



Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, left, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville speak during AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army's 2020 virtual annual meeting. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. JAMES HARVEY)

Army leaders: 'The time is now' for transformation

The time for Army transformation has arrived, with no turning back, senior Army leaders said this week during AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Speaking Tuesday during the opening ceremony, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said the Army has a new focus on readiness that places more emphasis on squads and small units and less on large-scale exercises, a continued push toward modernization, and is taking "rapid, positive and meaningful steps" on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Army's modernization push began three years ago with an agreement to focus on specific priorities.

"The payoff is starting to arrive," McCarthy said. "The time of transformation and modernization for the future

fight is now a reality."

Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, speaking Wednesday during the Dwight D. Eisenhower presentation, agreed.

"We must transform the Army, and the time is now," he said. "The time is now to transform how we take care of our people. The time is now to transform our doctrine, our organizations, our training. The time is now to transform how we compete around the world."

And the key to the Army's success will be its people, he said.

"'People First' is not only a philosophy, it's also now our No. 1 priority," McConville said. "When we take care of people, we get them in the right jobs at the right time, that is how we win."

The Army is people, McConville said,

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Soldier, NCO of the Year announced during AUSA Now

A soldier representing Army Futures Command and an NCO from Army Special Operations Command have been named the winners of the 19th annual Best Warrior Competition.

The 2020 Soldier of the Year is Sgt. James Akinola, a combat medic assigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The 2020 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year is Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Berger, who is assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Their names were announced Oct. 13 during a forum led by Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston during AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army's virtual annual meeting.

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Army's top soldiers and NCOs competed in the Best Warrior Competition from Sept. 17 through Oct. 9 at locations across the world.

Competitors—11 soldiers and 11 NCOs representing 11 commands across the Army—proved themselves during competitions throughout the year to earn their spot in the Army-level event.

The 2020 competition is unlike any of its predecessors, said Grinston, who oversees the competition.

"We've undergone unprecedented steps to ensure the safety of our soldiers while still creating a positive environment to encourage competition," Grinston said, according to the Best Warrior Competition website.

In September, the soldiers completed an Army Combat Fitness Test, a 12-mile foot march and a rifle qualification with their units.

In October, they completed hands-on warrior tasks and a written exam and essay and conducted board interviews with sergeants major from across the Army.

Honorary SMA named

Grinston also named retired Gen. Carl Vuono as the sixth Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army.



Sgt. James Akinola, left, is the Army's 2020 Soldier of the Year, and Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Berger is the NCO of the Year. (U.S. ARMY PHOTOS)

"Gen. Vuono empowered noncommissioned officers to take action," Grinston said. "In his words, the way the NCO corps goes, so goes the Army."

Vuono, a former Army chief of staff who also is a member of AUSA's board of directors, is a 1957 West Point graduate who served in howitzer units across the U.S. and in Korea and Europe. He also served multiple tours in Vietnam.

He was Army chief of staff from June 1987 to June 1991 and is credited with leading the Army through a period of great challenge and change.

Vuono said he is "deeply honored and grateful" to be named the honorary sergeant major of the Army.

"For me to be counted in your number is one of the more moving and rewarding accolades I could hope to achieve," he said. "You have always been, and you remain today, the very backbone of our Army."

NCOs are "experts in the art of war, you're responsible for the health and wellbeing of every soldier entrusted to your leadership, and you must ensure they are ever and always treated with dignity and respect," Vuono said. "You truly are, in my view, the heart and soul of a trained and ready 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.

Other honorees include legendary Army Ranger retired Lt. Gen. David Grange Jr.; former Army vice chief of staff retired Gen. Fredrick Kroesen; Elaine Rogers, CEO of USO-Metro; and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth "Rock" Merritt, a World War II veteran of D-Day, Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge.



Retired Gen. Carl Vuono.
(NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO)

AUSA honors 'The Army Family' with George Catlett Marshall Medal



'Families are the heart of our Army,' retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, said during the award presentation. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. DUSTIN BIVEN)

The Association of the U.S. Army's highest award for selfless service to the United States was symbolically presented Thursday to "The Army Family."

The Marshall Award, named for soldier-statesman Gen. George Catlett Marshall, traditionally goes to an individual. This is the second time since 1960 that it has been awarded to a group. The previous time was in 2004, when it was awarded to the American soldier.

"Our intent is to recognize and celebrate the great diversity and strength our families provide, and to document the fact that the Army's strength depends on the solid, unshakeable, enduring foundation that Army families provide," said retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO.

"A well-known saying is that non-commissioned officers are the backbone of the Army, and they truly are," Ham said. "I'd argue the time is now to add that families are the heart of our Army."

"The Time is Now" was the theme of AUSA Now, the association's 2020 virtual annual meeting this week.

"The Army family does many things. It serves, supports and

strengthens," Ham said. "The Army family is the glue that holds together when household goods are missing, an unaccompanied overseas assignment is extended, a spouse finds it difficult to get a job because employers want someone more permanent, or a child shows up at a new school and has to make new friends."

Soldiers draw strength from many things, but "no source of strength has been more important than the Army family," according to the citation accompanying the award.

