



Soldiers at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, test their proficiency in basic infantry and soldier tasks in the hopes of earning the Expert Infantryman Badge or Expert Soldier Badge. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. JESSICA SCOTT)

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 MAY 6, 2021 Legendary Ranger to **Receive Medal of Honor** 3 **Soldiers Prepare to Transfer to Space Force** 4 **Government Affairs** Budget Markup Delayed 6 **Member Benefits** Vacations, Mother's Day Gifts 7 **Chapter Highlights** Tobyhanna Army Depot Fort Jackson-Palmetto State

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## Army leaders discuss budget concerns

he Army "is in a great place, but we still have significant work to do," Acting Army Secretary John Whitley said Wednesday before the House Appropriations defense subcommittee.

Whitley, who continues to serve while the Senate considers the nomination of Christine Wormuth to be the next Army secretary and first woman to serve in the post, said the Army is a leader in defense technology and concepts and is transforming to prepare for all-domain and joint warfighting, but its gains in readiness and modernization require steady funding and support to survive.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. James Mc-Conville said he'd "like to see a larger Army if demands remain the same" to reduce stress and operating tempo on Regular Army and reserve units. He also knows that will be difficult to afford, so he is hoping to at least keep current personnel levels.

Funding for troops and training is important, McConville said, warning of the readiness gap that can quickly grow if funds are reduced.

"Our Army is overextended today," Whitley said. "The Army is in a very good place today, but to get there we took risk," he said, acknowledging gains "could be lost very quickly" without sufficient and timely funding.

Modernization will remain a priority, Whitley said, but other things could suffer.

"We believe we are setting the right way ahead for the Army," McConville said, pledging to tell Congress when he sees priorities being harmed.

Normally, Army leaders appearing before the House panel would be dis-

cussing the upcoming defense budget, but the fiscal 2022 budget has not yet been submitted to Congress.

The White House is proposing a \$715 billion defense budget for 2022, a slight increase from the 2021 budget that doesn't keep pace with inflation.

Rep. Betty McCollum, subcommittee chairwoman, said money remains a key issue.

"Fiscal year 2022 could be a challenging year for the Army," she warned, adding this makes her particularly interested in what's commonly known as "Night Court," an Army-created process to identify lower-priority programs that can be eliminated or reduced to partly fund modernization and transformation.

Whitley and McConville said the effort, which has already saved more than \$35 billion, will continue.

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## 70 years later, Ranger legend will receive Medal of Honor

etired Col. Ralph Puckett, a legendary Army Ranger highly decorated for valor in Korea and Vietnam, will receive the Medal of Honor for his actions in November 1950 during the Korean War.

President Joe Biden called Puckett, 94, on April 30 to inform him that he would receive the nation's highest award for valor, *The Washington Post* reported.

The award would make Puckett one of the most highly decorated soldiers in U.S. history.

Puckett is being honored for his actions at the beginning of the surprise Chinese intervention in the conflict, which "changed the entire complexity of the war," according to the Army.

On Nov. 25, 1950, Puckett was commanding the Eighth Army Ranger Company, which had seized Hill 205 at the point of the 25th Infantry Division's advance.

The unit was cut off from friendly forces and surrounded unexpectedly by large numbers of Chinese soldiers.

"I felt all alone, but totally focused on my direct responsibilities and prepared to hold the high ground," Puckett said in an Army news story.

He was wounded by a hand grenade during the first Chinese assault on the hill, and twice more during



Retired Col. Ralph Puckett speaks to soldiers during the Army's 2021 Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Georgia. (U.S. ARMY/MARKEITH HORACE)

the battle. Despite his wounds, Puckett continuously braved enemy fire to check on his soldiers and directed "danger close" artillery strikes near his own position as Chinese soldiers threatened to overwhelm his company, the *Post* reported.

After repulsing several waves of attacks for nearly five hours, the barely conscious Puckett was forced to order a retreat. Two of his Rangers, Pfcs. David Pollock and Billy Walls, carried him to safety.



Then-Capt. Ralph Puckett poses for a photo after recovering from wounds he suffered in Korea. (COURTESY PHOTO)

"Colonel (R) Ralph Puckett is a true hero. His actions on Hill 205 at the start of the Battle of the Chongchon River, rushing through intense enemy fire to check on his Soldiers saved many lives. We should all be proud of his actions and strive to emulate his noble legacy," Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville tweeted.

