



Sgt. Joshua Briggs, with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, assesses his squad movement Tuesday during a live-fire training exercise at Krivolak Training Area, North Macedonia. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. JON CORTEZ)

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## George: Army faces complex challenges

**W**hile the Army looks to the future by taking on its largest transformation in decades, the force still must contend with a variety of challenges in the near-term, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Randy George said.

"I generally don't talk about 2030 because I don't think we have that much time," George said, according to an Army news release. "[The year] 2030 is too far down the road. We are going to be a lot different before that, I can guarantee you. We are going to be a lot different in the next four years."

George spoke Nov. 29 at the 2023 FORSCOM Commander's Forum at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, where leaders from Army Forces Command and the reserve components gathered for training and conversations on leading warfighters.

Today's world is very complex, George said, noting that the Army has interests in many volatile areas, including the Middle East, Ukraine, Taiwan and Africa. The service also is dealing with recruiting shortfalls and funding instability, he said, according to the Army news release.

Warfighting is the Army's No. 1 priority, and while the service's modernization efforts will help equip soldiers with the tools they need, transformation also means changes to training and how Army formations look, George said.

"I want our leaders to decide what our formations will look like, not a bunch of us sitting inside the [Pentagon]," George said. "I can certainly do that, I definitely have my own opinions on a lot of this, but I want everybody involved in what we're doing."

Army training must build teams

and formations that are lethal and effective, said Gen. Andrew Poppas, commanding general of Forces Command. "The strength of that formation is that they rely on each other," Poppas said, according to the Army news release. "It's the person to your left that's carrying the shield that protects you. It's the strength of the formation that moves forward."

During the forum, Poppas explained his "4-Wins" philosophy for moving the command into the future: Win Trust and Empower Leaders, Win the First Fight, Win the Future Fight and Win as a Balanced Total Army.

"I will tell you that at every touch point within each one of these domains, I feel we've made great success," Poppas said. "In the way we are building the team ... strengthening the relationships we have."



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## Webinar highlights US soldiers' peacekeeping efforts

American troops who support peacekeeping efforts as United Nations military observers are unsung heroes, a retired U.S. Army colonel and author said during an Association of the U.S. Army Noon Report webinar.

"Many people were unaware of the role of American military officers and the role they played in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization since the modern state of Israel was founded in 1948," retired Col. L. Scott Lingamfelter said during the webinar on Tuesday. "Their experience ... [has] received scant treatment in military literature, yet the lessons that we learned [from them] are very important."

A 1973 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Lingamfelter served as a field artilleryman and a Middle East foreign area officer. He details his transition from preparing for combat to serving as a military observer in a peacekeeping mission in his book, *Yanks in Blue Berets: American U.N. Peacekeepers in the Middle East*.



Sgt. Stephen Fritts, assigned to the 297th Regional Support Group, instructs Mongolian Armed Forces soldiers in cordon and search operations during a United Nations training exercise at Five Hills Training Area, Mongolia. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/PFC. GRACE NECHANICKY)

In 1948, the U.N. launched the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, or UNTSO, in response to the conflict that had erupted between Israel and its Arab neighbors, who were opposed to the creation of a Jewish state.

The UNTSO quickly found itself overseeing the ceasefire lines between combatant parties, and in the ensuing decades, as countries along the eastern Mediterranean engaged in a series of escalating conflicts, the UNTSO was continually challenged in its peacekeeping mission.

The U.N. military observers are unarmed and "trained to observe and report violations of the agreements of ceasefire, disengagement," according to the UNTSO website. Personnel come from 27 nations and include 153 military personnel, according to the website.

Trained as warfighters, soldiers tasked with peacekeeping had to pivot in a way that Lingamfelter characterized as "discovery learning" with "little formal training."

"But what we did learn was nonetheless valuable," he said. In addition to learning from partner nations and about conflict in the Middle East,

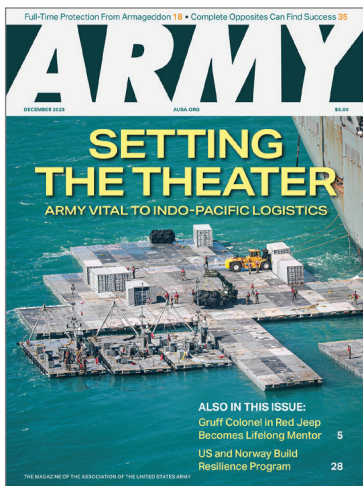
Lingamfelter said the most important lesson was "learning episodically [about] how to deal with the parties to the [Arab-Israeli] conflict in reporting violations, resolving disputes, negotiating hostage releases and dealing with the deadly hostile fire that surrounded us all the time."

Though Lingamfelter was unarmed during his time as an observer with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, it worked to his advantage. "Being an unarmed observer is a dangerous business. ... All that was in our holster was just hard work, resourcefulness, patience and decisiveness," he said. "Interestingly, I do believe that the fact that we were unarmed, on occasion, was beneficial to our credibility, because we were not seen as a threat."

