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WWI hero featured in new graphic novel

Sgt. Henry Johnson, a member of the famed “Harlem Hellfighters,” is the subject of the newest graphic novel in the Association of the U.S. Army’s series highlighting Medal of Honor recipients.

Medal of Honor: Henry Johnson features the story of Johnson, who served on the Western Front of World War I with the 369th Infantry Regiment, an African American unit that later became known as the “Harlem Hellfighters.”

While on sentry duty, Johnson fought off a German raiding party in hand-to-hand combat, despite being seriously wounded.

He was the first American to receive a Croix de Guerre with a golden palm, France’s highest award for

bravery, and became a national hero back home.

“Henry Johnson was a household name during World War I, but he has been largely forgotten since then,” said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA’s Book Program.

“It took almost a century to recognize his remarkable deeds with the Medal of Honor, and we are excited to share them with a new audience.”

AUSA launched its Medal of Honor graphic novel series in October 2018, producing four issues and a paperback collection.

Four new issues are planned for this year; the first, on World War II hero 2nd Lt. Daniel Inouye, was released May 28.

On May 15, 1918, along the West-

ern Front in France, Johnson, then a private with Company C, 369th Infantry Regiment, was on night sentry duty with fellow soldier Pvt. Neadom Roberts when they were attacked by a German raiding party of at least 12 soldiers, according to his Medal of Honor citation.

Under intense enemy fire and despite “significant wounds,” Johnson fought back and caused several enemy casualties.

He also prevented a badly wounded Roberts from being taken prisoner by German troops.

Johnson then exposed himself to “grave danger” by advancing from his position to engage an enemy soldier in hand-to-hand combat.

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THOUGHT LEADERS



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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**ASSOCIATION OF THE
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Army launches data science, AI programs to grow talent

The Army is launching two new programs this fall as it builds its talent management efforts in the areas of artificial intelligence and data science, a senior commander said.

First up is a master's degree program at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where the Army's Artificial Intelligence Task Force is based, said Gen. Mike Murray, commander of Army Futures Command.

The Army also is creating a year-long program for young officers, NCOs and warrant officers, he said.

"I'm convinced that the Army has got to start now to build the talent they're going to need in the future environment if machine learning and artificial intelligence are going to be important to us—and I'm convinced that it is," Murray said during a recent edition of the Association of the U.S. Army's Thought Leaders webinar series.

In the fall, the Army will send a "handful" of uniformed and civilian employees to earn a master's in data



The Army must start building talent in data science and artificial intelligence, said Gen. Mike Murray, Army Futures Command commander. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. SHANE KLESTINSKI)

science from Carnegie Mellon, Murray said. It also will create what is "fundamentally a digital master gunner's course" for young officers, NCOs and warrant officers, he said.

Futures Command also has received approval from Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy to create a software factory in Austin, Texas, where the command has its headquarters.

The software factory will offer six- to 12-week basic software courses and give soldiers a chance to work with the growing tech industry in Austin and sharpen their skills before returning to their units, Murray said.

"I'm convinced we've got to get this talent identified, and I'm convinced we've got it in our formations," he said.

Graphic novel

From Page 1

"Wielding only a knife and gravely wounded himself, Private Johnson continued fighting and took his Bolo knife and stabbed it through an enemy soldier's head," according to the citation. "Displaying great courage, Private Johnson held back the enemy force until they retreated."

After returning home from the war, Johnson was unable to return to his pre-war job as a redcap porter at Union Station in Albany, New York, because of the severity of his 21 combat wounds.

He died in July 1929 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Johnson was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart in 1996 and the Distinguished Service Cross in 2002.

The award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor in 2015.

AUSA's first graphic novel was *Medal of Honor: Alvin York*, commemorating the centennial of York's heroic actions in World War I.

It was followed by graphic novels on Maj. Audie Murphy, the most highly decorated soldier in American history; Green Beret legend and Vietnam War hero Staff Sgt. Roy Benavidez; and Spc. Sal Giunta, the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since Vietnam.

