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Army Secretary Christine Wormuth provides the keynote address Monday during the opening ceremony of the 2023 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

## Wormuth: Army becoming more modern, adaptive

**T**he U.S. Army is at a critical moment in history, and it must use this moment to ask hard questions and make big decisions, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said Monday in a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition.

"It is a crucial moment for the Army to summon our ingenuity, to innovate and invest in emerging technologies, to test and develop in uncharted areas like artificial intelligence and contested domains like space and cyber, to reshape and transform the force to be more adaptable and flexible," Wormuth said. "We've got to ask the tough questions and make the hard decisions on what our force needs to fight in the future."

The Army needs to think big, she said. "As we pursue the most significant modernization effort in generations, we're

building an Army that can dominate in large-scale multidomain operations."

She also spoke of still cloaked plans to realign force structure, making certain that in times of challenging requirements the Army can field "the right formations and ensure they are properly manned, trained and able to deliver lethal results."

Wormuth expects Congress will be briefed on organizational changes in the next few weeks.

Recruiting is another priority. "Simply put, we are changing who we recruit, how we recruit them and who we recruit them with," Wormuth said. "We're going to broaden our prospect pool to include more of the available labor force."

She added, "The United States Army cannot and will not be irrelevant. I am confident that what we're doing today

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## Chief calls on Army to focus on ‘core’ warfighting mission

America’s Army is doing a lot of things “really well,” but “we’ve got some work to do,” Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said.

Speaking Tuesday at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Luncheon at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., George said he is proud of the Army and its soldiers. “Wherever I go, I consistently see soldiers of every generation willing to innovate, train and endure hardship for the team and the mission,” he said.

George wants Americans to see the same Army. “I want them to feel the pride that I feel because their Army is the best ground fighting force in the world,” George said. “When our Army hits the dirt, our nation means business. Our allies and partners don’t want to fight without us, and our adversaries are wise to fear us.”

George said he has been reflecting on the Army’s motto: “This We’ll Defend.” First used as a battle cry by the Continental Army, “it reminds us that our Army’s purpose is timeless and clear: to fight and win the nation’s wars,” George said. “That is our mandate from the American people.”

Meeting that mandate requires action in four focus areas: warfighting, delivering ready combat formations, continuous transformation and strengthening the Army profession, George said.

To maintain its focus on the “core purpose” of warfighting, the Army must “ruthlessly prioritize” how it uses time and resources, George said. It also must reduce complexity in how it fights, equips and builds teams. “Soldiers need to shoot, move and communicate, and they need to bond together by tough training and overcoming adversity



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George addresses the Dwight D. Eisenhower Luncheon Tuesday during AUSA’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C. (AUSA PHOTO)

side by side,” he said. “Technology should facilitate those fundamentals, not encumber them.”

The Army’s ability to deliver ready combat formations is another focus area for George. “We must always be ready to answer the call to get our formations to the fight and sustain them there,” he said.

This includes trimming excess equipment from units. George cited as an example a company commander in Europe whose property book was 118 pages. “That makes no sense,” George said. “We will take that off commanders’ plates and off soldiers’ plates. They shouldn’t be spending time caring for equipment they don’t need.”

The Army also is looking to refine how it conducts maintenance. “Maintenance is critical and something we must get right, but we will make it more efficient,” George said.

Continuous transformation is an-

other focus area. This includes more than modernizing equipment. “Continuous transformation means iteratively adapting and evolving how we fight, how we organize, how we train and how we equip,” George said. He then asked industry for help. “Please help us transform continuously and build agility into the Army,” he said. “The lines of communication are open.”

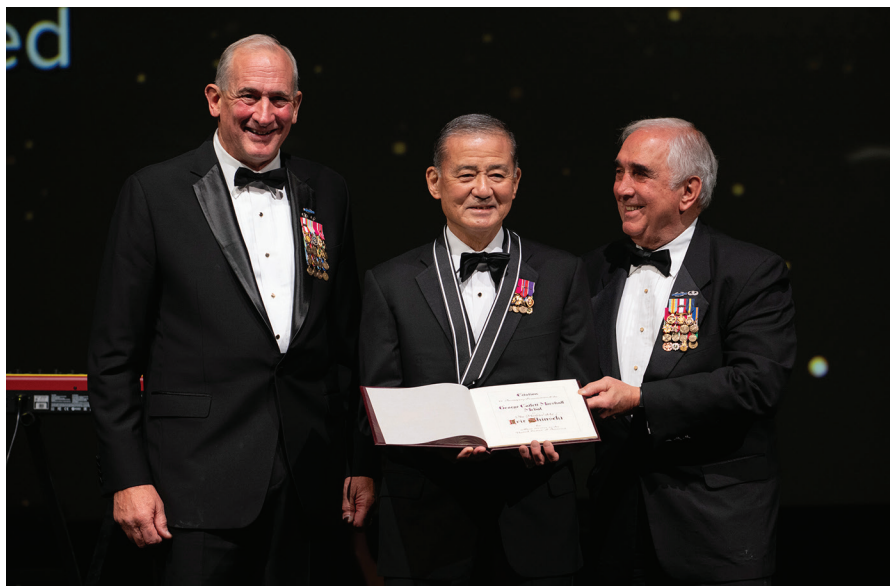
Finally, the Army must focus on strengthening the profession, George said. “This focus area underpins all the rest,” he said. “To maintain America’s trust, we must serve the nation with competence and character. Every time I get out to talk to our formations, I see mission-focused leaders and soldiers, but we must stay self-aware and continually seek improvement.”

Leaders must enforce standards and ensure discipline within formations, George said. “When it comes down to a close fight, grit, character and discipline are what make the difference,” he said.

*When our Army hits the dirt, our nation means business ... our adversaries are wise to fear us.*



## Shinseki receives 2023 Marshall Medal



Retired Gen. Bob Brown, left, AUSA president and CEO, and retired Gen. John Tilelli, right, a member of the association's Board of Directors, present AUSA's George Catlett Marshall Medal to retired Gen. Eric Shinseki. (AUSA PHOTO)

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army awarded its highest honor for selfless service to retired Gen. Eric Shinseki, a former Army chief of staff and former secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The 80-year-old Hawaii native received AUSA's George Catlett Marshall Medal Wednesday, the final day of the association's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition, saying he was "deeply humbled" to receive the award. The Marshall Medal is named for the Army officer and statesman who led the Army, the State Department and Defense Department.

Shinseki, born one year after the attack on Pearl Harbor, said, "I don't come from a military family," yet he feels "I've been a soldier most of my life."

His first exposure to soldiers came from men in his family who served in the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II. He recalls that they were young and robust, "flush with confidence in a sense of having done something big."

His own Army career would begin with an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New

York. Seven months after his 1965 graduation, Shinseki was shipped to Vietnam. A field artillery reconnaissance sergeant helped prepare him so he wouldn't be a liability to the team, an act that was the beginning of Shinseki's deeply held admiration for NCOs.

He would serve two tours in Vietnam and was wounded twice in combat. He commanded at all levels, and in June 1997 became the first Asian American to reach the rank of four-star general.

Shinseki served as the 34th Army chief of staff from June 1999 to June 2003. He was VA secretary from January 2009 to May 2014.

During his career, Shinseki said he learned that it's hard to lead if you lack credibility and knowledge of your basic skills, a message now embraced by new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, and that trust and confidence are critical for leaders.

"Can anyone do that better than soldiers who have been raised and trained in the profession?" Shinseki said. "If you want to change, it takes leadership and innovation. Change doesn't happen on its own."

# AUSAExtra

**Voice for the Army –  
Support For the Soldier**

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## Army announces 2023 Best Squad Competition winners

**F**ive soldiers from Army Special Operations Command are the winners of the Army's 2023 Best Squad Competition.

Sgt. Jacob Phillips, Spc. Chancellor McGuire, Staff Sgt. Andre Ewing, Spc. George Mascharka and Spc. Shane Moon were named the winning squad Monday during a luncheon at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

Additionally, McGuire was named the 2023 Soldier of the Year, and Phillips is the NCO of the Year.

