



The Army's goal is to continue growing by a modest 2,000 new soldiers a year until it reaches an end strength of about 500,000. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. PHILIP MCTAGGART)

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Congress slows Army personnel growth

Defense policy legislation taking shape in Congress promises the biggest military raise in a decade while also slowing the growth of the Army.

Draft legislation to be taken up next week by the House Armed Services Committee includes the 3.1% basic pay increase requested by the Trump administration and approved May 23 by the Senate Armed Services Committee.

This would be the biggest across-the-board increase in military pay since January 2010, when troops received a 3.4% hike. The pay increase would take effect Jan. 1.

The House and Senate versions of

the National Defense Authorization Act each would cap Regular Army troop strength at 480,000 for fiscal 2020, which is 7,500 less than the 2019 cap. The reduction, requested by the Army, reflects the ongoing difficulty in recruiting top-quality people.

In its draft report, the House Armed Services military personnel subcommittee says the Army expects to end the fiscal year on Sept. 30 with 478,000 people.

The Army's goal is to continue growing by a modest 2,000 new soldiers a year until it reaches an end strength of about 500,000.

Troop strength goals are also slightly reduced for the Army Nation-

al Guard and Army Reserve, again based on Department of the Army requests.

Full details are not available on the Senate's bill, but the House measure has several health care-related provisions.

One would set a new defensewide standard that defers deployment for 12 months for mothers who give birth.

Another would temporarily delay the reduction or realignment of military medical staff while the impact on health care services is reviewed.

A third would require that prescriptions filled by military treatment facilities be labeled with specific directions for the purpose for which the drug is intended.



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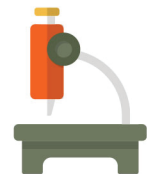
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Travel discounts for Mexico, Florida, New York and more

By Susan Rubel

Here are some shopping and travel savings just for Association of the U.S. Army members—just in time for Father's Day and your summer fun plans.

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Member Benefits

est launch coaster), and savings of 45% to experience the incredible Blue Man Group's humor and music.

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Susan Rubel is AUSA's Affinity Programs Director.

June podcasts feature benefits, leadership, Army museum

June podcasts from the Association of the U.S. Army include a discussion about leading by example, information on the new National Museum of the United States Army, and an interview with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rick Atkinson about his new book.

June's first podcast in the "Army Matters" series will be a discussion co-hosted by retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Welch, both of AUSA's NCO and Soldier Programs.

They will talk about what it means

to lead by example for emerging leaders and young professionals. It became available June 3.

Available beginning June 10 is a conversation about the new National Museum of the United States Army, which is scheduled to open next year at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

It will feature retired Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, president of the Army Historical Foundation, and Tammy E. Call, the museum's director.

Up next will be an interview with Chelsea Ortiz of MyArmyBenefits, the Army's official benefits website, dis-

cussing survivor benefits, the GI Bill and more. That podcast will be available June 17.

The final June podcast will be a discussion with Atkinson about *The British Are Coming: The War for America, Lexington to Princeton, 1775-1777*.

His new book, the first in a planned trilogy, tells the story of the early years of the Revolutionary War. The podcast will be available June 24.

Full details for all podcasts are available at podcast.ausa.org.

Recommendations for future topics are welcome at podcast@ausa.org.

Modernization, readiness and quality of life issues are Army budget priorities

By Mark Haaland

Every legislative year is different, and 2019 is surely proving to be different from last year.

Typically, the House Armed Services Committee marks up its version of the National Defense Authorization Act prior to the Memorial Day holiday.

This year, both the House Appropriations defense subcommittee and the Senate Armed Services Committee have marked up their respective bills, but the HASC has held off a bit, holding subcommittee markups last week, with the full committee's markup planned for June 12.

The next steps for the House and Senate armed services committees will be to take their respective bills to the House and Senate floors for debate and passage.

The Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee plans to mark up the fiscal year 2020 defense appropriation bill in mid-July, and the full Senate Appropriations Committee will likely mark up the bill the following week, just before the August recess.

With the traditional summer recess and district work period scheduled for August, and with only about three legislative weeks in September, there will be considerable pressure for Congress to pass a final defense appropriations bill in time for the new fiscal year.

