



Happy 250th Birthday, Army!



Click for video: The AUSA team wishes the Army a happy 250th birthday. (AUSA VIDEO)

AUSA graphic novel honors milestone Army birthday

In celebration of the Army's 250th birthday, the Association of the U.S. Army is releasing a special edition graphic novel titled *The Birth of the U.S. Army*.

The standalone graphic novel marks the milestone anniversary of the Army, which was established on June 14, 1775—more than a year before the Declaration of Independence. Under civil authority, militia from separate colonies unified under a new commander to form a national force to fight for independence.

"AUSA is proud to celebrate the 250th

birthday of America's first national institution, the Army, with this new graphic novel," said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA's Book Program. "My thanks go out to the creative team and our historical advisers for making it possible."

The Birth of the U.S. Army is available here.

AUSA also has a Medal of Honor graphic novel series that highlights Army recipients of the nation's highest award for valor. Those graphic novels are available here.

The Birth of the U.S. Army opens on

See **Graphic novel**, Page 6

IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 5
JUNE 12, 2025

Army to Rename

7 Bases

3

AUSA Hosts Army 250th Birthday Event

4

NCO & Soldier Programs

Training at Fort Leonard Wood

8

Chapter Highlights

Suncoast

9



Happy 250th Birthday, U.S. Army!



Thank You For Your Service.

Join Our Winning Team
gdls.com/careers



Scan to See The Next Generation

Posts renamed for heroes from Civil War through Somalia

Seven Army installations renamed in 2023 will be renamed once again in honor of soldiers who were decorated for heroic actions in conflicts from the Civil War through the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia, the Army said in a news release.

The changes were first announced by President Donald Trump during a visit on Tuesday to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to kick off the Army's 250th birthday celebrations.

They follow orders earlier this year by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to rename Fort Liberty to Fort Bragg in honor of Pfc. Roland Bragg, a World War II Silver Star recipient. He then renamed Fort Moore, Georgia, back to Fort Benning in honor of Cpl. Fred Benning, who received the Distinguished Service Cross during World War I.

Each of the nine installations had been renamed in 2023 following the recommendations of an eight-member commission that was tasked by Congress to remove Confederate names, symbols, displays and monuments from DoD properties.

In Virginia, Fort Pickett, formerly Fort Barfoot, is renamed in honor of World War II Distinguished Service Cross recipient 1st Lt. Vernon Pickett. While pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire, Pickett crawled forward and destroyed two enemy positions with grenades, according to the Army. After being captured, he escaped from a transport train with fellow prisoners of war and rejoined his unit before being killed in action.

Fort Lee, Virginia, formerly Fort Gregg-Adams, is renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Pvt. Fitz Lee for his heroism during the Spanish-American War. During a coastal assault in Cuba, Lee voluntarily disembarked under direct enemy fire to rescue wounded comrades from the battlefield, the Army said.

Virginia's Fort A.P. Hill, formerly Fort Walker, honors Medal of Honor



Fort Gordon, Georgia, formerly Fort Eisenhower, is renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. Gary Gordon for his valor during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu. Six other installations will also be renamed, the Army announced. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

recipients Lt. Col. Edward Hill, 1st Sgt. Robert Pinn and Pvt. Bruce Anderson. During the Civil War, then-Capt. Hill, Pinn and Anderson executed significant actions separately at Cold Harbor and Chapin's Farm in Virginia and Fort Fisher, North Carolina, in support of the U.S. Army, the news release says.

In Texas, Fort Hood, formerly Fort Cavazos, is renamed in honor of Distinguished Service Cross recipient Col. Robert Hood for his heroic actions during World War I. Under heavy enemy shelling near Thiaucourt, France, then-Capt. Hood directed artillery fire under enfilading machine-gun fire. After his gun crew was lost to enemy fire, he rapidly reorganized and returned fire within minutes, restoring combat capability, according to the Army.

Fort Rucker, Alabama, formerly Fort Novosel, is renamed in honor of Distinguished Service Cross recipient Capt. Edward Rucker for his heroism in World War I. Flying deep behind enemy lines, then-1st Lt. Rucker and his fellow aviators engaged a numerically superior enemy force in

a daring aerial battle over France, disrupting enemy movements and completing their mission against overwhelming odds, the Army said.