"One of the things that makes our Army so successful is people. People like you, who are tough and go far beyond the normal to achieve success," said Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, director of the Army Staff, who was the event's keynote speaker.

Piatt emphasized the importance of being ready regardless of resources. "Anyone can lead when conditions are perfect," he said. "You have made it clear that you can lead under the harshest conditions."

The profession of arms takes a toll on those who serve, Piatt said, so it is important to watch out for other soldiers. "Lead with strength, but also lead with compassion," he said. "We are a values-based organization. ... That is what makes our Army strong."

The Best Squad Competition, overseen by Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, took place Sept. 24–Oct. 6 at Fort Stewart, Georgia, and in Washington, D.C. Twelve squads representing major commands across the Army competed in the event. Each squad had five soldiers—a squad leader who is a sergeant first class or staff sergeant, a sergeant or corporal team leader and three squad members in the ranks of specialist or below.

The competition featured fitness and combat skills events, including the Army Combat Fitness Test, weapons lanes, a 12-mile foot march and individual warrior tasks and squad battle drills. It culminated with a



Lt. Gen. Walter Piatt, left, director of the Army Staff, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, right, recognize the team from Army Special Operations Command, winners of the Army's 2023 Best Squad Competition. (AUSA PHOTO)

board-style interview testing the soldiers' knowledge and professionalism in front of top Army leaders.

"We exist to fight and win," Weimer said. "You represent what it means to be ready for when we say 'This We'll Defend.' I couldn't be more proud of every single team that participated in this event."

### Honorary SMA

Weimer also announced Monday that retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, a former director of

NCO and Soldier Programs at AUSA, is this year's Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army, a tradition that began in 2016.

"I don't think thank you is a strong enough word to convey how grateful I am for this great honor," said Spencer, who enlisted in 1961 and served more than three decades in uniform.

"My journey started over half a century ago when I joined the 'team of teams,'" Spencer said. "I always had someone to my left, someone to my right, and shoulder-to-shoulder we faced whatever the future had in store. There's always been someone behind me ... willing and able to come to my rescue should I falter, and somebody in front of me to show me the way."

After leaving the Army, Spencer said, he joined another team, AUSA, where he continued his lifelong passion for taking care of soldiers, families and veterans.

"I was a soldier. I am a soldier, and I will always be a soldier," Spencer said. "My sincere wish for everyone in this room is that you may be in heaven 30 minutes before the devil knows you're dead."



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmie Spencer, a former director of NCO and Soldier Programs at AUSA, is this year's Honorary Sergeant Major of the Army. (AUSA PHOTO)



## Armywide ‘Blue Book’ will help NCOs maintain standards

**N**COs drive change across the Army, and they will have a critical role as the service renews its focus on standards and discipline, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer said.

“We’re going to get after standards and discipline,” Weimer said Wednesday at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. “I can’t go anywhere in the Army and not have a conversation about standards and discipline.”

Weimer acknowledged that while NCOs bear a large responsibility for soldier standards and discipline, it is not an easy burden to bear. “It’s tough being the standard every day,” he said. “You’re going to get injured. You’re going to have things happen in your life. It’s tough coming to work with a good attitude every day if you have stuff going on at home.”

But being the standard means something, Weimer said. “When you work on it and you stay steady with it and you add a little humility in there, you’ll build that cohesive team,” he said.

To help NCOs with this effort, Weimer said the Army is building an Army “Blue Book” that will be “the base document for everybody to know what right looks like.”

The Blue Book traces its origins to 1779, when Friedrich Von Steuben published *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, and the printer, facing a paper shortage, bound the book with the blue paper he had on hand, according to the Army.



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer discusses his initiatives and priorities during a briefing at the AUSA 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

The Blue Book isn’t new, Weimer said, but this new version will be a foundational document that “will be the same for every single one of us.”

A team of soldiers from the Army’s Software Factory will build the Blue Book in app form, allowing the Army to update information quickly and efficiently, Weimer said. The goal is to have it ready by the 2024 AUSA Annual Meeting, Weimer said.

Soldiers will hear a lot about standards and discipline, Weimer said, so the Army must be clear about what it expects. “If we don’t level what the standards are, we’re going to be frustrated,” he said.

The Blue Book will include Army history, the oath, the soldier, NCO and other creeds, links to commonly used publications and other relevant information, Weimer said. Army leaders also are seeking feedback from soldiers for what the book should include.

But standards and discipline don’t end with a book, Weimer said. “The book itself doesn’t create standards and discipline and lethality,” he said. “You still have to lead ... to have the personal courage to live the standard and enforce the standard.”

The Army also is looking to put rigor back into training, said Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Harris, senior enlisted leader for Army Training and Doctrine Command. “We have to be good at our tasks at all times,” Harris said. He used land navigation as an example. “Land nav is not just for the infantry, it’s not just for the scouts,” he said. “When you hold each other accountable, we’re going to get proficient in our tactical tasks and our warrior tasks and battle drills.”

As the Army enforces standards and discipline, unit cohesion will grow and harmful behaviors should decline, Weimer said. These efforts will be crucial if the Army is called to fight the nation’s wars, he said.

“The foundation of being a phenomenal warfighter is based on standards and discipline,” Weimer said. “If we’re truly going to be ready for large-scale combat operations, we’ve got to get tight on those standards and discipline.”

### Wormuth

From Page 1

and in the years ahead will ensure that we remain the greatest land fighting force in the world.”

Wormuth made a continued plea for Congress to pass full-year Army appropriations so it can avoid a looming late-November government shutdown, and to confirm more than 150 Army

general officer nominations. Delays are causing “needless uncertainty,” she said, adding that promotion delays are a “discouraging signal.”

Progress is being made on transforming the force with new capabilities, she said. “We’ve got to continue to embrace innovation and transformation or risk failing to address future threats,” Wormuth said.

“The good news for our Army is that across the force, I see us embracing change, looking to the future and becoming the more modern, more lethal and more adaptive force we need to be in close partnership with industry,” Wormuth said. “The Army has pressed ahead and stayed on track to implement our most ambitious modernization effort in 40 years.”





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## Army launches ‘significant’ recruiting transformation

The Army is professionalizing its recruiting force with a new MOS and an assessment process aimed at selecting the right people for the job, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said.

In remarks at a talent management forum at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., George outlined the coming transformation in Army recruiting, which will include a shift in how recruiters are identified and where they recruit.

Recruiters typically are selected from Army formations, but when he’s visited recruiting battalions, George said, “people would tell me, ‘Hey, I could tell almost immediately whether somebody had the skills to be a good recruiter.’ It’s a tough job to be able to sell those kinds of things.”

With the premise that recruiters will do better the longer they stay in one area, where they get to know the community, build cultural rapport and perhaps even speak a couple of languages, George said, people who qualify for the new MOS, 42T, will be selected much as soldiers are chosen to be in Special Forces.

“We’re going to go after selecting the right people ... and then training them and keeping them so we’re not rotating them all the time,” George said, pointing out that the model is similar to the way the Army National Guard recruits. “They can continue to progress, but they’re going to be out there where they’re actually going to know the environment and be more effective.”

The move to professionalize the recruiting force is part of a larger effort to transform the Army’s recruiting enterprise. The moves come as the service missed its recruiting goal for the third consecutive year.

Maj. Gen. Johnny Davis, commander of Army Recruiting Command, said during the Monday discussion that the best ideas to boost the number of new recruits have come from



Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George discusses upcoming changes to Army recruiting during a forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. DEONTE ROWELL)

recruiters. One of those is the Future Soldier Preparatory Course, a program run at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Fort Moore, Georgia, that helps new recruits improve their test scores and get into better physical shape.

“Everything we’ve done in this command is really the feedback from these recruiters,” Davis said. “It has allowed us to move resources and invest in their needs. When the recruiting force sees that, there’s this surge of energy to get out there and do more.”

The need to professionalize the re-

cruiting force was evident to Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, deputy Army chief of staff for personnel, G-1, as he walked the halls of the Annual Meeting.

