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Army breaks new ground in robotics, AI

Morality and modernization are equally important parts of the Army's efforts to expand artificial intelligence and robotics, a senior Army official said at the opening of an Association of the U.S. Army event focused on the expansion of military capabilities.

James McPherson, an Army and Navy veteran serving as the senior official performing the duties of the undersecretary of the Army, said the Army and industry need to concentrate on autonomous systems to keep pace with near-peer competitors like Russia and China.

"Every one of you has a part in the effort to get the Army across the finish line first," McPherson said Wednesday to kick off the two-day AUSA-hosted symposium and exposition in Detroit.

The Army, academia and industry

are breaking new ground with weapons and systems, expanding warfighting, revolutionizing supply and aiding smarter decisions, he said.

The Army is also working in partnership with the other services.

"We can do a whole lot more when we bring our funding together than we do in our little niche," he said.

Morality is also part of American use of artificial intelligence, McPherson said.

"U.S. commanders will always retain full responsibility for the weapons they employ," he said. "There will always be a human in the kill chain."

AUSA's Army Autonomy and Artificial Intelligence Symposium and Exposition at the TCF Center in Detroit took place Wednesday and Thursday for the second year.

The event drew a multiservice, academic and industry audience of about

550 people and about 30 exhibitors.

"AUSA is today an indispensable partner in so many ways for the Army, including putting on events like this," McPherson said.

Retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA's president and CEO, said artificial intelligence and robotics are not new to the Army, but the technology is gathering steam.

With it comes some big questions to be answered about the speed of adoption of the technology, how the Army can defend against adversaries who have autonomous systems, and how the Army will cover the costs of the new capabilities, he said.

Autonomy and People

During the symposium, experts from the military, academia and industry covered a wide range of topics.

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Playing cards help soldiers identify adversaries' weapons

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command has released more than 90,000 sets of playing cards as a unique tool to help soldiers learn to identify enemy vehicles and weapons.

The “Worldwide Equipment Identification” cards, designed by Army Training Support Center graphic artist Robin Hicks, display items including tanks, rocket launchers and air defense systems from China, Russia and Iran.

They are available to all soldiers regardless of rank or unit designation.

“You don’t have to have a security clearance; you don’t have to be assigned to a special unit,” said Fred Batchelor, TRADOC G-2 (Intelligence) director of current operations.

“Everybody has access to these cards, and I think that’s what really sold them.”

In July, TRADOC produced 9,800 packs of cards featuring Chinese vehicles and weapons, and they were gone after only three weeks.

To date, the command has released 30,000 decks of the Chinese cards, 38,000 packs of the Russian, and 33,000 featuring Iranian equipment.

Each of the new cards includes no-



‘Worldwide Equipment Identification’ cards display items including tanks, rocket launchers and air defense systems from China, Russia and Iran. (U.S. ARMY/GARY SHEFTICK)

menclature, weapons range and primary weapons systems.

TRADOC is considering cards depicting vehicles from friendly forces as well as another potential adversary, Batchelor said.

Although Batchelor had doubts about printing physical cards in an era that is overwhelmingly electronic,

he said the response from surveyed units has been positive.

Soldiers can order the cards through their installation training support centers.

A digital card memory game can be downloaded from a QR code available on each deck or through the TRADOC App Gateway here.

Autonomy

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Panelists and speakers discussed how the U.S. can compete with its adversaries, communicate on a highly lethal and competitive battlefield, manage massive amounts of data, and recruit and retain highly skilled talent.

One key discussion focused on a push to make sure the Army’s Next-Generation Combat Vehicles are spoof-proof.

Success in autonomous vehicles would be having a dozen spoof-proof Next-Generation Combat Vehicles operated by one human, according to Brig. Gen. Ross Coffman, who leads the cross-functional team searching

for vehicles that can provide more range, function and lethal punch on the battlefield.

What the Army needs is a system that is continually adaptive, learning as it goes and not easily fooled, Coffman said.

