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Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston addresses AUSA's Coffee Series breakfast Tuesday at the association's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

SMA works to improve readiness, fitness

Initiatives to sharpen soldier fitness, leadership skills and readiness continue to be top priorities for Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston as he enters the last six months of his tenure as the Army's senior enlisted leader.

Grinston, who will be succeeded in August by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Weimer, the senior enlisted adviser for Army Special Operations Command, continues to push for changes that will improve soldiers' readiness. He also is encouraging soldiers to tell their stories in their communities and take advantage of new incentives aimed at helping turn around the Army's recruiting slump.

One top initiative will allow soldiers who score 540 or higher on the Army Combat Fitness Test to be ex-

empt from being measured for height, weight and body fat. The test's maximum score is 600.

"What we found is most people that score that don't need to be taped anyway," Grinston said Tuesday at a Coffee Series breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army.

The Army directive for that initiative should be published by March, he said.

More changes to Army Combat Fitness Test scoring are in the works based on a requirement in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act to create a gender-neutral test for combat MOSs such as infantry.

Ideas that could be considered include "baselining an ACFT score that is age- and gender-neutral for combat arms, then you have to validate that,

or do you do a test that looks like ... things you do in combat," Grinston said.

He cited as an example the physical assessment that's part of Expert Infantryman Badge testing. "We just changed the Expert Infantryman Badge physical assessment, and we can use that as a model," Grinston said. "That may be one of the things we look at, but that's not been determined yet."

Grinston also has his sights on boosting the amount of time the Army spends on its youngest NCOs by increasing the length and breadth of the Basic Leader Course. "We haven't changed the amount of time we spend on our basic NCOs in a long time," said Grinston, who noted that the 22-

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MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

DAVID
BELLAVIA



REMEMBER THE RAMRODS

AN ARMY BROTHERHOOD
IN WAR AND PEACE



NOONREPORT

AN AUSA WEBINAR SERIES

REMEMBER THE RAMRODS

An Army Brotherhood in War and Peace

with author

David Bellavia

Medal of Honor Recipient

and moderated by **SMA (Ret.) Daniel A. Dailey**

15th Sergeant Major of the Army and Vice President, NCO and Soldier Programs, AUSA



JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

This webinar will include a Q&A session in which questions submitted by the audience will be selected and asked by the moderator.

A recording of the webinar will be available on our YouTube page the following day.



21 FEBRUARY 2023

1200-1300 EST

Join us to hear a presentation by Medal of Honor recipient David Bellavia, author of *Remember the Ramrods: An Army Brotherhood in War and Peace*. Bellavia will share how the bonds with his platoon motivated him to clear an enemy stronghold in Fallujah—and how reuniting with the unit 15 years later for the medal ceremony helped them all grapple with the legacy of the Iraq War.



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Center for Leadership brings cadets, Army leaders together

There is a strong propensity among young people to serve, said a senior Army leader who encouraged a group of future officers to find their “love and passion” for the Army by telling the stories they have in common.

“Any conversation that talks about a lack of propensity to serve makes light of those who are serving,” said Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, commander of I Corps and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, referencing the declining number of young people interested in serving, a factor contributing to the Army’s recruiting woes.

Brunson made his remarks before dozens of cadets from ROTC programs and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, during a staff ride hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army’s Center for Leadership. The daylong event at the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., took place Feb. 8.

About 90 people participated in the staff ride, including current and former Army leaders, AUSA leaders and cadets from ROTC programs at the Virginia Military Institute, George Mason University and Hampton University in Virginia, Georgetown University, Howard University,



Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, right, commander of I Corps and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, speaks with ROTC cadets during a staff ride hosted by AUSA’s Center for Leadership. (AUSA/GINA CAVALLARO)

American University and George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Morgan State University in Maryland, and West Point.

After touring the two museums, the group discussed what they had seen and learned about the challenges faced by enslaved and free Blacks, and the heroism and sacrifices made by Black soldiers through history.

