



Gen. Gary Brito, commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command, tries on the Reconfigurable Virtual Collective Trainer–Ground for the Bradley Fighting Vehicle Tuesday at the 2023 Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference in Orlando, Florida. (U.S. ARMY/ARIANA AUBUCHON)

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## Leaders aim to integrate training, tech

**A**s the Army continues its transformation, it must ensure that training keeps pace with new systems and technologies, and the service must work with industry partners to expedite the acquisition process, two senior Army leaders said.

“It’s an exciting time—the Army is doing a lot, very quickly,” said Douglas Bush, the Army’s assistant secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology. “We want to make things easier for our leaders, our commanders and our soldiers.”

Bush and Gen. Gary Brito, commanding general of the Army Training and Doctrine Command, spoke Tuesday during the 2023 Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference in Orlando, Florida.

To accomplish the mission of having

“a warfighting-ready Army,” Training and Doctrine Command must be “linked in early” in the acquisition process so that training, doctrine and leader development are integrated with new systems, Brito said. “When you do that, you enhance the lethality of the individual soldiers, you improve the ... collective training of the respective unit, you improve their performance when they go to a combat training center,” he said.

Limited funding is a perpetual stumbling block for modernization, Bush said. “I think the challenge the Army has, as always, is just resources,” he said. “How do we allocate resources to modernize quickly in this area of training ... while trying to do everything else?”

While the Army has made improvements in resourcing, it’s a constant challenge “to make sure that we are

starting an acquisition program and thinking about the training part up front, especially when we’re doing it faster,” Bush said.

“You can have a terrific piece of gear, but if it’s very difficult to train, it’s just not going to be as effective, or if it’s too expensive to train on, it’s not going to be as affordable for the Army to do at scale—and everything the Army does is at vast scale,” Bush said.

Looking to 2030 and beyond, the Army is depending on industry to provide feedback on which practices are most effective, Bush said. “The innovation in this country, in the defense industry—we rely on it,” he said. “Every answer should not be the Army telling industry exactly how we’re going to do something. We need to leverage that private sector innovation into our training systems.”





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## Longtime AUSA leader retired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton dies

**R**etired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton Jr., a longtime member of the Association of the U.S. Army's Board of Directors and a recipient of the George Catlett Marshall Medal, AUSA's highest award, died Tuesday. He was 97.

Becton joined AUSA's Board of Directors, then called the Council of Trustees, in 1994 and served for 13 years. In 2007, he was presented the Marshall Medal "for his numerous and consequential accomplishments over a lifetime of service as a soldier, leader, educator, administrator, mentor and role model," according to the award citation.

Born June 29, 1926, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Becton volunteered for Army service in 1944 with a desire to become a pilot. When astigmatism knocked him out of contention for flight school, he applied and qualified for Officer Candidate School.

Becton became a second lieutenant in 1945 with the all-Black 93rd Infantry Division and served in the Pacific at the end of World War II. In 1946, he transferred from active duty to the Army Reserve but re-entered active service in 1948. "I decided I really liked soldiering," Becton said in 2017 during a Black History Month commemoration at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

Over the next 35 years, Becton "with great distinction ... led Amer-



Nicholas Chabreja, left, then-chairman of AUSA's Council of Trustees, and retired Gen. Gordon Sullivan, right, then-AUSA president and CEO, present the association's 2007 George Catlett Marshall Medal to retired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton Jr. (AUSA PHOTO)

ica's soldiers in combat in Korea and Vietnam, and in Cold War operations," according to the Marshall Medal citation. His key assignments include commanding the 1st Cavalry Division, the Army Operations Test and Evaluation Agency and VII Corps in Germany during the Cold War.

Becton's final assignment before retiring from the Army in 1983 was deputy commander of the Army Training and Doctrine Command.

His awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit with Oak

Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Combat Infantryman Badge with star for service in Korea and Vietnam.

