



Army Secretary Christine Wormuth visits Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to see the Army's modernization, readiness and people priorities in action. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

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Secretary unveils new Army objectives

Armey Secretary Christine Wormuth has laid out an ambitious plan for addressing some of the biggest challenges facing the force. She said her plans look at making a brighter future for the Army.

At the top of her list is putting the Army on a solid and sustainable path. This is a challenge not made any easier by the "lack of certainty" in available funding, Wormuth said Tuesday at virtual event hosted by the Center for a New American Security, a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan research group focused on defense and national security policy.

She expressed hope and confidence that the Army will get the funding it needs when Congress ultimately passes a long-delayed defense budget.

The Army needs to continue its transformation while coping with

growing problems recruiting a quality force and caring for people and infrastructure, Wormuth said.

In a memorandum to the force, Wormuth said the Army is "navigating an unpredictable future," as is the nation.

Facing the biggest adjustment in the Army in more than 40 years, she's concerned about keeping momentum in modernization programs, and she accepts the possibility that some changes might be made depending on what works and what might need more time.

Moving quickly on new programs isn't easy, she said, using as an example the Army's experience with the Integrated Visual Augmentation System, a high-tech goggle that could provide dramatically expanded capabilities. The program has shown it is

possible to adopt and modify commercially available products even though there are still problems to resolve.

In addition to putting the Army on a solid and sustainable path, Wormuth unveiled five other objectives, including creating a more data-centric force and adjusting to climate change.

Her other three objectives are aimed at people. She wants to improve command climates across the force and reduce bad behaviors like harassment, racism and extremism. She also wants to adapt to what she expects is a more competitive environment for recruiting and retaining top talent.

This is a big and wide portfolio, she acknowledges, and it could involve making some changes in staffing and organization.

Wormuth's memo outlining her objectives is available here.



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POWER TO PROTECT

Brito: Talent management remains top priority for Army

The Army continues to refine and build its talent management system so it can recruit and retain the best, the service's top personnel officer said.

Testifying before the House Armed Services personnel subcommittee, Lt. Gen. Gary Brito, the Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, stressed that the Army will continue to prioritize its people.

"The Army's No. 1 priority remains our people," he said Tuesday. "All of our Army's personnel programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of our people with dignity and respect and building a culture of trust and cohesion."

Leaders also continue to focus on how to "acquire, develop, employ and retain the very best talent," he said.

This includes persevering through the challenges of recruiting during the COVID-19 pandemic, Brito said.

"We have a very challenging recruiting environment right now, largely due to COVID and some other environmental factors, but [we're] very aggressively working through all of that," Brito said. "I'm very proud of where our talent management efforts are going."

In fiscal 2020, the Army "increased end strength, decreased accessions and increased retention" over fiscal 2019, according to a Rand Corp. study on recruiting and retention.



Lt. Gen. Gary Brito, right, the Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, speaks with a soldier during a visit to Fort Knox, Kentucky. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. KEVIN SPENCE)

Looking ahead, the Army will use new technology and programs to ensure that its talent management system can meet recruitment and retention needs, Brito said.

"Personnel readiness is critical to Army readiness," he said. "New technology, programs, policy, innovation and management models are transforming the Army's personnel systems and will provide our soldiers and civilians with more opportunities to excel and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent."

One key change is rolling out the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army, Brito said. Also known as

IPPS-A, it is an electronic, data-driven system that brings personnel, pay and talent management information into one place.

The Army National Guard is already using the system, and the Army plans to roll it out to the Regular Army and Army Reserve in September.

"IPPS-A is the No. 1 human resource modernization effort for the Total Army," Brito said. "IPPS-A is the Army's new web-based HR system, which when fully deployed will deliver a single comprehensive, data-rich HR and talent management system to the total force."

In addition, programs such as the Army Talent Alignment Process, a decentralized, market-style hiring system that aligns officers with jobs based on their preferences, will help the force fill critical talent gaps, Brito said. These programs also will give commanders in the field the talent they need for specific jobs, he said.

"This talent marketplace gives leaders more flexibility to build a team of individuals with the needed skills, talent and experience," he said. "It also gives individuals more control over their assignments and their career path."



Maj. Gen. Darrell Guthrie, commander of the 88th Readiness Division, addresses human resources professionals attending the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army course at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. (U.S. ARMY/ZACHARY MOTT)

New Army undersecretary ‘humbled’ to serve soldiers, civilians



Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, left, swears in Gabe Camarillo Tuesday as the service's new undersecretary. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Gabe Camarillo, an attorney who has served in various positions in DoD, was sworn in Tuesday as the new undersecretary of the Army.

Camarillo, who is the 35th Army undersecretary, was confirmed Feb. 2 by the Senate. As the undersecretary, Camarillo is the Army secretary's senior civilian assistant and principal adviser on matters related to the management and operation of the Army. He is also the chief management officer of the Army.

