

THE OUTPOST

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

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Being handicapped no limitation to YPG employee

By Yolie Canales

Smiling graciously as she makes her way down the corridors of Bldg. 2100 in her medical mobility scooter, Betsy Baker, property book technician in the Directorate of Logistics, finds her job uncomplicated but busy at the same time.

“One of my main duties is to maintain the installation’s hand receipts as accurately as possible,” said Baker. “Keeping an open communication line with hand receipt holders is a must in order to keep the inventory accountable.”

Baker, who has been employed with the government for 13 years, came to YPG from a chemical depot in Oregon, where she began her career through the Student Temporary Employment Program for the Corps of Engineers. “It was good way for me to start as a civil

servant and so far, I have been very happy,” she said. She has a bachelor’s degree in administration with a minor in interior design, and enjoys working for the government, but is always willing to learn more.

Over the years, Baker has been afforded the opportunity to train in a variety of career fields. When she worked at the chemical depot in Oregon, Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities were taking place. “This was one of my most rewarding jobs,” she said. “There was so much going on and I had the great experience of seeing the many aspects of what goes into play when closing a base. We accomplished a lot in a short time.”

Although Baker must deal with physical limitations due to cerebral palsy, this does not limit her mental and learning abilities. “I’ve never allowed

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(PHOTO BY YOLIE CANALES)

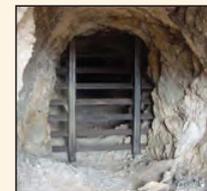
Betsy Baker, property book technician, enjoys interior design in her off time from her busy job at Logistics. Although Baker must deal with physical limitations due to cerebral palsy, this does not limit her mental and learning abilities. “I’ve never allowed my physical limitations to get in the way of learning different and challenging jobs,” she explained. “In fact, this pushes me to be more successful.”

YPG Range worker supports community by volunteering/Page 2

KTM upgrades save millions in taxpayer dollars /Page 4



“Mine” your own business. Stay out and stay safe! /Page 6



YPG range worker supports community

By Mark Schauer

Kurt Harrison has been a broadcaster and an emergency medical technician, but photography has long been his passion. These days, he applies his love of the photographic arts to both his professional and volunteer duties.

A native of Elkhart, Ind., Harrison started at YPG in November 2008 as a high speed photographer, then moved to the photo optical instrumentation stills department. He is also cross-trained to work as an artillery observer, and often finds himself spending workdays at remote YPG range locations observing the testing of artillery rounds in flight. It is meticulous and solitary work, but he is hardly a loner.

Among his community volunteer efforts is his work with one of Yuma's two chapters of Shriners International, a fraternal group best known to the public for their red fez hats, eye-catching mini cars commonly seen in parades, and,

most importantly, the organization's sponsorship of more than 20 children's hospitals across the United States. Specializing in treating severe burns, cleft palates, and musculoskeletal conditions, Shriners hospitals provide free care to thousands of needy children each year thanks to volunteer fundraising efforts.

"I was a Mason back in Indiana, and when I got out here I had more time," said Harrison. "The Shriners is a bit more fun. It's a wonderful way to give back to the community and spend time with a bunch of good people who enjoy raising money for the Shriners Hospitals."

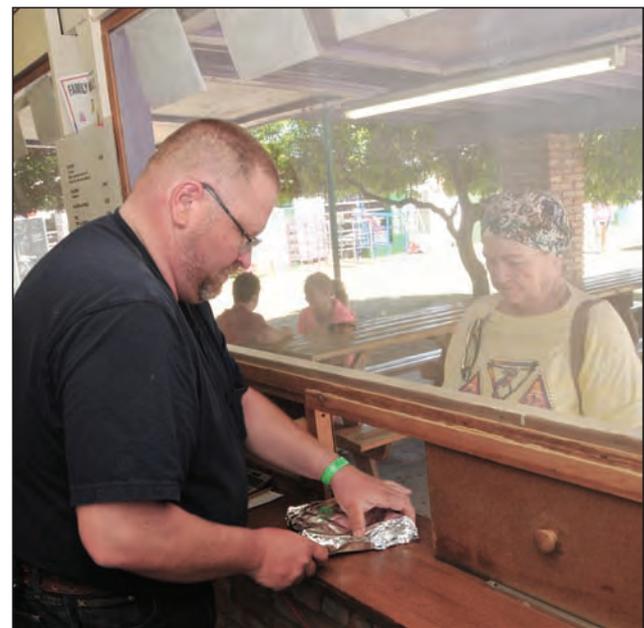
The Yuma club's biggest fundraising event is its popular food booth at the Yuma County Fair, and Harrison is happy to volunteer serving ribs, pulled pork sandwiches, and the group's specialty, baked potatoes with all the trimmings. Harrison says 90 percent of the proceeds go to the Shriners Hospital in Los Angeles by way of senior

