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Gen. Charles Hamilton, commander of Army Materiel Command, speaks Wednesday during a Coffee Series event hosted at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

Army sustainment seeks industry help

Industry partners will be essential to supporting Army large-scale combat operations in a contested environment, said Gen. Charles Hamilton, commander of Army Materiel Command.

Speaking Wednesday at a breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army as part of its Coffee Series, Hamilton called on industry to help the Army sustainment community meet one of the service's top priorities—the delivery of ready combat formations.

"It's important that we talk frequently," Hamilton told event attendees, many of whom are industry partners. "We've got to get a complete shared understanding of the problem

set, and I can't do what I do to support the Army without you."

Hamilton, who has been in command since March 16, 2023, said that his "big focus area" has been to meet one of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George's four focus areas, which is to "deliver combat-ready formations."

He recalled being invited to George's residence along with his peers from the Army's other major commands for what was to be a casual dinner, "then the white boards came out, so we started working" on the chief of staff's priorities, he said.

Hamilton pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic as having created "the biggest challenge" in resupplying the

force now, as some of the Army's small business partners, who supplied critical repair parts, kits, assemblies and components used to maintain equipment, were unable to stay in business.

"We lost a lot of our second and third tier suppliers, and so that's affecting the tempo, the pace I can get those parts and get them out to the force," Hamilton said, adding that foreign military sales for operations in Europe also have created competition for parts resupply.

To meet that challenge, he said, Materiel Command has tapped into industry and innovation centers and ramped up the creation of some parts

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Army unveils \$185.9 billion budget for fiscal 2025

The \$849.8 billion fiscal 2025 defense budget unveiled Monday includes a 4.5% pay increase for troops and a 2% raise for civilian personnel.

The Army's \$185.9 billion share, a 0.2% increase from the fiscal 2024 request, "meets the Army's commitments under the National Defense Strategy and the secretary of defense's priorities to defend the nation, take care of our people and succeed through teamwork," Army Undersecretary Gabe Camarillo said.

The budget allows the Army to continue focusing on recruiting and retention efforts, modernization programs, barracks and housing improvements, quality-of-life initiatives and training and exercises to maintain readiness across the force, he said.

"We always, every year, have to make some very difficult trade-offs," Camarillo said. He also warned of the impacts of operating under a continuing resolution, stopgap funding that keeps spending at the previous year's levels and prohibits new starts.

The Army and the rest of DoD have been operating under a continuing resolution since the Oct. 1 start of fiscal 2024.

Another factor is the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. Approved by Congress in the debt limit deal last year, the agreement limits fiscal 2024 spending to the president's budget request and provides for a 1% increase in fiscal 2025, CQ News reported.

Investing in people

For the Army, its fiscal 2025 request includes \$70.7 billion in military personnel funding to account for "all increases in basic pay, housing and subsistence," Camarillo said. The request projects an active Army troop strength of 442,300, down from the 452,000 requested in fiscal 2024 and the 445,000 that was authorized.

It also projects an Army National Guard strength of 325,000 and an Army Reserve strength of 175,800



Sgt. Claudia Kinney, assigned to the 8th Cavalry Regiment, retrieves a drone March 6 during an exercise at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany. The Army's fiscal 2025 budget request includes investments in unmanned systems and counter-small unmanned aerial systems capabilities. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. MICAH WILSON)

in fiscal 2025, for a total force of 943,100, down from the 951,800 that was projected in fiscal 2024.

Recruiting efforts continue to be a focus area, with funds allocated for expansion of the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, which helps recruits raise their fitness or academic scores, and improved recruiter selection and training.

There also is \$1.1 billion for marketing and advertising, a 10% increase from the previous year, and \$675 million for enlistment incentives across the three Army components, Camarillo said.

Housing is another area of focus. The fiscal 2025 request includes \$935 million for new barracks construction at nine installations across the Army, including Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; Fort Johnson, Louisiana, formerly known as Fort Polk; and Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. That's a 325% increase in construction from fiscal 2024, according to budget documents.

Additionally, "barracks sustainment is funded to 100% for the first time ever, at least in recent memory, at \$680 million," Camarillo said.

