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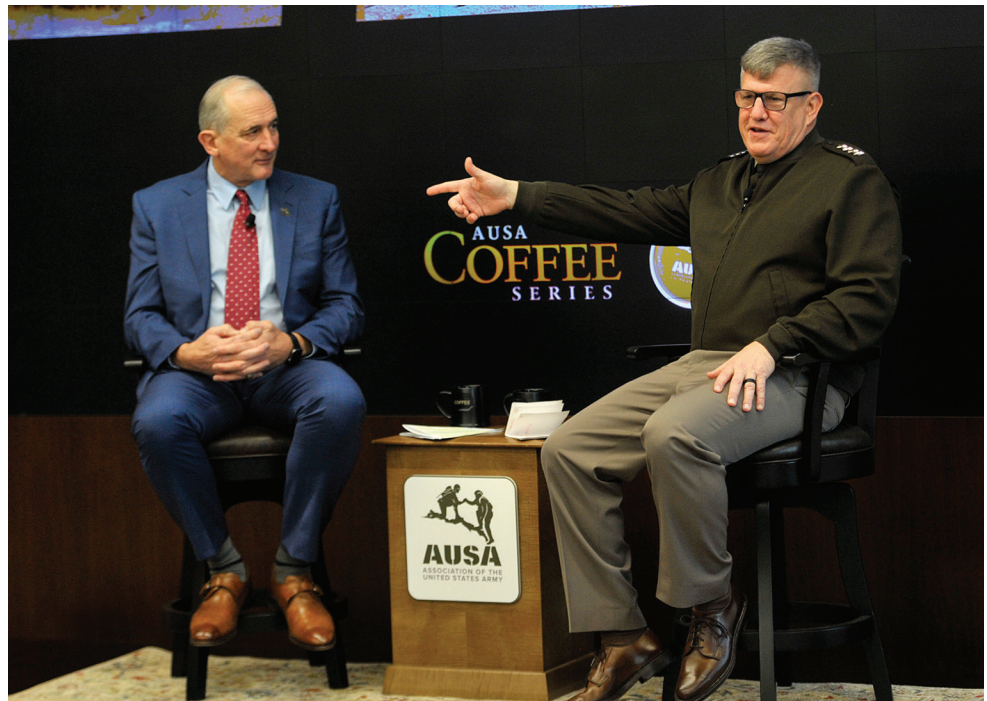
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Retired Gen. Bob Brown, left, AUSA president and CEO, listens as Gen. James Rainey, commander of Army Futures Command, speaks Wednesday at a breakfast hosted by the association. (AUSA PHOTO)

Rainey: Army modernization on track

The Army is keeping pace as it works to meet its modernization goals for the Army of 2030 and beyond, the commanding general of Army Futures Command said.

"We're continuing on track with our deliberate modernization," Gen. James Rainey said Wednesday during a breakfast hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army as part of its Coffee Series. "It's been a good year ... at Army Futures Command."

The Army's six modernization priorities include long-range precision fires, next-generation combat vehicles, Future Vertical Lift, air and missile defense, the network and soldier lethality.

As the Army moves ahead with its transformation, part of its approach within the next two years will be a shift from buying capabilities to buying systems, Rainey said. "I want to

buy capabilities, not systems," Rainey said. "We have a lot of legacy unmanned aircraft systems, stuff that is just not keeping up. So, there's an opportunity to get faster, but that's going to change the way we acquire when we start buying a UAS capability versus buying a UAS."

The service also is looking at formations that integrate humans and machines, standing up a platoon at Fort Moore, Georgia, and another at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, to run tests and experiments. The intent is not to replace humans with robots and autonomous systems, Rainey said, but to find the "optimal combination" of both.

The Army continues to learn from the fighting in Ukraine and Gaza, Rainey said, adding that he's "really impressed" with the Army's ability to learn from emerging global conflict.

"The ability to look at things that are happening in the world and move into a rapid acquisition of capability is something the Army has not been great at for about the last five years," he said. "We're starting to reestablish that muscle memory."

Looking ahead, Rainey said that the Army must make sure its doctrine, organization, training, leadership, education, personnel, facilities and policy are keeping up with the new equipment and technology it's delivering to the force. The service also will need to "recruit and retain a workforce that is capable of handling ... a datacentric Army," he said.