Fort Gordon, Georgia, formerly Fort Eisenhower, is renamed for Medal of Honor recipient Master Sgt. Gary Gordon for his valor during the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu. A Delta Force sniper, Gordon and fellow sniper Sgt. 1st Class Randy Shughart volunteered to be inserted to defend wounded crew members at a helicopter crash site and held off an advancing enemy force, protecting the pilot after exhausting all his ammunition, according to the Army.

Fort Polk, Louisiana, formerly Fort Johnson, is named in honor of Silver Star recipient Gen. James Polk for his actions as commanding officer of the 3rd Cavalry Group (Mechanized) during operations across Europe in World War II. According to the Army, then-Col. Polk led reconnaissance and combat missions under fire, spearheading Third Army advances as part of Task Force Polk. He later was commander in chief of U.S. Army Europe.

AUSA hosts 3-day Army birthday celebration in Philadelphia



Soldiers assigned to the 28th Infantry Division conduct a flyover at Citizens Bank Park during a Philadelphia Phillies baseball game in May. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/1ST LT. KATE McNELIS)

This weekend, the Association of the U.S. Army and its Greater Philadelphia-Penn & Franklin chapter will host a historic celebration of the U.S. Army's 250th birthday.

The three-day celebration, beginning on Friday, will take place in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Army and the nation. It is open to the AUSA community, soldiers, veterans, their families and anyone who wishes to gather on Independence Mall and celebrate this significant milestone.

"AUSA is proud to celebrate the Army's 250th birthday in Philadelphia, where both our nation and our Army were born," said retired Brig. Gen. Jack Haley, AUSA's vice president for Membership and Meetings. "It's truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

While national commemorations are scheduled in Washington, D.C., the celebration in Philadelphia offers a unique backdrop to the Army's milestone anniversary on Saturday. Rooted in community partnerships and longstanding relationships, AUSA's three-day celebration reflects the community's deep pride in military service.

The weekend-long celebration is

packed with events honoring the legacy and service of soldiers from the earliest days of the Continental Army to those serving today. There will be a powerful lineup of events including a parade, an enlistment ceremony for 250 new soldiers, reenactments, concerts, commemorative ceremonies and community tributes—culminating in a grand celebration on Independence Mall, where the American Army's story began.

Attendees will learn about the Army and its history, as well as those who choose to serve—fulfilling two key AUSA missions, to educate and connect the nation with her Army.

Haley, who served for more than 30 years, said the Army's milestone hits close to home. "I'm especially grateful for the incredible support of our Greater Philadelphia-Penn & Franklin chapter, which has led the charge in making this celebration possible," Haley said. "Their dedication and leadership have been integral to this effort and a shining example of what it means to stand with our Army."

For more information or to participate, visit goarmy250.com.

Follow the celebration @ausapennfranklin and with hashtags #goarmy250 #Army250.

AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier*

Gen. Bob Brown, USA Ret.
President and CEO, AUSA

Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, USA Ret.
Vice President, Leadership and 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

ARTICLES. Articles appearing in AUSA Extra do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the officers or members of the Council of Trustees of AUSA, or its editors. Articles are expressions of personal opinion and should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion of the Department of Defense nor of any branch, command, installation or agency of the Department of Defense. The publication assumes no responsibility for any unsolicited material. Email: extra@ausa.org

ADVERTISING. Neither AUSA Extra, nor its publisher, the Association of the United States Army, makes any representations, warranties or endorsements as to the truth and accuracy of the advertisements appearing herein, and no such representations, warranties or endorsements should be implied or inferred from the appearance of the advertisements in the publication. The advertisers are solely responsible for the contents of such advertisements.

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.

PERK OF THE WEEK

For soldiers, veterans and their families, the free MyVetBenefits mobile app and website digitally



creates a personalized list from a database of more than 2,500 service-connected benefits from federal, state and local veterans' organizations. Learn more at www.myvetbenefits.com/.

Poppas: Army must remain ready in unpredictable world

A volatile security environment that could erupt anywhere at any moment has replaced the predictability of conflict from the last couple of decades, said Gen. Andrew Poppas, commanding general of Army Forces Command.

