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'We have an obligation as an Army to protect the nation, but in order to do that we also have to protect the force,' Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Army moves to resume training, PCS

The Army is refining health and safety measures across the force as it moves closer to resuming collective training, PCS moves and other activities that have been stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Army's senior enlisted soldier said.

"We have an obligation as an Army to protect the nation, but in order to do that we also have to protect the force," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said during "The AUSA Noon Report," the Association of the U.S. Army's new professional development program.

The webcast, modeled after AUSA's popular breakfast events but tailored to the social distancing era, debuted May 21 with Grinston as the first guest speaker.

Grinston talked about everything from training to uniforms, and physical fitness tests to PCS moves during

a discussion with retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey, AUSA's vice president for Soldier and NCO Programs.

Resuming collective training

One of the key issues the Army is studying is how to safely resume collective training, including at the Army's combat training centers, Grinston said.

This includes maintaining tactical dispersion between soldiers, organizing them into small groups, testing them for the virus, and creating what leaders call "safety bubbles" once they're out in the field, he said.

"We're going to bring them in in waves; we're not going to do big formations," he said.

And once they're in the field, leaders will limit how many people can come in and out of the training area.

"We're very aware, to make sure we

maintain our bubbles," he said.

Restarting PCS

The Army also has put in place measures to help soldiers whose permanent change-of-station moves have been delayed by the pandemic.

A DoD stop-movement order implemented in early March has since been replaced by a phased, conditions-based plan that allows commanders to align travel and movement with conditions in their local cities and regions.

As PCS moves ramp up, those with orders can start making arrangements for their move, Grinston said.

Leaders are also encouraging soldiers with orders to South Korea or Europe to use military flights.

For example, Patriot Express flights, which move troops to and from Korea, are purposely not filled to allow for social distancing,

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DoD eases travel restrictions based on local conditions

The Pentagon has lifted an order restricting almost all travel for service members and their families, replacing it with a new conditions-based plan to better match cities and states as the U.S. military slowly recovers from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The initial stop-movement order, which was put in place in early March and then extended through June 30, affected everything from permanent change-of-station moves to temporary duty assignments.

The new May 22 memo signed by Defense Secretary Mark Esper allows commanders to implement a more tailored approach based on local conditions, Matthew Donovan, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said Tuesday.

The COVID-19 virus still presents a risk to service members, the memo states, but “improving conditions warrant a transition in our approach to domestic and overseas personnel travel to a conditions-based, phased approach.”

Donovan and his team will “continuously assess each U.S. state or territory and nations that host greater than 1,000 permanently assigned DoD personnel” using federal guidelines.

They will track the removal of shelter-in-place orders or other travel restrictions, a 14-day downward trajectory of flu-like and COVID-19 symptoms, and a 14-day downward trajectory of new COVID-19 cases or positive tests.

Local approach

In turn, service secretaries and combatant commanders will assess the conditions of each DoD installation, facility or location under their purview for the removal of local travel restrictions; the availability of essential services such as schools, child care and moving services; capacity at the medical treatment facility; testing capability; the capacity to isolate personnel returning from high expo-



The May 22 memo signed by Defense Secretary Mark Esper allows commanders to implement a more tailored approach to travel based on local conditions. (U.S. ARMY/PATRICK ALBRIGHT)

sure locations; and other factors.

Some areas could meet these criteria and “go green immediately,” Donovan said, adding that his office will regularly publish updates so commanders can see which parts of the country or overseas locations are safest.

“This conditions-based, phased approach prioritizes the safety and security of our personnel, their families and our communities, while balancing the need to advance service members’ career opportunities, unit rotational deployments, and other imperatives,” Esper wrote in the memo.

Army efforts

As the Army continues to monitor conditions across the force, the service also is looking for ways to ease stress on soldiers and their families.

“Our goal throughout this is to protect our families, our soldiers, our civilians, and help them through this situation as we help America through this situation,” Casey Wardynski, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, said during a May 19 town hall.