Programs 'on pace'

Army modernization "continues on pace," Camarillo said, as the service continues to deliver key capabilities such as the Precision Strike Missile Increment-1 and the Mid-Range Capability, which enables the Army to engage maritime targets.

The Army is requesting \$14.1 billion in research, development, test and evaluation funds, and \$24.4 billion for procurement.

It also will move out on its aviation rebalance strategy, which includes upgrades to current platforms, investments in unmanned systems, terminating the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft program and phasing out the Shadow and Raven unmanned aerial systems, among other changes.

The service also is looking to advance its efforts in counter-small unmanned aerial systems capabilities, requesting \$447 million in fiscal 2025, Camarillo said.

The budget also includes funding for 22 combat training center rotations, a "robust" flying hour program and \$461 million for Operation Pathways exercises in the Indo-Pacific, a more than 200% increase from the previous year.

George emphasizes urgent need for transformation in ‘volatile’ world

As it faces an increasingly “volatile” world and rapidly evolving technology, the Army must move with urgency, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said.

On today’s battlefield, “there is no place to hide,” George said during remarks March 7 at the McAleese Defense Programs Conference in Washington, D.C. “Everything and everyone can be seen ... and what can be seen can be killed.”

Commercial technology is moving faster than military technology, George said, and it has military applications. “In fact, employing simple, cheap tech faster is giving people a tactical edge,” he said.

Additionally, “people are gravitating toward urban centers, and so is conflict,” he said, and “the battlefield isn’t local like it used to be. Our enemies can reach around the globe and through space and cyberspace.”

Faced with these challenges, the Army must be able to help the joint force deter war everywhere and “be ready to fight anywhere against very capable adversaries,” George said. “We’ve got to be able to seize and hold ground for the joint team,” he said. “War always comes down to a close fight on the streets. We cannot expect to win without making contact on land.”

Simultaneously, Army must be able to “reach across the battlefield with long-range precision fires,” he said. It also must be able to get “beans, bullets and fuel to forward formations even when there are roadblocks everywhere,” George said.

In recent years, the Army has made progress in its transformation efforts, delivering critical capabilities to the force, George said. “We will keep up the momentum on these with a sense of urgency,” he said.

The Army also is “right sizing” its structure, George said. “Top of the list is to fix recruiting, because we



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, right, greets a paratrooper assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division during the 2024 NASCAR Daytona 500 in Daytona Beach, Florida. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. CASEY BRUMBACH)

need more soldiers,” he said.

It also is looking at units that were “built for the war on terror, not large-scale combat,” George said. “That means cutting in certain areas but also growing in others,” he said, including air defense, long-range fires and counter-unmanned aerial systems.

The Army’s network will become more crucial to the future fight. Leaders must have access to “good, accurate information at the right time and on the right easy-to-use device,” George said.

The sprawling operations centers with satellite dishes, server stacks and high digital signatures must go, he said. “Today, that setup will get us killed,” George said. Units must use small, intuitive commercial devices, move quickly around the battlefield and blend in with the area’s normal digital noise, he said.

“We have to change some things about our Army, and we don’t have time to waste,” George said. “We can’t plan to transform once in a generation. ... We must transform continuously and iteratively, and we must get better every day.”

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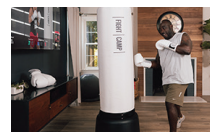
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Spotlight on AUSA Association Partner: NGAUS

Formed by a group of militia officers in 1878, the National Guard Association of the United States advocates for the National Guard in Washington, D.C., educating Congress on the roles, capabilities and requirements of the nation's first military force.

Each year, the association develops legislative priorities based on grassroots input from its members. "We take those priorities and work with Congress to enhance National Guard capabilities, equipment parity, and benefits equity," the organization's website says.

The association hosts a variety of educational events throughout the year, including its General Conference, where Army and Air National Guard officers from all 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia gather to network and hear



from civilian and military leaders. It also publishes *National Guard* magazine, a weekly "Washington Report" e-newsletter and educational videos.

In partnership with the National Guard Educational Foundation, the association offers four scholarship programs to help Guard members and their families start or continue their education. Additionally, the or-

ganization administers a variety of awards, including its highest honor, the Harry S. Truman Award for distinguished service in support of national defense.