Systems programmed to identify people or objects can be confused if shapes, colors or sizes are altered.

“I don’t want AI spoofed by spray foam and some cardboard,” he said.

Perfect, risk-free systems are almost impossible, said Ryan Close, of U.S. Army Futures Command, suggesting an Armywide discussion is needed about acceptable risk and who will be responsible.

“Just because there is risk doesn’t

mean we don’t do it,” Coffman said. “We just need to inform our commanders of the risk. We are not going to be at a fieldable position unless we take risk.”

Coffman also predicted that the human controlling the system will ultimately be the difference in how U.S. autonomous systems compare with systems from other militaries.

Building human trust in the systems is also important, Coffman said. That’s why the Army needs to get systems into the hands of soldiers and have those soldiers talk with engineers about how to do things better.

“There are a lot of great weapons in the Army that never leave the arms room,” he said.

National Guard defends homeland against malicious cyber activity



Sgt. Michael Russel, Texas Army National Guard, analyzes network traffic during a Cyber Shield 19 training week class at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. GEORGE DAVIS)

The chief of the National Guard Bureau said the Guard is prepared to respond to cyberattacks that are now “daily battlegrounds” in the homeland, citing attacks on school districts and government agencies in Texas and Louisiana earlier this year.

“Our adversaries and nonstate actors use cyber activity to target personnel, commercial and government infrastructure, and the effects can be devastating,” Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel said during a Nov. 5 media roundtable at the Pentagon.

Cybersecurity is a relatively new domain, but one of increasing importance and one where the Guard has seen growing involvement.

“When I first joined the National Guard, cyber was not part of our vocabulary, but certainly now it is,” Lengyel said.

In late October, Lt. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, director of the Army National Guard, announced the stationing of the Army Guard’s fifth cyber battalion in Indianapolis. The 127th Cyber Battalion is expected to reach operational capacity in 2022.

“The Army National Guard’s role in national cybersecurity provides a

larger blanket of protection against our adversaries,” Hokanson said.

Guard soldiers and airmen in Illinois are also forming a cyber task force to assist their states in the event of a domestic cyberattack, Lengyel said.

Several school districts and agencies in Texas and Louisiana were targeted this summer by ransomware attacks, malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a ransom is paid. The Guard response helped ensure the schools opened on time and government employees were able to get back to work, Lengyel said.

“[Ransomware] is obviously a new and emerging kind of enterprise. We are able to access superb civilians and skill sets, and they can bring capabilities that the military sometimes does not have,” he said, adding that many Guard members have cyber-related civilian jobs.

“This will be part of the cyber mission force that will be part of the Army’s mission to, if needed, be federalized and mobilized to do cyber activity for the U.S. Army or the U.S. Cyber Command,” he said. “And when they’re not mobilized, we can do our homeland mission.”

AUSAExtra

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Support For the Soldier**

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Military spouses work to inspire a million acts of kindness

By Patty Barron

One act of kindness multiplied by one million can change the world—at least that's what three military spouses are hoping for as they launch #GivingTuesdayMilitary on Dec. 3.

The spouses, Maria Reed (Army), Jessica Manfre (Coast Guard) and Samantha Gomolka (National Guard), were selected as the Armed Forces Insurance 2019 Military Spouse of the Year for their respective services.

The women first met in May in Washington, D.C., and recognized in each other a common passion—to create something special that would unite all branches of service. “We were brought together by the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year program for the work we do individually, but soon realized that as a team we

Family Readiness



Left to right, Maria Reed, Samantha Gomolka and Jessica Manfre. (COURTESY PHOTO)

could really enact change in communities around the world,” Reed said.

As they brainstormed, they realized they had a perfect vehicle in a recognized day of giving: Giving Tuesday.

Established in 2012 on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, this social media campaign provides a vehicle for charitable giving to organizations that are recognized as community builders for their respective missions.

