



Rather than get angry when soldiers voice how they feel, leaders should listen to them and 'do something about it,' Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

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## SMA: 'We have to know our soldiers'

**T**he Army's efforts to put people first will continue in the new year as the service and its leaders work to "do better," the sergeant major of the Army said.

"We have to know our soldiers," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said Tuesday during The AUSA Noon Report webinar hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army. "We have to make sure we actually listen to what they're saying."

One of Grinston's key initiatives is This is My Squad, which aims to build strong, cohesive teams and encourage leaders to get to know their soldiers. The initiative is part of the Army's ongoing efforts to eliminate bias and foster inclusion throughout its ranks.

There's "no place" for extremism and racism in the Army, Grinston said, and they will not be tolerated.

Grinston also addressed the Army's suicide prevention efforts, stressing that soldiers need to be physically and mentally fit. Senior leaders, he said, are "constantly looking at policies" surrounding suicide prevention.

As part of the Army's efforts to put the right people in the right jobs and improve quality of life for soldiers and their families, leaders are reviewing permanent change-of-station moves and related policies.

While the Army has requirements to fulfill, Grinston said, the intent isn't to move people who don't need to move.

"Just because you're available to move, doesn't mean you have to move," Grinston said, adding that leaders have had discussions with Army Human Resources Command about options available to officers.

Grinston's vow to "do better" comes

after an independent review of the culture and command climate at Fort Hood, Texas, left him feeling angry and disappointed.

The review came after the murder of Spc. Vanessa Guillen, a 20-year-old member of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment at Fort Hood.

"We didn't take care of our soldiers," Grinston said, adding that he was disappointed to see standards weren't enforced. "We've gotten to the point where we didn't feel like we should enforce those standards."

Released publicly in December, the report by five civilian experts found a "deficient" command climate at the installation, including ineffective implementation of the Army's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, according to the Army.

See **Grinston**, Page 3



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## Joint Chiefs, Army leaders condemn riots at U.S. Capitol

In an extraordinary action, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have issued a statement condemning the Jan. 6 violent protest at the U.S. Capitol while reminding service members of military rules.

Describing the riot as a “direct assault” on Congress and the constitutional process, the military leaders said these were illegal acts.

“The rights of freedom of speech and assembly do not give anyone the right to resort to violence, sedition and insurrection,” they write. “As Service Members, we must embody the values and ideals of the Nation. We support and defend the Constitution. Any act to disrupt the Constitutional process is not only against our traditions, values, and oath; it is against the law.”

Senior Army leaders—Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston—issued their own message to the force, condemning the “violent riot” as an attack on Congress and “our Constitutional democracy.”

“We defend the rights of every American, and we protect the roles of our institutions of democracy,” the leaders write. “We remind all Soldiers and Civilians to uphold the Army’s apolitical standards.”

In separate guidance, Lt. Gen. Walt Piatt, director of the Army Staff, describes violence at the Capitol as “reprehensible and contrary to the tenets



‘We defend the rights of every American, and we protect the roles of our institutions of democracy,’ Army leaders wrote in a memo. (AIR NATIONAL GUARD/MASTER SGT. MATT HECHT)

of the United States Constitution.”

“The Army strongly condemns these acts of violence against our democracy and we will continue to perform our duties in accordance with our oath of office and will execute the peaceful transition of power on January 20,” Piatt writes.

Piatt’s memo reminds soldiers of the rules of conduct. Soldiers are prohibited from participating in rallies, demonstrations and vigils when in uniform, while on duty, if violence is likely or in a foreign country.

“Any type of activity that involves violence, civil disobedience or a breach of peace may be punishable under the UCMJ or under state or federal law,”

he writes, referring to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

He also reminds soldiers that they are prohibited from participating in the activities of extremist organizations.

Soldiers can vote, express personal opinions, attend peaceful nonpartisan demonstrations, contribute to political parties and display political bumper stickers on their own vehicles, Piatt writes. He also provided some guidance on social media posts.

“Soldiers should only post messages on social media that are consistent with Army Values and demonstrate dignity and respect for self and others,” Piatt writes. “Think before you type and post.”

### Grinston

From Page 1

“The challenges at Fort Hood forced us to take a critical look at our systems, our policies and ourselves,” Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said in December.

“This is not just about metrics, but about possessing the ability to show compassion for our teammates and to look out for the best interest of our soldiers,” McCarthy said. “This report, without a doubt, will cause the

Army to change our culture.”

Grinston said the biggest issues he acknowledged after reading the report was a failure to communicate the importance of cohesive teams, and the failure of small-unit leaders in understanding their soldiers.

“I don’t let soldiers harm my soldiers,” Grinston said. “That’s what it means to be in my squad. ... Maybe I didn’t communicate that enough.”

While visiting Fort Hood recently, Grinston said he received honest

feedback and “other things” to look into while checking in with soldiers.