These families "come in all sizes, ages, races, ethnicities, religions and backgrounds. The diversity of Army families leads to one unwavering common element, the love of a soldier."

Additionally, the citation says, "No group, no organization, no instrument of the government has contributed more to America's Army than the Army family."

Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville joined the celebration, saying to families, "Because of you, we are Army strong," and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said he and many other soldiers would not be serving if not for the support of their families.

AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier*

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PERK OF THE WEEK

AUSA members save up to 40% on a new one-year Sam's Club membership and receive a limited-time free gift. The regular price is \$45,

but members pay just \$24.88. You will also receive a \$5 Sam's Club gift card, \$15 off your next purchase on AUSA's MemberDeals site (www.ausa.org/entertain) and a second complimentary Sam's Club membership card.



Army continues efforts to promote diversity, inclusion

The Army is continuing its push for diversity and inclusion in both its uniformed and civilian ranks, senior leaders said in a contemporary military forum during AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

"The events of this past year have caused a reckoning within the Army. We must understand the barriers our service members endure and create conditions allowing every person to realize their potential," Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said.

Leaders at all levels must "listen, learn and act" to enable the Army to evolve and continue safeguarding the nation.

During the forum, "Diversity and Inclusion: The Time is Now," McCarthy and other leaders stressed the need for a shift in Army culture toward identifying barriers and building diverse, cohesive teams that value human dignity.

At last year's AUSA annual meeting, a prominent topic was the Army People Strategy, which had just been signed by the Army secretary and Army chief of staff.

That strategy hinges on culture, said E. Casey Wardynski, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs.

"This summer, we completed work on our implementation plans for military and civilian personnel, which talk in detail about specific things we do to build strong, diverse teams across the Army," Wardynski said.

He added that in the officer corps alone, there are 20 different initiatives to build diversity in mid-grade and senior ranks.

"Anyone in the Army should be able to aspire to any role that their talents allow them to fulfill," Wardynski said.

In the past, the Army has talked about diversity in a very one-dimen-



'The Army's work on diversity, equity and inclusion will continue,' said Anselm Beach, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for equity and inclusion. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. DUSTIN BIVEN)

sional way, and shifting to a values-based construct will require time and effort, said Anselm Beach, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for equity and inclusion.

The service has begun an Army-wide "listening campaign" for leaders to engage with soldiers and civilians to understand how current events are impacting them and the readiness of the force, Beach said.

"Then, we take those learned themes back and analyze them at a macro level to see what has to be done policy-wise and at the local installation level to ensure all personnel have the tools they need to

maintain readiness," he said.

Sessions have already been completed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Redstone Arsenal in Alabama and in the national capital region, Beach said, adding that there is a full schedule into fiscal year 2022.

"The Army's work on diversity, equity and inclusion will continue," he said.

Cultural development needs to be built in as a key part of professional military education, said Gen. Paul Funk, commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command.

In the coming months, TRADOC is seeking to implement cultural training in PME, such as recognizing potential discrimination, demonstrating empathy, understanding soldiers' needs and becoming socially aware.

This training should be "interactive discussions, not just PowerPoint slides," Funk said.

The command also started a series of leader development forums and webinars to "reconnect with the Army as a profession," he said.

Funk and TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hendrex recently kicked off a series of webinars on diversity and inclusion. It will continue next week with retired Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick and focus on talent management in the context of diversity.

"The Army is representative of the nation because it is built from every corner of the nation," McCarthy said. "Our diversity is a strength and is paramount in maintaining the trust of the American people."

"Our diversity is a strength and is paramount in maintaining the trust of the American people."

AUSA Now*From Page 1*

even as the service pursues an aggressive plan to modernize and transform the force.

“It’s our people who will deliver on our readiness and modernization priorities,” he said.

The Army must continue to make progress on its modernization efforts while continuing to build readiness, McConville said.

This momentum and sense of urgency is critical because the Army must maintain “continued overmatch against those who wish us harm and those who threaten our national security,” he said.

“In order to win, we must transform the Army now,” he said.

America’s competitors have been “aggressively investing” in modernizing their forces, and the Army must do the same, he said.

“It’s not about fighting the next fight better, it’s about winning the next fight,” he said.

At the same time, the Army has faced a challenging year, from a no-notice deployment in January amid rising tensions in the Middle East to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, McConville said.

Today, about 180,000 soldiers are serving in more than 140 countries, he said.

“I am incredibly proud of our Army. The performance of our National Guard, our reserves and our active-



Retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, right, meets with Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy during AUSA Now. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. JAMES HARVEY)

duty force this year has been phenomenal,” he said.

McCarthy added that “the Army has been busy, but at no point have we been alone,” referring to working with industry on modernization, with state and local governments to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to civil unrest, and with allies and partners “to maintain the delicate balance of ensuring peace in some areas and countering threats in others.”

There has been stress, he acknowledged, from the COVID-19 health crisis, from the fallout from the murder of 20-year-old Spc. Vanessa Guillen by a fellow soldier, and by a nationwide reckoning over racial, diversity and equity issues.

