



Soldiers keep watch on targets during a joint combat live-fire event using the Gepard air defense system at Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. ELIZABETH BRYSON)

IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 46
APRIL 1, 2021

Army Continues to Refine New PT Test

3

Women Share Their Army Stories

4

Member Benefits

Fitness, Travel Discounts

6



Chapter Highlights

Potomac-Liberty
Braxton Bragg

7

Flat budgets threaten Army growth

While he'd like a bigger Army, Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said, troop levels are unlikely to grow in the face of flat or declining budgets.

Maintaining the current 485,000-person Regular Army is a satisfactory temporary measure to fund modernization and readiness programs when money is tight, McConville said Tuesday during a virtual event hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"I would like to grow it more," he said.

McConville and other senior Army leaders have said the force needs to be bigger, with some previously advocating for an active Army force of more than 540,000.

"The size of the Army should be

determined by the strategy that the policymakers want to execute," McConville said.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the Army was about the same size as it is today—a Regular Army of about 485,000 and a total force of just over 1 million soldiers, McConville said.

To meet the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army was forced to grow and grow quickly to build a force capable of having 720,000 soldiers on active duty—570,000 Regular Army soldiers and 150,000 from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, he said.

"So, you get an idea of what the size could be or how quickly we might need to grow the Army," he said.

For now, 485,000 in the Regular Army is "probably what we can af-

ford," McConville said. "We'll have to see where the budget goes."

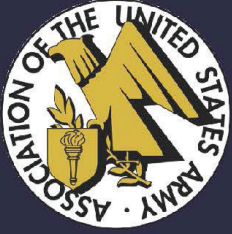
As chief, McConville said he has to look at "the strategy, the priorities."

"We're not going to send anyone into combat who's not ready, so we have to spend money on readiness," he said.

Today's Army is "very ready," he said, when "a few years back, we were not."

But the Army also must modernize.

"I also believe very strongly we must transform the force now, we must modernize it, we must get the force ready for the next 40 years, because our competitors are," McConville said. "If we're going to compete and deter, then we need to maintain the overmatch that we must have as part of the joint force."



Save 25% Off*
federal and state filing.

**AUSA Members can now save more with
TaxAct's® easy-to-use tax filing software.**

With over 80 million federal returns since 2000, TaxAct offers the guidance, support, and accuracy you want and deserve. Now is the time to join and get your maximum refund.

It's never been easier to get started.

For more information please visit

www.taxact.com/AUSA

TaxAct®

*25% offer is only valid until 10/31/21 at 11:55 pm CT for state and federal 2020 online returns and may not be combined with other offers. Price paid is determined at the time of print or e-file and is subject to change without notice. Additional fees apply for state returns. Add sales tax for applicable orders. Intended only for AUSA customers using the offer link provided directly by AUSA to create a new return.

Maximum Refund and \$100k Accuracy Guarantee: If you receive a reduced refund or increased tax liability, or pay penalty or interest because of a TaxAct error, we'll cover such charges and pay you the difference in the refund or liability up to \$100,000. Guarantee only applies to software errors and does not apply to errors attributable to the user. See <https://www.taxact.com/company/accuracy-guarantee> for more information.

The TaxAct® name and logo are registered trademarks of TaxAct, Inc. and are used here with TaxAct's permission.

Major updates help refine new Army Combat Fitness Test

The latest version of the Army Combat Fitness Test will make its official debut with two major updates, senior Army leaders said.

On Thursday, the Army introduced a new performance tier program for the ACFT, and the plank, previously a temporary alternative to the leg tuck event, is now a permanent option.

“As we look at what the ACFT is, it still remains age- and gender-neutral, and every soldier will be expected to meet the same baseline physical standard of 60 points for each event,” Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commanding general of the Army Center for Initial Military Training, said March 22.

The ACFT—which replaced the 40-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test on Oct. 1, 2020—is part of the Army’s effort to instill in soldiers a holistic approach to health and wellness that also prepares them for the demands of the battlefield.

It has six tasks: a three-repetition maximum deadlift, standing power throw, hand release pushups, a two-mile run, a leg tuck or two-minute plank, and the sprint, drag and carry.

Army leaders are continuing to refine the test’s requirements as they compile initial testing data from soldiers across all components.

Under the new tier program, soldiers’ scores—which can range from 360 to 600—will be identified by “gender-informed performance categories,” including platinum, gold, silver, bronze and green, he said.

According to Hibbard, the change “recognizes above average physical performance” and physiological differences between men and women.

Soldiers who perform in the top 1% of their gender will be identified as platinum status, Hibbard said.