Soldiers remain the Army's most lethal weapon, Rainey said. "People are the reason we are the best Army in the world, not technology," he said. "The best weapon system we have in the Army is a rifle squad. Period."



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Recruiting efforts build momentum despite challenges

Amid “one of the toughest recruiting landscapes” in over three decades, the Army continues to seek talented young people to join the service, the two-star in charge of Army Recruiting Command said.

“We are competing in one of the toughest recruiting landscapes I’ve seen in over 33 years of service,” Maj. Gen. Johnny Davis, commanding general of Recruiting Command, said Dec. 6 before members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. “This recruiting crisis certainly did not appear overnight and cannot be repaired overnight, but our superstar recruiters work hard every single day to recruit the best and brightest volunteers who can deploy, fight and win in the multidomain environment worldwide.”

Davis, who appeared alongside his counterparts from the other services in a hearing before the committee’s personnel subcommittee, said that he remains optimistic about the Army’s recruiting efforts even though the service faces stiff competition from civilian employers and a shrinking pool of eligible and interested potential recruits.

During fiscal year 2023, which ended Sept. 30, the Army fell short by about 10,000 people its goal of recruiting 65,000 new soldiers. Its goal for fiscal 2024 is 55,000 active-duty soldiers.

Improving awareness of the Army among service-eligible Americans is a “major” part of improving the Army’s recruiting numbers, Davis said. “One of the major things that comes up is ... awareness,” he said.

In addition to service-eligible individuals missing out on recruiter access in their schools due to the COV-



Staff Sgt. Jason Buckwalter, a recruiter with the New York City Recruiting Battalion, shares his Army story and assists an Anime NYC convention attendee in scheduling a future soldier appointment Nov. 18. (U.S. ARMY RESERVE/SGT. 1ST CLASS GREGORY WILLIAMS)

ID-19 pandemic, fewer young people have a personal connection to veterans. “When I grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, my grandfather was a World War II vet. I spent a lot of time with him ... [and] many of the [local] homeowners ... were also World War II or Korean War vets. They were the ones that really answered my questions,” Davis said. “That’s not the same today.”

Davis pushed back against the misconception that serving in the Army could cause young people to fall behind their civilian peers. “I also thought about the same things as an 18-year-old in Wisconsin,” he said. “But what I’ve learned, and what I share, is ... that this is certainly a life accelerator.”

Davis said he wasn’t aware of any high schools turning away Army recruiters, but he made the distinction

between “access” and “meaningful access.”

“We can get your help in terms of having our young recruiters share their story across the U.S.,” he said. Too often, access is not meaningful, and when “a young recruiter shows up to a particular school, [administrators] will say, ‘Absolutely, you’re welcome here, but we’d like you to set up your recruiting table in the cafeteria at 1600 on a Friday,’” he said.

Soldiers’ quality of life “is 100%” another important factor that affects recruitment and retention, Davis said. “Quality life is important,” he said. “I have children in uniform, and whenever I visit, I take a look at the barracks situation, just like any parent would. So, I think [quality of life] is so very important. It impacts retention and continued service.”

The Army continues to make progress in its recruiting efforts, Davis said. “We’re still in the first quarter of the fiscal year, and too early to estimate where we will finish ... in 10 months, but I will say we’re seeing momentum, and we’ll continue to build upon it,” he said.

Our superstar recruiters work hard every single day to recruit the best and brightest volunteers who can deploy, fight and win...

New paper challenges military to consider myths about future warfare



Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment fire M240 machine guns Dec. 8 during training at Krivolak Training Area, Republic of North Macedonia. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. DEVIN KLECAN)

A new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army examines five myths in contemporary military thinking that the author writes are holding back a broader appreciation for the challenges, opportunities and solutions for future war.

The paper by Lt. Col. Amos Fox is the second in a series focused on future warfare and how the military thinks about it. Fox is a doctoral candidate at the University of Reading and a freelance writer and conflict scholar writing for AUSA.

“Myths and Principles in the Challenges of Future War” presents five myths that Fox seeks to dispel, including the myth that small, light and dispersed is better, and that warfighting preference matters. “The neglect of adaptive and self-interested oppositional innovation is the theme that binds each of these myths; ultimately, it is why they provide limited utility for the practitioner and scholar of armed conflict,” Fox writes.

