



Army Reserve soldiers secure the perimeter of their forward operating base June 1 during exercise Mojave Falcon at Fort Irwin, California. (U.S. ARMY RESERVE/STAFF SGT. HEATH DOPPKE)

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Soldiers driving Army transformation

Plans to transform the Army are “now more urgent than ever” as the service faces increasingly complex threats and fast-moving advances in technology, senior leaders told lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Testifying Wednesday before the House Armed Services Committee, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll emphasized that the Army Transformation Initiative was conceived “with the soldier in mind.”

“I’ve met with them in the Middle East, Europe, along our southern border and across the United States,” Driscoll said about soldiers. “We ask a great deal of them, and they consistently deliver.”

Those soldiers are the reason why

the Army, industry and the nation’s leaders “must all work together to ensure the Army’s ready to fight and win,” Driscoll said.

Driscoll, who appeared alongside Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, faced several questions from lawmakers seeking more information and details on the Army Transformation Initiative. Outlined in a May 1 letter to the force, the initiative seeks to implement sweeping changes that include consolidating headquarters, cutting obsolete programs and equipment and bringing on cutting-edge capabilities such as drones and long-range fires. “The Army Transformation Initiative will make us into an Army that’s lean, agile and relentlessly focused on empowering

soldiers,” Driscoll said.

The Army is a professional team that remains focused on its warfighting mission, George said. “But we have work to do,” he said. “We know the world is changing. Commercial technology is rapidly evolving, and this is impacting the character of war. We understand we must transform to stay ahead of our adversaries.”

The Army must keep getting better—and faster, George said. “We must get better by 2026, 2027, not 2030,” he said.

Driscoll and George asked lawmakers to give the Army more agility when it comes to funding. “There are a lot of commercial, off-the-shelf stuff

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Army meets fiscal year recruiting goal 4 months early

With four months to go in the fiscal year, the Army has met its recruiting goal by signing contracts with more than 61,000 new active-duty soldiers, the service announced in a news release.

"I'm incredibly proud of our U.S. Army recruiters and drill sergeants," Army Secretary Dan Driscoll said in the Tuesday release. "Their colossal efforts and dedication to duty helped the U.S. Army accomplish our FY25 annual recruiting goal a full four months ahead of schedule."

After missing its recruiting goals for two years, the Army in October 2023 began a sweeping overhaul of the recruiting enterprise to overcome a recruiting slump created, in part, by the COVID-19 pandemic but exacerbated by a lower number of young people who were fit or willing to serve.

As part of the effort, the Army updated and expanded its training programs; added two new recruiter MOSs, including a new warrant officer recruiting specialty; expanded the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, which helps potential recruits meet the service's academic or physical requirements; developed the Go Recruit mobile application; and restructured Recruiting Command by incorporating the Army Enterprise Marketing Office.

In addition to the institutional changes, the Army returned to its iconic "Be All You Can Be" ad campaign, targeted new recruiting markets such as college students and professionals working in the private sector and created an experimental cell that could rapidly test new recruiting strategies.

In fiscal year 2024, the Army exceeded its goal of 55,000 recruits and placed another 11,000 in the delayed entry program, sowing optimism among senior leaders that the initiatives put recruiting back on track.

By March of this year, the Army's fiscal 2025 goal was already 50%



Staff Sgt. Elvin Rodriguez, right, assigned to the Indianapolis Recruiting Battalion, interacts with race attendees May 18 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. (U.S. ARMY/JOE JOBIN)

ahead of where it had been the year before, according to March 12 testimony from Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. James Mingus before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He cited "momentum unlike we have seen in probably a decade" in recruiting.

This year's goal of 61,000 new recruits is more than 10% higher than the 55,000 recruits targeted in fiscal

2024, and recent recruiting momentum has seen average contracts per day exceeding last year's levels by as much as 56% during the same period, according to the release.

"As the Army approaches its 250th birthday on June 14, 2025, these future Soldiers will carry forward a legacy of honor, courage and service spanning two and a half centuries," Driscoll said in the release.



