

143rd NGAUS  
National Conference in Las Vegas



Fall 2021

# VIKANG NEWS

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

Promotional rates available for 400 Officers and Warrant Officer starting as low as \$300..

**More information on page 10 >**





# President's Report

LTC Jay Hackett

The placard read "Minnesota 24%". A similar placard was placed over the seating area assigned to each State and Territory attending the 143rd National Guard Association of the United States Convention and Exposition. The assignments were made according to State membership strength. We were in the rear. We had to strain to see the stage.

As one would walk into the exposition hall, where supporters of NGAUS were lined up to excitedly demonstrate the wares of warfare, "Minnesota 24%" was placed on an adhesive sign on the floor. Well behind the even larger adhesive signs that read "Wisconsin 104%". Wisconsin also received an award during this conference for the State with the longest consecutive 100% strength rating.

My thoughts, as the representatives from Wisconsin walked across the stage to accept their award, turned to Major General Ellard A. Walsh. The former 1st Minnesota Soldier, 34th Infantry Division Commander and Assistant Adjutant General of Minnesota. MG Walsh is known as "the father of the modern National Guard". You may recall seeing his name emblazoned at the entrance of Camp Ripley, as he selected and developed the site in the 1930's.

He was also President of NGAUS for over sixteen years and was directly responsible for placing an office in Washington DC and instituting membership participation of the Soldiers and Airmen, in order to be heard. He, in my eyes, is the "father of the modern day NGAUS" as well. He is truly legendary in our State for his leadership, initiative and success at bringing military and political allies together to advance our cause.

He was well suited for the job at NGAUS. His experiences in Minnesota shaped his approach and his vision for the future of the Guard. The Minneapolis Teamsters Strike of 1934 resulted in open rioting in the streets of Minneapolis

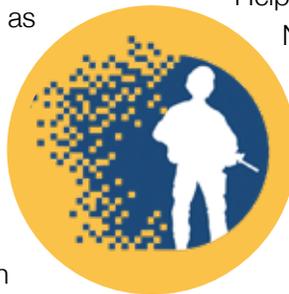
and a call-up of 4000 Guardsman, which he commanded, to quell the uprising. He fought hard during the post-WWII drawdown of forces to maintain National Guard relevancy. Decisions were being made at the Pentagon and the halls of Congress with respect to the role of the National Guard – without representation from the Guard itself.

MG Walsh led the efforts to make membership matter. He initiated the individual membership program to demonstrate NGAUS credibility to Congress. He knew that Guard officers as active members, raising issues and demanding action would be much more powerful than an office in DC going it alone. He understood the lever of constituency as a means to raising the Guard's posture as a relevant force.

History is clearly repeating itself. I need not re-hash the events of the past eighteen months, nor the fact that disparity between the components remains. I can only imagine what MG Walsh would be saying if he were up on that stage, straining to see his beloved Minnesotan's way in the back.

Help our organization regain its prideful standing in NGAUS and give us the credibility we deserve by urging your fellow officers to join. It's membership season. It's time to watch our own bobber and quit worrying about Wisconsin and South Dakota and others ahead of us. If you're reading this, you're already a member. Tell someone who isn't, why this matters. Tell them to call any of us to find out what it is that NGAMN and NGAUS does for all of us. I'd be happy to tell them why MEMBERSHIP MATTERS.

I'm confident that someday, I'll visit MG E.A. Walsh's gravesite in Little Falls, to give him a prideful salute and let him know we made it to the front row.





## Vice President - AIR

Col Mike Piontek

Hello Minnesota. The intent of my article for this quarter is to expand on a note I made in the summer edition. I closed the article with a link to an issue of National Guard magazine that outlined the history of NGAUS legislative accomplishments made on behalf of National Guard men and women. Links are great, but for this article I'm going to highlight some specific wins that impact most if not all of us in order to focus on the "whys" behind the importance of supporting NGAUS.

