



A soldier takes a photo with AUSA mascot Sgt. R. Hero on the opening day of the association's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C. (AUSA PHOTO)

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## AUSA 2023 'huge success' for Army

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition was "a huge success for the association and the U.S. Army," declared retired Gen. Bob Brown, the educational nonprofit's president and CEO.

The three-day event featured the latest updates from senior Army leaders and the newest technology from more than 755 defense industry partners. A record 41,000 people registered to attend the Oct. 9–11 event, where they listened to keynote speeches from senior Army leaders, participated in discussions with panelists from across the force and visited exhibits spread across five halls in the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Thousands more watched the speakers and forums online.

"AUSA is proud to have hosted a successful meeting, bringing together Army and civilian leaders to discuss ideas, trends and the latest developments in warfighting, particularly as the Army faces many challenges as it prepares for 2030 and beyond," Brown said.

The theme for this year's Annual Meeting was "Be All You Can Be." It featured keynote speeches from Army Secretary Christine Wormuth and new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, sworn in less than a month ago on Sept. 21.

There also were panel discussions on topics such as the Army profession, recruiting and retention, the Army's role in Europe and the Indo-Pacific and much more.

Throughout the course of the event, attendees—Army leaders, sol-

diers, Soldiers for Life, family members, industry leaders and advocates and supporters of America's Army—shared big ideas for the way ahead, Brown said.

The exhibit halls, contemporary military forums and military family forums were packed, as attendees sought to listen, learn and contribute to discussions about some of the most pressing issues facing the force today, he said.

America's allies and partners also were well represented, with participants from 92 countries attending the event, including 20 chiefs of Army.

"We also took time to salute the many soldiers and AUSA members who have shown outstanding leadership, dedicated service and care for

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## Flynn: Increased US presence vital to Indo-Pacific security

**M**ore and more partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific are turning to the U.S. as they work to deter China's "aggressive, irresponsible and insidious" behavior, the commander of U.S. Army Pacific said.

The Chinese are "conducting operations where they are violating the territorial integrity and the national sovereignty" of their neighbors in the region, and those neighbors are turning to their partner the U.S. Army, Gen. Charles Flynn said Oct. 12.

"Land is the prize, because if you control land, then you can control people," Flynn said. "We're seeing that today in Europe, and you're seeing that right now in the Middle East."

This is where armies have a key role, Flynn said. "What do armies do? They seize, hold and defend terrain, and the armies in this region are working to seize, hold and defend terrain, and they want to do that with their partner, the U.S. Army."

Speaking as part of the Strategic Landpower Dialogue co-hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Flynn said the Indo-Pacific may often be viewed as an air or maritime theater, but it is a joint theater with "joint problems" and several nations where the army is their primary force.

"This region is really defined by the



Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Division participate in live-fire training during Exercise Orient Shield 23 at Hokkaido, Japan. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/CPL. KALINA HYCHE)

armies," Flynn said. As examples, he said, 65% of the Japanese military is its army, 70% of the Philippine military is its army, and the army makes up 80% of India's military.

"My point is, they turn to their armies to provide security for their people," Flynn said, adding that "partnership with the U.S. Army is integral to that."

For the U.S. Army, that means more exercises and engagements with its Indo-Pacific partners and allies. It also means a growing need to

pay close attention to China, which leaders have called America's "pacing challenge."

"What they've done over the last 10 years and what they're signaling and intending to do over the next 10 years should be concerning for all of us," Flynn said. "And it's definitely concerning for the region, which is why they're showing up for all those exercises."

China has three things the U.S. does not, Flynn said. They are operating on interior lines—for example, they are just 100 miles from Taiwan—and they have mass and magazine depth. "We're trying to counter those three things," he said.

Flynn said he is excited about the gains the U.S. Army has made, particularly in increasing readiness and strengthening and expanding relationships in the region, "but there are still miles to march before we rest."

China is on a "dangerous path," Flynn said. "I worry less about what they're doing, and I worry more about what we're doing, and we have to get into position now," he said.

### Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

#### Samantha Garza

*Program Manager, Chapter Support*

Samantha Garza, a graduate of George Mason University with a master's degree in global affairs, has been with AUSA for four months. A former Peace Corps volunteer, she loves to read about past and current global topics. In her free time, Samantha enjoys listening to comedy podcasts and eating any type of Mexican food.