Because the travel restrictions can “cause some real difficulties for families” and soldiers, Wardynski said, the Army has “put in place a couple

financial measures to help out,” such as restriction of movement pay and isolation pay.

Sgt. Maj. Mark Clark, of the Army G-1 (personnel) directorate of military personnel management, said DoD has also implemented measures regarding leave and extension of service.

Soldiers facing a use or lose leave situation can have more than 60 days—but no more than 120—and carry those days over until fiscal year 2023.

This gives soldiers a chance “to take the leave that they’ve earned” in a spaced out manner, Clark said.

Opportunities are also available for soldiers reaching the end of their service contract this year.

“The impacts of COVID 19 have definitely changed the plans [for] soldiers [who] were planning to separate from the Army,” Clark said. “The job they were planning to walk into may or may not be available now, and that’s a very unfortunate situation.”

The Army is offering two plans for soldiers to either extend their service, in some cases anywhere between three and 11 months if “fully qualified,” or reenlist.

Career counselors can help soldiers learn which plan is for them, Clark said.

AUSA endorses better benefits for Guard soldiers in COVID-19 fight



Army National Guard soldiers unload disinfecting kits in preparation to support long-term care facility operations at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. (U.S. ARMY/STAFF SGT. MICHAEL GILES)

The Association of the U.S. Army, along with the Air Force Association, is calling for senior leaders to extend National Guard deployments for troops mobilized in the fight against COVID-19.

An extension will ensure the Guard is available to continue supporting local response efforts and provide the service members with additional federal benefits, retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO, and retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Bruce “Orville” Wright, AFA president, wrote in May 21 letters to President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

More than 46,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen are supporting COVID-19 response efforts in all 54 states and territories, the largest use of the Guard for a domestic operation since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, according to information from the National Guard Bureau.

Guard soldiers and airmen deployed under federal Title 32 orders are currently slated to complete their orders on June 24.

Extending their orders “will enable

them to continue serving the nation against this deadly disease,” the letters state. “As a number of state governors are now advising, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic clearly suggests our nation will need our National Guard to continue the fight well beyond June 24.”

In addition, extending the deployments by just one day will authorize additional federal benefits, including Post-9/11 GI Bill and early retirement benefits, for the Guard troops, Ham and Wright wrote.

AUSA and AFA also are recommending DoD authorize Tricare benefits to the soldiers, airmen and their families for six months after their deployments, according to the letters.

This is similar to what the service members would receive when returning from overseas deployments.

“As you know, our nation’s National Guard, like our Regular and Reserve Forces, are committed to serving our nation and the American people,” Ham and Wright wrote. “We see this every day in America and around the world.”

Read the letter here.

AUSA Extra

Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier

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PERK OF THE WEEK

Apple, Dell, Hewlett-Packard discounts

As many of us remain at home, this is a great time to take advantage of your AUSA member discounts on electronics. Now, more than 95% of Apple store products are covered by the AUSA discount program. Members receive 3-10% off almost the entire store. Dell has discounted pricing plus an additional 10% off, and Hewlett-Packard has up to 35% in savings. Please visit www.ausa.org/savings and click the companies’ logos to activate your savings.

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The Army also is working to get soldiers' on-post housing at their new duty station ready so they and their families can quarantine at home instead of in a hotel, Grinston said.

And the military is working with the moving companies to make sure movers practice social distancing and wear the appropriate protective equipment when they're working inside a service member's home, he said.

"We're putting in some extra precautions so we can safely move our families," he said.

"It's going to be challenging, but we do a lot of hard, challenging things, so we're confident that when the moves start, we've got a safe way to make them happen."

Army Greens, PT test delayed

The pandemic has also affected other parts of soldiers' lives.



The Army has delayed implementation of the new Army Combat Fitness Test due to the pandemic. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Army is about three months behind on issuing the new Army Greens uniform, and it has delayed the new Army Combat Fitness Test.