“They were really honest, and it was hard to take it,” Grinston said.

Rather than get angry when soldiers voice how they feel, he said, leaders should listen to them and “do something about it.”

“We’re going to do better, and that’s why I was at Fort Hood, to say, ‘Hey, are we going in the right direction? What else am I missing?’” Grinston said.

## Updated 'What's Your Warrior?' campaign spotlights 12 soldiers



The campaign is designed to draw young people in by letting them immerse themselves in an Army job through the eyes of the soldiers who are living it. (U.S. ARMY GRAPHIC)

**A**dozen real soldiers in different career fields are at the heart of the newest iteration of the Army's "What's Your Warrior?" social media-centered recruiting campaign.

Launched in November 2019, the first phase of the "What's Your Warrior?" campaign was an effort to reach the Gen Z cohort and talented people who knew little of the Army and its career opportunities.

The splashy campaign featured five soldier figures with different jobs and was part of an overhaul of the Army's recruiting machine.

The second phase, launched Tuesday, is designed to draw young people in by letting them immerse themselves in an Army job through the eyes of the soldiers who are living it.

By using monikers for the soldiers' jobs rather than an MOS description, the campaign makes their diverse specialties more recognizable, much like a character in a superhero series.

For example, Sgt. Josthin Josue Servellon Hernandez, a culinary specialist and one of the 12 soldiers profiled, is "The Replenisher."

Maj. Derese Getnet, a microbiologist, is "The Virus Hunter," while Sgt. 1st Class Jean-Noel Howell, an infantryman and sniper, is "The

Chameleon."

The soldiers and their monikers have taken over the @GoArmy social media channels for a new series called "Warrior Weeks," where potential recruits can get a day-in-the-life perspective.

The series is on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook through April 2.

The first phase of the campaign was designed to appeal to Gen Z, "and we know they liked what they saw thanks to a nearly 53% spike in online interest in the first year alone," Maj. Gen. Alex Fink, chief of the Chicago-based Army Enterprise Marketing Office, said in a news release. "To continue the momentum, now we're inviting youth deeper into this world through the eyes and experiences of real soldiers."

After failing to meet its 2018 recruiting mission by 6,500 soldiers, the Army overhauled its outdated recruiting strategy by refreshing a decades-old website, increasing the number of recruiters and targeting growing population areas in cities that had not previously been the focus of recruiting.

Army marketing also shifted its spending from television ads to social media to reach the 18- to 22-year-olds on those online platforms.

# AUSAExtra

**Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier**

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## PERK OF THE WEEK

All AUSA members—regardless of military status—are eligible to use the Armed Forces Vacation Club. This allows access to thousands of resort accommodations for just \$359 per week (and that's per unit, not per person). Right now, if you can travel by March 21, you'll find many options for just \$299. Visit [www.afvclub.com](http://www.afvclub.com) and select "AUSA Member" for eligibility.





## Ham, Funk discuss leading soldiers in ‘unprecedented times’

**L**oyalty to the nation, trust between leaders and their troops, and good communication between civilian and military leaders are bedrocks of the profession of arms, senior Army leaders said.

As the nation lives through “unprecedented times” in modern history, it is important for soldiers and leaders to remember that “we are grounded in that oath to the Constitution,” retired Gen. Carter Ham, president and CEO of the Association of the U.S. Army, said Wednesday during a professional development webinar hosted by Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Ham noted that the statement issued Tuesday by the Joint Chiefs of Staff addressing the violent Jan. 6 protest at the U.S. Capitol was an important reminder for everyone in the profession of arms.

That the Joint Chiefs and senior



Retired Gen. Carter Ham. (AUSA PHOTO)

Army leaders “felt it necessary to say, ‘Hey, remember who you are as an individual professional, remember who you are as an institution, and remember where we are, what we are grounded in,’ is an important reminder in a particularly sensitive and critical time for our nation,” Ham said.

In a wide-ranging discussion on

ethical leadership, Ham and TRADOC Commander Gen. Paul Funk also emphasized the importance of trust between leaders and the people they lead, and between military leaders and the civilians who lead the military.

“You’ve got competence, candor [and] commitment and our ability to have the courage to advise to the strongest level, but once the decision is made, if it’s legal, moral and ethical, you drive it,” Funk said.

Ham said that military leaders must keep in mind that civilian leaders often arrive to senior positions of the organization with no experience.

“We know the civilians are in charge,” Ham said. “Communication between senior military and senior civilian, particularly appointees, is absolutely vital to this trust Gen. Funk talks about.”

Watch the full discussion here.



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## NCO challenge named in honor of retired CSM Thomas

By Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey,  
U.S. Army retired

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army's NCO and Soldier Programs directorate has named its chapter challenge initiative in honor of retired Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Thomas.

During his almost two-decade tenure at AUSA, Thomas worked relentlessly on behalf of soldiers and NCOs. He was instrumental in shaping the NCO and Soldier Programs directorate and instituting numerous programs and events.