chapter in Phoenix.

"The fair is great. For the size of the community, there is a lot of support and many different fraternities working to raise funds to support kids."

The Harrison family's participation in the fair goes beyond his duties as a Shriner: both daughters have raised rabbits as members of the 4-H club, with his younger daughter earning several ribbons this year.

The remainder of the year, Harrison assists in other fundraising activities for the group and is often seen as the group's photographer when participating in parades and other community events.



Kurt Harrison, high speed photographer at Yuma Proving Ground's Optics Division, serves a famous baked potato at the recent Yuma County Fair's Shriners fundraising food booth.

(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

UNLIMITED

PAGE 1

my physical limitations to get in the way of learning different and challenging jobs," she explained. "In fact, this pushes me to be more successful."

Sometimes, according to Baker, when people see someone with a physical handicap, they think that person maybe limited in what they can accomplish; but however, the brain of a physically handicapped person functions just like everyone else's. "It's just bodies that have limitations," she said.

Baker says that her parents raised her to be independent and to be no different than others who don't have physical limitations.

"I have to say though: my father

always encouraged me to do better and has been a great supporter. He taught me a great work ethic and has been my greatest inspiration."

Baker said she is happy here at YPG. She feels supervisors and co-workers have gone out of their way to be accommodating when it comes to her handicap.

"Everything is close by at YPG, considering it is a remote post," she said with a smile. "I really like it here."

In her spare time, Baker enjoys being a children's pastor at church and enjoys interior decorating.

"I find teaching children rewarding. I have so much fun with them and look forward to my weekends. I also enjoy working on interior designing, which I find relaxing and rewarding," she said.

THE OUTPOST

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SOCIAL SECURITY CORNER

Spanish online services begin May 5

By Wilma Carrasquillo-Facio

Cinco de Mayo is May 5 — a time to celebrate Mexican heritage and pride.

Why not join the celebration by visiting Social Security's Spanish website, where you'll find a number of useful services and a wealth of information in Spanish. Just visit www.segurosocial.gov.

Perhaps the most impressive thing you can accomplish on our website — in Spanish — is to apply for Social Security retirement benefits! You can apply quickly and easily on your personal computer. The online application takes as little as 15 minutes. Once you complete the online application and "sign" it, with the click of a mouse, your application is complete. In most cases, there are no documents to submit or additional

paperwork to fill out. Online is the easiest way to apply, and you can do it in English or Spanish.

In addition to applying for Social Security retirement benefits, you also can apply for Medicare in Spanish — in as little as 10 minutes.

If you are not ready to apply for benefits now, there are still a number of reasons to visit the Social Security website. One of the most popular is the Retirement Estimator, which provides an instant, personalized estimate of your future Social Security benefits. Using the actual wages posted in your Social Security record, the estimator will give you a good picture of what benefits you may receive.

Try it out at www.socialsecurity.gov/espanol/calculador. If you already are entitled to Medicare and are having trouble with the cost of

prescription drugs, you might qualify for Extra Help from Social Security.

The Extra Help can save you as much as \$4,000 each year on your prescription drug costs. You can learn all about it and apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp/index_sp.htm.

On the right side of the website, under Frequently Asked Questions, you'll find a red envelope. Select it to receive email updates on the latest Social Security news and information. You can get your updates in English at www.socialsecurity.gov or in Spanish at www.segurosocial.gov.