There was a time after 9/11, he said, when leaders knew when and where they were going to deploy, what the human and physical terrain was going to be and even select the bed they'd be sleeping in.

"Well, that level of predictability's gone, the future is not written, and in fact, it is a much more uncertain and a much more lethal world," Poppas said June 5 during a Strategic Landpower Dialogue event, part of a series co-hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Poppas pointed to current events, such as the October 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel, the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, China's reaction to U.S.-led exercises in the Indo-Pacific or the tensions brewing in the Middle East, as examples of challenges bubbling up around the world.

"I think that we are continuously on a precipice, and it's going to take one strategic miscalculation. It might not be 30 days until that war comes upon us, but it could be within 30 minutes," Poppas said. "That's the world in which we're operating today, and that is literally worldwide."

In the context of a joint fight, Poppas pointed out that despite the vast oceans in the Indo-Pacific, the Army's contribution as a land power remains extremely important.

The largest military components of partner nations are ground forces, Poppas said, as he emphasized the importance of the U.S. Army's integration of those nations in its exercises and soldiers' engagements throughout the region. "It's our partnership with them, the assurance that we provide, and then physical presence,



Gen. Andrew Poppas, commanding general of Army Forces Command, smiles during the Army's 250th birthday celebration on Tuesday at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. (U.S. ARMY/PFC. RICHARD MORGAN)

obviously, is the deterrence," Poppas said. "We also provide survivability in terms of long-range precision fires that could be maneuvered and placed in multiple locations out there."

In a contested environment such as the Indo-Pacific, he said, the Army's logistics capabilities are "imperative for the overall fight."

As commander of Forces Command, Poppas said it is his job to make sure soldiers are in the right formations, have the right equipment

and the right mindset to move out when the time comes.

To get there, he and his leaders are guided by four focus areas. The first is people, and the bonds built through a foundation of trust and empowerment. Next is winning the first fight.

"That's the contract that we have. If something happens tonight, there's an expectation and a demand that we are ready to move forward with the formations," Poppas said. He added that behind that win is training and making sure "that we're masters at the basics, that we can execute at the higher echelons ... across all the domains and integrate our coalition and allied partners."

The Army must also win the future fight by developing the right formations and by fighting as a balanced force that includes the Regular Army, the National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve.

"The way that we fight is not as an active-duty component alone," Poppas said. "We are absolutely dependent on the inner strength of the active duty, the National Guard and the Reserve. It's the way we're structured. It's the way that we have to fight."



Pvt. 1st Class Tyler Gonzales, with the 552nd Military Police Company, 25th Infantry Division, provides security Overwatch June 2 during the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center Exportable exercise in the Philippines. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. 1ST CLASS GARY SILVERMAN)

Graphic novel

From Page 1

April 19, 1775, as American and British soldiers clash in the Massachusetts towns of Lexington and Concord, and in the bloody British retreat to Boston that follows. “As the alert spread, thousands of Massachusetts militia and minutemen converged to harass the British regulars,” the graphic novel says.

On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia, and delegates from the 13 colonies turn their attention to the onset of hostilities with Britain.

After much deliberation, the Continental Congress on June 14 votes to create the Continental Army. This new Army, America’s first national institution, includes 10 companies of riflemen, with the first enlistees coming from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

A day later, Congress votes to appoint Gen. George Washington, a renowned veteran of the French and Indian War, as commander in chief of the Continental Army. His commission reads, in part, “We, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity, do, by these presents, constitute and appoint you to be General and Commander in chief ... for the Defence of American liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof.”

The graphic novel then traces Washington’s journey from Cambridge, where he gets his first glimpse of his fledgling Army, to the March 2, 1776, bombardment of British-held Boston.

Despite that first victory, “repeated setbacks and gains lay ahead for the new Army. They would fight in fields, wilderness, and towns for the next seven years,” the graphic novel says.

