

THE OUTPOST

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New visitor center coming soon

By Mark Schauer

A popular public YPG attraction is temporarily off-limits to facilitate an important new construction project and protect historically significant adjacent land from the ravages of construction equipment and vehicles.

The Wahner Brooks Display Area will be closed for several months while a new 1,320 square foot visitor center is erected behind the existing exhibit. A response to a recent regulation change that requires military visitor centers to be located outside post boundaries, the construction project will employ between 80 and 100 people and be built with cost efficiencies in mind.

Though passersby will miss the opportunity to get up close and personal with historic military platforms like the M43 Sherman tank and Sergeant York 40 millimeter Anti-Aircraft Weapons System for the duration of the construction, planners feel the completed project will be worth the temporary inconvenience.

“We looked at a number of locations around YPG to locate this, and this was really the best spot,” said Mark Hanley, Engineering, Plans, and Services Division chief. “This is going to relieve a great deal of frustration for visitors. They can sit comfortably while the process is worked instead of waiting in line in their vehicle at an entrance gate.”

Locating the center behind the interpretive display will also save construction costs by utilizing the existing gravel parking lot. However, two handicapped parking spaces will be paved, and a 300 foot-long concrete sidewalk leading to the center’s front door will be constructed.

“Anyone who is handicapped will have

accessibility,” said Ernesto Elias, Army Corps of Engineers project supervisor.

Though the interpretive display will be closed to the public for the duration of the construction, planners are making efforts to minimize disruption to traffic along the well-travelled Imperial Dam Road, most notably by boring beneath the road rather than trenching through it to accommodate power and sewer connections. They are also actively restricting access to the adjacent land that once was home to the World War II-era Camp Laguna.

“Many who have heard of or read about Camp Laguna as a historic property don’t really understand that nothing was permanent,” said K.D. Tyree, archaeologist. “The only permanent things we have found are concrete pads for a kitchen area and a few latrines. In doing archaeological surveys we have located broken cans, Coke bottles, various walkways and unit insignia.”

An archaeologist will be on site throughout construction to ensure that historic areas are not disturbed.

“There is a possibility that something could be found, but not a high probability,” said Tyree. “The difficulty we have is to distinguish between more recent historic artifacts versus true Camp Laguna objects.”

Camp Laguna will be resurrected in a sense, however, with an interpretive wall display planned for the interior of the new center. The display will be curated by Heritage Center director Bill Heidner and Tyree.

“I think it is a great use of wall space,” said Tyree. “The team effort that has gone into this is outstanding.”

Construction planners aim to complete the new structure by summer.

“I think what is truly amazing about this project is that everyone got what they want,” said Hanley. “Everybody involved with the construction is happy, and we were able to get it done under the statutory dollar limit. This is really a win-win.”



(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

Construction crews dig trenches to prepare for plumbing that will be laid at the new Yuma Proving Ground Visitor Center which will be built behind the existing Wahner Brooks Display Area exhibit.

Civilian tester of the year drawn to YPG /Page 3



Petroleum analysis facility upgraded /Page 4



ATEC Commander says YPG integral to Army success /Page 6



Love of reading attracted Heather Goyette to career in libraries

By Yolie Canales

Ever since Heather Goyette, YPG Librarian, was a child, she was fascinated by books. "I have been an avid reader all my life and found reading fascinating and adventurous," said Goyette, who has been at YPG since July 2013. She said she loved reading so much that while in high school, she took a job at the library where she had ample time to read during breaks.

While in college, she was a history major which kept her in the library doing research. "The more time I spent in the library, the more I liked it and decided to pursue a Bachelor's in Library Science and then went back to receive my Masters," she said.

A native of Chicago, Ill., Goyette comes to YPG from West Point in New York, where she served as cataloging librarian. "Coming to work for a library of this size at YPG is refreshing. It's smaller and my duties are more in the administrative and budgeting fields," said Goyette. "YPG is a unique place. I get to work with a variety of patrons and

their requests are as unique as the proving ground. Each day, there is something new and different."

Goyette said that at the Military Academy at West Point she dealt primarily with cadets and faculty. The building was a six story facility with a library volume of 50,000, which kept her extremely busy.