## Graphic novel honors WWII Rangers who inspired new AUSA logo

In celebration of its new logo, the Association of the U.S. Army has released a graphic novel honoring the Army Rangers who scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, France, on D-Day.

AUSA's new logo, unveiled Oct. 9 on the first day of its 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition, is inspired by the Rangers' actions that day in June 1944.

*Pointe du Hoc: Army History, Army Values* is available here.

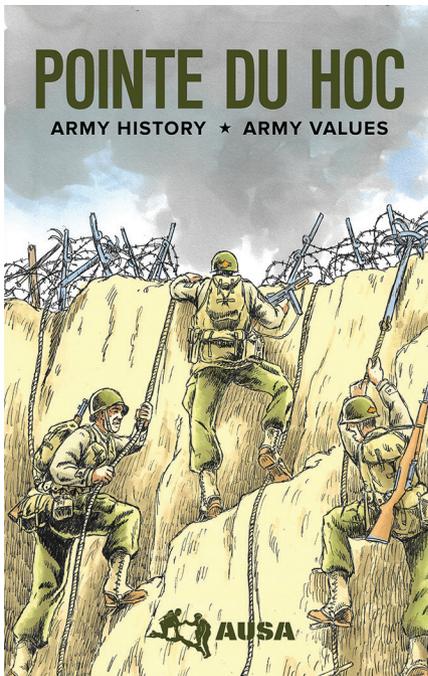
"We are excited to help celebrate the new AUSA logo by publishing this look into a remarkable piece of Army history," said Joseph Craig, AUSA's Book Program director. "I hope it encourages readers to learn even more about Pointe du Hoc and the drive to liberate Europe."

On June 6, 1944, as U.S. and Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, the Rangers scaled the steep cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. Located 4 miles west of Omaha Beach, the Germans had built a fortified position for a coastal battery of six 155-mm howitzers. Commanded by Lt. Col. James Rudder, the Rangers were given the mission of capturing Pointe du Hoc and neutralizing the German coastal battery.

The Rangers approached Pointe du Hoc by boat and began the dangerous ascent, braving heavy enemy machine-gun fire and grenade attacks. Rudder and almost 200 Rangers reached the top within 30 minutes of landing. The soldiers moved out to destroy the enemy guns, but they soon discovered that the guns were missing.

Rudder and his Rangers moved on to their next objective—seizing the coastal road to prevent German reinforcements from reaching Omaha Beach. They quickly found themselves under enemy fire again.

As the Rangers fought back, they discovered five of the missing 155 mm



guns hidden in the woods, aimed to fire toward Utah Beach. The Rangers destroyed the guns and fought enemy counterattacks for hours until reinforcements arrived from Omaha Beach.

The Rangers accomplished their mission, but at a heavy cost. Of the 225 men who landed at the cliffs, only 90 could still fight.

Drawing from the Rangers' incredible actions almost 80 years ago, AUSA's logo seeks to recognize the tremendous contributions of those who came before while keeping their stories alive for the next generation.

Each AUSA graphic novel is created by a team of professional comic book veterans. The script for *Pointe du Hoc: Army History, Army Values* was written by Chuck Dixon, whose previous work includes *Batman*, *The Punisher* and *The 'Nam*.

Artwork and the cover were by Wayne Vansant, who has worked on *The 'Nam*, *Savage Tales* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The lettering was by Troy Peteri, who has worked on *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man* and *X-Men*.

# AUSA Extra

Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier

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**AUSA 2023**

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their fellow service members and community,” Brown said.

More than 100 news articles were produced over the course of the Annual Meeting as Army leaders shared their vision for the future and panelists discussed progress in Army transformation and the service’s efforts to grow the force and attract talent.

Early calculations show Army social media posts with the #AUSA2023 hashtag had an overall reach of more than 102 million accounts, with social media posts reaching more than 647,000 people.

The Army also livestreamed several events, including Wormuth’s speech during the opening ceremony and George’s speech during the Dwight D. Eisenhower Luncheon, drawing a live audience of almost 88,000 viewers.



