

TITLE: Yuma Proving Grounds Collection

DATE RANGE: 1943 - 2012

CALL NUMBER: Y-MS 21

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11 boxes (10 linear feet)

PROVENANCE: Various sources

COPYRIGHT: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: This collection is unrestricted.

CREDIT LINE: Yuma Proving Grounds Collection, Y-MS 21, Arizona Historical Society-Rio Colorado Division, Yuma

PROCESSED BY: John Irwin and Benjamin Findley, 2014

HISTORICAL NOTE:

Yuma Proving Grounds is a military testing area for new technologies. It began in 1943 as the Special Bridge Test Section to assist in the development of floating bridges by testing them in the swiftly flowing Colorado River. The bridge tests were also used to train engineering troops in using the finalized bridges in the European theatre of WWII. In 1944, due to lack of man power, the testing was carried out by volunteer Italian Prisoner of War troops. Near the end of the war testing was also done on placing roads across rice paddies in preparation for invading Japan.

After the war ended it was decided to place a permanent test section, called the Yuma Test Branch, in the area with the intent of testing army equipment against desert conditions. The test section would also continue various river testing activities. However in 1949, damage to the Gila sluice basin brought a halt to the major tests in the area. Repairs were planned but were delayed for various reasons, and in October, 1949 the Yuma Test Branch was shut down.

In 1951 the Army decided to create another testing area in Yuma and created the Yuma Test Station. The station was used by a variety of different Army branches for testing including the Ordnance, Signal, Quartermaster and Chemical Divisions. In 1963 the station underwent a major reorganization and was renamed the Yuma Proving Grounds. Since then it has been a test area for many technologies in use by both the military and civilian companies, including a number of technologies used in space exploration.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

This collection is an eclectic mix of materials donated by individuals associated with the Proving Grounds, and records copied from the National Archives.

This collection is organized into nine series:

Series I – Documents: This series contains papers covering a wide range of subjects having to do with the Yuma Proving Grounds. The automotive testing folders have papers detailing information about vehicle tests as well as the test drivers. The desert Warfare board was an engineering group during World War 2 which tested equipment and technology in a desert setting. The folder of the same name contains several reports including a detailed list of some of the projects that they worked on. The quality control folder holds documents outlining testing procedures and quality control methods used on the training grounds. The Test Reports folder contains several reports as well as information about the testing areas.

Series II – General: This series contains general information about the Yuma Proving Grounds.

Series III – Historical Preservation: This series contains archeological information about areas within the Proving Grounds, as well as information about the Hackworth monument, an ornate paint storage shed built by volunteer Italian Prisoner of War troops.

Series IV – Newspaper Articles: This series contains newspaper articles concerning the Yuma Proving Grounds.

Series V – Personnel: This series contains papers concerning specific individuals that worked at the Yuma Proving Grounds.

Series VI – Photographs: This series contains photographic prints, both in black and color. The photos cover a large time frame from the first tests run by the army during WWII up to circa 1985. There are a number of photos from the Yuma Test Station, the precursor of the Yuma Proving grounds, which date from the 1950s to the early 1960s. There are also several transparencies.

Series VII – Publications: This series contains a variety of published material involving the Yuma Proving Grounds. The General folders contain meeting minutes as well as introductory materials given to new employees.

Series VIII – Videos: This series contains several videos concerning the Yuma Proving Grounds.

Series IX – Oversize: This series contains all the oversize material in this collection. The scrapbook contains newspaper clippings, as well as photos and memorabilia of employees at the Proving Grounds. The *Sidewinder* and the *Outpost* are newspapers produced by the Yuma Proving Ground. The drawings are photocopies from the National Archives mostly showing blueprints of various buildings in the Proving Grounds. They are located in the Vertical Map Cabinet in a folder labeled “Misc. Yuma Proving Ground.”

