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Maj. Gen. Kevin Vereen, left, commanding general of Army Recruiting Command, and Command Sgt. Major John Foley welcome a new Army recruit. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Army continues virtual recruiting push

The Army plans to hold a series of virtual recruiting events in the next few months after the success of a nationwide event this summer that generated tens of thousands of leads, a senior recruiting leader said.

Starting in mid-November, Army Recruiting Command will hold virtual career fairs on an online platform that is under development.

The regional career fairs will be designed “to give folks an opportunity to be informed about what we provide as an Army,” said Maj. Gen. Kevin Vereen, commander of Army Recruiting Command.

Army National Hiring Days, a three-day recruiting event that took place June 30 to July 2 to make up for the dip in recruiting caused by the pandemic, resulted in 30,000 credible leads for Army recruiters and “several hundred contracts” that

will go into effect during the fiscal 2021 recruiting year, Vereen said Wednesday during The AUSA Noon Report, a webinar series hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army.

The upcoming virtual events will be slightly smaller in scale and aimed at building momentum for another Army National Hiring Days event in June. The career fairs are likely to become the norm as the Army works to reach generations of young people who are comfortable engaging with recruiters online. While the virtual events have been successful, Vereen noted that there are still challenges in reaching young people because of the different levels of connectivity in different parts of the country.

School closures across the U.S. because of the COVID-19 pandemic have also made it challenging to engage with young people on a per-

sonal level without the visibility recruiters traditionally have in school hallways.

Still, recruiters have adapted to the virtual environment, and the Army was able to meet its fiscal year 2020 end strength goal, topping 485,383 soldiers.

The Army National Guard ended fiscal 2020 with 336,131 soldiers, slightly above its goal of 336,000, and the Army Reserve, with an end strength of 188,703, fell just short of its goal of 189,500.

Vereen praised the Army’s senior leaders for their support and recruiters for their efforts and hard work.

He added that the recruiting mission would not be possible without the involvement of retirees, veterans and communities across the country, including AUSA’s 122 chapters.

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New performance teams will improve care for soldiers

The Army is rolling out new “performance teams” made up of experts such as strength trainers and dietitians as part of its Holistic Health and Fitness initiative to take better care of soldiers, a top general said.

“We’re going to take care of the whole soldier under H2F,” Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commanding general of the Center for Initial Military Training, said Oct. 15.

The first units to receive these specialized teams include brigades in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington; the 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, Texas; and the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

The Army’s H2F program is an “all-inclusive” initiative designed to combine physical, sleep, nutritional, spiritual and mental fitness, according to the Army.

With a focus on injury prevention and long-term health, performance teams consisting of physical therapists, dietitians, occupational therapists, athletic trainers, cognitive enhancement specialists and strength and conditioning coaches will be embedded in brigades across the Army.

They will work with the chaplains, medical personnel and behavioral health teams already embedded within brigades “as one group” under this effort, Hibbard said.

“It combines all aspects of human



‘We’re going to take care of the whole soldier under H2F,’ said Maj. Gen. Lonnie Hibbard, commander of the Center for Initial Military Training. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. CASEY HUSTIN)

performance under a single governance,” he said.

The initial H2F-resourced brigades will receive “a full complement of resources,” including personnel and a roughly 40,000-square-foot Soldier Performance Readiness Center, according to Col. Kevin Bigelman, director of Holistic Health and Fitness.

Dedicated to H2F programming, unit-owned Soldier Performance Readiness Centers will serve as brigade-sized “brick-and-mortar” training centers for soldiers, and they will be staffed by the program’s professionals.

This fiscal year, 28 brigades will receive performance teams, followed by up to 18 brigades each year through fiscal year 2026, Bigelman said.

“H2F is really an investment in the health and fitness of our most critical

weapon system—the soldier,” Bigelman said.

While soldiers have a “personal responsibility” for their health and fitness, H2F will help soldiers “take charge of their health, fitness and wellbeing” while decreasing their risk of injury, he said.

The H2F initiative is part of an overall culture shift in the Army’s approach to health and fitness.

As part of these changes, the new Army Combat Fitness Test this month became the Army’s official test of record, replacing the 40-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test.