As he closed the discussion, Lingamfelter emphasized that "peace is worth it."

"I'm a warrior, and I was trained to be a warrior," he said. "But I think if you talk to any warrior, we will all agree that peace is better than war. Sometimes you have to fight those wars, but it's good to learn lessons from the past ... to help populate our ideas for shaping these operations."

### ARMY magazine December issue



AUSA Basic Members can now view a selection of articles from the December issue of *ARMY* magazine. To read the articles, click [here](#).

## Freeze on most promotions lifted, but defense funding bills still in limbo

**H**undreds of general and flag officer promotions were approved this week after a 10-month logjam, but lawmakers on Capitol Hill have much to do before the end of the year, including work on critical defense authorization and appropriations bills.

The Senate approved about 425 senior officer promotions Tuesday, just hours after Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville lifted his hold. About a dozen nominations for four-star positions, including Lt. Gen. James Mingus to be Army vice chief of staff, remain on hold. The Senate likely will consider these through floor votes soon.

The Association of the U.S. Army has been advocating for confirmation of these nominations as quickly as possible in support of military families, readiness and national security.

**Government Affairs** Negotiations on the fiscal year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act to reconcile the significant differences between the versions of the bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate wrapped up earlier this week.

However, consideration of the legislation by the House and Senate may take some time. Passage is not expected before next week, at the earliest.

The National Defense Authorization Act is critically important legislation providing policy and program direction to the Defense Department. AUSA recently sent a letter to the leaders of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees outlining the association's priorities and calling for the bill's swift passage.

Final passage of the bill remains uncertain, but AUSA's Government Affairs team is hopeful that it will become law before the new year.

The appropriations process continues to present a significant challenge



A full or partial government shutdown—or a full-year continuing resolution—would be very damaging to national security. (ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL PHOTO)

to both chambers of Congress.

A continuing resolution, a stopgap measure to fund the government and prevent a shutdown, was passed in November, pushing the next funding deadlines to Jan. 19 for some departments and agencies and Feb. 2 for others, including DoD.

Little progress has been made recently, and Congress still must find agreement on all 12 appropriations bills before the current resolution expires. A full or partial government shutdown—or a full-year continuing resolution, which would hold funding at the previous year's levels and prohibit any new program starts—could occur in the coming weeks.

A full-year measure would be unprecedented for the Pentagon and very damaging to national security.

Congress also continues to consider a possible supplemental national security funding bill or bills, but there has been little visible progress.

You can help build momentum for enactment of the appropriations bills and the NDAA by contacting your representatives and senators.

**Mark Haaland** is AUSA's Government Affairs director.

# AUSAExtra

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**Gen. Bob Brown, USA Ret.**  
President and CEO, AUSA

**Lt. Gen. Leslie Smith, USA Ret.**  
Vice President, Leadership and Education,  
AUSA

**Luc Dunn**  
Editor

**Desiree Hurlocker**  
Advertising Manager

#### Advertising Information Contact:

Fox Associates Inc.  
116 W. Kinzie St. • Chicago, IL 60654  
Phone: 800-440-0231  
Email: [adinfo.rmy@foxrep.com](mailto:adinfo.rmy@foxrep.com)

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## PERK OF THE WEEK

Take advantage of your AUSA member discounts for your holiday travel and fun.

You can save on hotel stays with Choice and Radisson Hotels and Red Roof Inn (where pets stay free), car rentals with Avis, Budget, Hertz, Alamo, Enterprise and National, and guided travel with packages across all seven continents. Visit [www.ausa.org/savings](http://www.ausa.org/savings).





## Deadline approaches for changes to Tricare coverage

**M**ilitary retirees and eligible beneficiaries who use Tricare have until Dec. 12 to enroll in or make changes to their health care coverage.

Tricare open season, which began Nov. 13, allows beneficiaries who use Tricare Prime or Tricare Select to stay on their plan, enroll in a plan or change plans. Changes go into effect Jan. 1.

Additionally, eligible beneficiaries have until Dec. 11 to enroll in or make changes to their vision and/or dental coverage through the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program. Known as FEDVIP, the program, managed by the Office of Personnel Management, offers a range of plans at varying costs, and coverage is not automatic, so beneficiaries must act to enroll in a dental or vision plan.



During open season, beneficiaries who use Tricare Prime or Tricare Select can stay on their plan, enroll in a plan or change plans. (DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY GRAPHIC)

Open season for FEDVIP began Nov. 13 and expires Dec. 11.

Those who are not already in a Tricare plan and don't enroll during open season could still receive care, but they will "only be eligible for care at a military hospital or clinic if space is available," according to the Tricare website. Outside of Tricare open season, beneficiaries can enroll or change their enrollment following

certain life events, including marriage, the birth of a child or retirement from active duty.

Open season does not apply to active-duty service members. It also does not apply to Tricare for Life—coverage is automatic for eligible beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and Part B, according to Tricare.

