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U.S. Air Force in the 14th African Air Chiefs Symposium 2025

This year's African Air Chiefs Symposium [co-hosted by U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa](#), and Zambia Air Force was held in Lusaka, Zambia from February 17 – 21.

The thematic focus of the 14th African Air Chiefs Symposium was **on ‘Strategic Collaboration and Operational Excellence: Enhancing effectiveness of the Association of African Air Forces.**

Military leaders, Air Chiefs, Liaison Officers, Women, Peace and Security Representatives, Senior Enlisted Representatives, and U.N Representatives, from 38 nations convened in African Air Chiefs Symposium 2025 to discuss crucial continental defense issues, and addressed challenges that threaten regional security, The symposium also assessed the existing capabilities and explored avenues to increase partnerships between African nations and the United States.

Among symposium's key delivered outcomes:

- Strengthening partnerships and collaborations between U.S-African air forces, fostering mutual understanding and shared strategies to address common security challenges.
- Operational excellence:
 - A. Improving the operational capabilities through joint multinational training exercises and interoperability;
 - B. The exchange of best practices;
 - C. And enhancing the air operations across the continent particularly in the natural disaster scenarios.



“The multilateral partnerships developed during the 14th African Air Chiefs Symposium are keys in the preparation and response to cross-continental natural disasters,”

***“Developing African-led solutions to these enduring challenges will help save lives.”** elaborated U.S. Air Force Gen. James Hecker ©[U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa](#)*

Additional: Digital Press Briefing State Department Feb. 19, 2025: [U.S Air Forces Africa Commander Gen. James B. Hecker and Zambia Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Oscar Nyoni.](#)

Acknowledgments: Sources ©U.S. Air Forces in Europe – U.S. Air Forces Africa. Image: U.S. Air Force Gen. James Hecker, U.S. Air Forces in Europe – Air Forces Africa commander and Association of African Air Forces co-chairman, during the opening ceremony for the 14th African Air Chiefs Symposium in Lusaka, Zambia, Feb. 17, 2025, by Senior Airman Seleena Muhammad-Ali ©U.S. Air Forces in Europe -U.S. Air Forces Africa. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.

U.S. Forces in Japan and the open gate friendship celebration of spring festival ‘Cherry Blossom’



The presence of U.S. military in Japan has fostered a strong alliance, contributing significantly to the regional stability and security. This partnership has played a crucial role in maintaining peace in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

Every spring, U.S. Forces Japan hosts the friendship cherry blossom festival, attracting upward of 17,000 visitors. This year's open gate festivals were held on Yokosuka Naval Base and Army Camp Zama on March 22nd. Yokota Air Base has scheduled to host its celebration on March 29th.

Open gate celebration, involving U.S. military bases promotes cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

- It builds community support and partnership;
- It illustrates positive intercultural engagements and friendships;
- It provides valuable opportunities for U.S. personnel and local communities to connect;
- And it cultivates goodwill and strengthens people-to-people ties.

Additional: [Annual event celebrates spring while bringing together 17,000 U.S., Japanese visitors \(U.S Army 2024\)](#)

Acknowledgments: Source © U.S Forces in Japan, U.S Army. Yokota U.S Air Base, Japan, March 30, 2018. U.S. Air Force photo by Yasuo Osakabe. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.

NATO Allies and Partners in a U.S Army Multinational Exercise Allied Spirit 25



Led by a U.S Army and conducted by the 7th Army Training Command, [Allied Spirit 25](#), the exercise-series that fortifies the transatlantic defense posture,

was held this year from February 22 to March 24, 2025 in [the 7th Army Training Command in Germany](#).

Military forces joined in the Allied Spirit 25 exercise were from: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as the Lithuania's Infantry Brigade was the rotating primary training unit.

- The exercise aimed to enhance and solidify interoperability and readiness among NATO allies and partners;
- It also focused on a multinational brigade to bolster NATO's deterrence efforts;
- It highlighted once again the U.S. commitment to a strong NATO presence and the importance of the transatlantic collective defense.

“We’re always open here, because at the end of the day, if we can all get together and learn from each other, we’ll be better as a coalition,” explained *Brig. Gen. Steven P. Carpenter, Commanding General of the 7th Army Training Command* ©U.S Army March 13, 2025.

Additional: [Lithuania Excels as Allied Spirit 25 Concludes by Army](#)

[First USEUCOM event of large scale global Exercise 24, Allied Spirit, is underway by USEUCOM](#)

Acknowledgments: Sources © U.S Army Europe and Africa/ 7th Army Training Command/ U.S Army. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.

U.S Army Led- Exercise Defender 25



DEFENDER 25 from April 10 through June 24, 2025, is a large scale exercise series led by [U.S Army](#) to demonstrate the United States commitment to Europe and NATO's collective defense.

The exercise explores to increase operational reach and agility, to enhance a swift deployment of U.S forces, the military equipment and logistics to Europe, and to enhance joint operations.

