



*Major General Shawn Manke is sworn in as the 32nd Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard*



Fall 2020

# VIKANG NEWS

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## #membership matters



[www.ngamn.org](http://www.ngamn.org)



# President's Report

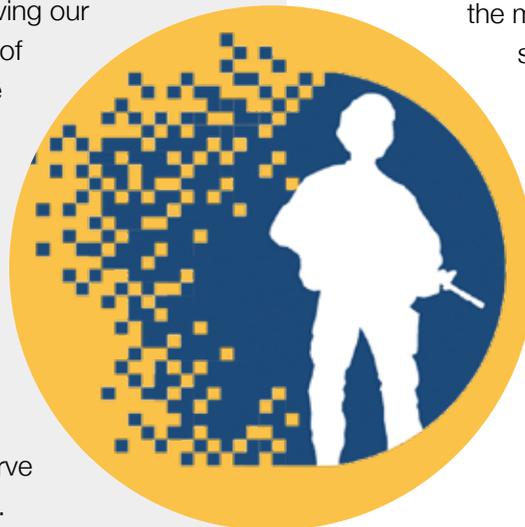
Lt Col Connie Armstrong

Welcome and congratulations to our new Adjutant General, MG Shawn Manke. We look forward to working collaboratively with our TAG to continue to grow and strengthen our organization.

## #MEMBERSHIPMATTERS

Thank you to all our members that participated in the 142nd NGAUS General Conference online. We had the unique opportunity to hear from many of the newly appointed leaders of the Air Force, Army, and National Guard. One take-away from the conference of particular importance is that membership in NGAUS and NGAMN matters. As military members, it is NGAUS that advocates on our behalf on Capitol Hill. With all the competing interests for limited funding, we cannot underestimate the importance of having our voice heard. However, the influence of our voice originates only through the strength of our membership. States with higher membership have greater clout.

It's too late to wait until an issue critical to Minnesota is up for deliberation to encourage our members to consider NGAUS membership – without the advance support, we're behind the power curve and lose any competitive advantage.



As COVID continues to challenge us all individually in our daily lives, it has also affected us in many ways as an organization. Not only do we continue to meet virtually, holding our NGAMN Board of Director meetings via Microsoft Teams, but we are also entering into a membership renewal campaign in this increasingly virtual existence.

The latest numbers from early October indicate that our overall membership within the state is at 52%; however, our goal remains at 76%. NGAUS offers a 5% Early Bird Rebate to each state for all Active Annual membership renewed and paid between October 1st and March 31st. Although renewed in the 2020 calendar year, any paid memberships before 2021 will count toward and carry forward through the end of 2021. Yet, one of the best ways to continue to support our state and our future viability is through lifetime membership. Lifetime memberships are the mechanism that allows us to bring our numbers beyond 100%. When an Active Life member retires,

the membership still counts toward our state's membership percentage. Plus, NGAUS also provides a 25% rebate to our state for each Active Life membership. We are still offering our lifetime promotion with a savings of over \$500 and payment plan options that are a great opportunity. The respective unit representatives can answer further questions and assist with membership sign-up as needed.

# Scholarship Recipients

One of the other benefits offered to NGAMN members and their families is our yearly scholarship program. It is always challenging to select from the many qualified applicants we receive, which was not made any easier this year. Thank you to all that submitted applications and to McGough Construction Co., LLC, for once again agreeing to sponsor our NGAMN scholarship program.

**We are pleased to announce the recipients of this year's scholarships:**



**\$1,000 McGough scholarship recipient: Jack Linton**



**\$500 NGAMN family member recipient: Ellen Ahlness**

**\$500 NGAMN servicemember recipient: Capt David Pagel**





## Vice President - ARMY

LTC IN Jay Hackett

Eleven miles from the Gaza Strip in the Northern Sinai, Egypt. A congressional delegation (CODEL) was in-bound to visit our Forward Operating Base. The prospect of collateral damage was high as recent VBIED's and ISIS activity created a "proper backdrop" for what I had planned to show and tell them. Greeting the Congress women and men with body armor helped to drive home the point - we were in a combat zone for all intents and purposes.