In his first tweet as Army undersecretary, Camarillo wrote that he is “humbled” to serve, adding, “There is no job as rewarding as serving with Soldiers and Civilians in the Army.”

Army Secretary Christine Wormuth praised Camarillo for “a wealth of experience and knowledge which will help us build on our strong foundational priorities of people, modernization, and readiness.”

Additionally, the Senate on Wednesday confirmed Douglas Bush to be the next assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology.

A former armor officer with years of experience on Capitol Hill, Bush was serving as the Army's top acquisition official in an acting capacity when he was nominated for the permanent job last September.

In this role, Bush will be responsible for leading the Army's acquisition enterprise, overseeing all Army acquisition programs and advising the Army secretary on acquisition programs and policies.

A West Point graduate who served in the 24th Infantry Division and 3rd Infantry Division, Bush was a congressional staff member for more than 18 years and was a national security analyst at the Association of the U.S. Army.

Camarillo spent several years at DoD over a career in government and private practice. From 2012 to 2015, he was the principal deputy assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology, where he helped lead the Army's research and development and modernization portfolio.

In 2015, he was appointed as the assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs.

Most recently, he was a senior vice president at SAIC.

During his confirmation hearing in October, Camarillo told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Army faces a “significant” challenge in balancing current readiness and investing in the future.

“If confirmed, I would work with Army leaders to ensure that the Army manages its investments to address these challenges,” he said.

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Recruiting quality increases despite pandemic challenges

In fiscal year 2020, the Army increased the quality of new recruits and relied more heavily on prior-service recruits to increase troop strength, according to a new Rand Corp. analysis.

The good news for recruiting in a year when COVID-19 concerns changed the national employment situation, significantly increasing unemployment, is the Army managed to do well, says the Jan. 18 report.

“The Army increased end strength, decreased accessions and increased retention,” the report found. “Enlistment contracts decreased, but the quality of contracts increased.”

The Marine Corps and Air Force also saw increases in quality of recruits, but the Navy did not, the report says.

The Army met its recruiting goals in fiscal 2019 and 2020, but part of the success might be that the 2020



New soldiers raise their right hand and repeat the oath of enlistment with their friends and family in attendance in Nashville, Tennessee. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. JAMES BOLEN)

goal was 10% lower. It signed up more than 68,000 non-prior-service recruits in 2019 but just 61,249 in 2020 because of a reduced goal.

The Air Force and Marine Corps had even larger reductions. There also was a 10-percentage point increase in

prior-service recruiting.

The Army succeeded even after moving all recruiting activities online in March 2020, closing its recruiting stations because of COVID-19.

“Based on these changes to in-person recruiting, we would expect the number and the quality of enlistment contracts and accessions to fall,” Rand says. That didn’t happen, most likely because of the dramatic rise in youth unemployment, the report says.

It also helped that the Army allowed short-term contract extensions that made it easier for soldiers to remain in the Army who would have otherwise been separated. Extensions of up to 23 months were allowed.

The Army succeeded at a time when unemployment rates were climbing for service-aged youth, making the military appear like a reliable employer, the report says.

Read the report here.



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Army needs improvements to prepare for future fight

Though the Army is “rightfully proud of its status as a premier land force,” the service will need to make several improvements to prepare for the future battlefield, argues the author of a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

In “Major Theater War: Challenges for the U.S. Army,” Richard Hooker Jr., a career Army officer who is a non-resident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council and a senior researcher with the University of Oxford’s Changing Character of War Program, suggests several improvements, including increasing the Army’s end strength and expanding its heavy brigades and its field artillery, short-range air defense and electronic warfare capabilities.

“For deterrence to be effective, our allies around the world must be confident that America will be there, on the ground, early in the fight,” the paper says. “Since the end of the Cold War, Army leaders have prioritized new technology over end strength. Implicit in this thinking is the dangerous assumption that technology can compensate for a lack of boots on the ground.”

Currently, the Regular Army has 10 divisions. To meet national security needs, the U.S. “needs a 12-division active Army,” Hooker says.



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, conduct vehicle inspections before qualifying on the M1A2 Abrams tank at Fort Carson, Colorado. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. ANDREW GREENWOOD)

Further, less than a third of the Army’s 31 active maneuver brigades are armored brigades, the paper says. While the Army’s 13 light infantry formations are less expensive and easier to deploy, they “cannot realistically compete with today’s threat,” the paper says.

In response, the Army could convert its Stryker brigades into “true heavy brigades, perhaps with the reconditioned M1 and M2 platforms that are now in storage,” the paper says.

While Army leadership has restored the division artillery headquarters and supports funding for future systems, “the active force needs more cannon artillery now, on the order of one general support 155 mm battalion in each division and an additional cannon artillery brigade per corps,” the paper says.

Hooker also recommends the Army reactivate its divisional short-range air defense battalions and leverage its aviation abilities and provide air-to-air capability for its attack and assault helicopters.

Despite the need for improvements, the Army will continue to adapt and respond appropriately, Hooker writes.