“I want you to own this history because it is ours, and I want you to own the thought that everybody serves because they see something better,” Brunson said.

The staff ride was an “incredible

success,” and it achieved the Center for Leadership’s goal of highlighting the inspiring service of African American soldiers throughout history, said Angela Pubal, the center’s program manager. More leadership events like it are being planned.

It was gratifying “to see the interaction between the senior leaders and the cadets, who spent the day gaining a deeper understanding of our country’s history together and forming new relationships they can take with them as they commission and move into their careers,” Pubal said.

Hampton University Cadet Jada Haskins, who plans to become a quartermaster officer, said she had approached the day as just another event to attend, but she gained a much richer experience.

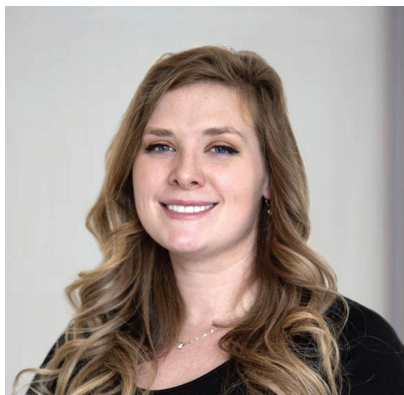
“After being here all day, just being able to speak with these different senior officers, I’ve been able to see that no matter what route we take as cadets, we are still going to be trying to achieve the same common goal,” said Haskins, a junior, who appreciated witnessing the long-standing relationships built among Army leaders. “The Army has so many different connections, and this program has allowed me to see that.”

Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

Angela Quidley

Senior Member Experience Associate

Angela Quidley has worked full time with AUSA for three years after two years in a temporary position during the association’s Annual Meeting. She graduated from the University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Arts. In her spare time, Angela enjoys going to concerts, traveling with friends and maintaining her large collection of enamel pins.



Special Forces hero to receive belated Medal of Honor for ‘remarkable’ valor

A Special Forces soldier who fought in Vietnam will receive the Medal of Honor for his actions during the war, the White House announced.

On Monday, President Joe Biden called retired Col. Paris Davis to inform him of the award for his “remarkable heroism,” the White House said in a brief statement. “The President told Colonel Davis that he looks forward to hosting him at the White House soon for a medal presentation,” the White House said.

Davis is being recognized with the nation’s highest award for valor almost 60 years after his courageous actions in Vietnam.

“The call today from President Biden prompted a wave of memories of the men and women I served with in Vietnam—from the members of 5th Special Forces Group and other U.S. military units to the doctors and nurses who cared for our wounded,” Davis said in a statement. “I am so very grateful for my family and friends within the military and elsewhere who kept alive the story of A-team, A-321 at Camp Bong Son. I think often of those fateful 19 hours on June 18, 1965, and what our team did to make sure we left no man behind on that battlefield.”

On June 18, 1965, a then 26-year-old Capt. Davis was the last American standing with a company of 90 South Vietnamese volunteers, pinned down by hundreds of enemy troops, according to *The New York Times*.

“Certain that he was as good as dead, he began fighting without fear of consequence, pulling his M-16 trigger with his pinkie, sprinting repeatedly into open ground to rescue teammates, and refusing to leave the fight, even after being shot several times,” the *Times* reported in 2021.

Davis survived the battle and was immediately nominated for the Medal of Honor, according to the



“When you’re out there fighting, and things are going on like that ... the bullets have no color, no names,” retired Col. Paris Davis said. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Times. “But the Army somehow lost the nomination. His frustrated commander resubmitted it, and inexplicably the nomination disappeared again,” the *Times* reported.

Over the years, Davis’ fellow soldiers would push for him to be properly recognized, without any results. They eventually came to believe Davis was being overlooked because he was one of the first Black officers in Special Forces, according to *The New York Times*.

In January 2021, then-acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller, a Special Forces veteran who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, ordered an expedited review of Davis’ nomination. The Medal of Honor for Davis is being awarded following recommendations by the Army secretary and defense secretary, the White House said. In his statement, Davis thanked “the volunteer team that advocated for us through the years.”

