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Lt. Gen. Karl Gingrich, right, deputy Army chief of staff for programs and resources, G-8, speaks with retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president for Leadership and Education, during a Coffee Series event Tuesday at the association's headquarters. (AUSA PHOTO)

Industry dialogue critical to future force

The Army's dialogue with industry is "incredibly important" to building the Army of the future, said Lt. Gen. Karl Gingrich, deputy Army chief of staff for programs and resources, G-8.

Pointing out that industry leaders are on the leading edge of developing the equipment and technology that will keep soldiers "safe and lethal on the battlefield," Gingrich acknowledged that getting through to the right people requires tenacity.

"The Army's a big place. I am just one cog in the wheel, and the Army is a cog in the wheel in the Department of Defense, and [DoD] is a cog in the wheel in the U.S. government," Gingrich said Tuesday during a breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army as part of its Coffee Series.

Gingrich cautioned industry lead-

ers that while the Army is receptive to innovative programs and capabilities, budgetary constraints play a role in moving things forward.

"Things that may come out that we may want to do ... may actually not happen, so you have to be a little bit careful with us," Gingrich said, adding that the conversations that take place at events such as the AUSA breakfast continue to be critical to modernizing the Army.

"I think this dialogue is incredibly important to help you help us keep our soldiers safe and lethal," he said.

Gingrich suggested that by maintaining a dialogue with the Army's cross-functional teams, industry leaders will more easily keep their fingers on the pulse of future requirements. The cross-functional teams, known as CFTs, are organizations

under Army Futures Command that focus on advancing specific modernization priorities.

The cross-functional teams "are very well linked to the associated [program managers and program executive offices], and then just work your way through that system," Gingrich told the audience. "Army Futures Command is really the one who is pulling us to the future, it is determining conceptually how do we want to fight as far away as 2040, trying to help us as we try to make equipment decisions today to make sure we're at least on a glidepath to the future."

Determining how the Army will fight will create some gaps, he said, adding that "I think you just keep pounding on the door until they answer. We have CFTs, they are designed to keep pushing us forward."



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Graphic novel features captain who tackled suicide bomber

Retired Capt. Flo Groberg, who tackled a suicide bomber in Afghanistan to protect his fellow soldiers, is the subject of the latest graphic novel in the Association of the U.S. Army's series on recipients of the nation's highest award for valor.

Medal of Honor: Flo Groberg tells of how Groberg was leading a security detachment in Afghanistan when he tackled a suicide bomber to keep him away from fellow soldiers. Groberg was severely wounded when the bomber's vest detonated, but his quick actions saved many lives.

"Flo Groberg is a humble man whose first thought in action was to save the lives of his comrades," said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA's Book Program.

Medal of Honor: Flo Groberg is available here.

AUSA launched its Medal of Honor graphic novel series in October 2018. The digital graphic novels are available here.

Florent "Flo" Groberg, 41, was born in Poissy, France. He moved to the U.S. as a child and became a citizen in 2001. He entered the Army in July 2008 and was commissioned as an infantry officer later that year and assigned to the 4th Infantry Division.

In 2012, while on his second deployment to Afghanistan, Groberg was the personal security detach-



ment commander for Task Force Mountain Warrior, responsible for the safety of 28 coalition and Afghan National Army personnel.

On Aug. 8, 2012, the soldiers set out from Forward Operating Base Fiaz to the provincial governor's compound in Asadabad, according to an Army account.

As the patrol neared the compound, Groberg spotted a man who began walking backwards in the direction of the patrol. When the man made an abrupt turn toward the formation, Groberg rushed him and shoved him

away from his fellow soldiers.

Groberg immediately confirmed the man was wearing a suicide vest, and with the help of Sgt. Andrew Mahoney, another soldier with the detachment, Groberg pushed the man away from the group and down to the ground, according to the Army.

On the ground, the man's explosive vest detonated. The blast caused a second suicide bomber, who remained hidden, to detonate his vest prematurely, according to the Army.

Four Americans died in the blasts—Maj. Thomas Kennedy, Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Griffin, Air Force Maj. David Gray and Ragaei Abdelfattah, a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Groberg lost almost half of his left calf muscle and suffered significant nerve damage. He also had a blown eardrum and a mild traumatic brain injury, according to the Army. After 33 surgeries and recovering for almost three years at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Groberg was medically retired from the Army.

On Nov. 12, 2015, Groberg received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama.

"We defeated the enemy on that day," Groberg said, according to the Army. "... But it was the worst day of my life, because even though we defeated the enemy, I lost four of my brothers."

