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Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, who has been nominated to lead the service, addresses attendees Aug. 20 at the National Guard Association of the United States' annual conference in Reno, Nevada. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. 1ST CLASS ZACH SHEELY)

George: Army must fight as total force

The Army must be ready to fight anywhere and anytime it's called, and it must do so as a total force, Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said.

"People will talk about Europe, and they'll talk about the Pacific and all those threats that are out there, but our Army is a global Army," George said. "We're going to have to be ready to go wherever we're going to go, and wherever we go, it's going to be a multicomponent solution. It's always been that way, and it will continue to be."

Speaking Aug. 20 at the National Guard Association of the United States' 145th General Conference and Exhibition in Reno, Nevada, George said the strategic environ-

ment today is "as complex and dangerous as I've seen it in the time I've been in uniform."

To achieve and maintain the readiness it needs to respond to any threat anywhere in the world, the Army must work in tandem with its Army National Guard and Army Reserve components, said George, who has been nominated to be the next Army chief of staff.

The Army National Guard, for example, makes up nearly 40% of the operational force, George said. "If the Guard is 40% of our force, you don't go anywhere with just 60% of your team," he said.

Looking ahead, George said he is focused on warfighting and delivering ready combat formations. "What

we want are trained, fit, disciplined, cohesive and lethal teams," George said. "We're here to fight. That is why we have a U.S. Army."

There must be conversations at every echelon about training management and how soldiers are spending their time, George said. "If there's something that you're doing that's not contributing to being more lethal or more cohesive, then we've really got to take a hard look at if we should be doing it," he said.

Two other areas where George is focused are continuous transformation and strengthening the profession of arms. "Discipline and standards are the reason that we're going to be successful in battle," he said. "It's the foundation of any good unit."



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USASOC initiatives seek to improve care for women

After a commandwide survey found widespread gender bias and sexual harassment, Army Special Operations Command is working on dozens of initiatives to better care for the women serving in its formations.

“Humans are more important than hardware, and anything that makes the individual [special operations] operator better ... that’s our solemn responsibility,” said Lt. Gen. Jonathan Braga, commander of Army Special Operations Command.

Speaking Monday at a media roundtable, Braga and other leaders from the command discussed findings from a study titled “Breaking Barriers: Women in Army Special Operations.” The goal was to identify barriers female soldiers encounter in Army special operations units and “establish lessons learned and best practices to recruit, maximize comprehensive integration and retain extraordinary soldiers,” the report says.

Using a commandwide survey that received responses from more than 5,000 people, 48 focus groups featuring almost 200 soldiers, and 25 command team interviews, leaders heard from soldiers and civilian employees, both men and women.

One key finding was 44% of women reported ill-fitting equipment as a challenge. “Body armor, the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH) and



A civil affairs officer with Army Special Operations Command assists a participant with fitting combat gear designed for female soldiers during a command capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, now Fort Liberty, North Carolina. (U.S. ARMY/MASTER SGT. RALPH STEVENS)

the MOLLE ruck system emerged as a nearly universal concern for women, especially for those under 5’5” tall,” the report says.

Other issues include gender bias, access to child care, social support, sexual harassment, morale and well-being, pregnancy and post-partum care, and overall quality of life.

“Gender bias and sexism are manifesting in a variety of ways as 40 percent of women service members reported Gender Bias in the Workplace

as a challenge,” the study says. “The research team captured a significant number of overtly sexist comments from male service members primarily focused on an aversion to females entering the 18 series [Special Forces] career field.”

Another top concern was sexual harassment, with as many as 30% of female soldiers reporting it as a challenge, according to the survey.

Access to child care is another stressor, with 44% of women and 70% of men in the command having at least one child, the study says.

“This study is not about accommodations for women,” said Command Sgt. Maj. JoAnn Naumann, senior enlisted leader for Army Special Operations Command. “It’s about providing tools to allow women to maximize their performance and continue to serve.”

The survey and the resulting initiatives are just a start, Braga said. “We have a long way to go,” he said. “Changing culture takes time. ... We have to be better. We must be better because our nation depends on it.”

Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

Sam Votsis

Art Director, ARMY magazine

Sam Votsis has been with AUSA for nearly six years as art director for the association’s flagship publication. He is married with two children. In his spare time, Sam enjoys playing ukulele and bass guitar, walking the hills in his neighborhood and playing Dungeons & Dragons with his son.



Study: College education influences military retirees' financial security



Soldiers learn about retirement pay and benefits at a briefing by Army Retirement Services during the 2022 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (U.S. ARMY/ELIZABETH CARAWAY)

Military retirees with at least a bachelor's degree have a higher net-earning and are more satisfied than veteran non-retirees and civilians, a Rand Corp. report found.