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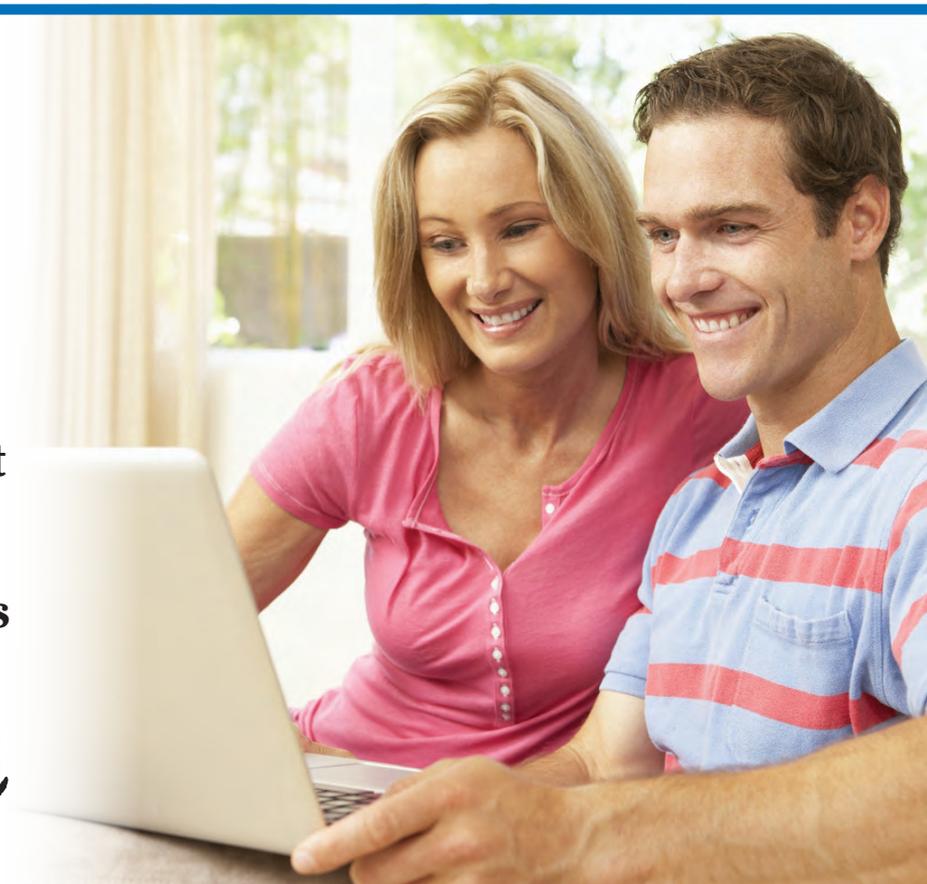
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KTM upgrades save taxpayer dollars

By Mark Schauer

You see them on YPG's vast ranges – white squat turrets adjacent to a large van.

Seated within an unshaded mount in the desert heat, operators aboard the camera-equipped turrets called Kineto Tracking Mounts (KTMs) wait for projectiles to fire from a distant howitzer or helicopter, all the while listening to radio communications, hoping that projections of the bullet's anticipated trajectory are accurate: if they aren't, his or her job of tracking a projectile flying hundreds of feet per second will be even more difficult.

The data generated by YPG's KTMs and the experts who operate them are vital to YPG's test mission.

As a matter of course, test customers have long received impressive footage of test objects in flight, be it a parachute or aircraft, or, even more impressively, a rocket, bullet, or artillery round. This dramatic footage comes thanks to the skill of operators of YPG's fleet of KTMs.

"We track it all the way out of the gun to impact," said Tyler Ware, KTM operator. "It gets fun. Before I came out here, I never would have thought it was possible to track an artillery round in flight with a camera."

"It takes incredible eye to hand coordination to see a rocket take off from a moving helicopter and keep the mount tracked on the projectile," added Paul Sears, equipment specialist. "These operators have a heck

of a skill set to be able to sit in this mount and track something like that."

With most of the KTMs serving faithfully for the better part of three decades, the Army has long sought upgrades or replacements for them. With lean budgets and a constant busy test mission, however, YPG personnel have been refurbishing the existing fleet for the last three years at a bargain price. Whereas the original estimate for the work amounted to nearly \$1 million per KTM, a different contractor was able to assist YPG personnel in their endeavor for less than one third of that price.