Each AUSA graphic novel is created by a team of professional comic book veterans. The script for *Medal of Honor: Flo Groberg* was written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*.

Pencils, inks and the cover were by Geof Isherwood, whose work includes *The 'Nam*, *G.I. Joe* and *Conan the Barbarian*; colors were by Peter Pantazis, who previously worked on *Justice League*, *Superman* and *Black Panther*; and the lettering was by Troy Peteri, who has worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.

Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

Mark Wolf

Assistant Director, Army Reserve Affairs

Retired Lt. Col. Mark Wolf has been with AUSA for nine years. He retired from the Army in 2015 after 29 years of service. He is working on a master's degree in data analytics, which he plans to complete next summer. In his spare time, Mark enjoys getting outside with his wife, Kathy, to enjoy their grandkids, hikes and the great outdoors.



DoD official: Military spouses critical to health of all-volunteer force

Satisfaction with military life among military spouses is “incredibly important” to the state of the all-volunteer force, according to a senior DoD official.

Citing the results of a recent military spouse survey that showed a slight decline in satisfaction with military life, Patricia Barron, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, said the downward trend reveals that spouses want to be heard and supported.

“What that [survey] tells us is that today’s military spouse wants to support their service member, is proud of the service that is provided to the nation, however, they also want to feel good about themselves, they want to aspire to their own dreams, their own goals,” Barron said Monday in a meeting with Pentagon reporters.

The youngest spouses, she said, want a work-life balance and to be “part of something bigger than themselves. That doesn’t go away when you say ‘I do’ to someone that happens to wear a uniform, so it’s incredibly important to the all-volunteer force that we support that military spouse who’s supporting that service member.”

Part of that support includes improving quality of life programs for service members and their families, including child care, health care and spouse employment.

Barron, who previously was director of Family Readiness at the Association of the U.S. Army, pointed to the Virtual Military Spouse Symposium, which kicked off May 14 and continues through May 30, as an example.

The career symposium, designed by the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, comprises a series of free virtual events that include keynote speakers, breakout sessions and special topics such as



Patricia Barron, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, addresses a family forum on health care and spouse employment during the 2023 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

how to build a network, how to grow a career or take it in a new direction, and webinars with career coaches offering one-on-one resume reviews and mock job interviews.

Job seekers can participate in the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Virtual Hiring Fair through May 30. This program aims to connect spouses with representatives from more than 700 employers committed to recruiting, hiring, retaining and promoting military spouses, according to a news release.

The DoD is committed to supporting military spouses “because the military spouse is there through mission deployment, reintegration and reset, as a full partner with that service member as they go about the business of defending our nation,” said Barron, a military spouse for three decades.

Get more details and register for the symposium here.

AUSA Extra

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Support For the Soldier

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Honoring spouses during Military Appreciation Month

In 1999, Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month, a monthlong observance dedicated to recognizing those who have served in the armed forces.

May was chosen because of the many military-related observances during the month, including Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day.

As we mark National Military Appreciation Month, let us not forget the countless service members who have answered the call of duty and

those who have given their lives serving our country. Their stories deserve to be told, their sacrifices remembered and their accomplishments celebrated.

Family Readiness

Military spouses and family members are an extension of their loved ones, demonstrating unwavering commitment and dedication. They are strong pillars in the Army community and embody the values of loyalty, resilience and selfless service, and help expand these values to others.

“The role of a military spouse comes with its challenges and is a total lifestyle commitment but has also afforded me extraordinary experiences and the opportunity to connect with others and build an extended family,” said Brittany Raines, a military spouse whose family was the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2020 Volunteer Family of the Year. “Between my network of friends and learned resources, our family has what’s needed to face this military life head on.”

In 2008, the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year program was created to recognize and honor military spouses’ contributions to the military community. Nominations from the civilian and military communities advance through four rounds, leading to the selection of the Military Spouse of the Year.

AUSA’s Family Readiness team, represented by Raines, director Hol-



AUSA Family Readiness director Holly Dailey, left, and Brittany Raines, right, whose family was AUSA’s 2020 Volunteer Family of the Year, greet military spouses at the 2024 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year award ceremony. (AUSA PHOTO)

ly Dailey and deputy director Thea Green, hosted an informational booth at this year’s Military Spouse of the Year award ceremony in Washington, D.C. Congratulations to Kimberly Gold, the Army’s 2024 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year, and Courtney Barber, the overall Military Spouse of the Year.