“We are listening,” McCarthy pledged. “We are learning, we are taking action.”

Looking ahead, the Army has a “unique opportunity” now to set its course for the future, from the way the Army fights to the way it arrays its forces around the globe, McConville said.

“Our nation’s competitors are more determined than ever to exert their will,” he said. “That’s why the time is now ... to build the Army we need for the future. These are challenging times, but the great thing about challenging times is the opportunity to transform.”

Retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, was pleased with how AUSA Now unfolded, for the “tough but meaningful” remarks by the Army secretary, attention being given to diversity and inclusion, and to the concern showed for soldiers and their families.

“It has been a great professional development event for all of us,” he said. “When we started this, I wasn’t sure how this virtual event would turn out.”

A virtual meeting isn’t the same as an in-person meeting, but it had many good parts that could be applied to future AUSA meetings, virtual or in person, he said.




Today, about 180,000 soldiers are serving in more than 140 countries, Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SGT. MASON CUTNER)

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New initiatives improve quality of life for Army families

The Army is making progress—and seeing results—after rolling out several initiatives within the past year to improve quality of life for soldiers and their families.

“We listened to your feedback, understood the issues and laid out our way ahead,” Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said Thursday in a town hall meeting during AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army’s virtual 2020 annual meeting.

Since last fall, senior Army leaders have implemented several key changes and initiatives to address critical issues affecting soldiers and families, including housing, permanent change-of-station moves, spouse employment and child care.

McCarthy said the Army is focused on making sure it offers safe and affordable on-post housing while holding housing companies “accountable” and improving oversight of their efforts.

“The Army and private housing companies are on track to invest up to an additional \$2.8 billion for Army housing over the next five years,” McCarthy said, which will lead to 3,800 new homes and nearly 18,000 renovations of Army homes and installations across the country.

New construction is already underway, McCarthy said, with more to come.

The Army also has invested \$9 billion to improve barracks between fiscal years 2020 and 2030, he said, adding that it has already executed more than \$780 million in work.

McCarthy said Army leaders are reviewing “every penny” in the investment plans to ensure dollars are maximized and quality housing is provided.

“We want to make sure we have quality barracks,” Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville said. “It’s going to take some time, but we are committed to making that happen.”



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston, left to right, Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville and Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy speak during AUSA Now. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. JAMES HARVEY)

Among some of the other initiatives, earlier this year the Army announced changes to improve spouse employment opportunities.

They include the expansion of hiring authority and a new “mechanism” that allows spouses to transfer their jobs from post to post, McCarthy said.

PCS moves were also made a little easier this year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, as Army leaders implemented initiatives to increase lead time for PCS orders up to 120 days, establish a committee for mov-

ing issues, hire quality assurance inspectors and provide help with relocation expenses.

Through “trying times” in child care this year, McCarthy said the Army increased staffing by 7%, with plans to add 5,000 child care spaces and nine child development centers over the next five years.

“We have over a million soldiers, and every single one of them deserves high-quality services in those areas,” McConville said. “We’re all committed to that, and we won’t rest until that’s all taken care of.”



Army leaders are seeing results after implementing several key changes and initiatives to address critical issues affecting soldiers and families. (U.S. ARMY/WINIFRED BROWN)

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Esper: Army ‘at the forefront’ of military transformation

Defense Secretary Mark Esper credits the Army as leading military transformation in an era of great-power competition. He even called the Army “ruthless.”

The former Army secretary, who assumed the top Pentagon post last year, said, “The future of warfare is being shaped right now, before our eyes, and the Army proudly stands at the forefront.”

He spoke Thursday during a presentation at AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

From hypersonic weapons to fighting in cyberspace, the Army has been “ruthless” in prioritizing time, money and manpower to modernizing and transforming the force, Esper said.

“To adapt and lead in this era of great-power competition, the Army



Defense Secretary Mark Esper. (U.S. ARMY RESERVE/ MASTER SGT. ANDY YOSHIMURA)

launched a wholesale transformation to dominate a 21st century high-end fight,” he said.

Today, rivals such as China and Russia seek to erode America’s long-standing advantages on land, in the air, at sea and in space and cyberspace, Esper said.

“In the face of these threats, we must harness the next generation of technologies and stay ahead of the competition,” he said.

The military also must continue to strengthen its “unmatched network of allies and partners,” Esper said.

This includes bolstering partners in the Indo-Pacific and conducting newly announced Stryker brigade combat team rotations to Europe, he said.

“All told, these efforts prepare us for a high-end fight we must hope we never have but must be prepared to win,” Esper said.

He added that he’s “incredibly proud” of the work the Army has done during a challenging year and expressed his gratitude to the force “for all you do to uphold our Constitution, defend our people and protect our way of life.”

Communication, training expedited response to COVID-19

Communication and exercises helped prepare the Army for an unprecedented “whole of nation” response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DoD and Army leaders said.

“COVID-19 required an unprecedented response,” Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson, commanding general of Army North said Wednesday during AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army’s virtual annual meeting.