"We're doing work they can't accomplish by themselves in a short period of time," said Scott Schindler, program manager for BAE. "They could accomplish it, but it would take them months and months to get it done, while we can come in with a large crew and do it in two weeks."

"We ended up doing three mounts for the price of one," added Sears. "It was a huge cost savings for the taxpayer, and when they are done our KTMs will be better than new."

The end-to-end refurbishing includes outfitting the mounts with new motors, bearings, and paint jobs. More importantly, the instruments' high speed 70 millimeter film cameras are being replaced with high definition digital cameras, along with other electronic upgrades that necessitated a complete rewiring of each KTM. This was a difficult undertaking



(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

As an electrician, Tyler Ware, one of YPG's Kineto Tracking Mount (KTM) operators, has played an extensive role in the refurbishment of the proving ground's KTM fleet. The cost of the multi-year project was less than one-third of buying new mounts.

inside the cramped underbelly of the mounts, work performed by individuals like Ware, who is also an electrician, along with Dennis Winterton and Ed Blanchard. New brakes have also been installed on the mounts, with parts fabricated by YPG's Electro-Optical Maintenance Operation machine shop.

"Externally they've aged well, but they weren't pretty to start with," said Schindler. "The components we've been pulling out of them are very, very resilient. They'll stand the test of time."

YPG officials add that this resiliency wouldn't have been the case if not for YPG's conscientious effort to transport the mounts with

care and ensure the KTMs received maintenance at regular intervals.

"We've had our KTMs longer and used them longer than other ranges that are now rebuilding newer models, which are of 1990s vintage," said Heinz Johnson, Maintenance and High Speed Photo Branch Chief. "Our attitude is, 'this is your instrument, take care of it, otherwise you won't be working.'"

This is not an easy task given the rugged terrain and harsh conditions that often attracts test customers to YPG in the first place.

"It's not just the mount, it's everything," said Johnson. "We've had boards that

cracked, joints that became loose, and monitors that broke. That gives you an idea of the extent of damage that can be caused by YPG's rough terrain."

With newly installed hardware and components, the refurbished KTMs are expected to continue their vital impact on test operations well into the future.

"The KTM is the workhorse because it has so much versatility and mobility," said Chris Eliassen, Trax Optics Group Manager. "There are other tracking instruments that we operate, but, by far, it is the KTM that is used more than others."

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Stronger Wings

By Chaplain Maj. Loren Hutsell

There is a modern day parable that illustrates the way in which struggles can strengthen our lives: A man found a cocoon on a twig in his garden. He brought the cocoon in the house and placed it in a mason jar. The next day he watched as the cocoon began to slightly move. He watched more closely and soon the cocoon was trembling with activity. Yet, no wings appeared and the man wondered when the butterfly might escape. Finally, the shaking of the cocoon became so intense the man thought the butterfly would die from the struggle. He removed the lid from the jar, took a pen knife from his drawer, and carefully made a tiny slit in the side of the cocoon. Almost immediately, one wing appeared and then out stretched the other. The butterfly was free! It seemed to enjoy its freedom and walked along the edge of the mason jar and onto the edge of the mantle. But it didn't fly. At first the man thought the wings needed time to dry, but time passed and still the

butterfly did not take off. The man became worried and called his neighbor who taught high-school science. He told the neighbor of the butterfly's terrible trembling as it struggled to get out, and how he had made a small slit to help the butterfly escape. The neighbor replied, "that is why the butterfly cannot fly. You see it is the struggle in the cocoon that gives the butterfly the strength to fly."

This parable teaches us that it is often the struggles in life that strengthen us the most. We notice from the parable that the butterfly was supposed to struggle. In fact, it was the struggle that develops its ability to fly. The same is true of our lives. The way to a better future is to meet our problems head-on and persistently work through them. As Winston Churchill aptly said, "If you're going through hell, keep going." Once we get to the other side our resilience and trust in God is strengthened. Romans 12:12 tells us to "rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