"It was an interesting opportunity but I like the variety of a smaller library. Here at YPG, I get to have more hands-on time in every aspect of the library---from administrative to crafts and other programs," she said.

As with many jobs, there are challenges along the way. Goyette says the biggest challenge she faces at YPG are the low number of patrons and acclimating to the difference between an academic library and a community library. "Here, you've got a broader community and trying to figure out their needs is a bit more difficult compared to West Point where I dealt mostly with cadets," said Goyette.

Goyette's goal is to get the word out to the community that the library is open to all residents of YPG, active and retired military personnel, and

members of the workforce to include contractors as well. "If anyone out there needs something special from our library, just let us know and we will do everything we can to accommodate your requests," said Goyette. "I also want everyone to know that we have 10 computers that are available for use by patrons; we have electronic books available that can be obtained online through AKO or through the library's website. Come by and visit us."

Goyette said that besides reading, she enjoys traveling abroad. "I've been to two Winter Olympics and had the best time ever." She said that meeting and talking to patrons from so many walks of life has been a rewarding experience. "I enjoy people and when I can help them with their inquiries, it brings great satisfaction to me."

Hours of operation for the library are as follows: Tuesday thru Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Goyette said that the library is in need of volunteers. If anyone is interested, please call her at 328- 2558 or come by the library.

THE OUTPOST

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(PHOTO BY YOLIE CANALES)

Heather Goyette is busy preparing materials for one of many special programs the library offers to families at Yuma Proving Ground.

Civilian tester of the year drawn to YPG

By Mark Schauer

Proving ground and magnet. Yuma Proving Ground's mission of testing nearly every piece of equipment in the ground combat arsenal requires the skill of hundreds of talented engineers who hail from all parts of the country. Many rise to distinction within the test community and spend entire careers here, even if they never imagined working and living in one of the world's most extreme desert environments.

An example is Isaac Rodriguez, who is earning plaudits for his work as team lead for the proving ground's evaluations of the Joint Lightweight Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) that will ultimately replace the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV). YPG's competition phase of testing evaluated three vehicles and involved the efforts of about 150 workers who devoted in excess of 340,000 labor hours to the tests.

"He is hard working and keeps his team informed," said Zack El-Ansari, combat automotive branch chief. "He is detail-oriented, calm, and he always focuses on providing a good, on-time product for his test customer."

The National Defense Industrial Association recognized Rodriguez and the JLTV effort when they recently named him government civilian tester of the year.

"This program was very demanding with an aggressive

schedule, and we had to deal with sequestration and budget concerns," said Rodriguez. "I have to thank all the test officers and leads. They executed very well and did a top notch job."

Rodriguez, a native of El Paso, Texas, was always mechanically minded.

"I had a lot of interest working on cars when I was younger," said Rodriguez. "My dad is a really good



(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

Combat Automotive Systems Division team lead Isaac Rodriguez was recently named Government Civilian Tester of the Year by the National Defense Industrial Association. At YPG for nearly nine years, Rodriguez plans to make the command a career. "I like the variety and learning new things and technologies."

mechanic and he always had me help him out working to maintain our cars. I really liked that."

An outreach program from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) sparked his interest in engineering. He ended up earning a

degree in mechanical engineering, but was slow to declare a major.

"I think the goal was to get started with basic classes and then hopefully figure it out," he said.

While a student at UTEP, he learned about Yuma Proving Ground at a job fair recruiting booth, and his friend Juan Cuevas, now chief of YPG's simulation branch, ended up taking a job there. Meanwhile, Rodriguez worked his

stay in his hometown until Cuevas told him of YPG's intense need for automotive test officers given the robust test schedule during the most violent insurgent days of America's involvement in Iraq.

"By this time we had purchased a house and had our first child," he said. "When I pursued it, it was really for informational purposes."

The nature of the work deeply intrigued him, though.

"I like the variety. I definitely like to see new things and experience new technologies."

After deep deliberations with his wife, he took a position offered in June 2006, relocating to Yuma. Prior to working on the JLTV program, Rodriguez tested such platforms as the all-terrain variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) and mine-clearing vehicles.

"It would be nice to be a little more hands on, but I understand our role here. I understand it is to be sure we get the right product to the warfighter and make sure we test it in a safe manner here."