The gold, silver and bronze categories identify soldiers who perform in the top 10%, 25% and 50% of their gender, respectively.

Soldiers who have met the mini-



A soldier completes a leg tuck as part of the Army Combat Fitness Test at Katterbach Fitness Center, U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, Germany. (U.S. ARMY/DANI JOHNSON)

mum passing standards will be identified as green, he said.

The Army will review and adjust those standards annually based on the previous year’s ACFT scores, Hibbard said, and new standards for the following year will be shared on Oct. 1.

“If you want to remain in your goal category, for example, you may have to work a little bit harder for the next year to stay in that goal category,” Hibbard said, adding that the annual review will also take into account other conditions, such as a pandemic or surge in global operations.

Leg tuck or plank

Under the second major update, soldiers can declare whether they’ll do a leg tuck or a two-minute plank to demonstrate their core strength as one of the test’s six events.

Before this change, soldiers had to try a leg tuck first. If they failed, they could opt to do the plank and only receive 60 points for passing the event.

Now, the plank can replace the leg tuck for up to the full 100 points.

Hibbard said the leg tuck was the “No. 1 failed event” out of the test’s six events, for both male and female soldiers across all three Army com-

ponents.

The change, he said, also considers soldiers who have been in the Army for 15 to 30 years and are now being “asked to build that upper body strength” for a leg tuck.

Fully validated

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said the newest version of the test, dubbed ACFT 3.0, has been “fully approved” and validated by an independent review by Iowa State University.

While the Army isn’t holding scores against soldiers’ records this year, soldiers are still required to input their ACFT scores into the Digital Training and Management System, known as the “system of record,” Grinston said.

Right now, the scores aren’t linked to anyone’s names, Grinston said, but the information will help the Army decide if it’s “going in the right direction” with the test.

Grinston said the Army is still “on track” to fully implement the ACFT and count scores for the record by April 1, 2022.

“Combat is age- and gender-neutral, and now we have a standard to be a soldier,” Hibbard said.

AUSA webinar highlights service, stories of ‘amazing’ military women

The Association of the U.S. Army hosted four Army veterans who’ve gone beyond the call of service to make sure women’s voices—and their experiences on the front lines—are heard.

“The images of war have been those of men,” Diane Carlson Evans, a former captain in the Army Nurse Corps and founder of the Vietnam Women’s Memorial Project, said March 24 during a panel as part of AUSA’s Thought Leaders webinar series.

“What I realized I needed to do was change that imagery so that people could see ... women were there,” she said.

In 1983, more than a decade after her service as a combat nurse in the burn unit of two evacuation hospitals in Vietnam, Evans set out on a mission to give women in uniform recognition on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Her book, *Healing Wounds: A Vietnam War Combat Nurse’s 10-Year Fight to Win Women a Place of Honor in Washington, D.C.*, highlights not only her own experiences on the front lines, but her fight to earn women in uniform recognition in the nation’s capital.

“It took me 50 years to have the courage to write this story,” Evans said.

The Thought Leaders webinar also featured Eileen Rivers, author of *Beyond the Call: Three Women on the Front Lines in Afghanistan*; Shannon Huffman Polson, author of *The Grit Factor: Courage, Resilience, and Leadership in the Most Male-Dominated Organization in the World*; and Kayla Williams, author of *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army* and *Plenty of Time When We Get Home: Love & Recovery in the Aftermath of War*.

After serving in Iraq, Williams said she wanted to share a “nuanced and detailed account” of her experiences



During the webinar, four authors shared their experiences as women serving in the Army. (U.S. ARMY/LISA BISHOP)

serving in the military.

“I had not grown up hearing stories—intimate, detailed accounts—from other women who had served before or during my own service, and I wanted to open that window,” said Williams, a former Arabic linguist in the Army.

In *Beyond the Call*, Rivers tells the stories of three women in the military, including two Army officers, who worked with women in Afghanistan to gather intelligence on the Taliban as part of the military’s Female Engagement Teams.

Rivers said finding out about the engagement teams was the first time she was “introduced to this idea of women serving in critical roles that men couldn’t fill.”

“I thought, ‘Man, I’m a woman who has served and have never heard of these teams before,’” said Rivers, a former Army Arabic linguist.

“If I haven’t, then I’m sure that there’s a lot of other people also haven’t and who don’t know the amazing, critical work and sacrifices that these women are making,” she said.

The books by these authors are available for purchase here.