To address the challenges of the future of armed conflict, Western military thinking “must expand beyond the confines of engrained institutional thinking,” Fox writes. “It must periodically question its assumptions

and its extant mental models. To keep pace with change, it must discharge obsolete ideas and concepts, regardless of how uncomfortable doing so might initially feel.”

This thinking also must be “thoughtfully critiqued,” Fox writes. “Rigorously examining military concepts, doctrine, strategies and non-specific ideas is the method by which those ideas are improved,” he writes.

Read the paper here.

Through his five-part series, Fox aims to start a discussion on military thinking about the future of armed conflict by highlighting the differences among strategy, concepts, doctrine, plans and theory. The papers also will describe how institutional thinking is well represented in contemporary military thinking, but independent ideas are underrepresented.

Fox, whose research and writing focus on the theory of war and warfare, proxy war, future armed conflict, urban warfare, armored warfare and the Russo-Ukrainian War, has been published in *RUSI Journal* and *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, among many other publications.

The first paper in the series, “Western Military Thinking and Breaking Free from the Tetrarch of Modern Military Thinking,” is available here.

AUSAExtra

**Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier**

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PERK OF THE WEEK

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Spotlight on AUSA Association Partner: AAFMAA

Established in 1879, the American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association is a nonprofit financial solutions provider supporting military families and veterans with financial advice and information, insurance, survivor assistance and other benefits.

The organization was created when officials in the U.S. War Department saw the need for an association to take care of soldiers following the Battle of the Little Bighorn. At the time, when a service member died in the line of duty, surviving members of the unit would raise money to care for the soldiers' dependents—but there were no survivors in the case of the 7th Cavalry.

Then-Lt. Col. Roger Jones, assistant inspector general of the Army, led a committee of officers to found the association, with a mission to aid



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the families of the fallen in a prompt, simple and substantial manner.

The association provides as much as \$1 million in life insurance coverage through its Survivor Assistance Services and offers a \$5,000 Career Assistance Program loan at 1.5% interest, according to its website.

“We understand how vital it is for members of the military community

to get the support they need and deserve for putting their lives on the line every day,” the organization’s website says.

In addition to life insurance products and other benefits, AAFMAA has two wholly owned subsidiaries: AAFMAA Wealth Management & Trust, which provides expert financial planning, investment management other services to military families, and AAFMAA Mortgage Services.

For more information, please visit www.aafmaa.com.

If your association is interested in partnering with AUSA, contact Susan Rubel at srubel@ausa.org.

Association Partnership with AUSA is an opportunity for like-minded military service organizations to join AUSA in support of the Total Army—soldiers, DoD civilians and their families.

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Best Squad Competition winners represent Army's finest

Each year, the Association of the U.S. Army recognizes the winners of the Army's Best Squad Competition at its Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

The grueling weeklong competition, featuring 12 squads representing major commands across the Army, took place Sept. 24–Oct. 6 at Fort Stewart, Georgia, and in Washington, D.C. The culminating events were a board-style interview at the Pentagon and a barbecue for the competitors at Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer's quarters at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia.

On Oct. 9, the opening day of the AUSA Annual Meeting, the winning squad representing Army Special Operations Command was announced to cheers and a standing ovation. The five soldiers went onstage to receive their award, and, to their amazement, two members of the team were announced as the Soldier and NCO of the Year—Spc. Chancellor McGuire and Sgt. Jacob Phillips, respectively.

This stunning victory came as no surprise to Command Sgt. Maj. JoAnn Naumann, senior enlisted leader for Army Special Operations Command, who said she knew the team would win after seeing how the soldiers performed during the competition.

I had the distinct honor and privilege over the course of the Annual Meeting to get to know the young men from the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. In addition to McGuire and Phillips, the Army's Best Squad includes Spc. Shane Moon, Spc. George Mascharka and squad leader Staff Sgt. Andre Ewing.

At the Dwight D. Eisenhower Luncheon on Oct. 10, Ewing and Phillips were able to promote the specialists in their squad to sergeant, with Weimer and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George standing and applauding.