These days, Rodriguez is even busier than usual as part of the proving ground's aspiring leaders program, the major facet of which is earning a Master's degree in program management from the University of Arizona. Rodriguez plans on making the command a career.

"I think I've grown a little here. I'm still learning a lot: I don't think I'll ever stop learning."



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Petroleum analysis facility upgraded

By Mark Schauer

If oil is the lifeblood of an engine, the chemists in YPG's material analysis lab are the clinicians.

Using high tech equipment, these chemists help determine if a vehicle's engine is on the road to a premature failure or troubled by other flaws.

"There's any number of metals that indicate unusual wear inside an engine," said Steve Maurer, chemist. "We use standard warning levels and flag results for the test customer."

During the worst years of the Iraqi insurgency, the combat automotive workload increased dramatically, with extensive and rapid testing of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle developed to protect American Soldiers from the destructive power of roadside bombs and other improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Today, testing of the

Joint Lightweight Tactical Vehicle, the successor to the high Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, is another high priority project.

Through it all, the material analysis lab vital to these tests has continued its mission in the same building built in the days of the Jeep. Originally designed as a vehicle maintenance building in the mid-1950s, the structure that has served as home to most of the lab's activities ever since was repurposed in an era far different from our own.

"This building evolved into a laboratory by adding a few ventilation hoods," said Maurer. "Back then, that was sufficient for a laboratory. Today, there are requirements for laboratories that this building can't meet, even with a major overhaul."

SEE **FACILITY** page 5



(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

YPG and Army Corps of Engineers officials recently joined building contractors in a ground-breaking ceremony for a new material analysis laboratory.

VIEWPOINTS

It's only February, but the warmer weather we've had lately makes a person think of summer and travel. We asked members of the workforce to share memories of their favorite vacations.



Isaac Rodriguez

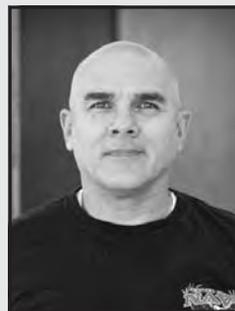
Team lead

Going to Legoland and Disneyland with my kids about a year ago. The trip really brought a smile to their faces, and we spent some good quality time together. I'm grateful we live relatively close to both places.

Wayne Schilders

Weapons operation chief

Probably visiting my wife's family in South Korea. I was stationed there when I was in uniform, but spending two or three weeks on vacation is like a whole other world. I've seen that area change a lot over the years, from rural to urbanized with 30-story apartment buildings everywhere. I think any vacation with the kids when they were young was memorable: you have to enjoy the time with them while you can.



Robert Trujillo

Ammo plant

Years ago my wife and I went to Colorado on the Harley. We did about 2,900 miles over two weeks, enjoying the ride, visiting with family, and stopping whenever we wanted to. There are lots of things to see and neat little towns you never hear of in the mountains: we found all kinds of hidden treasures.

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FROM PAGE 4

FACILITY

It was more than two decades in coming, but in recent weeks construction began on a new material analysis lab. Boasting 4400 square feet, three separate laboratories that will each have a specific function, and modern laboratory fume hoods, the new laboratory means a 21st century building will finally house the team's high tech equipment and activities.

"This new building was designed with modern chemical hygiene and ventilation guidelines in mind," said Maurer.

Meanwhile, the building that currently houses the lab will remain open as a workshop for activities that don't require ventilation. The new laboratory should be ready for occupancy by July.

"This is definitely an upgrade for us," said Larry Bracamonte, Director of Ground Combat Systems. "They've been in the same building since 1955. It's time for an update."

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Words Matter

By Chaplain Douglas (Maj.) Thomison

Good day Yuma Proving Ground. Recently many of us watched the Super Bowl. During the week that leads up to the Super Bowl a day is set aside entitled "Media Day." On that day members of the media have the opportunity to interview the respective Super Bowl teams. Numerous players are questioned, which gives them the occasion to not only answer questions, but to convey whatever they wish to millions of fans.

I watched a few of the respective interviews. Some were quite good. The players were insightful on the upcoming game, and talked of their faith and family. Other players were seemingly limited in positive speech or insight.