Premium-based plans, including Tricare Reserve Select, Retired Reserve and Young Adult, also are not impacted by open season. Eligible beneficiaries can buy these plans at any time throughout the year, according to Tricare.

For more information on Tricare open season, click here. For information on health plan costs for 2024, click here.

For more on the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, click here.



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## Discounts on gifts, fitness and professional certifications

**Y**our membership in the Association of the U.S. Army provides access to a variety of discounts and savings you can use as you go about your holiday shopping this year.

Here are a few examples.

### Spouse-Ly

Spouse-Ly is an AUSA affinity partner, offering a special discount for members. The company, owned and operated by a military spouse, offers products and services created by verified military and first-responder families.

You can shop small and have a big impact, supporting those who support us. Check out the unique products at [www.spouse-ly.com](http://www.spouse-ly.com) and use promo code AUSA to save 10%.

#### Member Benefits

### Apple discount changes

By visiting [www.ausa.org/apple](http://www.ausa.org/apple), AUSA members and their families who are current or retired employees or contractors of government entities can access their Apple discounts through AUSA.

For members who are not connected to the federal government, you can still receive Apple “Employee Purchase Program” discounts through Abenity, an AUSA benefit partner.

Visit [www.ausa.org/abenity](http://www.ausa.org/abenity) and create a new account to access thousands of local and national discounts.

The Apple discounts include 10% off AirPods, accessories such as AirTags and software including File-Maker Pro, AppleCare+ and more; 6% off MacBook and iMac, Magic Keyboard for iPad Pro and the Apple Pencil; 5% off iPods; 2% off Apple TV and iPhones; and 1% off iPad Air.

### FightCamp

FightCamp is a connected at-home boxing gym, allowing you access to world-class boxing and kickboxing trainers, premium equipment and



Spouse-Ly offers products and services created by verified military and first-responder families, and AUSA members can get a 10% discount. (COURTESY PHOTO)

performance-tracking technology. The ever-growing library of boxing, kickboxing, strength and conditioning and recovery workouts is designed to keep you engaged and focused.

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AUSA10 and can try the program risk-free for 60 days. Learn more by clicking [here](#).

### PM-ProLearn

AUSA has partnered with PM-ProLearn to provide educational opportunities with an exclusive benefit for members.

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**Susan Rubel** is AUSA’s Association and Affinity Partnerships director.



AUSA members can save 10% on FightCamp, an at-home boxing gym with access to world-class trainers and performance-tracking technology. (COURTESY PHOTO)



## Chapter leader recognizes local Vietnam veterans' service

A longtime advocate for soldiers and a leader with the Association of the U.S. Army's Coastal South Carolina chapter recently supported a ceremony honoring Vietnam veterans at the Brookdale West Ashley Senior Living Community in Charleston.

Retired Lt. Col. Larry Dandridge, the AUSA chapter's vice president for veteran affairs, was the guest speaker at the November celebration

### Coastal South Carolina

and pinning ceremony hosted by Agape Care Group of South Carolina.

He was joined in the pinning ceremony by retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Susan Leith of Veterans Last Patrol, an organization that connects volunteers with veterans in hospice, supports honor ceremonies and provides emergency assistance.

"I was honored to put veterans pins on the many veterans and spouses who attended the ceremony," Dandridge said.

In his remarks, Dandridge discussed health care options available through the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans' benefits—es-



Retired Lt. Col. Larry Dandridge, left, vice president for veteran affairs with AUSA's Coastal South Carolina chapter, and retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Susan Leith, right, present a Vietnam veteran with a commemorative pin during a ceremony at the Brookdale West Ashley Senior Living Community in Charleston. (AUSA PHOTO)

pecially service-connected disability compensation—and surviving spouse benefits. Dandridge also had a display with pictures of helicopters at war in Vietnam and his book, *Blades of Thunder (Book One)*, which was written to raise funds for Fish-

er House Charleston. Through book signings and events over the past four years, Dandridge has raised more than \$75,000 for Fisher House, which houses families of veterans receiving care at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston.

## AUSA chapter honors outstanding food service soldiers

The Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Liberty chapter in North Carolina recently sponsored and presented gift cards at the 406th Army Field Support Battalion-Liberty Food Services' quarterly meeting and recognition ceremony.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew McFowler, the chapter's past president, attended the event in November along with approximately 60 food service professionals.

### Fort Liberty

McFowler discussed the history of AUSA and presented gift cards to the Junior and Senior Chefs of the Quarter—Spc. Roniece Todd and Staff Sgt. Andres Gonzalez, respectively.



Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew McFowler, past president of AUSA's Fort Liberty chapter in North Carolina, presents gift cards to Spc. Roniece Todd, left, and Staff Sgt. Andres Gonzalez, Junior and Senior Chefs of the Quarter for the 406th Army Field Support Battalion-Liberty Food Services. (AUSA PHOTOS)





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