With 25,000 military personnel from 29 NATO allied and partner nations, Defender 25 aims to fortify Transatlantic defense and security— extending its impact beyond the immediate region.

[Get updated from U.S Army Europe and Africa](#)

Acknowledgments: Sources U.S Army Europe and Africa. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.

The U.S Flag Day June 14

June 14th holds a special significance for the United States. It marks both the U.S. Army's birthday and U.S Flag day.

On this day in 1777, the Continental Congress recognized and adopted the Stars and Stripes as the United States' official flag. And years later in 1949 the formal recognition of June 14th as the Flag Day was established by President Harry S. Truman. Throughout the centuries..... across the world, the U.S flag has been the leading defender of freedom, by fighting openly against tyranny, oppression, fascism and authoritarian systems.



The Stars and Stripes is not only the representative of United States national emblem, but prominently on the international stage and for the rest of the world.....it is the enduring aspirations of Freedom and Liberty, Human Rights, and Democracy.

[About the United States Flag, by Smithsonian](#)

Acknowledgments: Image © California NG. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.

Inspirational Page

The National Day of Prayer in the United States 2025

Observed every year on the first Thursday of May, [The National Day of Prayer](#) was first established in 1952. And later in 1988 the day was designated by Congress as a time for all faiths to pray for the United States, its leadership, and the world. This important observance has its origin back to 1774, when the first Continental Congress invited the nation to this spiritual event.

“From the earliest days of our Nation’s journey, America has been guided by the grace of Almighty God. Beginning with the opening prayer at the First Continental Congress in 1774, our faith has perpetually stood as the summit of our strength, the source of our unity, and the fount of our greatness. This National Day of Prayer, we thank God for His endless blessings -- and we ask Him to grant us fortitude, wisdom, and a renewed spirit of justice as we continue the work to save our country and restore our national promise.” Excerpt from *President Trump’s Presidential Proclamation of the National Day of Prayer 2025*
©The White House May 1, 2025

“On this day, may our faiths enable us to sow the seeds of progress in our ever-changing world. Let us resolve to guide our children and grandchildren to embrace freedom for all, to see God in everyone, and to remember that no matter what differences they may have, they, just like we, will always be united by their common humanity.” excerpt from *President Obama’s Presidential Proclamation of the National Day of Prayer 2016* ©The White House May 2016



“This event is a powerful reminder that prayer has the strength to connect and inspire us, fostering unity across all branches of service and the surrounding communities. Praying together strengthens not only individuals but entire families, creating a ripple effect that builds unit cohesion and enhances readiness for any mission,” *highlighted Maj. Joseph Okpe, Fort Buchanan’s Chaplain, on the National Prayer Luncheon May 1, 2025*



The 405th Army Field Support Brigade Europe and Africa joined the Army and the Nation in the National Day of Prayer May 1 at the brigade headquarters on Daenner Kaserne in Germany (U.S Army Base)

Additional: [Prayer Day at Fort Buchanan Highlights the Importance of Spiritual Readiness, U.S Army](#)

- [The National Day of Prayer in the United States 2023](#)
- [The National Day of Prayer in the United States 2017](#)
- Get updates from [405th Army Field Support Brigade – Europe & Africa](#)

*Acknowledgments: Sources © U.S Army / The White House/ National Day of Prayer. **Image:** Service members, families, retirees, and veterans gathered in the National Prayer Luncheon, where they prayed for peace and unity in Puerto Rico, the United States, and around the world. May 1, 2025 ©U.S Army /David Hernandez. **Video:** 405th AFSB joins Army and Nation in the National Day of Prayer May 1 2025.©DoD/ 405th Army Field Support Brigade – Europe and Africa/ National Guard/ 405th Army Field Support Brigade- Europe and Africa. May 1, 2025, by Cameron Porter. Article by Catherine S. Schmidt, Editor in Chief.*

Acknowledgments

Image 1 U.S. Air Force Gen. James Hecker, U.S. Air Forces in Europe – Air Forces Africa commander and Association of African Air Forces co-chairman, during the opening ceremony for the 14th African Air Chiefs Symposium in Lusaka, Zambia, Feb. 17, 2025, by Senior Airman Seleena Muhammad-Ali ©U.S. Air Forces in Europe -U.S. Air Forces Africa. **Image 2** Yokota U.S Air Base, Japan, March 30, 2018. U.S. Air Force by Yasuo Osakabe. **Image 3** The United States flag

© California NG. **Image 4** Service members, families, retirees, and veterans gathered in the National Prayer Luncheon, where they prayed for peace and unity in Puerto Rico, the United States, and around the world. May 1, 2025 ©U.S Army /David Hernandez. **Image 5** 405th AFSB joins Army and Nation in the National Day of Prayer May 1 2025 ©DoD/ 405th Army Field Support Brigade – Europe and Africa/ National Guard/ 405th Army Field Support Brigade- Europe and Africa. May 1, 2025, by Cameron Porter.

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