



Spring 2021

VIKANG NEWS

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Incoming NGAMN President



A Look at the Year Ahead

Lt Col Connie Armstrong will be stepping down from her position as NGAMN President, to be succeeded by LTC Jay Hackett, and Col (Ret.) Mark Schutta begins his tenure as Executive Director. The 116th NGAMN State Conference will be virtual for the second year in a row, and the McGough/NGAMN Scholarship applications will be on the topic of **Honor**.



President's Report

Lt Col Connie Armstrong

I'm both disappointed and excited as I prepare this, my last article as NGAMN President. Disappointed that COVID has impacted our association's ability to continue our in-person outreach, sharing the benefits and accomplishments of NGAUS. COVID has prevented us from getting out to meet our members and socialize with one another. 2021 is the second State Conference/Annual Meeting that we'll have to conduct virtually. We could not attend drill weekends together for several months, and our Board has not been able to meet in person for over a year. There are individuals on our Board who I've not yet met in person; instead, we only see each other on computer screens.

Even though my term as President will end shortly, I'll transition to the Past-President and hand the gavel off to my friend and colleague, LTC Jay Hackett, as the incoming President at the State Conference/Annual Meeting on April 24, 2021. I want to personally thank retired CW5 Pete Panos for all his time and effort and the attention and zeal he brought to NGAMN during his tenure as our Executive Director.

While we regret that he had to step away from the position, we wish him the best and hope we can keep him engaged with NGAMN in other ways. With Pete's departure, we recruited retired Air National Guard Colonel Mark Schutta as our new Executive Director. Col Schutta is still in his first month with NGAMN but has a long history with our association, brings a wealth of

knowledge from his prior military roles, and an enthusiasm to dig in and get things done. With the other engaged and competent members of our Board, I'm excited because I know that NGAMN is in great hands and still has so much more valuable work to do to support and enrich the lives and careers of our Soldiers and Airman.

Given everything the Minnesota National Guard, our members, and their families have experienced over the last year, it can be challenging to find a light at the end of the tunnel sometimes. Over the past year, our members have faced COVID restrictions, been activated on State Active Duty to respond to civil disturbance and to support COVID testing and vaccination clinics, the short notice inaugural support, along with support for Operation Safety Net and are all activities that our Airman and Soldiers have taken on in addition to managing their "normal" military activities.



NGAUS is *the* organization that actively advocates on behalf of the National Guard. Most recently, NGAUS's actions led to new laws that have expanded benefits to our National Guard members and their families. Notably, one new benefit is paid maternity leave for drill-status women in the National Guard. This new law provides excused absences with pay and retirement points for up to three months of unit training assemblies. Another change is the inclusion of six months of medical coverage for our members and their families after a Title 32 coronavirus response mission. While this transitional coverage previously applied after overseas assignments, it had not for domestic missions.

However, these are only a couple of examples of the difference NGAUS' actions have on our Guardsmen.

There are many more pending resolutions that NGAUS continues to advocate for in the legislature. For example, there is currently an initiative for authorizing legislation so our members may receive a day's pay as compensation for every eight hours of completed distance learning coursework. Another authorizing National Guard members, activated by the Governor for a State Active Duty (SAD) mission (not to include training) protecting citizens and their property, to accumulate federal retirement credit. For more information check the full list of NGAUS Fiscal Year 2022 Legislative Resolutions:

www.ngaus.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021_Legislative_Resolutions%20Booklet_FINAL_website2.pdf

Next up on our agenda is the 116th State Conference which will be conducted virtually April 24, 2021, beginning at 10 a.m. We are excited to have Maj. Gen. Michael T. McGuire, NGAUS Chairman, and Arizona Adjutant General, as our guest speaker, and hear remarks from MG Shawn Manke, Minnesota Adjutant General. We look forward to seeing everyone online for the conference. *See details on **page 5.***

As we approach the State Conference, it is also time to encourage members and their families to apply for our three scholarship opportunities. While McGough Construction Co., LLC will once again sponsor the \$1000 scholarship, recent changes to our application criteria expand the eligibility to include degree-seeking students and those enrolled in accredited trade school programs leading to certificates. This year's essay topic is "Honor," and the application deadline is June 30, 2021. *See details on **page 10.***



Vice President - ARMY

LTC IN Jay Hackett

"Hey! Remember when you said you might be interested in helping us out someday? Well, would you consider joining us as our Army Vice President?" she said with her trademark high-energy smile and enthusiasm. Her call to me was out of the blue, and followed up with an invite to lunch to talk more about it. Lt Col Connie Armstrong and I had had a conversation in one of the hospitality rooms at a State Convention. The call to me came much later. Connie and I had worked together in our civilian roles for a number of years, so my trust in her was inherent. "Yes, of course, Connie, I'd love to" was my response - even though I was reservedly measuring her up. I had no idea what I was getting into!