“#GivingTuesdayMilitary takes that

same premise and turns it into a movement; a kindness movement,” Reed said.

The three spouses' challenge to the military community and supporters is to collectively complete 1 million acts of kindness and share a photo, video or post of their act on social media using the hashtag #GivingTuesdayMilitary on Dec. 3.

“This movement is not about money, but about actions—doing something kind for a fellow human,” Reed said.

At the Association of the U.S. Army headquarters, we are excited to participate, and we hope you will join the #GivingTuesdayMilitary movement.

All it takes is one gesture or act of kindness to have a ripple effect across thousands of communities and create a tidal wave of goodwill.

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

Patty Barron is AUSA's Family Readiness Director.



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Chapter celebrates 40 years of supporting Total Army

The Association of the U.S. Army's Arkansas chapter recently hosted retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, to celebrate the chapter's 40th birthday and visit local Army National Guard and Army Reserve commands.

The birthday celebration was held Oct. 23 at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History in Little Rock, and it included Preston, former chapter presidents and many other distinguished guests, including retired Lt. Col. David Cooper, AUSA's state president for Arkansas.

Preston spoke about the status of the Total Army and AUSA's efforts to support soldiers and their families.

After a slideshow featuring past chapter events, a cake was cut by the oldest soldier present, retired Col. Don English, and the youngest, Capt. Amaquah Bonsu, who is the Little Rock Recruiting Company commander.

The next day, Preston and retired Col. Harold Tucker, the chapter president, discussed changes and challenges facing the Arkansas National Guard with the adjutant general of



Retired Col. Don English, left, and Capt. Amaquah Bonsu cut the birthday cake. (AUSA PHOTO)

Arkansas, Maj. Gen. Kendall Penn, Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Veazey, the state senior enlisted leader, and the state's Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Megoloff.

During the visit, Megoloff described the "Battle Ready Campaign," a professional development initiative in Arkansas for mid-grade noncommissioned officers who are teaching new lieutenants.

He also talked about the ongoing challenge of balancing military training and deployments with soldiers' civilian jobs.

Penn weighed in about balancing

funding while still maintaining the prescribed levels of proficiency training, and Veazey discussed the core leadership tasks of counseling and mentoring soldiers.

On Oct. 25, Preston and Tucker visited the Army Reserve's 90th Sustainment Brigade headquarters at Camp Pike to participate in the Joint Leadership Program training of 11 new NCOs.

Preston gave the new NCOs three challenges: establish a standard and then enforce it, always put someone in charge of the task or mission, and lead and mentor your subordinates.

Free workshops provide resources for veteran entrepreneurs

The president of the Association of the U.S. Army's Emerald Coast chapter is leading several free workshops to help veterans determine if they have the mindset to launch their own businesses and find the resources they need to succeed without using all of their available capital.

Robert Foster, who also serves as the coordinator of the University of West Florida's Military and Veterans Resource Center, held the first workshop Oct. 26 at the university's Pensacola campus.

He will bring in mentors and expert guest speakers for each session.

The events will continue weekly through the first quarter of 2020 at the chambers of commerce in Fort Walton, Pensacola, Santa Rosa, Crestview, Gulf Breeze, Niceville and Walton County.

Foster plans to launch an advanced class in March.

Workshop topics include "So You Want To Be An Entrepreneur?" "Bootstrapping & Guerrilla Marketing," "Social Media Business Efficiency Hacks & Techniques," "Raising Capital," "How To Validate Your Idea or Offering," "Protecting Your Intellectual

Property" and "How Developing a Dynamic Memory Can Boost Your Business," among others.

Foster is an Army veteran who has been supporting veterans in Florida for several years.

He was recently elected president of AUSA's Emerald Coast chapter, which covers 23 counties in northern Florida and southern Georgia.

For more information on the workshops, contact Foster at rfoster2@uwf.edu or 512-550-2799.

For information on the University of West Florida's Military and Veterans Resource Center, visit uwf.edu/mvrc.



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