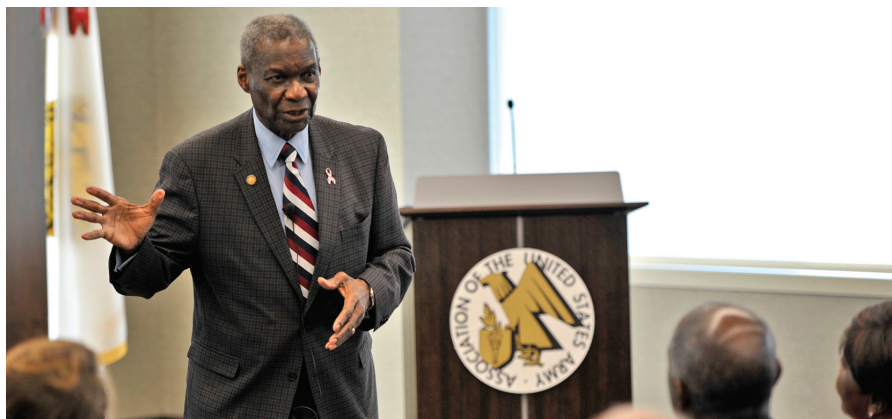
"I enjoyed being a soldier; I enjoyed being around soldiers," Becton said of his nearly 40 years of service.

From 1984 to 1985, Becton was director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the U.S. Agency for International Development. In 1985, he was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to be director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency—the first Black person to hold that position.

After leaving government service in 1989, Becton became president of his alma mater, Prairie View A&M University in Texas, "where he launched a new era of fiscal and academic accountability," according to the Marshall Medal citation.

During the 2017 event at AUSA, retired Gen. Carter Ham, former AUSA president and CEO, described Becton as "a man who has lived through extraordinary change and service."

"You've reminded us how far we have come as an Army and a nation," Ham said. "You have made this great country stronger."



Retired Lt. Gen. Julius Becton Jr. addresses an event commemorating Black History Month in 2017 at AUSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. (AUSA PHOTO)

## AUSA calls for quick passage of 2024 National Defense Authorization Act



'The Army is vital to national security with recent conflicts across the globe demonstrating that land power is essential, and the land domain is decisive,' writes retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, in a letter to lawmakers. (ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL PHOTO)

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army is urging key lawmakers to authorize full funding for the Army and DoD, a pay increase of at least 5.2% for service members and civilian employees and the resources needed to continue the Army's transformation and quality of life efforts.

In a letter to the chairmen and ranking members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, AUSA advocates for these critical issues and calls for passage "as quickly as possible" of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act.

"The Army is vital to national security with recent conflicts across the globe demonstrating that land power is essential, and the land domain is decisive," retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, writes in the Nov. 17 letter.

"Thus, we request that you authorize funding—at least at the levels included in the bills passed in your respective chambers—and add additional resources commensurate with the threats facing our nation," Brown writes. "Additional resources could support the Army's unfunded priorities, enable continuous transformation through modernization, support Army and DoD infrastructure, improve both the organic and defense industrial base, and help to mitigate inflation."

Brown also urges lawmakers to

support a 5.2% pay increase for service members and DoD civilians. "The pay increase is particularly important given military pay has not kept up with the Economic Cost Index (ECI) by 2.6 percent over time," he writes.

Quality of life programs, including improvements to child care, housing and health care, remain a priority, along with programs to eliminate harmful behaviors such as sexual assault and sexual harassment, Brown writes.

AUSA also supports the Army's transformation efforts. "As threats to our nation grow, the need to modernize and improve readiness is apparent," Brown writes. "AUSA requests your continued support for the Army's modernization priorities to enable future capabilities and support for the Army's training and sustaining priorities to assure near-term and future readiness—this includes a strong and expandable organic industrial base."

The Army continues to answer the nation's call at home and around the world, Brown writes. "Indeed, a ready and capable Army is indispensable to national security," he writes. "Once again, we urge you to swiftly pass the NDAA and authorize additional resources that reflect the demonstrated need and urgency that our national security challenges require."

Read the full letter here.

# AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier*

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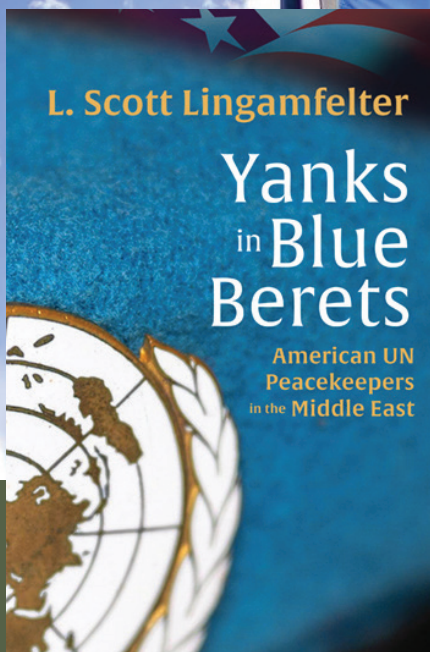
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## Author shares firsthand account of Battle of Mogadishu

**D**espite recent humanitarian pauses, the fight in Gaza against Hamas promises to be long and difficult. The challenges of urban operations are greatly exacerbated by an enemy that hides among civilians and civilian infrastructure. These complications led retired Gen. David Petraeus to predict last month that the offensive “could be Mogadishu on steroids.”

Retired Lt. Col. James Lechner, who is an Association of the U.S.

### Book Program

Army author, has firsthand knowledge of the operation referenced by Petraeus. Thirty years ago, Lechner was a young infantry officer in the October 1993 Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia, made famous by the book and subsequent movie, *Black Hawk Down*.

In *With My Shield: An Army Ranger in Somalia*, he offers a ground-level perspective of fighting deep in insurgent territory, surrounded and outnumbered, to protect each other and complete the mission.

Lechner recovered from the severe wounds he sustained that day, going on to serve multiple deployments over the course of his 27-year Army career. He currently is a freelance war correspondent in Ukraine.

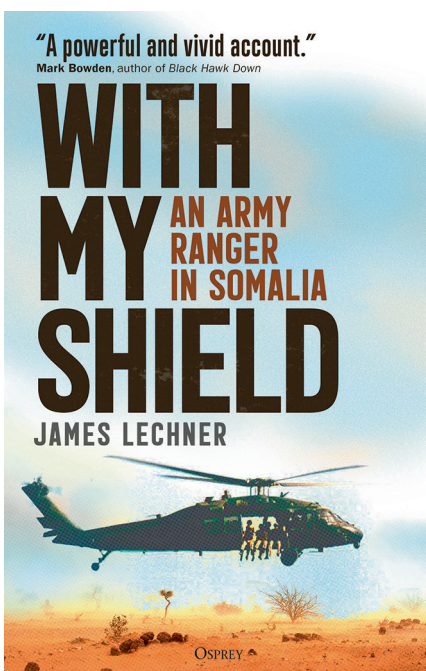
The AUSA Book Program sat down with him to talk about Mogadishu and the new book.

\*\*\*\*\*

**AUSA:** We recently passed the 30th anniversary of the battle in Somalia. What led you to finally share your experiences with this book?

**Lechner:** Prior to writing the book, I had been deployed to various conflicts and served in Iraq and Afghanistan until 2018. I had been focused on those duties, but at the conclusion of my service, I felt I could dedicate the time to adequately address the story.

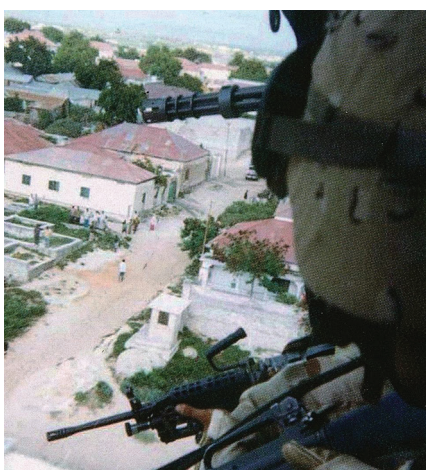
With the approach of the anniversary, I sat down to the task of writing and researching the story, which



included contacting a number of my fellow veterans.

