



The Pentagon has instituted a number of new safety measures as thousands of military families prepare to move in the next few months. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. ALEXANDER RECTOR)

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DoD preps for 'new normal,' PCS season

The military is putting in place increased safety measures to protect troops and their families as it prepares for peak moving season during the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said Wednesday.

The measures, effective immediately, were directed by Defense Secretary Mark Esper, and they come as the Defense Department is working toward a "new normal."

"The long-term view is what do we do over the next six, 12, 18 months," Esper said Monday during a virtual event hosted by the Brookings Institution. "My view, the view of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the view of our commanders, is there will be a new normal that we will have to adapt to for a certain period of time."

This period could last until a vaccine "we are confident in" is developed and available, Esper said.

During the COVID-19 crisis, tens of

thousands of troops have been mobilized to help local response efforts.

The military also has fought to contain the spread of the virus in its ranks, implementing travel restrictions and other measures to protect service members, civilian employees and their families.

DoD's travel restrictions are in place until June 30, but about 12,500 troops and their families have received permission to carry out their PCS moves since the order was implemented in March. Another 30,000 have since been approved to move, said Rick Marsh, director of the Defense Personal Property Program at U.S. Transportation Command.

Under the new safety measures, movers must wear face coverings, clean frequently touched surfaces and sanitize their hands often while packing and moving household goods in a DoD member's home.

They also must minimize the number of movers in the house in order to meet social distancing requirements.

Transportation Command also is requiring companies to certify that movers have been screened for illness.

Moving companies will provide the service member written certification of this screening upon arrival at the residence.

Service members can deny entry to moving personnel or question them about adhering to health protection protocols, officials said. They can also end the move and reschedule it to a later date if they feel the moving crew is compromising their safety.

"Moving is always stressful, and COVID only adds stress and uncertainty to the process," Marsh said.

"It's important DoD families know they are empowered to make decisions on the spot and that they have a voice in the process."



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Civilian aides to Army secretary support soldiers, vets

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the civilian aides to the secretary of the Army are working hard to help Army and community leaders, recruiters and local businesses navigate the crisis.

Many CASAs are also members and leaders with the Association of the U.S. Army.

“Our CASAs are out on the front lines with the senior leaders at our installations and the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers]-built hospitals,” said Angela Ritz, CASA program director.

CASAs are business and community leaders appointed by the Army secretary to advise and support Army leaders across the country.

CASAs come from a variety of backgrounds, including business, education, finance and industry, and they help bridge the gap between the Army and their local community.

Throughout the pandemic, Gus Rodriguez, CASA for Texas (West) and AUSA’s 4th Region president, has been working with recruiters to develop Facebook videos to help with virtual recruiting efforts.

“We are also looking at developing videos that we can use to help young people searching for employment see the Army as that source,” Rodriguez said. “At minimum I speak weekly with my local recruiters, but given the current situation, we communicate three to four times a week.”



Mario Guerra, left, CASA for California (Greater Los Angeles) helps distribute food with soldiers from the Los Angeles Army Recruiting Battalion. (COURTESY PHOTO)

On April 15, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy was accompanied on a tour of the Kenner Army Health Clinic at Fort Lee, Virginia, by Mike Flanagan, CASA for Virginia (South).

Flanagan is also vice president of AUSA’s Fort Lee & Southern Virginia chapter.

The tour included a visit to the optometry clinic to see how staff reconfigured the waiting area to allow for social distancing.

Leaders also got an update on Kenner’s COVID-19 testing capability, including training on a new lab process that produces same-day results.

In some instances, the CASAs are

able to provide a more personal touch.

“My greatest satisfaction is from delivering hot food daily to three veterans that are home-bound,” said Mario Guerra, CASA for California (Greater Los Angeles) and a member of AUSA’s Greater Los Angeles chapter.

Guerra started the deliveries when the shelter-in-place order was implemented in California.

He leaves the food on the porches of each of the veterans’ homes and calls to let them know it’s there.

“It’s their only contact, and they’re very appreciative. One is 89 and has a breathing tube, and I also buy his groceries,” Guerra said. “It’s now become a daily adventure that I’m honored to do. These are great men that served our country, and I get immense pleasure being able to help in their time of need.”

These are just a few of many examples of what CASAs are doing, and Army leaders recognize the value of their service.

“There are a lot of powerful stories here, telling how the CASAs across the nation are helping link their communities to the Army and together are leaning into the COVID fight,” said Kathleen Miller, administrative assistant to the secretary of the Army.



