds me is

SEE **COMMANDER** page 6



New U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. Charles Seaberry (left) accepts the guidon from Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon (right), Army Test and Evaluation Command Commanding General, at the change of command ceremony on Cox Field on June 11. The son of Non-Commissioned Officers, Seaberry pledged to continue YPG's reputation for excellence at the forefront of Army transformation efforts. (Photo by Mark Schauer)

Airborne Test Force
Soldiers train for
freefall jumps
/ Page 2



YPG housing director wears
many hats: career woman,
military spouse and cheer coach
/ Page 4



YPG celebrates
Army's 251st
Birthday
/ Page 11



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Airborne Test Force Soldiers train for freefall jumps

By Ana Henderson

Soldiers with Yuma Test Center's elite Airborne Test Force (ATF) are continually mastering their jumping

skills. Recently the Soldiers took to the skies over Eloy, Ariz. to train.

At the facility, the Soldiers focus strictly on skydiving, often referred

to as freefall, versus static-line jumps, where they are tethered to the aircraft.

"It fine-tunes us," says ATF Master Sgt. Donald Bullock of the training.

ATF Test Parachutist Program Manager Joe Castillo creates training programs for the Soldiers to keep building on their experience.

Bullock explains, "Once jumpers have enough jumps, at least 400 plus,

and they have already gone through all the steps Joe [Castillo] has come up with, they can transition into a non-standard parachute which is a non-military parachute. It's a regular skydiving parachute."

In Eloy, the jumpers are able to get more consecutive jumps per day.

"Each day it's about five to six jumps depending on the weather," says Bullock.



The Outpost

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Soldiers with Yuma Test Center's Airborne Test Force recently took to the skies over Eloy, Ariz. to train at Skydive Arizona. At the facility, the jumpers are able to get more consecutive jumps per day. (Photos by Master Sgt. Donald Bullock)

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MAG-13 and Military Freefall Instructors Conduct Search and Rescue Training



U.S. Marine Corps Master Sgt. Malachi Even, a chief instructor with Marine Corps Detachment U.S. Military Freefall School Training Command Yuma Proving Ground descends with a deployed parachute during a search and rescue training on May 5, 2026. Marines, Soldiers, and the Yuma Sheriff County Office worked together to develop their personnel recovery skills and improve interoperability between branches. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Sarah E. Foster)

YPG volunteers recognized for their contributions



Soldiers and civilians who selflessly gave their time as volunteers around post were recognized for their contributions. Army Community Services held a volunteer recognition ceremony on June 10 at the Palm Garden to thank the volunteers for their service at various locations across YPG including Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, Army Community Services, Environmental Sciences, public affairs, and the post library. Between all the volunteers on post, they contributed over 1,200 hours with Troy Balke leading the group with more than 500 volunteer hours. (Photos by Christopher Reitman)



YPG housing director wears many hats: career woman, military spouse and cheer coach

By Ana Henderson

Christie Shew is many times the first person people moving to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground meet. She's the Community Director for Desert Oasis Housing and has the pleasure of welcoming families to their new home on post.

"We call each other by first name basis by the time they walk in the door," she recalls.

Her role as a military spouse also helps her, help others.

"I am able to answer all their questions to make them feel a little bit more comfortable about the transition of coming to YPG."

Desert Oasis Housing is privatized housing on post at YPG. Several times in the last few years it has ranked high on the Tenant Satisfaction and Opinion Survey.

Shew said, "We have been in the



Christie Shew moved to Yuma Proving Ground nine years ago when her husband, Sergeant 1st Class Cody Shew a Soldier with the Airborne Test Force, was stationed at Yuma Test Center. (Photo by Ana Henderson)

top 10 out of 48 installations, so that has been a big plus. We are such a tight knit community, so it makes everyone feel welcome and at home."

Shew has worked in the housing office for several years but at one time she was the family moving to YPG. Her husband Sergeant 1st Class Cody Shew is a Soldier with the Airborne Test Force and has served for 17 years in the U.S. Army. They have now been at YPG for nine years but before that had lived in several larger military communities.

"Moving as a military family... it was tough, especially having smaller children," she recalls.

"I think moving to a smaller community like YPG made the transition, even to the remote desert area, a very easy one for our family. At the bigger ones it's so much tougher. It's hard to make friends, where actually

at YPG you feel like family."

