



Happy Thanksgiving



Spc. Terry Wedmore enjoys a turkey drumstick and Thanksgiving dinner in the field during the Vietnam War. (NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO)

IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 30
NOVEMBER 26, 2020

Command Combines Army Europe, Africa

3

National Records Center Halts Operations

4

Book Program

A Tale of Heroism in Iraq

6



Chapter Highlights

Pikes Peak

Eagle Chapters

7

More pay on the way for Army retirees

The nation's 2.8 million military retirees will receive a 1.3% increase in retired pay effective Dec. 1, but the January raise for service members and federal civilian workers has not yet been determined.

The cost-of-living increase for retirees matches the increase in Social Security under a formula linked to the Consumer Price Index.

Retirees will first see the increase in their January checks.

Retirement COLAs have been declining. The increase was 2.8% in 2018 and 1.6% in 2019.

The Jan. 1 raise for active and reserve component service members has not been finalized, but the Trump administration requested and the House and Senate have tentatively approved a 3% across-the-board increase that

would apply to all ranks. This is only slightly less than the 3.1% increase received in January 2020.

The fate of raises for federal civilians is unclear. The Trump administration proposed a 1% increase. The House supported the administration's plan, but the Senate Appropriations Committee has called for a federal civilian pay freeze.

A final decision is likely to come in whatever federal funding bill is approved by Congress.

The different pay adjustments are the result of different procedures.

Military and federal civilian cost-of-living adjustments are linked to consumer prices, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Congress usually authorizes the same increase in veterans' disability

compensation and survivor benefits that goes to Social Security recipients. The veterans' benefit increase is not automatic.

Since the start of the all-volunteer force, military pay raises are designed to be comparable to pay increases in the private sector, but the formula is less strictly followed than the automatic adjustments in Social Security.

The Pentagon and Congress have often asked for bigger or smaller increases depending on other economic factors and the current state of recruiting and retention.

For federal workers, the government does an annual federal wage survey, but its results, like the pay comparison for uniformed service members, are often overridden by executive branch and congressional action.

DETECT, TRACK, AND TAKE OVER DRONES

Control the Skies With CORIAN's™
C-UAS Handset **Takeover**



**EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY**

CACI
EVER VIGILANT

A Fortune World's Most Admired Company

A National Security Company

www.caci.com

New command will support operations in Europe, Africa

Army operations in Europe and Africa will now fall under a new command called U.S. Army Europe and Africa.

The move consolidates Army Europe and Army Africa into one command that will serve as the Army service component command for U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command.

It will be led by Gen. Christopher Cavoli, the Army Europe commander since January 2018 who was approved by the Senate for a fourth star and this new assignment on Sept. 30.

As part of the new command structure, Army Africa/Southern European Task Force is redesignated as Army Southern European Task Force, Africa.

Its two-star commander, Maj. Gen. Andrew Rohling, will also serve as Army Europe and Africa's deputy commanding general for Africa.

"This consolidation enhances global and regional readiness in support of the National Defense Strategy," Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said in a statement Nov. 20.

The new command structure will allow the four-star headquarters to



U.S. and Italian paratroopers prep parachutes before a joint airborne exercise at Juliet Drop Zone in Maniago, Italy. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. JACOB SAWYER)

focus on strategic level tasks while the newly reactivated V Corps and Southern European Task Force, Africa will focus on readiness interoperability with allies and partners at the operational and tactical levels, the Army said in its announcement.

In the coming months, V Corps, which was reactivated in October at Fort Knox, Kentucky, will have a forward-deployed command element of about 200 soldiers in Poznan, Poland, as part of a shift in U.S. pres-

ence in Europe.

The rotational element will be integral to the planning and synchronization of operations in Europe, the Army said.

At the same time, Southern European Task Force, Africa will be responsible for Army operations and assets in Africa and Italy, to eventually include the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The consolidation is expected to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2022.