But this is a "peacekeeping" mission. A three decade long Multinational Forces and Observer mission to observe the conditions of the treaty of peace between Egypt and Israel. It had long fallen off the radar due to the successful implementation of the treaty. The fall of ISIS in Iraq coupled with the overthrow of the Muhammed Morsi in Egypt brought ISIS to the Northern Sinai to wage conflict against the Egyptian Armed Forces, who now represented a threat to radical Islamic ideology.

Yet none of us were receiving the Combat Zone Tax Exclusion Benefit and more importantly, the Active Duty Soldiers serving side-by-side with National Guardsman, were receiving benefits that we wouldn't be seeing. Tuition assistance,



early retirement credit, transitional health care access and the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits were not funded under 12304b order status, which was how we were ordered to active duty. We had informed our Representatives of these gaps. Legislation was drafted and introduced. So the timing of their visit was crucial to having a first-hand understanding of what it was we were after.

As we talked, it really seemed to make a difference in HOW they listened once they knew I was an active NGAUS member in a politically active state like Minnesota. We talked about how active NGAUS is, right across the street from the Capitol. "Oh we know them very well", we were told. "If we come all the way here to hear the same thing we hear across the street in DC, we know they are pushing hard for benefit parity on the hill!" This was important for me, and now you, to hear – that being a NGAUS member is valuable and paying my dues are a great investment.

Our voice was being heard. Shortly after returning to CONUS, the Benefit Parity Act that we discussed in-theater was passed.

You may or may not have this perfect scenario drop in your lap. But many of us are now, or will soon be deployed. You can make the most of the current situation and help your fellow service women and men by becoming an active member and doing your part to bring others into the fold. Seek out those opportunities to tell your story during CODEL visits. Becoming active in NGAMN and NGAUS gives you and those you lead a voice.

Our voice is being heard. Pass it on.



## Vice President - Air

Col Lyle Shidla

Greetings NGAMN!

Another socially distant quarter has passed, and it looks like we still have more to come before the pandemic passes. An aspect we will likely start hearing more about are the ancillary impacts of the pandemic in the areas of mental health and deferred medical treatment for other ailments. It is hard to hold on to a sense of community when we are actively trying to keep separate from others, but it has never been more important. Keep in touch with one another so we can all make it to the other side together.

As we think about getting to the other side of this pandemic, we need to realize that the world will be different. One area that will directly impact us is defense spending. Since 2001, military spending has continually grown with the support of both major political parties. Now that the government's pandemic response has exploded our national debt, it is likely the military budget will be curtailed going forward. It is here that NGAUS membership will matter more than ever. NGAUS is the most powerful voice the National Guard has in Washington when it comes to guiding Congress on where and how to allocate assets and dollars. The voice of NGAUS is guided by its members, and States with more membership will have more influence on what that voice says. When we compare ourselves to our border states, Minnesota has the lowest membership percentage. We need to improve on this to ensure Minnesota does not get left behind as shrinking budgets lead to more distinct winners and losers. Membership matters, so please spread the word.

## Capitol Summit Recap

Capt Joshua Kolkind, 148th Fighter Wing

After attending the Capitol Summit virtually in July, I couldn't help but come away with a re-energized approach to involvement in things outside of my normal work sphere. We all can get stuck in the minutia of our daily grind which can lead to a divestment in those bigger picture things that can pay such huge returns. I was struck by the professional delivery and the absolutely stacked lineup of speakers in such an unprecedented environment. This dedication to excellence during contested operations left me feeling confident in our abilities to adapt and persevere when it may be easier to throw in the towel and call it off. Hearing the outgoing Chief of the National Guard Bureau, as well as the incoming General Hokanson give their perspective on both where we have been and where we are going was more enlightening than any presentation I can recall in my 17 years in the Air National Guard. Add to that a glimpse into the congressional process and the work going on in Washington on behalf of the National Guard, and it's impossible for me to not step back from my daily work and take a look at the bigger picture. We are now much better off than National Guardsmen who came before us, and because of the work of all of us, it has to, and will be better for those who serve within it once we are gone.