In an earlier interview with CBS News, Davis said soldiers forget color when under attack. “When you’re out there fighting, and things are going on like that, everybody’s your friend, and you’re everybody’s friend ... the bullets have no color, no names.”

AUSAExtra

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PERK OF THE WEEK

If you don’t have dental insurance, take advantage of the Aetna dental discount program through AUSA.



The normal price for Aetna is more than \$10 per month, but AUSA member pricing for families is just \$3.16 per month. Save on exams, X-rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments, fillings, crowns, root canals and more at www.ausa.org/dma.

Sign up for AUSA’s Global Force Symposium in Huntsville

Registration is now open for the Association of the U.S. Army’s Global Force Symposium and Exposition in Huntsville, Alabama.

Back in-person for the first time since 2019, the three-day event will take place March 28–30 at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, just outside Redstone Arsenal, home to the Army Materiel Command.

This year’s theme is “Designing and Sustaining the Army of 2040,” with keynote speeches and panel discussions focused on the continued transformation of the Army as the force prepares for a complex future battlefield.

Key topics include designing and sustaining the Army of 2040, materiel modernization for the Army of the future, and manning the Army of 2040.

Senior leaders from Materiel Command, Army Futures Command and the office of the assistant Army sec-



The exhibit floor of the 2019 Global Force Symposium and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

retary for acquisition, logistics and technology are scheduled to participate, along with leaders from other Army commands.

Throughout the event, the Army will run the Warriors Corner, featuring presentations by Army leaders, from its booth in the Von Braun Cen-

ter’s South Hall.

A full agenda will be available soon.

There also will be more than 200 exhibits, showcasing the latest innovations from industry and the Army

To register, click here.

For more information on Global Force, click here.

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Showing love and gratitude for our soldiers and families

In February, we celebrate Presidents Day, Iwo Jima Day, the Coast Guard Reserve's birthday and Black History Month, but there is another holiday where we share our affection and gratitude—Valentine's Day.

For some, Valentine's Day means going out to dinner and giving a card, candy or flowers to their significant other. Others may cook a meal together, enjoy an outdoor activity or celebrate at home with their children.

However, some of us celebrate in a nontraditional way. With our unique

Family Readiness

Army lifestyle, many soldiers and their loved ones experience holi-

days apart—I know firsthand, having been an Army spouse for 30 years—and find a way to say “I love you” no matter the distance.

This could be through sending a care package with homemade goodies, writing a heartfelt letter or sending an album of favorite photos. Thanks to more modern technology, a phone call or video chat may also be possible.

United Through Reading offers



Capt. Andrew Green, 3rd Infantry Division embraces his fiancée, Amanda Atrash, during a redeployment ceremony at Fort Stewart, Georgia. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. DANIEL THOMPSON)

a way for military families to stay connected through story time video recordings and books. This is a wonderful way to keep reading traditions going and be able to hear your loved one's voice over and over again. Hear more about this bonding experience on the Association of the U.S. Army's Army Matters podcast.

You can show your appreciation for

service and sacrifice by sending Valentine's Day cards or care packages to deployed troops, veterans, military families and first responders through Operation Gratitude, which was highlighted in another AUSA podcast. If eligible, you can also donate blood to the American Red Cross.

Another way to show gratitude is by volunteering in-person or virtually. Reaching out and remembering those in our hospitals, nursing homes, schools or at the VFW or American Legion will make all the difference in the world.

Of course, you can also join AUSA, where volunteers make up our chapters around the world. They are passionate and understand the importance of supporting the needs and interests of our soldiers, civilians, retirees and families.

No matter how you celebrated Valentine's Day this year, remember that sharing love and gratitude is not limited to just one day.

Holly Dailey is AUSA's Family Readiness director.

SMA initiatives

From Page 1

day course was once 30 days. “I want to take it back to 30,” he said.