The Army's interactive STEM semi-trailer, filled with hands-on education and entertainment activities, tours high schools in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (U.S. ARMY/JONATHAN HOLLOWAY)

Betty: Army Reserve prioritizes combat readiness amid recruiting shortfall



Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty, left, senior enlisted leader of the Army Reserve, greets retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, during a Noon Report webinar hosted by the association. (AUSA PHOTO)

The Army Reserve is prioritizing building combat readiness, mobilizing at scale and modernizing the force, the component's senior enlisted leader said.

Our "first priority is to build combat readiness, and that's key. We've got to make sure our reserve component is lethal," Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Betty said May 29 during an Association of the U.S. Army Noon Report webinar. "The second priority is to mobilize on time and at scale."

There are about 9,000 Army Reserve soldiers deployed throughout the world today, and about 200 units are activated, Betty said.

As the Reserve prioritizes its combat capabilities, it is eyeing a shift to get soldiers out of reserve centers and into training centers, Betty said. Soldiers may work on things like additional MOS training and weapons training at the training centers, "so when it's time to deploy, we are ready and capable," he said.

As it modernizes, the Reserve is pushing back against a recruiting shortfall, Betty said. "Recruiting civilian talent is key," he said, adding that the Army Reserve is facing a shortfall of about 4,000 soldiers.

"To get after that 4,000 that we're

missing out on, we have 1,500 [Active Guard and Reserve] recruiters ... out there dedicated to recruit for [us], and they're going after those skill sets to make sure that we get ... the right civilians to become soldiers to help us fight the fight," Betty said.

The Army Reserve also anticipates getting more involved with the Army's transforming in contact initiative, which puts new technologies in soldiers' hands for testing.

"We're going to get some of the next-gen equipment," Betty said. "We're divesting equipment that we will not be using in the future fight." With the "money that's saved, we can get the new equipment and fix the equipment that we will use in the time of conflict," he said.

Army Reserve soldiers are a vital force multiplier, Betty said.

"Not only do we have an MOS in the Army, we also have a civilian skill set," he said. "With only 6% of the Army's budget ... we provide more than half of capabilities in supply, in sustainment, [psychological operations and] civil affairs, ... the [Judge Advocate General] Corps, just to name a few. Those are the strengths that the Army Reserve brings to the Total Army fight."

AUSAExtra

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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.

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West Point cadets attend leadership forum at AUSA

For the second year in a row, the Association of the U.S. Army's Center for Leadership hosted faculty and cadets from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, for a leadership forum aimed at improving character development in commissioned officers.

Held May 29 at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, the panel discussion was part of a 10-day program for West Point's "Character in the Profession" Academic Individual Advanced Development program. The program is sponsored by the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic and serves to aid cadets in their understanding and execution of quality character development as a commissioned leader.

The first half of the forum was led by Capt. Nikki Polhamus, a 2019 West Point graduate who was honor captain of her class. Each year at West Point, a group of cadets is selected to serve on the Honor Committee. Led by the honor captain, the committee seeks to uphold the honor code values and investigates alleged violations.

During the discussion, Polhamus shared her experiences as honor captain, lessons from the Cadet Honor Code and how those lessons and experiences have guided her Army career.

Answering a question about how to get cadets to ask hard questions during investigations, Polhamus said, "By figuring out what the system looked like, they guarded it more closely. When you have a vote for who is going to represent you, you care more about it. Everyone has a piece in owning the honor system. We wanted to show them that they had an active role in this."

Accountability and trust in leadership were recurrent themes throughout the discussion, as the cadets talked about how respect and understanding fuel quality leadership—and how it's as much about people as it is about the mission.



Cadets from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, discuss Army life with currently serving officers during a leadership forum hosted by AUSA's Center for Leadership at the association's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

The second half of the forum was led by four recent West Point graduates, Capts. Annabel Benoit, Matt McGovern, Bailey Abercrombie and Ananth Ghosh. The primary focus of their panel was how West Point's character program helps graduates build and lead effective teams. They also answered questions about life after West Point, including balancing family and the demands of Army life.