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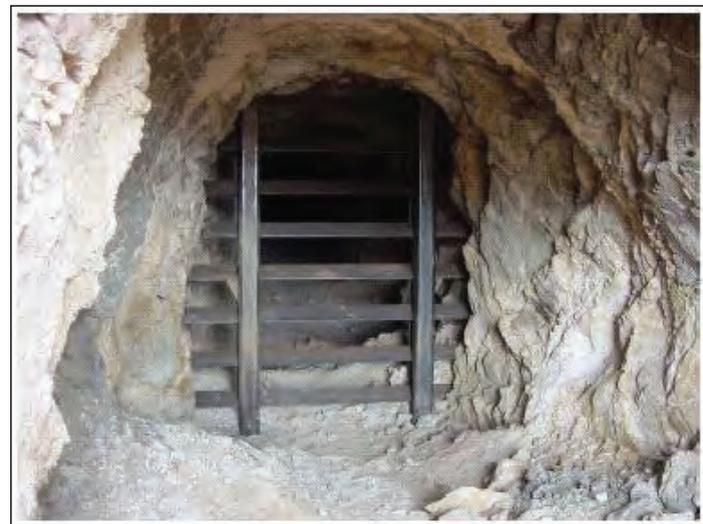


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(LOANED PHOTOS)

By eating insects and pollinating plants, healthy bats play a critical part in our ecosystem. Human-spread disease can devastate bat populations; one more reason to avoid abandoned mines. A California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*) flies out of an abandoned mine on YPG. Excavated and operated in a time before safety and environmental protective laws, abandoned mines shafts are dangerous and should be avoided. Particularly unstable mines are barred off to prevent human entrance.

Mines are their own business

Wildlife and danger abound in abandoned Arizona mines

By Daniel Steward

Arizona has a rich mining history dating back to the 1600s. Many of our early settlements were built on the miners' dream of "striking it rich."

This region hosts deposits of gold, manganese, copper, lead, and mercury; all of which were historically mined by digging underground shafts or tunnels as well as surface pits.

Miners would place claim on mineral deposits on federal land and mine until the ore (or their money) ran out.

In the early days, there were no environmental regulations mandating how a mine was to be closed, or what condition the land had to be left in. Many of these old mining operations were simply abandoned at the end of the workday or mine closure. Today, abandoned

mines are found across the southwest including Yuma Proving Ground. These sites can pose a danger to people who venture into them. Many of the mines contain valuable historic resources, mineral resources, and habitat for wildlife such as bats.

Abandoned mines can pose a significant risk to people and dozens of people are injured or killed in abandoned mines each year. Hazards in abandoned mines include falls, cave-ins, entrapment, dangerous gases, and discarded explosives or other chemicals. The ground at the edges of mine shafts sometimes becomes very unstable. The timbers or other supports that were used in the mining operation may be rotted or non-existent. Venturing too close to a mine shaft can result in falling hundreds of feet. The pathways and terrain

of underground mines are extremely unpredictable. People who enter often become lost or fall into unseen pits or shafts. Loose rock falling from the walls or ceiling can trap or crush people inside.

One of the biggest dangers of abandoned mines is the invisible threat of bad air. Air inside a mine does not circulate very well, and pockets of toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide, can

build up. Sometimes little to no oxygen can be present at the bottom of a mine shaft. Often, victims of bad air or oxygen deprivation don't realize they are in danger until it is too late. They become tired or drowsy, and eventually fall asleep never to wake up. Because of this silent killer, many rescuers have become victims as well.

Historic mining operations used a number of hazardous chemicals such as mercury

and cyanide as well as explosives. When people enter a mine, they may contaminate their clothing and other belongings with harmful chemicals. They may also encounter unstable explosives such as TNT. Over time TNT begins to break down and "sweat," leaking nitroglycerine. The slightest bump or careless foot fall can result in disaster. The activities in many of these mines are largely unknown, so there is no way of telling what chemical or explosive hazards a person entering a mine may be exposed to. Through educational programs such as "Stay Out-Stay Alive," we seek to protect people when in these areas.

Despite the dangers to humans, the still, dark recesses of abandoned mines provide excellent habitat for

YPG is home to more than 10 different species of bats. The dead bats in this photo, were killed by white-nosed syndrome in a cave in the Northeastern U.S.

(LOANED PHOTO)



SEE MINES/10

YPG civilians, Soldiers and Marine recognized during a recent ceremony

By Yolie Canales

Approximately 58 individuals were recently presented with certificates of appreciation, length of service awards, commander's coins, DA Achievement Medal for Civilian Service, Civilian of the Quarter Award, and Garrison Coin at a recognition ceremony held at the Cactus Cafe.