Manufacturing challenges have delayed the highly anticipated Army Greens, Grinston said, but he expects they will be issued to new recruits

this fall. "We've had a short delay, but it's coming," he said.

The new ACFT was supposed to become the Army's test of record in October, but the rollout was delayed because of the pandemic.

Equipment for the six-event test should be delivered to all units by October, but the Army is looking for ways to keep the equipment clean between soldiers, Grinston said.

In the meantime, the Army Physical Fitness Test remains the test of record, and the Army is allowing modifications for soldiers who need to take the test, Grinston said.

For example, instead of having someone hold their feet during sit-ups, a soldier can use a bar instead, he said, and soldiers will be split into small groups for the 2-mile run.

"These are trying times for soldiers and our families," Grinston said. "We're going to get through this. We're going to kill the virus."



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Six senior enlisted service members share their stories

By Joseph Craig

There are many leadership books published each year, but the newest addition to the Association of the U.S. Army's Book Program is truly unique.

Breaching the Summit brings together the stories of six former senior enlisted advisers to the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

- Kenneth Preston, 13th sergeant major of the Army
- Michael Barrett, 17th sergeant major of the Marine Corps
- Rick West, 12th master chief petty officer of the Navy
- James Roy, 16th chief master sergeant of the Air Force
- Denise Jelinski-Hall, third senior enlisted adviser for the National Guard Bureau
- Charles "Skip" Bowen, 10th master chief petty officer of the Coast Guard

Each discusses how they got their start, how mentors encouraged them along the way, and how they eventually became the highest-ranking enlisted member in their respective service.

Book Program

Preston, who was recently appointed an AUSA senior fellow, sat down to discuss the book.

AUSA: How did the co-authors come together to write this book?

Preston: The authors served together in the Pentagon at the same time for their respective service chiefs. The six of us formed an LLC called Summit Six, focused on leadership, team-building and relationships among employee workforces in businesses and organizations.

Collectively, the group agreed to author a book on the key leadership principles and experiences from their careers.

AUSA: Many of the leadership lessons you provide relate to early phases of your military career. How did your role as a leader change when you were



Breaching the Summit is authored by six former senior enlisted advisers to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, including retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston. (AUSA PHOTOS)

named sergeant major of the Army?

Preston: My focus on leadership lessons as a young soldier and non-commissioned officer set the foundation for leadership positions throughout my career.

As the senior enlisted adviser to my service chief, supporting our Army and a nation at war with two countries, the operational pace of the Army was immense.

During times of stress and long work hours, focusing on the fundamentals kept our units focused on standards and maintaining discipline among the ranks.

AUSA: What was your proudest achievement as an Army leader?

Preston: There were many personal achievements anyone would be proud of during a military career.

I believe as a leader, the greatest achievement is the group of leaders you develop throughout your career.

Our role in the Army is to build the bench, the next generation of leaders who will continue a legacy of service to our nation.

AUSA: Your co-authors represent every branch of the U.S. military. Do you feel that the different services call for different leadership styles?

Preston: When you read through all six sets of experiences, you will find they all come from humble be-



ginnings prior to entering military service.

All six dedicated their lives to our nation's military service and their respective service members. Their individual acts may differ, but in the end, all were focused on excellence and led by their own example.

AUSA: What one piece of advice would you give to a young soldier in today's Army?

Preston: Be a good soldier every day, at work, at home, off duty and on social media. Treat people with dignity and respect.

Be an expert in your profession, know your warrior tasks and battle drills, and be physically, mentally and spiritually fit.

As you get promoted or you are given the opportunity to lead, use what you have learned to teach and make those soldiers in your care as good as you were.

Leadership and teaching go hand in hand as a noncommissioned officer, regardless of your rank—even as an SMA.

To order a copy of *Breaching the Summit*, please visit www.ausa.org/books.

Joseph Craig is AUSA's Book Program Director.

