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Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nathan Shea, assigned to the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, operates a first-person view drone March 25 during a partnership event at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. THOMAS DIXON)

George: Soldiers shaping future force

While gathering insights from its initial transforming in contact brigades, the Army is adjusting in real time to shape the future of the force, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said during Defense One's 2025 State of Defense series.

"In the Army, we like to say they're only lessons observed, they're not lessons learned, until we actually change how we train and operate, change how we organize, and then change how we buy things," he said. "I think that that's the most exciting thing, is that we're seeing changes in weeks and months, rather than waiting years to advance."

Following experimentation with each transforming in contact brigade,

the Army is looking to tailor its equipment investments to the environments that soldiers will operate in.

"What we're going to buy for our formations, they are going to be a little bit different," George said. "A good example is, we've got units that operate up in the Arctic. You need different kit when you're going to operate up in the Arctic. Drones work differently up there. The network works differently up there. Same thing in the Pacific."

As it modernizes, the service is in the process of reviewing "everything across the Army" and making "tough choices" as it prioritizes "war-winning capabilities," George said.

As technology advances and excess is removed, future formations

will be increasingly mobile. "Where we typically had big satellite dishes, server stacks and all kinds of extra vehicles, we're now talking about a commander that's on the field and a staff that is basically operating off of tablets and software-defined radios and very simple kit, which will make us much more mobile, much more lower signature," he said.

Units across the Army are eager to get involved with the transforming in contact initiative, George said. "The feedback that I generally get from everybody ... is they want their unit to be a part of this, and they want to go faster. I think that's one of the big lessons that we're learning," he said. "Our soldiers are ready for it, and they're very adaptive."



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Rainey: Troops are ‘phenomenally adept’ at innovating

Soldiers’ ingenuity and curiosity are informing and driving Army transformation efforts, the commander of Army Futures Command said.

Through the Army’s transforming in contact initiative, “we’ve put kit in the hands of soldiers, and [we’re] getting user feedback,” Gen. James Rainey said.

“The closer you are to getting shot at, the better you are at innovating,” he said. The good news is today’s young soldiers are “phenomenally adept” at innovating. “It’s inherent,” Rainey said.

Speaking March 26 during a Strategic Landpower Dialogue event co-hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Rainey said today’s soldiers also are adaptable. “If you bring a piece of technology and you give it to a soldier, and it takes them more than eight hours to figure out, you’ve probably got a garbage product,” Rainey said.

Soldiers are innovating “all over



Soldiers assigned to the 188th Infantry Brigade troubleshoot a Parrot ANAFI USA small unmanned aircraft system March 20 during field training at Fort Stewart, Georgia. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. MARLANA CURETON)

the force. It’s happening naturally,” Rainey said.

During the Strategic Landpower Dialogue, which took place in conjunction with AUSA’s Global Force Symposium and Exposition in Huntsville, Alabama, marking the first time the popular dialogue series was held outside of Washington, D.C., Rainey also talked about the challenges facing the Army and joint force.

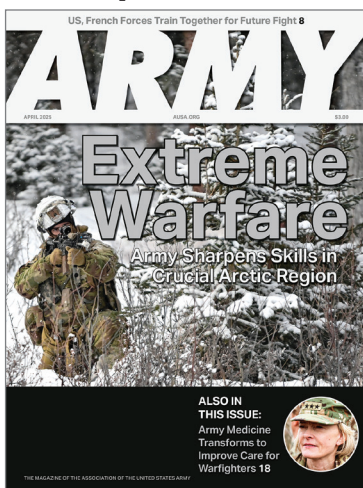
“We’re at the most disruptive point in time in the history of warfare,” Rainey said. “The speed and scale of it is unprecedented.”

As the Army looks for new technology, “the key characteristic we want to build into our forces is adaptability,” Rainey said. The challenge for the U.S. joint force is to look at what’s happening in Gaza and Ukraine and determine which lessons must be learned and applied, he said.

“No Army leader wants to see a U.S. rifle squad helpless against a swarm of drones,” Rainey said.

Rainey said he is optimistic that the Army and industry will work together to solve the challenges facing the force today. “We’ve got to be more iterative and more open with industry and let industry do what they’re good at,” he said. “We need to lean into the acquisition authorities we have and look for new approaches. I’m an optimist. You have to be an optimist to be a leader in combat. Nobody likes to follow a pessimist around in a gunfight.”