AUSA also released a paperback collection of all four graphic novels.

This year's two remaining graphic novels will highlight Dr. Mary Walker, a Civil War surgeon and the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor, and Cpl. Tibor Rubin, the Holocaust survivor who later fought in Korea.

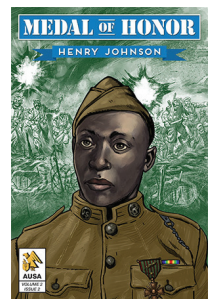
Each graphic novel is created by a team of professional comic book veterans. The script for the graphic novel on Johnson was written by Chuck

Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*. Pencils, inks and the cover were done by P.J. Holden, who has worked on *Judge Dredd*, *Battlefields* and *World of Tanks*.

Colors were by Peter Pantazis, who has worked on *Justice League*, *Superman* and *Wolverine*, and the lettering was by Troy Peteri, who previously worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.

Craig praised the creative team, crediting them with doing "a great job bringing Henry Johnson's story to life."

To download *Medal of Honor: Henry Johnson* and for more on the series, visit www.ausa.org/moh.



VA increases telehealth options, medical hiring during pandemic



'There's no question' that telehealth 'is the way to the future,' said Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie. (U.S. ARMY/GIGAIL CURETON)

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to care for veterans—and some non-veterans—during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite halting face-to-face encounters, the department's top official said.

"We have shown we are adaptable, we're agile," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said during an event hosted by the Defense Writers Group on Tuesday.

Telework hasn't caused any decline in productivity among VA employees, he said. If anything, "it's gone up."

While VA facilities eliminated most face-to-face appointments in response to COVID-19, the department expanded its telehealth reach for mental health services.

"We have transitioned on the mental health front from 40,000 telehealth appointments a month to over 900,000," Wilkie said. "That's the new wave in terms of mental health care."

Wilkie said "there's no question" that telehealth "is the way to the future," especially for mental health and expanding the VA's footprint in rural areas across the country.

As the VA continues to expand its

care and resources around the country, including caring for about 9,000 non-veteran citizens, it's also preparing for a resurgence of coronavirus cases, he said.

"I am preparing in the event that there is a major rebound, despite what we've seen so far," Wilkie said, emphasizing that the VA has "months of supply in reserve now."

Despite the pandemic, the VA is continuing to make changes by improving its hiring process and growing its pool of medical professionals.

The department has shortened its yearlong onboarding process for new hires to a few days, Wilkie said.

Over the past seven weeks, the VA has hired 18,000 new providers—including 5,000 nurses—and 90% of them are permanent hires, he said.

"I could not be happier with the pace with which we're hiring," Wilkie said, adding that the VA is looking to offer competitive pay as it competes for talent with the private sector.

"We have to be realistic there are certain medical skills we can't attract unless we have the ability to compensate those professions," he said. "That's something we've wanted for many years."

