



A soldier with the Indiana Army National Guard speaks with visitors May 21 during an Armed Forces Weekend event at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. (U.S. ARMY/CPL. EDWARD KAIKUMBA)

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## Army seeks to educate Gen Z on service

As the Army works to recruit new talent and dispel misconceptions about serving, the knowledge gap between Generation Z and the service is widening, an Army survey found.

Though 73% of Gen Z respondents said they are familiar with the Army, the “Know Your Army” National Consumer Survey found that this group, young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, holds several misconceptions around Army jobs, work-life balance and soldier benefits.

Conducted in mid-March, the survey analyzed data from 3,000 American adults between the ages of 18 and 76. It found that just over half of Gen Z respondents are “unsure what they want in a career,” but 90% said they want to work for an organization that

has a positive impact on society.

“The Army has what Gen Z is looking for in an employer—they just don’t know it yet,” said Maj. Gen. Alex Fink, chief of Army Enterprise Marketing.

Additionally, nearly one-third of Gen Z respondents believe that most Army jobs are combat roles, though the Army offers over 200 jobs across a variety of fields. Further, just 51% of Gen Z respondents think that soldiers are allowed time to pursue their hobbies or recreation.

Inspired by this knowledge gap, the Army created its “Know Your Army” campaign, which educates Gen Z, the youngest generation eligible for service, to the benefits the Army offers, both personally and professionally.

The “Know Your Army” campaign, which features five 15-second videos,

aims to show future soldiers how their goals align with Army opportunities and benefits. The videos are being shown on TV, online, on podcasts and on social media, including Reddit, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

“‘Know Your Army’ plays an important role in shifting this narrative by educating young people about the incredible range of benefits making it possible for today’s one million soldiers to thrive at work and at home,” Fink said.

As the share of Americans with military experience declines and the number of young people eligible for service grows smaller, the Army is battling a generational gap and a numbers game.

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## Graphic novel features double Medal of Honor recipient

Capt. Tom Custer, the first soldier in U.S. history to earn two Medals of Honor, 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: Tom Custer* tells of Custer's actions during two separate Civil War battles in April 1865, where he captured Confederate flags and multiple prisoners. The younger brother of famed Civil War Gen. George Custer, Tom Custer lied about his age to enlist in the infantry. Years later, he was killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

"George Custer once said of his younger brother, 'Tom ought to have been the general and I the captain.' *Medal of Honor: Tom Custer* shows why," said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA's Book Program. "The artists and historians working on this graphic novel have done a great job of highlighting Tom Custer's often-overlooked accomplishments."

*Medal of Honor: Tom Custer* is available here.

AUSA launched its Medal of Honor graphic novel series in October 2018. This is the 15th novel in the series, which is available here.

Born in 1845, Custer idolized his more famous brother and wanted to follow him into the military, according to a DoD website.



During the Civil War, a 16-year-old Custer lied about his age to enlist in the infantry, joining the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry in 1861.

Custer fought in several battles in Tennessee and Georgia before he was sent to work on the staff of three generals, including Gen. Ulysses Grant.

He reenlisted in 1864 and was commissioned as a cavalry officer and transferred to the 6th Michigan Cavalry, which served in Virginia, according to DoD.

On April 3, 1865, Custer was leading a charge over an enemy barricade at Namozine Church in Willicomack, Virginia, when he grabbed the Confederate flag out of the hands of its bearer and secured the capture of 14 prisoners, according to DoD.

Three days later, Custer was at the Battle of Sailor's Creek in Deatons-

ville, Virginia, where he captured two more flags—one of which he stole while charging the color bearer on his horse, according to DoD.

His animal shot out from under him, Custer was wounded in the face, but he managed to shoot and kill the enemy soldier and take the flag.

Custer's successful capture of the enemy's flags was more than a heroic gesture. As well as being a battlefield marker, the colors represented the spirit of its unit, and its capture could cause the dissolution of a regiment, according to the graphic novel.

He would receive two Medals of Honor for his actions in the two battles and be promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel.

On June 25, 1876, Custer and his brothers died during the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Each AUSA graphic novel is created by a team of professional comic book veterans.

The script for the graphic novel on Custer was written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*.

Pencils, inks and the cover were by Andrew Paquette, who has worked on *Avengers*, *Daredevil* and *Hellraiser*; 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

### Tiarra Perriman

#### Program Manager

Tiarra Perriman is the program manager for AUSA's NCO & Soldier Programs directorate. A military spouse, she has been with the association for almost a year, and on June 14 welcomed daughter Cori June Perriman. She enjoys spending time with friends and family with sports, play dates and birthday parties.



# Human domain remains critical as Army faces global challenges



Capt. Angela Hansen, right, and Kesa Channoy, center, along with Pvt. Hristo Georgiev of the Bulgarian Land Forces, brace themselves for an earthquake simulation during combined training at Lozen, Bulgaria, in May. (U.S. ARMY/CAPT. ANGELO MEJIA)

**A**s the Army faces complex global challenges, a basic understanding of the human domain and the environment on the ground should receive as much emphasis as modernization and large-scale combat operations, according to the authors of a recent article.