Puckett would earn the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions that night. He would go on to earn a second Distinguished Service Cross and two Silver Stars for actions during the Vietnam War.

He also received five Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in combat and two Bronze Star Medals with V device for valor, the *Post* reported.

After retiring from the Army in 1971, Puckett remained active in military affairs.

Most recently, he spoke at the Army's Best Ranger Competition on April 16 at Fort Benning, Georgia.

"Thank you for being who you are and doing what you're doing," Puckett told the soldiers competing in the three-day event.

"You set the standard for the Army. ... I appreciate all you do for our Army and our country."

# Army space capabilities critical to operations on future battlefield

rmy Space and Missile Defense Command is focused on putting "people first" as its top general aims to ensure soldiers who transfer to the U.S. Space Force "are taken care of."

"People will take care of the mission because we will take care of the people," Lt. Gen. Daniel Karbler, commanding general of Space and Missile Defense Command and the Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense, said Tuesday.

"If we go in with that mindset, the transfer over to Space Force will be fine," he said.

Speaking during The AUSA Noon Report, hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army, Karbler said his command is working closely with the Space Force to make sure some logistics—such as how promotions, assignments and reenlistments will be done—are "understood by everybody and agreed" upon.

So far, he said, plans are "working very smoothly with the Space Force."

Space Force, the new and sixth branch of the military, was established Dec. 20, 2019, within the Department of the Air Force.

As the service grows, plans call for DoD to consolidate some space missions from across the military into the Space Force.

Karbler said Space and Missile Defense Command will continue to "play a key role" in future strategic deterrence. The other top priority, Karbler said, is taking care of the command's mission.

Army space capabilities are critical to successful ground combat operations, and their importance will only grow as the force transforms for the future.

Integrating space with land force operations will become increasingly important as the Army relies more and more on satellite communica-



Lt. Gen. Daniel Karbler, commanding general of Army Space and Missile Defense Command. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. ZACHARY SHEELY)

tions, GPS, electronic warfare, missile warning and surveillance capabilities.

Karbler said one of the highlights of Space Force is the way it's "reenergizing space," noting that he sees the mission growing.

Col. Andrew Morgan, an emergency room physician and West Point graduate who was selected by NASA to join its astronaut corps in 2013, joined Karbler for the AUSA webinar.

In April 2020, Morgan completed a nine-month tour on the International Space Station, where he served as a flight engineer and contributed to hundreds of science experiments and completed seven spacewalks totaling almost 46 hours.

Morgan said the astronaut program is getting ready to select its next class for the first time since 2017, when it received almost 18,000 applications. Only 12 were chosen, including Army Lt. Col. Frank Rubio, he said.

For the next class, Morgan said, soldiers from any specialty, background or rank are eligible to apply.

The Army, he said, provides "a little bit of bare bones screening at the beginning" of the application process before NASA selects candidates "without respect to the rank or background."



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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

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#### PERK OF THE WEEK



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## AUSA board members recognized on list of top executives

wo members of the Association of the U.S. Army's Board of Directors have once again made the "Wash100" list of influential executives in Washington, D.C.

Also making this year's list are Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Army Gen. Paul Nakasone, commander of the U.S. Cyber Command and director of the National Security Agency.

Wash100 is compiled by Executive Mosaic, an international leadership and media company based in Virginia, and then voted on to see who ranks at the top. This is the eighth year for the awards.

Phebe Novakovic, chairman of the AUSA board, makes the list for the seventh time. As General Dynamics' chairman and CEO, Novakovic was selected for the Wash100 list for leading company initiatives in meeting federal



Phebe Novakovic. (AUSA PHOTO)

government requirements and helping defend national security interests, according to Executive Mosaic.

AUSA board member Leanne Caret, president and CEO of Boeing Defense, Space and Security, is on the Wash100 list for the fifth consecutive time.

She is being lauded for driving innovative solutions across the technology and defense landscape, as well as spearheading investments to grow the Boeing Defense, Space and Security business unit, according to the list.

Austin, a retired Army general who has been defense secretary since January, makes his debut this year on the Wash100 list.

He is lauded for his focus on innovation to ensure U.S. tech dominance, driving collaboration between federal and state leaders, and advancing battlefield networks and artificial intelligence technologies to succeed in the future, according to the list.

This is Nakasone's fifth consecutive appearance on the Wash100 list.

This year, he is being recognized for his role in helping the military increase its agility across the cyber domain, according to the list.

The full Wash100 list is available here.