Col. Reed Young, YPG commander, along with Rick Martin, garrison manager and YPG Chaplain Maj. Loren Hutsell, did the honors of recognizing these individuals for their outstanding support to the mission of YPG.

Col. Young and Chaplain Hutsell opened the ceremonies by presenting the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal to Capt. Nickolas Pacella, Health Clinic Administrator, and Marine Staff Sgt. Wilfred Porras from Marine Corps Detachment, YPG, for outstanding volunteer community service to the religious services at the YPG Chapel. In addition, Kellie Pacella and Jessica Porras were presented with the Department of Army Commander's Award for Public Service.

Martin, garrison manager, presented the first Civilian of the Quarter Award to Abdollah Ebadirad from the Directorate of Public Works. He was recognized for outstanding service as the senior civil engineer in the Engineering Service Division. Ebadirad's efforts positively impacted both the garrison and the mission through unparalleled engineering achievement, ranging from roadway, parking lot and airfield pavement repair, construction and reconstruction to design and development and support for the material analysis laboratory and contractor owned contractor operated fuel sites.

In addition to the above mentioned top awards, the following awards were also presented:

Length of Service certificates ranging from 5 years to 30 years were presented to 14 dedicated YPG employees;

DA Certificates of Achievement



PHOTOS BY YOLIE CANALES/THE OUTPOST

Top photo: 58 individuals recognized at award ceremony; (left to right) Kellie Pacella and husband, Capt. Nicholas Pacella, Marine Staff Sgt. Wilfred Porras and wife, Jessica, holding their son, and YPG Chaplain Maj. Loren Hutsell. At right, YPG's Command Sgt. Maj. Keith West (far left) recognizing Soldiers for their support to the 2013 MCAS Air Show.

to Brian Hoon for organizing the installation's new storm water sampling plan to conform to the Public Law; and Deborah Campbell for efforts with coordinating and executing the annual safety and wellness expo.

YPG Certificate of Achievements were presented to Ellen Cunningham and Reggie Willoughby for their support and coordination of the design/build contract for the new Automotive Instrumentation and MRAP buildings resulting in upgrading these facilities to over 15,000 square feet of maintenance and office space.

Quarterly I.C.E. Award for Customer Service was presented to Mark Ellis;

DA Achievement Medal for Civilian Service presented to Christopher Lee for his efforts with coordinating and

executing the Annual Safety and Wellness Expo which resulted in 59 exhibitors and over 400 Soldiers, family members and civilians in attendance.

Garrison Coin presented to Johnnie Cook for his positive and friendly customer skills; and the Commander's Coin was presented to Doreen Connor and Marty Clark for their cooperation during the DAIG CYSS inspection.



Staff Sgt. Ian Dimmic, was presented with an ATEC award for outstanding Retention NCO. In addition, Sgt. Cherica Ibarra was also recognized as Distinguish Honor in the Advance Leader Course.



Customer Service Roll Call



Congratulations to the following personnel who are recognized for their great customer service at Yuma Proving Ground. YPG customers were so impressed with their service, they submitted ICE comments to tell us what a terrific job they did. If you would like to comment on our Service Providers go to <http://ice.disa.mil>

Alford Kim	Everly, Connie	Moreno, Paul
Armstrong, Jonathan	Fieldgrove, Andrew	Overstreet, Raquel
Baker, Jineane	Gordon, Joyce	Owens, Robert
Barragan, Arron	Jacobsen, Cameron	Perkins, Amanda
Castanon, Bernardo	Lee, Christopher	Robinson, Ethel
Cook, Johnnie	Lauzon, Carolyn	Saladin, Kya
Daley, Dan	Lyda, Dee Ann	Van Why, Ronald
Dayton, Rosa	Minner, Francis	White, Jordan
Ellis, Marc	Moe, Gregory	Willoughby, Reginald

2nd Quarter FY13 - Winner for Outstanding Customer Service

VA expedites decisions for long-standing claims

The Veterans Affairs Department is expediting compensation claims decisions for veterans who have waited one year or longer, VA officials announced April 19.