“We have only trained for something like this in an exercise,” she said, adding that all 10 FEMA regions were activated in response to the pandemic.

As civilian hospitals and care facilities across the country became overwhelmed earlier this year, the Army developed field hospitals, designed so medical providers could arrive quickly and begin working within one or two days, Richardson said.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 3,800 military medical providers have responded to 134 FEMA-approved missions and deployed to 10 states, she said.



Sgt. Leann Roggensack of the Tennessee National Guard administers a COVID-19 test at a medical testing site in Tullahoma, Tennessee. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. SARAH KIRBY)

Army North, the Joint Land Force Component Command for U.S. Northern Command, has also assisted 47 hospitals and nine alternate care facilities.

Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, director of the Army National Guard, said focusing on relationships between DoD, state and federal agencies enabled an immediate emergency response, especially as states faced “different levels of this pandemic across the country.”

“Our ability to really communicate from the ground level all the way to the senior executive level under the Department of Defense was very important during this time,” Jensen said. Senior leaders took part in frequent “huddles” to share information, sometimes multiple times a week.

The nation’s response to the pandemic isn’t over, Jensen said, as more than 17,000 Guard troops remain on duty to support COVID-19 efforts.

National Guard remains engaged at home and abroad

The Army National Guard remains busy and engaged during a year of unprecedented activity across the nation, according to Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, director of the Army National Guard.

At the highest point of activity in June, “we had 99,000 Army Guardsmen on some sort of duty order in support of COVID-19 response, civil unrest response and the overseas mission,” Jensen said Tuesday in a seminar during AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

He noted that in addition to those missions, National Guard troops continue to be deployed nearly constantly in support of the firefighting mission in the country’s western states, the U.S.-Mexico border mission, and the flurry of damaging hurricanes.

Add to that “the upcoming elections, and we’ve rounded the mission triad,” Jensen said.

Maj. Gen. Matthew Beevers, assistant adjutant general of the Cali-



National Guard troops continue to mobilize in support of firefighting missions, said Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, Army National Guard director. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SGT. 1ST CLASS PETER MORRISON)

fornia National Guard, said during the seminar that there are currently 2,000 Guard troops from California and surrounding states helping to fight wildfires burning in an area roughly the size of Connecticut.

The fires, he said, have “demonstrated the capability of our Army aviators.”

Helping the Guard in the fire mission are soldiers from Canada, Israel and Mexico, and “15 helicopters

from across Guard nation,” which he said included aviators from National Guard units in Arizona, Idaho, West Virginia, Utah, Wyoming and Wisconsin, with additional help arriving soon from Mississippi and Oklahoma.

“This type of flying builds readiness. Our crews aren’t simply doing laps around Fort Hood banking hours,” Beevers said. “This flying absolutely ensures that lives will be saved in the war fight.”

Army Reserve training must replicate ‘fluid’ environment

The Army Reserve must prepare its commanders and soldiers for multidomain operations with training that incorporates mission command, tools that can replicate domains other than land, and the platforms soldiers need to remain physically fit and resilient, senior leaders said.

Soldiers are still going to have to “shoot, move and communicate” in any battle, but they’ll need to train for a complex battlefield that will be integrated with the joint forces that maneuver in other domains, Lt. Gen. Thomas James, commander of First Army, said Tuesday in an Army Reserve panel discussion during AUSA Now, the virtual 2020 annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

“We are going to have additional assets, space assets, cyber assets, things

to protect ourselves from an enemy attack in those domains, but we’ll also have offensive capability that can be done as well,” he said. “We have to make sure that we replicate that in the collective training environment and individual training.”

To maintain a competitive edge against adversaries like Russia and China, soldiers need to be “healthy to begin with, develop the right soldier skills and resiliency attributes,” said Maj. Gen. Jonathan Woodson, commander of Army Reserve Medical Command.

Woodson said the right training platforms need to be developed to enhance physical fitness, as well as simulation platforms that can help replicate the multidomain battlefield, where “the environment will be fluid,” he said.



Spc. Rafael Gil, of the Army Reserve’s 313th Military Police Company, patrols during training at Fort Hunter Liggett, California. (U.S. ARMY RESERVE/MASTER SGT. ANDY YOSHIMURA)

State partnership program makes Guard a unique force

The National Guard's state partnership program is "the greatest national security tool that most people have never heard of," said Gen. Daniel Hokanson, the 29th National Guard Bureau chief.

Speaking at a forum during AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army, Hokanson said the program provides durable ties between the U.S. and other nations that is unmatched by anyone else.

It also provides exchanges with a variety of purposes, from disaster planning to military vehicle maintenance to leadership training, he said.

"Freedom and democracy are American values, but we cannot uphold them alone," Hokanson said.

Nations with no other diplomatic relationships with the U.S. sometimes have partnerships with states,

Hokanson said. An example is the relationship between Wisconsin and Nicaragua.

"These are small actions with big impact," he said. "It sets the U.S. apart as an ally."

About 18,000 National Guard members are currently deployed as part of the 27-year-old state partnership program, he said. There are 54 states or territories involved in 82 nation partnerships and seven multination partnerships.

