



Soldiers assigned to the 8th Military Police Brigade and Philippine Army soldiers with the 5th and 7th Infantry Divisions participate in a subject-matter expert combatives exchange April 11 during Exercise Salaknib 24 at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

## IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 49  
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### Recruiting Initiatives Gain Momentum

3

### Paper: Chinese Army Lacks Mission Command

4

### Family Readiness

Operation Deploy Your Dress

6



### Chapter Highlights

Fort Novosel-Wiregrass

8

# LANPAC features US, partner leaders

**C**ommanders from U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Army Futures Command and the Japanese, South Korean and Australian armies are among the leaders scheduled to speak at the Association of the U.S. Army's LANPAC Symposium and Exposition in Hawaii.

An international symposium dedicated to land forces in the Indo-Pacific, the three-day event is May 14–16 at the Sheraton Waikiki in Honolulu. It is expected to draw military leaders from more than 26 countries, including at least 15 army chiefs.

This year's theme is "Campaigning with Landpower." Topics that will be discussed include creating and maintaining joint interior lines, the evolving role of NCOs in the region, and multidomain operations for the

Army, the joint force and industry.

There also will be almost 70 exhibits and a Leadership Forum for a select group of about 120 soldiers conducted by AUSA's Center for Leadership.

To register for LANPAC or for more information, click here.

Army updates from the symposium will be available here. You can join the conversation with this year's hashtag #LANPAC2024.

LANPAC opens May 14 with a keynote from Gen. Charles Flynn, commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific, followed by a panel discussion on integrating all domains for the coalition and joint campaign. Panelists include Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, commanding general of I Corps; Lt. Gen. David Hodne, di-

rector of Army Futures Command's Futures and Concepts Center; and Marcia Holmes, principal deputy assistant defense secretary for mission capabilities.

In the afternoon, there will be a panel on the evolving role of the NCO in the region, featuring senior enlisted leaders from U.S. Forces Korea, the Marine Corps and the armies of New Zealand, Singapore and Australia.

Brig. Gen. Onisivoro Covunisaqa, commander of the Fiji Military Forces' Land Force Command, will provide a keynote, and there will be a panel on the adversary approach to multidomain operations.

Mario Diaz, deputy undersecretary of the Army, opens Day 2 of LANPAC

See **LANPAC**, Page 5

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## Army efforts to improve recruiting ‘beginning to work’

**W**ith about six months to go, the Army is on pace to meet its recruiting goals for the fiscal year, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said.

“While I don’t want to be overconfident because we have six more months in the fiscal year, if we continue to perform as we have, there’s an excellent chance we’ll meet our recruiting goal this year of 55,000 soldiers and 5,000 in the delayed entry program,” Wormuth told the House Armed Services Committee.

Wormuth and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George testified Tuesday before the committee to discuss the service’s \$185.9 billion budget request for fiscal 2025.

Pentagon data has shown in recent years that the military recruiting environment is among the worst in U.S. history. Only about 23% of Americans between the ages of 17 to 24 qualify for military service, and of those, only about 9% have shown interest in the military, according to the Defense Department.

The Army has missed its recruiting goals the past two years—falling short by about 15,000 in fiscal 2022 and 10,000 in fiscal 2023. In response, the service offered promotion and bonus incentives for soldiers who refer recruits who make it through basic training, and in turn offered re-



Future soldiers recite the oath of enlistment April 13 during a ‘Salute to Armed Forces’ night hosted by the Seattle Mariners in Washington. (U.S. ARMY/PFC. NATHAN ARELLANO TLACZANI)

cruits incentives such as quick-ship bonuses, duty station of choice and bonuses for critical MOSs.

It revived its iconic “Be All You Can Be” marketing slogan and is investing in targeted marketing and advertising campaigns.

The Army also stood up the Future Soldier Preparatory Course,

designed to help recruits meet the service’s academic or physical fitness standards, and announced several initiatives to transform the recruiting workforce, including the creation of recruiting warrant officers.

The first cohort of those warrant officers, who will bring specialized expertise to the recruiting force, will be trained and out in the field by the end of summer, Wormuth said.

“The things the Army’s been doing in the last year and a half, I think, are beginning to work,” Wormuth said.

As the Army continues to confront its recruiting challenges, the service is restructuring and would like to grow, Wormuth said. Regular Army troop strength is 452,000, she said, and plans call for that number to grow to 470,000 by fiscal 2029.

