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A participant learns the proper wear of a helmet and body armor from a 4th Infantry Division soldier during a 'Meet Your Army' event at Fort Carson, Colorado. (U.S. ARMY/CAPT. ALEX WERDEN)

Army divisions join recruiting effort

Soldiers from five active-duty divisions are providing “campaign-level support” to help the Army navigate the national recruiting crisis, a senior commander said.

The recruiting mission belongs to the Army Recruiting Command, but the recruiting slump that has caused a significant shortfall in the Army’s ability to enlist new soldiers is “a Total Army problem,” said Gen. Andrew Poppas, commander of Army Forces Command, which is the Army’s largest command and consists of more than 750,000 soldiers in the Regular Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

The Army and the other services are facing a tough recruiting environment after the COVID-19 pandemic forced recruiters to miss out on almost two years of face-to-face contact with high

schoolers, and the services grapple with a cohort of young people who are either unfit or unwilling to serve.

The military also is contending with a low unemployment rate and competition from the private sector, which is offering many of the same benefits as the Army, including bonuses, tuition reimbursement and health care.

Declaring in a mid-July memo that the Army is in a “war for talent,” Army Secretary Christine Wormuth and Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville predicted that the Army’s end strength could nosedive even further by the end of fiscal 2023.

To augment recruiting capacity, Poppas said, selected soldiers in the division headquarters of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York, the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia, the 1st Cavalry Division

at Fort Hood, Texas, the 7th Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington, and the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, are working with Recruiting Command’s five recruiting brigades.

Poppas described the support that the divisions are providing as “almost campaign-level” in size and scope.

It includes planning and analyzing engagement strategies, identifying recruiting event venues and recommending where to commit resources.

Some events are traditional outreach activities coordinated through existing relationships between operational units and local recruiting battalions. They are gaining in visibility because they are being tracked at a higher level as part of the broader effort, said Sgt. Maj. David Rhodes, a

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Additional COVID-19 vaccine authorized for soldiers

Novavax is now available to soldiers as an alternative COVID-19 vaccine.

“With the availability of the Novavax vaccine, we are pleased to have another tool to help combat the spread of COVID-19,” Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, Army surgeon general and commanding general of Army Medical Command, said in an Army news release.

The other vaccines that have been offered by the military include those from Moderna, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

Service members who are not vaccinated can indicate their vaccine preference, Dr. Michael Malanoski, deputy director of the Defense Health Agency, said in a DoD news release.

“If they’d like to be vaccinated with Novavax, and it’s not immediately available, we’ll make sure the service member can be vaccinated with the Novavax vaccine within a few days,” he said.

As of Aug. 25, 97% of soldiers in the Regular Army had been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to Army data.

About 89% of Army National Guard and 90% of Army Reserve soldiers are fully vaccinated.

More than 1,100 soldiers across the three components have requested medical exemptions, while almost 6,500 have requested a religious exemption, according to Army data.



Spc. Tristan Spoerri, left, of the Utah National Guard Medical Detachment, administers the COVID-19 vaccine to a soldier at Camp Williams, Utah. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. ALEJANDRO LUCERO)

Novavax provides another option for unvaccinated soldiers because it uses a different technology from the mRNA and viral vector vaccine options. Dr. Steven Cersovsky, deputy director of the Army Public Health Center, said Novavax performs like a traditional vaccine.

“In a more ‘traditional’ vaccine, like Novavax, the injection gives your body a part of the virus. In this case, it’s giving you one protein, the spike protein,” Cersovsky said, according to the Army news release. “And it allows your body to generate an immune response to that protein.”

The Novavax vaccine uses technology that has been used in other vac-

cines required by the military, including the current shingles vaccine and the Hepatitis B vaccine, officials said.

Novavax was well tolerated in clinical studies, with the most common side effects being injection-site tenderness, headache, muscle pain and fatigue, according to the DoD news release.

Soldiers who choose to get Novavax will be considered in compliance with the DoD COVID-19 vaccine requirement.