“When you walk around the halls here, you see all of this great kit that’s in the hands of our warfighters,” Stitt said. The overhaul of the recruiting enterprise “is the most significant transformation that’s happened within [Recruiting Command]. Well, we want the best kit in our soldiers’ hands to do any mission that they’re given. Recruiting Command is no different.”

Stitt pointed out that the training a young sergeant receives to be a recruiter “is shorter than everything except for two military occupational specialties within the United States Army.”

To modernize and “upskill” the recruiting force, he said, “we want to make this a career for a recruiter” while maintaining the value of a clear career path with opportunities for leadership positions and authority within the organization.

It will require setting the conditions to catch up with a 21st century labor market and developing Recruiting Command into a “resilient organization that is able to withstand economic or geopolitical impacts on the labor market,” Stitt said.



Retired Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, left, AUSA’s vice president for Leadership and Education, moderates a forum on recruiting during the AUSA Annual Meeting. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. DEONTE ROWELL)

## Leaders seek to instill pride, professionalism in soldiers

**R**einforcing the fundamentals of professional soldiering has emerged as a drumbeat among Army leaders as they prepare the force for future combat.

The focus on strengthening the Army profession is less a change than it is an effort to instill anew the foundational tenets of cohesive teams—teams that are built on trust and discipline and rely on competence, character and standards.

“It’s always been part of our DNA as a military, but it’s an inflection point right now for our Army,” Gen. Gary Brito, commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command, said Wednesday during a forum on the Army profession at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

“Switching from [counterinsurgency] to large-scale combat operations, it just fits in well, and we also have some new Army leadership, so I would say that we’ve had a strong Army profession, [but] there’s a point that we always re-look at it as well,” Brito said.

Jeffrey Peterson, director of the Character Integration Advisory Group at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, said instilling an ethos of professionalism among the young men and women who will become the Army’s future leaders starts at school and continues through regular reinforcement.

“There is a bit of a back-to-basics approach here, there is no silver bullet to this,” Peterson said. “This requires consistent effort, consistent discussion and consistent prioritization on adhering to Army Values and living by our ethic, and always asking if what we’re doing is building trust or undermining trust, no matter what the task.”

Peterson pointed out that because competence in basic soldiering skills is easier to measure than character and commitment, it’s understandable



New soldiers arrive at Fort Moore, Georgia, for basic training. (U.S. ARMY/CAPT. STEPHANIE SNYDER)

that it would receive most of the attention. But, he said, taking character and commitment out of the equation would result in failure.

“You can be really competent, you can have pretty good character, but if you’re not committed to the mission, to the organization, to your unit, then you’re probably not going to be trustworthy, because when the chips are down, you’re going to be looking out for yourself more than you are your soldiers, your unit or the mission,” Peterson said.

Strengthening the Army profession



Gen. Gary Brito, commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command, addresses a forum on the Army profession during AUSA’s Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

is one of the top priorities of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer has placed a focus on being “brilliant at the basics,” with a promise to renew the focus on standards and discipline.

“The character of war is changing, and we have to transform,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Harris, senior enlisted leader at Training and Doctrine Command. “We are continually transforming. That goes right with our being a steward of our profession. We have to continually reinforce what we do.”

Brito pointed out that the culture of pride in being a soldier starts when young people arrive for Initial Entry Training and when officers go through the Basic Officer Leader Courses. Training, education and reinforcement of the Army profession is instilled “through the continuum of learning,” Brito said.

“So, that private today is going to come back as a sergeant later on for some additional education, the same with the lieutenants, they’re going to come back as a captain or major later on, so it’s reinforced there,” Brito said.



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## Senior Army leaders hear family concerns at town hall

In a town hall for family members featuring the Army's top leaders, one soldier stood and stated his problem bluntly. His wife, he said, "would rather deal with Comcast than try to find information from the Army."

Army Secretary Christine Wormuth visibly reeled from the rebuke, but then turned to the service's new chief of staff, Gen. Randy George.

"We have soldiers working on this right now, and they have interviewed hundreds of spouses, soldiers at all different levels so that you get the same kind of user experience," George said.

George's solution to the Army's long-standing failure to push out accurate and timely information about installations, particularly online, is a new app called "My Army Post." At the forum, held Wednesday at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., George asked a team of four Army software engineers to come to the front of the room. They had been tasked two weeks ago, he said, to develop the app, building in need-to-know information from gate hours to on-post services and medical and child care resources.

Thanks to input from stakeholders across the Army, George said, the app will be designed to be accessible to everyone who needs to get around an Army post.

George said at the forum's outset that making sure families moving to new installations could easily get connected was a particular priority for him and a frustration he experienced as part of an Army family. "I'm looking around at all the people in uniform, and you know what it's like to show up in a location and not necessarily know where to go, so you know how important welcoming is when you show up someplace, and being able to find the right resources," he said.

This is not the first time the



From left to right, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer answer questions from Army families during a town hall at AUSA's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

Army has launched a smartphone app aimed at putting post resources and information in a single place. In 2020, the service announced the new "Digital Garrison" app, developed through a collaboration between AAFES, Army Installation Management Command and Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

That app is still available, with a 4.3-star rating out of five on the Apple store. It was not, however, developed under the oversight of the chief of staff of the Army and by active-duty soldiers. George added that the app would create a tailored experience for users based on the information they need most. "These are nerds," George said of the software team, "and that's a compliment."

George said the team had been given 30 days to present a working solution, but a version of the "My Army Post" app is already available to download from app stores.

### Better communication

Information flow problems go beyond gate hours and getting around post. As the Army leaders hailed policy improvements for spouse employ-

ment, including an agreement with the Italian government that will allow spouses stationed there to work remotely, George said not enough spouses seemed to be aware of the licensure reimbursements offered by the Army. Since 2019, he said, only about 800 spouses had taken advantage of the offer.

"We've got to do better at getting the information out," he said.

### Barracks woes

Army leaders also are emphasizing better communication and creative solutions to well-known problems in other areas. For the first time in the family town hall series, leaders solicited real-time feedback via attendees' smartphones on topics they cared about most. When the first question went live—what quality of life topics the audience wanted to hear leaders speak on—the response was nearly instantaneous: Barracks issues loomed above other issues in a growing word cloud.

Wormuth acknowledged a Government Accountability Office report published in late September that

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## Army must prepare for ‘any uncertainty’ around the world

**F**aced with a shifting global security environment that has grown even more uncertain in recent days, the Army is building readiness through the warfighting skills that come with trusting and empowering people, the commander of Army Forces Command said.

On the third and final day of the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., Gen. Andrew Poppas led a discussion on what it will take to fight and win future wars, having listened in on security forums from Army leaders in the Indo-Pacific, Europe and Africa.

“Just sitting through the last couple of days of engagements here,” he said, “you realize that the world today is much more uncertain, and it is a much more dynamic environment than we have prepared for.”

“We’ve had a lot of discussions about readiness, and that’s one of the key components here, but one of the things comes up is ... ready for what? How do you further define that?” Poppas said. “Over the last 20 years of continuous conflict, we’ve had a level of clarity. We no longer have that clarity.”

At Forces Command, Poppas said, four principles for training are aimed at being prepared “for any uncertainty that arrives worldwide, because we’re a global power.”

First, leaders must win trust and empower people, which comes down to the individual, that human dynamic that defines the Army. “It’s building those teams, building the trust, the competence, making sure that it is a cohesive fighting force that has the will to fight together,” Poppas said.

The second principle is that the Army must “win the first fight,” he said, by making sure teams and squads are ready.

It also means making sure there is expertise in battalions and brigades as well as divisions and up, so



**Top:** Gen. Andrew Poppas, commander of Army Forces Command, leads a discussion on what it will take to fight and win future wars during the AUSA Annual Meeting.

**Bottom:** A soldier presses the panelists with questions. (AUSA PHOTOS)



leaders can synchronize warfighting functions to bring the Army’s full capabilities to bear.