"There's so much that the Guard has to offer and the stories, I think, are endless. We need to keep telling them," retired Maj. Gen. Francis McGinn, the association's president, said in an interview in *National Guard* magazine.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ngaus.org/>.

If your association is interested in partnering with AUSA, contact Susan Rubel at srubel@ausa.org.

Association Partnership with AUSA is an opportunity for like-minded military service organizations to join AUSA in support of the Total Army—soldiers, DoD civilians and their families.

Sustainment

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with 3D printing where possible. But it will take years without industry help, he said.

"I would challenge anyone here, if you can come up with a solution, I don't care if it's 3D or you can get some great artists and professionals out in industry, there's an opportunity," Hamilton said.

"I'm not afraid to say it out loud, a pretty big opportunity, that means a lot of money to be made in this space," he said.

New capabilities that could change the way the sustainment enterprise operates also are emerging, Hamilton said, as demonstrated at Project Convergence, a joint and multinational experimentation event that took place this month at the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton and at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, both in California.

"I am very optimistic looking at the autonomous vehicles I saw there, the drones," Hamilton said. "We've got



Spc. Cartia Carter, assigned to the 524th Division Sustainment Support Battalion, 25th Division Sustainment Brigade, readies a vehicle for experimentation Feb. 15 during Project Convergence-Capstone 4 at Camp Pendleton, California. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. HUNTER GRICE)

to get to that level of resupply, and that's why we've got to be so precise in the future."

When it comes to sustaining the warfighter, he said, "I've got to get

it right every time in order for that brigade, task force or division to be able to maintain that momentum in the fight. Sustainment is about warfighting. Period."

Sharing leadership lessons with the next generation

Just six months ago, I retired on the historic Brown Parade Field at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, in front of family, friends and colleagues on a unseasonably temperate August morning.

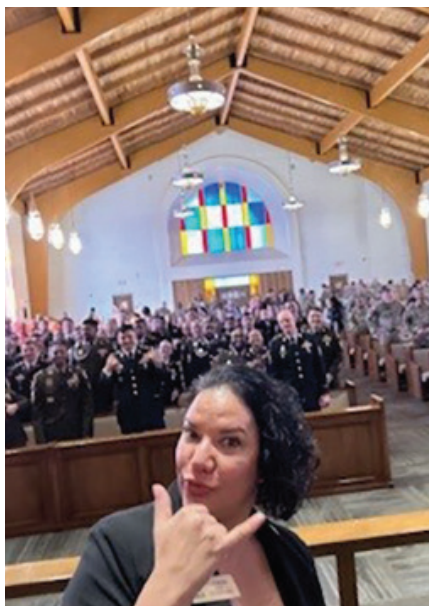
Fort Huachuca is home to the 10th Cavalry “Buffalo Soldiers,” B Troop—4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment (Memorial), the Network Enterprise Technology Command and all the intelligence and professional military training within the Army’s Intelligence Center of Excellence. Nestled in the Huachuca Mountains, the installation has been a staple within the Sierra Vista and Cochise County community since March 1877.

I spent many months in training and years stationed at this installation as a private, drill sergeant, operations sergeant major and battalion command sergeant major. Returning home to Fort Huachuca as a retired soldier, after former soldiers of mine requested that I speak and provide a leader development session, was surreal but also comforting.

Command Sgt. Maj. Isaac Cummings, commandant of Fort Huachuca’s NCO Academy, was one of my instructors in the 309th Military Intelligence Battalion from 2012–2014. When I spoke at the Senior Leader Course graduation ceremony, my goal was to talk about all things leadership as it applies to NCOs and as members of our communities.

My focus areas were connection, mentorship and doing hard things.

Soldiers’ connection to the American people they serve makes them part of the communities where they live. Service and giving back increase that connection, no matter where we are stationed. Mentorship is a relationship that must be cultivated through trust, accessibility and telling the truth—even when it may be hard to hear. And when we do hard things in life and our



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra, AUSA’s director of NCO and Soldier Programs, addresses the graduation ceremony of the Senior Leader Course at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. (AUSA PHOTO)

careers—taking the hard jobs and pushing through to the finish line—we know that despite what we are going through, we are not in it alone.

