



Army tank crewmen assigned to the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, return to post after a live-fire exercise at Fort Stewart, Georgia. (U.S. ARMY/PFC. SANTIAGO LEPPER)

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Army reorganizes force for future fight

The Army is moving forward with a significant force reorganization to shrink “hollow” formations and make room for the capabilities it needs to fight technologically advanced adversaries, senior leaders said.

The moves include reducing the force by about 24,000 authorizations as the Army contends with a continuing recruiting crisis and moves away from two decades of counterinsurgency operations to prepare for large-scale combat operations.

In a paper published Tuesday on the Army website that explains the changes, the force structure transformation will enable the Army to bring in new capabilities required under the National Defense Strategy. It also will help narrow the gap between a force structure designed

for 494,000 soldiers and the current active duty troop strength, which is set by law at 445,000.

By fiscal 2029, authorized troop levels will be brought down to approximately 470,000 soldiers, which is about 20,000 more than the current end strength but a reduction of about 24,000 authorizations compared to the currently planned force structure, the paper says.

“We are transforming our weapons systems through our modernization programs, and what we’ve done through the force structure changes is make room for some new formations” such as the multidomain task forces and directed energy capabilities, for which more than 7,500 new spaces are needed, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth told defense reporters Tuesday at a meeting hosted

by George Washington University’s Project for Media and National Security.

Wormuth added that the analysis took place over the past year as the recruiting challenge decreased the service’s end strength, making it impossible to fill existing units and organizations. She and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George “did not want to have a lot of hollow structure hanging around. That’s essentially unready structure,” Wormuth said.

As a result, “we needed to basically reduce 32,000 spaces to both shrink over-structure and make room for that 7,500 of new structure,” she said. The Army emphasized that the planned reductions are to spaces in the formation, not individual soldiers. “The Army is not asking cur-

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AUSA hosts leadership conference for ROTC cadets

More than 120 future Army leaders gathered Feb. 23 at the Association of the U.S. Army headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, to learn principles of leadership from currently serving and retired officers and NCOs.

The goal of the annual Senior Leader Development Conference, co-hosted by the AUSA Center for Leadership and Army Cadet Command's 4th Brigade, was to educate and inspire the next generation of Army officers. The unique forum connected cadets to senior leaders through panels and small-group discussions with themes focused on building trust, underwriting honest mistakes and empowering junior leaders.

"The AUSA Center for Leadership was thrilled to help the 4th ROTC Brigade plan and execute their annual Senior Leader Development Conference," said retired Col. Scott Halstead, director of the AUSA Center for Leadership. "The event included 123 cadets and 29 cadre members from 14 schools in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia."

He added, "We hope this leadership event helped the cadets think deeply about how they will soon partner with their NCOs to build and lead lethal, cohesive and honorable teams."

Retired Lt. Gen. Tom James, an AUSA leadership fellow who moderated the day's first panel discussion, thanked the cadets for choosing to join the profession of arms. "It is not lost on me that less than 1% of our able population raises their right hand and says, 'I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.' Never has such a large responsibility rested on the shoulders of so few," James said.

Trust is the foundation of leadership, James said, and "hard work and commitment" allow junior leaders to grow and improve, even when making mistakes. "It's all about learning and getting better every day," he said.



Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, left, deputy Army chief of staff for personnel, G-1, greets an ROTC cadet during the Senior Leader Development Conference at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

That trust creates an environment that encourages initiative and allows young officers to learn from their mistakes, said Maj. Gen. James Smith, director of operations for the deputy Army chief of staff for logistics, G-4.

Smith recounted a story from his time as a first lieutenant at Fort Irwin, California, when he neglected to establish proper security around a halted convoy during training. Instead of firing him on the spot, Smith said, his brigade commander "made it a teachable moment and walked me through ... what right looks like. I carried that lesson with me throughout the rest of my career as an example of what you're supposed to as a leader."

Young officers often lack knowl-

edge and experience, so they must build trust and relationships—particularly with their NCOs, said Command Sgt. Maj. Bryan Otero, senior enlisted leader of Army Test and Evaluation Command.

"Trust yourself and trust your profession," Otero said. "Soldiers don't get to pick their leaders, so you have an inherent responsibility to be what they need. Trust them ... and you'll be amazed at how they will perform underneath your leadership."

Other panelists discussed experiences when dealing with poor leaders. Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, deputy Army chief of staff for personnel, G-1, told the cadets that lessons learned from inadequate or inept leaders often can be as or more valuable than those from outstanding officers. "You will have a shining, crystal clear example of what not to do," he said.