ARMY magazine April issue



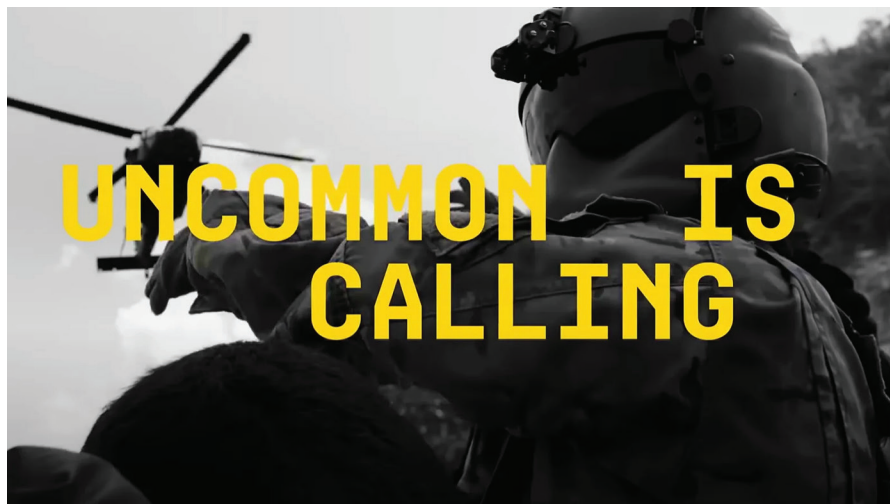
AUSA Basic Members can now view a selection of articles from the April issue of *ARMY* magazine. To read the articles, [click here](#).

Mingus speaks to Army fellows at AUSA



Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. James Mingus addresses Army fellows during a breakfast on Wednesday at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

'Uncommon' ad campaign highlights Army National Guard service



A new Army National Guard marketing campaign challenges young people to see themselves as becoming "uncommon" through part-time service in uniform.

Titled "Uncommon is Calling," the campaign features five short black-and-white films starring Army National Guard soldiers working in simulated emergency scenarios that depict the types of missions Guard troops are called upon to do, according to an Army news release.

"Many young people are unaware that they can serve in the Army part-time," Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, chief of the Army Enterprise Marketing Office, said in the March 17 release. "To bridge this gap, 'Uncommon is Calling' offers youth a new perspective on Army service by presenting the experiences, flexibility and local impact that can only be achieved as part of the Army National Guard."

The main film, titled "Uncommon is Calling," is 60 seconds and depicts soldiers in their regular civilian jobs while a narrator asks, "Who are you not to be uncommon? Who are you not to be one in a million, a hundred million?" It's followed by the statement, "Your day job is what you do, but it doesn't define you."

Four variations of the same film are 30-second productions, each focusing on the tasks Army National Guard soldiers perform in the nation's 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia.

The films' visuals and distinct typography are designed to reach a new generation of prospective soldiers and showcase how the Army National Guard is distinct from other paths to military service, the release says.

"By showing the variety of capabilities and extraordinary blend of skills National Guard soldiers can gain through service, we are inspiring the next generation of soldiers who seek exciting challenges, opportunities for growth, and a deep sense of purpose," Gant said in the release.

Audiences will see "Uncommon is Calling" across a variety of channels and distribution methods, including streaming platforms like MAX, CBS and ESPN, and digital platforms like YouTube, Meta, Reddit, LinkedIn and NationalGuard.com, according to the release.

Correction

A photo caption on page 6 in the March 28 issue of *AUSA Extra* misidentified a vehicle. It was an M109A6 Paladin.

AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier*

Gen. Bob Brown, USA Ret.
President and CEO, AUSA

Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, USA Ret.
Vice President, Leadership and 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

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MEMBERSHIP RATES. To celebrate the U.S. Army's 250th birthday, from April 1, 2025, to Dec. 31, 2025, membership rates are reduced to a five-year Premium rate of \$50 and a two-year Premium rate of \$30. Lifetime membership is \$250. A special Premium rate of \$10 for two years is open to E1-E4 and cadets only. Two-year Basic membership with select benefits is free. Learn more at www.ausa.org/join.

PERK OF THE WEEK

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AUSA members save 25% when filing federal and state returns with TaxAct. The company assures that you'll get your maximum tax refund using calculations that are 100% correct, backed by \$100,000. Visit www.ausa.org/tax for personal filings and www.taxact.com/ausasmb for small-business filings.

Army launches ride-share pilot program at 6 installations

The Army has launched a ride-share pilot program across six installations to increase access for soldiers and families who live on post.