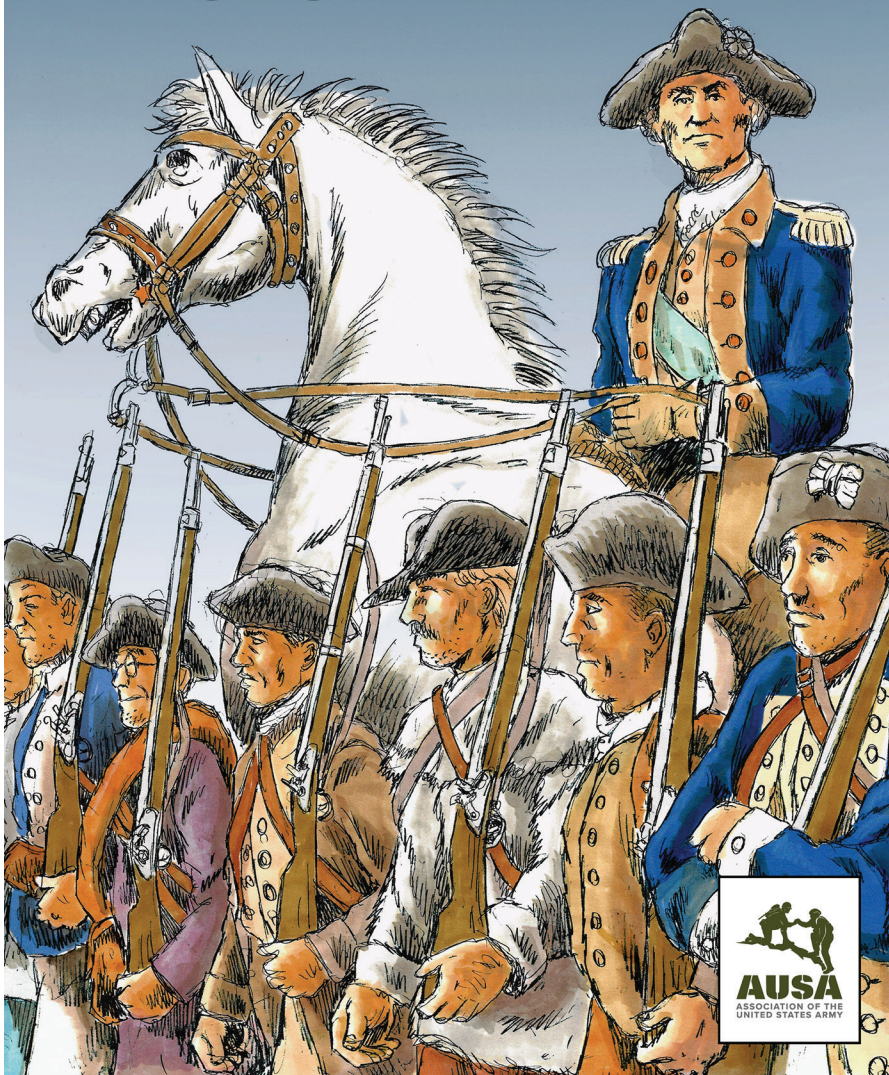
The Army’s ultimate victory would come in Yorktown in 1781. The British defeat at Yorktown led to the Treaty of Paris in 1783, in which the British acknowledged the independence and

sovereignty of the United States.

“Born from a desire for liberty, forged in the heat of battle, the United States Army has stood as the first line of defense for 250 years,” the graphic novel says. “The proud tradition of citizen soldiers lives on.”

The Birth of the U.S. Army, like AUSA’s other graphic novels, was created by a team of professional comic book veterans. The script for

The Birth of the **U.S. ARMY**



The Birth of the U.S. Army was written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*.

Artwork and the cover were by Wayne Vansant, who has worked on *The 'Nam*, *Savage Tales* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*; and the lettering was by Troy Peteri, who has worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.

Spotlight on AUSA Association Partner: MOPH

Formed in 1932, the Military Order of the Purple Heart aims to serve all who have received the Purple Heart, awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces “who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action,” according to the organization’s website.

The history of the Purple Heart dates to Aug. 7, 1782, when Gen. George Washington established the Badge of Merit at Newburgh, New York. “Not only instances of unusual gallantry, but also of extraordinary fidelity and essential service in any way shall meet with a due reward,” Washington said of the award.