## Vice President – Alumni

Brigadier General (Retired) Tim Kennedy

Due to restrictions placed on facilities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have chosen to cancel the annual holiday dinner scheduled for Friday, December 4, 2020. Several things factored into this decision. One was the requirement for any room used can only be filled to 25% capacity, this meant we would have had to rent a room that would hold 350 to 400 people for our group that usually numbers between 75 and 100 people. It is difficult to have much of a social gathering with everyone spread out like that. Additionally, most of the Alumni are in what is considered the COVID vulnerability group and we did not want to put anyone's health at risk.

The pandemic had an impact on many activities that Alumni members typically work on to raise money for military causes. Youth Camp was cancelled as was the Tee It Up For the Kids golf outing. Both should be on for next year. Alumni members also play significant roles in MAC-V, Free Urns for Veterans and the Minnesota Military Family Foundation. All are looking to a return to more normal activity in 2021.

We are nearing the November election and I encourage everyone to get out and vote. Thank you for being a member of NGAUS and NGAMN.

# Report on the 2020 NGAUS conference

The 2020 NGAUS conference was unique in that it was held virtually. Originally scheduled to be held in Boston, the pandemic led to it being conducted over two days with several one hour video sessions. Maj Gen Michael McGuire, Chairman of NGAUS Board, opened the conference by highlighting that there were currently 90,000 guardsmen on duty. Because the conference is being held virtually, all by law changes and elections were suspended until the 2021 conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Maj Gen McGuire was followed by Col (Ret) Mike Hadley who provided a legislative update. A key accomplishment was the extension of Title 32 orders for the COVID-19 response which enabled members to qualify for benefits. The current House and Senate bills provide for 6 months post-deployment healthcare for Guardsmen transitioning off COVID-19 duty and for hazardous duty incentive pay. Priorities for a 21st century National Guard include the same equipment, the same resources and the same benefits for the same mission.

Key elements in the NDAA include Army and Air Force weapons platform procurement, post-deployments transitional health benefits for Guardsmen on Title 32 orders from COVID-19 missions, amending the law to eliminate the 1/30th rule for hazardous duty incentive pay, the redesignation of the DD214 as the "Certificate of Military Service" and a study to create a Total Force document to provide to Reserve Component service members throughout



their career. 2021 appropriations were discussed, only from the House perspective. The Senate has currently not released their appropriations plan.

Michele Mahoney, director of membership and marketing for NGAUS reported on membership, indicating that 13 states have 100% membership and in the past 12 months, life memberships have increased by 800. The 2021 membership campaign kicks off on October 1, 2020. The Treasurer's report from Brig. Gen. (Ret) Ken Ross indicated that NGAUS is financially sound. NGAUS is doing well with the building as it brings in 45% of the revenue and accounts for 42% of the expenses. We also heard from Dr. Anne Armstrong, Deputy Director, of the National Guard Education Foundation and Command Sgt Maj (Ret) Karen Craig, EANGUS President.

The day concluded with a speech from General James McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He thanked the Guard for all that they have done this year with units deployed across the world and on duty for hurricanes, fires, civil unrest and COVID19 response. He stresses the



slogan “People first, winning matters, army strong.” His priority is to transform the army now and the Guard is critical to that transformation. Guard units will be among the first to field the Army’s newest weapon systems, from new rifles to vertical lift. He specifically mentioned the 1/34th ABCT and their work at the NTC. He ended by talking about the National Defense Strategy and to hold a competitive edge we must engage with allies and partners in a region. Security Force Assistance Brigades and the Partnership for Peace programs are also key pieces of the puzzle.