U.S., French, British soldiers train for future battlefield

The French army will test its new warfighting doctrine this spring in a major exercise with U.S. and British forces as it prepares to face a future fight against a state adversary.

Much like the U.S. Army's Multi-Domain Operations concept, which assumes strategic challenges from a near-peer adversary on land, air, sea, cyber and space, the "Strategic Vision of the Chief of Staff of the French Army: 2030 Operational Superiority" addresses the need for shared vision and interoperability among its Allies and partners.

In remarks Tuesday during a Thought Leaders webinar hosted

by the Association of the U.S. Army, Gen. Thierry Burkhard, chief of staff of the French army, said he is "deeply concerned" about the complex and challenging strategic environment.

"We cannot afford to risk any time in preparing for the future fight," Burkhard said, explaining the reason for his new "realistic doctrine."

In an exercise scheduled for April in Europe, French forces will train alongside the U.S. Army's III Corps



Gen. Thierry Burkhard.
(FRENCH ARMY PHOTO)

and 1st Armored Division, and the 3rd U.K. Division, said Brig. Gen. Todd Wasmund, deputy commander for operations of the 3rd French Division and the first U.S. Army officer to serve in an officer exchange program with the French army.

"The [exercise], which I am told will be the largest in the history of the warfighter program, presents [the French army] a unique opportunity to develop interoperability with the U.S.," Wasmund said. "We are in the midst of transitioning the French army from a focus on counterinsurgency operations to preparing for high intensity combat, just as we are transitioning the U.S. Army."

National Personnel Records Center temporarily suspends operations



The suspension slows but does not completely halt activity on veterans' claims that often require proof found in military records. (NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER PHOTO)

The National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri, has been closed to the public since March and is now temporarily shutting down most of its remaining operations because of increased COVID-19 spread in the area.

There is no prediction for when full operations might resume. "The NPRC will be operating at various degrees of reduced on-site capacity until the public health emergency has ended," the center says in a statement.

This action slows but does not completely halt activity on veterans' claims that often require proof found in military records.

"We will continue servicing emergency requests associated with medical treatments, burials, and homeless veterans trying to gain admittance to a homeless shelter," the center said in a statement on its website. "Please refrain from submitting non-emergency requests such as replacement medals, administrative corrections, or records research until we return to pre-COVID staffing levels."

"We will maintain a small on-site staff who will respond only to emergency requests, such as those involving requests to support burial honors for deceased veterans; life-threatening medical emergencies; requests from homeless shelters seeking to gain admittance of a homeless vet-

eran; and comparable emergencies," the center says. "If you have such an emergency, you must complete Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, and fax a signed copy to (314) 801-0764."

While NPRC continues to provide military records to determine eligibility for burial in national cemeteries, the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Cemetery Authority reports delays in obtaining needed records.

"At this time, NPRC is working with NCA to identify records related to casketed interment requests," the VA said in a statement. "Once NPRC can resume normal operations, NCA will then request records for cremated interments."

Eligibility for burial may often be determined without assistance from the records center, the VA says.

The records center said it does not have much choice in the partial shutdown. The facility "is located in an area which has one of the highest per capita rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases in St. Louis County," a records center statement says.

Workspaces "are in close proximity to each other; work processes require frequent, close interactions with coworkers; and the servicing of most requests requires access to over 60 million paper records that are stored on-site and unable to be accessed remotely."

AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier*

Gen. Carter F. Ham, USA, Ret.
President and CEO, AUSA

Lt. Gen. Guy C. Swan III, USA, Ret.
Vice President, Education, AUSA

Luc Dunn
Editor

Desiree Hurlocker
Advertising Manager

Advertising Information Contact:
Fox Associates Inc.
116 W. Kinzie St. • Chicago, IL 60654
Phone: 800-440-0231
Email: adinfo.rmy@foxrep.com

ARTICLES. Articles appearing in AUSA Extra do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the officers or members of the Council of Trustees of AUSA, or its editors. Articles are expressions of personal opinion and should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion of the Department of Defense nor of any branch, command, installation or agency of the Department of Defense. The publication assumes no responsibility for any unsolicited material. Email: extra@ausa.org

ADVERTISING. Neither AUSA Extra, nor its publisher, the Association of the United States Army, makes any representations, warranties or endorsements as to the truth and accuracy of the advertisements appearing herein, and no such representations, warranties or endorsements should be implied or inferred from the appearance of the advertisements in the publication. The advertisers are solely responsible for the contents of such advertisements.

