

# Strengthening the Army Profession through the Harding Project

Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army

Army University Press (AUP) recently shared a “chief priority” of Gen. Randy George, chief of staff of the Army (CSA), regarding his emphasis on renewing professional military writing and scholarship.<sup>1</sup> On 5 January 2024, we received official notification that the “rose was pinned” on AUP to pursue the objectives of the Harding Project on behalf of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This decision was based on the executive recommendations coming out of a two-day workshop sponsored by the CSA and hosted by the Modern War Institute (MWI) and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. If readers have not been following the development of the Harding Project, they are encouraged to learn more by reading the CSA’s article on the MWI website or Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle’s article on the *Military Review* website.<sup>2</sup>

For AUP, the mission we have been given is clear: modernize U.S. Army publications and platforms, optimize institutional archives, and achieve innovative, disruptive change.

To continue gaining momentum on this initiative, on 25 January 2024, AUP hosted an organizational meeting for all branch journals. Over thirty-five branch representatives attended the meeting to hear and understand where the CSA is leading Army publications. The Army’s branch journals and their respective leadership and editorial teams are excited about modernization and change.

The first step will be endeavoring to create a baseline of training and knowledge related to modern, online publishing. However, this is more than a



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Director, Army University Press

training shortfall. It is a long-running challenge caused by dwindling resources. With the buy-in of Training and Doctrine Command and Combined Arms Center leadership, however, critical investment in our branch journals is coming. The intent and desired end state is that all branch journals have the capability to produce web-first, mobile-friendly content, and that articles and editions are archived in a standardized format that is optimized for research accessibility.

We are aggressively seeking to achieve several objectives by the end of fiscal year 2024—a lofty aspiration that may be disruptive. However, disruptive, innovative change can be good if it improves our institution, organization, and professional community. We should not be satisfied with continuing to do things as we have done in the past, particularly if our future leaders are having to look outside the Army to participate in professional discourse. Army University Press is

committed to producing products and platforms that facilitate professional discourse where our junior, mid-career, and future audiences will find them.

In addition to providing professional development and resources to our branch journals, AUP is excited to announce three initiatives that will help reinvigorate professional scholarship and writing. First, the U.S. Army's premier writing contest, *Military Review's* General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition, will be awarding significant financial awards sponsored by the Association of the United States Army. Check out the 2024 DePuy Writing Competition at our website for more details.<sup>3</sup>

Second, we are pleased to announce the LTG (Ret) James M. Dubik Writing Fellows Program. This exceptionally prestigious fellowship, launching in Spring 2024, will select a small cohort of writing Fellows. Each selectee will be working with AUP to write, publish, improve branch journals, and find new and exciting opportunities to improve professional development and educational resources for our Army. If you are interested in applying to this rewarding new fellowship program, visit our AUP website for more information and reach out to our leadership.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, AUP and the Harding Project will be hosting a series of events over the course of 2024. In June 2024, branch journal teams are invited and encouraged to participate in workshops at Fort Leavenworth to continue to learn, share best practices, and report on progress toward the CSA's objectives. In October 2024, AUP and the Harding Project, in partnership with the Association of the United States Army, will be hosting a series of panel discussions, inviting winners of the DePuy Writing Competition and nonresident writing Fellows to Washington, D.C., to present their papers and research.

Army University Press is honored to be appointed to lead the CSA's initiative to renew and reinvigorate professional military writing and scholarship. With passionate professionals and scholars across the force, we are looking forward to igniting a renaissance in professional discourse and sharing the immense knowledge and experience that resides across our formations. We look forward to improving how authors and readers interact, share opinions, and discuss important issues and challenges facing our Army, and we hope YOU will join and support us in these efforts. ■

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## Notes

1. Todd Schmidt, "Chief Priority! Ignite a Renaissance in Military Scholarship and Writing," *Military Review* 103, no. 6 (November-December 2023): 1-3, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2023/Chief-Priority/>.

2. Randy George, Gary Brito, and Michael Weimer, "Strengthening the Profession: A Call to All Army Leaders to Revitalize Our Professional Discourse," Modern War Institute at West Point, 11 September 2023, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/strengthening-the-profession-a-call-to-all-army-leaders-to-revitalize-our-professional-discourse/>; Milford H. Beagle Jr.,

"Professional Discourse and Dialogue Made Easy," *Military Review* Online Exclusive (December 2023), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/journals/military-review/online-exclusive/2023-ole/professional-discourse-and-dialogue-made-easy/>.

3. "2024 General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition," Army University Press, accessed 2 February 2024, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/DePuy-Writing-Competition/>.

4. "LTG (Ret) James M. Dubik Writing Fellows Program," Army University Press, accessed 2 February 2024, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/James-Dubik-Writing-Fellowship-Program/>.

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