"As you gain experience and professional development, you will see ... how you can navigate those challenges and protect your most important resource—your soldiers," Stitt said.

At the end of the conference, James said he was impressed by the cadets' questions and their dialogue with panel members. "After today's activities, I'm confident in this generation of new leaders as they join our Army," he said. "I think our soldiers are hungry for their leadership, and they will be good leaders. We're in pretty good hands."



Currently serving and retired officers and NCOs share lessons learned during their careers with cadets from 14 schools in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

Paper warns Russia has advantage in 'war of attrition' in Ukraine

Two years after its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, Russia has gained the upper hand, according to a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

"Considering the balance in relation to each state's ends, Russia is currently winning the war," Lt. Col. Amos Fox writes. "Russia controls significant portions of Ukrainian territory, and they are not likely to be evicted from that territory by any other means than brutal land warfare, which Ukraine cannot currently afford."

In "The Russo-Ukrainian War: A Strategic Assessment Two Years into the Conflict," Fox, a doctoral candidate at the University of Reading and a freelance writer and conflict scholar writing for AUSA, delves into the nuances behind the war.

Land wars, like the Russo-Ukrainian war, require a strategy that is "properly aligned" with a fight for control over territory, Fox writes.

"Russia's strategy of exhaustion ... appears to be working," he writes. "A strategy built on the centrality of precision strike but lacking sufficient land forces to exploit the success of precision strike ... will not win a war for territory—especially against an industrialized army built to fight and win wars of attrition."

Though precision strike capabilities provided by the U.S. and its partners helped initially, Russia's manpower is now overpowering Ukraine, Fox writes.

"Precision might provide a tactical victory at a single point on the battlefield, but those victories of a finite point are not likely to deliver strategic victory," he writes. "Ultimately, Russia's operations in Ukraine show that mass, especially in wars of territorial annexation, are how a state truly consolidates its gains and hedges those military victories against counterattacks."



Lt. Gen. Antonio Aguto Jr., right, commanding general of Security Assistance Group-Ukraine, speaks Feb. 7 with a soldier assigned to the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine at Grafenwoehr, Germany. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/2ND LT. JARVIS MACE)

Russia and Ukraine likely will be locked in a stalemate until one of their armies is able to "outright defeat the other," according to Fox.

"If it is correct that Russian strategy is primarily concerned with retaining its territorial acquisitions ... and that Ukrainian land forces do not have the numbers to... [attack, defeat and defend against Russian military forces], ... then the precision strike, drones and targeting information might be the window dressing for a futile strategic position," he writes.

Until then, this "war of attrition" will continue to grind on, Fox writes.

"Ukraine's inability to generate the size of force, coupled with the destructive warfighting capabilities needed to destroy Russia's army in Ukraine and to occupy and hold the liberated territory, means that this war of attrition will likely grind on until either Ukraine can generate the force needed to evict Putin's army from Ukraine, Ukraine becomes strategically exhausted and has to quit the conflict, or both parties decide to end the conflict," he writes.

Read the paper here.

AUSAExtra

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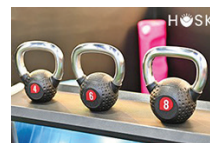
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HUSK is a curated wellness marketplace that offers exclusive pricing on gym memberships,

equipment, virtual subscriptions in nutrition, health coaching and more. AUSA members can find best-in-class pricing with some of the industry's biggest brands at www.ausa.org/husk.



Graphic novel highlights tank hero's sacrifice in WWII

Staff Sgt. Ruben Rivers, who ignored his own wounds to protect his fellow soldiers in the 761st Tank Battalion during World War II, is the focus of the latest graphic novel in the Association of the U.S. Army's series on recipients of the nation's highest award for valor.

Medal of Honor: Ruben Rivers tells of how Rivers, who served in the famed battalion known as the "Black Panthers," refused evacuation after his tank hit a mine outside Guebling, France. Instead, he took command of another tank and kept fighting.

Three days later, when the company ran into German defenses, Rivers fought to cover the unit's withdrawal and was killed by anti-tank fire.

"Ruben Rivers was a case study in determination," said Joseph Craig, AUSA's Book Program director. "I'm proud to share his story with our readers."

Medal of Honor: Ruben Rivers is available here.

AUSA launched its Medal of Honor graphic novel series in October 2018. This is the 21st novel in the series. The digital graphic novels are available here.

