



IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 15
AUGUST 11, 2022

Post-9/11 Burn Pit Bill Becomes Law

3

Lessons From Operation Inherent Resolve

4

NCO & Soldier Programs

Developing Life Skills

7



Chapter Highlights

AUSA Members Become
Civilian Aides to Army Secretary

8



A soldier enters the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., during the 2021 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

AUSA 2022 registration is now open

Registration is now open for the Association of the U.S. Army's 2022 Annual Meeting and Exposition.

The in-person event will take place Oct. 10–12 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Attendees also can register for housing, which opened in June.

This year's theme is "Building the Army of 2030." Throughout the annual meeting, professional development forums and addresses by top military leaders will focus on the continued transformation of the Army.

In the four years since Army Futures Command was established, the Army's top priority has been reshaping the force—including equipment, people and doctrine—to meet expected challenges.

The Army faces "very, very challenging times," Army Chief of Staff

Gen. James McConville said in July.

"I'm not sure, in my 41-plus years of service, I've seen a more potentially dangerous time for our country and for our military," McConville said.

To prepare, the Army is undertaking a sweeping modernization effort to develop next-generation capabilities, creating a data-centric force and modernizing its personnel policies to build and maintain the talent it needs.

The Army is also boosting troop levels in Europe while deploying forces and equipment to the Indo-Pacific in efforts to strengthen joint force integration, promote interoperability and demonstrate combat capabilities.

During the annual meeting, attendees will be able to hear keynote addresses from senior Army leaders, participate in a wide range of forums featuring Army, DoD and industry leaders, view Warriors Corner and

Innovators Corner presentations and visit more than 650 exhibits spread over five halls.

Also scheduled are several award presentations, including the winners of the Army's inaugural Best Squad Competition, NCO and Soldier of the Year and the Marshall Medal, which is AUSA's highest award for selfless service to the country.

The meeting is free, but registration is required. Some seated events require separate reservations and may have a fee. Those tickets will be available soon.

Online registration is open until 8 p.m. Eastern Oct. 5. On-site registration opens Oct. 7.

All attendees and exhibitors must be vaccinated against COVID-19.

More information is available here. You can register here. Housing registration is available here.



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Eligible veterans urged to apply for PACT Act benefits

A bill supported by the Association of the U.S. Army to help veterans exposed to toxic burn pits is now law, and the Department of Veterans Affairs is urging eligible veterans to apply for benefits.

President Joe Biden signed the bill, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, on Wednesday. It is the most significant expansion of benefits and services for toxic exposed veterans in more than 30 years, the White House said.

“As a nation, our truly sacred obligation is to equip those we send into harm’s way and care for them and their families when they come home,” Biden said on Twitter.

Known as the PACT Act, the measure is named for Sgt. 1st Class Heath Robinson, a Kosovo and Iraq veteran who was 39 when he died in 2020 from a rare form of lung cancer.

It establishes a presumption in favor of veterans with certain forms of cancer and respiratory illnesses and makes them eligible for veterans’ health care and disability pay.

This is similar to the presumption provided to Vietnam veterans who have health issues that might



Wind fans the flames of a burn pit at Combat Outpost Tangi in the Tangi Valley of Afghanistan on Aug. 31, 2009. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. TEDDY WADE)

be linked to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange.

“We at VA are ready to implement the PACT Act and deliver for toxic-exposed veterans and their survivors,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement after the bill was signed.

The “historic new law” will help the VA “deliver for millions of veterans—and their survivors—by empowering us to presumptively provide care and benefits to vets suffering from more than 20 toxic exposure-related conditions,” McDonough said.

Eligible veterans can apply for PACT Act-related benefits by filing a claim at the VA. More information is available at [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or by calling 1-800-MY-VA-411.

Military units deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq commonly used large outdoor pits to burn waste including food, packaging, medical waste, plastic, metal and rubber. The open-air burn pits—large and small—were mostly phased out by 2010 when incinerators were delivered to areas with large troop concentrations.