Crowds of soldiers, AUSA members, defense industry representatives and more enter the Walter E. Washington Convention Center for the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

The Annual Meeting is a crucial way for the Army to talk about its priorities and tell its story to a wide audience, and AUSA is already planning for the 2024 Annual Meeting

and Exposition, Brown said.

“We are thrilled at this year’s successful Annual Meeting, and we’re already excited about the next one,” he said.

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## AUSA helps young professionals become future leaders

In conjunction with the Association of the U.S. Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition, the AUSA Center for Leadership hosted its first-ever Young Professionals Forum Oct. 8–11.

Fifty young professionals from around the world gathered for a facilitated workshop, with a theme of "Build Your Leadership Toolkit," and immersion in the Annual Meeting. Participants included active-duty soldiers, soldiers transitioning out of the military, veterans, spouses and family members, government civilians and Army supporters.

These emerging leaders are the future of AUSA, as they will become chapter and region leaders, dedicated volunteers, industry associates and Total Army partners for years to come.

Thirteen of the 50 participants are part of the dedicated Young Professionals Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from each of AUSA's nine regions. Though this was the first time they gathered in person, they hold virtual meetings each month to assist the Center for Leadership in building the national Young Professionals Program.

The Center for Leadership is extremely grateful for this team and its hard work.

For the main event, participants in the Young Professionals Forum heard from two incredible speakers Oct. 9. Sarah Draper, a retired FBI supervisory special agent, facilitated a workshop about resilience and developing a leadership mantra. Attendees left with fresh takeaways, tips for their leadership toolkits and a renewed sense of how to live and lead well.

Robert Seymour, managing director at J.P. Morgan Chase, provided an inspirational keynote address focused on how he gained perspective throughout his leadership journey in the Army and the private sector.

Throughout the Annual Meeting,



Members of AUSA's Young Professionals Advisory Council pose for a photo on the opening day of the association's Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

the young professionals participated in various events, including receptions, contemporary military forums and AUSA region breakfasts. These events allowed the future leaders to network and connect with AUSA communities during their time in the nation's capital.

On Oct. 10, the young professionals joined the "Inspiration to Lead" exercise with 100 soldiers from this year's Leader Solarium, also hosted by AUSA's Center for Leadership. The combined group went to the National Mall, where they visited the Washington Monument, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Me-



Sarah Draper, a retired FBI supervisory special agent, speaks at a workshop for young professionals during the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

memorial, Vietnam Women's Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial, and heard presentations and personal stories from speakers at each stop.

AUSA's Young Professionals Program is poised to gain momentum and grow in the coming months. Attendees at this year's forum plan to return to their local communities and kickstart their local Young Professional programs with a renewed sense of excitement for what lies ahead.

The overall vision for the program, created by the Young Professionals Advisory Council, is "to provide a platform for emerging leaders to enhance their leadership potential, connect with like-minded young professionals, and learn about their local military community through inspirational events and fun activities." The Center for Leadership looks forward to seeing how these leaders take their lessons learned back to their units, companies and AUSA chapters.

AUSA is thrilled to be able to continue educating, inspiring and connecting leaders at all levels.

**Angela Pubal** is a senior program manager with AUSA's Center for Leadership.

## Forums highlight critical issues, resources for families

**A**s the Association of the U.S. Army continues its efforts on behalf of soldiers and families, its Family Readiness directorate was honored to host four family forums last week during the association's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

The forums featured both in-person and online audiences, and participants were able to ask questions and have their voices heard. Feedback also was collected through an online survey, with respondents receiving a "digital swag bag" full of resources from the forums.

On Oct. 9, panelists in the first family forum discussed the importance of resilience and preventing harmful behaviors. The next day, a second forum focused on programs and resources to help military families reduce risk and stress and thrive in Army life.

### Family Readiness

The third family forum, also on Oct. 10, featured panels on two critical quality-of-life issues—health care and military spouse employment. The first panel focused on recent military health system changes, while the second discussed how spouse employment contributes to retention and readiness.

The Army is working hard to reduce spouse unemployment and underemployment, but it is not in this alone. Federal agencies and private organizations are coming together and collaborating to improve career and employment opportunities for military spouses.