Rivers was drafted into the Army in January 1942 and assigned to the unit that would become the 761st Tank Battalion, a new all-Black armored unit in the then-segregated Army. After months of training, the unit was sent to war, landing at France's Omaha Beach in October 1944.

In November 1944, as the Black Panthers attacked the German-held town of Morville-les-Vic, France, Rivers encountered a German roadblock. Under heavy fire, "he leaped out of the tank, attached a cable from his Sherman to the roadblock, re-mounted, and then had his tank pull the obstacle off the road, freeing the tank column to resume the advance and capture the town," according to the National World War II Museum.

On Nov. 16, as Rivers and his soldiers moved into Guebling, France,



Rivers' tank hit a mine. The blast severely wounded his right leg, but Rivers refused to be evacuated or receive a shot of morphine, according to his Medal of Honor citation.

Instead, Rivers took command of another tank and moved with his company into Guebling the next day.

"Repeatedly refusing evacuation, Staff Sergeant Rivers continued to direct his tank's fire at enemy positions," the citation states.

As the tanks advanced toward

Bourgaltoff, their next objective, they were stopped by enemy fire. Capt. David Williams, the company commander, ordered his tanks to withdraw and take cover.

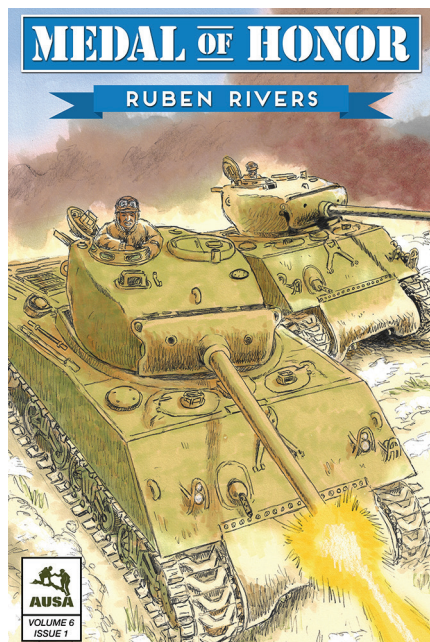
"Staff Sergeant Rivers, however, radioed that he had spotted the German antitank positions: 'I see 'em. We'll fight 'em!'" his citation says.

Rivers and another tank opened fire on the enemy, covering the others as they withdrew. An enemy round hit Rivers' tank, killing him and wounding the rest of the crew.

More than 50 years later, on Jan. 13, 1997, Rivers' sister, Grace Woodfolk, received his Medal of Honor from President Bill Clinton.

Each AUSA graphic novel is created by a team of professional comic book veterans. The script for the graphic novel on Rivers was written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*.

Pencils, inks and the cover were by Wayne Vansant, who has worked on *The 'Nam*, *Savage Tales* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*; colors were by Peter Pantazis, who previously worked on *Justice League*, *Superman* and *Black Panther*; and the lettering was by Troy Peteri, who has worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.



Nonprofit provides companionship to veterans in hospice

Veteran's Last Patrol, a nonprofit organization based in Spartanburg, South Carolina, is seeking volunteers to befriend, honor and support veterans in hospice care.

"I founded Veteran's Last Patrol nearly five years ago after learning about the great needs of veterans nearing the end of their life," said retired Col. Claude Schmid, the organization's CEO and an AUSA member.

Hospice care eligibility, provided by Medicare, is the final six months of life, Schmid said. "Veterans of all branches of service understand patrolling, whether it's land, sea or air, and we say that when someone goes into their final chapter of life it's their 'last patrol,'" he said.

Many of these patients are nearly forgotten by the veteran community and disappear from public life. They



reside in private homes or care facilities in towns across the U.S. and often don't have families nearby or are entirely alone, Schmid said. "They would just like someone to talk and share stories with as they proceed on their last patrol," he said.

Volunteering to visit is a great way for veterans to continue to serve and support their brothers and sisters in

arms, Schmid said. The organization facilitates veteran-to-veteran visits around the country and currently has volunteers in 29 states. For those who are unable or might feel uncomfortable making such personal visits, Veteran's Last Patrol has the "Cards of Gratitude" program for volunteers to write thank-you cards to veterans.

The organization also provides emergency assistance to veterans and caregivers in need, and hosts honor ceremonies to recognize veterans, which could include a certificate from Congress, handmade quilts and other gifts.

"We're part of a team," Schmid said. "Whether they patrolled the air, sea or land, this is their final chapter, and this is one final way for us to serve. We must stand by them."

For more information and to volunteer, visit www.veteranlastpatrol.org.