Gathering information through a network of scouts or intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance technology is important in an operational environment, but the focus of their work is threat-based. There is no framework to make sense of the cultural and political nuances of people and institutions on the ground, said co-author 1st Sgt. Sean Acosta.

"We're not saying that technology is not important. We need technology. ... However, we feel that sometimes we're over reliant on that technology to provide answers," Acosta said Wednesday during a webinar hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army as part of its Noon Report series.

Acosta, a civil affairs NCO with the 98th Civil Affairs Battalion, Col. Arnel David, an Army strategist with the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, and Nicholas Krohley, a social scientist and founder of FrontLine Advisory, discussed their

article, "Getting Competition Wrong: The U.S. Military's Looming Failure," published by the Modern War Institute at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

"We're not arguing for a massive change to the Army and military. We know there's no room for growth and a big change, but the change required is not expensive," David said. "What we need is organizational innovation, a sliver of the Army needs to get better at human domain engagement."

Krohley noted the "staggering influence of data" that can help paint a picture of what's going on around the world. But data alone, he said, cannot answer basic questions such as why things are happening or what should be done in response to the data.

"We're talking about causal understanding, establishing cause and effect between events, establishing what patterns mean," he said.

The authors urged the Army to re-examine its human domain enterprise capabilities and provide the resources necessary to employ and connect them with the larger strategic picture.

"The Army as a whole needs to make a decision about what matters beyond the enemy," Krohley said.

Read their article here.

# AUSA Extra

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## Soldiers and families benefit from AUSA financial aid

**M**ore than 760 people have participated in a program, supported by the Association of the U.S. Army, that aims to improve financial readiness among soldiers.

Launched in late April, the Financial Literacy Program is run by Army Emergency Relief. AUSA pledged \$1 million to the program as part of a larger effort to help soldiers and military families struggling with food insecurity.

The goal is to give soldiers and their families much needed assistance while reinforcing the importance of financial readiness and well-being through an incentivized financial training program, retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, said when AUSA announced its pledge earlier this year.

"The leading cause of food insecurity is financial readiness," Dailey said at the time.

In 2016, the National Defense Authorization Act mandated financial training at different points in a service member's career, according to information provided by Army Emergency Relief. The Army implemented that mandate, and in 2021 directed training with 15 professional and personal milestones.

In response, AUSA proposed a \$1 million donation to Army Emergency Relief to help promote individual financial literacy within the Army.

The financial training, developed by the USAA Education Foundation and approved by the Army G-9, addresses debt, major purchases and a spending plan, according to Army Emergency Relief.

Soldiers who complete the training

must pass a test to receive a credit toward the repayment of their loan.

As of May 31, more than \$82,600 had been distributed to 763 participants, according to Army Emergency Relief.

Founded in 1942 and charged with relieving undue financial stress on the force, Army Emergency Relief provides assistance through grants or loans, depending on the soldier's situation, as verified by their chain of command.

AUSA continuously works with the Army to seek solutions for food insecurity and other issues facing troops, Dailey said.

"This is an excellent program," he said. "It helps our soldiers in need while simultaneously promoting financial education."

For more information, visit Army Emergency Relief here.

# READY FOR ACTION

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**Gen Z**

From Page 1

About 71% of young people do not qualify for service due to obesity, drugs, physical and mental problems, misconduct or aptitude, according to an Army Recruiting Command fact sheet. Further, the number of people on active duty has dropped by 2.1 million since 1968, according to the Pew Research Center.

In terms of the Army's efforts to remain relatable, Gen Z is less likely than previous generations to have an immediate family member who served in the military.

According to the Pew Research Center, more than three-quarters of Americans 50 or older said they had an immediate family member who served in the military, while the same is true for just a third of Americans ages 18 to 29.

Findings from the "Know Your Army" survey reflects this, particu-



A participant using virtual reality gear engages in a combat simulation during a recruiting event for Jacksonville State University's Army ROTC in Alabama. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

larly in the Gen Z respondents' lack of understanding of or familiarity with soldiers' jobs and day-to-day life.

Those in the Gen Z age group are the least likely to think soldiers have work-life balance, the survey found.

Few of them seemed aware of the benefits provided to soldiers, including education benefits such as tuition assistance or the ability to earn full college tuition; early retirement; health care; and early retirement, according to the survey.

Despite Gen Z's misconceptions, respondents were certain about the benefits they're looking for. More than four-fifths of Gen Z respondents said their desired benefits include pay, health insurance and time off, all benefits that the Army offers.

Regardless of the work and life ambitions of future soldiers, the Army is ready to support its people.

"Whether you're looking to continue your education, start a family, or travel the world, the Army is committed to helping you build the future you're looking for," Fink said.

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## Region meeting highlights collaboration and connection

**O**ur Association of the U.S. Army Family Readiness travels continue, and this month I attended the Fifth Region annual meeting in Minneapolis, where we met the intent of this year's theme to "Reconnect, Recharge and Refresh."

