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Gen. Andrew Poppas, commander of Army Forces Command, speaks Wednesday at AUSA's inaugural Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina. (AUSA PHOTO)

# Warfighters need in-person leadership

**T**oday's Army leadership has a key role in winning future battles, Gen. Andrew Poppas said Wednesday in a keynote speech at the Association of the U.S. Army's inaugural Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

The new commanding general of Army Forces Command, Poppas said the summit represents an opportunity to focus on the adjustments the Army needs to make as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan pivot to the possibility of large-scale combat.

"It is an exciting time to be a soldier, because this is a time of momentous change," he said. "When we are not an Army at war, we must be, and we are, an Army at the ready."

However, the question always arises: "Ready for what?" Poppas said, calling it a "fair question."

The short answer is being prepared for change, Poppas said.

"We must be ready for what comes next," he said. "America is entering a new era of global security challenges, and with it we are ushering in a new generation of warfighters."

The Army needs teams of warfighters "who train and retrain" on the fundamentals, Poppas said.

"They don't do it until the task is right, but they continue to execute until they are incapable of getting it wrong," he said.

It isn't easy, he said. It takes professionalism, proficiency, discipline and physical fitness, Poppas said. It also takes "up-to-date training and realistic conditions and an absolute winning attitude," he said.

Leader engagement will be a critical part of how the Army prepares,

Poppas said. This requires many things, including physical presence, by doing things like being there for morning physical training.

"I expect leaders to look each soldier in the eye every single day," he said.

This gives leaders a better sense of responsibility over their soldiers, and gives soldiers a better idea of what is expected.

In-person leadership is important, Poppas said.

"Engagement has got to be face-to-face, not by text, not by email," he said.

Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA's president and CEO, said the educational nonprofit has wanted for many years to hold a symposium and exposition near Fort Bragg, one of the Army's largest and busiest posts.

"This is our first event ever, and I can guarantee the best event ever," he said.

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## Community, connections key to Army family readiness

**S**trong connections and robust quality-of-life programs are critical to the Army's efforts to ensure soldiers and their families are taken care of, a panel of experts said during the Association of the U.S. Army's inaugural Warfighter Summit and Exposition.

Speaking Wednesday on the first day of the two-day event near Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the panelists emphasized the importance of building a strong community to help Army families navigate the stressors of military life.

"Our warfighters are more effective and can focus on the mission if he or she knows everything at home is fine," said Holly Dailey, AUSA's director of Family Readiness, in her opening remarks.

Having an "immediate support system" is important for Army families to thrive, wherever they are stationed, she said, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic introduced new ways of making and sustaining connections virtually.

"As long as those connections are made, our families are not alone," Dailey said.

Tawni Dixon, an Army spouse whose family was named AUSA's 2021 Volunteer Family of the Year, said she learned very quickly how to build her community, especially as her husband deployed frequently.

"I cannot stress the importance of getting to know your community and knowing the resources available," she said.

Army leaders—from the most senior leaders to those at the installations—are focused on making sure soldiers and their families are taken care of, said Maj. Gen. Walter Duzzny, chief of staff for Army Materiel Command.

From improving permanent change-of-station moves to providing safe housing and high-quality, accessible child care, the Army continues to work to make sure soldiers



Army leaders, spouses and community leaders speak on a panel on family readiness at AUSA's Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina. (AUSA PHOTO)

feel confident their families are well cared for while they're away from home, Duzzny said.

"We owe it to them ... so they can fully focus on their mission," he said.

Several initiatives are already yielding improvements for families, Duzzny said.

One key area is PCS moves, which are stressful for families, he said.

The Army had "really tough seasons" in the past two or three years, Duzzny said. In response, the ser-



Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, addresses the association's inaugural Warfighter Summit and Exposition in Fayetteville, North Carolina. (AUSA PHOTO)

vice implemented several initiatives to try to provide smoother, more efficient moves, he said.

This includes standards-based quality assurance inspections of all household goods shipments before they're moved, and a streamlined and simplified claims process for furniture that's damaged during a move, he said.

The Army also continues to invest in safe, healthy housing, Duzzny said. The service has almost 10,000 Army-owned homes, more than 2,000 barracks and more than 87,000 houses managed by privatized housing companies.

Plans call for 2,700 new homes and 15,000 renovated homes by fiscal year 2025, Duzzny said, and billions of dollars in barracks improvements.

Work is also underway to make it easier for spouses to find work or to apply to run a home-based business, he said.

"Senior Army leadership is fully engaged on this," Duzzny said about overall quality-of-life improvements. "The investment over time is massive, but it's going to take time, focus and effort."

## Facing tough recruiting challenges, Army leaders declare ‘war for talent’



Eighteen high school military recruits recite their oath of enlistment at Saint Martin University in Lacey, Washington, in May. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. RICHARD CARLIS)

**A**rmy leaders have declared war after acknowledging serious problems manning the force.

“This is not a recruiter problem,” Army Secretary Christine Wormuth and Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville say in a joint memo that projects Regular Army troop strength will be about 466,400 at the end of the fiscal year, far less than the originally budgeted 485,000.