AUSAExtra

Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier

Gen. Carter F. Ham, USA, Ret.
President and CEO, AUSA

Lt. Gen. Guy C. Swan III, USA, Ret.
Vice President, Education, AUSA

Luc Dunn
Editor

Desiree Hurlocker
Advertising Manager

Advertising Information Contact:
Fox Associates Inc.
116 W. Kinzie St. • Chicago, IL 60654
Phone: 800-440-0231
Email: adinfo.rmy@foxrep.com

ARTICLES. Articles appearing in AUSA Extra do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the officers or members of the Council of Trustees of AUSA, or its editors. Articles are expressions of personal opinion and should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion of the Department of Defense nor of any branch, command, installation or agency of the Department of Defense. The publication assumes no responsibility for any unsolicited material. Email: extra@ausa.org

ADVERTISING. Neither AUSA Extra, nor its publisher, the Association of the United States Army, makes any representations, warranties or endorsements as to the truth and accuracy of the advertisements appearing herein, and no such representations, warranties or endorsements should be implied or inferred from the appearance of the advertisements in the publication. The advertisers are solely responsible for the contents of such advertisements.

RATES. Individual membership fees payable in advance are \$40 for two years, \$75 for five years, and \$400 for Life Membership. A discounted rate of \$10 for two years is available to members in the ranks of E-1 through E-4, and for service academy and ROTC cadets and OCS candidates. More information is available at our website www.ausa.org; or by emailing membersupport@ausa.org, phoning 855-246-6269, or mailing Fulfillment Manager, P.O. Box 101560, Arlington, VA 22210-0860.

PERK OF THE WEEK

Enjoy discounts on your prescription medications with the pharmacy discount card that’s included with any of the medical discount plans at



www.ausa.org/dma. Save 10% to 85% on most prescriptions at 60,000 retail pharmacies nationwide and 10% to 60% on 30-day mail order prescriptions. Walgreens, Target, CVS and many independent chains participate in the program.

ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY EXCLUSIVE



ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE PLAN (AD&D)

AS AN AUSA MEMBER,
YOU QUALIFY FOR
AFFORDABLE GROUP RATES

WHY INSURE AGAINST ACCIDENTS?

Accidental injuries have become the 3rd leading cause of death in the U.S.* While you can't control what happens in life — you can be better prepared for the things that catch you by surprise.

The AD&D Plan pays cash benefits to your family if you die or suffer a serious injury as a result of a covered accident.

Please act now to enroll in AUSA's AD&D Plan to be prepared for life's surprises.



**ACCEPTANCE
GUARANTEED**



**PROTECTION IS AVAILABLE
UP TO \$250,000**



**NO HEALTH QUESTIONS
TO ANSWER**

VISIT US AT WWW.AUSAINSURANCE.ORG TODAY! OR CALL 1-800-882-5707 FOR MORE INFORMATION

All benefits are subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. Policies underwritten by Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company detail exclusions, limitations, and terms under which the policies may be continued in force or discontinued.

The Hartford® is The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., and its subsidiaries including issuing company Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company, Hartford, CT 06055.

*National Safety Council's *Injury Facts*, 2019 Edition.



50189 ©2020

Accident Form Series includes GBD-1000,
GBD-1300, or state equivalent.

Get fitness, travel discounts with your AUSA membership

By Susan Rubel

Abenity is a members-only site offering Association of the U.S. Army members thousands of discounts on a variety of products and services.

GlobalFit's Gym Network 360 participates in the program, and you can join a gym for as low as \$10 and save with its lowest price guarantee.

Participating gyms include Anytime Fitness, 24 Hour Fitness, Curves, LA Fitness, Gold's Gym and many more. The program also includes discounts for other health-related services like Jazzercise and Jenny Craig.

Sign up at www.ausa.org/abenity.

Road trip

Abenity also features a program where members receive up to 10% off the purchase of a new or used RV.

You can also rent a car using your discounts at Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz or National.

Visit www.ausa.org/savings and click on the logo of your favorite car rental agency. Your discount will automatically apply.

At Avis and Budget, scroll down to see additional offers—like a free upgrade—that can often be combined with your member discount.

For a place to stay, use your discount on Choice Hotels by visiting www.ausa.org/choice or check out our wholesale hotel discount program at www.ausa.org/hotelclub, which includes savings on almost every hotel brand—Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, Sheraton and even boutique hotels.

If you are traveling with a pet, remember that pets stay free at Red Roof Inn, where AUSA members get 20% off—more than the military discount. Visit www.ausa.org/red to activate that discount.