This is true for both the veterans and military construction appropriations bills as well. And, we note, the administration and Congress have not yet agreed to a budget deal to solve the threat of sequestration.

From an optimist's perspective, Congress can pass the appropriations bill and the NDAA in time for the new fiscal year.

It is still possible. But, time is not on Congress' side.

Highlights for the Army in the HAC-D and SASC marks include broad support for the Army's modernization strat-



egy and support for much of the Army's budget request for modernization.

Overall, the Senate and House leadership for the defense committees have been complimentary of the Army's strategy for modernization.

Additionally, both defense committees have prioritized support for and investments in technologies and systems to enhance lethality and achieve overmatch.

The HAC-D and SASC both provide strong support for Army readiness as well, to include training and sustaining the force. Quality of life issues are also priorities.

In their bills, the defense committees seek to fix the serious problems associated with family housing and barracks, support making child care more available for families, and support environmental restoration to make sure drinking water is safe for troops and their families.

Both defense committees also have approved a pay raise of 3.1% for military personnel.

AUSA continues to be a strong advocate with Congress to support the Army's 2020 budget request.

Mark Haaland is AUSA's Government Affairs Director.

AUSAExtra

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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 Production and
Fulfillment 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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AUSA job fair helps military talent connect with employers

In a mission to share military-trained talent with the civilian sector, the Association of the U.S. Army held its fourth job fair June 5 at its national headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

“We think it’s really important that we bring the talent the Army soldiers, civilians and family members have to the attention of civilian employers,” said retired Lt. Gen. Patricia McQuiston, AUSA’s vice president for Membership and Meetings. “We think that they’re the perfect candidates to be applying for jobs in the civilian sector.”

Open to transitioning and former military members, family members, Defense Department civilians and AUSA members, the free event attracted more than 165 job seekers and 45 military-friendly companies that varied in size and expertise. Attendees who pre-registered had the opportunity to submit their resumes in advance and receive feedback on how to



More than 165 job seekers attended the job fair at AUSA headquarters. (AUSA PHOTO)

strengthen them ahead of the job fair.

McQuiston said AUSA will continue hosting job fairs as long as connecting employers with members, potential members and soldiers remains beneficial and relevant. AUSA plans to host

another job fair later this year. “It’s a win-win-win situation,” McQuiston said.

For a full list of companies that participated in the June 5 event, please click here: <https://bit.ly/2WdIKbL>.

New graphic novel features legendary Special Forces NCO

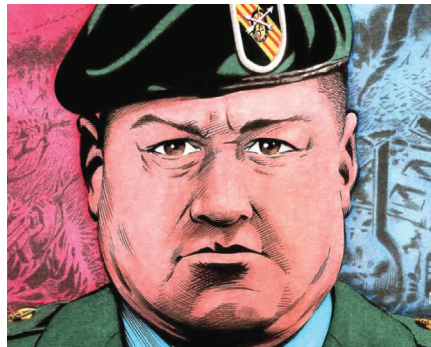
The Association of the U.S. Army has released its second graphic novel as part of a series highlighting Medal of Honor recipients.

Medal of Honor: Roy Benavidez (<https://www.ausa.org/benavidez>) features the story of Special Forces Staff Sgt. Roy Benavidez, a Green Beret legend and Vietnam War veteran.

“It’s a very powerful story and one that people are going to enjoy reading,” said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA’s Book Program.

On May 2, 1968, Benavidez volunteered to help rescue a 12-man reconnaissance team trapped by the North Vietnamese Army near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. He was severely wounded multiple times as he crossed 75 yards of open ground toward the team.

Despite his critical condition, he tended to survivors, including those from a downed aircraft hit by ground fire, recovered classified documents



AUSA’s second graphic novel highlights Staff Sgt. Roy Benavidez. (AUSA PHOTO)

and carried his wounded comrades to safety—all while under heavy enemy fire. Benavidez was awarded the U.S. military’s highest honor for his actions that day.

The full-color digital graphic novel was created by a talented team of professionals. The script was written by Chuck Dixon, best known for his work on Marvel Comics’ *Punisher* and DC Comics’ *Batman* and *Nightwing*.

