



AUSA Sunshine Chapter Newsletter – Summer 2022 (Jul - Sep)

Things are busy, moving along again. Your chapter needs you to know and to become involved. Here is some recent news and some upcoming events you can join in on in the future as they come around!

Chapter President's Message

Greetings to all our Sunshine Chapter members and partners. As we start a new fiscal year, let's acknowledge the great accomplishments that closed out our 2022 year. The Army Birthday ball was a tremendous success. With our focus on the Army family, from Soldiers and veterans to parents and spouses, to civilians and community partners, we expressed our gratitude and respect for that indomitable spirit which has made us a stronger and more resolved advocate for the Army and the nation it serves.

Our transition out of the pandemic restrictions is complete. At times like this where we move from a significant world event, it is natural to expand our vision and strive for bigger and better things. For our chapter, this starts with first recognizing our mission. Being true to our purpose, we will expand this year from the lessons of the past, and we will do it with reasoned enthusiasm. Volunteers together in our mission are the essential resources for chapter success. As we build our membership base, we will be mindful of the precious commitment from our volunteers and strive for success in our actions.

To recap for our membership, our mission is to:

- Educate those we serve with programs, products, resources, and events,
- Inform our members, Congress and the American public about issues affecting America's Army, and

- Connect America’s Total Army, its industry partners, like-minded associations, and other supporters.

Our chapter serves as the Army’s private organization for three General Officer-level Commands, five Field Grade-level Commands, University of Central Florida ROTC, the Orlando Recruiting Company, and twelve Junior ROTC detachments. Within this area of operations, we also partner with our sister service organizations, veteran organizations, defense trade organizations, and a robust industrial base delivering capability to the Army.



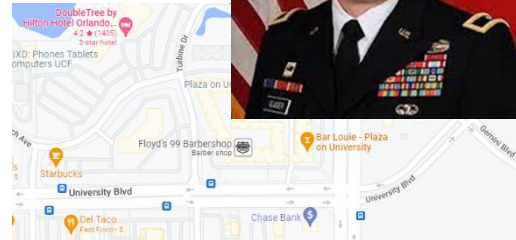
There are several leadership changes for the chapter executive committee in 2023. Your chapter leadership team:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Steve Beltson | VP Programs |
| Rob Fortenberry | Soldier Programs |
| Amanda Stewart | Chapter Programs |
| Emily Banister | Secretary & Young Professionals |
| Steve Kennedy | Treasurer |
| Dylan Morelle | Operations |
| Clay Edwards | Historian & Communications |
| Brian Walsh | Membership |
| Kenny Johnson | Chaplain & Awards |
| Ben Dils | Community Outreach |
| Jenna Tuck | Army Birthday Ball |
| Robert Biggers | Golf Tournament |
| Kevin Vizzarri | Executive VP |
| Harry Buhl | President |

In executing our mission, we are re-establishing our organizational battle rhythm. The **second Monday of each month** will be our chapter networking social. This event will be in complement to the Army Procurement Acquisition Lead Time or PALT meeting held each month, and our Navy League partners that host a Tuesday evening social on Navy PALT months. We thank our friends at Island Wing Company on Alafaya Trail for supporting these monthly events.



The chapter is also holding our first in-person General Membership Meeting on **September 6** at the DoubleTree Hotel on the West side of the University of Central Florida Campus. We are privileged to have Brigadier General William



Glaser, the Director of the Army Future Command's Synthetic Training Environment (STE) Cross-Functional team. STE is one of the Army's eight modernization priorities, and an industry focus within the Central Florida modeling simulation and training industrial base.

1130-1300 6 September 2022
DoubleTree Hotel Orlando East-UCF
12125 High Tech Ave, Orlando



We will honor our Gold Star Mothers and Families in solemn tribute of the sacrifice of their Soldiers on **September 18** in partnership with Orange County Veterans, and the Veteran's Administration. More information on this ceremony will be forthcoming.