What struck me is this may be their one and only forum to convey something poignant to the world. In fact, several film clips of previous Media Day interviews were shown. Some were

well presented while others were not. Some former players were seemingly embarrassed of what they had said in years past. So why do some players convey insightful words and others do not? I guess you would have to ask the player himself.

You and I may never have millions of adoring fans waiting to hear what we have to say. However, what we say really does matter. Words we convey to co-workers, family and friends are lasting. The Bible tells us, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29). Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." I once had a teacher that would say to the class, "Think, and then speak." Let's do some discerning in using words worth conveying. Have a blessed day!



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ATEC commander says YPG integral to Army success

By Chuck Wullenjohn

The Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) stretches across the North American continent and incorporates installations numbering among the Army's largest. The impact of the command's mission is enormous, for it is to ensure that the weapons and munitions issued to America's Soldiers function reliably – all the time, in any weather and terrain condition, without fail. The mission workload has declined throughout the command in the years since the end of active combat

operations in Southeast Asia, but remains much higher than just 15 years ago.

ATEC's Commander, Maj. Gen. Peter Utley, spent two nights earlier this month at Yuma Proving Ground viewing current test activities and meeting people on the range. He was impressed with what he saw.

"I saw a sampling of the real power and capability this organization brings to the Army," said Utley. "YPG possesses a unique capability whose contribution to the national defense is unmatched."

Utley views all the test

centers making up ATEC as part of a larger whole. Each center has a unique capability not replicated elsewhere, such as the extreme hot weather testing performed in Yuma.

"Any one of those test centers not being capable of performing its mission would have a serious impact on the Department of Defense," he said.

As leader of the sprawling command, Utley sets time aside throughout the year to visit test centers scattered

throughout the nation.

Last visiting YPG about six months ago, during his recent visit he received update briefings on all three test centers falling under the YPG umbrella – Yuma Test Center, Cold Regions Test Center and Tropic Regions Test Center.

Determinations on test projects for him to observe downrange centered on high visibility tests but also those that highlighted the breadth of testing that takes place at YPG.

"It's important for him to have eyes on the command," said YPG Commander Col. Randy Murray. "It's one thing to read emails and see photos, and another to see it in person and meet the people doing the actual work."

One particularly important recent YPG test took place in the latter half of December 2014 when 3300 155mm artillery rounds were fired over an 11 day

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(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

Sgt. 1st Class Dawit Gebregiorgis of Airborne Test Force at Yuma Proving Ground is presented the ATEC Non-commissioned Officer of the 1st Quarter award by Maj. Gen. Peter Utley. Joining in on the presentation is ATEC Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Orosz.

FROM PAGE 6

COMMANDER

period from three cannon tubes on YPG's Kofa Firing Range. It was a short notice test project that required firing on a 24 hour basis, except for short periods of maintenance, and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Firing began with one shot exploding from the tube every three minutes – gun crews later got it down to firing every two minutes. Each round weighed 100 lbs.

“The successful completion of this test is an example of what makes the command great,” said Utley. “The workers were cool, calm professionals who executed the test safely and ahead of schedule. The results are enabling the Army to make decisions that ensure howitzers across the Army remain capable.”

YPG executed a total of 1.9 million direct labor hours in accomplishing its workload last year, which was down from the 2.4 million achieved

three years before. Other test centers have experienced similar declines. Utley sees slight growth in future years because of modernization actions to come.

“The majority of the systems deployed today will be with us in the future,” he said. “The need for them to be improved and modernized to ensure they remain relevant will continue to exist. I see YPG as integral to this effort.”

In future years, the Army must prioritize the investments it makes, explained Utley. The testing of some of obvious importance, such as unmanned aircraft, are performed today – and will be performed in the future – at Yuma Proving Ground.



Maj. Gen. Utley places the Army's Safety Excellence Streamer on the YPG Colors, which indicates YPG did very well on safety last year. Assisting are YPG Commander Col. Randy Murray (center) and Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Ward.



Iris Espinoza, Civilian Training Manager, is presented the ATEC Civilian of the Year award by Maj. Gen. Utley. Espinoza received the recognition for the leadership programs she has developed and managed for YPG that are now used at other installations.