Effective now, VA claims raters will make provisional decisions on the oldest claims on hand, officials said, which will allow veterans to begin collecting compensation benefits more quickly, if eligible.

Veterans will be able to submit additional evidence for consideration a full year after the provisional rating, before VA issues a final decision.

Provisional decisions will be based on all evidence provided to date by the veteran or obtained on their behalf by VA. If a VA medical examination is needed to decide the claim, it will be ordered and expedited.

If any increase is determined to be

warranted based on the additional evidence received, benefits will be retroactive to the date the claim was initially filed. The initiative protects the veteran's right to appeal the decision.

If no further evidence is received within that year, VA's Veterans Benefits Administration will inform the veteran that the rating is final and will provide information on the standard appeals process.

As a result of this initiative, metrics used to track benefits claims will experience significant fluctuations, officials said. The focus on processing the oldest claims will cause the overall measure of the average length of time to complete a claim -- currently 286 days -- to skew, rising significantly in the near term because of the number of old claims that will be completed, they explained.

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Army Post-9/11 GI Bill transfer policy to take effect Aug. 1

Beginning Aug. 1, 2013, every Soldier who elects to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a family member will incur an additional four years in the Army, without regard to their time in service.

"This policy was drafted in 2009 and takes effect Aug. 1, 2013. It is important that we inform Soldiers of this existing policy regarding the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits," said Lt. Col. Mark Viney, chief of the Enlisted Professional Development Branch, Army G-1.

That news came in a message to military personnel, dated April 15, 2013.

The rule largely affects senior officers and enlisted Soldiers who are retirement-eligible. As of now, these Soldiers may be able to transfer benefits to their loved ones with

anywhere from zero to three years of additional service.

Soldiers who are not retirement eligible, electing to transfer their GI Bill benefits to a family member means re-upping for an additional four years.

Come Aug. 1, that rule will apply to all Soldiers, whether they are retirement-eligible or not.

"The Post-9/11 GI Bill. Soldiers are entitled to the benefit for their own use, but to transfer to dependents: that is used as a recruiting and retention tool," said Lt. Col. Mark Viney, chief of the Enlisted Professional Development Branch, Army G-1.

Viney also serves as the policy proponent for the Army's Post-9/11 GI Bill Transfer of Education Benefits Program.

"We want Soldiers to be informed of the impact of this policy," Viney said.

"This is going to impact their decisions and their families, and whether or not they are going to have this money available to fund their dependent's education."

Veterans Affairs, or VA, also has eligibility requirements for transferability. A Soldier must have six years of active duty in order to transfer his GI Bill benefits.

In some cases, if a Soldier has incurred additional time in service in order to transfer GI Bill benefits to a family member, and is afterward unable to serve that additional time in service, he or she may be required to pay back those benefits.

Viney said that as the Army draws down, some Soldiers will be involuntarily separated under force-shaping initiatives. Soldiers who are separated early under such

circumstances and who had previously transferred their Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to their dependents may retain the transferred benefits, without needing to repay them to the VA.

Soldiers who were retirement eligible after August 1, 2009 and before August 1, 2012 and who are considering transferring their benefits to their dependents should review their service obligation before doing so. All Soldiers will incur a four-year service obligation after August 1, 2013 if they transfer their benefits to their dependents.

Soldiers with questions about transferring their Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to their dependents should contact their approving official.

DOD releases update to sexual assault prevention, response policy

The Department of Defense released updated policies and procedures aimed at combating sexual assaults in the military and improving care for victims, March 28.

Senior defense officials said the updated policies and procedures provide a framework that improves safety for sexual assault victims, standardizes victim-assistance services across the force, enhances prevention efforts and provides victims added confidence to come forward to report assaults and seek treatment.

"Today's release of an updated policy directive underscores the department's commitment to combating sexual assault on every level within the military," said Army Maj. Gen. Gary S. Patton, director of DOD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, or SAPRO.

SAPRO officials said the policy changes came about through a coordinated effort among the services, the National Guard Bureau, the DOD inspector general, military healthcare providers, chaplains and the entire

DOD community to improve every aspect of the department's response to sexual assault.

