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Follow AUSA 2019 news, events online

The Association of the U.S. Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition starts Monday at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

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This year's hashtag is

#AUSA2019.

AUSA releases exclusive Medal of Honor collection

The Association of the U.S. Army is releasing two new graphic novels Thursday as part of a series highlighting the service's Medal of Honor recipients.

In addition, AUSA is offering an exclusive Medal of Honor compendium that will include all four graphic novels released so far.

Copies of the newly released collection will be available for free at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition Oct. 14-16 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The printed book includes the two newest graphic novels, *Medal of Honor: Audie Murphy* and *Medal of Honor: Sal Giunta*, and the previously released issues on Staff Sgt. Roy Benavidez and Sgt. Alvin York.

"We are excited to share these stories with readers," said Joseph Craig, director of AUSA's Book Program. "It has been personally rewarding to learn more about these remarkable soldiers, and we have been fortunate to work with such a talented creative team to bring this history to life."

The graphic novel on Murphy chronicles the service of the most highly decorated soldier in American history.

Among his many acts of bravery during World War II, Murphy was awarded the Medal of Honor for single-handedly holding off six German tanks and waves of infantry for more than an hour during a firefight in January 1945.

Murphy stopped only when he ran out of ammunition, then made his way back to his men and organized a successful counterattack.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for valor, Murphy was awarded the Disting-



Copies of the newly released collection will be available for free at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

guished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Download *Medal of Honor: Audie Murphy* at www.ausa.org/murphy.

Former Staff Sgt. Sal Giunta was the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War.

As a specialist with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Giunta was on patrol in the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan in October 2007 when his platoon was caught in a Taliban ambush.

Braving rocket-propelled grenades and intense small arms fire, Giunta advanced on the enemy, prevented the capture of a fellow paratrooper and turned the tide of the battle.

Download *Medal of Honor: Sal Giunta* at www.ausa.org/giunta.

See **Graphic Novels**, Page 4

NO MATTER WHERE FUTURE WARFIGHTERS ARE CALLED WE STAND WITH THEM.

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WWII hero named Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army

By Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, U.S. Army Retired

Greetings from the Association of the U.S. Army, the professional organization for our Army and our soldiers.

Across the total force, Army leaders, soldiers, Army civilians, retired soldiers, veterans, industry leaders and Army families are excited about this year's AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition.

One of the highlights of this year's meeting is the opportunity to recognize the selection of a great leader as our 2019 Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army.

This year we celebrate retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth "Rock" Merritt and his lifelong commitment to service.

A World War II veteran of D-Day, Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge, Merritt enlisted in the Army in 1942 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

He volunteered for airborne training and began his career with the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment on Oct. 20, 1942, as the regiment was swelling with incoming new recruits.

Merritt and the 508th PIR deployed to Ireland on Dec. 28, 1943, where the soldiers would train and continue to develop their skills before moving forward into England.

Merritt quickly rose through the ranks to corporal and served as the light machine gun squad leader.

On June 5, 1944, the 508th PIR loaded up and prepared to jump into France, beginning their mission at midnight when the paratroopers descended on Normandy.

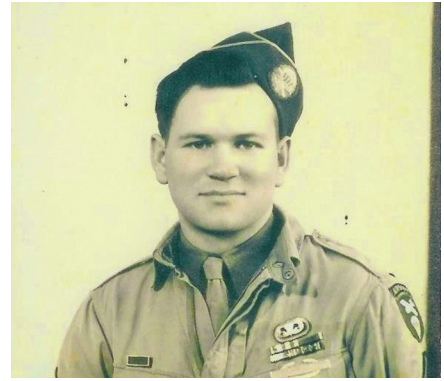
From objective to objective, Merritt and the 508th PIR fought their way across the French countryside.

On July 3, 1944, now-Sgt. Merritt and 1st Battalion, 508th PIR were ordered to hold Base Hill 131 until "the last man fell."



Left: Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth 'Rock' Merritt speaks at a ceremony in Vielsalm, Belgium, in 2016 that honored his sacrifice and service during the Battle of the Bulge.

Right: Then-Cpl. Merritt poses for a photo in 1944. (U.S. ARMY/KRISTIN ELLIS)



"I'll never forget that day," Merritt said. "It was raining, and there was a loudspeaker nearby blaring German propaganda. There was a machine gun firing at us all the time.