From my own personal experience, as I'm sure most of us can relate, educational benefits were one of the reasons I joined the Guard. Some of NGAUS most impactful work has been advocating for education benefits for us and our families. 1984 – Montgomery GI Bill provides for the first time federal financial support to Guard men and women going college. 1987 – NGAUS persuades Congress to make Montgomery GI Bill permanent. 2008 – Post 9/11 GI Bill allows service members to transfer benefits to family members. 2017 – Forever GI Bill eliminates the expiration date on benefits for anyone who left the military after 1 Jan 2013. I've made use of the benefits as a student, my kids and yours are able to take advantage now because of the work NGAUS had done for us.

Medical readiness is a significant part of our overall readiness. NGAUS has worked with Congress to provide additional medical resources for Guard men and women and their families. 2006 – culminated a seven year NGAUS effort to improve the Guard's medical readiness through introduction of TRICARE Reserve Select. 2009 – TRICARE coverage prior to deployment increased from 90 to 180 days. 2020 – paid

maternity leave for drill-status women as well as six months of transitional medical coverage for Guard soldiers & airmen and their families after T32 COVID response missions. In order to meet the increased demand on the Guard to be ready we need to be medically ready all the time. Unfortunately not all our soldiers & airmen have adequate medical coverage. One of NGAUS 2021 Legislative Priorities is zero-cost TRICARE to ensure reserve-component medical readiness. Same benefits for the same missions.

Education and medical benefits have an impact on us all. NGAUS has also been our champion with respect to concurrent and proportional fielding of equipment as well as modernization & recapitalization, resourcing, and status protections. Maybe not all directly at the local level, but their impact has been felt across the Guard enterprise.

If you are a member, have the discussions with your fellow officers to encourage them to consider membership, tell the NGAUS story. If you're reading this and not a member, I would encourage you to consider membership in the organization that is our voice to our lawmakers. Their work benefits us all and the cost for lifetime membership is at an all-time low.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!



## Vice President - ARMY

LTC Kristen Auge

Obtaining a minimum of a bachelor's degree is a societal norm and with that can come the challenges of paying for it. Through corporate sponsorships, the National Guard Association of Minnesota (NGAMN) has long offered scholarships to members' families as a way to give back and ease the financial burden of continuing education. Each year, NGAMN board members determine a theme and applicants' responses are weighted to determine the final award recipients. This year's theme asked applicants to describe what honor means to them both personally and professionally.

Of the five applications, one stood out above the rest and the board unanimously chose Jessica Bartz as the McGough and NGAMN \$1000 recipient. Jessica is the daughter of retired servicemember Nathan Bartz. From a young age, she was impacted by her father's service both at home and abroad during a deployment. She aspires to become a doctor and carries that spirit of giving back, just as her father emulates. Bartz is attending St. Catherine University. "Honor, to me professionally, means that I uphold myself to the highest standard and utilize the gifts, talents, and opportunities that were provided to me with the intent to better the world around me," wrote Bartz.

Second place \$500 recipient is Cela Cashel, step-daughter of retired Army Lt. Col. Rhonda Evenson. Cashel is attending Missouri State University and seeking a Public Relations degree. Cashel wrote, "I view honor as an internal concept that serves as a moral compass." She further added, "It means making sacrifices to do the right thing. It means treating others with dignity and respect and holding oneself to the highest standard."

Third place \$500 recipient is Elise Larson, daughter of Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Emily Larson. Larson is attending South Dakota State University with a focus on pharmacy. Larson had this to write about honor, "Acknowledging one's mistakes, failures, and shortcomings is the rarely acknowledged dirty, grimy side of honor." She added, "Moving forward from one's mistakes, is



**Congratulations to the scholarship recipients! We look forward to next year's applications.**

a vital, bittersweet lesson to be learned, from mistakes grow compassion, understanding, and character."

All five applicants were impacted by their family member's service, but Bartz summed it up by concluding her essay with, "I am honored to have been raised in a military family and to understand what a great privilege it is to live in the United States of America." No truer words could have been written.

