



First Lt. Kenyon Fretwell, with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, tackles an obstacle course Dec. 11 at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany. (U.S. ARMY/MARKUS RAUCHENBERGER)

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DECEMBER 19, 2024

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**AUSA Extra will be on  
break until Jan. 9.  
Happy holidays!**

## Army seeks 300 LTs to transfer branches

In an ongoing effort to balance the force, the Army is seeking about 300 eligible infantry, armor, field artillery or engineer lieutenants to apply for voluntary branch transfer to one of several understrength branches and functional areas.

This offer from Army Human Resources Command is an expansion of the Officer Rebranching Program, a pilot that kicked off last January. This time, the Army is looking for about 300 eligible lieutenants to transfer to the adjutant general, air defense, finance, logistics or signal corps, or into one of four functional areas including information technology engineer, space operations, public affairs and simulations operations, according to an Army news release.

The current offer applies to year group 22 lieutenants in the infantry, armor, field artillery or engineer branches. Last year, the offer was open only to year group 21 infantry and armor lieutenants, the release states.

Applications will be accepted from Jan. 7 through Feb. 17, according to the release. Each branch has a designated cap on the number of officers allowed to transfer out or into a particular career field.

"Last year's pilot program was successful as more than 130 [year group] 21 lieutenants voluntarily transferred from the infantry and armor branches into the adjutant general, finance and signal corps," Maj. Thomas Mussmann, a readiness analyst for Human Resources

Command's Force Shaping Directorate, said in the release. "By offering more options this year we hope to get greater participation and have a greater impact on readiness."

Rebranching is a tool the Army uses when it detects a misalignment between manning requirements and available officer inventory.

Eligible lieutenants who wish to volunteer should log into the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army portal, locate the Talent Management Soldier Work Center within the self-service window and select "Closed Marketplace Preferences" to begin the rebranching process.

Results of the rebranching should be published in early March.

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



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## AUSA recognizes two congressmen for Army support

**F**or their staunch and effective support of the Army and soldiers, veterans and their families, two members of the House Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee have been awarded the Association of the U.S. Army's 2024 Legislator of the Year award.

Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger, a Democrat from Maryland, and Republican Rep. Steve Womack from Arkansas were honored on Capitol Hill by AUSA President and CEO retired Gen. Bob Brown and retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president for Leadership and Education.

"Representatives Dutch Ruppersberger and Steve Womack have long been champions of America's Army, and AUSA is pleased to recognize them as our 2024 Legislators of the Year," Brown said. "Their bipartisan leadership and steadfast commitment have gotten results and made a difference in the lives of our soldiers, veterans and their families."

Ruppersberger, who is retiring after his 11th term in the House of Representatives, is a proud supporter of the Army, particularly the Army Research Laboratory and Aberdeen Proving Ground in his home state.

In 2003, he created Operation Hero Miles after learning that deployed troops were paying for connecting flights home. The program allows



Rep. Steve Womack, top left, and Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger, below center, receive AUSA's 2024 Legislator of the Year awards from retired Gen. Bob Brown, top center and below left, AUSA president and CEO, and retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA vice president for Leadership and Education. (AUSA PHOTOS)



Americans to donate frequent flyer miles instead, and more than 3 billion miles have been donated to date.

"I could not be prouder to receive

this recognition from the Association of the U.S. Army as I approach my retirement from public service and a career dedicated to supporting our Army, its soldiers and their families," Ruppersberger said.

Womack, who was first elected to the House in 2010, is a retired Army National Guard colonel who served for more than 30 years. He is the chairman of the West Point Board of Visitors, where he supports the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

"Our nation's service members, veterans and military families consistently put the nation above self, sacrificing for the security and freedoms we enjoy as Americans. They've earned and deserve our unwavering support," Womack said.

## Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

### Jacob Vitkauskas

*Accounting Manager*

Jacob Vitkauskas has been with AUSA for just over one year. In his role as accounting manager, he is responsible for performance and oversight of all accounting and cash management functions and activities relating to the association's financial reporting. In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities, wine and time with friends and family.