Discussion group focuses on foreign policy, global issues

The Association of the U.S. Army's Greater Kansas City chapter has started a Great Decisions Discussion Group, a new initiative launched this year by retired Maj. Emma Toops, the chapter's immediate past president.

The group's aim is to encourage discussions among senior-level chapter members, retirees and those interested in foreign policy and global issues.

Toops posed the idea of the group to the chapter's advisory council in late 2019 while she was chapter president.

During her two terms as president, she observed that the chapter had grown its membership and event engagement with soldiers from the active and reserve components, ROTC cadets and new retirees through new programs focused on community engagement, outreach, young professionals and transitioning military.

However, engagement dropped

Discovery. Discussion. Decision.

GREAT DECISIONS

The next Great Decisions meeting will take place Monday with a focus on China in Latin America. (AUSA GRAPHIC)

among older retirees and those more used to breakfast programs.

The advisory council liked the idea and agreed that the chapter needed a routine activity suited to retirees' interests for business or national-level topics, or concerns that had strategic-level implications and encouraged larger-scale thinking and discussion.

The chapter's Great Decisions group, which is part of a larger program by the Foreign Policy Association, meets on the first Monday of every month.

The Foreign Policy Association

seeks to serve as a catalyst for developing awareness and understanding of U.S. foreign policy and global issues.

Early meetings were in a local restaurant, but the group started meeting virtually in April because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants represent a diverse mix of retired generals, sergeants major and field grade officers, and military spouses and company grade veterans.

The group has discussed the death of Iranian Gen. Qasem Soleimani, the Philippines and the U.S., climate change and the global order, the COVID-19 pandemic, and artificial intelligence and data.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday with a focus on China in Latin America, led by retired Maj. Gen. Mike Symanski.

For more information or to attend a future meeting, contact Toops at emma@toopsconsulting.com or past president kcausa@ausa.org.

Greater
Kansas City

Eagle Chapters

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

Korea (10)	Redstone-Huntsville (7)	Cowboy (6)
Arsenal of Democracy (9)	Magnolia (7)	Greater Philadelphia (Penn and Franklin) (5)
Coastal South Carolina (9)	Braxton Bragg (7)	MG Harry Greene, Aberdeen (5)
Rock Island Arsenal (9)	Arkansas (7)	Florida Gulf Stream (5)
Connecticut (8)	Leonidas Polk (7)	Greater Atlanta (5)
West Point Area (8)	Fort Sheridan-Chicago (7)	Fort Riley-Central Kansas (5)
Capital District of New York (8)	Las Vegas-John C. Fremont (7)	St. Louis Gateway (5)
Northern New York-Fort Drum (8)	Arizona Territorial (7)	PFC William Kenzo Nakamura (5)
Western New York (8)	Tucson-Goyette (7)	Denver Centennial (5)
Fort Campbell (8)	Minutemen (6)	Massachusetts Bay (4)
Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson (8)	Col Edward Cross (6)	Northern New Jersey (4)
Fort Rucker-Wiregrass (8)	Fort Pitt (6)	Tobyhanna Army Depot (4)
Emerald Coast (8)	Francis Scott Key (6)	Sunshine (4)
Marne (8)	Tri-State (6)	New Orleans (4)
Fort Jackson-Palmetto State (8)	Fairfax-Lee (6)	Thunderbird (4)
Puerto Rico (8)	A.P. Hill Rappahannock (6)	GEN John W. Vessey, Jr (4)
Greater Los Angeles (8)	Central Virginia (6)	Silicon Valley (4)
Pikes Peak (8)	Suncoast (6)	First In Battle (4)
Joshua Chamberlain (7)	Space Coast (6)	Houston Metroplex (3)
Dix (7)	Chattahoochee Valley-Fort Benning (6)	Fort Huachuca-Sierra Vista (2)
Greater New York-Statue of Liberty (7)	North Texas (6)	Mid-Palatinat (2)
George Washington (7)	Henry Leavenworth (6)	
Corporal Bill McMillan-Bluegrass (7)	San Francisco (6)	



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