“We don’t have weeks, months or years to prepare our formation. It has to be prepared today, right now, when the call comes,” Poppas said.

The Army must also prepare for and win the future fight as a total force, which includes the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve.

Lt. Gen. Sean Bernabe, commander of III Corps and Fort Cavazos, Texas, formerly known as Fort

Hood, pointed out that with about 600 days since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, “we’ve all watched the character of war change right before our eyes.”

“We’ve had a chance to really watch and learn to appreciate the challenges of large-scale combat operations in the current environment,” he said during the forum Wednesday. “We’ve seen that combined arms maneuver is still a key to success, but we’ve also seen how difficult combined arms maneuver can be.”

## Ukraine lessons better prepared Army to support Israel

**A**s a new unprovoked invasion ignites war in the Middle East, the U.S. Army is watching—and it's better prepared to assist now than it was two years ago.

That's the message from Douglas Bush, assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology. Speaking Monday at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., Bush hailed the transformation that has taken place within Army acquisition in the past year, motivated by the urgent need to support Ukraine in its defensive war against Russia.

"It's been a big year," Bush said, pointing to the thousands of missiles, hundreds of vehicles and millions of artillery shells the Army has provided to Ukraine, and \$25 billion worth of contracting in less than a year to replace those supplies. Beyond that, he added, the service reached numerous internal acquisition milestones, including full-rate production for the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle and the Integrated Battle Command System; key down-selects for programs including the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft; and the rollout of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army.

In moving to develop and field warfighting gear faster than the historic norm—the XM7 assault rifle, he said, is expected to enter production just under four years from the start of that acquisition program—Bush said the Army is proving its capability as "the arsenal of democracy" and answering criticisms about its ability to conduct acquisition at the speed of warfare.

"The way you change a narrative is to show you can do it," Bush said, adding that "the Ukraine war has shown how fast we can go."

***If Israel needs additional support as well, we're ready and standing by in the Army to help them."***



Douglas Bush, assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology, addresses a forum during the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

As the Army continues to provide materiel support to Ukraine and works to accelerate the purchasing and delivery of systems, Bush acknowledged the three-day-old conflict unfolding in Israel, following the Oct. 7 invasion by Palestinian militant group Hamas, saying the service was prepared to send military aid there too, if called upon.

"If Israel needs additional support as well, we're ready and standing by in the Army to help them," he said.

Gen. James Rainey, commanding general of Army Futures Command, said the Army has benefited from having "lessons learned" collection teams on the ground in Ukraine since before Russia's invasion in February 2021 closely observing the conflict. In addition to insights about the changing nature of warfare, how it's demanding more speed, autonomy and smart weaponry, Rainey said, the war has

shown that some things remain the same: war continues to be about the human actors and decision-makers at its core.

And, Rainey said, the Army's formations and NCO corps continue to be "the envy of the world."

"The tragedy that's been unfolding in Ukraine ... and now in the Middle East for the last 72 hours, I think we have a moral responsibility to do everything we can to learn from that," Rainey said.

Meanwhile, Bush said, the Army expects to get faster still, with aid from Congress and industry.

The Army is in an "aggressive testing campaign" aimed at getting its much-anticipated long-range hypersonic weapon fielded by the start of 2024, and it has fielded its first operational Strategic Mid-Range Fires battery, equipped with ground-launched Tomahawk and SM-6 missiles, he said.

Among the emergent efforts that Army acquisition leaders expect to set new speed standards are a move to equip Army formations with loitering munitions, also known as kamikaze drones, which, with their autonomous elements and ability to improve targeting reaction time, will make the elements "much more capable," Bush said.

Another panelist, General Dynamics President of Ordnance and Tactical Systems Firat Gezen, described the work the company has done to meet the urgent demands of the Ukraine conflict with a doubled research and development budget and a sixfold increase in production capacity for the artillery components that the war requires.

"A lot of people are talking about artillery acceleration around the world, but the U.S. is doing it," Gezen said. "Nobody is doing it at the rate and at the speed that the U.S. is doing it, and it's all because of the partnerships we have within industry and beyond."



## Efforts at installations aim to help soldiers, families thrive

**M**aking sure military families on large Army posts have what they need to thrive is a big, intensive job—and it extends beyond the installation gates, a panel of leaders said Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Omar Jones, commanding general of Army Installation Management Command, was joined on a panel at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition by leaders from one of the service's largest posts: Fort Bliss, Texas. Maj. Gen. Jim Isenhower and his wife, Cheryl, emphasized the importance of engaging soldiers and families with effective and timely information, and joining forces with the local community to build a stronger network of support.

Cheryl Isenhower said she's always working on the challenge of how to disseminate need-to-know information and updates quickly and reliably on a post that's geographically the size of Rhode Island. One key, she said she's learned, is identifying "influencers," those with a lot of connections who are good at spreading information via text.

Jones said his command is looking to internalize these lessons, with efforts underway to develop better tools for disseminating information at every installation. In addition to the "My Army Post" app announced earlier in the day by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, these tools aim to provide more flexibility to meet local needs, Jones said.

"Maybe it's flyers, maybe it's digital signs at the installation," Jones said. "As Team Bliss gets [the tools] and they say, 'We want to do a little bit more of this, a little bit less of that to meet the needs of Community Bliss,' they can do that."

An audience member asked the panel about the information the new app promised to deliver, pointing out that it would pull information like military dining facility and post gym hours from Army websites, some of which are not regularly updated and are frequently inaccurate.

Jones pointed to a soldier feedback feature on the upcoming app that will help users flag outdated or insufficient information, but he also agreed that the issue was a problem

that needs to be solved.

"You should be able to know before you leave your house, your car, your barracks, what are the hours," he said. "It should be there at your fingertips, accurate and reliable, because you know that it is up to date. So that's why we're going in the direction we're going. ... [It's] one of those problems that we've got to solve across the board."

Just as important as the information delivery mechanisms is ensuring the information in circulation is accurate, the panelists said. The Isenhowers discussed their work to reframe the narrative at Fort Bliss, which can be viewed as an undesirable posting, with an "It's Better at Bliss" campaign that highlights the post's best features, including attractions near El Paso.

Soldiers also need to "tell the Army story" to the civilian communities around their installations, Jones said, particularly in an era where few Americans have direct exposure to the military.

"The soldiers in the room are the most effective spokesmen and women the Army has," Jones said. "It's our job, America's Army's job, to connect with the American people and to tell that story."

Maj. Gen. Jim Isenhower added that forging connections with the community isn't just about creating positive associations with the Army; it's also about making sure there's a robust support network available for families, the majority of whom live off-post. As an example, he described his effort to bring local religious leaders on post for breakfast twice a year to familiarize them with what units at Fort Bliss are doing.

"I have been very frank with them and said, 'If these units deploy, our families are already in your communities, they're volunteering in your churches, [and] I hope that you provide pastoral care, because the chaplains are coming with us,'" he said.



Lt. Gen. Omar Jones, commanding general of Army Installation Management Command, discusses tools for soldiers and families and answers questions from the audience during a forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTOS)





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## Exercises in Europe to focus on real-world adversaries

**A**s Russia's war on Ukraine wears on into its second year, the leader of U.S. Army Europe and Africa said that preparing for future fights will mean leaning into real-world battle scenarios.

Speaking Tuesday at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., Gen. Darryl Williams said that, following NATO's July summit emphasizing deterrence and allied support of Ukraine, the Army would stress becoming more prepared to fight the real threat in the region.

This also means bringing a broader range of allied nations into joint exercises, Williams said, and engaging in scenarios they're likely to face based on geography and context.

"Our Baltic brothers and sisters will draw first contact, possibly, so what does their stance look like, what forces do we have there?" Williams said. "How are we empowering them? How are they linked to posse up with Finland, and Sweden, hopefully, in the future?"

"We will fight the people who we're going to fight now," Williams said of the exercises. While he did not name Russia, he said that exercises featuring notional enemies and battle scenarios, such as the one featured in NATO command post exercise Steadfast Jupiter, taking place now in Brunssum, Netherlands, would take a back seat to more realistic conflict. Operation Austere Challenge, a recurring U.S. European Command exercise to be held in March, would feature this new approach, he said.