The report analyzed a cohort of men born between 1931 and 1941, who served prior to the modern all-volunteer force, to understand the relationship between their service and life outcomes.

For military retirees without a bachelor's degree, "military retirement benefits effectively offset the earnings gap" they experienced compared to their fellow veterans without retirement benefits, according to the report.

For veterans with at least a bachelor's degree, "military retirement benefits more than offset the gap" compared to veterans without retirement benefits.

Satisfaction with earnings, both during and after service, are key to military readiness, the report found.

"From the standpoint of military readiness, it is critical that military members with the talents and capabilities to serve in senior leadership positions find earnings over a military career adequately attractive,

including post-service civilian earnings opportunities, to induce them to stay for a career and seek higher-ranked positions where they are best suited," according to the report.

Given changes to the U.S. military since the cohort studied retired, the report notes that "military pay increased dramatically during the early years of the [all-volunteer force]" and that "newer entrants may be eligible for better civilian opportunities and better post-service earnings than draft-era personnel."

By the time military retirees in the cohort were 55 and 56, they "had greater accumulated wealth" and "had on average \$292,000 more" than veteran non-retirees, the report found.

Military leaders can rest assured that the military retirement benefit will support their soldiers as they transition to civilian life, the report says.

"For military leaders concerned with whether the military retirement benefit is sufficient to offset negative post-service earnings outcomes, the answer is yes—benefits are sufficient for the cohort studied here," the report found.

Read the full report here.

AUSAExtra

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PERK OF THE WEEK

Remember your AUSA discounts for back-to-school shopping at Apple, Dell, HP, Office Depot and eKnowledge, where you can get free SAT/ACT test prep materials. You can also get a lifetime license for Microsoft Office for one machine for just \$39.99 through AUSA's member discount program at Abenity.



Spotlight on AUSA Association Partner: SFA

The Special Forces Association serves as the voice for the Special Forces community and strives to carry on its traditions, advance the image of Army Special Forces to the public and promote the welfare of Green Berets and their families, according to the group's website.

Founded in 1964 at Fort Bragg, now Fort Liberty, North Carolina, as the U.S. Special Forces Decade Club, the organization was incorporated in 1971 as the Special Forces Decade Association. In 1976, the word "decade" was dropped to allow membership for all graduates of the Special Forces Qualification Course.

The association played a key role in establishing two organizations that provide resources and support to Special Forces soldiers and their families: the Green Beret Founda-



tion in 2009 and the Special Forces Charitable Trust in 2011. It has also "provided numerous resources to assist the Special Forces units since our inception to ensure units are adequately manned and equipped for the defense of the United States," its website says.

According to the group's website, its 85 chapters seek to honor the memory of Special Forces soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom and "unite fraternally all persons who are now or have been assigned to the United States Army's most elite force, the Green Berets." Chapters also sponsor local fundraisers and host events recognizing wounded warriors from the special operations community.

For more information, please visit www.specialforcesassociation.org.

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

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Sharing resources, programs benefits military families

In late July, the Association of the U.S. Army's Family Readiness team was thrilled to participate in AUSA's Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina, with the inaugural Warfighter Family Pavilion.

Thea Green, deputy director of Family Readiness, created and implemented the pavilion, which featured seven military family community partners and government agencies that provided programs, resources and swag to attendees.

Family Readiness

They included the Armed Services YMCA, Army Emergency Relief, the Defense Commissary Agency, Military OneSource, Tutor.com, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program and Operation Deploy Your Dress.

Attendees who visited the pavilion gave tremendous feedback on the importance of resources for families and shared how grateful they were that AUSA stepped forward to provide opportunities to learn more.

At the Warfighter Summit, I had the honor to host Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, the Army's deputy chief of staff for installations, G-9, and Dee Geise, director of soldier and family readiness and the Quality of Life Task Force, for a fireside chat where we discussed programs to improve housing, help spouses find employment and other initiatives.

Additionally, Thea and I were ecstatic to host an Operation Deploy Your Dress "Sip and See" event in partnership with Yvonne Coombes, co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress; Emily Hardy, the Fort Liberty Operation Deploy Your Dress shop manager; Fort Liberty Armed Services YMCA Executive Director Jeremy Hester; and Jill Kiah-Saslav, the installation's director of development and community relations.

The event kicked off with opening remarks from retired Lt. Gen.



Thea Green, left, AUSA's deputy director of Family Readiness, joins AUSA members and community partners at the Family Pavilion during the association's 2023 Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina. (AUSA PHOTO)

Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president of Leadership and Education, and it provided an opportunity for local Army and community leaders and AUSA's Fort Liberty chapter—represented by retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew McFowler, Shauna Johnson and Tina Wright—to come together to network and learn about

the great things AUSA chapters and community partners are doing together for our soldiers and families.