# Vice President - Alumni

BG (Ret.) Tim Kennedy



The NGAUS national conference was successfully held in person in Las Vegas at the end of August. The 2022 conference will be held in Columbus, Ohio next year beginning on August 26th. Most of the NGAUS legislative priorities come out of these conferences. For the Alumni Group, at the national level, that is where the legislation which provided veterans status to all military retirees evolved. At the state level, in 2016, NGAMN, along with several Minnesota veteran's groups was successful in getting military retired pay exempt from Minnesota State Income tax. This has resulted in thousands of dollars in savings, annually, for retired members of the Alumni Group. Please stay involved, your participation and membership matters.

The Officers' Holiday Party is December 3rd. Please join us at the Embassy Suites Minneapolis Airport, 7901 34th Ave South, Bloomington, MN 55425. Our guest speaker will be The Adjutant General, Major General Shawn Manke. General Manke assumed the TAG position during some very interesting times so it will be interesting to hear from him.

The attire is Business/Business casual. It is a great evening to break out that Christmas tie and/or socks. Social hour starts at 1800 with the meal served at 1915. Onsite parking is free. Come join us for an evening of information and fun!

The cost for the dinner is \$50 per person. We'll be having Champagne Chicken which is pan seared chicken breast with roasted grapes and leeks in a light cream sauce. It is served with roasted fingerling potatoes and asparagus. It includes a house salad and chocolate cake with fresh berries and whipped cream for dessert. We have a private bartender and there are 2 complimentary drink tickets with each meal. All dinners include regular and decaf coffee, hot and iced tea.

To sign up, please visit the National Guard Association of Minnesota's website: <https://www.ngamn.org/holidaysocial>. Suspense for reservations is November 31st.

I hope to see you there,

Tim Kennedy  
President, NGAMN Alumni Group  
Brigadier General USA (Retired)

## Officers' Holiday Party

### December 3rd

Embassy Suites  
Minneapolis Airport

7901 34th Ave South  
Bloomington, MN

Social hour 1800  
Dinner 1915

**Dinner**  
\$50/person

### For more information and to register:

[ngamn.org/holidaysocial](https://www.ngamn.org/holidaysocial)



## Executive Director

Col (Ret.) Mark Schutta

### Why Corporate, Business or Individual Partnerships?

Beginning January 2022, the Board will begin its Corporate, Business and Individual Partnership drive. So why Partnerships? Textbooks, magazines articles, and social media will give you many answers as to why. These outlets will tell you by entering into a partnership, corporations are able to communicate their values and shape how their brand is perceived. Or maybe it will increase their brand exposure to include other programs or items they produce. Or possibly this partnership provides the nonprofit organization more operating funds to run successful programs.

While I agree with all of the reasons listed above, Jay Hackett and I had an opportunity to sit down with one of our Corporate Partners – Guaranteed Rate. Right away we knew this partnership was going to be different. It wasn't about the money but it was about serving people who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

All the while we were in Bryan Wernimont's office he wanted to know what he could do for our soldiers and airmen. While Bryan himself was not able to serve he has a deep respect for those who did, including a few of his family members. He went on to explain that there are many veterans who didn't know or understand the VA Benefit options when buying a home. He went on and provided this testimonial.

"I met with Frank R from New Prague MN because he was looking to get pre-approved to buy another home. He was pre-approved by another lender for 10% down but I noticed he checked that he was a Veteran on his application. I asked him if he knew about his VA benefits that would allow him to buy a home with zero down. He said he didn't know. After getting a copy of Frank's DD214 form, it was determined that not only was he eligible for 100% financing, he also qualified to have the VA funding fee waived because he was partially disabled. This not only saved Frank a significant amount of



money by not having to pay the VA funding fee, it also allowed him to keep his 10% down payment in savings. The rate was less, and Frank received a better loan."

As Jay and I walked out of the building, we looked at each other and stated this just isn't a business partnership but a relationship that will benefit our soldiers and airmen in the future.

So, as we begin our Partnership drive, I challenge each of you to meet with your employer and see if they are willing to become a Partner with the NGAMN. A conversation like this just happened recently with Twin Metals Minnesota and they have jumped on board to become our most recent partner. To assist with the conversation we have a template already available for your use and will be posted to our web page. Also, when reviewing our web page at [NGAMN.ORG](http://NGAMN.ORG), you will see all of our other partners for CY21.