## Paper encourages leaders to embrace nontraditional commands

**A**rmy leaders selected for command positions can set themselves up for success both prior to and while commanding, regardless of the type of unit they're tapped to lead, according to a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

"All officers have an unspoken level of nervousness and apprehension going into their command positions—and fears and uncertainty are likely heightened when officers are going into nontraditional command roles," write authors Capt. Andrew Lightsey and Tanner Cook, Col. Xavier Colón and Lt. Col. Chaveso Cook. "There is a lot of written guidance on basic branch and operational commands, but there is not much to be found on 'alternative' leadership positions."

In "The Leadership Route Less Taken: Taking Charge in the Army's 'Other' Commands," the authors offer advice for commanders as they prepare to take command and during their tenure.

Lightsey is a public affairs officer with the 101st Airborne Division, while Cook commands the Boise Army Recruiting Company. Colón is a division chief on the Joint Staff's deputy directorate for special operations and counterterrorism, and Cook is a division chief on the Joint Staff's deputy directorate for global operations. Their paper is part of AUSA's new Harding Papers series, which was launched in conjunction with the Army's Harding Project, which aims to revitalize scholarship and writing across the force.

Incoming leaders should create a vision and purpose statements that can "reach and resonate with the most junior soldiers and civilians in the organization," the authors write.

"When the Army talks about purpose and legacy, it talks about us 'being a part of something bigger';



Lt. Col. Jon Richardson, left, of the Utah Army National Guard passes the guidon to Capt. Jeffrey Brenchley Nov. 16 during a change-of-command ceremony at Camp Williams, Utah, where Brenchley assumed command of the 128th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

although your purpose and vision should be tailored to the organization, do not discount the need to fit into the bigger Army picture—even when your command is nontraditional," the authors write.

Commanders "must be prepared to 'loosen the reigns' as quickly as [they] tighten them" and "be comfortable with delegating tasks, and trust that they will be completed to standard," according to the authors.

Regardless of the type of unit, "leading America's sons and daughters in our armed forces is an unparalleled privilege," the authors write.

"While the role of the commander in nontraditional units certainly comes with distinct challenges and issues, as does any command, each leader must remember that, no matter the circumstances, a command is a command," the authors write. "It is not a privilege or a responsibility to be taken lightly—and it is certainly neither a guarantee nor a right for any commander."

Read the paper here.

# AUSAExtra

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

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## PERK OF THE WEEK

AUSA members can save on *Army Times*, *Navy Times*, *Air Force Times*, *Marine Corps Times* and *Defense News* by visiting <https://offers.armytimes.com/ausa-offer/> and save 60% on *Stars and Stripes* with promo code AUSA60 at <https://ww2.stripes.com/ausa>.





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## Traditions help connect soldiers, families with the Army

**W**hether it's the family you're born into or your Army family, traditions are a vital part of our culture, forming the structure and foundation of our families.

Traditions contribute to a sense of comfort and belonging, bringing people together and helping them connect with one another.

The Army is built on traditions and customs, and as a result, its members share a common experience. One longstanding tradition in November is when Army leaders put aprons over their uniforms and serve Thanksgiving dinner to soldiers and their families.

For some soldiers, this may be their first time away from home. Senior leaders serving dinner provides unity and reinforces the concept of servant leadership.



Holly Dailey, left, AUSA's Family Readiness director, David Fulton, right, president of the association's European Region, and AUSA mascot Sgt. R. Hero congratulate the European Region Volunteer Family of the Year, Cpl. Marvin Lopez and his wife, Caitlyn. (AUSA PHOTO)

During Thanksgiving this year, Holly Dailey, Family Readiness director for the Association of the U.S. Army, and other leaders from the association's national headquarters were

honored to participate in this Army tradition by serving dinner to soldiers and families alongside members of AUSA's GEN Creighton W. Abrams chapter at the Clay Kaserne dining facility in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Another tradition Dailey participated in was thanking our volunteers. The AUSA Family Readiness directorate was excited to honor the association's European Region Volunteer Family of the Year, Cpl. Marvin Lopez and his family from the Abrams chapter. Lopez and his wife, Caitlyn, were recognized for more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service organizing morale events for soldiers and families and hosting community fundraisers to support the 66th Military Intelligence Brigade Soldier and Family Readiness Group.

For many people, this time of year is filled with a variety of customs and traditions—familiar activities that provide comfort for both adults and children. Family traditions during the holidays can help manage expectations and provide a sense of stability, especially if your soldier is away from home.