That is not the worst of it. While the Army is taking steps to improve recruiting, “we currently project that our end strength may further decrease,” the leaders say, warning it could drop as low as 445,000 by the end of fiscal 2023.

This is not what the Army wants.

“Though it will take time, our objective is to regrow our end strength to 460K or more as quickly as possible, and we will pursue this objective aggressively,” Wormuth and McConville write, announcing a series of short- and long-term initiatives to overcome the societal changes that are behind most of the Army’s recruiting woes.

Since the creation of the all-volunteer force in 1973, things have not gone exactly as planned. Intense competition in the private sector labor market has hurt, Army leaders said.

Additionally, academic and fitness standards have fallen among service-

aged youth. Recruiters have also had a more difficult time selling military service during the pandemic.

Market research shows the Army doesn’t have the attention of enough Americans, and service-aged youths have misconceptions about service.

“Potential recruits cannot see themselves in the Army, often due to assumptions about Army life and culture,” the memo says.

There is another problem, too.

“Younger Americans are losing trust and confidence in many American institutions, including the military,” it says.

Efforts are underway to rethink marketing, but Wormuth and McConville promise they won’t lower standards.

Proven recruiters will be extended in their jobs, and retired recruiters could be brought back as mentors.

A new physical fitness and academic program will be tested to help incoming recruits who don’t quite meet Army standards but could with some help. Funding will be provided to hold recruiting events in priority population centers.

More initiatives will follow.

“We are in a war for talent,” Wormuth and McConville write, pledging to “fight and win this war.”

Read the Army leaders’ memo here.

## AUSA Extra

Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier

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### PERK OF THE WEEK



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# AUSA supports bill honoring Vietnam helicopter crews

The Association of the U.S. Army supports a renewed effort to honor the U.S. Army air ambulance crews that operated in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

The helicopter crews are credited with the evacuation of about 900,000 people—American troops and Vietnamese and allied forces—from 1962 to 1973.

Efforts to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the crews for their heroic live-saving actions were launched years ago, but the legislation has not received enough support to be enacted.

The current legislation, H.R. 2281 in the House and S. 2738 in the Senate, lack support for passage.

The House bill, sponsored by Rep. Derek Kilmer of Washington, has 14 cosponsors, far short of the 218 needed to guarantee passage. The Sen-



Combat medics load wounded soldiers onto a UH-1 Huey in Vietnam. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

ate version, sponsored by Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, has 10 cosponsors; 51 are needed for certain passage.

Air medical evacuation became widely used during the Vietnam War, with so-called dustoff crews dedicated to rapidly transporting the wounded to field hospitals. It was

dangerous work, with a high rate of crew casualties and loss of aircraft.

“It was a great group of men,” the late Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton Abrams Jr. said in 1972. “Courage above and beyond the call of duty was sort of routine to them. It was a daily thing, part of the way they lived.”



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## Explore Patton's career through AUSA books, podcasts

**G**en. George Patton Jr. remains one of the Army's most charismatic, confounding and controversial generals.

His actions during the Sicily campaign of World War II aptly demonstrated his multifaceted character.

In the final week of July 1943, *TIME* magazine featured Patton on the cover—just a few months after he first graced that spot.

Operation Husky was off to a good start, and the magazine portrayed Patton as the famously flamboyant commander, “beautiful and battle-fe-

### Book Program

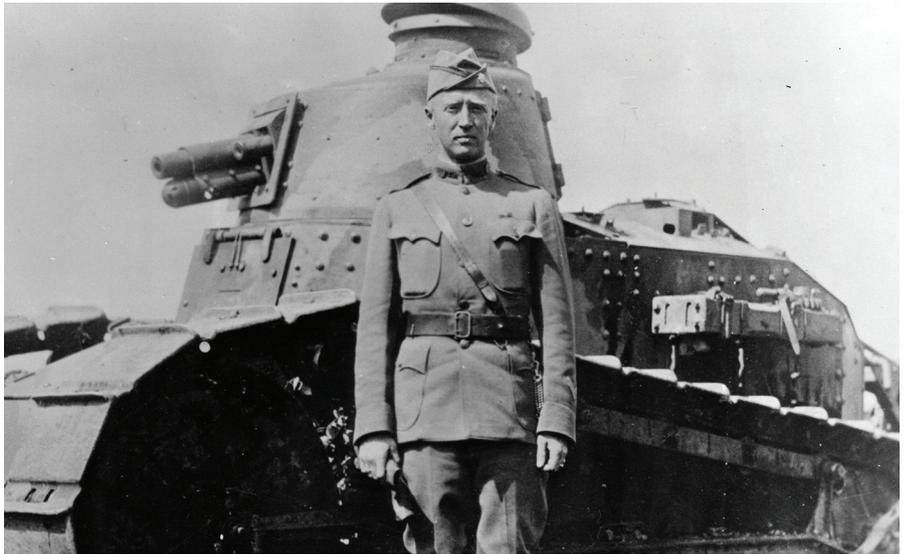
vered in boots and whipcords,” who was no stranger to

embellishing his own reputation.