AUSAExtra

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Support For the Soldier*

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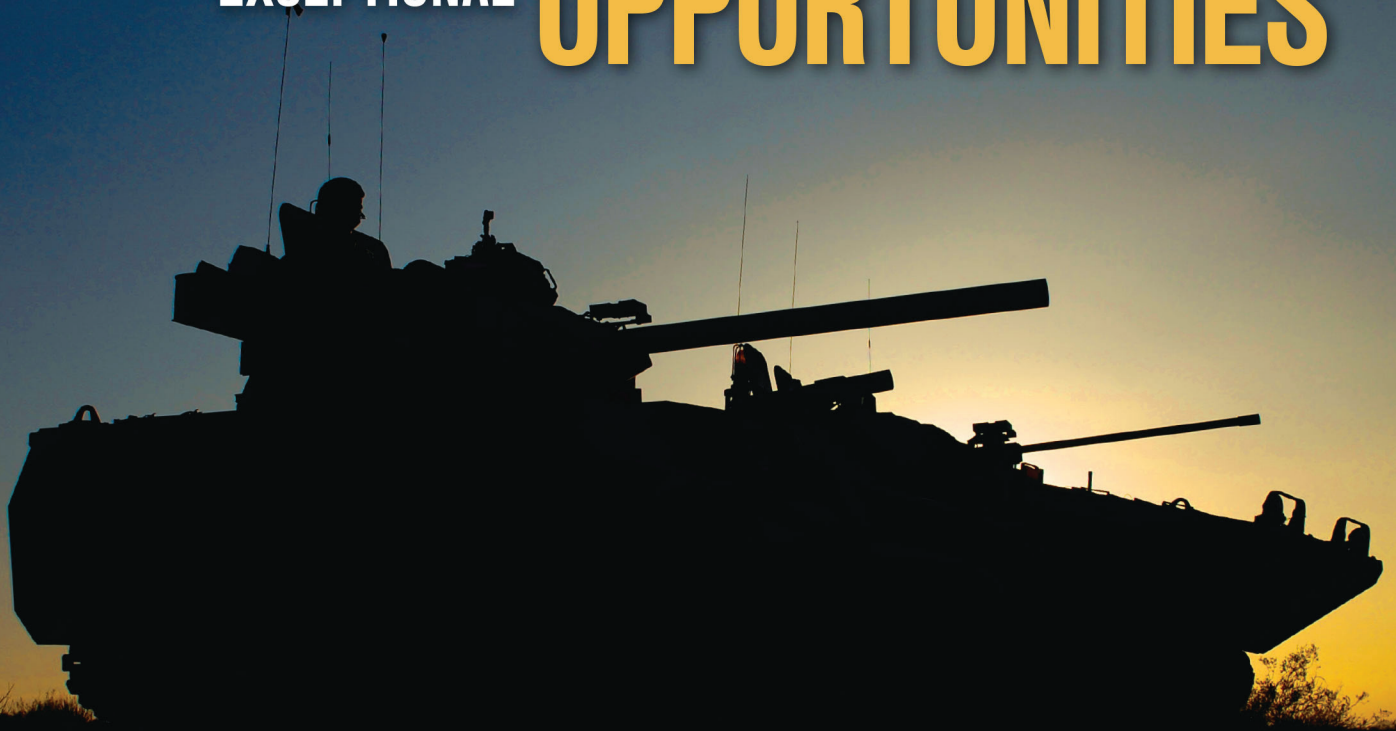
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AUSA tracks NDAA, supports bills honoring WWII heroes

By Mark Haaland

The fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act is making good progress, but challenges remain for speedy passage in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. James Inhofe, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, had planned to complete the NDAA before July 4, but the legislation is still being debated in the Senate.

The House Armed Services Committee unanimously passed its version of the bill on July 1. Typically, this is completed before Memorial Day, but it was delayed this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Government Affairs

Congress has done well navigating virtual hearings and other measures to help ensure the 60th consecutive NDAA is passed in a timely manner.

The House and Senate are now on recess and scheduled to return the week of July 20.

In the House, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer plans to complete all 12 appropriation bills and the House NDAA in July, before members leave for the August recess.

The Senate appropriations process has seen a few setbacks, but the Senate Appropriations Committee's goal remains to complete the 12 appropriations at least at the committee level before the August recess.

AUSA's Focus Areas

Both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA include many sections that align with the Association of the U.S. Army's 2020 Focus Areas.

Notably, AUSA supports legislation that aims to define "family readiness," develop better communication methods with military families, and increase child care services.

AUSA is concerned about the "Military Justice Improvement Act" amendment, which would remove



Among other legislation, AUSA is supporting a bill to recognize the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion with the Congressional Gold Medal. The unit was the only all-Black, all-female battalion overseas during World War II. (DOD PHOTO)

commanders from their role as the convening authority for courts-martial. AUSA is recommending senators not support that legislation.