See also the Yuma Proving Ground Oral History Project, in the Oral History Collection.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1	1	Documents: Advertisements	2003, n.d.
	2	Documents: Automotive Testing	1965 – 1968
	3	Documents: Automotive Testing	1969 – 1970
	4	Documents: Desert Warfare Board	1943 – 1944, n.d.
	5	Documents: Events	1985 – 2003
	6	Documents: Maps	n.d.
	7	Documents: Quality Control	1961 – 1968, n.d.
	8	Documents: Test Reports	1961 – 1976, n.d.
	9	General	1943 – 2009, n.d.
	10	Historical Preservation: Archeology	1987 – 1992
	11	Historical Preservation: Hackworth Monument	1974 – 1975, n.d.
2	1	Newspaper Clippings	1947 – 1993
	2	Newspaper Clippings	1994 – 1998
	3	Newspaper Clippings	1999 – 2001
	4	Newspaper Clippings	2002 – 2004
	5	Newspaper Clippings	2005 – 2007
	6	Newspaper Clippings	2008 – 2012, n.d.
	7	Personnel	A-Z
	8	Photographs: Equipment Testing	1972 – 1980, n.d.
	9	Photographs: People	1944 – 1985
2a	1	Photographs: People	n.d.
	2	Photographs: Places	1968 – 1980, n.d.
	3	Photographs: Places, Fort Carson/Camp Hale	1959 – 1960, n.d.
	4	Photographs: Places, Physical Test Labs	1970
	5	Photographs: Places, Physical Test Labs	1970
	6	Photographs: Places, Physical Test Labs	1970
2b	1	Photographs: Places, Physical Test Labs	1970
	2	Photographs: Places, Physical Test Labs	1970
	3	Photographs: Places, Test Areas	n.d.
	4	Photographs: Places, Woomera, Australia	1985
	5	Photographs: Aircraft	1972 – 1982, n.d.
	6	Photographs: Aircraft, Cheyenne Helicopter	1970 – 1971
	7	Photographs: Aircraft, Cheyenne Helicopter	1971 – 1972, n.d.
	8	Photographs: Tracked Vehicles	1952 – 1953
2c	1	Photographs: Tracked Vehicles	n.d.
	2	Photographs: Tracked Vehicles, Chieftain Tank	1975
	3	Photographs: Wheeled Vehicles	1955 – 1987
	4	Photographs: Wheeled Vehicles	n.d.
	5	Photographs: Wheeled Vehicles, NASA Lunar Rover	1966, n.d.

	6	Photographs: World War II Bridge Tests	1944, n.d.
	7	Photographs: World War II Military Camps	1981
	8	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Armed Forces Day	1953, n.d.
	9	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Little Theatre Group	1953
	10	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Mine Detection	n.d.
3	1	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Mine Detection	n.d.
	2	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, People	1953 – 1958
	3	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Places	n.d.
	4	Photographs: Yuma Test Station, Testing	1947 – 1963, n.d.
	5	Photographs: Transparencies	1947, n.d.
	6	Publications: Environmental Impact	1991 – 1998
	7	Publications: General	1946 – 1990
	8	Publications: “Draft Range Wide Environmental Impact Statement”	1998
	9	Publications: Magazine Articles	1976 – 2004
	10	Publications: Telephone Directories	1961 – 1968
4	1	Videos: “South Camp Laguna Range Recon”	n.d.
	2	Videos: “Sun, Sand, & Steel Building of YPG Test Areas”	1951 – 1952
	3	Videos: “Sun, Sand, & Steel Various Testing”	n.d.
	4	Videos: “U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground Test Clips Yuma Az 85365-9102”	n.d.
5		Oversize: Scrapbook	1961 – 1971
6		Oversize: Publications, Newspaper, <i>Sidewinder</i> and <i>Outpost</i>	1997 – 2003
7		Oversize: Publications, Newspaper, <i>Outpost</i>	2004 – 2010
8	1	Oversize: Drawings, Service Club, Enlisted Men, Bld Loc. Plan & Utilities/Eng. Research Dev. Lab	1949
	2	Oversize: Drawings, Rehab-General Layout Plan (Main Post)	1951
	3	Oversize: Drawings, Airfield/Access Road & Rehab. Of Pavement	1951
	4	Oversize: Drawings, Cryptograph Room Rehab.	1951
	5	Oversize: Drawings, Tent City Area Rehab.	1951
	6	Oversize: Drawings, Industrial Area/Site Plan	1952
	7	Oversize: Drawings, Research & Development Area/Site Plan	1952
	8	Oversize: Drawings, Ordnance Acceptance Testing Facilities/plot plan & drainage plan	1952
	9	Oversize: Drawings, Constant Temperature Bldg #2, plan elevation & section	1952
	10	Oversize: Drawings, Chronograph Building	1952

		#9/plan, elevation	
	11	Upsize: Drawings, Assembly Bldg #4/plan, elev., sections	1952
	12	Upsize: Drawings, Weapons Repair Bldg #10/plan. Elev./sec.	1952
	13	Upsize: Drawings, Star Gauging & Instrument Calibration Bldg. #7/plan, elev. & sections	1952
	14	Upsize: Drawings, Electrical Distribution System, Communication & Chronograph Circuits	1952
	15	Upsize: Drawings, Ordnance Acceptance Test Facilities Water Distribution Plan & Details	1952
	16	Upsize: Drawings, Research & Development Area Site Plan	1953
	17	Upsize: Drawings, Ordnance Firing Range Area Site Plan	1953