Hibbard said H2F, recently published in Army Field Manual 7-22, serves as a “readiness system” to improve soldier health and fitness.

“If you look at the number of active-duty soldiers who are medically nondeployable, that equates to being short about nine brigade combat teams worth of combat power that can’t deploy at a given notice,” he said.

Reducing those numbers by just 1% will save the Army more than \$40 million, he said.

“We owe it to our men and women of our Army to provide them the necessary tools and training to fight and win our nation’s wars,” Hibbard said. “But we have to do that by protecting the whole soldier.”

Recruiting

From Page 1

“I can’t say enough about the members of AUSA, our veterans, our community partners that are in our towns and cities,” he said.

He called on members of this Army community to continue telling the Army story.

“I would ask the same continued effort from our AUSA leadership

and our members and our retirees to help us because, again, it goes back to what I always say, it takes a community to recruit for the United States Army, and I truly believe that,” he said.

The AUSA Noon Report series continues Nov. 18 with remarks from Lt. Gen. James Pasquarette, Army deputy chief of staff, G-8.

For more information, click [here](#).

Retirees urged to prepare for new Tricare Select enrollment fees



Beneficiaries who set up their payments after Nov. 20 may have to pay for one or more months up front to allow time for the allotment to be processed. (U.S. ARMY/TWANA ATKINSON)

Military retirees affected by new monthly enrollment fees for Tricare Select health care coverage can now set up their automatic payments.

The monthly enrollment fees kick in Jan. 1, 2021.

Mandated in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, the change applies to Group A retirees, whose initial enlistment or appointment occurred before Jan. 1, 2018, and their beneficiaries.

This marks the first time this group of beneficiaries will be charged such fees.

Retirees in this group must act if they want to keep their Tricare Select coverage in 2021, according to the Tricare website.

Tricare open season runs Nov. 9 through Dec. 14, but payments can be set up now.

Those affected by this change must set up a monthly allotment through their DoD pay center or via electronic funds transfer, credit card or debit card.

Tricare is encouraging beneficiaries to set up their payments as soon as possible. Those who set up their payments after Nov. 20 may have to

pay for one or more months up front to allow time for the allotment to be processed, according to Tricare.

Beneficiaries can be disenrolled from Tricare Select if they fail to pay enrollment fees by Jan. 1, according to Tricare. If that happens, beneficiaries have 180 days from their last paid through date to request reinstatement. They will also be responsible for past enrollment fees.

Individual enrollment fees are \$12.50 a month or \$150 a year. Retirees on a family plan pay \$25 a month or \$300 a year.

Enrollment fees are waived for active-duty family members, survivors or medically retired retirees or family members, according to Tricare.

Additionally, the catastrophic cap will increase from \$3,000 to \$3,500; the enrollment fees will apply toward the catastrophic cap.

Beneficiaries who use Tricare for Life, Tricare Prime, Tricare Reserve Select, Tricare Retired Reserve or Tricare Young Adult are not affected.

Depending on your Tricare contractor, you may set up your payments online, by phone or by mail.

For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).

AUSAExtra

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PERK OF THE WEEK

AUSA members save 15% to 50% with Aetna Dental Access, a dental discount program (not insurance). Members pay just \$4.56 per month for the program and prescription discounts. Additional discount programs are available for vision, chiropractic, telemedicine and more. For more information, visit www.ausa.org/dma.



Tickets now available online for national Army museum

Tickets are now available for the National Museum of the United States Army, which opens on Veterans Day.

Free, timed-entry tickets are required as museum staff work to manage capacity and implement enhanced health and safety measures while providing an optimal experience to visitors.

Tickets are available on the museum website here, and they must be reserved online ahead of time. Walk-up tickets will not be available.

The National Museum of the United States Army opens Nov. 11 after a five-month delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The museum, which has been in the works for years, will be the first and only museum to showcase the entire history of the U.S. Army since its establishment in 1775.



Tickets for the museum must be reserved online ahead of time, as walk-up tickets will not be available. (AUSA PHOTO)

The 185,000-square-foot building sits on more than 80 acres of publicly accessible land at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and more than 700,000 visitors are expected to visit each year.