“One of the things I was really impressed with is the level of work that the creative team has put into it,” Craig said. “The scripts and the artists—these are all people from the world of professional comic book publishing. These guys know comics, they know military comics in particular, and the job is just really top-notch.”

Drawings and the cover were done by Rick Magyar, an artist, penciller and inker who has also worked for Marvel and DC on *Iron Man*, *ROM Spaceknight*, *Defenders* and *Omega Men*. Colors were done by Peter Pantazis, who has worked on *Justice League*, *Superman* and *Wolverine*. Lettering was done by Troy Peteri, who has worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.

AUSA’s first graphic novel was released in October. It features the story of Sgt. Alvin York’s heroic deeds in France as part of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I.



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Sustainment soldiers must train for large-scale operations

As the Army shifts from counterinsurgency operations to training for a potential fight against a near-peer adversary, the service's sustainment forces must adapt alongside their combat arms counterparts, several Army experts said.

"Our forces have to be trained, equipped and modernized at the right levels to execute what is required for large-scale ground operations ... and move away from the brigade-centric organizations we've been in the past," said Maj. Gen. Rodney D. Fogg, commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee, Virginia.

Fogg and several other senior leaders spoke May 29 during a Hot Topic forum on Army sustainment hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Institute of Land Warfare.

After almost two decades of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Na-



Maj. Gen. Rodney D. Fogg. (AUSA PHOTO)

tional Defense Strategy has the Army focused on conducting large-scale operations, Fogg said.

When the U.S. military was investing in MRAP vehicles for the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan, China and Russia were working on electronic warfare and other capabilities, Fogg said.

"There are areas where we don't have overmatch capabilities," he said. "In fact, we may be behind in some areas."

To compete, the Army has stepped up its training strategy, including robust home-station training and frequent rotations at its combat training centers. "We're preparing for future conflict, not for counterinsurgency," said Maj. Gen. Kurt Ryan, deputy chief of staff for logistics at the U.S. Army Forces Command.

Units are working on high-end combat skills, combined arms maneuver, integrated fires, and "relearning how to maintain the readiness of these forces at scale," he said. These days, brigade commanders maneuver their forces more than 200 miles over a 14-day period during a CTC rotation.

Leaders deal with information operations, swarming of enemy assets, electromagnetic threats, cyberattacks and urban operations, Ryan said.

Exchange again named on 'Best for Vets: Employers' list

The Defense Department's largest retailer was recently recognized as a top employer for veterans for the sixth year in a row.

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service was named the second-best government or nonprofit organization for excellence in providing job opportunities for veterans in the *Military Times* Best for Vets: Employers 2019 list. AAFES beat out 17 other organizations.

This is the first year *Military Times* has ranked for-profit companies and government/nonprofit organizations (<https://bit.ly/2WtrumY>) on separate lists.

"The Exchange is honored to be acknowledged for its commitment to hiring our nation's heroes," said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luis Reyes, the Exchange senior enlisted adviser, in a press release.

Veterans make up 11.8% of the Exchange's workforce.



Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luis Reyes, Army and Air Force Exchange Service's senior enlisted adviser, meets with employees and staff at the Fort Drum Exchange. (U.S. ARMY/MICHAEL STRASSER)

In 2018, the Exchange hired nearly 7,000 veterans and military spouses worldwide and reaffirmed its commitment to hiring 50,000 veterans and military spouses by 2020.

"Veterans bring a depth of experience and knowledge to their civilian

careers," Reyes said. "Their perspectives provide new insight that makes us better at what we do."

Veterans, military spouses and others seeking jobs with the Exchange can visit ApplyMyExchange.com to view job openings worldwide.

MISSION Act gives veterans more flexibility on healthcare

New legislation being implemented Friday could decrease red tape and increase satisfaction and predictability for patients in the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system.

The MISSION Act, passed by Congress in 2018, will give veterans more flexibility to choose their healthcare provider.

Veterans will be eligible to get community care for a variety of reasons, including when VA can't provide the treatment they need or when care outside the system is in the best medical interest of the patient.

Standards for choosing a community provider closer to home will now be based on drive time instead of mileage.

Patients facing an average drive time of 30 minutes or more for VA primary or mental health care, or non-



The act will allow more veterans to choose their healthcare provider. (U.S. ARMY/ SHAUN EAGAN)

institutional extended care services, will be able to select a closer option.