"I told the Alpha Company platoon leader, 'I'm going out there to knock out that damn machine gun.' I went up there and knocked that gun out."

Merritt would later receive the Silver Star from Gen. Matthew Ridgway for his heroic actions that day.

On July 13, 1944, Merritt and his fellow paratroopers returned to England to prepare for Operation Market Garden.

The 508th PIR lost more than 50% of its soldiers in those initial six weeks of combat operations. Of 2,056 soldiers, only 900 returned to England.

Merritt continued to serve with the 508th PIR through WWII, and later reenlisted to continue his career as a soldier.

He is one of the few senior NCOs to serve 35 years in the Army, spending 31 of those years on airborne status.

Merritt retired from the Army on Dec. 1, 1977, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he was serving a second tour as the XVIII Airborne Corps command sergeant major.

Following retirement, Merritt served five terms as the president of

the 508th PIR Association.

He officiated the unit's formal retirement at Camp Blanding, Florida, on Oct. 19, 2004, exactly 62 years after the regiment was initiated.

Merritt and his wife, Sally, have sponsored 508th PIR Association reunions and hosted events for members to reunite with their comrades.

Even though Merritt retired more than 40 years ago, he continues to give regular speeches on leadership to members of the 82nd Airborne Division and other units and is still very involved with the training programs at Fort Bragg.

Merritt is a Soldier for Life, and he epitomizes the selfless service of a senior noncommissioned officer. He is deserving of being named the fifth

Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army.

The tradition of appointing an Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army each year began in 2016 when retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan, AUSA's former president and CEO, received the honor.

Three others have been named since: retired Lt. Gen. David Grange Jr., retired Gen. Fredrick Kroesen Jr., and Ms. Elaine Rogers.

Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston is AUSA's Vice President for NCO and Soldier Programs and was the 13th sergeant major of the Army.

NCO & Soldier Programs

Army doctrine may need to change for potential nuclear conflict



Currently, three of the United States' four primary rivals—Russia, China and North Korea—possess nuclear weapons. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

A new paper from the Association of the U.S. Army's Institute of Land Warfare warns the Army may need to give more thought to potential conflicts involving nuclear-armed near-peer competitors.

"Risking Nuclear Escalation: The Characteristics of War from the Sino-Soviet and Kargil Wars," by Maj. Zachary Morris, draws conclusions based on the only two historical cases of direct conflict between nuclear powers: the 1969 Sino-Soviet War and the 1999 Kargil War between India and Pakistan.

Both of those wars contain lessons for commanders at all levels that "emphasize the risk, difficulty of control and severe constraints created by nuclear weapons," the paper says.

Currently, three of the United States' four primary rivals—Russia, China

and North Korea—possess nuclear weapons, and current doctrine for Army operations does not account for this strategic reality, Morris writes.

"Fighting wars using old methods and ideas would likely encourage nuclear escalation and result in millions of deaths and the destruction of multiple states," the paper says.

Innovative ideas and concepts and a better understanding of constraints, Morris writes, will be critical for preventing a nuclear apocalypse.

"Not thinking about these changes and challenges ahead of time simply increases the risk of mistakes—and mistakes in a conflict between nuclear powers could easily result in an unthinkable nuclear exchange," he says.

To read the full paper, please visit <http://bit.ly/31Y7GHN>.

Graphic Novels

From Page 1

AUSA's first graphic novel was released last October. It features the story of York's heroic deeds in France as part of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I. See it now at www.ausa.org/york.

The second, on Benavidez, a Green Beret legend and Vietnam War veteran, was released in June. It can be found at www.ausa.org/benavidez.

All four titles were produced by the same creative team of professional comic book veterans. The script was

written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *The Punisher*, *Batman* and *G.I. Joe*.

Drawings and the cover were done by Rick Magyar, an artist, penciller and inker who has worked on *Avengers*, *Captain America* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

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

For more information about this series, visit www.ausa.org/moh.

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Unique Army command moves into new headquarters

By Clem Gaines

The 20th Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Command will celebrate its 15th anniversary Oct. 16 and cut the ribbon on its new headquarters Oct. 18 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

The unit's history begins in 2003 with the mission to find and eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Because there was no standing Army capability, the 75th Field Artillery Brigade was tasked to form the 75th Exploitation Task Force.