Of course, one of the highlights of every year is the AUSA national meeting in Washington DC. This year's meeting is **October 10 -12**. As in the past, your Sunshine Chapter with the National Training and Simulation Association will be hosting a hospitality suite for all Central Florida members and partners. The suite will be open on **Tuesday, October 11** in the Marriot Marquis -adjacent to the convention center. Please attend the conference and join your chapter after the day's events on Tuesday. Note that because we will be at the annual meeting, there will not be an October social in Orlando.

 **AUSA 2022**
ANNUAL MEETING & EXPOSITION
10-12 OCTOBER | WASHINGTON, DC
Building the Army of 2030



October and November are also the birthday celebrations of our maritime sister services. The Navy League will host their birthday ball on October 22, and the Marine Corps Foundation will host their ball on November 12. Army representatives of the chapter will attend because after all, it can't be a party without Soldiers, and we will have to help our maritime partners celebrate on dry land. And we will especially remind our Navy brethren as we prepare for the annual Army-Navy Game in December that no kid ever said, "Let's go outside and play navy."

More to follow in our next newsletter as we highlight our Veterans' Day events, the Interservice /Industry Training Simulation and Education Conference, and our Thanksgiving and Christmas events in support of families of those deployed and senior veterans in our community.

The chapter is always appreciative of our community partners. Your membership and sponsorship of our events enable us to fulfill our mission. If you would like to sponsor, volunteer, or host any of our events, please contact me anytime. We can't do it without you.

Scouts Out!

Harry

Harry Buhl President.Sunshine@ausa.org

Message from the Chapter's Executive Vice President, Kevin Vizzarri

Join our chapter and let the networking begin.

I write this article with Army Veterans in mind as the target audience. Whether you in the National Guard, Reserves, ROTC, active duty, a veteran or retired, you all have an affiliation to the US Army. We all share the Army values, we all “embraced the suck”, while we “hurried up and waited.” We have a sense of mission focus and purpose that is hard to replicate in the average American. We are different, plain and simple. Why not spend time with similarly minded folks by hanging out and networking at a chapter social, general membership meeting or Army Ball. Once you take the first step, you will learn of other networking opportunities such as the Central Florida Army Aviation Association of America which also has monthly socials. You will learn of a group of Vets who meet every Thursday for a cigar night. You will learn of the mentor protegee groups, like Camaraderie Foundation, JOSH, Four Block, and Veterati to name just a few, that exist for the sole purpose of helping veterans. Whether you are looking for a job, trying to learn about Department of Defense contracts, starting a business, selling a service, running for office, or just want to tell war stories, networking starts the process and AUSA can be the first step in getting your message out to the world. Consider coming to our monthly social which will be the second MONDAY happy hour at *Island Wings* on Alafaya near UCF. We used to do only Tuesday PALT days but now we are shifting to Mondays before the PALT. For you non-PEO STRI folks, that is an event where all the future Army contracts are discussed with industry. If you want to participate on the Executive Committee, we meet once a month on the third Wednesday to discuss the chapter events. If you enjoyed last year's Army Birthday Ball and want to be on the committee, let us know who you are and we will sign you up for the monthly meetings that are about to start for the June 24th, 2023, 248th Army Birthday Ball.

To our industry partners reading this newsletter, for a small fee you can sponsor these events giving you numerous networking benefits, a way to meeting some of your “competimates”, possible ACC Orlando and PEO STRI personnel attendance, and a chance to meet the Warfighter young and old. If you are a social sponsor, we can give you a minute or two to educate the audience about your company

and do some marketing. Army Ball or AUSA National Convention Hospitality suite sponsorship gets your name on the banner and access to special events associated with each. To seal the deal, we can even have to take a selfie with the current President, Harry Buhl. That will be worth a lot someday!

Army Strong

The XO

***Save the Date* - The 248th Army Birthday Ball,
24 June, 2023**

Golf

Look to our website for updates on the Golf Tournament. Robert Biggers is moving forward with it and has been talking with a Pro to oversee our “long drive” for the next year.

Scholarships

As a reminder, Scholarship applications will be due in March of next year. SFC (Ret) Ken Johnson will be leading our Scholarship Program in the 2023 Operational year. He will be in touch. Keep on the look-out!