An ice breaker kicked off our "reconnecting" throughout the week. We "recharged" with inspiring mes-

### Family Readiness

sages from AUSA national leaders, including retired Brig. Gen. Jack Haley, vice president for Membership and Meetings, and retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs.

And we were energized by learning what all our chapters are doing to make a difference for soldiers, families and communities.

AUSA's Fifth Region includes Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

The purpose of the regional organization is to improve coordination, enhance leadership in the chapters and provide assistance to chapters in implementing programs and proj-



Members of AUSA's national staff gather with volunteer leaders from the association's Fifth Region at Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota. (AUSA PHOTO)

ects that support the Army—its soldiers, civilians and their families.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Morris, the Fifth Region president, challenged the attending leaders and volunteers from nine states and 12 chapters to share their best practices and the unique ways they connect the Army to their communities.

"You could tell by the conversations in all of the discussions, formal and informal, that the region understands that collaboration and

teamwork can make us all stronger," Morris said.

I would like to share a best practice from AUSA's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter.

Brittany Raines, chapter executive consultant, described engaging the community with the chapter's Community Partners as the secret to the group's success.

"Each event hosted by the chapter has a collaboration element that enhances participation and elevates the impact made on soldiers and family members," Raines said.

The region meeting continued with a visit from the local recruiting station and leadership from the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, who enlightened us on the status of the force and families in Minneapolis and the surrounding area.

All of us were "refreshed" not only through the wonderful venue, refreshments and a dinner cruise with live entertainment on Lake Minnetonka, but also through the teamwork of sharing and brainstorming to move forward with AUSA's mission to continue supporting our soldiers by educating, informing and connecting.



Members of AUSA's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid-Missouri chapter, including Brittany Raines, right, the chapter executive consultant, participate in the Community Salute to Service event in May hosted by the Waynesville R-VI School District. (AUSA PHOTO)

**Holly Dailey** is AUSA's Family Readiness Director.

## AUSA chapters commemorate Army's 247th birthday

Several Association of the U.S. Army chapters on June 14 marked the Army's birthday and Flag Day with events and celebrations in line with the association's mission to support soldiers and their families.

Here are some highlights.

### Allegheny-Blue Ridge

In Martinsville, Virginia, members of AUSA's Allegheny-Blue Ridge chapter hosted soldiers, their families and local community members June 12 for an early Army birthday celebration.

"We want everyone to realize that the flag has a long, long history, always associated with our country, always associated with our military and the wars our military has fought to keep us free," said retired Col. John Miller, the chapter president, according to WSET-TV.

"[The Army] is the ground force of the United States, and we want to ensure that it's recognized for what it provided to our country over its long history," Miller said.

Retired Gen. Dennis Via, an AUSA senior fellow who hails from Martinsville, was the keynote speaker.

"It's special that we come together each year to celebrate the Army's birthday and to celebrate the men and women who serve our nation voluntarily around the world as well as supporting contingencies here at home," Via said, according to WSET-TV.

### Greater Philadelphia-Penn and Franklin

The Army's history and its future were both on display during the annual celebration hosted at Independence Hall in Philadelphia by AUSA's Greater Philadelphia-Penn and Franklin chapter.

According to the National Park Service, the first and last time American and British military officers were together in Independence Hall was in 1777, when British forces occupied Philadelphia and interrogated



Maj. Gen. Rodney Faulk, left, commander of the Army Reserve's 99th Readiness Division, and Air Vice-Marshal Mick Smeath, British defense attache to the United States, enter Independence Hall in Philadelphia June 14. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. SALVATORE OTTAVIANO)

American officers.

On June 14, that changed when Maj. Gen. Rodney Faulk, commanding general of the Army Reserve's 99th Readiness Division, and Air Vice-Marshal Mick Smeath, British defense attaché to the U.S., toured the historic site.

"This auspicious occasion [marks] the first time in the history of our nation, according to historians, that we have a British officer ... [and] an American officer gathered together not as adversaries, but as friends and allies," said retired Lt. Col. Paul McCullough, a member of the AUSA chapter, according to an Army press release.

Other notable moments from the day's events include a naturalization ceremony for 13 new U.S. citizens and the enlistment of dozens of Army recruits.

### Redstone-Huntsville

Lt. Gen. Donnie Walker, deputy commander of Army Materiel Command, delivered the keynote address at an Army birthday celebration at

the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama, hosted by AUSA's Redstone-Huntsville chapter.

"The Army's legacy has been built on 247 years of history, displayed in the dedication, courage and heroism of the American soldier and the entire Army team," Walker said, according to the *Redstone Rocket*. "It requires no explanation, at least not to this audience, as you all have dedicated your lives and careers to this nation, that defending America is a 24/7 job."

During the event, Walker recognized the chapter's volunteer family of the year, Earl and April Thomas, for their contributions to the lives of the children, veterans and first responders of the Tennessee Valley region.

"As the late Gen. Ray Odierno ... used to say, quote, 'The strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our soldiers. And the strength of our soldiers is our families. That's what makes us Army strong.' You keep us strong," Walker said, as reported by the *Redstone Rocket*.



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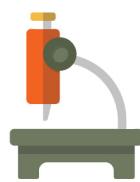
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