Land navigation, which was removed from the course a few years ago, has been the subject of several pilot programs and is making its way back into the program of instruction, he said. A field training exercise that was removed also will be put back in the course.

“What we need to do is continuously challenge our NCOs at the Basic Leader Course,” he said, explaining that he wants to “bring back a little bit more of the rigor and the field time and the tactics.”

Grinston said he expects changes to the Basic Leader Course to be in effect by the end of fiscal 2023 or the following fiscal year.

Addressing the tough recruiting environment, Grinston said recruiters are getting some extra help through the newest incentive, which offers promotions or promotion points to soldiers who refer potential recruits.

“We had this program before, this wasn't anything new, we kind of dusted off the Soldier Referral Program. We're looking at how we can help our recruiters, too, they're out there alone and unafraid,” Grinston said, calling the program one of “a ton of efforts we've got going on.”

Meeting the Army's end strength involves more than just recruiting new soldiers, he said, explaining that retention, which factors into the numbers, is strong.

“End strength ... is a culmination of not just accessions but also retention, and the good news about that is our



Sgt. Christian Martinez of the 253rd Transportation Company begins his land navigation route during training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/MARK OLSEN)

retention numbers have stayed steady or higher than they ever have,” Grinston said. “What that tells us is we just need to get people into the military and the Army. Once they get in, they want to stay.”

AUSA members briefed on intelligence transformation

More than 140 people attended a quarterly membership meeting hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's George Washington chapter.

Attendees at the meeting on Feb. 7 at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia, included industry leaders, chapter Community Partners, ROTC cadets from George Mason University and Howard University, and soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard).

George
Washington

Mark Kitz, program executive officer for intelligence, electronic warfare and sensors, and Leonel Garciga, director of Army intelligence community information management in the office of the deputy Army chief of staff for intelligence, G-2, were the guest speakers. They discussed several issues, including digital transformation, secure software development and data analytics, and the develop-



AUSA members, soldiers, industry leaders and more gather at the general membership meeting of the association's George Washington chapter. (AUSA PHOTO)

ment, acquisition, fielding and life cycle support of Army systems.

"The conversation was lively with excellent questions following the presentations," said Dick Winter, the chapter president.

The chapter also recognized the PenFed Foundation Military Heroes Program for its \$10,000 donation to

support food insecurity programs at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia. In addition, retired Col. Mollie Pearson, a longtime AUSA volunteer leader, was presented with a certificate of appreciation for service to the association by retired Col. Glenn Yarborough, AUSA's Second Region president.

Chapter event fosters government-industry partnerships

Dozens of government employees from the Army's Program Executive Office Simulation, Training and Instrumentation recently attended an event hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Sunshine chapter in Orlando, Florida.

The event, known as Reverse Industry Day, aims to improve relationships with industry to streamline the defense acquisition process.

Sunshine

Reverse Industry Day is a new initiative for the office, and it is "designed as a professional development opportunity for PEO STRI employees," said Bruce Delaporte, PEO STRI talent management director, according to the Army.

Senior Army leaders have often emphasized the importance of partnerships with industry, academia



A subject-matter expert addresses the Reverse Industry Day event hosted by AUSA's Sunshine chapter. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

and the tech sector in building the Army of 2030. The Reverse Industry Day teaches employees how to view their individual processes from the industry perspective, is an investment in people and will help to deliver a best-in-class workforce career-development program focused on the

future, Delaporte said.

"Training opportunities like this are key to the PEO STRI strategy of investing in our workforce," he said.

The event was also attended by representatives from large and small businesses that serve as both prime and subcontractors for government contracts. Rob Miller, assistant program executive officer for project support, stressed the importance of relationships with industry in the acquisition process.

"Transparent relationships between PEO STRI and industry are critical to successful execution of test and training programs in support of soldiers," Miller said, according to the Army. "Events like the Reverse Industry Day significantly contribute to this transparency, allowing us to work with our industry teammates more efficiently."



AUSA'S HOT TOPICS



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