On Oct. 11, a performance by the Washington Tattoo preceded our most popular forum—a town hall where attendees, both in-person and online, had an opportunity to ask questions and participate in a discussion with our Army's top leaders.

Leaders announced a new app, "My Army Post," and asked for everyone's input to help create a tailored experience for users. In addition, for the first time during the Army Senior Leaders' Town Hall, attendees used their smartphones to provide instant feedback.



Holly Dailey, AUSA's director of Family Readiness, greets Maverick, American Humane's Therapy Dog of the Year, during the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

Outside each forum, the Family Readiness team hosted a book signing with Ginger Perkins, author of *Customs, Courtesies & Traditions of the United States Army: A Primer for Family Members* and co-author of *The Army Spouse Handbook*. Additionally, representatives from the Armed Forces Wellness Center, which seeks to improve quality of life by targeting the behaviorally modifiable factors most likely to result in chronic disease, injury and/or performance issues, brought a biofeedback device for attendees to try.

To close out this fantastic Annual Meeting, I was thrilled that my friend Maverick stopped by to see us. Maverick, a 6-year-old, 150-pound Great Dane, recently was named the 2023 Therapy Dog of the Year by American Humane for his help comforting service members and their families through the USO at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Annual Meeting and our military family forums. We hope you had a valuable experience and look forward to seeing you soon.

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

Subject-matter experts discuss changes and updates to military health care during a military family forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)



Subject-matter experts discuss changes and updates to military health care during a military family forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

## Chapter recognizes outstanding VA health care team

The Association of the U.S. Army's Coastal South Carolina chapter awarded its Outstanding Service Award Oct. 3 to the Beaufort Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic.

Retired Lt. Col. Larry Dandridge, chapter vice president for veteran affairs, presented the award plaque to lead physician Dr. Christopher Murphy, nurse manager Laura Deaton and Patrick Talbert, supervisory advanced medical support assistant. Each member of the clinic's leadership team also received a letter of commendation from the chapter.

"Providing kind, compassionate, highly skilled and empathetic care to veterans and their families is the constant goal of the Beaufort CBOC," the award citation says. The leadership team and the other 61 employees at the clinic are known throughout the region "for practicing servant leadership and a tireless commitment to excellent service."

The clinic offers primary care and specialty health services, including mental health services, according to the VA. Its leaders "are unsung heroes, and they are each one of the reasons the CBOC gets high numbers of positive customer surveys and dozens of compliments from the veterans it serves," Dandridge said.



Retired Lt. Col. Larry Dandridge, second from right, vice president for veteran affairs with AUSA's Coastal South Carolina chapter, presents the chapter's quarterly Outstanding Service Award and letters of commendation to the leadership team of the Beaufort Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic. (AUSA PHOTO)

According to the most recent Consumer Assessment of Health and Systems survey, conducted by the VA to collect feedback from 150,000 veterans across the U.S., 91% of patients "usually or always get an appointment when they need it" for routine care at the Beaufort clinic, and 90% get an appointment as needed for urgent care.

Each quarter, the AUSA chapter

presents its Outstanding Service Award to a different VA health care employee or team. Past recipients include an intensive-care nurse, emergency room and mental health teams and a former chief of patient experience.

The Beaufort clinic is a great asset to veterans in the county and surrounding area, said Dandridge, who was wounded in combat in Vietnam and is a 100% service-connected disabled veteran.

"The Beaufort VA CBOC leaders are examples for other health professionals to follow and are one of the reasons that the Ralph H. Johnson VA Health Care System is a world-class patient- and family-centered care team," Dandridge said.

If a veteran is not enrolled in VA health care, they should find out if they are eligible for VA health care benefits by clicking here, Dandridge said. "I encourage every eligible veteran to enroll in and use VA health care," he said.

### Community Partner Challenge

The following chapters are the September winners of AUSA's Community Partner Challenge in their award categories. Each winner receives \$500 and 5 points toward Best Chapter in their group.

- George Washington – Award Group 1
- North Texas-Audie Murphy – Award Group 2
  - Sunshine – Award Group 3
- COL Edward Cross – Award Group 4
- Central California – Award Group 5

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