Mike Flanagan, center, CASA for Virginia (South), accompanies Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy on a tour of the Kenner Army Health Clinic at Fort Lee, Virginia. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Retired Gen. Frederick Kroesen, former Army vice chief, dies at 97

Retired Gen. Frederick Kroesen, a legendary soldier and former Army vice chief of staff, died April 30 at the age of 97 after a long illness.

A longtime senior fellow with the Association of the U.S. Army and a columnist since 1990 in *ARMY* magazine, the association's flagship publication, Kroesen saw combat in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam in a career that spanned from 1944 until his retirement in 1983.

Among his many accomplishments, he was the first graduate of Officer Candidate School to reach the rank of four-star general.

Retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, called Kroesen "the conscience of our Army, writing insightful commentaries for AUSA which have shaped generations of Army leaders. He was wise, caring, unselfish. One of the Army's great leaders. I will miss him. We will all miss him."

"I first met Gen. Kroesen when he commanded the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. I was a specialist four, one of thousands in his division. Yet I recall with great clarity the occasions I met him. He had that effect on people," Ham said.

Kroesen was highly decorated as a soldier and was most proud of wearing a Combat Infantryman Badge with two stars, a sign of active combat service in three wars.

In his post-service life, Kroesen received AUSA's Abrams Award in 2005, the Thayer Award from the West Point Association of Graduates in 2007, the Audie Murphy Award from the American Veterans Center in 2013, the Gold Good Citizenship Medal from the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in 2013, and was named an Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army in 2017.

Born in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, in 1923, Kroesen graduated from Rutgers



Retired Gen. Frederick Kroesen. (AUSA PHOTO)

University in 1944 with an agriculture degree and was commissioned as an infantry officer, joining the fight in Europe with the 254th Infantry Regiment of the 63rd Infantry Division.

In the Korean War, he was part of the 187th Regimental Combat Team.

In Vietnam, he commanded the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division, and rose to become the First Regional Assistance Command commanding general.

After Vietnam, he served in several stateside assignments, including 82nd Airborne Division commanding general and VII Corps commanding general. He became Army Forces Command commanding general in 1976 and served as the Army vice chief of staff from 1978 to 1979.

In his final active-duty assignment, he became the Seventh Army and U.S. Army Europe commanding general in 1979. In 1981, Kroesen and his wife suffered minor injuries during an attempted assassination in Heidelberg, Germany, when terrorists fired guns and an anti-tank grenade at his armor-plated vehicle.

Kroesen retired from the Army in 1983. His book, *General Thoughts: 70 Years with the Army*, was published in 2003 by AUSA.

AUSAExtra

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Support For the Soldier**

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PERK OF THE WEEK

Don't forget Mother's Day

Visit your AUSA member discount page at www.ausa.org/savings for a variety of ideas including fruit bouquets, gift baskets, personalized gifts, Goodsey gifts, Harry & David, popcorn tins, chocolate and more. Be sure to check out R.Riveter for beautiful gifts hand-made by military spouses, and Abenify for discounts at even more nationally known retailers. You may want to consider using your theater or concert ticket discounts for a later date when social distancing is eased.

Longtime AUSA member Dudley ‘Gene’ Atkinson dies

Dudley “Gene” Atkinson, a lifetime member of the Association of the U.S. Army and a founding member and president of the association’s Central Virginia chapter, died April 26. He was 86.

Atkinson also served on AUSA’s National Advisory Board of Directors, where he was a strong advocate for the Army’s reserve components.

Born June 5, 1933, Atkinson attended Virginia Polytechnical Institute, where he was regimental bugler in the Corps of Cadets, and later the University of Richmond, where he studied business and law.

After graduation, he served for more than 40 years in the Virginia Army National Guard and the Army Reserve.

His entire military service was devoted to taking care of soldiers, from foxhole counseling to lobbying



Dudley ‘Gene’ Atkinson. (COURTESY PHOTO)

lawmakers on military and veterans’ issues.

Atkinson was also a commander of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, an organization established in 1789 as a company of voluntary militia that served in the Civil War and both world wars.

An avid historian, Atkinson served on the boards of the Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation and the Virginia Holocaust Museum.

He was a strong advocate of building a museum honoring the achievements of the Virginia National Guard.

Atkinson is survived by Anne, his wife of 45 years, their son Austin and his wife Betty, and three grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to support the construction of the Virginia National Guard Museum. Donations may be mailed to Virginia National Guard Management Group, VA NG Museum Fund, P.O. Box 37037, Richmond, Virginia 23234.

For more information on the museum, click here.

Condolences may be registered here.