Hokanson then presented videos featuring Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, New York and Oregon military leaders who spoke about their state partnership programs.

The National Guard is a unique force, he said, with operational overseas missions while always remaining ready to serve in communities at home.



There are 54 states or territories involved in 82 nation partnerships and seven multination partnerships, said Gen. Daniel Hokanson, National Guard Bureau chief. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SGT. 1ST CLASS JASON KRIESS)

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New rotation model aims to give soldiers predictability

The Army is developing a new model that would prepare soldiers for current and future missions by aligning divisions with geographic regions on predictable deployment and training rotations.

The force generation model, known as the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model, or ReARMM, is expected to be launched in fiscal year 2022, Lt. Gen. Charles Flynn, deputy Army chief of staff for operations, said in a contemporary military forum at AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

The intent of the ReARMM model is to achieve operational balance for soldiers with predictable, dedicated periods for missions, training and modernization. This would include a reduction in back-to-back brigade rotations in favor of task-organized battalion task forces.

Flynn used four “Cs” to outline the concept: competition, crisis, conflict and change.

He cited long-term strategic competition with Russia and China and the need to keep them guessing; the ability of the force to respond dynamically to crises such as the pandemic; the capacity to transition to conflict anywhere in the world by quickly generating tacti-



Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment prepare to get onto a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a training exercise at Camp McGregor, New Mexico, in preparation for a NATO peacekeeping deployment to Kosovo. (U.S. ARMY/MAJ. SAMUEL OTTO)

cal units; and the ability to change by calibrating the force posture for multi-domain operations globally.

Training would be mission-tailored and regionally focused, he added.

More predictability

Citing the Army’s pledge to place people first, Lt. Gen. Lee Quintas, deputy commander of Army Forces Command, said the force generation model “presents an opportunity to achieve a new level of predictability in our formations.”

He noted that units today operate in an environment of unpredictability, and even some instability, because they are placed on rotational missions based on their availability.

Their missions vary in location, length, manning readiness and requirements in equipment, he said, “just to name a few.”

“Modernization today occurs when we can find a window to fit it in or simultaneous with other activities, [and] every week, month and year is filled with not only constant change but also high tempo,” Quintas said.

Detailing the ReARMM model, Quintas said the first order of business will be to establish regional alignments in which soldiers and leaders will have “known and habitual missions” they will carry out at

all levels.

This will enable units to develop processes and habits, build familiarity and form relationships with allies and partners. Soldiers’ skills and equipment will be optimized for the aligned region.

Long-term engagement

With alignment, leaders will be able to plan for specific rotations, align priorities and resources for the specified mission, and achieve “unity of command,” he said.

Next, he said, “we bake in modernization. We build in time to divest the old, field the new.”

The ReARMM model would also align the Army Reserve and National Guard, he said, calling it an “opportunity to habitually align component missions” for the two components.

Acknowledging that ReARMM is “not all unicorns and rainbows,” Quintas pointed out that there will be challenges to overcome in manning units with the right soldiers.

Additionally, regional alignments will require changes in how combatant commanders are supported.

“We have to achieve a supply-based approach in order to provide predictability, especially to high-demand forces like our aviation brigades and our air and missile defense units,” he said.



Lt. Gen. Charles Flynn, deputy Army chief of staff for operations. (DOD/MARVIN LYNCHARD)

Project Convergence pushes modernization forward

The Army's modernization efforts have not slowed down in the face of 2020 challenges, said Gen. Mike Murray, commanding general of Army Futures Command, citing as an example the recently completed six-week exercise that's part of the service's Project Convergence initiative.

Speaking Wednesday during a contemporary military forum as part of AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army, Murray said the idea for the exercise was presented to him as a way to maximize the synergistic effect of the 31 signature systems being developed by Futures Command's eight cross-functional teams.

"When you add the effects of each of them individually, how do you assure that the sum total of that effect is much greater than the individual components?" he said. "In other words, how do you tie things together? How do you speed up decision-making?"

Only eight months elapsed between the time Brig. Gen. Ross Coffman,

director of the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle Cross-Functional Team, presented the concept to Murray and the initial execution at Yuma Proving Ground, Arizona.

Coffman noted that the core elements of the project, which has been dubbed "The Yuma Maneuvers" by some, included people, weapon systems, command and control information and terrain.

"When you put all of that together, it gets to what Gen. Murray was discussing," he said. "What is possible in the future? How do we make the speed of our actions faster than our enemies?"

Coffman added, "In a nutshell, the technology is here today, and I believe that Project Convergence sends a clear signal that we're not looking for a fight, but should a fight come, we're going to be able to do it faster than any adversary."

Looking toward future milestones, Murray said, "Project Convergence was not a one-time shot."



Project Convergence maximizes the effects of multiple systems working in coordination, said Gen. Mike Murray, Army Futures Command commander. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

The Army is already planning for similar events in 2021 and 2022, Murray said. He added that goals for 2021 include the introduction of Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps systems and capabilities, and the 2022 event will include international partners and allies.