"Our exercise construct—it's strong now, but it'll be even stronger because we're going to fight the enemy," Williams said. "We're going to practice that way with all of our alliance."

As the Army continues to evaluate ways to apply hard-earned war insights learned from Ukraine, Williams stressed the importance of reaction speed on the battlefield, par-



Gen. Darryl Williams, commander of U.S. Army Europe and Africa, speaks at a contemporary military forum during AUSA's Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

ticularly in artillery maneuver. The Ukrainians, he said, were working "admirably" to meet the challenge amid complex obstacles.



Pfc. Carlos Beltran-Cayetano, with the 3rd Infantry Division, provides live-fire artillery support on Monday to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group Lithuania during Exercise Iron Wolf at Pabrade Training Area, Lithuania. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. CESAR SALAZAR JR.)

"The synchronization of offensive operations—the idea that you fire and maneuver, not fire, then maneuver, is something that we're working very closely with," Williams said.

Lt. Gen. Pasi Välimäki, commander of the Finnish Army who appeared on the panel with Williams, said the war also emphasized the importance and challenges associated with battlefield sustainment and building up a mature and capable reserve force to carry on the fight. He applauded the work of the U.S. Army's 21st Theater Sustainment Command in "pushing through materiel in huge quantities" to support the alliance.

Williams said the Army has more to internalize about the challenges of increasingly long logistics challenges and the prospect of having supply lines contested.

"The center of gravity of NATO has moved farther east, right through Finland, down through the Eastern Bloc," Williams said. "It's going to be contested logistics. We're going to fight our way into this, probably. So, how do we protect those long lines of communication to get those enablers to support the warfighter on the very tactical edge of the fight?"



## Allies, partners key to deterrence in Indo-Pacific region

**W**ith an ongoing war in Europe and a new war in the Middle East, it's more important than ever to keep war in Asia at bay by building the Army's presence and capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, said Gen. Charles Flynn, commander of U.S. Army Pacific.

By building relationships, forward positions and training areas and conducting regular, campaign-style exercises with partners and allies, the Army is creating enduring operational advantage in the region for the joint force, he said.

"The goal is no war, and that is the land power's contribution to the joint force to prevent that from happening," Flynn said Tuesday in a forum at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition.

"What those joint interior lines are doing, along with Operation Pathways and along with training in the region, is to take time and space away from [China], to deny key terrain ... and to keep our physical presence forward with hard power to deter a war from happening," Flynn said.

Flynn noted three strategic advantages the Army contributed to establish that operational endurance in



A soldier with the 2nd Infantry Division, right, utilizes a Utah Army National Guard linguist to communicate with Japan Ground Self-Defense Force members during Exercise Orient Shield 23 in September at Hokkaido, Japan. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/CPL. KALINA HYCHE)

the region, starting with the creation of the Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center, the first combat training center built by the Army in 50 years.

With campuses in Alaska and Hawaii, the real gem is the center's exportable capability, which has been extended into training centers in Australia, Korea and Japan, and dis-

cussions are underway to build one in the Philippines, among other islands.

"The point I'm making is, it's not just the training centers in Hawaii and Alaska, which look exactly like the region, it's the exportable version of the training center in the region," Flynn said. "Why is that happening? Because the region sees the value of what our combat training centers represent, and they want to get that level of high-end training in their countries."

The second thing the Army is doing, he said, is increasing interoperability with allies and partners and increasing "the confidence they have in our tactics, techniques and procedures," Flynn said.

Most importantly, the Army's enduring reach and training opportunities with allies and partners are "denying key terrain to the [People's Republic of China]," Flynn said. "We are taking time and space away from them by being forward in the region with combat credible forces, and we are adversary-focused and we're conducting a series of rehearsals out there."



Gen. Charles Flynn, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, discusses the Army's presence and capabilities in the Indo-Pacific at the 2023 AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



## Experts discuss efforts to build resilience, quality of life

The Army is getting ahead of harmful behaviors by prioritizing quality of life for its soldiers, communities and families, a panel of experts said.

“Resilience [and] suicide risk is a community and social issue,” said Craig Bryan, a veteran and a clinical psychologist with expertise in military personnel and veterans, who moderated a military family forum Monday at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. “Suicide prevention is not just about stopping people from dying and keeping them alive. It’s about helping them to find purpose and meaning. It’s about helping them to achieve well-being in their lives.”

The Army has taken multiple steps to increase soldiers’ resilience and reduce harmful behaviors, including extending its Quality of Life Task Force and implementing new suicide prevention regulations.

Social determinants of health, including issues like health care and economic security, “overlay all of the quality-of-life issues that we’ve been working on,” said Dee Geise, director of the soldier and family readiness directorate and the Army’s Quality of Life Task Force.



Subject-matter experts discuss quality-of-life initiatives for soldiers, communities and families during a military family forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

Though Geise noted that the Army does check in with young soldiers at training posts, it is not yet “to the extent that we need,” she said. Geise also said that soldiers at all stages of their careers may be at points where they could benefit from proactive wellness checks.

Times of transition, such as a permanent change-of-station move or when a relationship fails, are times when soldiers may need more support, said Col. Samuel Preston, commander of Blanchfield Army Com-

munity Hospital at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

The Army’s Mission 100 program, which provides soldiers in Alaska with annual counseling, could be used to inspire soldier support across other installations, said Brig. Gen. William Green Jr., the deputy chief of chaplains who is performing the duties of the Army’s chief of chaplains. The program was implemented after a cluster of suicide deaths in Alaska.

“In Mission 100, [the Army] made sure that [everyone] saw or talked to someone, either a chaplain, a behavioral health expert or a military family life consultant,” Green said. “We were able to get those particular folks on the ground [in Alaska]. From all accounts, we’ve heard that they came in and they helped significantly, and they were absolutely the value added to the process.”

For soldiers, every interaction and community connection has the ability to prevent harmful behaviors.

“Our communities are our first line of defense, and that’s everything from formal programs that we deliver to every touch point that we have with each other, in our community and in our unit to [interactions with community members],” Geise said. “It’s all meaningful engagement.”



A participant asks a question during a family forum titled ‘Transforming Army Prevention, Care, Education, and Quality of Life’ at the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



## Army champions ‘holistic’ care for soldiers and families

**F**rom financial education to counseling services, the Army is working to boost a holistic approach to taking care of soldiers and families.

Resources that support resilience and help prevent harmful behaviors can be useful for soldiers and families at any point in their careers, said Robyn Mroszczyk, an Army spouse and the financial education program manager in the Army G-9.

“Life happens, milestones happen. There’s all of these different personal and professional points in a soldier’s career but also within a family’s holistic life and journey,” Mroszczyk said Tuesday during a military family forum at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. “It doesn’t matter where you are in the spectrum. Everybody can use assistance.”

To better streamline these efforts, the Army is aligning the Army Resilience Directorate under the Army G-9, led by Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen, deputy Army chief of staff for installations. This way, “we can really look at [resilience] much more holistically and ensure that we’re getting upstream and [implementing] some programs ... to ensure that we’re getting [ahead] of any ... harmful behaviors,” said Sgt. Maj. Michael Perry, senior enlisted adviser to the Army G-9.

More spouses have been seeking out nonmedical counseling more often, said Erika Slaton, director of Military Community Support Programs. “[The] nonmedical counseling program [is] a way for us to provide support around those everyday military life issues that can cause stress in a military context, whether it’s communication with a spouse, whether it is parent to child communication, whether it’s relationships, whether it’s sleep loss,” Slaton said.

Supportive leadership and trust are key to ensuring soldier resilience, Perry said. “Confidentiality is very, very important. This is where I



A panel of experts discusses Army efforts to improve holistic care for soldiers and families during the 2023 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

would say leadership is critical to a lot of the programs that we have to implement,” he said. “When soldiers trust their leaders ... and you have these cohesive teams, those soldiers will actually feel very empowered, and they feel like they can bring their problems to their leadership.”