“Our No. 1 priority is protecting the health and welfare of our greatest assets—our soldiers, our family members and Army civilians,” Dingle said.

Recruiting

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Forces Command spokesman.

For example, the 4th Infantry Division partnered with the Denver Army Recruiting Battalion in August to host a “Meet Your Army” event at Fort Carson, Colorado.

Participants in the one-day event included young people, families and educators from across the state who got some hands-on experience with things such as tactical medical care

and physical fitness events, and they heard from real soldiers about the benefits of Army service.

The Aug. 19 event resulted in “some successful prospects” for local recruiters, and other such events are being planned, Poppas said Aug. 29 in a media engagement at the National Guard Association of the United States’ General Conference and Exhibition in Columbus, Ohio.

Poppas said he has not put an end date on the mission, but he expects

that it will continue “well beyond 90 days.” He said the divisions have the capacity to do it, and it will not detract from training.

“This is a priority for the secretary of the Army, and it’s a priority for the chief [of staff of the Army], and where there’s a priority, you put your effort and your resources,” Poppas said.

With Forces Command’s engagement in the recruiting effort, he said, “You’ve got the capacity of the whole Army that is committed to this.”

Former AUSA assistant director dies

Retired Lt. Col. Isabelle Slifer, a longtime leader with the Association of the U.S. Army and Army Reserve Ambassador, died Aug. 25. She was 75.

Following a long Army career, Slifer served as AUSA's assistant director for Army Reserve Affairs and Community Partnerships from 2005 to 2015.

"I first met Isabelle when she came to work at the Pentagon in 2001. Shortly after, we experienced 9/11, and I witnessed her courage in helping others to evacuate and her compassion and determination as she assisted her teammates in coping with the losses," said retired Col. John Davies, AUSA's director of Membership.

"When she joined AUSA, I saw those same traits again. Isabelle was a great listener to our members and volunteer leaders, a great problem-solver and innovator," Davies said. "When faced with cancer, her courage got her through, and she was once again a survivor."

After leaving AUSA, Slifer continued to serve soldiers as an Army Reserve Ambassador for Virginia.

Slifer enlisted in the Women's Army Corps in 1975 after graduating from the State University of New York College at Buffalo.

Two years later, she was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Reserve after completing Officer Candidate School, and she entered active duty as an Active Guard Reserve officer in 1983.

During her time on active duty, Slifer held both personnel and operational positions, including as a mobilization officer at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and Troop Program Unit policy officer in the office of the Army Reserve chief.

In 2001, Slifer was stationed at the Pentagon during the Sept. 11 attacks.

"On the 11th of September [2001], I actually started my sixth day with the Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel



Army Reserve Ambassador Isabelle Slifer addresses a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program event in Hershey, Pennsylvania, in 2017. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. SHAWN MORRIS)

section," Slifer said in a 2003 report published by the Office of Army Reserve History. "Around 9:36 [a.m.]... the building violently, violently—and I can't say it, I can't emphasize it enough—shook."

When the ceiling collapsed, Slifer and her coworkers were forced to crawl for about 40 feet before making their way past sealed fire doors and obstructed hallways to safety.

"I felt calm. I was with my fellow comrades. I mean by that, Soldiers. I knew I was going to get out okay," Slifer said in the report.

Her final position before retiring from the Army in 2005 was as the reserve component branch chief for Personnel Policy Integration in the office of the Army deputy chief of staff for personnel at the Pentagon.

Slifer is survived by her husband, retired Lt. Col. Gediminas Naujokaitis, and their sons Pranas and Juozas.

"Isabelle had much to be proud of during her time in uniform and as a civilian, but she was proudest of her family and her sons," Davies said. "Isabelle's legacy of selfless service cannot be matched, and she will be missed."

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PERK OF THE WEEK

Find movie theater discounts and savings at local restaurants and businesses with Abenity's "Members Only" site for AUSA. Visit www.ausa.org/abenity, create an account and find thousands of discounts. The movie theater and Sam's Club discounts are the most popular, but check out the wide variety of savings available.