## Defense hearings continue despite 2022 budget delays

#### By Mark Haaland

ongressional hearings on national security topics and confirmation hearings for DoD nominees continue at a brisk pace.

Combatant commanders have been providing testimony in both open and closed sessions with the Senate and House armed services committees, and this week the House Appropriations subcommittee on defense held

#### Government Affairs

a hearing on the Army's fiscal 2022 budget request. We are not sure

how informative these hearings will be since the Pentagon has not released any budget details.

However, the Army should be able to discuss its priorities for fiscal 2022 in the context of the national security guidance provided by the White House here. Last week, Sen. Jack Reed, Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, announced the committee will markup the National Defense Authorization Act in July. This typically happens earlier in the year, but Reed noted that delaying the markup will allow more time for confirmation hearings and national security and budget-related hearings, he said.

The Senate Appropriations Committee typically completes its markup on defense and military construction appropriations legislation after the Senate Armed Services Committee, which helps align the two legislative actions.

But this year may be different, with the appropriations committee possibly beginning its markup in July as well because of the delay in the DoD and Army budgets.

With August traditionally being a

recess month for Congress, the appropriations committee will hopefully seek to complete its markup before then so September can be used for conference and floor time to pass the final measures.

The bottom line is the Senate will be hard-pressed to complete the defense and military construction appropriations bills in time for fiscal 2022, which begins Oct. 1.

In the House, the House Armed Services Committee does not have a role in the confirmation process, so it does not have the same pressures to delay its markup. By nature of congressional rules, the House can clear the floor and pass its NDAA legislation more quickly than the Senate.

This is true for House Appropriations as well, so the House should be able to pass its NDAA and defense

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## AUSA members save on vacations, Mother's Day gifts

**By Susan Rubel** 

've been following all the rules during the pandemic—staying home and staying masked—and the Association of the U.S. Army staff has been working remotely for more than a year.

I love my home, but I am ready to go somewhere and do something.

Recently, I heard on the news that people are booking their vacations now. Hotels are filling up fast, and there's a shortage of rental cars as companies work to replenish their inventory.

Be sure to book your trip soon and use your AUSA member savings.

AUSA members get car rental dis-

#### Member Benefits

counts at Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz and National. Visit

www.ausa.org/savings and click on the company you prefer.

If you're using Avis or Budget, scroll to the bottom of those web sites and get a coupon for even more savings.

Don't forget to check out the vacation hotel savings I mentioned in my column last month.

Click on the Choice or Red Roof logos here for immediate savings at those brands, or access savings at almost all hotel brands including Marriott, Hilton, Sheraton, many boutique hotels and more at our wholesale hotel pricing partner.

When you see a comparison to an "internet price," it is showing prices from Expedia.

#### **Armed Forces Vacation Club**

One of my favorite programs is the Armed Forces Vacation Club. Now, because of an affinity relationship, all AUSA members and their families are eligible to participate, regardless of military service.

AFVC is an exceptional value because you can access vacant timeshare resorts around the world for just \$379 a week.



Remember to use your AUSA member discounts when purchasing gifts for Mother's Day and booking vacations, hotels and car rentals. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

The price is the same whether it's a hotel room or a three-bedroom location, and the rate is per accommodation, not per person.

I have used AFVC many times. When my kids were young, we stayed in a gorgeous two-bedroom timeshare near Disney World with a jacuzzi and a kitchen.

All-inclusive options in Mexico are also part of the inventory, but the cost for food and drinks will be added.

Visit www.afvclub.com and choose "AUSA Member" from the eligibility dropdown menu.

#### Don't forget about mom

Sunday is Mother's Day. Did you wait until the last minute?

Remember to use your AUSA member codes at these places:

- 1-800-baskets.com 18BARMY10
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- Simply Chocolate SCARMY10
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- Wolferman's Bakery-WFARMY15

Also, through our relationship with Abenity, members have access to additional savings at thousands of retailers.

Mother's Day savings include 20%

off 1-800-flowers.com and 30% off Teleflora, Personalization Mall, Edible Arrangements, Godiva Chocolates, PaintYourLife, NutriBullet, HelloFresh, WOW Skin Science, Spafinder, FabFitFun, Arctic Zone and much more.

As a mom expecting something fabulous for Mother's Day, I certainly wouldn't mind a new iPad or laptop.

Your discounts at Apple, Dell and HP are available at www.ausa.org/ savings.