Membership

Active Life Members 178

Association Members 1202

Individual Members 414

Total Members 1838

Don't forget, if you are not a Life Member, your membership expires someday. Keep checking to keep up to date.

Member Articles

“There is No Free Chicken”,

Perspective of a Career Soldier

By CSM (R) Rob Fortenberry

I have read a lot of great articles, blogs, posts, and veterans mentorship groups regarding transition that have provided a wealth of insight and knowledge over the past few months. Like most service members in the final year before retirement, I have been overcome with many emotions; excitement, depression, enthusiasm, and frustration extending the full spectrum. The closer I get to retirement; the rucksack only seems to be getting heavier. Before entering this phase of my journey, I made a deliberate decision a few months ago. I am a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer and instead of continuing to seek positions with greater responsibility and influence in the Army, I decided to shape my own destiny and challenge myself by traveling the path less traveled earlier than initially intended. I have had what most would consider an exceptionally successful career in the Army and have come full circle as the Command Sergeant Major for the United States Army Infantry School. Like many retiree mentors have said, “When you know, you know when it is time” and, that becomes a real consideration in your thoughts, it is difficult to conceptualize. In April, before being considered for another senior position in the Army, I removed myself from the Nominative Sergeants Major slating process. This decision allowed me to laser focus all my energy outside of my Army obligations to my goals and a new future for my family. I simply was not ready to define my legacy, there was more work to do. I must be honest; I have done a lot of things in my life that some would consider risky or even foolish and amongst my confidants, peers, and friends this decision was of no exception.

The Army for myself has given my family and I far more than we would ever be able to repay it has enriched our lives and shaped me into the person I am today. However, I have always been appreciative but uncomfortable and confused with the gratitude given by those that support our Service members. I acknowledge that it is deeply rooted in patriotism for our country and those that stand as guardians of

our way of life, thank you. The Army provides all of us transitioning from service a wealth of resources, schooling, and opportunities to position ourselves for success within the civilian marketplace. However transitioning service members beware, **“there is no free chicken”**, it requires an individual investment of time, resources, commitment, and above all a positive, humble attitude that is committed to achieving your goals.

I have reflected a lot over the past few months on the accomplishments, challenges, and hardships, of almost three decades of service to our country, most of which as a Nation at war. I have binders of awards, evaluations, and entire walls covered in symbols of recognition for hard work and inspirational leadership. I do not say that to be boastful but merely to make a point. These mementos of success are important and should never be marginalized, they are reminders of what we have achieved and are symbols of what we represented to those we positively inspired and served. I have seen far too many veterans that have become disenfranchised with the military as they transition almost spiteful in some regards and make comments like, “once I leave the military, I will never hang any of my awards in my home as a veteran”. I consider it as misplaced frustration due to a sense of perceived entitlement from years of gratitude and free chicken as a service member, nobody twisted our arms, and we chose to serve. I am certainly not defending this position nor sympathizing with it. I point it out because we as service members must reconcile with our past to gain perspective and strength for the challenges and unknowns of our future.

I look at the challenges of building a professional network on LinkedIn, writing resumes, and conducting formal and informal interviews no different than attending Ranger School at 45 years old. Yes, it was challenging and honestly sucked but it was achievable and attainable. However, there was no free chicken. The work I put into the physical and mental preparation for the course, “known challenges” provided strength for the “unknown challenges” such as rucking up the Stairway to Heaven, in the mountains of north Georgia. Draw from your past successes and what you overcame to prepare for future success but nothing more, it is about harnessing our past to gain strength in setting conditions for our success as veterans.

Finally, it is my opinion that humility goes a long way, and although we may have made it to the top positions in our country’s military. We are entering not into a new chapter of the same book but writing a completely different book in the same series. The principal characters may be the same but new characters are introduced, and different environments, relationships, social dynamics, and even the vernacular

are different. I say embrace the challenge and get comfortable being uncomfortable. Reflect on your past to gain strength and perspective but stay positive, humble, and keep your compass on azimuth. Regardless of the small setbacks, you may encounter along the way. Dedication, positive attitude, and hard work always pay off but there is no free chicken.