RATES. Individual membership fees payable in advance are \$40 for two years, \$75 for five years, and \$400 for Life Membership. A discounted rate of \$10 for two years is available to members in the ranks of E-1 through E-4, and for service academy and ROTC cadets and OCS candidates. More information is available at our website www.ausa.org; or by emailing membersupport@ausa.org, phoning 855-246-6269, or mailing Fulfillment Manager, P.O. Box 101560, Arlington, VA 22210-0860.

PERK OF THE WEEK

At www.ausa.org/savings, holiday shopping is easy with discounts at Apple, Dell, HP and a variety of gifting companies.



Choose R.Riveter for handmade gifts that support military spouse employment. Click "Abenity" to access your Costco deal and more than 300,000 local and national offerings, or choose "Provengo" for outdoors brands like Yeti, Costa, Shimano and more.



THOUGHT LEADERS

ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

AUSA'S THOUGHT LEADERS WEBINAR SERIES WELCOMES

LTG(R) H.R. McMASTER

author of Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World



FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER
1000-1100 EST

***Battlegrounds: The Fight
to Defend the Free World***
by LTG(R) H.R. McMaster

PRE-REGISTER AT WWW.AUSA.ORG/MEET



JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

The webinar room will open at 0955.

Didn't catch it? The video will be
posted to our YouTube page the
following day.

JOIN LIVE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE Q&A

LEARN MORE & REGISTER ONLINE AT

WWW.AUSA.ORG/MEET



**ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

New book tells story of paratroopers' heroism in Iraq

By Joseph Craig

The 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment of the famed 82nd Airborne Division was selected in 2005 to be the Army's first airborne reconnaissance squadron.

The unit, also known as "Headhunter" in honor of the commander's radio call sign, was only half the size of a full-strength battalion, but it soon took on a big job in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Headhunter: 5-73 CAV and Their Fight for Iraq's Diyala River Valley, the latest title in the Association of the U.S. Army's Book Program, details the unit's mission to hunt down terrorist factions. Their work was later recognized with a Presidential Unit Citation.

Author Peter Svoboda invested years researching and interviewing the paratroopers to tell the story of their deployment from the soldiers' point of view.

The AUSA Book Program recently sat down with Svoboda to discuss the new book.

AUSA: This is your first book, written after a full career in another field. What inspired you to tell this story?

Svoboda: I was moved by my dad's World War II service as a paratrooper in the airborne command and the 82nd Airborne Division.

AUSA: Why did you decide to write about this particular unit from the 82nd Airborne Division?

Svoboda: After interviewing [Lt. Col.] Drew Poppas, who was 5-73's commanding officer, I was drawn to the story of 5-73's campaign to rid Diyala Province of al-Qaida terrorists as well as their insurgent affiliates. It was so compelling, I knew that this story had to be told.

AUSA: You note that the 5-73 was filled with a combination of cavalry scouts and infantry riflemen. How did the two cultures blend?



Soldiers from the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, take a knee during an operation in Iraq to search for weapons caches and insurgents. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. JAMES SELESNICK)

Svoboda: The different mindsets created an initial challenge.

The running joke was that the riflemen had to be taught to get in the gun trucks and the cav scouts had to be taught to get out.

When 5-73 went to support the relief effort in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, the two began to blend.

Once in Kuwait, rigorous training further strengthened that bond. Poppas emphasized the shared vision of the Spartan mindset of collectively

holding the line and counting on each other.