Ghosh used the term "symbiotic relationship" to describe quality re-

lationships in Army life—both in marriage and in peer leadership and camaraderie. All four officers emphasized the importance of accountability and ownership of the team's actions.

Maj. McCoy Bean, an instructor of officership at the Simon Center who accompanied the cadets to AUSA, noted the value of learning from near-peers.

"We are talking about how to ready yourself for the uncertainty of the world and, ultimately, the few things they can control are their character and their value system and how to have that moral courage," Bean said. It's easy for old generals to say those things. They hear that all the time. But this was an opportunity for them to connect with leaders that are just a few years ahead of them, bringing these big conversations closer to their lived experience."

Cadet TJ Dickerson said the forum was helpful because the cadets were "seeing people in the seats we will be in. It helps us feel prepared to fill those shoes and develop our character."



Capt. Nikki Polhamus, left, a 2019 West Point graduate who was honor captain of her class, speaks with a West Point cadet during a forum hosted by AUSA's Center for Leadership. (AUSA PHOTO)

AUSA leader recognized with lifetime achievement award

Holly Dailey, the Association of the U.S. Army's Family Readiness director, is the 2025 recipient of the Bonnie Amos Impact Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Presented by Hiring Our Heroes, an initiative by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to connect service members, military spouses and veterans with American businesses to create economic opportunity and a strong and diversified workforce, the award recognizes a person or entity for "going above and beyond the call of duty to promote and protect economic opportunities for military spouses," according to the group's website.

"I am truly humbled to accept this impactful award for all our military spouses," Dailey said. "Thank you to Hiring Our Heroes for being the foundation where we can all work together on creating pathways to economic opportunities for military spouses. It is imperative to help our spouses find meaningful employment and prepare them for their future and the future of our next generations. It is an honor to continue being our families' eyes, ears and voices through AUSA."

The award was presented May 21 during the 2025 Military Spouse Employment Summit, an annual event celebrating the unique strengths of military spouses and their role in shaping America's future talent.

"We are thrilled that our very own Holly Dailey has been recognized for



Holly Dailey, center, AUSA's Family Readiness director, receives the Bonnie Amos Impact Award for Lifetime Achievement from Hiring Our Heroes during the 2025 Military Spouse Employment Summit. (COURTESY PHOTO)

this important award," said retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO. "An Army Spouse for Life, Holly is a tireless, passionate and dedicated champion for military families. We're so proud of her and the work she continues to do here at AUSA on behalf of military families everywhere."

Dailey, who has been with AUSA since March 2021, is an Army spouse of 32 years. The spouse of retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, Holly Dailey is a staunch advocate for military families and has served in various leadership roles for many military volunteer organizations.

As an Army spouse, she has vol-

unteered, served and advocated for military families at the unit level all the way up to the Army level. As the spouse of the Army's senior enlisted leader, Dailey advocated for the families of 1.2 million soldiers on through her involvement with various organizations, boards and Army programs.

She also represented Army families in congressional and White House forums, and her leadership led to the creation of the first Army Senior Enlisted Spouse Council, the Army Senior Enlisted Mentorship Program and the Nominative Spouse Seminar at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

At AUSA, Dailey continues to serve on various boards as an adviser and advocate for military families.

Transformation

From Page 1

we should be adopting," George said. "We need agile funding to be able to buy as the technology changes [and] buy the best available thing that's on the market," he said.

As the Army moves forward with the Army Transformation Initiative, it must be able to look in the mirror and admit when it's made a mistake, Driscoll said. He cited as an example

the M10 Booker, which the Army recently canceled because it didn't meet the service's needs. "We wanted a light tank, but we ended up with a medium tank," Driscoll said. "We got this wrong, and the Army has to own this."

The Army is focused on what soldiers need. "Almost all of the Army Transformation Initiative has been informed by what soldiers have told us," Driscoll said, citing the service's

transformation in contact initiative, which puts new technology in soldiers' hands for testing. "What transformation in contact has done for us is it gave us lessons from the actual soldier," Driscoll said.