The order is composed exclusively of Purple Heart recipients but supports all veterans and their families



through a variety of nationwide initiatives, including legislative advocacy, suicide awareness, scholarships and youth programs.

It also operates the Center for Development and Civic Engagement,

the largest volunteer program in the federal government that supplements essential personnel for the care and treatment of veteran patients.

“Our members have all answered our Country’s call. Now as Combat Wounded veterans, we proudly continue to serve our country by helping America’s active duty, veterans, her families and those who have borne the burden of battle,” the group’s website says.

For more information, please visit <https://www.purpleheart.org/>.

If your association is interested in partnering with AUSA, contact Susan Rubel at srubel@ausa.org.

Association Partnership with AUSA is an opportunity for like-minded military service organizations to join AUSA in support of the Total Army—soldiers, DoD civilians and their families.



KRH | YOUR VALUE DRIVEN PARTNER OF CHOICE

TURNKEY SOLUTIONS | AGILE TEAM | DYNAMIC SERVICES

KRH provides integrated HR solutions and life support services to various clients. KRH is recognized as a well-founded, sustainable, and legal partner to businesses within the region. As industries evolved, KRH is agile in gaining a deep understanding of its clients' changing needs and reforming its strategies to address new challenges.

SERVICES



INTEGRATED LIFE
SUPPORT SERVICES



TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES



GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS SECTOR



ENGINEERING
SERVICES



HR & ADMIN
SERVICES



FIELD OPERATIONS
SERVICES



INTEGRATED
FACILITIES
MANAGEMENT
(IFM)



KRH ACADEMY



VALUES



Accountability



Passion



Commitment



Excellence



Integrity



Innovation



Respect

SCAN FOR MORE



CENTCOM HQ
KUWAIT, SHARQ, AL SHUHADA STREET,
AL GHAWALI TOWER
TEL: + 965 22320113
BD@KRHKW.COM

OPERATING IN THE HEART OF CENTCOM



Recognizing blood donors, teaching life skills in Missouri

In the month of May, the Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter hosted multiple events that educated, informed and connected participants on the support the association provides to service members, families and the community.

I was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood from 2004–2007 as a drill sergeant and first sergeant for basic trainees. I hardly had time to sleep, much less learn about the amazing connection that exists between

NCO & Soldier Programs

the AUSA chapter, Army leaders and the small but tight-knit community. Last month, 18 years after I left the area, I returned to a town that still felt like family.

During my trip, I was invited to tour the new blood donor facility at Fort Leonard Wood. I was greeted with Midwestern hospitality at the Armed Services Blood Program by retired Command Sgt. Maj. Freddie Brock, the chapter president, and blood program recruiter Carl Norman. They proudly highlighted the program and the gorgeous building that provides blood donations across the Department of Defense.

The facility recognizes organi-



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Freddie Brock, right, president of AUSA's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter, presents a 'Giving4Living' guidon streamer recognizing 100 or more donations during a single-day blood drive to Delta Company, 787th Military Police Battalion. (AUSA PHOTO)

zations that provide 100 or more eligible donors during a single-day blood drive with membership in the 100-Donor Club, which began in October 2022. In 2023, the Armed Services Blood Program began partnering with the AUSA chapter, and the chapter presents a "Giving4Living" guidon streamer to each 100-Donor Club member. Since the inception of the partnership and recognition program, 19 organizations have earned club membership.

These units, enshrined on a 100-Donor Club plaque hanging in the donor center lobby, have provided more than 2,200 eligible donors,

resulting in more than 4,000 blood products being made available to ill and injured service members and their families. To date, the unit with the highest donation level at Fort Leonard Wood is Charlie Company, 787th Military Police Battalion, which has made the honored plaque four times.

The AUSA chapter guidon streamer highlights units' excellence and secures bragging rights for the leaders and soldiers within the organization.

The chapter also supported this year's Best Sapper Competition, during which soldiers from across the Army compete in a grueling week-long competition at Fort Leonard Wood to be named the Army's Best Sapper team. The chapter hosted its Best Sapper Meal to support the event, feeding over 600 people including competitors, support staff, cadre and community members. AUSA mascot Sgt. R. Hero made an appearance, delighting soldiers and family members who took advantage of selfie time with him.

Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president of NCO and Soldier Programs, also traveled to Fort Leonard Wood to conduct a Life Skills event with soldiers. Life Skills is an AUSA program that teaches soldiers how to change engine oil and other basic maintenance techniques for their personal vehicles.

The chapter hosted this event on the installation over two days, servicing 33 vehicles—and for the first time, we were able to offer this opportunity to spouses, allowing them to learn this critical skill.

Thanks to Brock and the Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter for all they do in support of soldiers, families and their community.

Follow NCO and Soldier Programs @ncosoldierprograms on Instagram.



Soldiers learn how to change engine oil and other basic car maintenance techniques during a Life Skills event led by retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president of NCO and Soldier Programs, at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. (AUSA PHOTO)

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra is AUSA's director of NCO and Soldier Programs.

Chapter hosts Operation Deploy Your Dress pop-up event

Furthering the Association of the U.S. Army's mission to support soldiers and families, AUSA's Suncoast chapter in Tampa, Florida, recently partnered with Operation Deploy Your Dress to host a pop-up event where more than 106 dresses were provided to service members and military spouses.

"We are overjoyed at the response we received from our community for Yvonne Coombes and Operation Deploy Your Dress," said Marilyn Westropp, the chapter president. "What a great experience for everyone who participated in our AUSA Suncoast Chapter. We had so much fun seeing our members and meeting military women from all branches."

Coombes is a co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress, which was formed in late 2015 at Fort Bliss, Texas, by a group of military spouses who organized a dress swap to lessen the cost of formal wear for holiday balls. The idea quickly grew into an organization run by dozens of volunteers, offering gently used dresses and accessories to military members and dependents.

AUSA has partnered with Operation Deploy Your Dress to host a pop-up event at its national headquarters for several years, but this was only the second time a giveaway has happened outside the Washington, D.C., area. The first was earlier in May in conjunction with AUSA's LANPAC Symposium and Exposition in Hawaii.

"This event was only possible due to the amazing support of AUSA at the chapter level and could not have been pulled off without AUSA Family Readiness at the national level," Coombes said. "It is just another amazing example of the great things we are able to do through our teaming agreement with AUSA, and we're so excited to get to work with some new chapters along the way."

The Suncoast chapter's event was



Left to right, Thea Green, deputy director of AUSA Family Readiness; Mickia Freeman, program manager for the Blue Star Families Tampa chapter; Yvonne Coombes, co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress; AUSA Suncoast chapter member Shirley Baez; and Marilyn Westropp, Suncoast chapter president, prepare for the Suncoast chapter's pop-up event in partnership with Operation Deploy Your Dress. (AUSA PHOTO)

held at the American Legion Alafia Post in Riverview due to chapter member Shirley Baez, who negotiated use of the venue at no charge, Westropp said. "We wanted that location because many military families live in that area of our Hillsborough County. The women who came to the event were so excited that we chose that location since they usually must drive a long way for many events," she said.



Yvonne Coombes, co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress, helped plan and execute the pop-up dress giveaway event hosted by AUSA's Suncoast chapter in Tampa, Florida. (AUSA PHOTO)

Westropp coordinated with Coombes and Thea Green, deputy director of AUSA Family Readiness, to plan the pop-up experience. To promote the event, Westropp arranged for Coombes to appear in an interview on WTSP Channel 10 Tampa Bay and partnered with other military service organizations to spread the word on social media.

"We provided one dress for each woman with a military ID and encouraged them to bring their daughters with them as well. They were so excited," Westropp said. "We also invited the men to join their wives. They loved seeing their wives get a free ball gown for an upcoming event."

Women continued to reach out after the pop-up event, Westropp said, and the chapter plans to hold another giveaway soon.

"We never know the circumstances of a person's life, and whatever we can do to educate, inform and connect is important," Westropp said. "We now have a good idea of what is needed to continue this for our AUSA Suncoast Chapter to keep providing dresses for the military women in our community."



CELEBRATING THE U.S. ARMY'S **250TH BIRTHDAY**

We proudly serve those who serve to protect us.

AM GENERAL[™]
MISSION READY ★ FUTURE DRIVEN