**AUSA:** How did working on the book affect your understanding of the battle?

**Lechner:** Taking the time to research the events, especially discussing them with other veterans and getting their perspective along



Army Rangers observe the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, in September 1993 from a Black Hawk with the call sign ‘Super 64’—one of two aircraft that would be shot down over hostile territory a month later during the Battle of Mogadishu.

(COURTESY OF RETIRED LT. COL. JAMES LECHNER)

with confirming details, allowed me to fill in some gaps and put together some parts of the story that had previously not been widely known or understood.

**AUSA:** What is your most vivid memory of that day?

**Lechner:** When the battle reached its climax in our fire-swept portion of the street and the intensity of the fighting all around me. Also, when I was able to bring in the Little Bird attack helicopters, with the overwhelming firepower they brought to bear to break the massed Somali assault.

**AUSA:** How did the fighting in Mogadishu compare to combat you faced in other deployments?

**Lechner:** Nothing compared to Somalia for the amount of fighting and intensity during a short period of time. I learned that we as U.S. soldiers could not always rely on our technology, firepower or a numeric advantage.

However, with leadership, proper training and discipline, we would always prevail.

**AUSA:** What lesson from *With My Shield* would you like to share with the soldiers of today’s Army?

**Lechner:** Today’s sociopolitical environment creates a tough situation for soldiers, especially for combat units. I would like soldiers and especially Army leaders to remember that many of the old aspects—tough, often brutal training, selecting the right men and maintaining high standards based upon combat requirements—are absolutely essential for creating unit cohesion and developing the warrior spirit.

Those bonds of brotherhood allow a combat unit to weather the shock of combat and keep on fighting.

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Please visit [www.ausa.org/books](http://www.ausa.org/books) to order a copy of *With My Shield*.

**Joseph Craig** is AUSA’s Book Program director.



## AUSA chapter honors service members, organizations

Several individuals and organizations were honored Nov. 10 for their service to the nation, soldiers and families during a dinner presented by the Association of the U.S. Army's Redstone-Huntsville chapter.

The chapter partnered with the Madison County Military Heritage Commission and the North Alabama Veterans and Fraternal Organizations Coalition to host the event at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Retired Col. John Kuenzli, the AUSA chapter chairman and vice president, was the emcee.

Awards were presented to retired Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Barnett, the Huntsville-Madison County Veteran of the Year; retired

### Redstone-Huntsville

Navy Capt. William "Bill" Marriott, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and the Rocket City Adjutant General's Corps Regimental Association, which was named the Veteran Organization of the Year.

In receiving the Veteran of the Year Award, Barnett encouraged people to volunteer "any chance that you get. There are many opportuni-



Retired Navy Capt. William 'Bill' Marriott receives the Lifetime Achievement Award at a dinner hosted by AUSA's Redstone-Huntsville chapter. (REDSTONE ROCKET/JONATHON STINSON)

ties out there," according to the *Redstone Rocket*.

K.C. Bertling, president of the coalition, said in announcing the awards that the Rocket City Adjutant General's Corps Regimental Association has prepared and delivered Thanksgiving dinner to first responders at Redstone Arsenal, led the annual Heroes Fishing Trip

to Destin, Florida, and organized a hunting trip for Vietnam veterans and Gold Star families. The association also has raised nearly \$100,000 for northern Alabama nonprofit organizations that help veterans and their families.

Also at the dinner, four former service members were inducted into the Madison County Hall of Heroes. They included retired Col. Roy Adams, a member of the AUSA chapter who served in Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm; retired Col. William Johnson, who deployed in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom; Ronald Wright, an Army medic who served in Vietnam; and James Andrews, a former Marine who served in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"I believe that if we recognize heroes, remember them, educate everyone about them, their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families, we will, by God's grace, enjoy this precious gift of liberty for generations to come," said retired Navy Cmdr. Clay Davis, the commission's president, as reported by the *Redstone Rocket*.



Retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Eugene Roberts accepts an award on behalf of the Rocket City Adjutant General's Corps Regimental Association, which was named the Veteran Organization of the Year. (REDSTONE ROCKET/JONATHON STINSON)



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