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Army astronaut honored for record-breaking mission

Col. Frank Rubio received the Army Astronaut Device Feb. 22 during a ceremony at the Pentagon, making him one of just three currently serving soldiers authorized to wear the device.

“Col. Rubio, you are a stellar example of the Army’s core values and what it means to lead a life of service,” Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said during the ceremony. “You inspired audiences around the world as you orbited the Earth for 371 days, and now, back on Earth, you continue to inspire others as you share your experience with the public.”

Rubio set the record for the longest single spaceflight by an American after he spent just over a year aboard the International Space Station. He returned to earth on Sept. 27.

“What an incredible honor it is to represent the Army, and, honestly, the biggest honor for me ... is the fact that, to me, [this is] the ultimate team badge,” Rubio said during the ceremony. “You absolutely cannot get to space on your own. No matter how talented you are, no matter what you’ve [accomplished], it takes a team of thousands to get you to space.”

During his remarks, Rubio recognized his wife, Deborah, and their



Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, left, presents the Army Astronaut Device (inset) to Col. Frank Rubio during a Feb. 22 ceremony at the Pentagon. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. DEONTE ROWELL)

four children, whom he affectionately referred to as Team Rubio. “They’re the reason that I was able to do this and that I’ve been able to really have my entire career,” he said. “Without them and the support that I get from them, none of this would be possible.”

Considered one of the rarest de-

vices a soldier can earn, Rubio joins Col. Anne McClain and Col. Andrew Morgan as the only active-duty soldiers authorized to wear the Army Astronaut Device. To earn the badge, soldiers must complete at least one operational mission in space, according to Army Regulation 600-8-22.

Force structure

From Page 1

rent soldiers to leave,” the paper says.

To phase out 32,000 authorizations, the Army examined each MOS, skill set and functional area for efficiencies among units such as counterinsurgency-based engineer assets whose soldiers could be reallocated to divisions for use in large-scale combat operations.

Special operations jobs will be reduced in areas such as print media and some psychological operations capabilities “that are sort of no longer needed,” Wormuth said. “Those are the kinds of things that we look to get rid of.”

The Army also will inactivate cavalry squadrons in the U.S.-based Stryker and infantry brigade combat teams, convert infantry brigade combat team weapons companies to platoons and eliminate some positions in the Regular Army security force assistance brigades.

As part of the Army’s “transforming in contact” concept, George said at the Tuesday meeting that the Army has “put out left and right limits to our troops that are in the field that are going to fight in these formations.”

“We are going to make adjustments based on that that are going to feed how we’re going to do things Army-wide,” he said. “We are viewing ev-

ery bit of our force structure, and we have to do that to make sure that we don’t have any kind of redundancy, that we are having the right skills at every level.”

The Army’s transformation will take time, but it is critical for the future. “The transformation of Army force structure and recruiting will not happen overnight, but changes in both areas are underway,” the paper says. “In the years ahead, the Army will continuously transform and improve in order to become more ready, agile and lethal while fulfilling our critical responsibilities to our nation.”

Read the Army paper here.

Author recounts pivotal battle from Vietnam War

Fifty-eight years ago in February, newly promoted Col. Harold “Hal” Moore was in the midst of a six-week military operation as he led troops from the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) against a North Vietnamese division in the Battle of Bong Son.

Moore had proved the value of the air assault concept a few months earlier in the Battle of Ia Drang.

Book Program

This new operation was significantly larger—and deadlier—yet it is much less known today.

Kenneth White set out to rectify that situation with *The Battle of Bong Son: Operation Masher/White Wing 1966*. White served as an infantryman in the 1st Cavalry Division’s long-range reconnaissance patrol unit, and his book is the first full account of the battle. It also is the latest title in the Association of the U.S. Army’s Book Program.

The Book Program recently sat down with White to talk about *The Battle of Bong Son*.

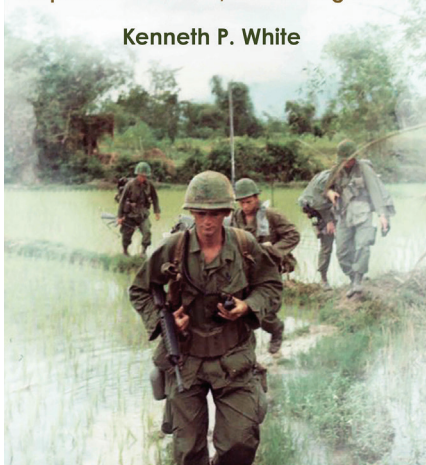
AUSA: What inspired you to write this story?