Make a difference, contribute to society, and maintain your values, ethics, and moral character. Be proud of who you are, a Soldier for Life in civilian clothes so make it count and accomplish the mission.

PS: I wrote the below article just over a year ago as I transitioned from the Army after 28 years. I tested this mindset over the past year without understanding the full scope of the outcome. Now, I can honestly say that this mindset has been tested and provided me with the motivation, direction, and focus to succeed in my new environment as a proud Army Veteran. The article below was a therapeutic experience for me, in a time of uncertainty and confusion in understanding, where I had been, where I was then, and where I was going in the future. To provide perspective this article was written 3-4 months before my exit from Army during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic and reflects my mindset and thoughts of that time. I hope this can assist our fellow AUSA members as they transition from the uniform, to continue a successful career and life as veterans and leaders in the communities we now serve, thank you for your service.

Chapter Calendar

As of August 17, 2022

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| September 4 | 5 Labor Day | 6 Fall GMM | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Patriots' Day | 12 NDIA Army Social | 13 PALT Navy Social | 14 Navy Luncheon | 15 NDIA Lunch Incheon 1950 | 16 AAAA Social | 17 Antietam 1862 |
| 18 Orange Co Gold Star Mothers & Families | 19 | 20 | 21 EXCOM | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Gold Star Mothers & Families | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 ABBCOM | 30 | October 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Operation Enduring Freedom 2001 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 Columbus Day No Social | 10 AUSA Annual Meeting, Washington DC | 11 PALT | 12 | 13 AAAA Social | 14 | 15 |
| 16 NDIA | 17 | 18 | 19 EXCOM | 20 Carol Denton Golf Challenge | 21 Bob Bret Golf Tournament | 22 Navy Ball |
| 23 | 24 Operation Urgent Fury 1983 | 25 | 26 Professional Development Breakfast | 27 ABBCOM | 28 | 29 |
| 30 Halloween | November 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Trivia & Game Night | 5 | |

As of August 17, 2022

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| November 6 | 7 Army Social | 8 Election Day PALT Navy Social | 9 Navy Luncheon | 10 | 11 Veterans Day AUSA MC Golf MC Casino | 12 Marine Corps Ball |
| 13 NDIA | 14 Battle of Ia Drang 1965 | 15 | 16 EXCOM | 17 NDIA Luncheon | 18 | 19 Young Professionals @ UCF vs. Navy |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 Thanksgiving | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Earle Denton Memorial Golf | 28 | 29 | 30 | December 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 Flamingo Party | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 ABBCOM | 9 AAAA Toys for Tots | 10 ARMY BEATS Navy At the Link |
| 11 | 12 | 13 EXCOM | 14 Operation Joint Endeavor 1995 | 15 WID Holiday Social | 16 Battle of The Bulge 1945 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 Christmas | 26 Battle of Trenton 1776 | 27 | 28 Chapter Party @ Storage Unit | 29 | 30 | 31 New Year's Eve |

As of: August 17, 2022

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------|
| January 1 | 2 | 3 Seminole County School Restart | 4 | 5 | 6 NDIA CPAG Defense Forum Breakfast | 7 |
| 8 New Orleans 1815 | 9 NDIA Army Social | 10 PALT Navy Social | 11 Navy Luncheon | 12 | 13 AAAA | 14 |
| 15 MLK Birthday | 16 | 17 | 18 EXCOM | 19 NDIA NDIA Luncheon | 20 | 16 |
| 22 Anso 1944 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 ABCCOM | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 Young Professionals | February 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 ABCCOM | 10 AAAA | 11 |
| 12 NDIA Army Social | 13 | 14 PALT | 15 EXCOM | 16 Chiyong Ni 1851 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 President's Day | 20 | 21 | 22 Buena Vista 1847 | 23 ABCCOM | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 GMM | March 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Your Executive Committee



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<https://www.ausa.org/chapters/sunshine-chapter>

President.Sunshine@ausa.org