“Ahead of him came stories befitting the Patton legend. ... Patton's colleagues smiled at such stories, believed some of them,” the article says.

Then, twice in the next two weeks, Patton struck enlisted men who were being treated for combat stress. He was forced to apologize and faced harsh criticism when the incidents became public. The Army withdrew him from combat command for nearly a year, concerned about his lack of judgment and discipline.

When Patton finally got back into the field in August 1944, his suc-



Then-Lt. Col. George Patton stands in front of a French Renault tank near Bourg, France, in summer 1918. (COMMONS PHOTO)

cesses on the offensive from France to Germany secured his place in military history.

The Association of the U.S. Army's “Army Matters” podcast recently featured a conversation with Stephen Moore, author of *Patton's Payback: The Battle of El Guettar and General Patton's Rise to Glory*.

The discussion covers the first days of the general's national prominence when, following the debacle of Kasserine Pass, Patton took over command of II Corps in North Africa and

spurred his men to victory.

Listeners can find that episode here. In particular, the story about Patton's treatment of Maj. Gen. Terry Allen is something I'll not soon forget.

In a previous episode on Patton's military career, Jon Mikolashek spoke about Patton's pioneering work in armored warfare with a discussion of his book *Blood, Guts, and Grease: George S. Patton in World War I*.

Moving to the printed page, the AUSA Book Program has over the years featured many books about “Old Blood and Guts.” Patton's early years as a tanker can be found in both Mikolashek's book and *Pershing's Tankers: Personal Accounts of the AEF Tank Corps in World War I*, edited by Lawrence Kaplan.

Those more interested in the second World War can find such titles as *Patton at Bay: The Lorraine Command, 1944* and *Advance and Destroy: Patton as Commander in the Bulge*, both by John Nelson Rickard, and *Patton's Photographs: War as He Saw It* by Kevin Hymel.

To order any of these titles, please visit [www.ausa.org/books](http://www.ausa.org/books).



Lt. Col. Lyle Bernard, right, speaks with then-Lt. Gen. George Patton, commanding the U.S. Seventh Army, near Brolo, Sicily, in July 1943. (COMMONS PHOTO)

**Joseph Craig** is AUSA's Book Program Director.

## Chapter scholarships assist military families, veterans

**K**atharine Sauer, the daughter of an Army Reserve chaplain, has received a \$2,500 scholarship from the Association of the U.S. Army's MG William F. Dean chapter in Pleasanton, California.

Sauer, who was recognized during a July 18 ceremony, is about to begin her second year of study at Eastern Connecticut State University, majoring in history with a minor in music. She is the daughter of Capt. Paul Sauer, chaplain at Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin.

"[It is] pretty amazing the amount of support she has received for college from our military community," the captain said in a Facebook post.

Presenting the scholarship were Pat Leary, the chapter treasurer, and retired Col. Phil Stage, a chapter board member who is also a past president of AUSA's Sixth Region and an Army Reserve Ambassador.

Also present were Lt. Col. Marisol Chalas, Parks Reserve Forces Training Area garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McKie,



At the scholarship presentation are, left to right, Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McKie, senior enlisted leader for the 63rd Readiness Division; Pat Leary, treasurer for AUSA's MG William F. Dean chapter; Capt. Paul Sauer; Katharine Sauer; retired Col. Phil Stage, a chapter board member; and Lt. Col. Marisol Chalas, Parks Reserve Forces Training Area garrison commander. (AUSA PHOTO)

senior enlisted leader for the 63rd Readiness Division.

The chapter, which covers the counties of Napa, Contra Costa and Alameda, awards five scholarships each year to outstanding students.

It also donates \$5,000 annually to the Veterans First program at Las Positas College in Livermore, which provides veterans with services and resources to assist them in achieving their educational goals.

## Eagle Chapters

**The following chapters attained Eagle status for June by showing positive membership growth. The number of consecutive months of growth since July 1, 2021, is shown in parentheses.**

Arizona Territorial (9)

Braxton Bragg (8)

Mid-Palatinate (8)

Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon (7)

Texas Capital Area (7)

Milwaukee (7)

GEN William C. Westmoreland (7)

Corporal Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (6)

Suncoast (6)

GEN John W. Vessey, Jr (6)

National Training Center-High Desert (6)

Coastal South Carolina (5)

Thunderbird (5)

Utah (5)

Ethan Allen (2)

Magnolia (2)

Isthmian (2)

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