White: Operation Masher/White Wing marked the start of the ground war in Vietnam. It was the largest operation to date and proved to be one of the costliest battles of the en-

THE BATTLE OF BONG SON

Operation Masher/White Wing 1966

Kenneth P. White



tire war. Writing this book was my way of helping to ensure the legacy of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during the Vietnam War.

AUSA: Why did the operation have two names, Masher and White Wing?

White: President Lyndon Johnson reacted angrily to the name Masher. He felt that the name was too crude in light of the fact that the U.S. was promoting pacification as a key strategy for the war, and he ordered a change.

The new name chosen by Gen. William Westmoreland and his commanders was rumored to be White

Dove, but at the last minute they thought better of their choice and settled instead on White Wing.

AUSA: Some will be familiar with Col. Hal Moore from his actions at the earlier battle at Landing Zone X-Ray, as featured in *We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young*. What would you like readers to know about his leadership in Bong Son?

White: Hal Moore demonstrated time after time in the Battle of Bong Son that he was a natural leader who inspired confidence in those around him and moved them to action.

AUSA: What is the legacy of the battle?

White: The Battle of Bong Son demonstrated that the 1st Cav—together with the Air Force, Marines, Navy, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and elements of the Republic of Korea Army Capital Division—had the firepower, mobility and leadership to find the enemy and deliver a severe blow.

But without a complementing plan at the strategic level to stop the unabated flow of communist troops and supplies into South Vietnam, it just wasn’t clear how Westmoreland and the U.S. military could ever achieve victory. Operation Masher/White Wing clearly exposed this flaw in the U.S. strategy.

AUSA: Now that *The Battle of Bong Son* has been published, what’s next for you?

White: I would like to document that period in the 1st Cav’s history immediately following Operation Masher/White Wing, ending at the start of 1968 when Westmoreland ordered the division to terminate its operations in the Bong Son area and move north to the DMZ to reinforce the besieged Marines at the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh.

Please visit www.ausa.org/books to order a copy of *The Battle of Bong Son*.

Joseph Craig is AUSA’s Book Program director.



Soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) fire at a Viet Cong bunker during the Battle of Bong Son in 1966. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

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 is shown in parentheses.

Allegheny-Blue Ridge (7)	Central Ohio (6)	Fort Huachuca-Sierra Vista (5)
Arizona Territorial (7)	Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore (6)	Fort Jackson-Palmetto State (5)
Benelux (7)	(6)	Korea (5)
CPL Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (7)	Dix (6)	Las Vegas-John C. Fremont (5)
Delaware (7)	Fort Campbell (6)	Last Frontier (5)
Florida Gulf Stream (7)	Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri (6)	New Orleans (5)
Fort Sheridan-Chicago (7)	(6)	Northern New Jersey (5)
GEN Creighton W. Abrams (7)	Fort Liberty (6)	San Francisco (5)
George Washington (7)	Fort Pitt (6)	SGM Jon Cavaiani (5)
Greater Atlanta (7)	Fort Riley-Central Kansas (6)	Sunshine (5)
Greater New York-Statue of Liberty (7)	Francis Scott Key (6)	United Arab Emirates (5)
Greater Philadelphia (Penn & Franklin) (7)	Gem State (6)	Western New York (5)
Magnolia (7)	Greater Los Angeles (6)	Fort Knox (4)
Massachusetts Bay (7)	Houston Metroplex (6)	Greater Augusta-Fort Eisenhower (4)
Milwaukee (7)	Indiana (6)	Mediterranean (4)
National Training Center-High Desert (7)	Marne (6)	MG John S. Lekson (4)
Newton D. Baker (7)	MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen (6)	Northern New York-Fort Drum (4)
North Texas-Audie Murphy (7)	Minutemen (6)	Southern Virginia (4)
PFC William Kenzo Nakamura (7)	Redstone-Huntsville (6)	Tucson-Goyette (4)
Picatinny Arsenal-Middle Forge (7)	Rhode Island (6)	Coastal South Carolina (3)
San Diego (7)	Silicon Valley (6)	Pikes Peak (3)
Suncoast (7)	Space Coast (6)	White Sands Missile Range (3)
Texas Capital Area (7)	St. Louis Gateway (6)	Guam (1)
Thunderbird (7)	Tri-State (6)	
Virginia Colonial (7)	Utah (6)	
Arkansas (6)	Alamo (5)	
Arsenal of Democracy (6)	COL Edward Cross (5)	
	Columbia River (5)	
	Connecticut (5)	
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