The Army also is focused on being ready for any mission anywhere in the world. "China is the pacing threat, but ... we want an Army that can be effective anywhere that we send it," Driscoll said.

Appropriations bills unlikely to pass before new fiscal year

Both chambers of Congress have returned from recess, and things remain busy on Capitol Hill.

This week, the Association of the U.S. Army's Government Affairs team participated in a meeting for military and veteran service organizations hosted by the Defense Health Agency. In these meetings, AUSA joins with other organizations to en-

Government Affairs

courage the agency to keep deductibles and co-pays manageable for service

members and military families, and to provide excellent care at military treatment facilities and through the Tricare network.

Last week, the administration released more materials related to the president's budget request, which provide insight on the administration's priorities for fiscal year 2026. We anticipate additional information in the coming weeks.

This week, the Senate and House Armed Services Committees hosted Army Secretary Dan Driscoll and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy



AUSA is advocating with Congress for adequate and flexible appropriations and timely passage of the National Defense Authorization Act to enable a strong Total Army. (ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL PHOTO)

George for posture hearings. You can view those hearings [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

The House Appropriations military construction, veterans affairs and related agencies subcommittee held a markup of the House version of the annual appropriations bill. You can

view that markup [here](#).

Although the House and Senate appropriations processes are getting underway, AUSA does not anticipate the defense appropriations or the military construction and veterans affairs appropriations bills to be enacted in time for the new fiscal year on Oct. 1. Nonetheless, AUSA is advocating with Congress for timely, adequate and flexible appropriations and timely passage of the National Defense Authorization Act to enable a strong Total Army and improve overall national security.

You can help build momentum for 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 by meeting with them.

Your voice makes a difference, and we encourage you to meet with lawmakers or their staffs as constituents and AUSA members in support of the Total Army. Advocate for AUSA's Focus Areas and passage of the legislation mentioned above.

The Government Affairs team continues to meet with congressional staff and advocate for the Total Army. In our meetings, we emphasize the Army's critical role in the Indo-Pacific and recommend Congress support Army priorities including warfighting, transformation and quality-of-life initiatives for soldiers and their families.

We also are encouraging lawmakers to pass the Military Spouse Employment Act and the Major Richard Star Act, legislation aimed at ensuring that combat-disabled veterans with less than 20 years of service can receive both their military retirement pay and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mark Haaland is AUSA's Government Affairs director.



Capt. Brandon Rasor, an aviation officer assigned to the 16th Combat Aviation Brigade, outlines the capabilities of the AH-64E Apache helicopter to members of a congressional delegation at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. REBECCA WATKINS)

Use AUSA discounts for legal services, health screenings

When looking for information, we've all tried typing a half-formed question into Google and hoped for the best. But the truth is, your answer is only ever as good as your question.

That's where the Association of the U.S. Army's new "Ask A Legal Question" service comes in. Part of AUSA's LawAssure free member benefit, the system doesn't rush to respond. Instead, it takes a moment to think—just like a good attorney would—and will ask smart follow-up questions to refine and clarify what you're really asking.

Member Benefits

By the time your query reaches LawAssure's artificial intelligence, it's sharper, more precise and far more likely to get you the answer you need. Because in law—and in life—clarity is everything.

This video provides a brief overview of the new service.

LawAssure also enables AUSA members to create a host of vital legal documents, including wills, health care directives and powers of attorney.

Go to www.ausa.org/legal and create a new LawAssure account or log in to your existing account.

Here's a short video explaining the LawAssure program.

Preventive screenings

Many AUSA members have received or will receive a mailer about a member discount on Life Line screenings. These are affordable, state-of-the-art screenings that can help detect potential health issues before they become serious.

The painless, non-invasive screening tests for cardiovascular disease, stroke risk, peripheral arterial disease, osteoporosis and more.

This short video shows how the process works.

