



## IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 41  
FEBRUARY 24, 2022

### AUSA Responds to Ukraine Conflict

3

### Guard Remains Busy as Pandemic Wanes

5

### Book Program

*Tales from the Cold War*

7



### Chapter Highlights

Central Texas-Fort Hood  
Eagle Chapters

8



Capt. Kevin McCarty, left, a chaplain with the 7th Transportation Brigade (Expeditionary), assists a soldier during a food drive at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia. (U.S. AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. JOSHUA MAGBANUA)

# AUSA donation helps soldiers in need

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army recently pledged \$1 million to Army Emergency Relief to help soldiers and military families struggling with food insecurity.

The goal is to give soldiers and their families much needed assistance while reinforcing the importance of financial readiness and well-being through an incentivized financial training program, said retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Dan Dailey, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs.

"The leading cause of food insecurity is financial readiness," Dailey said.

Army Emergency Relief's enhanced Financial Literacy Training Program, scheduled for launch in mid-March, has two goals: providing immediate relief for those in need, and reinforcing positive financial education for service members, he said.

Founded in 1942 and charged with relieving undue financial stress on the force, Army Emergency Relief provides assistance through grants or loans, depending on the soldier's situation, as verified by their chain of command.

Through the new program, soldiers who receive a loan can undergo financial readiness training. If they pass, they receive a credit toward the repayment of their loan.

AUSA also is working through its chapters, located across the U.S. and around the world, to provide relief to soldiers and families in need, Dailey said.

Food insecurity has been a challenge for some service members and military families, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2020 Blue Star Families Military Lifestyle Survey found that 14% of active-duty en-

listed family members had faced food insecurity within the past 12 months.

Military leaders, including Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, have pledged to address the problem.

"Men and women in uniform and their families have enough to worry about—basic necessities like food and housing shouldn't be among them. This is a readiness issue. And that's why I'm focused on making sure that our service members and their families have what they need to thrive," Austin told reporters following a November memo to the force.

AUSA continuously works with the Army to seek solutions for food insecurity and other issues facing troops, Dailey said.

"This is an excellent program," he said. "It helps our soldiers in need while simultaneously promoting financial education."



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POWER TO PROTECT

## Brown issues statement regarding Ukrainian invasion

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army supports America's Army as it sends soldiers to bolster and assure our NATO allies and partners in Europe.

"At this defining moment in world history, the United States Army stands ready to defend our nation's security and support our European allies and partners, just as it has for generations," said retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO.

"We at the Association of the United States Army are proud of America's Army, giving thanks that our well-trained, well-equipped and well-led soldiers are on duty in Europe standing against threats to peace and security. We give our thanks and support to the men and women of the U.S. Army and to their families for their continued service and sacrifice."

He continued: "As we have since our founding in 1950, AUSA offers our continued support as our soldiers serve with professionalism and honor in the difficult days ahead."

Brown's statement comes as Russian forces mount an invasion of Ukraine, including what appeared to be rocket and artillery attacks followed by armored convoys.

In a fiery statement, Russian President Vladimir Putin told NATO nations to stay away and not interfere.



Paratroopers assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division walk to their aircraft Feb. 14 at Pope Army Airfield, North Carolina, as they prepare to deploy. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. HUNTER GARCIA)

"Whoever tries to impede us, let alone create threats for our country and its people, must know that the Russian response will be immediate and lead to the consequences you have never seen in history," Putin said, according to the Associated Press. "No one should have any doubts that a direct attack on our country will lead to the destruction and horrible consequences for any potential aggressor."

President Joe Biden responded in a written statement calling the attack "unprovoked and unjustified."

Biden has said he has no intention of sending U.S. troops into Ukraine,

and NATO partners have issued similar statements.

But thousands of American soldiers have deployed to support NATO allies including Poland and Romania. They include almost 5,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, at least 1,000 soldiers from a Stryker squadron already in Germany, and an infantry battalion task force of about 800 soldiers from Italy that is moving to the Baltic region.

The Pentagon also is sending a battalion of attack aviation—20 AH-64 Apache helicopters—from Germany to the Baltic region, and an attack aviation task force of 12 Apache helicopters from Greece to Poland.

Additionally, about 8,500 troops are on heightened alert in case NATO activates the NATO Response Force.

America's commitment to NATO is ironclad, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Feb. 17 during a press conference from NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

"I leave here incredibly proud of the alliance and satisfied in the knowledge that we will be sure-footed in the face of aggression, but dedicated, as always, to the prospect of peace," he said.