Day two started with a tribute to Charlie Daniels and the enthusiastic and entertaining Roll Call of the States. This was followed by a series of speeches. First was General Dan Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He indicated that we have never been busier or more visible with the pandemic response, civil unrest, fighting fires and continuing to complete our overseas missions. Also, the Partnership for Peace program has grown to 89 nations. A major change coming to the Guard includes aligning much of the Army Guard force under eight divisions. Doing this should bring significant benefits to retaining talent and to equipment modernization. The goal is to have all units as part of a division or corps level organization.

General Hokanson was followed by former Vice President, Joe Biden. He praised the Guard for its efforts over the

past two decades and, in particular, for the recent months. He promised that the Guard will not deploy with outdated equipment and promised needed health care, including mental health care, when returning from missions.

General Charles Q. Brown, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was up next. His message was that the Air Force must accelerate change or lose because our advantage over the rest of the world is eroding. Budgets will become an issue and collaboration with Congress and all three components of the Air Force will be the key to moving things forward. The Air Guard has the same equipment and a great deal of experience. The value of the State Partnership Program is huge. There are currently 1,100 service members involved with the Space Force but the Guard’s role is yet to be determined as well as what the air force will do in support of the space force. General Browne acknowledged the 90 wings in the 54 states and territories.

General John W. “Jay” Raymond, Chief of Space Operations, and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the Guard for the first time. He acknowledged that the National Guard has been a critical partner in the establishment of the Space Force but is not part of it, at this time. In the past, the big concern was to get satellites in orbit but were not concerned with protecting them. Now it is a war fighting domain, just like air, land and sea. The Space Force must be lean and agile, attract and develop talent, work with partners across the world, coordinate with industry and build the service as a digital service. It has to be a disruptive innovator for the department of defense.

LTG Jon Jensen, our former TAG and now Director of the Army National

Guard, lauded the membership for the positive leadership during current crisis. 99,000 Army National Guard were on duty in June, about 1/3 of the Army Guard strength. He spoke about the institutional priorities for the Army Guard – End Strength, Readiness and People. End Strength is the highest priority and will receive resources, including more recruiters, incentive pay and bonuses. Around readiness, we have to continue to be innovative in our ability to create and maintain readiness in the COVID environment. We missed out on 18,000 school slots because of the pandemic and it will take several years to make that up. We cannot abandon our core missions of deterring aggression and defeating threats across the globe. Divisions are the decisive tactical echelons. The alignment of all guard units under the eight divisions is happening so that they will be able to deploy as a full division in the future. For people, we have to take care of each other and understand that the keys to our success are our NCO core, the Reserve Components and our diversity inclusion and equity.

Lt Gen Michael Loh, Director of the Air National Guard said that the strength of the Air Guard is its people, not its equipment. The Guard has the trust of the communities that we serve and we must maintain that. New equipment is being fielded in the Air Guard with F35’s in Vermont, F15 EX’s in Oregon and KC46’s in New Hampshire. He reported that 1,000,000 guard members have been mobilized since 9/11/2001 while he warned that “we may have seen the highwater mark for the defense budget. We have to figure out how to ensure that the force structure of today is lethal and capable.” He is working to ensure that, as the Space Force evolves, Air Guard members are included.



## Headquarters, 34th Infantry Division

LTC Sarah Witt

### WFX 21-1

In October 2020, over 160 Soldiers of the 34th Infantry Division (ID) Headquarters participated in Warfighter 21-1 exercise at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). The digitally simulated exercise focused on large-scale combat operations, providing a challenging and realistic environment to test their technical expertise and ability to synchronize effectively and collectively as a Division Staff. The exercise provided a dynamic training platform to train staff on Mission Command in both Unified Land Operations and the Multi-Domain Battlefield.