That's a true statement. I really had no idea. I have been a career-long member of NGAMN as a member-at-large. But as I've mentioned before, I had only taken a passive role in business meetings if I went to them at all. I measured the Connie I knew on the civilian side against the Connie I knew who had been involved on the board of directors. The passion and drive she displayed for her career and her military commitment were reflected again in her role as the VP Air Force. It was an important measurement to take for me to ensure that I was committing to something that others were truly committed to as well. That it would not just be another board to serve on, but one that had a very special purpose.



Connie has truly lead the way this past year as President. From stepping up to lend her legal expertise and advice when reviewing contracts to applying her keen eye in analyzing our chartered by-laws to being a true champion of gaining and retaining people to serve our board, she's charged extremely hard. She inspires us by making time for NGAMN while juggling a command, general counsel duties at McGough Construction, and many other commitments. Her imprint on this organization will be lasting.

Her term as President is up in April. I want to take this opportunity to thank Connie for her friendship, fellowship, and leadership. Many of you won't get a chance to see, meet or hear Connie, and that's a COVID-related shame since we won't be meeting in person. I can tell you her passion remains high; she is excited now as she was at the beginning to continue the mission of the NGAMN and see that Air and Army Service Members are heard and represented on the hill.

So whether you are called to renew your membership, take a more active role or commit to serve on the board, you should be inspired by Lt Col Armstrong. Thank you, Connie, for showing us the way!



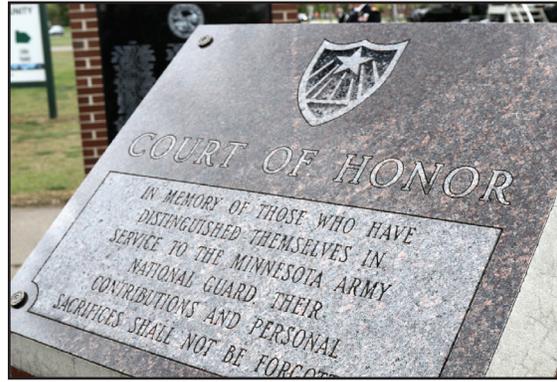
Vice President - AIR

Col Lyle Shidla

It is exciting to see that we may finally be turning the corner on the pandemic! As more people get vaccinated, every day we are getting closer to getting back to normal. We will likely have a "new" normal for at least several months as masks will still be common while large indoor social gatherings will not, but at least we won't be stuck at home. Try not to let pandemic fatigue lead you to make unsafe decisions for yourselves and your loved ones, and just get vaccinated as soon as you can.

Our annual conference will again be a victim of the pandemic as it will be a virtual experience. With one of the greatest strengths of NGAUS being its social community, it is harder to generate enthusiasm when we cannot be together. Nevertheless, it is still important to get the message out that membership is important. Government spending cannot continue at its current pace, and "discretionary" spending, as the Defense Department is categorized, will inevitably be a target for contraction. For the National Guard, NGAUS is our best vehicle for getting our message to Washington. The fact is a larger part-time force makes economic sense, and the Minnesota Army and Air Guard's stellar performance makes the case as well or better than any other state. Unfortunately, performance does not speak for itself when it comes to budget decisions. It needs a voice, and our best voice is NGAUS. Membership matters; please pass the word.





Vice President - Alumni

BG (Ret.) Tim Kennedy

I am sure that all of you are looking forward to moving on from the year that was 2020. After nearly a year of COVID restrictions, we are seeing the administration of vaccines and the hope of returning to a time when we can again have meetings in person. The State Conference will again be virtual, but the current plans are to have the National Conference in person, September 9 through 12, 2021, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

As I indicated in the previous paragraph, the 2021 State Conference will be conducted as an online meeting. Last year I did not do a good job of getting the word out to the Alumni Group, so our group attendance was low. Put the date, 24 April 2021, on your calendar and plan to connect in and participate in the conference. There will be more detail at [ngamn.org](https://www.ngamn.org) and in this newsletter.

The Alumni Group currently has 438 members. The biggest impediment to increasing membership is the lack of good contact information on retired or separated members.