Honoring heroes

Recently, the AUSA government affairs team has worked to increase the number of co-sponsors for three bills.

The first, HR. 906, if passed, will award the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) of World War II with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Known as Merrill's Marauders after their commander Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill, these brave men fought in the forgotten theater of China-Burma-India on a mission they were not expected to survive.

The Senate companion legislation, S. 743, was passed in December.

The other two, HR. 3138 and S. 633, would recognize the women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion with the Congressional Gold Medal.

During World War II, the women battled racism, sexism and austere conditions as they conducted 24/7 operations to clear a backlog of more

than 17 million pieces of mail, greatly boosting troop morale.

AUSA is teaming with other groups to achieve overwhelming support for these bills prior to the end of the 116th Congress.

Additionally, AUSA supports an amendment allowing primary and secondary caregivers to use already-approved leave in the event of a stillbirth or miscarriage. We were pleased to see that the HASC included a similar amendment.

AUSA is also supporting legislation to develop a grant program for science, technology, engineering and math education within Junior ROTC.

This bipartisan legislation aims to give students the opportunity to learn about 21st century topics the Army is working on and develop skills that will be useful for future innovation.

Our team is closely monitoring the NDAA and appropriations processes and advocating for the Total Army, Army families, Army civilians, retirees and veterans.

Mark Haaland is AUSA's Government Affairs Director.

Chapter honors soldier for saving 3 from vehicle crash

Spc. Joshua Bolden recently became one of the Association of the U.S. Army's newest members for doing something that just came naturally.

"I wasn't trying to be heroic. I was just helping," Bolden said of the day he pulled three people out of an overturned pickup truck at the site of a traffic accident near Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. "I don't know who ran the red light, I don't know exactly what happened, all I saw was three vehicles got into a wreck, one of them flipped and my first reaction was, you know, go help out."

His humility notwithstanding, Bolden's heroic actions soon made their way into the local newspapers and caught the attention of retired Col. Kelly Knitter, president of AUSA's Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon chapter.

She located Bolden at Fort Gordon and arranged for the young soldier to be recognized at the chapter's monthly meeting on June 26, held online because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Bolden, 19, has been in the Army for two years, but he hadn't heard of AUSA before the chapter's recognition.



Spc. Joshua Bolden of the 67th Expeditionary Signal Battalion. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. VICTOR EVERHART JR.)

He received a free, two-year AUSA membership and a \$50 gift card.

"At AUSA, that's our purpose in life, to go out and help the military and recognize good acts by our soldiers," Knitter said. "He truly is a humble guy. He doesn't call himself a hero, and he's not unlike any other soldier that's out there just trying to do their duty and help people. He didn't want to call attention to himself."

Bolden, who is a multichannel transmission systems operator and maintainer with the 67th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, 35th Signal Brigade at Fort Gordon, was on the

way to pick up his son from the boy's grandparents' house on May 27 when he came upon the accident.

He went to the pickup truck, which was lying on its side, and the woman at the wheel told Bolden there were two children in the back.

A little boy had unstrapped his seat belt, and Bolden was able to pick him up and hand him to someone quickly.

But he didn't see the baby girl at first because she was "hanging upside down from her car seat."

"Since she was upside down, it was kind of hard for me to unstrap her while she was suspended in the air," Bolden said in a newspaper report.

His brother-in-law, who was also at the scene, held Bolden by the ankles and lowered him into the passenger cabin so he could get the little girl out.

"Being in the military has brought up my confidence a little, but I was a fire explorer before I joined the military, so that aspect of helping people wasn't really a new thing to me, it was just second nature," Bolden said in the news report.

Bolden said he was surprised by the chapter meeting and the gifts.

"It was kind of overwhelming because I'm just an ordinary person, I felt like my deeds were just expected," he said.



Spc. Joshua Bolden's brother-in-law holds Bolden's ankles while he is lowered into the overturned truck to rescue a family of three from the May 27 accident. (COURTESY PHOTO)



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