The 34ID participated as a response cell, feeding information and providing real life interaction and synchronization of a subordinate and sister Division, enabling a successful exercise for the training audience. The training audience for WFX 21-1 consisted of the XVIII Airborne Corps as 34ID's higher HQs operating out of Fort Bragg, NC along with 3rd ESC (Expeditionary Sustainment Command), the 82nd Airborne Division, 16th Military Police Brigade, 20th Engineer Brigade. 1st Cavalry Division participated as a training audience from Fort Hood, TX. I Corps and 451st ESC simulated the HICOM at the Mission Training Center (MTC) at JBLM.

During this exercise, FORSCOM, JBLM and the 34ID worked through the unique challenges of COVID-19 to ensure the safety and welfare of all Soldiers and civilian contractors. LTG Randy George, I Corps Commander at JBLM stated, "while it is not possible to eliminate all risk of COVID-19, JBLM will implement prudent force health protection measures to mitigate risk to the greatest extent, while still achieving the WFX 21-1 training objectives."

Warfighter exercises require staff members to exercise the military decision-making process (MDMP), mission command systems and Warfighting function expertise to develop plans, provide command and control of units, and anticipate and overcome enemy actions. The Division Staff executes these processes while simultaneously overcoming geographical constraints against a near-peer threat in order to meet the commander's intent and successfully execute the mission.

Warfighter exercises provide realistic combat operations for a Division Staff while providing a challenging opportunity to test abilities, build upon and improve existing SOPs, and provides a safe learning environment that encourages collaboration and accepts failure as part of the training process. The Red Bulls increased their individual and collective proficiency in staff processes while gaining valuable experience to incorporate into future training.

34ID's involvement as a response cell at WFX 21-1 contributed to their training plan in preparation for WFX 22-1. The 34ID ADC-S, BG Stephen Schemenauer, stated "The concept of the Multi-Domain Battlefield is built on the core principle of expanding capabilities to prevent adversaries from taking advantage of seams in air, land, sea, space and cyberspace. WFX 21-1 provided the Division with the opportunity to do just that by allowing the TAC to exercise its mission command systems, conduct operational planning for large-scale combat operations, and integrate ISR into the targeting process so that joint fires could be synchronized. This exercise set the conditions for a successful Warfighter 22-1 rotation next October."



## SSLI Update

The NGAMN is a member of the Militia Insurance Trust (MIT) underwritten by New York Life. The Militia Insurance Trust is comprised of 13 National Guard Associations.

So far this year 13 families of Minnesota Airmen, Soldiers and retirees have received a benefit from the Trust.

Every member of the Minnesota National Guard is covered with \$1,000 SSLI at no cost to the member. This \$1,000 benefit is provided through the Militia Insurance Trust Group Life Insurance Plan.

### Key Benefits of the SSLI

1. Over \$1,000,000 in coverage available for the Minnesota National Guardsman through a combination of the SSLI plans.
2. Coverage available for the spouse and children.
3. Rates do not go up just because you separate from the National Guard –you can keep the coverage when you separate.
4. Coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
5. No War Exclusion – you are covered in combat.
6. No Aviation Exclusion – aviators are covered.
7. New Recruits are eligible for \$10,000 SSLI coverage under the MIT Group Life Insurance Plan at no cost for the first year of service in the Minnesota National Guard. Enrollment must occur within 120 days of joining the Minnesota National Guard.

Go to [www.NGSSLI.com](http://www.NGSSLI.com) for more information including eligibility, benefits, rates, exclusions, limitations and renewal provisions. Enrollment forms are also available online.

Policy Service: [eve@ngssli.com](mailto:eve@ngssli.com) or [kjenkins@ngssli.com](mailto:kjenkins@ngssli.com)

**Toll free # 1-800-633-8333**



# Executive Director

Peter Panos

## Membership

Currently we have 445 Officers/Warrant Officers whose 1st year memberships expire at the end of 2020 and 338 that expired in 2019. We need your continued support, for a simple \$60 annual membership (just \$5.00 a month) you add to our strength, enabling NGAUS and NGAMN to continue engaging lawmakers, where numbers matter, keeping them focused on important issues facing the National Guard. Members are the backbone of our organization, giving us strength in our fight for past and present National Guardsmen and their families.