During Maj. Utley's visit, he had the opportunity to view current test activities and meet people on the range. In this photo he is discussing the SR60 Robotic Steering System with Julio Dominguez (right) and Justin Canzonetta.

(PHOTO BY CHUCK WULLENJOHN)

The Key Concepts of Spiritual Resilience

By Paul Kilanski

Building spiritual resilience involves understanding the concepts underlying spirituality: meaning, values, transcendence and connection.

“Meaning” refers to making sense

of situations that occur in life, and from those experiences gaining a sense of purpose for living. In your life, you might witness or experience events that appear cruel, unjust or tragic. These actions could conflict with your values and seem senseless,

making the work you do seem futile. Yet, reflecting and searching for meaning in the event can help put disturbing incidents into perspective and give you a sense of purpose that can sustain you during adversity.

Meaning may be found in a number of ways. For example, you might find meaning by: Assigning responsibility for the event, interpreting the experience through your philosophical or religious beliefs or believing that something positive has come from the event. Researcher Abraham Maslow identified that people who found meaning in life were “self-actualized”. Self-actualized people seemed to be fulfilling their dreams and being the best they could be. They were able to reach their full

potential.

“Values” are cherished beliefs and standards that provide a moral compass to steer us toward right or ethical behavior. Values provide a personal belief system, such as principles to live by or an ethical path to follow. In essence, values establish the foundation for our behavior, guiding and shaping our thoughts, actions and decisions. There is a difference between a perceived value and an actual value. Perceived is how you think something is and actual is how something really is. For example, a man might say that his family is the most important thing in his life; however, he spends little time with them and most of his time at work. The man has, in fact, a

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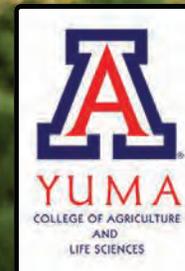
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Origins of Black History Month

Black History Month, or National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom,

also devote a month to celebrating black history.

Origins of Black History Month

The story of Black History Month begins in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. That September, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and

History (ASNLH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Known today as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the group sponsored a national Negro History week in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and

Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures.

In the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing Negro History Week. By the late 1960s, thanks in part to the Civil Rights Movement and a growing awareness of black identity, Negro History Week had evolved into Black History Month

Did you Know? The NAACP was founded on February 12, 1909, the centennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

SEE **ORIGINS** page 10



1936 A woman working in Alabama fields.

Historic Images of African American Life during the Depression: 1935-1944



1939 Men shuck corn on Uncle Henry Harrett's place in Talley Ho, N. C.



1940 A man stands in the "colored" area at a Durham, N.C. bus station.



1941 Employees of African American health insurance company work in Chicago, Ill.



1940 Migrant workers travel from Florida to New Jersey to harvest potatoes. African American were particularly devastated by the great depression when work and food were scarce.

FROM PAGE 9

ORIGINS

on many college campuses. President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Since then, every American president has designated February as Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme. The 2013 theme, At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington, marks the 150th and 50th anniversaries of two pivotal events in African-American history.

FROM PAGE 8

RESILIENCE

perceived value of his family, not an actual value of them.

“Transcendence” refers to experiences and appreciation beyond the self. This can include an awareness of and appreciation for the vastness of the universe. It may also include an awareness of, or belief in, a force greater than oneself, whether this be a creator, an infinite being or beings, or a cosmic force. One may accept the universe with its mystery, have faith in the unknown and feel like a vital component of some larger scheme.

“Connection” is an increased awareness of a connection with the self and others. Being connected

included the notion of selflessness, a love that involves working toward a greater good and a desire to help others. The quality of caring about others seems to be innate, or “wired” into our being. Even toddlers will give assistance if they perceive that someone needs help. Being connected can include: Sharing our lives; sharing our values; celebrating our symbols and ceremonies; singing, exercising, meditating or praying with others; participating in activities of mutual support and assistance.

Stacey Faris honored as Military Spouse of the Year



such as Faris have been selected to represent more than 170 bases and all nine Coast Guard districts.