The idea to name the challenge after Thomas was presented in December at the AUSA national awards committee meeting and approved by retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO.

Along with the NCO and Soldier Programs Ribbon, the chapter challenge was created in 2020 to recognize AUSA chapters for additional programming geared toward supporting, educating and developing NCOs and soldiers.

In its inaugural year, 12 chapters earned the NCO and Soldier Programs Ribbon, while three chapters earned cash prizes as part of the chapter challenge.



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Don Thomas was instrumental in shaping the NCO and Soldier Programs directorate. (AUSA PHOTO)

However, the ribbon did not count toward best overall chapter points because it was instituted mid-year.

For 2021, the ribbon will count toward the race for best overall chapter, and the chapter challenge will see its first full year of competition.

Based on the potential impact of these programs, we thought it appropriate to give the chapter challenge a namesake while honoring someone who worked tirelessly to take care of soldiers while serving and developing the NCO and Soldier Programs directorate.

Many of Thomas' accomplishments are still in place today. Before retiring from AUSA in 2016, he was key in initiating the Sgt. Maj. of the Army William G. Bainbridge Medal, which is presented every year at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition to an NCO who continues to support the Army's enlisted force after retirement.

Thomas also moved the Army's NCO and Soldier of the Year awards ceremony and recognition of the Army's top drill sergeants, recruiters and career counselors to the AUSA annual meeting, giving outstanding soldiers the recognition they deserved.

He advocated for increasing the number of NCOs serving on the AUSA board of directors and initiated the SGM Dawn Kilpatrick Memorial AUSA Scholarship and the SGM Larry Strickland Memorial Fund and Scholarship that are administered by the Army at AUSA's annual meeting.

Along with his long list of accomplishments, anyone who has worked with Thomas will remember him for his good-hearted, energetic personality. He was a consummate professional and an absolute team player.

We want to thank Thomas for his hard work and dedication to AUSA—and for laying the foundation for our team to continue supporting America's Army.

We look forward to having him join us in recognizing the winning chapters of the NCO and Soldier Programs Don Thomas Chapter Challenge Program for years to come.

For more information on the ribbon and chapter challenge, contact Victoria McAdoo, NCO and Soldier Programs' senior program coordinator, at [vmcadoo@ausa.org](mailto:vmcadoo@ausa.org).



Left to right, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Don Thomas, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Collin Younger and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer. (AUSA PHOTO)

**Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey** is AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs and was the 15th sergeant major of the Army.



## AUSA members get updates on DEVCOM, modernization

**B**ecause the future battlefield “will be contested in all domains,” the Army is preparing to equip soldiers with capabilities that will allow them to operate and win in any environment, the commander of Army Combat Capabilities Development Command said.

The command, which is also known as DEVCOM, is the “bedrock of Army modernization,” Maj. Gen. John George said during a recent virtual forum hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army’s MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen chapter.

Headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, DEVCOM consists of a variety of geographically dispersed laboratories and facilities that provide fundamental research for offensive and defensive network capabilities, chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive defense, data analysis and more, George said.

“We really do two things: science and technology and providing lifecycle engineering support to [program executive offices] at the Army’s lifecycle management centers,” he said.

DEVCOM executes about 75% of the Army’s science and technology resources and works under Army Futures Command in support of the service’s six modernization priorities and eight cross-functional teams.

“As we understand the change in the future of warfare in 2035 and beyond ... we’re going to engage in complex terrains and urban areas, it’s going to be an increasingly equal fight,” George said.

The Army must work to achieve “windows of superiority against near-peer adversaries,” with capabilities that let soldiers “maneuver, sustain and protect our forces in a lethal and disconnected environment,” he said.

This means having platforms with increased survivability, range, lethality, speed and situational awareness.



Maj. Gen. John George, left, uses special interactive goggles to view One World Terrain 3D interactive simulation data in Los Angeles, California. (U.S. ARMY/JOE LACDAN)

“From robotics to artificial intelligence, the future battlefield will also be increasingly virtual ... with the use of robotic solutions and autonomy,” George said.

Soldiers could be equipped with a sensor that operates an unmanned aerial vehicle swarm or robotic combat vehicle, connected through devices like the Integrated Visual Augmentation System that is in development now, he said.

With the rise of artificial intelli-

gence, the Army’s “sensor to shooter capacity will be second to none,” and with the use of synthetic biology, “soldiers will become more stealthy with enhanced camouflage technology,” George said.

“Most importantly, our warfighters will remain an elite, well-trained force in the future, enabled by data, robotics, autonomy and artificial intelligence to see, sense, decide and act faster than our adversaries,” he said.

## Chapter donates to deployed soldiers



Fort Campbell

The Association of the U.S. Army’s Fort Campbell chapter partnered with the Walmart Distribution Center in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to provide care packages for deployed soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division’s sustainment brigade. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)



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