“We would like to grow, absolutely,” she said. “We’re committed to increasing the size of the Army, particularly the active-duty force.”

### Meet the AUSA headquarters staff

#### Karli Goldenberg

*Staff Writer, ARMY magazine*

Karli Goldenberg has been with AUSA for nearly three years. She has reported from Chicago, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Virginia during her career. In her spare time, Karli enjoys traveling, hiking, running and spending time with friends and family. An avid baker, she is on a quest to create the best browned butter chocolate chip cookie.



## Paper: Chinese military's top-down system inhibits mission command

The structure of the Chinese People's Liberation Army precludes any implementation of mission command and leaves China vulnerable, according to the author of a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

"The entire system of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership and control of the armed forces and society is built on a foundation of strict, top-down guidance from the central leadership, covering all aspects of national security and military affairs," retired Col. Larry Wortzel writes. "The fact that the People's Liberation Army has followed the concept of mission command and its practice in the U.S. Army is worthy of study."

In "The PLA and Mission Command: Is the Party Control System Too Rigid for its Adaptation by China?" Wortzel, a senior fellow in Asian security at the American Foreign Policy Council and former director of the Strategic Studies Institute at the U.S. Army War College, delves into why the concept of mission command is incompatible with China's military structure.

In the paper, Wortzel defines the concept of mission command as a system that "allow[s] subordinate leaders in Western militaries flexibility in implementing a commander's intent."

Despite the Chinese military's rejection of Western military practices, four field grade officers in the People's Liberation Army wrote about the potential benefits of mission command in a 2022 article in *China Military Science*, the Chinese military's authoritative doctrinal journal, Wortzel writes.

In it, they "argue that in using the concept of mission command, Western militaries take advantage of the spirit and initiative of subordinate leaders" and "imply that the [People's Liberation Army] should study and perhaps adopt mission command,"



Soldiers with the Chinese People's Liberation Army 1st Amphibious Mechanized Infantry Division prepare to demonstrate capabilities to U.S. officers in 2011. (DoD PHOTO)

Wortzel writes.

Given the high-control environment of the Chinese Communist Party, authors who discuss ideas like mission command must "insulate themselves from party criticism," Wortzel writes. The four field grade officers quote Mao Zedong, the former leader and founder of the People's Republic of China, and Chinese President Xi Jinping to prevent backlash, according to Wortzel.

Ultimately, China's overdependence on data and information technology in the place of command and control could leave its military more vulnerable to attacks, Wortzel concludes.

"Xi Jinping's vision for the future of the [People's Liberation Army] ... takes advantage of automation and artificial intelligence," which precludes members of the Chinese military from having "the flexibility to interpret the commander's intent," Wortzel writes. "This will undoubtedly impose new challenges ... particularly as these automated decision systems are vulnerable to enemy intervention and electromagnetic or cyberattack."

Read the paper here.

# AUSA Extra

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Support For the Soldier

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## PERK OF THE WEEK

AUSA members are invited to a webinar at 2 p.m. Eastern on May 1 with AUSA's Affinity Partner Statera



Retirement to learn about unique solutions for today's retirement landscape. If you cannot attend, email [Pete@stateraretirement.com](mailto:Pete@stateraretirement.com) for a one-on-one recap of the presentation.

**LANPAC**

From Page 1

with a keynote address. Flynn will then lead a panel on forward positioning and tactical defense, featuring Gen. Yasunori Morishita, chief of staff of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, Gen. An Su Park, chief of staff of the Republic of Korea Army, and Lt. Gen. Simon Stuart, chief of the Australian Army.

Maj. Gen. Brian Eifler, commanding general of the 11th Airborne Division, and Air Force Lt. Gen. David Nahom, commander of Alaskan Command at U.S. Northern Command, will talk about the challenges of operating in the range of environments in the Indo-Pacific.

In the afternoon, Stuart will provide a keynote presentation, followed by a panel discussion on the importance of multinational training and exercises led by Lt. Gen. James Jarrard, deputy commanding general of



Gen. Charles Flynn, commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific, speaks at AUSA's 2023 LANPAC Symposium and Exposition in Honolulu. (AUSA PHOTO)

Army Pacific.

The third and final day of LANPAC will begin with a keynote by Young Bang, principal deputy assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology. Maj. Gen.

Jered Helwig, commanding general of the 8th Theater Sustainment Command, will then lead a discussion on sustainment in competition, crisis and conflict.