“America’s military and their families have been at the ready throughout the past 13 years in which our nation was at war,” said Kate Dolack, Editor-in-Chief of the magazine. “The military spouses who maintained the home front during deployments and training missions have accomplished remarkable feats. Now, perhaps more than ever, it is important to recognize those stand out spouses and honor them for their achievements.”

Faris believes she was nominated at YPG because of her involvement in the community and her strong

desire to see military families obtain all the resources they are due.

“There’s much more to being a military wife than just being a wife,” she said. “Many spouses have gone out of their way to volunteer with the goal of filling gaps and meeting needs. Some are caregivers, others are mentors or project leaders.”

The goal, she says, is to improve the lives of all military families.

The overall winner and 2015 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year for the entire nation will be revealed at a VIP ceremony in Washington, D.C. on May 8th.

SAFETY CORNER

Spring is still more than a month away, but reptiles & other critters are already coming out of hibernation thanks to our warm winter. People working in or enjoying the outdoors need to be ready.

Rattlesnakes usually hibernate until April, but might be active before then due to the recent pleasant temperatures. You soon could be seeing critters actively scooting across your test site or gun position, or even your favorite hiking trail or golf course, so be aware & prepared.

Watch where you put your feet and your hands, wear heavy work gloves when moving material critters might be hiding under, and use a flashlight when you are outside on a warm night.

Don’t forget to set out water buckets for bees if they’re active in your area! Contact YPG Safety at ext. 2660 or Environmental Sciences at ext. 2125 for more info about desert critters, and remember that at YPG...NOBODY GETS HURT!



YUMA SHADOW RUN

Register to Run | Walk | Honor at www.PATSRUN.com.

On Saturday, April 25, 2015, over 30,000 participants, volunteers and spectators from across the country will unite at Arizona State University's Sun Devil Stadium. Together, they will Run, Walk and Honor Pat Tillman's legacy while raising important scholarship funds to support Tillman Military Scholars – military veterans and spouses – who reflect Pat's values, strength of character, and commitment to service. To date, Pat Tillman Foundation has invested over \$9 million in educational support for 290 Tillman Military Scholars at 85 academic institutions nationwide. This year, make a difference by registering to Run | Walk | Honor in our community.

SHADOW RUN DATE
Saturday, April 25, 2015

LOCATION
Ray Smucker's Park and Kofa High School
2930 S Ave A.
Yuma, AZ

7:00 A.M. Check-in/Pre Run Events

SHADOW RUN CAPTAIN
Jesus Elin
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4.2 mile run/walk
REGISTRATION &
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SHADOW RUNS:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/yuma-az-pats-run-shadow-run-registration-15148947911>

*ONLINE REGISTRATION TO BE DONE THROUGH APRIL 9. ONSITE REGISTRATION WILL BE DAY OF EVENT.

2015 SHADOW RUNS

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Saguaro's life span and uses

An adult saguaro is generally considered to be about 125 years of age. It may weigh 6 tons or more and be as tall as 50 feet. The average life span of a saguaro is probably 150 - 175 years of age. However, biologists believe that some plants may live over 200 years

The amount of life that the saguaro attracts is quite amazing. As well as the discovery of the unexpected – such as a woodpecker variety, you will even get to see hummingbirds in action as they hover over the enormous, candelabra-shaped cacti. It was many generations of hummingbird ago that this example of the saguaro first started its slow reach for the sky. Although they will sometimes reach fifteen meters in height, the saguaro does not bloom until it is around fifty years

old. The hummingbird here can be weighed in grams while the saguaro itself may weigh up to nine thousand kilograms. That's some difference.

Although the saguaro is the state flower of Arizona it can be found in Mexico as well. The name comes from a combination of Spanish and the local American Nation language of the Tohono O'odham. They traditionally harvested the red fruit of the saguaro (pronounced sah-wah-roh) – and it was an important source of food for them. So it is too with the visitors to the cactus such as this gorgeous Red-shafted Flicker – a type of woodpecker who will not find much wood in this part of the world but will, nevertheless, make itself quite at home here.



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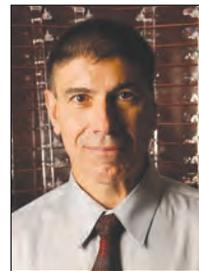
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