**Cindy Risch** is AUSA's Family Readiness program manager.

## AUSA staff and chapter members donate toys for military families



Thea Green, AUSA's deputy director of Family Readiness, assembles toys donated by the association's national headquarters staff for junior enlisted soldiers and their families. The gifts were distributed at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall and Fort Belvoir in Virginia by AUSA's George Washington and Potomac Liberty chapters. (AUSA PHOTO)

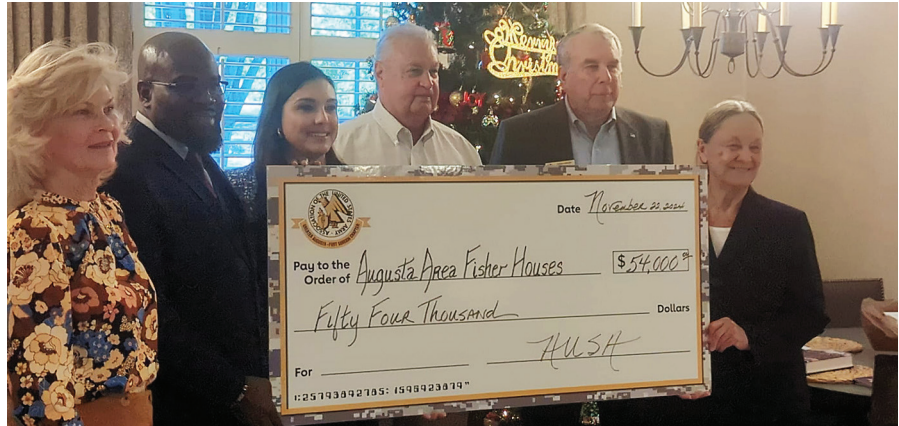


## Chapter fundraiser benefits Fisher House Foundation

The Association of the U.S. Army's Greater Augusta-Fort Eisenhower chapter in Georgia recently advanced AUSA's mission to support soldiers, veterans and their families with a \$54,000 donation to the Fisher House Foundation.

Chapter board members retired Col. Thom Tuckey and Bruce Fletcher presented the check to representatives of the foundation at the Charlie Norwood Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which hosts one of two local Fisher House locations. The second is on the installation.

The chapter was forced to cancel its annual Military Appreciation Banquet that benefits the local Fisher Houses because of the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene. "Even though the event was canceled, all sponsors remained dedicated to sup-



Members of AUSA's Greater Augusta-Fort Eisenhower chapter in Georgia present a \$54,000 donation to the Fisher House Foundation. (AUSA PHOTO)

porting the Fisher Houses with their donations," the chapter said in a Facebook post.

Tuckey shared the chapter's gratitude to the sponsors who stood by their commitment to an organization that serves military families.

"Fisher Houses provide the opportunity for service member families, active-duty retirees, veterans, free lodging while their loved ones are being treated in area hospitals," Tuckey said. "So, it really takes a financial burden off of them."

## Eagle Chapters

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

Allegheny-Blue Ridge (5)	Gem State (5)	Pikes Peak (5)
Arkansas (5)	Greater Atlanta (5)	Puerto Rico (5)
Captain Meriwether Lewis (5)	Henry Leavenworth (5)	San Diego (5)
Central California (5)	Houston Metroplex (5)	St. Louis Gateway (5)
Central Texas (5)	Indiana (5)	Thunderbird (5)
Central Virginia (5)	Joshua Chamberlain (5)	Connecticut (4)
Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Moore (5)	Magnolia (5)	Ethan Allen (4)
Delaware (5)	Marne (5)	First Militia (4)
Denver Centennial (5)	Massachusetts Bay (5)	GEN Creighton W. Abrams (4)
Fires (5)	MG William F. Dean (5)	Lafayette (4)
First In Battle (5)	Milwaukee (5)	Monmouth (4)
Fort Campbell (5)	National Training Center-High Desert (5)	Tucson-Goyette (4)
Fort Knox (5)	North Texas-Audie Murphy (5)	GEN William C. Westmoreland (2)
Fort Riley-Central Kansas (5)	Northern New Jersey (5)	Hellenic (1)
		Isthmian (1)

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