I would like to enlist your help to increase the Alumni Group membership. If you are willing to help, e-mail me at bgrettim@gmail.com. My ask of you is to look at the list of current members and identify individuals who are not current members and provide me with a current e-mail address. I will then invite them to join our group.

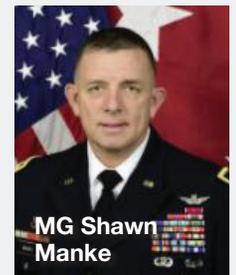
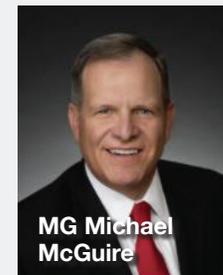
The Camp Ripley Memorialization Board is accepting nominations for possible candidates to be inducted into the 2021 Minnesota Army National Guard Court of Honor. Nominations are due by 1 April 2021, and the ceremony will be held on Sunday, 3, October 2021.

The Operational Tempo for the Minnesota National Guard remains high. Please do what you can to support organizations that are helping our Soldiers and Airmen continue to serve. I thank those of you who volunteer in these organizations and look forward to seeing some of you this year at various events.

116th NGAMN State (Virtual) Conference

24 April 2021 | 10:00am - 11:30am

We regret the NGAMN board will not be able to conduct an in-person conference this April. The program will be scaled back to meet the necessary requirements of our By-Laws, to include voting on new officers, and a presentation by MG Michael McGuire, NGAUS Chairman, and our very own Adjutant General—MG Shawn Manke.



The conference will be carried on NGAMN Microsoft Teams live on Saturday 24 April 2021 from 10:00am - 11:30am. It will be available for all members of the Minnesota National Guard to view and participate. We will send out a direct link and agenda once we have completed the planning.

Visit <https://www.ngamn.org/stateconference> for updates.

To join or renew your Membership see links below:

Officers join NGAMN at <https://www.ngamn.org/individualmembership>

Enlisted members join MNGEA at <https://mngesa.com/membership-account/membership-levels/>



Exciting Tax Stuff

CPT Tyler Anderson—Deputy Treasurer

Tax and the IRS are rarely exciting topics, but here's the blue moon where I am excited to share that in late 2020, we were approved by the IRS to change our tax status into a 501(c)19 Veterans Organization, just like our parent organization, NGAUS.

So, what does this mean? In short, any donation to NGAMN is now tax deductible. This opens the door for much greater corporate support. In the past, our corporate sponsors were just that, sponsors, and they could not deduct a charitable gift for sponsoring us. This also prevented many corporations from contributing because they had rules on which types of not-for-profit entities they could contribute to. Our previous tax status typically did not fall into those categories.

The timing for this status change was not the greatest as we finally became tax deductible as the nation was in the midst of a global pandemic. That timing may also have played into how quickly the IRS processed our application and approved our request. Nonetheless, our hope is that as things progress to returning to normal, and companies start looking at places to donate, that you can remind them of NGAMN.

We have operated on a small and tight budget, so all contributions will be greatly appreciated, and we plan to use any contribution in the best way we can to serve the Soldiers and Airmen of the Minnesota National Guard.

1st Armored Brigade Combat Team

CPT Chloe Carlson

Over the past few months, 1st Brigade has been supporting Minnesota's COVID-19 response, with Soldiers supporting testing and vaccination sites as well as assisting in long-term care facilities across the state. Following the Brigade's National Training Center rotation last summer, the unit continued to prepare to mobilize in support of Operation Spartan Shield in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. The mobilization will mainly include 1-194 Combined Arms Battalion with elements from 2-136 Combined Arms Battalion and support personnel from 334 Brigade Engineer Battalion, 134 Brigade Support Battalion, and 1-125 Field Artillery. Last month around 120 Soldiers from 1-194 Cavalry Squadron were activated and traveled to Washington, D.C., to support the 59th Presidential Inauguration. All of these efforts underscore our unique role as citizen Soldiers—always ready and available to support our state and nation when needed, at home and abroad.

A significant purpose of the NGAMN and the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) is to provide state and national-level advocacy for National Guard servicemembers—whether it's our benefits, equipment, or other support that will improve our force. I encourage you to read about legislative updates to stay informed about these efforts. One topic receiving renewed attention following a year of unprecedented state activations across the nation is benefit parity; the differences in benefits that servicemembers receive

on Title 32 and state active duty missions versus what servicemembers receive on Title 10. You can follow the NGAMN and NGAUS on Facebook, LinkedIn, and/or Twitter, where you will find legislative news and event updates.