"We have thousands of victims in the armed forces," Air Force Col. Alan R. Metzler, SAPRO's deputy director, said in an interview with American Forces Press Service. "We need to make sure that we prevent sexual assault from happening, and when it does, provide a response system that can care for people and hold people accountable so we can get the perpetrators out of the armed forces."

The updated policies incorporate expedited transfers for victims, establish a hotline for crisis intervention, and require additional training as well as new, uniform standards for care givers.

A goal of the new policies and procedures is to encourage sexual assault victims to have confidence in the system and to come forward and report crimes, which Metzler acknowledged are "vastly under reported."



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SAFETY CORNER

Need a safety issue resolved? Submit a SafetyGram!

During a recent safety check of a work area in one of the Yuma Test Center facilities, Richard Guyette saw something that seemed unsafe for everyone involved.

When Guyette saw that a firearms clearing barrel had been installed near an office area in the YTC area, he was concerned that it might be a hazard to personnel working in the area. He submitted a SafetyGram to the Safety Office, and Safety investigated the situation. With the addition of procedures and signage, the firearms clearing barrel has been made safe to use.

Do you know of a safety concern that needs to be addressed? Do what Guyette did, submit a SafetyGram and get results!

SafetyGrams may be submitted by going to the YPG Safety Office website on the YPG Intranet, or by filling out a SafetyGram form and either placing it in a drop box, or sending it directly to the Safety Office via interoffice mail.

The image shows a screenshot of the YPG SafetyGram website interface on the left and a physical 'YPG SAFETYGRAM' form on the right. A red circle highlights the 'YPG SafetyGrams: New Item' link on the website. Two yellow starburst callouts are present: one on the website saying 'ON THE WEB' and one on the physical form saying 'DROP BOX OR INTEROFFICE MAIL'. Below the forms, a red heading asks 'WHY SUBMIT A SAFETYGRAM?' followed by three bullet points: 'Report unsafe acts or conditions anonymously', 'Bring hazards to the attention of the Safety Office and Senior Leaders', and 'Immediate feedback from management'.

MINES

FROM PAGE 6

wildlife. When you think of caves, you automatically think of bats. There are more than 10 different species of bats that may use mine shafts or tunnels and rock crevices on YPG. Bats are a critical part of our ecosystem because they prey on insects and help to pollinate plants. Some species of bats are rare, or face threats such as loss of habitat which could someday threaten their existence. Disease is a major threat to bats. In the eastern United States, a disease called white-nosed syndrome is killing thousands of bats. This disease is spread by people venturing into caves afterwards, each bat in the colony spread it to one another until the colony is devastated. This disease has not spread into Arizona yet and it is critical that we keep it that way!

Many historic abandoned mines provide a glimpse into the past and allow historians the opportunity to see what was happening at the time. The tools, timbers and even garbage that were left behind tell us when these areas were settled and how people lived back then. Federal laws like the National Historic Preservation Act give us the responsibility to protect these areas. These laws also make it a crime to take or vandalize artifacts at these sites.

In some cases the need to protect people or a site is so great that we must close it from human access

by putting bars across the opening. These bars have openings just large enough to allow wildlife access but small enough to keep people out. Mines that do not have historic significance or provide habitat for wildlife are often plugged or filled.

Early mining efforts were poorly tracked and rarely recorded so the only way to find out what abandoned mine features are on the range is through field inventory. This is a monumental task because YPG covers more than 838,000 acres. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) is a valuable partner to YPG for inventorying abandoned mines. The AZGFD is currently locating many of these mines and surveying the bat populations that use them. The AZGFD is developing a predictive model to aid in finding mine sites and other cavern habitat through a Legacy Grant from Department of Defense. Once we know where a mine is and its relative risk and value, both biologically, and historically we can bar or close it.

Old mine sites can be a popular attraction for people exploring the desert, but these areas should only be admired from a distance. Entering abandoned mine sites endangers wildlife, historic resources, and most importantly you. So, if you are ever out in the desert and come upon a deep, dark tunnel into the earth, remember, "Stay Out-Stay Alive." For more information on abandoned mines please visit <http://abandonedmines.gov/>

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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 Retired Air Force Senior Flight Surgeon and State Air Surgeon for the Arizona National Guard with 27 years of military service.

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

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