Understanding soldiers’ financial situation is also a key part of understanding their wellness and their risk of engaging in harmful behaviors. “We don’t talk about finances,” said Mroszczyk. “Yes, there’s going to be times when there are more

bills than there is money coming in. ... Maybe it’s because they didn’t have affordable housing. Maybe it’s because our spouse lost their job in the middle of a permanent change of duty station. We have to look at everything holistically.”

Just as soldiers train, spouses and families can adopt a training mindset to foster resilience, Perry said. “We have to train our young soldiers, our spouses and our family members to be resilient,” he said. “There’s a ton of resources out there, so we just have to expose them to that.”



Soldiers, spouses and family members learn about resources that support resilience and help prevent harmful behaviors during a forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



## Soldiers brief senior Army leaders at AUSA solarium

**A** Leader Solarium organized by the Association of the U.S. Army concluded Wednesday with the opportunity for about 160 mid-grade NCOs and officers to pitch ideas to senior Army leaders about solving some of the service's big challenges.

Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer listened to ideas on fixing a troubled soldier pay system, expanding cold-weather training and straightening out a complicated batch of unit rosters that don't always agree on how many soldiers are in a unit.

George launched the Leader Solarium review by asking some big questions. "What are the things that prevent you from accomplishing your warfare mission and building cohesive teams?" he asked the group. "What keeps junior soldiers from taking initiative? How do you help leaders enforce standards and discipline?" he asked.

One group asked for earlier and more comprehensive grading of how well soldiers have mastered their MOSs, possibly with annual evaluations called the Total Soldier Assessment Program. "You just came up with something we might be able to use," Weimer said.

George said he would have the Army Training and Doctrine Command review the proposal. Wormuth also supported the idea, saying, "Great job. I think this is a great idea."

Inaccuracies in pay and different pay processing rules from one installation to another were issues raised by Solarium attendees. There was no clear proposal to fix a complicated and frustrating payroll system, and Wormuth has gotten involved in difficult cases. Understaffing of finance personnel may be part of the problem.

"It bothers me that you say this,"



**Top:** From left to right, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George and Army Secretary Christine Wormuth respond to briefings from officers and NCOs participating in a Leader Solarium at AUSA's Annual Meeting and Exposition.

**Bottom:** A captain attending the solarium speaks to the Army's top leaders. (AUSA PHOTOS)



George said. "We will obviously take a look."

He warned, though, that not every problem is worth fixing, especially if it's complicated and will take considerable time and money to remedy. "For everything we add, we need to think of what comes off the plate," he said.

Organized by AUSA's Center for Leadership, the Solarium featured talks from Army leaders and civilian subject-matter experts and small-group discussions. The group of about 160 specially selected soldiers provided their feedback to the senior Army leaders at the end of the three-day event.



## AUSA unveils new logo inspired by WWII Rangers

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army unveiled a new logo inspired by the World War II Army Rangers who scaled the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc in Normandy, France.

Revealed Monday at the opening ceremony of AUSA's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition, the new logo represents AUSA's role as the Army's premier association and its efforts to grow and connect with a new generation of soldiers.

Established in 1950, AUSA adopted its current logo in August 1954. Designed by one of AUSA's first members, it features a bald eagle, an olive branch, a shield and a torch.

Creating a new logo is part of AUSA's 2025 Strategic Plan. It aims to refresh the association's brand while broadening awareness of AUSA, its products and programs. It also seeks to appeal to a younger Army demographic.

The 1950s logo will be retained as



AUSA's seal and reserved for official documents, certificates and awards.

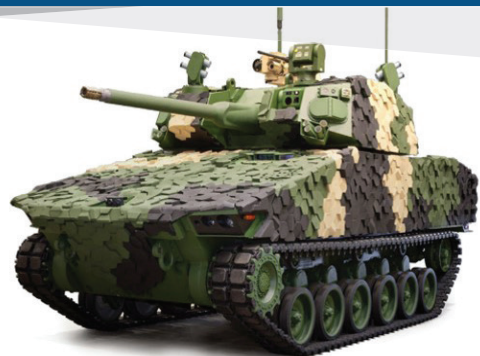
On June 6, 1944, as U.S. and Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France, the Rangers scaled the steep cliffs of Pointe du Hoc. Located 4 miles west of Omaha Beach, the Germans had built a fortified position for a coastal battery of six 155-mm howitzers.

The Rangers approached Pointe du Hoc by boat and began the dangerous ascent, braving heavy enemy machine-gun fire and grenade attacks.

Although many soldiers were lost, the Rangers reached the top and accomplished their mission by capturing Pointe du Hoc.

Drawing from the Rangers' incredible actions almost 80 years ago, AUSA's logo seeks to recognize the tremendous contributions of those who came before while keeping their stories alive for the next generation.

Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, said he hopes the new logo resonates with the Army community and AUSA members. "I want them to see that AUSA focuses on the people who are the Army," he said. "It takes a team—soldiers, families, civilians, retirees, veterans and industry—but one objective: to support the Army community."



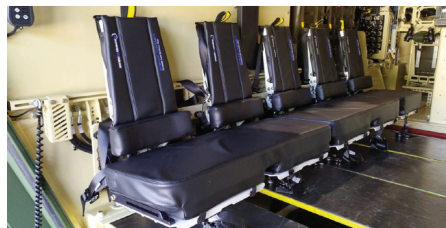
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## NCOs must ensure soldiers are ‘brilliant at the basics’

The 17th sergeant major of the Army encouraged all NCOs to get advanced degrees in warfighting and master the basics of soldiering.

“I worked on my bachelor of science, finished it online, but what we’re really going to focus on is a master’s degree in warfighting, because if we’re called upon with the adversaries we have now, that’s the one that’s going to matter the most,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer said Tuesday at a senior NCO forum during the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C.

Weimer, a career special operations NCO who became the Army’s top enlisted leader on Aug. 4, made his remarks at the conclusion of a panel discussion with the senior enlisted leaders from Army Forces Command, Army Training and Doctrine Command, the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Army Materiel Command and Army Futures Command.

He reinforced the tenets of a professional NCO corps and highlighted some of the key points from their dis-



Top NCOs from major Army commands discuss training, technology and the future force during the 2023 AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

cussion. Ensuring soldiers are “brilliant at the basics,” he said, “is our responsibility. Teaching is nonstop.”

Weimer urged NCOs to get their soldiers to schools, even if it means taking a risk with unit manning strength, and he echoed Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Hester of Futures Command, who said that while technology will be part of any future war-

fare, it will be the basics of soldiering that ensure victory in battle.

“We should not necessarily throw all of our eggs in the technology basket. Technology is going to help us fight and win without a doubt, it’s going to bring a particular capability to our formations,” Hester said. “But I also flip that on its end and say technology’s also going to punish the untrained, the ill-disciplined, the unprepared organization. Fighting is about people.”

Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the Army’s efforts to instill and maintain a warfighter mentality, especially with the service’s youngest soldiers, Weimer reiterated the need for the Army to get beyond the crisis and begin to strengthen the profession by being focused on mastering the basics.

Weimer plans several changes to get the force back to a warfighting ethos while acknowledging that change is hard. But, Weimer said, what he plans for the force is more than just change.

“I would argue some of it is pure change, and some of it is just getting back to what we know right looks like,” he said.



NCOs from across the force listen to the Army’s senior enlisted leaders during a forum at the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)





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## Evolving technology requires more speed in acquisition

**A**s the Army faces pressure to adopt the technologies and digital tools rapidly becoming the standard for business and professional operations, service leaders plan to roll out a slate of new development and acquisition policies aimed at standardizing best practices and taking advantage of outside expertise and already validated efforts.

But even with these initiatives in motion, the Army may not be moving fast enough to satisfy the industry partners supporting its work.