Recognizing the challenges of this unit as an ad hoc organization, the Army directed the establishment of a single headquarters to establish unity of command for worldwide CBRNE response.

On May 1, 2003, then-Lt. Gen. Richard Cody, the Army deputy chief of staff for operations, signed a memo codifying the command as the "organizational solution for an operational command to gain efficiencies, better focus, coordinate, and employ Army chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives response capabilities."

The command was constituted on May 6, 2004, and activated later that year, on Oct. 16.

Today, the command is a highly technical, special-purpose formation of about 3,800 soldiers and 225 civilians in 16 states on 19 different installations.

The 20th CBRNE Command is the Army and Department of Defense's only integrated command with explosive ordnance disposal, CBRN and lab capabilities.

On Oct. 18, Brig. Gen. James Bonner, the unit's commander, along with former commanders and other dignitaries, will cut the ribbon on a new, \$88.4 million two-building complex on Aberdeen Proving Ground.

The total cost of the project includes planning, design, construction, furniture, audio/visual, and physical secu-



The 20th CBRNE Command is the Army and Department of Defense's only integrated command with explosive ordnance disposal, CBRN and lab capabilities. (U.S. ARMY PHOTOS)



rity measures, and the two buildings have more than 186,000 square feet of space with 492 work stations.

The command continues to write its history today while supporting combat operations overseas.

A glass display at the entrance to the new headquarters honors the ultimate sacrifice of 31 20th CBRNE soldiers since the command's inception in 2004.

The current display photo captures the dignified transfer of Sgt. Joseph Collette, of the 71st Ordnance Group (EOD), at Dover Air Force Base on March 24.

In addition, images throughout the

buildings highlight the multiple missions of EOD and CBRN soldiers and civilians.

The Oct. 18 ceremony will also christen a Pentagon Memorial in front of the new headquarters.

The inscription, carved into the granite base, reads:

"The 20th CBRNE Command dedicates this memorial to those who lost their lives in the attacks on September 11, 2001. This surviving piece of limestone symbolizes the strength of our will."

Clem Gaines is the acting chief of public affairs for the 20th CBRNE Command.

Chapter supports, recognizes III Corps Best Warriors

The Association of the U.S. Army's Central Texas-Fort Hood chapter joined Army officials and other organizations to honor the III Corps top soldier and noncommissioned officer during an Aug. 29 event at the Phantom Warrior Center, Fort Hood, Texas.

Spc. David Chambers and Staff Sgt. Michael Nixon were honored as the III Corps Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year, respectively, for winning the corps-level Best Warrior Competition in July.

"This is about recognizing two soldiers that show the expertise of our craft over numerous days and numerous events," said Lt. Gen. Pat White, III Corps and Fort Hood commander.

The Central Texas-Fort Hood chapter donated a yearlong lease on a new vehicle to the two soldiers.

Larry Phelps, the chapter president, said the contribution is something the chapter does every year and is the key component of the chapter's Soldier Support Program.



Spc. David Chambers, left, and Staff Sgt. Michael Nixon. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

"The outpouring for our top soldiers is unlike any other competition in the United States Army," said Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex, the III Corps and Fort Hood senior enlisted adviser.

As the III Corps champions, Chambers and Nixon advanced to the next level of the Best Warrior Competition—in their case, the Army Forces Command competition Aug. 16-22 at

Fort Stewart, Georgia.

Nixon placed third overall for NCOs, and Chambers beat out the other lower enlisted competitors and was named the FORSCOM Soldier of the Year.

He is currently representing Fort Hood, III Corps and FORSCOM at the Armywide Best Warrior competition underway this week at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia.

Chapter trivia night event raises funds for local museum

On Sept. 28, the Rock Island Arsenal chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army hosted a trivia night event to raise funds for the Rock Island Arsenal Museum.

The command team from U.S. Army Sustainment Command, Maj. Gen. Steven Shapiro and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Ulloth, were among the many attendees who gathered for the event.

The chapter also debuted a new display that will be at its booth (#719) at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition next week in Washington, D.C.



The chapter's new display will be at its booth at the AUSA annual meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



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