On another note, we are midway through our Membership drive and it is my hope to achieve 400 new Digital Life Memberships. With the subsidy provided by the NGAMN (see the membership form on the last page), Minnesota is offering this Life Membership at the lowest rate nation-wide. So please be an ambassador for membership and spread the word!



## 34th Infantry Division

MAJ Tim Grinde

Over the past few months 34ID has been preparing for and executing Warfighter 22-1. The exercise was shifted last minute from Camp Atterbury, Indiana to Fort Riley, Kansas

due to Camp Atterbury starting to house and support Afghan refugees. Despite the curve balls thrown at the participants, 34ID, along with 13 other organizations, made it safely, on time, and performed admirably.

While down at Fort Riley, I was able to discuss some of the recent accomplishments that NGAUS has made with some DHHB, 34ID Soldiers participating in the exercise. In particular, the topic of the FY 2021 NDAA and its legislation that authorized paid maternity leave and retirement credit for MDAY Soldiers was a topic of conversation. Currently, the number of females serving in the Minnesota National Guard is at an all-time high. However, female retention through retirement is 30% less than that of their male counterparts. Military OneSource cites that between the ranks of E4-E5, female retention drops by 44%, and between the ranks of O3-O4, female retention drops by around 38%. While not the sole reason, a major contributing factor can be the stressful decisions that females may have to make during in their peak childbearing years. Oftentimes, expecting mothers may struggle with determining whether taking care of their newborns and the changes in life that come with it are able to be balanced with the demands of the military, along with the uncertainty of how their chain of command with support

their needs. While it has taken a few years for the legislation to catch up to the active component's maternity benefits, NGAUS was successful in getting three months of paid IDT following childbirth passed, along with retirement points – an equivalent period of coverage to the active component's 12-week policy.

1LT Erica Iverson is an expecting mother and Soldier within the DHHB's Battalion Staff. LT Iverson and her husband have carefully considered her military career along with her full-time civilian career when doing their family planning. This newly passed legislation has provided much relief and comfort going forward, knowing she will be less burdened on determining whether caring for her upcoming newborn (and future children) would need to be deconflicted with her military obligations. Erica stated that this enactment was “an important step forward for women in the Minnesota National Guard,” and that this was a “testament to the government's support of female Soldiers and their families” overall.

Through the efforts of NGAMN and NGAUS, benefits like this become a reality. If you're not already a lifetime member of NGAMN and NGAUS, there has never been a better time than now to join! This issue has the latest rates that are significantly subsidized and substantially lower for 'digital' memberships than ever offered before – more bang for your buck, and your contributions make legislation like the above come to fruition. Enjoy the fall, and looking forward to actually seeing all in person this April during the Joint Officer/Enlisted Conference!



# 133rd Airlift Wing

Capt Brian Willis

Founded in 1921, the 133rd Airlift Wing is a critical resource for the state and nation; providing nearly 10% of Capitol Response airlift, supporting the state during recent civil disturbances, deploying more than 100 members overseas, and supporting the establishment of refugee locations after the withdrawal from Kabul. Additionally, the wing reached the end of a 5 year inspection cycle, hosting a hybrid virtual/in-person inspection by Air Mobility Command. The 133rd Airlift Wing also had the great opportunity to host Lt Gen Loh, Director of the Air National Guard.

During a town-hall, the Director fielded a variety of questions, including a number of NGAUS priorities. He was asked about the recent push for Tri-care for all; indicating one of the biggest challenges is educating representatives in Congress regarding the differences in coverage Guardsmen receive. Additionally, he was asked about: upgrades to the C-130H,

recapitalizing to C-130J models, and the future of the 133rd Airlift Wing.

In addition to his visit with Airmen, Lt Gen. Loh also met with Governor Walz, where the Governor re-affirmed the importance of the 133rd's mission, and his support of our continued flying mission. One of the key takeaways of his visit was the important role NGAUS plays in educating our representatives and advocating for the National Guard's priorities in Washington, both when it comes to our Airmen's entitlements, as well as our mission sets in the future.