In addition to a career, a life as a military spouse and a mother, Shew is the assistant cheerleading coach at Gila Ridge High School. Her involvement in cheer started when her daughter was in sixth grade and continued as she made her way through high school. Shew was involved in the booster club and became president. Then the coaching opportunity came about so Shew earned her coaching certificate and began coaching.

"It's been an amazing experience."

While her daughter no longer attends Gila Ridge High School, Shew still feels like the team mom.

"Your cheerleaders also feel like your children because you become so close to them and they come to you just like one of your children would."



In addition to a career, a life as a military spouse and a mother, Christie Shew (left, back row) is the assistant cheerleading coach at Gila Ridge High School. Her involvement in cheer started when her daughter was in sixth grade. When the coaching opportunity came about Shew earned her coaching certificate and began coaching. (Loaned photo)



Christie Shew is the Community Director and is many times the first-person people moving to U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground meet. Desert Oasis Housing is privatized housing on post at YPG. Several times in the last few years it has ranked in the top 10 on the Tenant Satisfaction and Opinion Survey. Shew (far right) is pictured with the housing team. (Loaned photo)

COL Nelson and family receive a farewell luncheon



Former Yuma Proving Ground Commander Col. John Nelson relinquished command of YPG on June 11 to Col. Charles Seaberry. During a luncheon on June 4, the YPG workforce provided him and his family with a proper sendoff. Many spoke of Nelson's unwavering and impactful leadership during these last three years at YPG. He and his wife Gina received meaningful parting gifts as they make their move to another command within the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command. (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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New U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) Commander Col. Charles Seaberry speaks at the change of command ceremony at YPG's Cox Field on June 11. "It is an extreme honor and a privilege to stand here amongst the Soldiers, civilians, and teammates whose dedication and commitment make YPG what it is," he said. "Together we will deliver for the Army, the joint force, and specifically for the Soldiers who depend on us to get it right."



Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon, Commanding General of the Army Test and Evaluation Command, speaks at the post's change of command ceremony. "I can't say how much I appreciate this talented and dedicated team," he said of YPG. "There is unmatched talent and professionalism in the culture here."

COMMANDER

FROM PAGE 1

people who come in motivated and bringing innovation."

Prior to his recent tenure as Director of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's

Forward Element-Atlantic, Seaberry served as Product Manager for the Common Synthetic Environment. Commissioned in 2001, he joined the Army Acquisition Corps in 2007. YPG was his top choice for command prior to being selected, and he is already impressed by the post's vast institutional knowledge.

"The longevity in these positions strikes me," he said. "15 years plus is probably the mean value of the tenure of people talking to me about how long they have been part of the YPG mission."

During his command, Seaberry wants to ensure that YPG's culture for safety and excellence is sus-

tained. He also stressed he wants the installation to continue its over 80 years of outstanding rapport with the local Yuma community.

"The warm gestures and respect given to the military community here are extremely impressive," he said. "It's about not taking for granted what the service members do to pro-



Outgoing Commander Col. John Nelson speaks at the change of command ceremony. Nelson's next assignment is as Commander of U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range. (Photos by Mark Schauer)



Members of YPG's elite Airborne Test Force perform a jump onto Cox Field at the beginning of the change of command ceremony.



YPG Commander Col. Charles Seaberry talks with media representatives from KYMA, KTVK, and KAWC prior to the ceremony. "The main feeling I have is excitement: ready to get started and do what the mission calls on me to do," he said. "What we do here is extremely important and I found that the workforce here is all in."

protect our nation, and I'm thoroughly impressed by it."

In recent years, YPG has achieved an unprecedented prominence within the Department of War and ambitious Army transformation efforts will continue apace for the foreseeable future. Seaberry is eager to promote all that YPG has to offer the Army

and Department of War.

"The folks who know what we do here utilize it to verify and validate their capability to put it in the hands of Soldiers. I want to keep those relationships strong, but I want to reach out and touch the folks who don't know about us, in industry, in academia, and in commercial industry."



Hundreds of visitors packed YPG's Cox Field to join new YPG Commander Col. Charles Seaberry. "The warm gestures and respect given to the military community here are extremely impressive," he said.