“This program demonstrates our commitment to addressing the challenges faced by our military communities,” Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said in an Army news release. “Through collaboration with the ride-share industry, we’re able to provide our soldiers and their families with safe, reliable and convenient transportation options that support their unique needs and enhance their overall quality of life.”

The two-month pilot program will standardize access procedures and requirements to safely increase ridership and promote additional transportation options for more than 600,000 service members, retirees



The two-month pilot program will standardize access procedures and requirements to safely increase ridership and promote transportation options for service members, retirees and civilians. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

and civilians across the six installations, according to the news release. The installations included in the pilot are Fort Bliss, Texas, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, and Schofield Barracks, Fort Shafter and Tripler

Army Medical Center in Hawaii.

Visitors, including taxi and ride-share drivers, will undergo identity proofing and vetting through the FBI’s National Crime Information Center and Terrorist Screening Database, according to the news release. Drivers also will be required to show the ride-share request on their smartphones or identify the person and building for the pickup.

If the program is successful, the Army plans to expand the program to more installations throughout the U.S., according to the news release.

The pilot aims to simplify transportation onto installations in a safe way, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer said. “We heard you and agree, it shouldn’t be so hard to coordinate transportation onto our installations, but also in and around some of our larger ones,” he said.

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Collaboration builds advocacy, support for Total Army

In support of the Association of the U.S. Army's mission to advocate on behalf of soldiers, veterans and families, AUSA's Government Affairs team works with like-minded organizations to grow support for the Total Army.

Recently, we highlighted our outreach work during a discussion with the National Guard Association of the United States. The forum was

Government Affairs

hosted by the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States as part of its annual Legislative Workshop. We also talked about AUSA's advocacy work to the American Legion Post at Vinson Hall in McLean, Virginia.

Initiatives like these are critical to building support for a strong national defense.

The Government Affairs team continues to meet with congressional staff to provide recommendations on supporting and enabling a strong Army. In our meetings, we emphasize the Army's important role in the Indo-Pacific, and recommend Congress support Army priorities including warfighting, transformation and improving quality of life for soldiers and their families.

We also continue to work on AUSA's 2025 Focus Areas—our overarching legislative recommendations. This year, we have made some updates and adjusted the format to better reflect AUSA's support for the Total Army given the new administration and Congress, and to reflect this year's very significant 250th Army birthday. We hope to announce those Focus Areas soon.

On Capitol Hill, things are busy, with the Senate and the House of Representatives in session this week.

A yearlong continuing resolution was signed into law on March 15, preventing a damaging government shutdown. However, this is the first time the Army and DoD are operat-



Retired Maj. Tom McCuin, left, AUSA's deputy director of media operations and deputy editor of *ARMY* magazine, and Mark Haaland, center, the association's Government Affairs director, address a Legislative Workshop hosted by the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States. (EANGUS PHOTO)

ing under a full-year stopgap funding measure.

The Senate continues to process executive branch nominations and hold confirmation hearings for appointees. The Senate and House Armed Services Committees also have held posture hearings that are part of the annual authorizations process. You can view those hearings [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.



AUSA continues to recommend that Congress support Army priorities including warfighting, transformation and improving quality of life for soldiers and their families. (ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL/THOMAS HATZENBUHLER)

The next big marker is the release of the president's budget request. It is common for the request to be provided to Congress late in the first year of a new administration, and we anticipate it will likely be provided in April or early May.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who has been reaching out to their congressional leaders to advocate for the Total Army. You are helping to make a difference by building awareness and support for the Total Army with lawmakers.

For others who want to help, we welcome your support. You can build momentum for quick passage of the fiscal 2026 National Defense Authorization Act and the 12 appropriations bills—especially defense, military construction and veterans affairs—by contacting your representatives and senators or meeting with them. We encourage you to meet with lawmakers or their staff as a constituent and AUSA member in support of the Total Army and advocate for AUSA's Focus Areas.

Mark Haaland is AUSA's Government Affairs director.

Professional development, health screening discounts

The Association of the U.S. Army offers members several opportunities and options for professional development.

Professional certifications like Project Management Professional, Agile, Lean Six Sigma and Change Management are fast, low-cost ways to set yourself up for success.

PM-ProLearn is a top-three training partner globally with the Project Management Institute and has been an AUSA member benefit partner for some time.

PM-ProLearn's training includes:

- Live instruction.
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AUSA members receive 25% off—a \$500 discount. Veterans and families may have access to free funding through the Post-9/11 GI Bill,

Veteran Readiness and Employment, DoD's Tuition Assistance Program, the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program, the My Career Advancement Account Scholarship and other programs.