## Update: Our Vision and Mission statement

**Vision** - To serve as a strong advocate for promoting the highest levels of readiness, modernization and quality of life for all Members and Families of the Minnesota National Guard (MNNG); Past, Present, and Future.

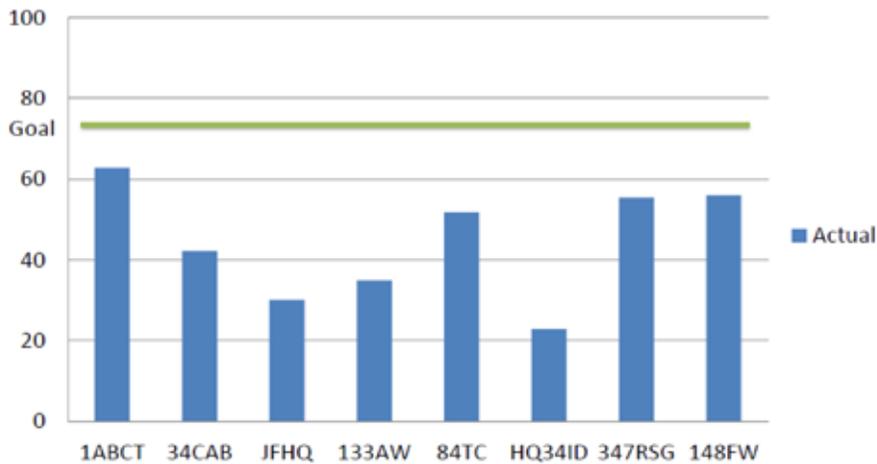
**Mission** - Continually promote the relevance, readiness, and modernization of the Minnesota National Guard by supporting state and national policies to advance the security of Minnesota and the United States; while improving the quality of life, status and professionalism for members (both active and Retired) of the Minnesota National Guard



## Our Partners



## Membership Goal 76%



## Our Numbers at a Glance

as of Oct 15, 2020



# Membership Dues National Guard Association of Minnesota



PO Box 131766  
St. Paul, MN 55113-0020  
Phone: 763-229-3984  
[NGAMN.ORG](http://NGAMN.ORG)

**Active Annual Member**

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>\$175</b>	<b>\$175</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$115</b>	<b>\$115</b>

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

- 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. In addition, new accessions from other services are given the same courtesy of a one year free membership.
- Associate Member:** NGAUS:\$45 – State: \$25
- Active Life NGAUS:** One lump sum payment of \$1,000, in four \$250 installments or ten \$100 installments and an **Active Life State Member:** One lump sum payment of \$250. Call NGAUS at 202-408-5880 if choosing installments.
- 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)

To **Pay by Check:** Complete the information below and send the form with a check payable to NGAMN to address above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City | State | Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

To **Pay by Credit Card:** please go to [www.ngaus.org/membership](http://www.ngaus.org/membership).

**– PLEASE NOTE –**

**MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION ENCOMPASSES BOTH THE STATE AND NATIONAL DUES AS PER THE STATE ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS. YOU CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION WITHOUT BEING A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION. PLEASE CALCULATE YOUR DUES APPROPRIATELY.**



## National Guard Association of Minnesota

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### Board Members & Staff

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Vice President Alumni: BG (Ret) Tim Kennedy

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Webmaster: MAJ (Ret) Christopher Kline

### Update your information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit:  133AW  148FW  1ABCT  
 347RSG  34ECAB  84TC  
 Alumni  HQ34ID  JFHQ

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(If different from mailing)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Civilian Email: \_\_\_\_\_