A Stryker from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment arrives in Romania on Feb. 13. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

## AUSA observes Black History Month



Retired Gen. Colin Powell speaks to service members at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in 2007. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. 1ST CLASS JACOB MCDONALD)

**A**ssociation of the U.S. Army staff marked Black History Month Feb. 17 with a presentation on the contributions of Black service members throughout history.

Among those highlighted were retired Brig. Gen. Charles McGee, a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen who died in January, and retired Gen. Colin Powell, the first Black Joint Chiefs chairman and secretary of State. Powell died in October.

Black History Month honors the accomplishments and contributions of Black Americans throughout history. Since 1976, every U.S. president has designated February as Black history Month, according to the American Bar Association.

More than 90,000 Black soldiers serve in the Regular Army today, alongside 39,000 in the Army Reserve and 52,000 in the National Guard, according to the Army.

“Black Americans have served and sacrificed in every conflict in our nation’s history, with more than 245 years of honorable service,” the Army said in a press release. “Black Soldiers, who have defended our nation since the Revolutionary War, have built a legacy of courage and professionalism by serving the U.S. Army with great honor and distinction, in-

spiring generations to come.”

The contributions of Black soldiers are as old as America’s fight for independence, said Ali Muhammad, a member of AUSA’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

“About 5,000 Black soldiers served in the Continental Army. They fought at the Battle of Concord in 1775, and on Christmas night in 1776, Black soldiers crossed the Delaware River with Gen. George Washington,” Muhammad said during the AUSA presentation.

Black soldiers served their country even as they faced segregation.

“In World War I, more than 350,000 Black soldiers served in segregated units, and by World War II, more than a million Black Americans served in uniform,” Muhammad said.

He also emphasized the contributions of Black soldiers to the country’s history.

“African American history is American history,” Muhammad said.

Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, said it’s important to remember the contributions of so many.

The presentation “was great to show the incredible contributions and some amazing heroes for our nation,” he said.

# AUSAExtra

Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier

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### PERK OF THE WEEK



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## Army Guard missions continue at home and overseas

The number of National Guard soldiers on duty each month in support of the COVID-19 response has begun to go down, and as the pandemic wanes, the mission will end, the director of the Army National Guard said.

“At some point, we’re going to leave a COVID-19 environment,” Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen said Tuesday during a webinar hosted by the Center for a New American Security. “If you take that [mission] off our plate right now, that would reduce our operational tempo by a factor of about 15,000 soldiers a month.”

But Jensen warned that the end of the pandemic does not mean the National Guard will take a rest.

He noted that events brought on by climate change have already resulted in a higher rate of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic states and wildfires that are spreading into new areas.

The National Guard also has continuing overseas missions, Jensen said. As of Tuesday, about 41,600 Army National Guard soldiers were on duty, and they were almost evenly split between domestic and international missions, he said.

In the spring and summer months of 2020, during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, some 40,000 National Guard troops were on duty supporting communities across the country. That number dropped to about 15,000 that fall and remained steady through most of 2021, Jensen said.

This past December, the number of Guard troops on COVID-19 duty had dropped to 10,000, but virus cases across the country skyrocketed, and the number of Guard soldiers supporting the response crept up to 16,000, Jensen said.

There are about 15,000 National Guard soldiers supporting the COVID-19 response today.

It has been one of the National Guard’s lengthiest missions, affect-



Soldiers with the Minnesota National Guard train at Camp Ripley after being activated to support the state’s COVID-19 response. (U.S. ARMY/ANTHONY HOUSEY)

ing training schedules, communities and soldiers’ families, Jensen said.

He noted, however, that “we are in a once-in-a-century time period” that will come to an end just as the influenza pandemic did more than a century ago.

“This does not happen often,” he said. “Traditionally, we respond to an emergency, it’s a short duration emergency, and then we’ll return back to our families and our employers. With COVID-19, what we’ve seen is just an enduring mission.”



Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, director of the Army National Guard, speaks to soldiers from the Colorado Army National Guard’s 100th Missile Defense Brigade at Schriever Space Force Base. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Domestically, there are about 19,400 troops on state active duty supporting a variety of missions, including the COVID-19 response, which includes substitute teaching in schools in New Mexico, and response to recent winter storms.

Some 22,200 soldiers are on duty on a variety of federal assignments, including the National Capital Region-Integrated Air Defense System mission in Washington, D.C., and missions in Kosovo, Guantanamo Bay, Operation Atlantic Resolve in Europe, Operation Spartan Shield in the Middle East, and in the Horn of Africa.