Most of us only do medical testing that our doctors order after we've had an appointment and described a con-



Through AUSA's partnership with LawAssure, members can create free legal documents, and the new 'Ask A Legal Question' service utilizes artificial intelligence to provide refined, clear answers to all your questions. (COURTESY GRAPHIC)

cern. But many people don't go to the doctor often, and there are some conditions that don't show obvious signs that warrant a physician ordering a test.

Aggregate results of Life Line screening show that 2.5% will show critical results—possibly a life-saving move—and 28.7% will be considered abnormal with a recommendation to see your doctor.

If you're interested in learning more, click [here](#) or call 1-888-711-0225 and give the phone agent the priority code BDHW354.

Insurance discounts coming soon

AUSA recently partnered with Farmers GroupSelect to provide a member discount on auto and home insurance.

Farmers has an "A" (excellent) rating from AM Best, indicating a strong ability to pay out claims.

The company offers numerous discounts, including multi-policy, good driver, good student and homeowner discounts—and now an AUSA member discount.

Farmers offers a variety of standard and optional coverages, including accident forgiveness, original equipment manufacturer parts coverage, customized equipment coverage and rideshare insurance. In addition to the AUSA member group discount, benefits include good driver rewards, automated payment discounts and superior 24/7 claim service.

Choosing the right insurance company depends on many factors, and premiums are based on many factors as well. Farmers is not going to be the least expensive option in every case, but if they're not the right fit for you, they can quote you a price from their competitors and connect you with them as well.

Members will receive more information when the program goes live on July 1.

Access all of AUSA's savings programs at www.ausa.org/savings. If you have any questions, please contact me at srubel@ausa.org.

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

AUSA members commemorate Army Reserve birthday

Maj. Gen. Kevin Meisler, Army Materiel Command chief of staff and assistant deputy commanding general for the Army Reserve, stressed the importance of the Reserve during a breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Redstone-Huntsville chapter in Alabama.

"We're not a secondary force and, I'll repeat that again, we are not a secondary force; we are a necessary force," Meisler said, as reported by the *Redstone Rocket*. "We augment and enhance the Army's overall readiness, ensuring it's prepared for any mission anywhere in the world."

Redstone-Huntsville

Reservists are resilient and adaptable soldiers with an unwavering commitment, who must balance their careers, family obligations and military duties, Meisler said during the event, which marked the Army Reserve's 117th birthday. "Your ability to transition seamlessly between these worlds to be successful as a civilian and a dedicated soldier is



Maj. Gen. Kevin Meisler, center, Army Materiel Command chief of staff, cuts a cake celebrating the Army Reserve's birthday alongside the oldest and youngest soldiers in attendance, Col. Brett Saxon, left, and Cadet Keltrick Jakes. (REDSTONE ROCKET/ERIN ELISE ENYINDA)

a testament to your character and a dedication to America and its interests," he said, as reported by the *Redstone Rocket*.

The Army Reserve has a presence in all 50 states, five U.S. territo-

ries and 20 time zones around the world, and makes up nearly 20% of the Army's personnel and more than 50% of the quartermaster and medical formations, said Mike Dove, the Redstone-Huntsville chapter's vice president for National Guard and Reserve Affairs.

"Being a warrior citizen isn't just about who we are, it's about what we deliver," Meisler said. "The Army Reserve stands ready to answer the call, and we do consistently."

Since its creation as the nation's federal reserve force in 1908, "we've seen Reserve components mobilized for every major conflict" as well as natural disasters at home, Meisler said, as reported by the *Redstone Rocket*. "We've adapted, we've grown, and we've constantly delivered, proving time and again that a citizen soldier is a force to be reckoned with."

Reserve soldiers are "standing ready at all times," said retired Lt. Col. Marc Jacobson, the chapter president. "We can never thank you enough for your service, your sacrifice and your unwavering commitment to keeping our nation safe."

Chapter supports West Point social



West Point

John Buckheit, left, president of AUSA's West Point chapter, and chapter treasurer Eileen Sciscoe share information about the association with attendees May 21 during the West Point Association of Graduates Firstie Social. (AUSA PHOTO)

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