Another resource is the Army Credentialing Assistance through Army Ignited, which remains a powerful education program for soldiers. Officers may be losing this benefit in May and should sign up now to be grandfathered into the program.

Soldiers can receive up to \$12,000 across their careers, capped at \$2,000 per fiscal year. This is a tremendous benefit, enough to earn several certifications or expose soldiers to various learning opportunities.

The only changes for PM-ProLearn students are that you can only earn one certification a year, and there's a minor change to the exam process.

But don't worry—PM-ProLearn



All AUSA members receive a 25% discount on professional certification training from PM-ProLearn, which can provide a competitive edge for many careers. (COURTESY PHOTO)

only charges \$5 for every exam to remove any risk.

Certifications provide a competitive edge. Sign up to speak with an adviser at www.pm-prolearn.com/ausa.

Health screening discounts

AUSA recently partnered with Life Line Screening to provide members with a discount on preventive health screenings. These are affordable, state-of-the-art screenings that can detect potential health issues before they become serious. They are painless and non-invasive and test for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, stroke risk, peripheral arterial disease, osteoporosis and more.

You may wonder how AUSA chooses programs to add to its member benefits. I'd like to share a quick story to highlight how Life Line Screening made the cut.

Some time ago, when I held a similar position with a different military association, a staff member asked for the morning off for some quick medical screenings. She was an older woman who wasn't experiencing any medical issues. She was just curious and wanted to check things out.

She did not return to the office that day. The screening discovered an aortic aneurism, and she was told to see her doctor right away. She was able to see her doctor that afternoon and was scheduled for surgery the following day.

It is not an exaggeration to say she may have died without the screening.

Most screenings are not going to find something significant. In fact, only 2.5 % will be critical, and 28.7% will be considered abnormal with a recommendation to see your doctor, according to data from Life Line Screening.

To learn more, visit www.lifeline-screening.com/partner/ausa or call 1-888-711-0225 and give the phone agent the priority code BDHW354.

A four-test package costs is \$135—a 15% discount. It includes a carotid artery scan and peripheral arterial disease, abdominal aortic aneurysm and atrial fibrillation tests.

Another test grouping includes osteoporosis screening and is 26% off for AUSA members.

Susan Rubel is AUSA's Association and Affinity Partnerships director.

Chapter donation provides updated day room for soldiers

Officials at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, recently unveiled a refurbished day room in the installation's unaccompanied housing area that was made possible by a donation from the Association of the U.S. Army's MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen chapter.

The new facility, designed as a welcoming space for soldiers to relax and connect, was formally dedicated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the chapter that was attended by military leaders, service members and community partners.

During the ceremony, Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Denson stressed the importance of the day room as a

MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen

place for soldiers to connect. "Many times, soldiers are isolated in their individual rooms and miss the opportunity to build strong relationships. The new day room will give the space needed to build unity, strong teams and solve problems that they might be experiencing," Denson said, according to an Army news release.

The chapter's donation allowed installation leaders to respond quickly to meet soldiers' needs, Den-



Soldiers enjoy new furnishings and amenities in a refurbished day room in the unaccompanied housing area at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, made possible by a donation from AUSA's MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen chapter. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

son said. "We could action [the day room] quickly for America's sons and daughters without waiting on funding," he said, according to the Army.

The day room features modern amenities and comfortable gathering areas intended for off-duty relaxation and social interaction among soldiers in unaccompanied housing.

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, attendees toured the renovated facility. Spc. McKinney Credit, assigned

to the Army Test and Evaluation Command, said he is now "looking forward to hang out with the soldiers who live [there]," according to the release.

Leaders in attendance said the AUSA chapter's donation underscores a shared commitment to the well-being of the Army community, and investment in quality living spaces is a vital part of sustaining morale and readiness at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Chapter representatives expressed pride in supporting the project, as Denson toured the facility with one chapter member who described the new space as "pretty awesome."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, post leaders expressed their commitment to continue exploring ways to enhance the quality of life for all personnel and invest in the welfare of the military community. Speaking to the soldiers in attendance, Garrison Commander Col. Phil Mundweil said, "Your hard work and sacrifices are the backbone of our mission, and we are committed to ensuring that you have every resource necessary to succeed both on and off duty," according to the Army.



Retired Col. Robert Gutjahr, president of AUSA's MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen chapter, speaks with Aberdeen Proving Ground Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Denson in the new day room for soldiers made possible by a donation from the chapter. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

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