MemberDeals

Use your special MemberDeals dis-



If you are planning a trip with your family, be sure to check out AUSA membership discounts on car rentals, hotels and entertainment. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

counts at www.ausa.org/entertain to find exclusive deals on a variety of things to do.

You can search by type, such as theaters or theme parks, and by city.

For example, I chose San Francisco under “Choose a City”—here are some of the options that came up with a special discount:

- San Francisco Zoo & Gardens.
- Ski Butlers rental gear delivery.
- Go San Francisco Explorer passes.
- San Francisco CityPASS.
- Madame Tussauds.
- Aquarium of the Bay.
- Golden Gate Bay Cruise.
- Blazing Saddles' Golden Gate Bridge bicycle tours.
- San Francisco Ghosts.
- Unlimited Biking e-bike rentals and guided bike tours.
- Urban Adventure Quest.

Virtual events are also often available with a discount.

Check out your destination—or even your own city—and plan an itinerary with your exclusive savings.

Thousands of local deals at locations like restaurants and service stations can also be found with Abenity.

Download the Abenity app, and

you'll receive notifications whenever you are near a good local restaurant deal on your trip.

TaxAct for small businesses

TaxAct is an AUSA affinity partner that provides members 25% off federal and state filings. Just visit www.taxact.com/ausa for more information and to get started.

For our community partners and small business owners, that discount is now being extended to small business filings as well.

Visit www.ausa.org/taxbus for 25% off TaxAct Business.

TaxAct's suite of tax prep products provides easy and comprehensive step-by-step guidance to help you complete your taxes—and get the best possible results—without paying a premium price.

Should you need it, you can connect with certified professional accountants for real-time, one-on-one tax support.

Go to www.ausa.org/savings to access these and all your AUSA member discounts.

Susan Rubel is AUSA's Insurance and Affinity Programs Director.

Retired Army officer shares her story with AUSA members

A retired Army officer who went on to become a successful entrepreneur shared her story during a recent virtual meeting hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Potomac-Liberty chapter at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Retired Maj. Tabatha Turman enlisted in the Army Reserve out of high school and completed initial entry training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, she said.

Potomac-Liberty

As an NCO, she deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield before attending college in 1996 as an ROTC cadet.

Originally, Turman said, she planned to remain in the Reserve as an officer, but she decided to transfer to the active Army after talking to her family.

Then came the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and Turman was deployed to Iraq in 2004 as a finance commander with the 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas.

After a year of "running missions in and out of several [forward operating bases] in Iraq, I came back



Retired Maj. Tabatha Turman speaks to members of AUSA's Potomac-Liberty chapter during a virtual meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

in 2005 and decided to hang up my boots" and spend more time with her children, Turman said.

In 2007, Turman founded Integrated Financial and Accounting Solutions, which has since become a successful contractor for DoD and other federal agencies.

"I'm very proud of the individuals that we've brought on board over the last 14 years who have helped catapult us to the next level," she said.

One challenge she had to overcome as a leader in both the military and civilian sectors is temperance, Turman said.

"If I have a vision, I think everyone around me is supposed to rally and move at a gazelle's pace," she said.

As a leader, "you have to meet people where they are ... give them milestones to report back on and let them execute," Turman said. "I've learned to temper myself in that regard."

Chapter NCO vice president speaks to PSYOP soldiers

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer of the Association of the U.S. Army's Braxton Bragg chapter recently conducted an

Braxton Bragg

NCO professional development session with students training to become psychological operations soldiers at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Spencer, the chapter's vice president of NCO and Soldier Programs and an AUSA senior fellow, talked about Army leadership during the hourlong presentation.

He also provided the soldiers with information about AUSA, according to the chapter's Facebook page.



AUSA's retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, center, spoke about leadership during the professional development session. (AUSA PHOTO)



THE ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY PRESENTS

DR. JAMES HELIS



Director, Army Resilience Directorate

During this session, Dr. James Helis, Army Resilience Director, will discuss the Army's efforts to continuously improve sexual assault, sexual harassment and associated retaliation prevention efforts. He will explain how eliminating sexual offenses promotes cohesion and ensures the readiness of Army formations. Dr. Helis will discuss how the Army ensures professional, compassionate, and comprehensive care and support to members of the Army team when sexual harassment or sexual assault incidents do occur.



JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

The webinar room will open at 1355.

Didn't catch it? The video will be available on our YouTube page the following day.



THURSDAY, 8 APRIL
1400-1500 EST

Part of the Association of the United States Army's

THOUGHTLEADERS

WEBINAR SERIES



**ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

LEARN MORE & REGISTER ONLINE AT

WWW.AUSA.ORG/MEET