The PACT Act, which was approved by the House of Representatives in July and by the Senate in early August, could expand health care coverage to the more than 3.5 million combat veterans who served in the post-9/11 era.

The VA’s Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, created in 2014, includes the names of more than 289,000 service members or veterans who believe they were potentially exposed to toxic hazards while deployed.

Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, said the bipartisan measure is an example of taking care of soldiers.

“Our nation owes it to our soldiers and their families to do our utmost to provide excellent post-war health care and benefits without a lot of red tape,” he said in endorsing the bill.

Chapter presidents gather at AUSA



Newly elected presidents from AUSA chapters across the country visit the association’s headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, for training this week. (AUSA PHOTO)

IS fight holds lessons for the future



Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) load a high-explosive round into an M777 howitzer during Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq. (U.S. ARMY/1ST LT. DANIEL JOHNSON)

The war waged by the U.S. against the Islamic State terror group during Operation Inherent Resolve was a decisive win for America, a renowned national security correspondent said.

"The book I wrote was about a war that we won by any reasonable standard," Michael Gordon, author of *Degrade and Destroy: The Inside Story of the War Against the Islamic State, From Barack Obama to Donald Trump* said Tuesday during a webinar hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army as part of its Noon Report series.

"[During] Operation Inherent Resolve, ISIS' caliphate was destroyed. The cost to the U.S., in terms of lives lost, was minimal, around the order of 20 [killed in action]," said Gordon, who is the national security correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal* and former chief military correspondent for *The New York Times*, where he worked from 1985 to 2017.

On Oct. 17, 2014, the Defense Department formally established Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve to combat the Islamic State group threat in Iraq and Syria, according to DoD.

U.S. service members still maintain a presence in Iraq and Syria to support the mission, Gordon said.

There are about 2,500 U.S. military personnel in Iraq and approximately 900 in Syria, according to a quarterly report on Operation Inherent Resolve from April.

"Just a few weeks ago, there was a drone attack that the U.S. carried out to kill an ISIS commander, so the United States achieved a victory with its partners, who paid a high cost, but this operation is not over," Gordon said.

He also said he saw firsthand how the U.S. maintained a complicated balance with partner forces during the fight against the Islamic State group.

"When you have partner forces ... you can't dictate to the partner forces who are doing the bulk of the fighting and the dying, you can't order them around," he said.

The counter-ISIS campaign is not merely a part of history, Gordon said. It is essential to understanding future conflict.

"I think there's a bit of an attitude ... that this is just history ... [and that] we've moved on to China, Russia, great-power competition, integrated deterrence and the like," he said. "What happened in the counter-ISIS campaign has applicability towards the future, particularly in the ungoverned spaces in the world where the threats are sure to emerge again."

AUSAExtra

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

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PERK OF THE WEEK

Members get exclusive savings on GE appliances. Some items on sale through Aug. 14 are great for campus life, including ice makers, toaster ovens, blenders, food processors, mixers, espresso machines and more. Visit www.ausa.org/ge to create your account and access your member savings.



New paper stresses role of tanks on future battlefield

As the sole provider of armored forces, the Army's tanks will fill a critical role in any future amphibious assault undertaken by the joint force, according to the author of a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

The role of the Army's armored force will only grow as the Marine Corps phases out its tanks, Maj. Matthew Graham writes in "Tanks in the Surf: Maintaining the Joint Combined Arms Landing Team."

"While the Army lacks the doctrinal responsibility for amphibious operations, it should not and cannot abdicate its responsibility to consider or conduct amphibious operations as part of the joint force," writes Graham, an active-duty armor officer with combat experience in Afghanistan who currently is a student at the School of Advanced Military Studies.

Instead, the Army should reenergize its doctrine, training and organization around amphibious operations and, specifically, the role of armor within them, with the goal of ensuring the "future of the joint force combined arms landing team," Graham writes.

"In the popular imagination, amphibious operations are dominated by the initial assault or landing," Graham writes. "However, this limited focus runs contrary to the U.S. Army's historical experience."

Mobile, protected and expeditionary armored vehicles were crucial to the Army's success in several World War II campaigns, Graham argues.