For specialty care, the drive-time standard will be an average of 60 minutes.

Additionally, VA patients facing a 20-day or more wait time for primary or mental health care, or non-institutional extended care services, will have the option of choosing a commu-

nity provider who can deliver that care faster. For specialty care, the wait-time standard will be 28 days.

Some veterans will also have access to urgent, walk-in care that gives them the choice to receive certain services at participating community clinics.

For more information on the changes, visit www.MISSIONAct.va.gov.

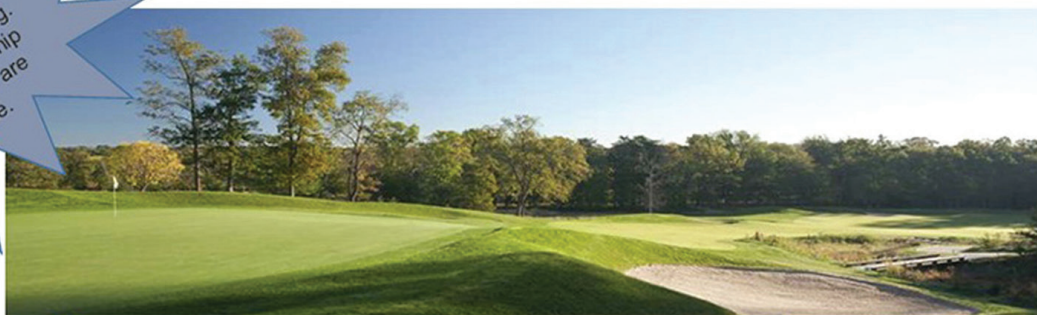
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Chapter-hosted symposium focuses on space, network

The Greater Los Angeles Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army on Friday is hosting a symposium on space and the Army network at the Westin Hotel in Long Beach, California.

This multidomain discussion will include participation from U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command (USASMDC/ARSTRAT), Army Futures Command, Army Cyber Com-

mand, the Army CIO/G-6, the Air Force Space and Missile Center and the Missile Defense Agency.

There will be four panels focused on analyzing the nexus of space, cyber, electronic warfare and the network.

They are: Army Space—Postured for Multi-Domain Operations; Space Enablers; Acquisition Innovation; and an executive roundtable lead by Lt. Gen. Bruce Crawford, the Army CIO/G-6.

Other key speakers include Maj. Gen. John George of Army Futures Command and Lt. Gen. James Dickinson, the USASMDC/ARSTRAT commander.

For registration hours, the agenda and more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2Z3ACwa>.

Greater Los Angeles



Lt. Gen. James Dickinson, USASMDC/ARSTRAT commander, led a panel on cyber threats during last year's symposium. He's scheduled to speak again this year. (AUSA PHOTO)

Leaders mentor young professionals at 'Ready Set Connect'

The Association of the U.S. Army's Rock Island Arsenal Chapter brought together young professionals and local and military leaders during a "Ready Set Connect" event May 29.

The event at the Arsenal Museum was presented by Alexis Condon, the chapter's director of young professional relations.

Designed to provide 28 participants with networking and leadership development opportunities, "Ready Set Connect" was supported by senior military

leaders, community leaders, as well as military historians who volunteered their time and expertise.

"Building relationships has become a lost art that I'm trying to bring back," Condon said. "My overall goal was for everyone to walk away knowing they could email, call or contact at least one person after RSC, and it was more than exchanging business cards, it was building meaningful relationships."



Participants had the opportunity to network with local and military leaders during the 'Ready Set Connect' event. (AUSA PHOTO)

Participants were divided into two groups. They engaged in three-minute connections with leaders or interactions using military artifacts from the second-oldest Army museum so they could benefit from leadership lessons drawn from the Army's past.

"Engaging with young professionals in our area is a top priority for our chapter, and we are so fortunate to

have someone like Alexis as our director for YP relations," said Julie Johnson, the chapter president.

"She embraced this event and provided a tremendous opportunity for leaders to shine, participants to benefit, and our chapter to obtain tremendous positive exposure as a result. We are already looking forward to what she will do next," Johnson said.

Rock Island Arsenal

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