Are you interested in getting more involved with NGAMN? My position as 1/34 ABCT Primary Representative will soon need a replacement on the NGAMN Board, and we still have an opening for the 1/34 ABCT Alternate Representative position. If you or one of your Officers is interested, please contact me to discuss further.

If your NGAMN membership has lapsed, I hope you consider renewing it. By having an active membership, you strengthen this organizations' ability to advocate for your Soldiers and yourself at both the state and national levels.

The State Conference will be in a virtual setting again this year. Mark your calendar for April 24th and keep an eye on the NGAMN website/social media for registration and conference information to be posted soon.

Top:

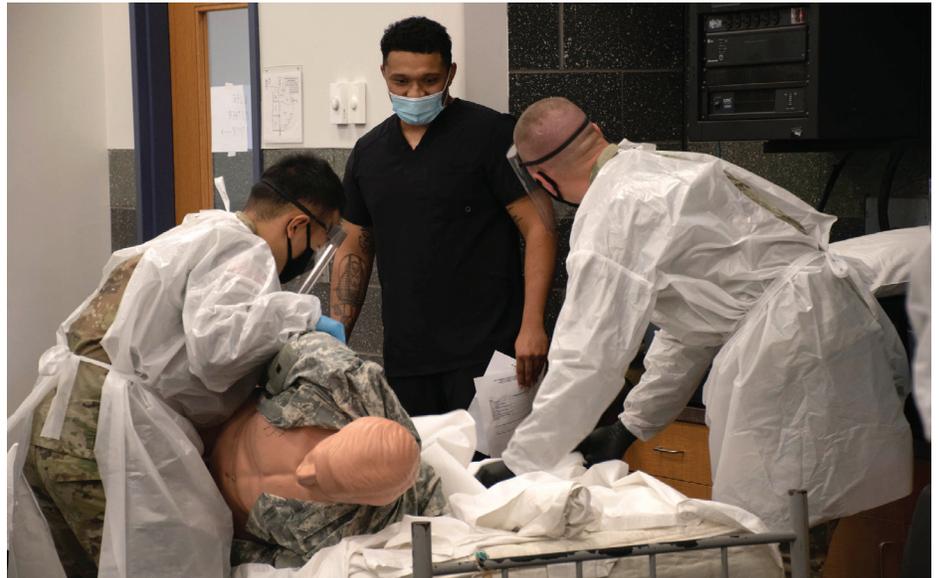
In preparation for deployment 1-194 AR (CAB), Commander LTC Jacob Helgestad received his first COVID-19 vaccination. Photo by 1-194 AR (CAB).

Middle:

Soldiers from 1-94 Cavalry Squadron conducted training on civil disturbance techniques in preparation to provide support to the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C. Photo by Sgt. Mahsima Alkamooneh/MNNG PAO Team.

Bottom:

Soldiers conducted training in preparation to provide support to staff and residents in long-term care facilities across Minnesota. Photo by MSG Blair Heusdens/MNNG PAO Team.





347 RSG Newsletter Comments

MAJ Johnny Villarreal

Soldiers of the 347th RSG continue to support the State of Minnesota, as well as operations abroad. Soldiers of the RSG have been facilitating COVID testing and vaccinations throughout the

State of Minnesota and are stepping up to provide services in long-term care facilities where critical support to the State Active Duty (SAD) operations during the civil disturbances in-state and Washington, D.C., and are preparing to assist with Operation Safety Net this Spring. RSG Soldiers accomplish these missions while simultaneously preparing for continuing deployments and readiness events. The efforts of NGAMN and NGAUS keep the interests of Soldiers and their families front and center in the minds of decision-makers at the state and national levels. Your support of these organizations through your membership is critical in order to sustain our achievements and move forward with other initiatives.

Civilian leaders can sometimes lose sight of the sacrifices Soldiers and Families endure. Help make sure they never forget by renewing your membership today or better yet, take advantage of becoming a Lifetime Member!