"The museum is stunning, and it is an honor to present this history in

a way that shows the connection between the American soldier, the U.S. Army and the nation," said Tammy Call, the museum's director, in a statement.

The museum is a joint effort between the Army, which owns and manages the museum, and the Army Historical Foundation, which led a \$200 million privately funded campaign to build the museum.

The Association of the U.S. Army is the single-largest museum donor, contributing \$42.5 million to the project. A third of AUSA's chapters have also donated money.

A small ceremony to mark the museum's Nov. 11 opening will be livestreamed on the museum's website. More information will be available once details are finalized.

For more information on the museum, click here.



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Biography tells compelling story of a veteran's healing

By Joseph Craig

The *Eagle on My Arm*, the newest title in the Association of the U.S. Army's Book Program, tells the inspirational story of Patrick Bradley, a Vietnam veteran who uses his passion for birds of prey to help other veterans heal physically and psychologically.

Bradley struggled to adjust at home after being wounded in combat, but his life changed forever after spending three years in the Canadian wilderness studying bald eagles as part of his recovery.

Book Program

He made important findings—both scientific and personal—and went on to have a 40-year career as a wildlife expert and trainer.

He committed himself to helping other wounded warriors by co-founding the Avian Veteran Alliance, a non-profit organization that pairs injured birds of prey with veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and physical injuries.

Authors Dava Guerin and Terry Bivens show how a soldier became a dedicated healer, using years of study and solitude to turn his pain into a lifelong passion for helping others.

The AUSA Book Program recently sat down with Guerin to discuss the new biography.

AUSA: How did you meet Patrick Bradley?

Guerin: I met Patrick when he was managing the birds of prey program at the Narrows in Largo, Florida. I discovered his groundbreaking work pairing wounded birds of prey and wounded warriors when I was doing research for another book called *Vets and Pets*.

AUSA: What inspired you to write a book about Patrick's story?

Guerin: Seeing first-hand Patrick's love of wounded raptors and passion for helping others was my initial motivation. Beyond that, his patriotism, his overcoming unspeakable obsta-



Patrick Bradley hangs out with Sarge the bald eagle at the George C. McGough Nature Park in Largo, Florida. (TAMPA BAY NEWS/CHRIS GEORGE)

cles, and the way he dedicated his life to saving the lives of veterans and wounded warriors all made his story so appealing.

AUSA: You have written several books about wounded warriors. How did you get connected to their world?

Guerin: It was by accident, actually. I volunteered for a Valentine's Day event at Walter Reed, and while there met a young wounded warrior who had been seriously injured in Afghanistan.

I visited him nearly every week, then got to know all the mothers whose sons and daughters were also hospitalized.

They moved me so much that I decided to write my first book, *Unbreakable Bonds*, about the moms who gave all.

I then moved on to individual stories about soldiers and Marines that I found inspiring.

AUSA: What is one thing that you would like readers to learn from *The Eagle on My Arm*?

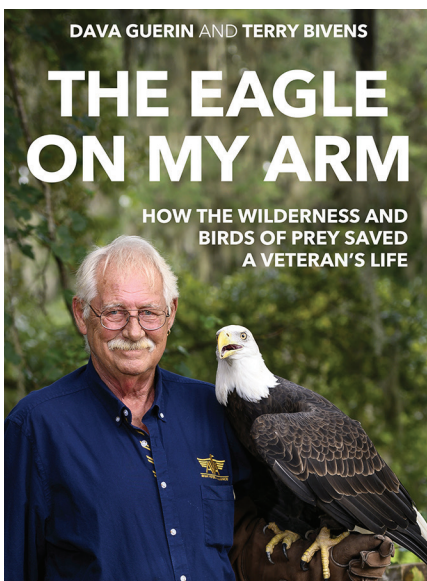
Guerin: I would like readers to understand and appreciate how the power of nature can heal the human soul. And that no matter what obstacles we face, there is always a way out—and to never give up. That is Patrick's life story and will be his legacy.

AUSA: What's next for Patrick and the birds?

Guerin: It's an exciting time for Patrick and the raptors he loves. In addition to volunteering for the Owl's Nest Sanctuary, he is working on creating a mobile program where he will bring the wounded birds of prey—including Thunder the bald eagle, the bird on our cover—to Veterans Affairs hospitals, parks and other locations around the state of Florida.