A collage of 12 images illustrating various aspects of the U.S. military. The images include: a close-up of a soldier's helmet with a night vision device; a soldier looking through binoculars; a soldier operating a computer in a control room; a soldier in a tank; a soldier in a helicopter; a soldier in a boat; a soldier in a desert; a soldier in a city; a soldier in a field; a soldier in a forest; and a soldier in a mountain. The images are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some overlapping. The overall theme is the versatility and readiness of the U.S. military in various environments and missions.



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Variety of educational savings available for members

As the new school year gets underway, there is still time to take advantage of the many education-related discounts available with your membership in the Association of the U.S. Army.

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You can also make your purchases online, where you can see which products are discounted. To create an account and start shopping, visit <https://officediscounts.org/ausa/>.

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Teenagers from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Ada County, Idaho, learn about the Army National Guard's equipment during a visit to Gowen Field. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/CRYSTAL FARRIS)

To learn more and access the materials, visit www.ause.org/eknowledge.

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I took a free Microsoft Excel class at edX, as well as a contract law class

from a seasoned Harvard professor.

Publications

Great leaders know their military history, and you can, too, with *Battle Digest*, a bimonthly, visually stunning executive summary of important historical battles.

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AUSA members can save 20% at www.ause.org/battle.

Also, all members receive a discount on *Military Times* and *Defense News* at www.ause.org/times.

College Ave

AUSA has partnered with College Ave Student Loans, a private student loan company, to offer special benefits for association members on undergraduate, graduate, parent and refinancing loans.

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Susan Rubel is AUSA's Association and Affinity Partnerships Director.

Chapter award recognizes outstanding ROTC cadet

ROTC Cadet Cole Anderson of Western Illinois University recently was recognized by the Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Knox chapter with its Leadership Excellence Award, given to the top cadet in each regiment during Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Anderson received the award Aug. 18 during the 11th Regiment graduation ceremony. The award was presented by retired Maj. Mike Pesko, vice president of the Fort Knox chapter.

"My platoon cadre walked up to me, and my captain asked, 'Has anyone told you yet?' And then he told me I was named the No. 1 cadet for my regiment," Anderson said, according to a Western Illinois University news release.

"I was shocked—there were a lot of knowledgeable and skilled cadets



Retired Maj. Mike Pesko, right, vice president of AUSA's Fort Knox chapter, presents the chapter's Leadership Excellence Award to ROTC Cadet Cole Anderson. (AUSA PHOTO)

in my platoon alone, so it was humbling, and it is an honor to have received this award," he said.

Anderson, who hails from Bismarck, North Dakota, and is majoring in law enforcement and justice administration, will graduate in

May. He plans to commission in the Army Reserve to begin his career as a military police officer, and he hopes to spend his final semester of college as an intern with the Illinois State Police, according to the news release.

AUSA members help families with back-to-school needs

Members of the Association of the U.S. Army's National Training Center-High Desert chapter joined other local organizations to help service members and their families prepare for the new school year during two back-to-school events at Fort Irwin, California.

The installation and the Silver Valley Unified School District hosted a town hall July 29 where community members could interact with school administrators and teachers, according to the Army.

On the next day, Fort Irwin's directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation hosted its annual Block Party, where students received free backpacks and other school necessities from the AUSA chapter and organizations such as Operation Homefront and the Villages at Fort



Members of AUSA's National Training Center-High Desert chapter and other volunteers hand out gifts to children at Fort Irwin, California. (U.S. ARMY/ABRAAM DAWOUD)

Irwin.

"Honestly, it's an awesome event," said Susan Davis, who attended the Block Party with her son, Tristan.

"We got to meet with school staff, Tristan was able to get his school sup-

plies, and I got to shop from some of the home-based businesses here," Davis said, adding that she was appreciative of all the school district staff and the volunteers and vendors, according to the Army.



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