YTC Commander recognizes employees for their years of service

10 Years



Erik Hurtado and Cesar Ramirez

15 Years



Marco Nixen and Rob Fillinger (Photos by Ana Henderson)



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YPG and YTC Commanders recognized workforce's accomplishments

Yuma Proving Ground and Yuma Test Center leadership along with members of the workforce gathered on June 3 to recognize the excellent work of the following employees. (Photos by Ana Henderson)

YPG Staff Employee of the 2nd Quarter Civilian Service Achievement Medal



Durred Francher

Airborne Test Force's Water Jump



Sgt. First Class Cody Lavalla received an Army Commendation Medal and Joe Castillo received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal.

Civil Service Achievement Medal



Lori Ittner received a Civilian Service Achievement Medal and Special Act award.

Big Test Week



Martin Gilbert, Thomas Hall, Christopher Jordan received a Civilian Service Achievement Medal while Edgar Hurtado received a Civilian Service Commendation Medal.

Years of Service



Ramon Noriega with 20 years of service and Robert Decorse and Craig Magdaleno with 5 years of service.

Concept Focused Warfighting Experiment 2026 Civilian Service Achievement Medal:



David Acevedo

Flight Services earns safety award



Scott Myers, Justin Crutch, and Robert Tackett received an Army Accident Prevention Award of Accomplishment in Safety from the Army Test and Evaluation Commander Maj. Gen. Patrick Gaydon.

Wellness Challenge

Top 3 in Transformation Challenge

- 1st: Eddy Patchet – 12.3% change
- 2nd: Austin Rudolph – 9.1% change
- 3rd: Grace Conner - 8.5% change

Top 3 Teams in the Step/Cycle Challenge

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- 3rd: Hey, I'm walking here!
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Program Overview

Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) is the official Army program designed to provide long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers. This is a program, conceived of and developed by survivors, that is continually refined based on survivor feedback and involvement by Army senior leaders. Army National Guard, US Army Reserve and active component Families are served by SOS staff located across the country. Regardless of the Survivor's loved one's Army component, duty status, location or manner of death, SOS staff provide outreach and support. Services are portable and, where available, may be provided at an Army location (including joint installations, National Guard installations or State headquarters and Army Reserve centers) closest to the survivor's current residence.

The casualty assistance officer (CAO) works with the Casualty Assistance Center (CAC) to identify the SOS coordinator who supports the AOR in which the survivor lives. The Army has a network of SOS coordinators at locations across the country. View the list at www.armyresilience.army.mil/survivor-outreach-services/pages/survivor-outreach-coordinators.html.

More information and Resources

Services

The SOS program offers survivors long-term case management through a menu of services to support their needs. The critical services are milestone management, annual outreach and referral. The goal is to educate survivors on available resources, assist them with concerns with military benefits and help them maintain a connection to the Army. The services offered are based on the individual survivor's needs and eligibility. The SOS program may provide the following services to eligible survivors which include but are not limited to:

- Milestone management such as changes in benefits, entitlements, financial stability and recertification of enrollment of children in full-time education.
- Liaison to DOD agencies and benefit coordinators, such as the Defense Health Agency, Veterans Affairs, and Defense Finance Accounting Service.
- Liaison with nongovernmental organizations such as Tragedy Assistance for Survivors, Gold Star Wives/ Mothers/Fathers and others.

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U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground celebrates Army's 251st Birthday

By Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) celebrated the Army's 251st birthday on June 10 with an early morning walk-run event followed by a ceremony where the post's oldest and youngest Soldiers engaged in the traditional Army Birthday cake-cut-

ting.

For more than a quarter of a millennium, the United States Army has courageously fought our country's wars and served honorably in peace. Thanks to American Soldiers, freedom's light shines as a beacon throughout the world.

"We owe a great deal to those who served before us," said then YPG Commander Col. John Nelson in remarks at the ceremony. "Our veterans and retirees helped shape the victories we defend today. Every day is a good day to thank a veteran for their service, but the Army Birthday

is a particularly special one."

Nelson's remarks also noted the sacrifice of the nation's Soldiers throughout history, the unfailing faith of their families back home, and the service of Army civilians at posts like YPG who provide vital support to active-duty personnel.



U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) celebrated the Army's 251st birthday on June 10 with an early morning walk-run event followed by a ceremony where the post's oldest and youngest Soldiers engaged in the traditional Army Birthday cake-cutting. (Photos by Mark Schauer)

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