While you're doing your spring cleaning, if you decide a new appliance or two is in order, you get substantial savings on GE appliances.

This is a relatively new program, and I have heard from a few AUSA members that they got excellent savings on their new appliances.

Go to www.ausa.org/ge and compare for yourself.

Lastly, I'll mention your Sam's Club discount since so many members ask about it. You can click on the Sam's Club logo on the savings page to get an annual membership for \$24.88.

Feel free to contact me at srubel@ ausa.org if you have any questions.

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

#### **Government Affairs**

From Page 6

and military construction appropriations in time for the August recess.

The Association of the U.S Army has written to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in support of quality and accessible health care for our soldiers, families and retirees.

As the nation makes progress fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, AUSA has recommended a comprehensive reassessment of planned reductions to military medical positions and the consolidation of military treatment facilities to make sure health care services are not reduced or made more complicated and expensive.

Another priority AUSA is supporting is the RECRUIT Act, which provides tax credit incentives to small-business employers of National Guard and Army Reserve personnel.

Reps. Tim Ryan and Steven Palazzo are sponsors of this bill.



National Guard soldiers demonstrate how to fire a mortar round for Kentucky employers during an event at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SPC. JOHN STEPHENS)

We believe this important legislation would be helpful for small-business employers and help maintain readiness. AUSA is supporting the RECRUIT Act along with other associations in The Military Coalition. Look for next month's column for additional advocacy efforts by AUSA in support of the Total Army.

**Mark Haaland** is AUSA's Government Affairs Director.



## **109th Infantry Regiment Association honors AUSA chapter**

he Association of the U.S. Army's Tobyhanna Army Depot chapter recently was recognized by the 109th Infantry Regiment Association for its "steadfast and continued support to the soldiers and families of the 109th Infantry Regiment" throughout the greater Scranton, Pennsylvania, area.

#### Tobyhanna Army Depot

Retired Maj. Mike Jones of the 109th Infantry Regiment Association presented a plaque with the

regimental colors to retired Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Spencer, president of the AUSA chapter.

The AUSA chapter "has been a valuable partner with the 109th Infantry Regiment Association, which provides support directly to our Gold Star families, our wounded warriors, drilling members and veterans of the 109th Infantry Regiment," the regiment association said in a statement.

Primarily, the 109th Infantry



Retired Maj. Mike Jones of the 109th Infantry Regiment Association, left, presents a plaque to retired Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Spencer, president of the AUSA chapter. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Regiment Association focuses on providing educational assistance in the form of a Legacy Scholarship Program for children of 109th Infantry Regiment Gold Star families.

Additional support is provided to Pennsylvania Wounded Warriors, Inc., and to Camp Freedom, an ad-

venture camp "for individuals with disabilities, including veterans and first responders, their families, and Gold Star families which provides quality hunting, shooting sports, fishing, camping, hiking, biking, and other year-round outdoor activities," according to the camp's website.

## Chapter president recognized as Sheriff of the Year

By W. Thomas Smith Jr.

eon Lott, president of the Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Jackson-Palmetto State chapter, has been named the 2021 Sheriff of the Year by the National Sheriffs' Association.

Officially titled the Ferris E. Lucas Award for Sheriff of the Year, the award will be presented during the

#### Fort Jackson-Palmetto State

sheriffs' association's annual convention in June.

"This is a tre-

mendous honor both personally and for the state of South Carolina," Lott said.

"This is the first time a sheriff from S.C. has been named national Sheriff of the Year. And to be recognized by this 81-year-old organization with a history going back to the 19th century in which some of the



Sheriff Leon Lott, president of AUSA's Fort Jackson-Palmetto State chapter. (AUSA/W. THOMAS SMITH JR.)

most important local and national law enforcement policy has been legislated makes it all the more rewarding to me," he said.

The decision to recognize Lott with the honor followed a lengthy and exacting nomination and selection process.

Lott, who has served since 1997 as sheriff of Richland County, South Carolina, also commands the all-volunteer South Carolina State Guard. He was sworn in as sheriff for a seventh consecutive term on Jan. 5.

Founded in 1940, the Alexandria, Virginia-based National Sheriffs' Association represents thousands of sheriffs, deputies and other law enforcement and public safety professionals.

The association's roots stretch back to the Interstate Sheriffs' Association founded in Minnesota and surrounding states in 1888.

The Sheriff of the Year award was established in 1995.

W. Thomas Smith Jr. is a member of AUSA's Fort Jackson-Palmetto State chapter.

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