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AUSA partners offer health and wellness benefits

By Susan Rubel

We spend a lot of time focusing on our diet and exercise, but there is one aspect of our health that doesn't get much attention: our hearing.

Whether we're watching TV, cheering on a sports team or attending concerts, our ears endure a lot. Often, people can experience hearing loss without realizing how much they're missing.

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, so let's take a moment to learn more.

Know the signs

Did you know that more than 48 million Americans suffer from some type of hearing loss? If you think you might be one of them, check the signs.

If you find yourself often asking others to repeat themselves, or if you're listening to the TV or radio at volumes others find loud, you might be experiencing some form of hearing loss.

You might even feel like other people mumble or slur their words or have trouble hearing certain voices.

Long-term impact

Often, people will wait five to seven years between first experiencing symptoms and getting help.

Over time, reduced stimulation to your ears and brain can impair the brain's ability to process sound and recognize speech. The more speech recognition deteriorates, the more difficult it is to recover.

Plus, when you can't hear what's going on around you, your mental acuity suffers. A report by the Better Hearing Institute showed that people with untreated hearing loss could lose as much as \$30,000 in salary annually, depending on the degree.

Take action

If you feel you or someone you know has an issue with hearing loss, why not find out for sure?



Army audiologist Maj. William Gottlick, right, conducts an exam during an annual hearing test at Lyster Army Health Clinic, Fort Rucker, Alabama. (U.S. ARMY/JENNIFER STRIPLING)

The Association of the U.S. Army's affinity partner, Starkey Hearing Technologies, offers AUSA members the American Hearing Benefits program with exclusive discounts on American-made hearing aids.

Members receive free annual hearing consultations for themselves and their families at provider locations, up to six free follow-up office visits the first year, a deluxe warranty plan and a three-year battery supply.

Call a hearing adviser at 888-982-4656 or visit www.ausa.org/hearing.

Dental and other savings

We know that many of our members receive hearing and dental coverage as part of their military service.

Many have Tricare coverage; some have access to hearing aids through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

But we also have many members who do not fall under these programs, so AUSA offers other options.

AUSA provides a dental discount program as an insurance alternative.

Starting at \$5.97 a month (less than \$72 a year), members can enjoy savings of 15% to 50% on most dental procedures. For example, you can save around \$50 (\$40 for a child) on teeth cleanings.

The dental discount program includes:

- More than 230,000 dentists and specialists participating in the Aetna Dental Access network.
- No copays, deductibles or annual benefit maximums.
- No waiting period—you can start saving right away.

You also get discounts on prescriptions. For a few dollars more you can add vision and chiropractic discounts, health advocacy services and—certainly appropriate with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis—telehealth for 24/7 doctor access.

Visit www.ausa.org/dma to learn more and sign up.

Abenity health and wellness

I encourage you to take advantage of the many health and wellness benefits that are a part of the AUSA Abenity program.

Visit www.ausa.org/abenity, create an account and view the more than 300,000 national and local deals available only to members. Click on “Categories” and “Health and Wellness” to view deals from a variety of providers.

Susan Rubel is AUSA's Affinity Programs Director.

Army Ten-Miler registration postponed due to pandemic

Registration for the Army Ten-Miler has been postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 36th annual race is scheduled for Oct. 11. Priority and general registration for the race was scheduled for May 6 and May 20, respectively, race organizers announced.

New registration dates will be announced when conditions allow.

“The Army Ten-Miler and the Military District of Washington want to ensure a safe experience for participants, volunteers, supporters and members of the community,” officials said in a statement. “During this delay, we will review event operations and protocols to ensure we are in compliance with all prescribed guide-



The Army Ten-Miler attracts more than 35,000 runners and 900 teams. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

lines for gatherings and community events.”

The annual Army Ten-Miler Race and Expo takes place in Washington, D.C., and attracts more than 35,000 runners and 900 teams from around the world. More than 900 soldiers and 900 volunteers support the event.

All proceeds from the race benefit Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

To date, the Ten-Miler has generated more than \$7.3 million for Army MWR programs, according to the event website.

For more information, click [here](#).

AUSA continues advocating for soldiers during crisis

By Mark Haaland

The Association of the U.S. Army continues to engage Congress in support of the Total Army as staffers from the armed services and appropriations committees review and prepare to markup the Defense Department budgets.

Most recently, AUSA has joined other military and veterans service organizations in asking lawmakers to lift copays for Tricare pharmacy home delivery.