Army must balance requirements to hit readiness goals

The Army has managed to balance its priorities of readiness, modernization and soldiers' safety during a "challenging" year, senior leaders said.

Despite challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, junior leaders "found ways to generate readiness" while protecting their troops, according to Gen. Michael Garrett, commanding general of Army Forces Command.

"That's a pretty big deal in light of the enduring and emerging requirements that we've lived over the past eight months," Garrett said Tuesday during a contemporary military forum as part of AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army's virtual annual meeting.

Speaking on the same panel, Army National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Jon



Junior leaders 'found ways to generate readiness' in a challenging year, said Gen. Michael Garrett, Army Forces Command commander. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. INEZ HAMMON)

Jensen said the Army needs to be able to operate during the pandemic—a complex but "temporary" condition.

"We cannot discount or ignore the risk associated with COVID-19, but

we must ensure we are prepared to operate in the COVID-19 environment," Jensen said.

Right now, more than 22,000 Army Guard soldiers are supporting response efforts for COVID-19, natural disasters and civil disturbances.

"The time and money that we spend on one requirement comes at the expense of another," Garrett said. "We have to think through how we will continue to prioritize our resources in order to achieve desired readiness requirements."

While readiness and modernization will "consume" the Army's intellectual energy, people remain the Army's top priority, he said.

"We certainly have more to do in terms of our ... performance, our modernization requirements and taking care of our people," Garrett said.

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Army transforming soldier care, training, development

From enlistment to retirement and all points in between, the Army is changing the way it recruits, trains, develops and takes care of soldiers, a panel of senior leaders said.

The change is being driven through a renewed emphasis on people and is based on the first ever Army People Strategy published last year.

“This is the ‘how’ of the People Strategy, and it will transform the way we approach people in the Army,” said E. Casey Wardynski, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs.

Speaking Wednesday as part of a contemporary military forum during AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army, Wardynski described the effort underway as “probably the most substantive change in 100 years.”

“Our leaders are conceiving new formations, new operating paradigms, to create a pace of operations and agility organizationally that our enemies simply won’t be able to match,” he said. “But the key enabler to this will be our people.”



Once a soldier is in the Army, leaders must develop them and take care of them, said Gen. Paul Funk, commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. THOMAS CROUGH)

The Army is moving beyond looking at soldiers based on rank and branch, he said. Instead, it’s seeking to look at the “value of the individual” so it can “put the right person in the right place at the right time, and taking care of those folks physically, spiritually and mentally.”

Once a soldier is in the Army, leaders must train and develop them and take care of them, said Gen. Paul Funk, commanding general of Army Training and Doctrine Command. “We are, in fact, trying to lead our

Army to higher levels of expertise, professionalism and developing leaders of character,” he said.

One key effort is the holistic health and fitness initiative, which seeks to prevent injuries and improve soldiers’ health and performance.

“We have to stop breaking soldiers,” said Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commanding general of the Center for Initial Military Training. “Instead, we must start preventing injuries and protecting our most important resource.”

Program builds technical skills, expertise in the ranks

The Army is working to build more data science and data engineering expertise in the force by adding a short-term certification program to a pilot program underway now at a leading university.

The upcoming program will select a number of soldiers to do a six-month certification program in data science through Carnegie Mellon University, a “world leader in data science,” after which the soldiers will return to the force, said Maj. Gen. J.P. McGee, director of the Army Talent Management Task Force.

There are 20 officers and four civilians currently working toward master’s degrees in data science in an 18-month program at Carnegie Mel-

lon, according to McGee, who said the certification program for the selected soldiers will be expanded over the next two years to include more people.

“Those [soldiers] will be plucked from inside the force, trained and moved out, and the great thing is across the active, National Guard, [Army] Reserve and civilian components, we have lots of soldiers or civilians who have these skill sets that we can capitalize on,” McGee said Thursday in a contemporary military forum on talent management during AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

To build more technical and scientific expertise in the future, McGee said, there are more authoriza-

tions for lateral entry into the force as spelled out in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, which allows the Army to direct-commission officers.

Previously, he said, the Army had been limited to direct commissioning at the rank of captain, but there is now an opportunity to bring in officers from lieutenant through colonel.

The Army is “working through what that looks like right now,” McGee said, noting that a field grade cyber officer was recently direct-commissioned in the National Guard.

The Army is working on a plan to bring in talent laterally for years to come as technical expertise requirements evolve, he said.

SMA: Having strong teams will combat negative issues

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston is calling on NCOs to take time to get to know their soldiers as the service battles challenges such as suicide and sexual assault and harassment across the force.

“When we focus in on fit, disciplined and well-trained teams, we’re going to drive down all the negatives that happen to us on a daily basis,” Grinston said Tuesday during an initiatives forum as part of AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

Having strong teams where soldiers know and care about each other will “drive down sexual harassment and sexual assault. It’s going to drive down suicide. It’s going to drive down issues we have with racial inclusion,” Grinston said.

The change the Army is working toward “is more than just a culture or a slogan,” he said.

There are tangible efforts underway, he said, including developing an app to help squad leaders better connect with and manage their soldiers.