Thea Green, AUSA’s deputy director of Family Readiness, provides information about the association at a booth during the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Conference in Atlanta. (AUSA PHOTO)

LANPAC, Family Fellows

AUSA’s LANPAC Symposium and Exposition took place in Honolulu last week, and we were proud to host the first-ever Family Readiness Pavilion at the conference with participating organizations such as the Defense Commissary Agency and DoD Military OneSource. In addition to LANPAC, the association’s Family Readiness team also was represented at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Conference in Atlanta.

We also want to draw your attention to AUSA’s newly launched Family Fellows program, which aims to expand our mission of supporting Army families through various programs, resources, outreach efforts and advocacy initiatives. Join us in welcoming our new Family Fellows: Tina Wright, Karen Halverson, Angel Mangum and Ginger Perkins. Click here for more information or to request a Family Fellow.

As May unfolds, please take the time to pause, reflect and honor the brave women and men who have served our country and the resilience of the military families who stand steadfastly by their side.

Kaylee Spielman is AUSA’s Family Readiness intern.

Chapter event highlights Operation Eagle Claw veterans

Eight Army veterans who played pivotal roles in the mission to liberate American hostages in Iran in 1979 shared their accounts publicly for the first time at an event hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Redstone-Huntsville chapter.

The chapter collaborated with the Army Heritage Center Foundation to host "An Evening in the Desert with Operation Eagle Claw," marking the third year the organizations have partnered for a fundraising event. Organized by retired Maj. Gen. Paul Pardew, a member of the AUSA chapter's board of directors, the event aimed to raise funds for the expansion and renovation of Huntsville's U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum.

About 330 people attended the May 8 event at the Jackson Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

The hostage crisis, which began Nov. 4, 1979, saw 52 American diplomats and citizens taken captive at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by college students supporting the Iranian Revolution. President Jimmy Carter labeled the hostage-taking "black-mail" and condemned it as an act of "terrorism and anarchy."

One of the speakers, retired Col. Carl Savory, noted that the hostage crisis marked the start of the war on terror, prompting Carter to authorize the rescue mission, dubbed Operation Eagle Claw, on April 24, 1980. The operation, involving elements from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, was one of the earliest missions for the Army's Delta Force and contributed significantly to the development of modern U.S. special operations capabilities.

Although the mission tragically resulted in the loss of eight service members in an explosion before reaching the embassy, Operation Eagle Claw is recognized as a groundbreaking endeavor, often dubbed the "most successful failed mission



Army veterans discuss the mission to liberate American hostages in Iran in 1979 at an event hosted by AUSA's Redstone Huntsville chapter in Alabama. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

in history." Many tactics and procedures pioneered during the mission have become standard practices in military operations, including training for helicopter pilots in low-level penetration, aerial refueling and use of night-vision goggles.

Savory served as the chief medical officer for Operation Eagle Claw. Other speakers included:

- Logan Fitch, who was tasked with riding shotgun and taking out the guard on the sidewalk upon reaching the compound, then assuming control of B Squadron.
- Phill Hanson, assigned to the assault team in A Squadron, whose role was to be the point man moving over the wall into the embassy.
- John "Johnny" Jones, the team leader of A Squadron, tasked with securing the vehicle gate at the motor pool.
- Glen "Nick" Nickel, an assaulter in B Squadron responsible for eliminating the sentry inside the embassy compound. He also provided aid to a severely burned loadmaster.
- Mike Vining, assigned to B Squadron as an assaulter and explosive ordnance disposal technician. His role included securing the second floor of the ambassador's residence and maintaining an overwatch posi-

tion on the roof. Vining also rendered aid to a badly burned helicopter pilot.

- Steve Wright, an A Squadron soldier armed with an M203 grenade launcher, who was responsible for suppressing any reaction from the Iranian military compound on the west side of the embassy. He also collaborated with Farsi-speaking drivers in developing the vehicle assault plan.

- Claude "Bud" McBroom, a CIA pilot who joined the agency after leaving the Army, who flew a mission prior to the operation to reconnoiter proposed landing strips and assisted in laying remote lighting at the site. McBroom and his co-pilot were awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Cross by the CIA.

"The Guts to Try" became the catchphrase for the mission, from a note attached to two cases of beer dropped off by British airmen for troops returning from the operation that read, "To you all from us all, for having the guts to try." This phrase encapsulates the courage, determination and resilience displayed by the brave service members who participated in Operation Eagle Claw.

Marc Jacobson is the president of AUSA's Redstone-Huntsville chapter.

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