The U.S. Army plays a key role in the Indo-Pacific, home to more than half of the world's population, several of the world's largest militaries and two of the three largest economies. Between 2020 and 2024, the Army has made "pretty substantial" progress in building partnerships with allies, increasing U.S. presence in the region and working to deter countries such as China, Flynn said recently.

"We already have a limited regional war going on in Europe. We've got a limited regional war going on in the Middle East. The last thing that we can afford is to have another war out here in the Pacific," Flynn said. "And we're doing everything we can to prevent that from happening."

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## Record-breaking dress giveaway aids military families

In just one day, the Association of the U.S. Army's Family Readiness directorate and Operation Deploy Your Dress gave away 824 dresses to service members and military family members in the Washington, D.C., area.

The record "deployment" of dresses took place April 13 during the groups' seventh annual pop-up event in the area. This year's event was at a new location, the Military Women's Memorial in Virginia.

Operation Deploy Your Dress helps offset the cost of formal military events by offering new and gently used dresses and accessories to service members and their family members. The nonprofit organization, founded in 2015, has "deployed" over 20,000 dresses through its 14 shops around the world and various events, saving military families approximately \$2 million.

"The pop-up event has become the highlight of our Operation Deploy Your Dress year," said Liz McKenrick, Operation Deploy Your Dress co-founder. "It embodies the entire mission and spirit of our organization in one weekend."

Volunteers began collecting gowns and accessories in January, McKenrick said, "sorting, tagging and processing close to 2,000 dresses all donated by the American public."

"Then, in less than six hours, they put together a pop-up boutique, which is both elegant and fun," she said.

McKenrick and Yvonne Coombes, another co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress, along with retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president of Leadership and Education, retired Lt. Col. Marilla Cushman, the Military Women's Memorial senior adviser to the president, and AUSA Family Readiness volunteer Angel Mangum kicked off the weekend's events April 12 with a "Sip and See" reception at the memorial.



Yvonne Coombes, left, co-founder of Operation Deploy Your Dress, AUSA mascot Cpl. M. Power and Holly Dailey, the association's Family Readiness director, prepare for the pop-up event at the Military Women's Memorial in Virginia. (OPERATION DEPLOY YOUR DRESS PHOTO)

Guests began arriving the following morning, with a special 8 a.m. time slot reserved for AUSA Premium members. All who registered received a free AUSA Basic membership and were able to select a time slot between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

After checking in, guests were welcomed by representatives from organizations supporting military families. The groups provided re-

sources and giveaways such as diamond earrings, beauty supplies and clutch purses.

Attendees then proceeded to the dress boutique, where they were able to select two dresses and an accessory. It was breathtaking to see the gallery of the Military Women's Memorial filled with elegant gowns.

The event was more than just a "shopping" trip—it turned into a delightful experience as volunteers took on the role of personal stylists. Volunteers assisted several attendees in finding the prom dress of their dreams, ensuring each one would feel like a star on their special night. Similarly, they helped many select gowns suited for glamorous military balls. The magic of watching another person's face light up while finding that perfect dress was a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Attendees also were pleasantly surprised to find a special section dedicated to suits, donated by many community support organizations. These contributions enabled Operation Deploy Your Dress to expand the boutique experience.

See **Family Readiness**, next page



Yvonne Coombes, left, and Liz McKenrick, right, co-founders of Operation Deploy Your Dress, greet retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, AUSA's vice president of Leadership and Education, during a reception at the Military Women's Memorial. (AUSA PHOTO)

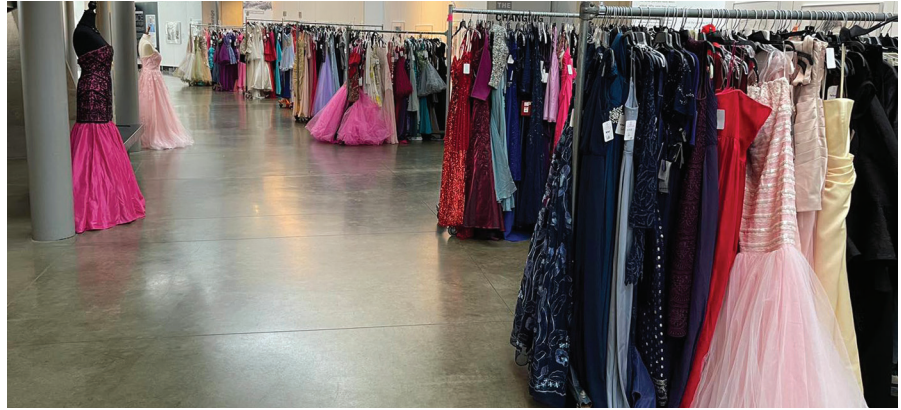
**Family Readiness**

From preceding page

In all, 824 dresses were “deployed” in one day—a new record for the AUSA-Operation Deploy Your Dress pop-up event. “The big payoff is event day, when we see hundreds of ‘shoppers’ wearing gorgeous gowns and beaming smiles,” McKenrick said.