Tools to improve sponsorship of new soldiers, counseling and training management are three areas Grinston has asked app developers to focus on for now.

During a This is My Squad panel discussion on Wednesday, Grinston emphasized that when he talks about a squad, he doesn’t necessarily mean it literally, he said.

“It’s more like a term of endearment,” he said. “This is more than about a section or an infantry squad. This is about those that are close to you, that you know and can recognize you as a person and an individual.”

One key to the This is My Squad effort is building and empowering staff sergeants to be strong, well-developed leaders.

Squad leaders are typically staff sergeants, and “they’re who soldiers see,” said Capt. Kenneth Danos, a detachment commander with the Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory.



The change the Army is working toward ‘is more than just a culture or a slogan,’ Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said. (U.S. ARMY/LARA POIRRIER)

Focusing on building them up will benefit the Army in the long run, he said.

Danos was among the company-level leaders from Army Futures Command, Army Forces Command, the Military District of Washington and the Army Reserve to participate in

Wednesday’s panel.

Grinston agreed, adding that leaders must foster a culture where NCOs are empowered to correct, train and develop their soldiers.

“If I can get that right, we’ll have NCOs out there getting things done,” he said.

And if one or two NCOs slip up or make a mistake, “we correct that action, develop them as an NCO, and they’re going to get better,” Grinston said.

When asked how the Army can help better develop junior leaders, the panelists called for more opportunities for schooling and training and the resources they need to train their soldiers.

They also suggested more coaching and mentoring, an idea Grinston embraced.

This is something senior leaders are already studying, Grinston said, adding that he also wants to train senior NCOs so they can better coach and mentor younger leaders.

“This is really important,” he said. “We all have a role in how we build better junior leaders and how we build our squads.”



One key to the This is My Squad effort is building and empowering staff sergeants to be strong, well-developed leaders, panelists said. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

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Army keeps PCS moves safe despite pandemic challenges

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic turning this year's permanent change-of-station season "upside down," the Army has managed to keep soldiers moving while keeping them safe, officials said.

"The Army met the challenge and safely completed over 72,000 PCS moves in 2020, and we're not done yet," Lt. Gen. Douglas Gabram, commanding general of Army Installation Management Command, said Thursday during AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army's virtual 2020 annual meeting.

Since the pandemic began, soldiers have faced several challenges affecting day-to-day operations and PCS orders, including stop-movement orders, quarantine restrictions and passport and visa delays.

As movement resumed, the Army implemented several safety precautions to safeguard soldiers and their families, according to Maj. Gen. Michel Russell, the assistant deputy Army chief of staff for logistics.

"We hold the moving crews to strict adherence of [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] COVID-19 health protocols," Russell said.



Lt. Col. David Chapman, his wife, Jaime, and their Irish wolfhound Wally prepare to move earlier this year. (U.S. ARMY/LISA BISHOP)

Moving companies are required to conduct health screenings of their personnel and provide "written certification" of the screenings before beginning work in a residence.

Earlier this year, the Army also developed an agreement for soldiers, Army civilians and their families to complete in an effort to ensure that they also are complying with the CDC's health guidelines, Russell said.

"They should also complete this

agreement before ... moving company personnel arrive" to show they are virus-free, he said.

Over the summer, Army leaders announced several new PCS policies and initiatives to make moving easier on soldiers and their families.

As part of these changes, the Army Relocation Advisory Committee was established to identify and resolve moving issues. Spouses were added to the committee to provide feedback about "what they're seeing out there on the ground," Russell said.

The Army also hired more quality assurance inspectors, provided an allowance to help with relocation expenses and increased lead time for PCS orders.

Soldiers and families now have 180 days—up from 75—to notify moving companies about lost or damaged property, and more than 300 claims advisers have been hired for Army shipping offices, Russell said.

Soldiers and their families can also download a new mobile app, called "Army PCS Move," to find information on topics such as planning or scheduling a move, COVID-19 and filing claims, according to the Army.

Survey seeks to improve military spouse employment

An Army survey aimed at finding more and better ways to improve military spouse employment opportunities was launched Wednesday and will seek feedback from Army civilians who are spouses of military members.

The focus of the Army Civilian Military Spouse Employment Survey is to get Army civilians whose spouses are members of the military "to share their insights and experiences regarding how they gained and maintain employment in the Army," said Karen Wolfe, chief of the staffing and classification division in the office of the deputy Army chief of staff for personnel.

"We'll use that feedback to identify new and improved ways to further improving military spouse employment in the Army," Wolfe said in a military family forum on spouse employment during AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.

The invitation to participate in the survey, which will be open through Nov. 4, will be sent to the government addresses of current Army civilians, she said.

Wolfe also outlined a host of initiatives that are under development in the office of the deputy Army chief of staff for personnel that would make it easier for commanders to hire spouses

for federal jobs, increase the ability of spouses to continue to work during moves to new assignments, and allow military spouses to exercise their preference 30 to 45 days prior to going to an overseas location.

She pointed to the Army Quality of Life website as a resource for families, including a section dedicated to Army spouse employment.