AUSA: What did you find most surprising as you worked on the book?

Svoboda: I was pleasantly surprised and gratified with the willingness of these paratroopers and their loved ones to share these powerful stories. Their accounts were heartfelt and moving. It was an honor to be able to shape their words into this work.

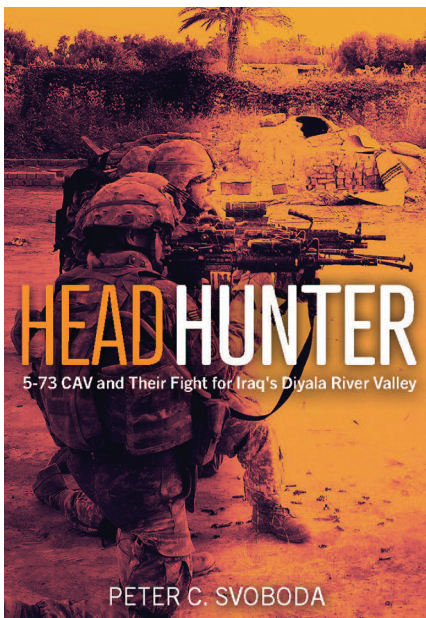
AUSA: What project would you like to tackle next?

Svoboda: I am writing a series of short stories that will trace the 82nd's deployments during the War on Terror.

Beginning with the first Afghanistan deployment, moving through the initial combat in Iraq, and followed by the various deployments of the division, it will focus on the human element of what the paratroopers and their family members have experienced as well as their struggles following these deployments.

To order a copy of *Headhunter: 5-73 CAV and Their Fight for Iraq's Diyala River Valley*, please visit www.ausa.org/books.

Joseph Craig is AUSA's Book Program Director.



Chapter provides Thanksgiving meals to military families

The Association of the U.S. Army's Pikes Peak chapter recently partnered with the Salvation Army Fountain Valley Corps to deliver Thanksgiving food to military families from Fort Carson, Colorado.

More than 300 meals were distributed from multiple locations during the Nov. 21 event, according to the chapter's website.

Traditionally, the annual event provides hot meals, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, families drove through the sites and were given food to cook at home.

The Salvation Army specifically thanked Marissa Wentling, the Pikes Peak chapter vice president for family programs, and Yvonne Coombes, the chapter vice president for special events, for their service during the event.

Other organizations participating in the distribution included MMRE Realty, The Enlisted Association



More than 300 Thanksgiving meals were distributed to military families from multiple locations during the Nov. 21 event. (COURTESY/SALVATION ARMY)

Chapter One, Fort Carson's 52nd Brigade Engineer Battalion and Chive On Colorado.

"What an honor this was to serve

over 150 military families on Saturday and over 600 military families in total out of Fort Carson," the chapter said in a Facebook post.

Eagle Chapters

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

Alamo (4)
Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Benning (4)
Fires (4)
Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon (4)
Polar Bear (4)
Texas Capital Area (4)
Catoctin (3)
Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri (3)
Francis Scott Key (3)
GEN John J. "Black Jack" Pershing (3)
Hawaii (3)
Hellenic (3)
MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen (3)
Mid-Palatinate (3)
Redstone-Huntsville (3)

Rock Island Arsenal (3)
Space Coast (3)
Tobyhanna Army Depot (3)
Tucson-Goyette (3)
Western New York (3)
Arizona Territorial (2)
Corporal Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (2)
CSM James M. MacDonald-Keystone (2)
Delaware (2)
Des Moines Freedom (2)
Henry Leavenworth (2)
Northern New Jersey (2)
First In Battle (1)
Picatinny Arsenal-Middle Forge (1)
West Point Area (1)



YOU KNOW **WHAT** **MATTERS** MOST

**100% of your donation to AUSA
goes to the programs you choose.**



**ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

DONATE AT

www.ausa.org/give

Your gift is tax-deductible as a charitable contribution within the limits prescribed by law.
U.S. Army photo. The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.