Following this session, the Operation Deploy Your Dress shop opened for a special shopping event, allowing anyone with a military ID card to view the boutique and its family resources and receive a free dress with accessories.

The first 50 people received a tote bag filled with swag, including the AUSA publication *Customs, Courtesies and Traditions of the United States Army: A Primer for Family Members*. And, we were proud to welcome 71 new AUSA members.

The Family Readiness directorate's participation in these events furthers the AUSA mission to educate, inform and connect by supporting our chapters and connecting communities to AUSA and the Army.

Most importantly, we seek to tell our soldiers' and families' stories, to be their voice and advocate for them as they serve our nation.



Retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president of Leadership and Education, speaks during an Operation Deploy Your Dress 'Sip and See' event at Fort Liberty, North Carolina. (AUSA PHOTO)

Holly Dailey is AUSA's Family Readiness director.

Chapter aids recruiters with professional sales training

As the Army continues to grapple with a difficult recruiting environment, the Association of the U.S. Army's North Texas-Audie Murphy chapter has facilitated a training program to help local recruiters reach their goals—with impressive results.

"We're on a mission to equip servicemen and servicewomen with the training they need to succeed, and the results of our test program reveal the vast potential of this strategy to improve the quality and quantity of recruits to the U.S. Army," said Patti McCoy, the chapter president, as reported by the *Cross Timbers Gazette*.

To support the Dallas Recruiting Battalion, one of seven battalions under the Army's 5th Recruiting Brigade, McCoy and other chapter leaders approached Jason Forrest and his wife, Mary, who run the Forrest Performance Group, one of the chapter's Community Partners. Together, they created a customized version of the Forrest Group's sales training program, tailored for Army recruiters.

"To prepare new recruiters to communicate the benefits of the U.S. Army better, we created an entirely new process, rewrote their script, and taught them to believe in the importance of their role," said Jason Forrest, whose passion for the military stems from his years in the ROTC program at Texas Christian University.

Professional education for recruiters is one area senior Army leaders are considering to help combat the current recruiting shortfall. "Most of our recruiters are NCOs who do other things most of the time, and then they come and recruit for a couple of years and they go back into the operational force," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said in July.

McCoy echoed that sentiment. "If you've ever had a job you struggled in due to lack of training, then you've



Jason Forrest and his wife, Mary, of the Forrest Performance Group, conduct Warrior Sales Program training for Army recruiters in Dallas. (CROSS TIMBERS GAZETTE PHOTO)

walked in the shoes of the unprepared soldier assigned to the role of U.S. Army recruiter," she said, according to the *Cross Timbers Gazette*.

The 38 recruiters who participated in the specially tailored program, called the Warrior Sales Program, are already demonstrating the benefits of professional sales training.

Each NCO who attended the program enlisted an average of six more soldiers over the 13-week training period compared to other recruiters, and they did so with nearly 300 fewer appointments.

The program also sought to improve the recruiters' mentality and reduce stress by emphasizing positiv-

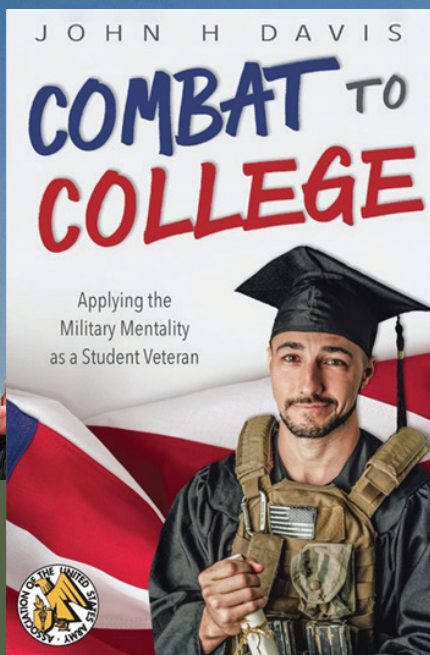
ity, confidence and motivation.

"Many of these well-intentioned young soldiers joined the Army to fight for their country," said retired Col. James Hogan, executive director of AUSA's Fourth Region, as reported by the *Cross Timbers Gazette*. "The Warrior Sales Program, donated by Forrest Performance Group at no charge, helped them see recruiting as another worthy way to serve."

McCoy believes that the program's success could have applications on a much larger scale. "It's a common-sense solution that, if applied nationally, holds vast potential to improve the quality of our armed forces and bolster national security," she said.



Soldiers assigned to the Dallas Recruiting Battalion practice techniques learned from training facilitated by AUSA's North Texas-Audie Murphy chapter. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)



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