As the 133rd looks to remain relevant for the next 100 years, we'll need continued engagement of our representatives who fully understand the pivotal role our planes provide the state and nation.

# Warrant Officers

CW4 Brett Setterlund

Greetings, My name is CW4 Brett Setterlund, and I volunteered to represent the Warrant Officer Cohort at NGAMN. I have been a proud member of NGAUS for the past seven years and have been a huge proponent of this organization. I know the benefits we gain through their efforts on the hill continue to improve our status as a reserve force and our lively hood outside the uniform. I urge each of you Warrant Officers to take advantage of this limited-time offer to become a life member. An ordinary life membership ran \$1,250 a year ago. You are saving about \$900 on a life membership for the only organization that continues to fight for your benefits as a Guard member. Once a life member, the only thing you have to remember is to change your address after you move to the beach to retire. If you look at NGAUS.org, you will see all the successful lobbying efforts of NGAUS that have made it into the NDAA or become permanent law. One, in particular I want to point out occurred in 2011 when the Chief of National Guard Bureau (CNGB) became a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Going against the advice of the Secretary of the Army and the Army CoS, NGAUS was able to convince Congress into enacting that change into law, giving the NG a much louder voice in Washington. This year, an amendment was proposed in the NDAA to allow the CNGB to be eligible for Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs. In my lifetime, I would love to see our most senior National Guard leader become the chairmen and report directly to the Secretary of Defense. Without NGAUS's support, ideas like this never have a chance of becoming a reality. NGAUS needs your support!

**I want to congratulate the following newly appointed WO1's who graduated from the State program in October.**

- WO1 Reed Pritchard - Engineer
- WO1 Jess Richards - Ordnance
- WO1 Anton Johnson - Ordnance
- WO1 Scott Lundequam - Engineer
- WO1 Clayton Anderson - Aviation
- WO1 Emily Malherek - Aviation
- WO1 Robert Theuringer - Ordnance
- WO1 Aarin Urevig - Quartermaster
- WO1 Mark Peloski - Aviation
- SSG Thomas Wright – COE

Here's a short article that summarizes the challenges and achievements WOC's encounter during the course: [www.dvidshub.net/news/404072/resiliency-rti-warrant-officer-candidate-pushes-through](http://www.dvidshub.net/news/404072/resiliency-rti-warrant-officer-candidate-pushes-through). Congratulations to all on this next major step in your career. Work hard and continue to become experts in your craft.



**To all Leaders, submissions for the CY22 Minnesota Warrant Officer of the Year Award are due 15 December 2021. Please take the time to nominate any of your Warrant Officers that are going the extra mile to make your team successful (especially at Warfighter!).**



# Reduced Cost Memberships

CPT Tyler Anderson

In an exciting turn of events, we are hoping to have the next few months show net losses. That normally sounds bad, but in this case, it's deliberate as we have budgeted to cover costs to provide a reduced rate for 400 service members to obtain a lifetime membership at \$300 for company grade, \$375 for field grade and \$450 for flag officers.

You've probably seen reference to this multiple times within this issue of the Vikang newsletter and there's a big reason. First, because it's a low cost we have not had available in the past. Second, because we as an association can afford to assist in your payment. Third, because you should become a lifetime member!

I'll start with how it's a great deal. Some people talk in percentages and others in dollars. In this case, I'm going to talk in years. For our Company Grade Officers, your annual membership dues are \$60. So, a newly commissioned Officer will have their first year free but would pay \$60 each year thereafter. Assuming the initial obligation of 6 years after commission and "getting out" thereafter, this \$300 is just paying those 5 years up front in one payment, and not having to remember to pay each year (or get hassled about renewing your dues). But that's just brand new.

If you're planning to be in the National Guard for the long haul, the benefits that NGAUS and NGAMN are pushing for are directly affecting you. When the Association is able to say they speak on behalf of X number of service members while getting our government to support our goals, it's speaking on behalf of active members. It doesn't say much when the Association is speaking on behalf of 100 members, but it means a lot more when saying "on behalf of over 1,000 National Guard members, we would like your support for zero-cost TriCare" (which is a current push) it's a bigger voice speaking.