This event would not have been possible without generous donations from numerous companies, organizations and individuals around the world, as well as the extraordinary efforts of volunteers, AUSA staff, Military Women’s Memorial staff and Operation Deploy Your Dress leaders.

This year, volunteers came from across the country to show their love and support of service members and their families, including Georgia and New Jersey; the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and Fort Gregg-Adams (formerly known as



In total, 824 dresses were ‘deployed’ during the one-day pop-up event hosted by AUSA and Operation Deploy Your Dress. (OPERATION DEPLOY YOUR DRESS PHOTO)

Fort Lee) in Virginia.

“AUSA’s mission is to educate, inform and connect. We introduced or reintroduced military families to the Military Women’s Memorial, connected them to military resources—including AUSA Family Readiness—and provided our military community with an opportunity to

make memories and spend the day with old friends and new,” Coombes said. “The ODYD-AUSA pop-up event once again showed the national capital region that we’re ‘more than a dress.’... We’re a community.”

**Kaylee Spielman** is AUSA’s Family Readiness intern.

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## Aviation commander bids farewell at chapter meeting

Leading the Army's aviation force for the past two years has been "a dream come true," said Maj. Gen. Michael McCurry, commanding general of the Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Novosel, Alabama, formerly known as Fort Rucker.

McCurry, the 17th Army aviation branch chief, was the keynote speaker April 11 at the Association of the U.S. Army Fort Novosel-Wiregrass chapter's general membership meeting at the Enterprise Civic Center.

"It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as the commanding general of USAACE and Fort Novosel," McCurry told the nearly 400 attendees, including soldiers, AUSA members, city leaders and business owners. He will be reassigned this summer, he said.

### Fort Novosel-Wiregrass

"My great friend, a tremendous Army leader, Maj. Gen. Clair Gill and his lovely wife, Fran, will be joining you all here to partner even stronger," McCurry said. Gill currently serves on the Pentagon's Joint Staff as deputy director for regional operations and force management, J-3.

In the past year, aviators from Fort Novosel flew 223,354 hours, Mc-



Maj. Gen. Michael McCurry, commanding general of the Aviation Center of Excellence at Fort Novosel, Alabama, addresses the general membership meeting of AUSA's Fort Novosel-Wiregrass chapter at the Enterprise Civic Center. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Curry said. "For perspective, that is 36% of all flying hours flown in the Army around the world, right here, with only 13% of the Army aircraft," he said. "That does not happen by accident. It is enabled by the people of the Wiregrass and your unending support for what we do."

Fort Novosel is the fifth largest employer in the state, largely thanks to the Wiregrass community, McCurry said. "On any given day, there are about 25,000 of you living and working in and around the post support-

ing us in this labor of love," he said, as reported by the *Dothan Eagle*.

Enterprise Mayor William Cooper responded in kind to McCurry's words. "We are proud to have the home of Army Aviation in our backyard, to have the sound of freedom flying overhead day in and day out, and to have our soldiers and their families call our city home," Cooper said.

As the Army's aviation enterprise modernizes along with the rest of the force, it's important to remember that troops are at the heart of every effort and initiative, McCurry said. "While there may be new doctrine, aircraft and training requirements, our steadfast commitment to providing the best training for aviation soldiers is resolute. We must continue to train America's sons and daughters to be ready to fight and win our nation's wars," he said, as reported by the *Dothan Eagle*.

"Army Aviation exists for one purpose, and that is the soldier on the ground. It's our culture and it's our sacred trust," McCurry said. "It has been my honor and pleasure to serve over the last two years and, as always, I offer my heartfelt thanks to all of you for what you do."



A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter takes off April 2 at Fort Novosel, Alabama. In the past year, aviators from Fort Novosel flew 223,354 hours—36% of all flying hours flown in the Army around the world, Maj. Gen. Michael McCurry said. (U.S. ARMY/KELLY MORRIS)





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