“The Army has been here before. Its roots run deep in the American experiment and its resilience and adaptability are defining features of an institution that is unique among the Armed Forces,” the paper says. “As a flexible and forward-thinking organization, the Army is and should be constantly striving to improve its capabilities in a dangerous world.”

The paper is available by clicking [here](#).



Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 25th Infantry Division Artillery, conduct platoon-level live-fire certifications and qualifications at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. JESSICA SCOTT)

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AUSA and DoD partner to assist transitioning soldiers

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

Recently, the Association of the U.S. Army's NCO & Soldier Programs directorate led the effort to establish a partnership with the Department of Defense through the DoD SkillBridge Program.

SkillBridge was created to provide opportunities for service members to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships or internships while they transition out of the military.

Each year, approximately 200,000 members of the armed forces transition from active duty, and in most cases, they will enter the civilian workforce or pursue higher education. The SkillBridge program was designed to connect them with participating industry partners across the country.

For the service member, SkillBridge provides an invaluable chance to work and learn in civilian career areas. Industry partners gain an opportunity to access and leverage the world's most highly trained and motivated workforce at no cost.

Those involved in DoD-approved SkillBridge training, apprenticeships or internships continue to receive their military compensation and benefits. Transitioning service members can participate in the program up to the last 180 days of their military service.

AUSA, in partnership with SkillBridge, created internship opportunities within each of its directorates for all branches of the military, veterans and spouses. These internships offer a learning experience that helps participants prepare for employment.

The NCO & Soldier Programs team was honored to host AUSA's first SkillBridge intern. Sgt. 1st Class David Fitzgerald, a career infantry soldier of more than 20 years, was



The SkillBridge program was created to provide opportunities for service members to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships or internships while they transition out of the military. (AUSA PHOTO)

looking for an opportunity to gain valuable civilian work experience through the SkillBridge program.

After searching through hundreds of opportunities on the SkillBridge website, Fitzgerald selected AUSA and joined the NCO & Soldier Programs team just prior to the association's annual meeting last October.

The timing of Fitzgerald's internship couldn't have been better.

"The annual meeting is one of AUSA's biggest events that features forums as well as static displays of various defense contractors," he said. "This event provided an amazing networking opportunity."

Following the annual meeting, Fitzgerald was invaluable throughout the remainder of his internship. He revamped and updated the NCO & Soldier Programs webpage, created a virtual platform for collaboration between NCO & Soldier Program chapter vice presidents, assisted AUSA's Family Readiness team, served on the Soldier For Life Network Task Force and collaborated with many of AUSA's other directorates.

The Soldier For Life Network is an

online network for Army veterans and active-duty soldiers.

Operated by AUSA in a joint effort with the Army, it is independent of DoD and Army networks and replicates some functions of the now-defunct Army Knowledge Online,

Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to Fitzgerald as he completed his internship and finalized his transition from the Army. The good news is he was offered a position in government service and has begun a new chapter in his life.

"This internship has been excellent," Fitzgerald said. "Throughout my time I have learned how to operate in an office environment. It has provided not only on-the-job training but also networking opportunities."

Visit <https://skillbridge.osd.mil/> to learn how to participate in the SkillBridge program,

If you are interested in an AUSA internship, please click here.

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.

Chapter members provide supplies for military families



Roughly 40 volunteers participated in the inaugural Operation Honor event to distribute supplies including food, dry goods, toiletries, personal care items and toys for children to more than 700 military families. (COURTESY PHOTOS)

The Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Campbell chapter in Kentucky recently partnered with other local organizations and community supporters to provide food and personal items to military families.

Roughly 40 volunteers participated in the inaugural Operation Honor event, handing out food, dry goods, toiletries, personal care items and toys for children from more than 700 families of active-duty soldiers and veterans, according to Clarksville-

now.com. The event took place Feb. 2 in Clarksville, Tennessee.

In addition to the AUSA chapter, there were volunteers from Fort Campbell YAIPak Outreach, Operation Stand Down Tennessee, the Montgomery County Veterans Coalition, Soldiers and Families Embraced, the United Way of the Greater Clarksville Region and Toys for Tots.

The event was organized by veteran family Joe and Cathi Maynard, who said, "We remember those early days in our military careers and the help folks provided us. This chance to provide a bit of help to veteran families, active or not, is just one of many opportunities we have been given to continue that spirit of giving," Clarksvillenow.com reported.

Many military families "need a little help, just a little help, with some food and other supplies," Joe Maynard said.

The Maynards and LifePoint Church were the presenting sponsors for Operation Honor. ECHO Power Engineering and F&M Bank were contributing sponsors, and supporting sponsors included Feed the Children, Tyson, Beaver 100.3 FM and Q108 WCVQ.

Soldiers join Central Texas chapter



Central Texas-Fort Hood

During a recent newcomers briefing at Fort Hood, Texas, members of AUSA's Central Texas-Fort Hood chapter signed up seven soldiers as AUSA members. (AUSA PHOTO)



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