Some additional quick math: O4-O6 and CW4: just about 4 years paid at once.

You may be asking, how we can do this. First, NGAUS has recently included a \$500 digital lifetime membership option. On top of this reduced cost, the Board for the Minnesota Association have decided to set aside \$40,000 to assist in the



cost of your lifetime membership. This is due to the strong cost savings and new efforts of building corporate contributions that our executive directors and the board have done over the past few years. (A special thanks to the work of Carl Willis and Pete Panos, previous executive directors, and our current executive director, Mark Schutta for their hard work pushing the association forward). With this budgeted amount available, we are investing in the future of the Association.

We currently have an amount that can reduce the cost for 400 servicemembers to get an active life membership. After that, it's back to the \$500 for the NGAUS life, and \$125 for NGAMN life, which is still a reasonable cost, but that extra \$325 - \$175 doesn't have to be your cost if you act now and apply.

Is this a once-in-a-lifetime deal, or will it happen annually? That depends on all of us. NGAMN is now a tax deductible 501(c)19 Veteran Organization, so if we can get more corporate sponsors, we will have more funding available to reduce these costs to new members to become lifetime members. We say "corporate" but it does not mean a big public company. We gladly accept contributions from your company, your friend's company, or anyone that wants to do more to move our mission forward, and there is no dollar threshold. It's tax deductible for them, and we make sure we recognize our contributors.

I hope this membership push is a success, and that you take advantage of the discounted price. There is so much to be gained by becoming a member. If you have questions, feel free to reach out to any of us on the board, especially reaching out to your group representative. Become a lifetime member!



# Payment by Check Form

## National Guard Association of Minnesota



PO Box 131766  
 St. Paul, MN 55113-0020  
 Phone: 612-790-5414  
 NGAMN.ORG

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City | State | Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1 ABCT    347 RSG    34 ID    133 AW    148 FW    JFHQ    34 CAB    84 TRC    ALUMNI

### Annual Membership Dues:

Grade	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O7	O8	WO1	CW2	CW3	CW4	CW5
State	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$45	\$45	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$35	\$35
National	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$80	\$80	\$80	\$130	\$130	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$80	\$80
Total	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$175	\$175	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$115	\$115

PLEASE NOTE – YOU CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF NGAMN WITHOUT BEING A MEMBER OF NGAUS

### Other Membership Options:

**NEW for 2022 - Digital Life NGAUS/NGAMN Membership:** Promotional rates by grade: \$300 (WO1 / CW2 / O1 / O2 / O3), \$375 (CW3 / CW4 / O4 / O5), \$450 (CW5 / O6 / O7 / O8). Will provide Active State Life Membership, Digital Life Membership to NGAUS,

**\*\*Promotional Rate valid for first 400 registrants.\*\* After first 400 registrations, rate is \$500 for NGAUS digital life membership, and \$125 for State Life Membership.**

Newly Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers: Free membership for a period of one year and any portion of the year in which they are appointed.

Associate Member: \$70

For Alumni/Retired Officers: NGAUS Life Member \$125 – State Life Member \$50 (Note, officers who have not “retired” and have elected to renew their service obligation with the guard will revert to annual membership while they are on active status)

Amount Due: \_\_\_\_\_ (See options above)

Pay by Check: Make check payable to NGAMN,      Pay by Credit Card

send to address above.

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV: \_\_\_\_\_



## National Guard Association of Minnesota

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### Board Members & Staff

Executive Director: Col (Ret) Mark Schutta

President: LTC Jay Hackett

Vice President (Army): LTC Kristen Auge

Vice President (Air): Col Mike Piontek

Vice President Alumni: BG (Ret) Tim Kennedy

Vice President Legislative: Vacant

Treasurer: COL (Ret) Al Timm

Secretary: WO1 Shannon Siroin

Webmaster: MAJ (Ret) Christopher Kline

## Calendar

Officers' Holiday Party

**December 3**

NGAMN State Conference

**April 22-23**

NGAUS National Conference

**August 26**