Users can click on the Army Spouse Employment icon to find more than 50 links to resources and information, such as support for home-based businesses, licensure reimbursement, telework, education and scholarships and points of contact for civilian personnel advisory centers, Wolfe said.

Talent management reform aims to boost civilian workforce

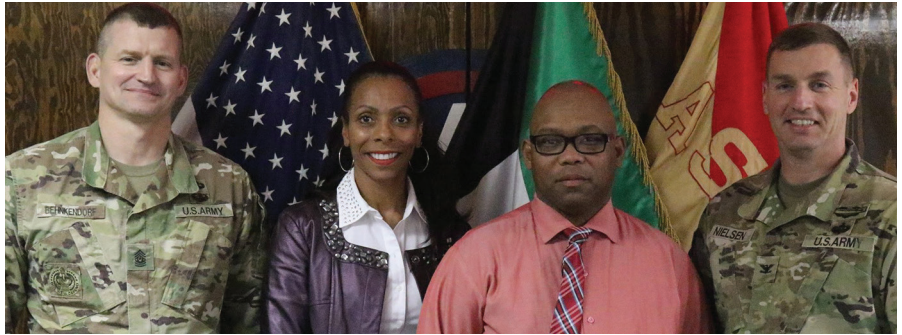
As the Army rolls out talent management initiatives across the force, it is also launching a sweeping plan to build a better future for its civilian workforce, senior leaders said.

“People bring unique gifts to the Army,” E. Casey Wardynski, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, said Wednesday during an Army civilian forum at AUSA Now, the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2020 virtual annual meeting.

“And we want to put them in career fields where they have the maximum potential,” he said.

To do that, leaders are relying on the Army People Strategy, which was introduced last year by Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville.

The strategy provides a roadmap as the Army works to build a “talent-based personnel management system,



Army civilians are critical to readiness, leaders said. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

reform essential quality of life programs and build cohesive teams,” according to the Army.

As part of that strategy, the Army’s new civilian implementation plan aims to transform and modernize the civilian side of talent management.

Todd Fore, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for civilian personnel, said the transformation will “exponentially improve” the Army’s ability to

acquire, develop, employ and retain top talent.

“Army civilians are critical to readiness, and we’re committed to making sure that those civilians [have] all the talent, all the skills, all the capabilities they need” to ensure the Army succeeds, Fore said. “We are now putting the right people, the right policies and the right systems in place to build toward our future.”



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Transformation, safety needed in organic industrial base

The Army must continue transforming its organic industrial base to ensure the safety of its workforce and the readiness of the force, senior leaders said Tuesday during a contemporary military forum titled “Driving Deliberate Change in the Industrial Base Through Innovation, Vision and Cooperation.”

While the organic industrial base, also known as the OIB, is not generally thought of as “the pointy end of the spear,” almost everything that happens at the pointy end of the spear depends on the OIB, said Bruce Jette, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology.

Speaking as part of AUSA Now, the virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army, Jette said that the top priority is the safety of the workforce.

Jette emphasized safety concerns by reading aloud the names and circumstances behind three members of the workforce who died in accidents at government owned or operated facilities over the last decade.

People should remember that their deaths came as a result of “trying to pursue the Army’s needs for its abil-



The top priority is the safety of the workforce, said Bruce Jette, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology. (AUSA PHOTO)

ity to fight and win the nation’s wars,” he said.

The base technology in much of the OIB was rooted in the 1940s, and the network was subsequently enhanced with modernization initiatives introduced over the past 80 years.

“However, we need not to just simply modernize but to transform,” Jette said. “We have done a large number of modernization projects, but it still hasn’t prevented all possible acci-

dents. We need to relook facilities. We need to relook contracting. We need to look relook our organizational relationships.

“We need to get people away from the energetics,” he added. “There’s no reason they have to be there anymore with technologies like robotic operations, modular batch processing, fault tolerance, multiple lines and reconfigurable production lines, batch control and better testing.”

Sustainment modernization supports future operations

A 15-year plan to modernize the Army’s organic industrial base is taking place with “holistic transformational change” in the service’s ammunition and maintenance depots and arsenals, said Gen. Edward Daly, commander of Army Materiel Command.

“When we say modernize, it’s just not applying a couple of initiatives that may be 21st century in approach to a 20th century organic industrial base. It’s holistic transformational change,” Daly said Thursday in a contemporary military forum on sustainment modernization during AUSA Now, the 2020 virtual annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army.



Gen. Edward Daly, commander of Army Materiel Command. (U.S. ARMY/ELLEN CROWN)

The transformational change, he said, incorporates “not only future design layout changes, but computer program, logic, robotics, [artificial in-

telligence], sensors on our equipment, process changes” and other technological advances.

Daly pointed out that the Army’s sustainment warfighter is also anticipating future modernization requirements.

He offered as an example the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Missouri, where ammunition for the next-generation squad weapon is “really starting from scratch” in terms of how the ammunition is manufactured.

“We’re focusing deep as well into how do we support the future of [multidomain operations] and how do we support the modernization efforts that are forthcoming,” Daly said.



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