Army Undersecretary Gabe Camarillo, who headlined a panel about digital transformation Tuesday at the Association of the U.S. Army's 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., hailed the work done in the past two years to emphasize simple and standardized initial capabilities documents, or ICDs, over more elaborate, bespoke and descriptive needs statements that can slow acquisition and development. Enabled by expanded authorities from Congress that allow for streamlined acquisition, this ICD-based approach is now in use by 11 Army programs, Camarillo said.

"We are always looking for the best of breed, so how do we adapt our essential processes to do that is something we've begun to do in a fundamental way," he said. "But there's more to be done."

To that end, he said, the coming rollout of new policies "will fundamentally reshape the landscape" for how the Army manages and maintains software.

These include changing the software test and evaluation process to acknowledge contractor testing that has already taken place, in order to avoid duplicating efforts; establishing "coherent" contracting approaches that require Army personnel trained in software development and how to define the right requirements; and importing knowledge in the form of a team of outside experts



Army Undersecretary Gabe Camarillo outlines new digital development and acquisition policies during a panel at AUSA's Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

the Army can lean on to review and refine solicitations for complex software development.

"I think industry would very much appreciate that," Camarillo said. "The reality is, there are way too many programs for contracts that have been led without an understanding of what we're asking for in a real sophisticated way."

These efforts notwithstanding, another panelist faulted the Army for being too risk-averse when it comes to widespread deployment of systems and technologies.

Karen Dahut, CEO of Google Public Sector, cited artificial intelligence and generative AI in particular as spaces in which a fear of the unknown was pushing the U.S. military to extensive testing and development rather than timely execution. When a crisis unfolds, like the war in Ukraine, Dahut added, the Defense Department then approaches industry partners demanding urgent delivery of the products and capabilities they've long been deliberating over.

"I think we tend, inside of the department, to think too long and hard about these experimental technologies, and that prevents us from per-

vasively deploying them and really enabling the warfighter in a different way," she said.

What's holding the Army back may come down to simply having the protocols and procedures necessary to sustain the new systems, said Lionel Garciga, the Army's chief information officer.

"From a technology perspective, we could probably deploy ICAM across the Army today," Garciga said, referring to the service's future Enterprise Identity, Credential and Access Management system.

Young Bang, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology, said the Army should look to the Marine Corps as a leader in developing tactics, techniques and procedures, rather than soliciting more tech to solve problems.

"What does the Army do? We throw more money and more systems at the problem, versus the Marines, ... they actually look at TTPs, because they don't have a lot of money," Bang said. "If we increase our technical debt, we're never going to be able to get to our target systems or spend money for that."



**Town hall**

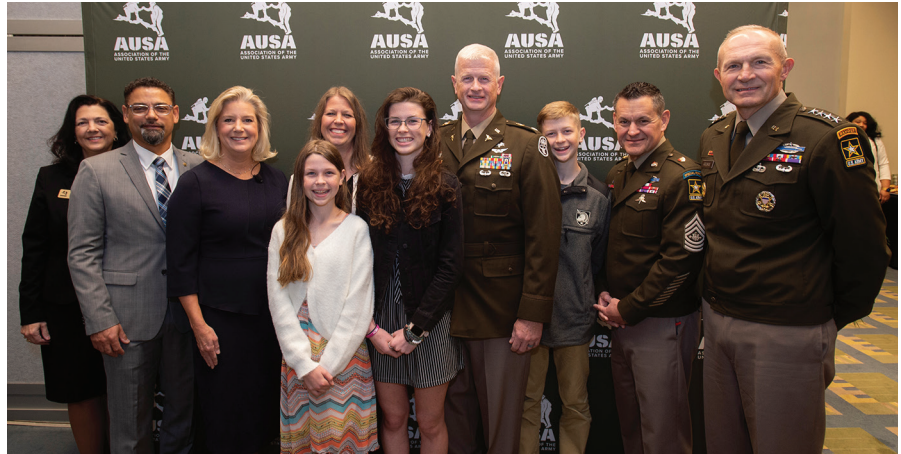
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revealed persistent poor living conditions and hazards including sewage overflow and mold. She said the service would “take all of those recommendations on board,” as leaders work to increase spending for fiscal 2025 on military construction and barracks sustainment.

“I would ask you to be patient with us,” she said, as the Army works to improve oversight and accountability while constrained by a flat current budget.

She added that the Army is exploring the possibility of launching a privatized barracks project at Fort Irwin, California, following the lead of the Navy, which has two such projects in Norfolk, Virginia, and San Diego. “That would be a big shift, but it’s something we’re looking into, because it may work in some places,” Wormuth said.

A final smartphone question for



Army Secretary Christine Wormuth, third from left, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, second from right, and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George, right, greet Lt. Col. Robert Shipley and his family—AUSA’s Volunteer Family of the Year—during the association’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)

the audience asked attendees what factors most affected decisions about whether to continue serving. Topping the list, in nearly a dead heat, were salary and operational tempo.

While demands on the Army continue to be high, George said he is

in the process of reviewing current practices and requirements in hopes of clawing back time from unnecessary maintenance hours or training that could be better spent at home. “We have to learn to say no to certain things,” he said.

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## Cyber threats, weather, border insecurity challenge US

From cyberattacks to increasingly severe weather, the U.S. faces growing homeland security challenges, the commander of U.S. Northern Command said.

Conditions around the world are “the most dynamic and challenging as I’ve seen,” Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck said.

Speaking at a homeland security seminar Tuesday at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., VanHerck said “environmental change is a challenge to us right now, especially here in the homeland. More hurricanes, more wildfires, but really what we’re seeing is the weather in the Arctic is creating opportunities and vulnerabilities for our adversaries.”

As an example, Russia is sailing through the Arctic to provide fuel to China, VanHerck said. “Significant things are happening in the Arctic. Fifty-two percent of my [area of operations] is in the Arctic. I care very much about what goes on in the Arctic and the challenges we face.”

The U.S. also is “under attack every day in the cyber domain and the information space,” VanHerck said.

Around the world, China and Russia remain real threats, and the two countries are working together, he said. The missile threat from North Korea continues to grow, with more than 70 launches last year, and “I significantly worry about Iran,” VanHerck said.

Transnational criminal organizations pose a “global problem, a multi-domain problem and a problem here in the homeland,” he said.

“We often talk about the symptoms—human migration, narcotics flow—but the problem is we have transnational criminal organizations with weapons on par with nation states around the globe,” VanHerck said.

America’s “strategic stability is eroding,” VanHerck said. “That’s



Sen. Mazie Hirono, left, of Hawaii, is briefed Tuesday by Col. Jess Curry, right, commander of the Army Corps of Engineers Hawaii Wildfires Recovery Field Office, on the recovery mission after the devastating August wildfires on Maui. (U.S. ARMY/KATIE NEWTON)

what keeps me up a little bit.”

Amid this challenging environment, the military is the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s “most trusted partner,” said Deanne Criswell, FEMA administrator. “You are our most trusted team that comes in to help us in all the things we’ve seen,” she said, including “extreme

weather events that have given us challenges we haven’t seen before.”

This includes teams that helped identify remains after the deadly wildfires on Maui, Hawaii, she said.

“Every time we call, you are always there, and we’re calling you more and more and for different things,” Criswell said.

The challenge for FEMA and organizations such as Northern Command and Army North will be determining the best way to respond to evolving and increasingly dangerous threats—all while dealing with today’s crises, Criswell said.

Leaders must think seriously about “how we’re approaching the different threats we’re facing, whether it’s climate-related disasters, whether it’s cyberattacks, whether it’s the border insecurity we’re facing or the contested information environment,” Criswell said.

“We’re constantly in this response mode,” Criswell said. “We don’t have the time or the staffing ... to really think about the future and solely focus on how we can start to plan for that because we’re in this continuous repetitive cycle.”



Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck, commander of U.S. Northern Command, speaks at a homeland security seminar Tuesday during the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



## Civilian contributions essential to building Army of 2030

**A**rmy civilians are playing a vital role in building the Army of 2030, Army leaders said Wednesday.

“We cannot afford to lose sight of the efforts required to recruit the necessary skill sets and personnel to maintain robust career paths [for Army civilians], guarantee immediate and long-term readiness and construct the Army of 2030 in the face of adversity,” Agnes Schaefer, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, said during an Army civilian showcase at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition.