To order a copy of *The Eagle on My Arm*, please visit www.ausa.org/books.

Joseph Craig is AUSA's Book Program Director.



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Longtime *ARMY* writer honored for defense reporting

Longtime *ARMY* magazine contributing editor Scott Gourley, a former Army officer and a member of the Association of the U.S. Army since 1984, was honored for four decades of tireless reporting with an Outstanding Achievement Award at this year's Defence Media Awards.

"I'm both surprised and honored," Gourley said in a video accepting the award. "It has not always been easy to be a freelance defense writer working on the somewhat remote redwood coast of northern California, but it has been a wonderful ride so far."

Gourley's career as a defense writer began when he was in the Army, and he started writing for *Jane's Defense* in 1986. He has been writing for AUSA's *ARMY* magazine for 25 years, producing the monthly Soldier Armed column about hardware and writing feature articles.

"Editors like Mary French and Rick Maze have made me a better writer," he said.

French, who retired in 2014, was editor in chief of *ARMY* for 18 years. Maze is her successor.

Gourley has also written for *National Defense* and *Popular Mechanics*, and he currently is editor of *Special Operations Outlook* and writes for Shephard Media.

"What I have loved over all of these years is that my defense writing involves ordinary people doing extraordinary things every day," he said. "My best results have always come from joining them in the field."

The Defence Media Awards were created in 2018 as an independent and unbiased way to honor and recognize the work of defense journalists and publishers. This year's awards were presented virtually.



Scott Gourley has been writing for AUSA's *ARMY* magazine for 25 years, producing a monthly column about hardware and writing feature articles. (COURTESY PHOTO)



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Chapter member recognized for service to community

A lifetime member of the Association of the U.S. Army's Greater New York-Statue of Liberty chapter was among nine veterans recognized Oct. 4 at the second annual Veteran Hall of Honor ceremony.

Retired Lt. Col. Joseph Schroder, a past chapter president and current chapter treasurer, was honored for his dedication, commitment, passion, bravery and service to the country and community during the ceremony at Tanglewood Preserve in Rockville Centre, New York.

The event was hosted by New York State Assemblywoman Judy Griffin.

Schroder was drafted into the Army in 1966 and served in all three components—Regular Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve—during his career.

He retired after 33 years with four



Retired Lt. Col. Joseph Schroder and eight other veterans were honored at the second annual Veteran Hall of Honor ceremony. (COURTESY/ASSEMBLYWOMAN JUDY GRIFFIN'S OFFICE)

overseas tours, in Germany, Iceland, Canada and Afghanistan.

In addition to AUSA, Schroder is active in other military and veterans' organizations, including the Reserve Officers Association, the Military Officers Association of America, the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division


Association and the 77th Infantry Division Association.

Schroder has been married to his wife, Mary Ann, for 40 years. They have three daughters, Kimberly, Michele and Jeanine, and four grandchildren, Damien, Charleigh Rose, Thomas and Christopher.

Eagle Chapters

The following chapters attained Eagle status for September by showing positive membership growth. The number of consecutive months of growth since July 1, 2020, is shown in parentheses.

Alamo (3)	Hellenic (2)
Braxton Bragg (3)	Isthmian (2)
Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Benning (3)	MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen (2)
Emerald Coast-Big Bend-So. Georgia (3)	Redstone-Huntsville (2)
Fires (3)	San Francisco (2)
Fort Knox (3)	Space Coast (2)
Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon (3)	Suncoast (2)
Houston Metroplex (3)	Tobyhanna Army Depot (2)
Korea (3)	Tucson-Goyette (2)
Polar Bear (3)	Virginia Colonial (2)
Texas Capital Area (3)	Western New York (2)
Carlisle Barracks-Cumberland Valley (2)	Allegheny-Blue Ridge (1)
Catoctin (2)	Corporal Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (1)
Ethan Allen (2)	Des Moines Freedom (1)
GEN John J. "Black Jack" Pershing (2)	Magnolia (1)
GEN John W. Vessey, Jr (2)	Mediterranean (1)
Greater Atlanta (2)	Pikes Peak (1)
Hawaii (2)	



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