AUSA has also joined the other organizations in asking the armed services committees to adjust legislation to allow National Guard troops serving their states and the nation in the fight against COVID-19 to receive full federal health care benefits, and for legislative changes to be retroactive to when mobilizations first began.

With the ongoing pandemic and national elections this year, there is not much time for Congress to consider new legislation.

Regardless, AUSA, as a member



association of the Military Coalition, has recommended that the armed services committees correct legislation that prevents combat-disabled military retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and their families from receiving both their earned retirement pay along with their VA service-connected disability compensation.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., and Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., are sponsoring bicameral and bipartisan legislation, H.R.5995 and S.3393, known as the “Major Richard Star Act,” in support of these service members.

The priority themes for AUSA’s updated 2020 Focus Areas are putting people first, strengthening the total Army and growing the force.

AUSA’s priorities for supporting soldiers, families and Army civilians

include continuing the call for competitive pay and benefits for military and civilian personnel, improvements in soldier and family housing, affordable and quality health care and child care, expanded spouse employment, and better experiences when moving to new duty stations.

To strengthen the Army, AUSA is advocating for on-time authorization and appropriations to provide for readiness, modernization and reform initiatives across the service. AUSA also supports reform initiatives that support the Army’s priorities for people, readiness, and modernization.

As the Army continues to grow, AUSA is supporting recruiting and marketing programs, advocating for increasing Full-Time Support for the Army National Guard and partnering with Guard and Reserve employers along with DoD’s Employer Support for Guard and Reserve Program.

The full list of 2020 Focus Areas can be found by clicking [here](#).

Mark Haaland is AUSA’s Government Affairs Director.

Government Affairs

Troops provide virtual update on COVID-19 response

In lieu of a physical gathering, the Association of the U.S. Army's Col. Edward Cross chapter held a virtual meeting April 24 featuring military personnel serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic fight.

Navy Capt. Lynne Blankenkemper provided an update on the hospital ship Comfort, which was stationed in hard-hit New York City to serve as an overflow hospital during the outbreak.

Col. Edward Cross

The ship returned to its home port of Norfolk, Virginia, on Saturday.

According to the ship's commanders, the Comfort treated 182 patients while in New York, about 70% of whom were highly acute coronavirus patients.

Army Col. Chris Briand, a chapter member, gave a briefing on her service as the officer in charge of the commander's action group for the 377th Theater Sustainment Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston in Texas.

"It was genuinely great to have these officers on the call and to hear what they are doing for our country. We look forward to their return



The hospital ship Comfort treated 182 patients while in New York, about 70% of whom were acute coronavirus patients. (U.S. NAVY/MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS SARA ESHLEMAN)

home," said retired Lt. Col. Gregory d'Arbonne, president of the New Hampshire-based chapter.

Retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, and retired Lt. Gen. Patricia McQuistion, AUSA vice president for membership and meetings, also joined the virtual meeting.

"It was truly an honor to have Gen. Ham participate and to hear from him all the great things happening with AUSA," d'Arbonne said.

Capt. Mat Leach, Army recruit-

ing company commander for New Hampshire, and Capt. Cole Gonchar, commander of the Army Reserve's 94th Military Police Company and a chapter member, spoke about the challenges of training and recruiting during the pandemic.

Participants also heard from Pete Burdett, civilian aide to the secretary of the Army for New Hampshire, and from state Rep. Jim Allard and City of Durham councilman Andy Corrow, both of whom are chapter members.

Chapter member named Sun Bowl Association president

Natalia Flores, a member of the Association of the U.S. Army's GA Omar N. Bradley chapter, was recently named the 87th president of the Sun Bowl Association Board of Directors in El Paso, Texas.

"The Sun Bowl Association is such an outstanding organization that helps promote economic development for our Sun City by hosting a myriad of events for our community to enjoy," Flores said.

GA Omar N. Bradley

Flores is the marketing man-

ager for the local FirstLight Federal Credit Union, which was the chapter's Corporate Sponsor of the Year in 2007.

The Sun Bowl Association was founded in 1935 with a threefold purpose: present a football attraction of national importance, promote El Paso and the southwest region, and generate tourist income for the area.



Natalia Flores.
(COURTESY PHOTO)

"Natalia has been with us for many years and understands what this organization truly means to the community. I cannot wait to see what is in store with her leading the way," said Bernie Olivas, the association's executive director.

"It's an honor to serve as the 2020-2021 Sun Bowl president, and I look forward to working with Bernie Olivas," Flores said in a local news report. "I would like to thank the Sun Bowl staff and board, our amazing sponsors and over 700 volunteers, as this organization would not be sustained without them."



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