“I think that the Army National Guard’s domestic functions are a little bit more understood, in part, because I think for all of us in our communities, we’ve actually seen it in front of us, but the Army National Guard deploys for overseas operations quite a lot,” Jensen said.

The number of soldiers on duty at home and overseas, Jensen said, has been at about the same level since he took over as director of the Army National Guard in August 2020.

“It’s a sustainable number for the Army National Guard going into the future,” he said.



# NOONREPORT

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## ARMY CLIMATE STRATEGY

**Mr. Paul Farnan**

*Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Installations, Energy & Environment*



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# Officer describes Cold War challenges in new AUSA book

By Joseph Craig

**T**he Ukrainian crisis is focusing attention on Europe, with the threat of the largest armed conflict in the region since the end of the Cold War.

The Army is deploying forces to the area to help support NATO defenses, but the numbers are small compared to those of the Cold War era, when almost 300,000 soldiers defended the West from Soviet aggression.

Retired Col. Michael Mahler was one of those soldiers.

A former commander of the 3rd Armored Division's cavalry squadron, he is the author of *Tales from the Cold War: The U.S. Army in West Germany, 1960–1975*, a

## Book Program

new title in the Association of the U.S. Army's Book Program. His memoir reveals the challenges of raising a family and leading troops in a potential war zone.

The AUSA Book Program sat down with Mahler to discuss those years.

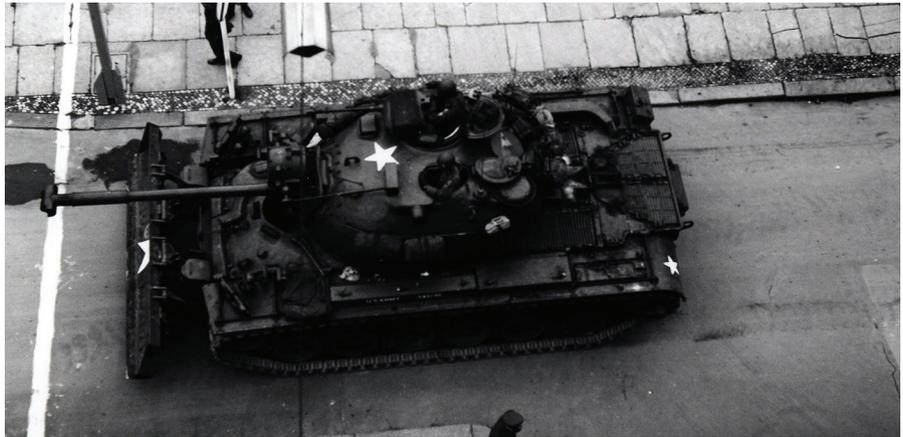
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**AUSA:** What inspired you to join the Army?

**Mahler:** As a youngster growing up during World War II, I closely followed the war on maps and the famous generals who led the various campaigns, so it was almost a natural progression that I ended up wanting to attend the U.S. Military Academy. That was supported by my family, who had close ties to a number of Military Academy graduates from the 1920s and 1930s, as well as to World War II veterans who were part of our extended family.

**AUSA:** How was everyday life different for American soldiers serving in Germany during the Cold War compared to today?

**Mahler:** While never actually at war, the very real threat of it and our proximity to that threat hovered over us and created an intense sense of urgency. The posts were mostly small and isolated in the rural German countryside—initially, there wasn't



An Army tank crew stands guard at Checkpoint Charlie in West Berlin in 1961 during one of several standoffs between U.S. personnel and East German police. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

even American TV—so there was a tightness to the community.

By today's standards, we lived in a bare-bones environment with few distractions and were more focused on each other.

**AUSA:** How many of your fellow troopers expected the Cold War to go hot?

**Mahler:** I doubt that our mostly draftee troopers thought much about it, but among the company and field grade officers and noncommissioned officers, the threat of it going hot was always there, particularly when the Berlin Wall went up. We never could

be quite sure that an alert was just practice.

**AUSA:** What lessons from those years should be remembered by today's Army?

**Mahler:** Training is all-encompassing, and almost every activity on the daily schedule is a training opportunity. Such training requires the involvement of the whole chain of command if it is to be effective, which leads to the familiarity with soldiers' strengths, weaknesses, problems and concerns that is so necessary to effective leadership.

**AUSA:** The book is filled with great anecdotes that show the lighter side of your experiences. Would you share a favorite?