Today, there are about 262,000 Army civilians, Schaefer said. Army civilians work alongside soldiers and leverage their expertise and skills to contribute to the Army and its mission, according to the Army’s website.

The share of Army civilians is growing. The Army Corps of Engineers, for example, has “doubled in size in the last few years,” said Karen Pane, director of human resources

for the Army Corps of Engineers.

Pane added that she expects the corps will continue to double in size, and it is focused on “innovating in everything [they] do.”

Serving as an Army civilian is more than a career, said Lt. Gen. Christopher Mohan, deputy commanding general and chief of staff of Army Materiel Command. “We can’t do it without you guys. ... It’s not just a career, it’s a calling,” he said.

Army civilians are an essential teammate to the warfighter, said Lt. Gen. Maria Gervais, deputy commanding general and chief of staff of Army Training and Doctrine Command.

“I would not be sitting up here if it hadn’t been for the great civilians I had the pleasure of serving with throughout my career,” she said. “We are a team. ... At the end of the day, it’s about how you bring that whole team together so that you can leverage the expertise, the experience and the knowledge from everybody and bring it to bear, which makes us the best ... Army.”



Agnes Schaefer, assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, addresses an Army civilian showcase at AUSA’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C. (AUSA PHOTO)

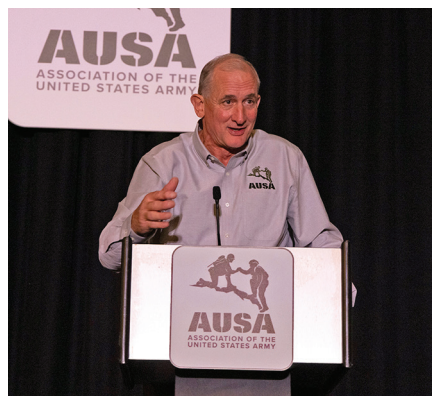
Building the Army of 2030 would not be possible without Army civilians, Schaefer said. “I extend my gratitude for your unwavering dedication and commitment to our force,” she said. “The Army would not be the Army without you.”

## Volunteers help AUSA connect America with the Army

**T**he Association of the U.S. Army is needed now more than ever, as the Army and the nation face “very difficult times,” AUSA President and CEO retired Gen. Bob Brown said Sunday.

The linchpin in AUSA’s support for the Army—including the active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve—is its 122 chapters around the world that foster relationships in their communities, Brown said. “When I talk to [Army Secretary Christine Wormuth] and other senior leaders about how AUSA can help, they tell me that connection is key,” he said.

Brown addressed the association’s chapter and region leaders at a reception the evening before the opening of AUSA’s 2023 Annual Meeting and



Retired Gen. Bob Brown, AUSA president and CEO, speaks to chapter and region leaders from across the association during the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)

Exposition at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

When AUSA chapters “get the

word out” about what the Army is doing, they are “connecting America with her Army—and that’s absolutely critical,” Brown said. Chapter volunteers are “telling the Army story,” he said.

“Our AUSA chapter presidents are leaders in their communities as well as in the association,” said retired Brig. Gen. Jack Haley, AUSA vice president for Membership and Meetings, adding that the volunteers’ hard work is “essential” to the association’s mission.

“I want to thank each and every one of you for what you do—it’s absolutely incredible,” Brown said. “Selfless service, unbelievable volunteers—[you are] making a difference every day for our soldiers, their families and veterans.”

## Poppas: Guard must prepare today for future fight

**T**he Army National Guard must prepare to face and define a new reality of war, the commander of Army Forces Command said.

“We have to win the first fight,” Gen. Andrew Poppas said Monday during the MG Robert G. Moorhead National Guard and Army Reserve Breakfast at the Association of the U.S. Army’s 2023 Annual Meeting and Exposition. “We have to prepare for the battle today, especially in this uncertain world. ... We have to be ready today.”

The Guard has responded effectively to several natural disasters throughout the year, Poppas said.

“The response that we had to Hurricane Idalia included 6,500 Florida Guardsmen alone,” he said.

“We saw the true Total Army with [its] response to the Maui wildfires that took place this past summer. Your teams are always ready ... for whatever Mother Nature throws at us,” Poppas said.

Now, after 20 years of war, the Guard is adjusting to a new era of conflict, Poppas said. “We’re putting even more intellectual rigor toward understanding when and how we’re



A soldier with the New Jersey National Guard conducts weapons qualification operations Sunday at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. SETH COHEN)

going to operate when that next fight comes,” he said. “We’ve got to look at the future fight, not what we’ve done in the past. Twenty years of continuous conflict have built a lot

of resilience and combat experience, and now we have to adjust as our own doctrine adjusts.”

The Guard will need to determine its capabilities before future conflicts emerge, Poppas said. “As the Army shifts focus to the division and division-level enablers as a tactical formation, now is the time to ask ourselves: who does what, [and] when do they have to do it?” he said. “We’ve got to find the gaps, the faults and the friction points in warfighting today.”

When the next crisis comes, the “Army will not have the luxury of time” to build its lethal force and resiliency, he warned.

“We cannot wait. ... We’ve got to be prepared today,” Poppas said. “The undisputed bottom line is that we know that the Guard and the Reserve soldiers are going to be committed, we know that they’re well trained and lethal and that they’re ready when called upon.”



Gen. Andrew Poppas, commander of Army Forces Command, addresses a breakfast for the National Guard and Army Reserve during AUSA’s Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



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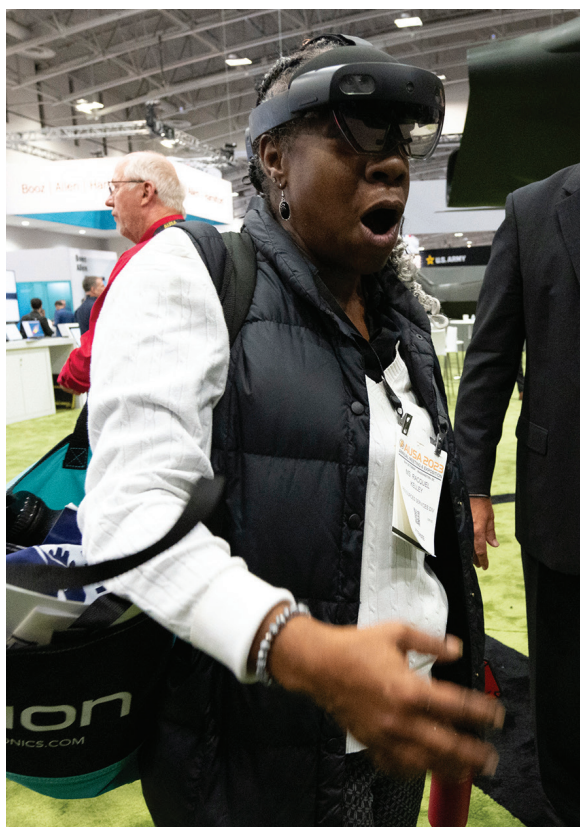
## Scenes from AUSA 2023



From left to right, retired Command Sgt. Maj. Troy Welch, AUSA's Membership director, Meg Ryle, director of Membership Marketing, and retired Brig. Gen. Jack Haley, vice president for Membership and Meetings, open the Member Pavilion Sunday at the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



AUSA mascots Sgt. R. Hero, left, and Cpl. M. Power greet an Annual Meeting attendee. (AUSA PHOTO)



An AUSA Annual Meeting attendee checks out new technology on the exhibit floor. (AUSA PHOTO)



A soldier examines a map of the convention center's exhibit halls during the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition. (AUSA PHOTO)





A canine attendee poses for a photo during a forum at the Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



A soldier attending the AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition takes a selfie with Army Secretary Christine Wormuth. (AUSA PHOTO)



Soldiers, AUSA members, defense industry representatives and more network in the exhibit halls during the AUSA Annual Meeting. (AUSA PHOTO)



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