As the Best Squad members left



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra, center, AUSA's director of NCO and Soldier Programs, visits with the winners of the Army's 2023 Best Squad Competition and their spouses during a visit to Fort Moore, Georgia. (AUSA PHOTO)

Washington, D.C., on Oct. 11, I promised them I would see them again, and in November, I traveled to Fort Moore, Georgia, to make good on that promise.

My time at Fort Moore started with a breakfast hosted by AUSA's Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore chapter, where we discussed Weimer's new initiatives, ways to further integrate with the installation and NCO events, and how to continue supporting the Army's Best Ranger Competition.

I then went to the 75th Ranger Regiment Warrior Restaurant, where I had lunch with garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Brett Johnson, Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Foutz of the Regimental Military Intelligence Battalion, and their teams. There was continued discussion on involving the AUSA chapter in NCO induction ceremonies and family events hosted by the regiment.

Following the productive lunch, I was given a tour around the new 75th Ranger Regiment headquarters. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Ranger battalion's intelligence soldiers and hear about the work they are doing to support operations around the world.

My last and most important event of the day was dinner with the Best Squad members and their spouses in Columbus. We talked about my transition from the military, the Army-Navy game, retreats for operators and spouses and the upcoming holidays. Perhaps the biggest news was an announcement from McGuire and his wife, who had just found out that they are having twin girls—so the dinner was not only a reunion, but also a celebration.

I want to thank the members of AUSA's Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore chapter and the Belton Chamber of Commerce for their continued support to the Best Squad by sponsoring the purchase of Army Green Service Uniforms. Thanks also to Tracy Bailey, spokeswoman for the 75th Ranger Regiment, for the coffee, time and discussion on Best Squad activities.

Most of all, thank you to the soldiers of the Army's 2023 Best Squad and their spouses for being amazing examples of leadership and dedication.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Julie Guerra is AUSA's director of NCO and Soldier Programs.

Chapter honors units for hosting successful blood drives

The Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter recently recognized five of the installation's training companies for volunteering to donate blood through the Armed Services Blood Program.

More than 600 soldiers from the companies donated blood between Sept. 10 and Oct. 15, earning each participating unit a "Giving 4 Living" guidon streamer from the

**Fort Leonard
Wood-Mid
Missouri**

AUSA chapter and membership in the Fort Leonard Wood Blood Donor

Center's 100-Donor Club, which is reserved for organizations that provide 100 or more eligible donors during a single-day blood drive.

"We can't say thank you enough to these soldiers. Their compassion is saving lives around the world," said Paul Newman, Fort Leonard Wood Blood Donor Center technical supervisor, according to an Army news release.

The units included Company C, 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry Regiment; Companies B and C of the 787th Military Police Battalion; and Companies B and D of the 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment.

Supporting the blood program at such an extraordinary level exemplifies the Army Values, said 1st Sgt. Michael Bizarro of the 2nd Battalion,



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Freddie Brock, right, vice president of NCO and Soldier Programs for AUSA's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter, presents a 'Giving 4 Living' guidon streamer to the 787th Military Police Battalion's Company C for providing 100 or more eligible donors during a single-day blood drive. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

10th Infantry Regiment.

"Our soldiers donating at this level proves they understand the Army Values," Bizarro said, according to the Army news release. "Their showing selfless service and coming together for a greater good is remarkable to see. Units waiting for the perfect time to donate blood is not the answer—you have to create the time."

"As a retired Army NCO, it makes me proud to see young men and wom-

en stand up for a cause that's bigger than themselves," Newman said. "Without them, we couldn't accomplish our mission. Because of their generosity, many people have a better chance to win their battle with illness and injury."

The Armed Services Blood Program is the official blood program of the U.S. military, and it relies on volunteer donors to ensure a steady supply of blood is always available, as the military health care system requires hundreds of units of blood every day.

Donations from the five Fort Leonard Wood units produced enough blood and blood products to supply every soldier serving in three average-size Army companies—nearly triple the average volume for blood drives at the installation, Newman said.

"If you have your health, celebrate it by giving blood to those who are not as fortunate," Newman said, according to the Army news release. "Our five new 100-Donor Club members demonstrated the power that true compassion for others can have."

Community Partner Challenge

The following chapters are the November 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
- Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon – Award Group 2
- Northern New York-Fort Drum – Award Group 3
- Monmouth – Award Group 4
- MSG Leroy Arthur Petry – Award Group 5

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