Executive Director

Col (Ret.) Mark Schutta

Greetings to all NGAMN members! I am honored to write my first article for the VIKANG Newsletter as your new Executive Director. I'm not new to the board per se, as I was involved in the NGAMN Association as a CGO and 133rd AW Group Rep. for my first 16 years as a commissioned officer. I believe in the NGAUS program and have witnessed many benefits gained for our National Guard Members through their efforts. What I am going to ask is this... As a dues-paying member you receive this publication, please share it with another member who may not be, and ask them to join. Years ago I found out many people are willing to join, but no one ever really sat them down and asked them to join. I'm asking you to invite one person to be a new member. While doing so, here are a few talking points to guide the conversation:

NGAUS Member Benefits:

- Dedicated advocates on Capitol Hill fighting for your benefits.
- Access to exclusive professional development, networking and educational opportunities.
- Eligibility for member and member defendant scholarships.
- Insurance supplements designed for members of the National Guard, including technician insurance.
- A monthly subscription to National Guard Magazine.
- A subscription to Washington Report, the NGAUS weekly newsletter.
- Exclusive access to legislative analysis.
- The opportunity to serve on association committees and task forces that help drive the future of Guard advocacy.
- NGAUS website: ngaus.org/benefits

Should you have any questions please contact me at director@ngamn.org

Mark Schutta, Col. (Ret.)
Executive Director for NGAMN





McGough / NGAMN Scholarships

One \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by McGough Construction Co., LLC

Two \$500 scholarships sponsored by NGAMN

Applications are available at www.ngamn.org/scholarships or you can request an application from director@ngamn.org. Application deadline: June 30, 2021.

Topic: Honor

1. The NGAMN Executive Board has voted to continue the annual award of scholarships: One (1) \$1,000 McGough Construction Co., LLC sponsored scholarship and two (2) \$500 NGAMN sponsored scholarships.
2. This policy letter serves as the authorizing document for the identification, selection, and awarding of the scholarships. This letter also establishes the minimum guidelines for qualifying applicants and timelines for submission of application materials.
3. The following are **approved categories** of eligible applicants for the scholarship:
 - Any active member, retired life member, alumni life member, or spouse/child/grandchild of an active member or retired/alumni life member of NGAMN may apply to compete for a scholarship.
 - The top applicant (any category) will be awarded the \$1,000 McGough Construction Co., LLC scholarship.
 - One runner-up from the active member/retired/alumni life member category will be awarded a \$500 NGAMN scholarship.
 - One runner-up from the spouse/child/grandchild of active member/retired/alumni life member category will be awarded a \$500 NGAMN scholarship.
4. The following minimum **qualifications** must be met to be eligible to receive the scholarships.
 - The applicant must be currently attending an accredited institution of high learning ("college") or an accredited technical, vocational, or trade school ("trade school") and pursuing a program that will lead to a bachelor's degree, graduate degree, post graduate degree, or trade school degree.
 - The applicant must have a minimum of a 2.75 cumulative GPA to be eligible.
 - The applicant must be attending college or trade school at least 6 semester credits/hours or 3 semester credit hours (graduate/post-graduate degree) each semester during the past 2 semesters.
5. The following **documents must be provided** to NGAMN Executive Director by email in combined PDF file not later than the annual due date listed above.
 - A copy of the applicant's transcripts from the college or trade school that the applicant is attending (official transcripts are not required).
 - Typewritten essay prepared by applicant (at least one page but not more than two pages, double-spaced, 10-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins.) addressing what the selected Army/Air Force value selected for the year and listed in item 10 below means to them personally and professionally.
 - A resume or biographical summary for the applicant.
6. The following submission timelines are in effect.
 - Each year submissions are required to be emailed to NGAMN Executive Director at the email address shown above no later than June 30th, 2021.
 - The application materials will be reviewed and voted on by voting members of the Executive Board in July and the recipients will be invited to the August Executive Board meeting for the presentation of the scholarship checks.
7. All annual scholarship awards will be paid directly to the applicant for use to offset the costs of pursuing a degree.
8. All decisions by the NGAMN Executive Board are final.
9. The voting members of the NGAMN Executive Board are the President, VP Army, and VP Air. Alternate voting members (in order) are the Secretary and Treasurer.
10. Each of the Army/Air Force values has been assigned a year for the essay topic.
 - 2021 - HONOR
 - 2022 - INTEGRITY
11. Recipients of a scholarship are not eligible to apply again for a minimum of three years.



Membership Dues National Guard Association of Minnesota



PO Box 131766
St. Paul, MN 55113-0020
Phone: 612-790-5414
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
Total	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$115	\$115	\$115	\$175	\$175	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$115	\$115

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.

– 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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President: Lt Col Connie Armstrong

Vice President (Army): LTC Jay Hackett

Vice President (Air): Col Lyle Shidla

Vice President Alumni: BG (Ret) Tim Kennedy

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Treasurer: COL (Ret) Al Timm

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Update your information

Name: _____

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 347RSG 34ECAB 84TC
 Alumni HQ34ID JFHQ

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(If different from mailing)

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Civilian Email: _____