I had the honor of shaking every graduate’s hand, seeing familiar faces and meeting new ones. At the end of the ceremony, the distinguished honor graduate presented me with a certificate of achievement, bringing a smile to my face even in retirement.

The following morning, I returned to Fort Huachuca’s Weinstein Complex to do a leadership professional development session with the 305th

Military Intelligence Battalion in what was my headquarters in 2012.

I spent two hours with instructors, cadre, leaders and drill sergeants discussing everything from intelligence structure changes and centralized boards to issues related to soldiers and families that I could speak to as a member of the Senior Enlisted Council—the sergeant major of the Army’s advisory body. We had thought-provoking conversations, and I was challenged and inspired by some of the recommendations, which I will share with colleagues who are still in uniform.

The battalion command team, Lt. Col. Gil Juarez and Command Sgt. Maj. Edson Rodriguez, humbled me at the end with a coin presentation and certificate in front of their soldiers.

I also was able to spend time with leaders from AUSA’s Fort Huachuca-Sierra Vista chapter over breakfast and had dinner with old friends at the garrison command sergeant major’s quarters—right across from the field where I retired.

Some say you can’t go home again, especially once you are on this side of service. I say we must go home. We must continue to lead, inspire and coach with the knowledge we have gained and obstacles we have faced. Also, going home feels great.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra is AUSA’s director of NCO and Soldier Programs.



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra, center, AUSA’s director of NCO and Soldier Programs, conducts a leadership professional development session with the 305th Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. (AUSA PHOTO)

Chapter event connects Army leaders with industry reps

The Association of the U.S. Army's Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore chapter recently supported Army Futures Command and the Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate by hosting its annual Industry Day event at the Columbus Georgia Convention and Trade Center.

"Our AUSA chapter is proud to welcome 570 attendees to the Columbus Iron Works Convention Center for our 25th annual Industry Day,"

Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore

said Steve Hesler, the chapter president, as he kicked off the event. "Our

purpose is to provide our industry partners with a forum to hear the latest priorities and capabilities needed for our ground maneuver forces."

Retired Lt. Gen. Guy Swan, an AUSA senior fellow and former vice president for Education at AUSA's national headquarters, provided attendees with an overview of the association's Leadership Fellows program. Established by AUSA's Center for Leadership, the program provides experts to guide important discussions for AUSA chapters, ROTC cadets and Army units across the country and around the world.

In his keynote address, Douglas Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, discussed priorities and



Brig. Gen. Monte Rone, left, commandant of the Army Infantry School; retired Lt. Gen. Guy Swan, center, an AUSA senior fellow; and Steve Hesler, president of AUSA's Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore chapter, gather at a reception during the chapter's Industry Day event at the Columbus Georgia Convention and Trade Center. (AUSA PHOTO)

strategies for the Army in a resource constrained environment, and Lt. Gen. David Hodne, deputy commanding general for futures and concepts at Futures Command, provided an update on the command's vision for continuous transformation.

The morning's events also included a panel with Brig. Gen. Monte Rone, commandant of the Army Infantry School and director of the Soldier Lethality Cross-Functional Team; Brig. Gen. Michael Simmering, Army Armor School commandant;

Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Norman, director of the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle Cross-Functional Team; and Col. Scott Shaw, director of the Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate.

Over the next two days, companies scheduled one-on-one sessions at Fort Moore, formerly known as Fort Benning, to meet with government representatives.

The best ideas from the Industry Day event will be showcased at the 2024 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., Hesler said.

"Following a 30-day review by industry representatives, the Maneuver Center of Excellence has asked that industry submit their solutions to address the capabilities required for ground maneuver," he said. "After an assessment of those candidate solutions, the Maneuver Capability Development and Integration Directorate will assign tier rankings and recommend to the commander of Fort Moore which solutions will be briefed during the AUSA Annual Meeting in October."

Community Partner Challenge

The following chapters are the February winners of AUSA's Community Partner Challenge in their award categories. Each winner receives \$500 and 5 points toward Best Chapter in their group.

- Fort Novosel-Wiregrass – Award Group 1
- Greater Augusta-Fort Eisenhower – Award Group 2
- Capital District of New York – Award Group 3
- Monmouth – Award Group 4
- Minutemen – Award Group 5

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