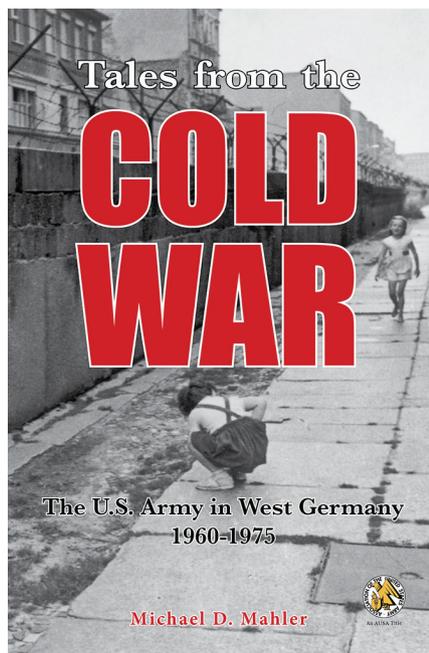
**Mahler:** I guess bringing the Bundesbahn [the German railroad] to a halt throughout Bavaria for several hours as a result of my junior officer zeal to accomplish a mission.

That was right up there with my boss, Lt. Gen. Arthur Collins, telling our young warrant officer pilots to set our helicopter down in a soccer field because he had lost faith in their ability to navigate among the southern German Alps.

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To order a copy of *Tales from the Cold War*, visit [www.ausa.org/books](http://www.ausa.org/books).

**Joseph Craig** is AUSA's Book Program Director.



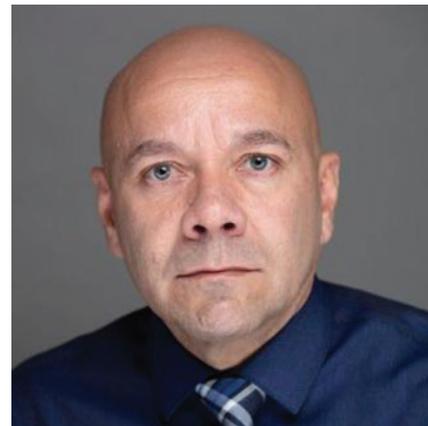
## Chapter members named civilian aides to Army secretary

**R**etired Maj. Gen. Kendall Cox and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar Fuentes, who are members of the Association of the U.S. Army's Central Texas-Fort Hood chapter, have been appointed as civilian aides to the secretary of the Army for Central Texas.

"You are an ambassador of the Army, and an important resource for me and the entire Army team," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said during a Feb. 8 virtual ceremony, according to the Army. "You know firsthand what is resonating in your community and where we need to put forth additional effort."

Cox served in the Army for 36 years. In addition to his service with AUSA, he is a member of the Rotary Club of Killeen Heights and the board of directors of the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce.

"I have been blessed to be a part of the Army my entire life, and this gives me a chance to continue to serve the Army, soldiers, their families and the great Central Texas community," Cox said, according to the Army.



Retired Maj. Gen. Kendall Cox, left, and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Edgar Fuentes are the new civilian aides to the secretary of the Army for Central Texas. (COURTESY PHOTOS)

Fort Hood is one of the Army's pre-eminent installations, and Cox said he is looking forward "to supporting the leadership and soldiers stationed there in any capacity."

Fuentes enlisted in the Army shortly after graduating high school and served for more than 30 years.

As a recently retired soldier and long-term member of the community, Fuentes said he is "aware of the complex issues and challenges" facing service members and their families.

"My passion has always been leading and mentoring soldiers, and this

appointment will allow me to continue to serve this great nation and improve community relations within the greater Fort Hood area," Fuentes said, according to the Army.

Civilian aides to the secretary of the Army are business and community leaders appointed by the secretary to advise and support Army leaders across the country.

Each is involved in the community and brings to the position an interest in the Army, a high degree of business and civic leadership and an ability to influence the public.

## Eagle Chapters

**The following chapters attained Eagle status for January by showing positive membership growth. The number of consecutive months of growth since July 1, 2021, is shown in parentheses.**

Arizona Territorial (6)

Braxton Bragg (6)

Central California (6)

Fort Rucker-Wiregrass (6)

GEN William C. Westmoreland (5)

Tri-State (5)

Central Ohio (4)

Corporal Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (4)

Florida Gulf Stream (3)

GEN John W. Vessey, Jr (3)

Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon (3)

San Diego (3)

Utah (3)



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