



Michael A. Grinston **Chief Executive Officer** **Army Emergency Relief**

A native of Jasper, Alabama, Michael Grinston became the chief executive officer of Army Emergency Relief in 2024. Grinston served 36 years in the U.S. Army, and had the distinction of being named the 16th Sergeant Major of the Army, the highest-ranking enlisted Soldier and the Army Chief of Staff's personal advisor on quality of life issues. These matters impacted a force of approximately 1 million Soldiers and an operating budget of \$180 billion.

Grinston sees his role at AER as a continuation of his commitment to Soldiers and their Families. The mission of AER is to provide grants, interest-free loans and scholarships to promote readiness and help relieve financial distress for Soldiers, retired Soldiers and their Families. AER's mission strongly aligns with Grinston's purpose of bringing stability to Soldiers in need. In his former leadership roles, he saw first-hand the issues that can stem from strained financial situations – suicide, domestic violence and food insecurity to name a few. Grinston wants to ensure that Soldiers do not have the burden of worrying about financial issues while they are protecting Americans around the world.

As the Sergeant Major of the Army, Grinston advocated for change in many areas that also overlap with services provided by AER. He championed issues such as housing, helping to secure over \$1 billion dollars a year to enhance living quarters. He began a worldwide, quarterly meeting to improve overall food nutrition in the Army. Not only was access to healthier food options examined, Grinston pushed to modernize facilities where Soldiers eat. Grinston is also widely known for reducing the stigma of behavioral health challenges, encouraging Soldiers to use the resources available to them. Immediately following the incident of George Floyd, Grinston brought the conversation of racial inequity to the forefront of the Army.

Grinston holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland University College. His military education includes all levels of the noncommissioned officer education system. He is a graduate of the Ranger, Airborne, Drill Sergeant and Air Assault schools. Grinston's deployments included six combat tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, as well as one operational tour in Kosovo. He also served on the boards of the Army & Air Force Exchange Services and the Defense Commissary Agency.

Grinston and his wife, Alexandra, have two children.