"Tanks contributed to the protection of the beachhead against armored counterattacks," Graham writes. "Because of their mobility, firepower and armored protection, they could rap-

idly exploit the surprise and shock achieved by the landings to advance inland toward operational objectives."

In the future, the Army could once again find itself engaged in a conflict where its ability to conduct amphibious operations could be a key factor for inland power projection, Graham writes.

"The tank's qualities of shock, mobility and protected firepower make it essential to the effectiveness of combined arms, especially in amphibious operations," he writes. "While anti-tank guided missiles and drones have changed battlefield dynamics and increased the need for a recapitalization of anti-air and anti-tank guided missiles defensive technologies, the simple fact remains that the tank will continue to evolve and endure as a member of the combined arms team."

To read the full paper, click [here](#).

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Spotlight on AUSA Association Partner: AQM

The Association of Quartermasters is the only worldwide professional organization focused on enhancing the “image and professionalism” of the Army’s quartermasters, according to the organization’s website.

The association provides scientific, literary, educational and professional tools for mentoring quartermaster personnel.

It fosters camaraderie and promotes efficiency within the quartermaster corps and the Army and recognizes quartermaster excellence by providing support for incentive award programs at the brigade level or higher.

There are currently about a dozen chapters worldwide, with more being established.

Membership is open to quartermaster officers, warrant officers and enlisted soldiers, as well as Department



of Defense civilians, retirees and other members of the armed forces interested in the advancement of defense logistics.

The association awards the Saint Martin Award for active-duty, reserve component and civilian members.

The award has three levels: the Ancient Order of Saint Martin, the Honorable Order of Saint Martin and the Distinguished Order of Saint Martin.

It also awards the Catharine Greene Award to recognize significant contributions and support provided by quartermaster spouses.

Finally, the association presents annually the Colonel Alexander Davis Association of Quartermasters Memorial Scholarship to deserving students.

Davis was a life member and president of the association who dedicated countless hours raising money for the group’s scholarship program.

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

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

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AUSA events help soldiers develop important life skills

When the average person hears the term “life skills training,” they might immediately think of the skills necessary to compete in an episode of *Survivor*.

Things like knowing which plants are safe to eat, how to build a fire and how to hunt, gather and fish are important skills to sustain life, especially in the wild.

But many of the skills necessary for a soldier to perform his or her duties

NCO & Soldier Programs

during training or combat also could fall within the life skills category.

Navigating in unknown terrain, operating in extreme environments and mastering the art of rifle marksmanship and hand-to-hand combat must be on the list.

So, why would soldiers need additional life skills training?

The Association of the U.S. Army's NCO and Soldier Programs directorate recently asked that question to Command Sgt. Maj. Gerardo Gonzalez, the senior enlisted leader at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Gonzalez told us that soldiers possess many life skills, but there are a few that the Army does not teach that can enhance a soldier's tour of duty, increase their quality of life and get them out of the barracks to focus on alternative uses of their time.

With limited resources for these types of activities at the installation's disposal, AUSA's General of the Army Omar N. Bradley chapter and Gus Rodriguez, the association's Fourth Region president, offered to help.

For the inaugural life skills training event, Fort Bliss, its Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program and the AUSA chapter teamed up to hire a professional chef to teach soldiers living in the barracks how to prepare a delicious, healthy meal on a budget.

The event was a huge success, and Rodriguez and the chapter pledged future support for the program.

When the NCO and Soldier Pro-



Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, center, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, joins soldiers at Fort Bliss, Texas, for a life skills training event on routine vehicle maintenance. (AUSA PHOTO)

grams team at AUSA's national headquarters got wind of the program, we immediately wanted to be part of it, so we loaded up and traveled to Fort Bliss.

After talking to Gonzalez about the life skills that were important to us as young soldiers, we settled on how to perform basic maintenance on our vehicles.

Unlike in decades past, almost every soldier serving today has a vehicle, and, of course, they all need routine maintenance.



Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, right, AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs, and Command Sgt. Maj. Gerardo Gonzalez, senior enlisted leader at Fort Bliss, Texas, change oil during the life skills training event. (AUSA PHOTO)

Together with the BOSS program and Angel Jimenez, manager of the Fort Bliss Auto Craft Shop, we put together a class teaching soldiers how to preform safety inspections and routine vehicle maintenance.

At the conclusion of the event, the NCO and Soldier Programs directorate picked up the tab and provided a free oil change for all participants.

The soldiers were pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to conduct the maintenance and extremely happy to see their “oil life” back to 100%.

One of the soldiers told us, “I didn't realize how easy this was or that there was a place on the base that I could do this kind of work. I am coming back and telling my fellow soldiers all about this place.”

That was the goal we set out to achieve, and we hope more AUSA chapters adopt the life skills program.

If they do, we will be ready to help any way we can.

Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey is AUSA's vice president for NCO and Soldier Programs and was the 15th sergeant major of the Army.

AUSA members named civilian aides to Army secretary

During an Aug. 2 ceremony at the Pentagon, three members of the Association of the U.S. Army were appointed as civilian aides to the secretary of the Army.

They are Nancy Jean-Louis, president of AUSA's Potomac-Liberty chapter in Virginia; Peter Hoffman, a life member with the association's Marne chapter in Hinesville, Georgia; and Angela Odom, whose AUSA membership comes through its Association Partnership with The ROCKS, Inc. Also named as a CASA was Peter Crean Sr. from New Orleans, Louisiana.

"It's an honor to welcome our four newest CASAs back to the Army team. They will be great advocates for the Army in their local communities," Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said, according to an Army news release.

"I have asked them to help share the Army story to help young people see how the Army can give them a sense of purpose and provide a fulfilling career," she said.

Jean-Louis served in the Army for over 25 years and has been president of AUSA's Potomac-Liberty chapter since 2019. She is known as an engaged member of the community and serves on many local boards and councils.

Her outreach includes efforts to build relationships with ROTC programs in the area, such as by helping raise funds for more than 100 scholarships.

"I am honored and deeply humbled to be selected by Secretary Wormuth to serve my community and country in this new role," Jean-Louis said, according to the Army. "As one of the more than 800,000 veterans currently living and working in the Commonwealth of Virginia, I feel compelled to foster that wonderful tradition in the community and share with those who have not had the benefit of serving."

Hoffman served 30 years in the



At the induction ceremony for new civilian aides to the secretary of the Army are, left to right, Peter Crean Sr., Angela Odom, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, Nancy Jean-Louis and Peter Hoffman. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Army and until recently was vice president for student affairs at Savannah Technical College. In addition to his membership with AUSA, he is the officer co-chair of the Fort Stewart Retired Soldier Council and serves on the chief of staff of the Army's Retired Soldier Council.

"I couldn't be more excited by this opportunity to help share the story of our great Army. As a retired soldier, I understand the importance of keeping the community informed and building strong relationships," Hoffman said, according to the Army news release.

Odom, a leadership and personal-development coach, served 27 years in the Army and Army Reserve.

During one of her three combat deployments, she commanded a battalion-sized element during operations in Baghdad for over 14 months and earned a Legion of Merit and a Bronze Star.

"I am proud, humbled and honored to be selected by Secretary Wormuth to serve as a civilian aide for Georgia (North)," Odom said. "This critical appointment allows me to continue

my service to our Army's greatest asset: its soldiers and their families."

Crean served 30 years in the Army and is currently vice president of education and access at the National World War II Museum.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to serve the Army beyond my time in uniform. I am grateful for the support of the leadership of the National WWII Museum as I start on this adventure," he said.

CASAs promote good relations between the Army and the public, advise the secretary about regional issues, support the total Army workforce, and assist with recruiting and helping soldiers as they transition out of the military. They are usually business or civic leaders who possess a keen interest in the welfare of the Army and their communities.

Each agrees to serve as representatives of the secretary of the Army without salary, wages or related benefits, and is afforded a 3-star protocol status. They are committed to supporting all Army civilians, soldiers and their families.



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