

VIKANG NEWS

Spring 2025



MN Twins receive the NGAUS' Patrick Henry Award at the MN Twins Armed Forces Appreciation Day game.



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President's Letter

Brett Setterlund



Register now for the State Conference!
I look forward to seeing everyone there!

Association Members - This year, the national conference was held in Detroit, MI. Minnesota had the opportunity to stay at the downtown Marriot, part of the Renaissance Center, a sizeable 80-story complex that is the HQ of General Motors. A stone's throw away was the Detroit Conference Center, which housed the event and had a couple hundred exhibitors and multiple key leaders speaking and engaging with the members. Minnesota had a good turnout that included four company-grade Officers who were able to attend in a paid status with per diem. Highlights were the mixer on Belle Island with wine and beer tastings from local vendors, an evening at the historic Ford Museum, and hospitality night where Minnesota teamed up with seven different states to host one of the best venues that DID NOT run out of food or drink. Keynote speakers were Chief of Staff General Randy George (Army) and General David Alvin (Air Force), along with our NGB Directors LTG Johnathan Stubbs (Army) and LTG Luke Pirak (Air).

As a first-time attendee of the national conference, I was impressed with the size and coordination of the events. With over 4,000 members attending, how many familiar faces you bumped into from previous deployments or exercises was surprising. It offered a great networking opportunity and to hear the focus areas from our senior leaders in Washington. The beauty of this event came from the grassroots efforts of members from across the 54 who were pushing their priorities up to the national level. As a delegate, I participated in the Joint Resolutions session, where members could voice their opinions and deliberate on issues that affect both the Army and Air.

Sincerely- Brett



2024 NGAUS Conference

A resolution update from the NGAMN President:

Former NGAMN President Mike Piontek and I participated in the joint resolution process during the conference. I was surprised to see how very grassroots the process was. We spent a couple of hours going through a litany of new resolutions or updating older ones. Needless to say, it was a bit hectic, in my opinion. Some resolutions received approval that were a bit simple, or it sounded like we wanted Congress to source something that we already had in place. Many of these resolutions are vetted within task forces assembled of members. Last year, the State Army Aviation Officer (SAAO), COL Greg Fix, chaired the Army Aviation Task Force and did a tremendous job cleaning up outdated and duplicate resolutions relating to Army Aviation improvements. Because of his efforts, he was given the NGAUS Meritorious Service Award. I was impressed with their ability to steer the Army Aviation Enterprise towards consensus and fine-tune the resolutions before the overall Army Resolutions voting process occurred.

The bottom line (at least in the Joint meeting) is that nearly every resolution was passed. So, if you are passionate about something that you feel our Congress needs to work on and you want NGAUS to begin that fight, start doing your research, gather your facts, and get your resolutions submitted to our board before the state conference in April. During the business meeting at our state conference, we will then present the resolutions to the members who are present and vote on whether to send them to the national level. The resolutions we voted on at the National Conference this past August are FY26 priorities for NGAUS.

Next, you will find the highlights of the Joint, Air, and Army resolutions that affect our organizations. A booklet of the current resolutions is available on the NGAUS website at https://www.ngaus.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/FY26_Legislative%20Resolutions.pdf

Joint Resolutions Updates

DOMOPS

-A push to be energy resilient at our JFHQs and local armories and purchase a system that will allow those facilities to operate independently from the local grid.

-Modernization and sustainment of the NG rescue capability by sponsoring the qualification and upgrade of the H-60 helicopters with an enhanced rescue hoist to significantly improve combat and domestic incident response capabilities by resolving issues with cable looseness, bird caging, cable misalignment, as well as reducing oscillations, and improving operational readiness by reducing maintenance and extending overhaul times.

Force Management

- Remove restrictions on the transfer of officers between the active and inactive National Guard. Personnel Pay & Member Benefits.
- Offer Retention/Reenlistment incentive for up to \$25000 in Closing cost Loan Assistance for VA Home loans.
- Provide CNGB the authority to authorize NG 502(f)(2) orders with Stafford Act funding from FEMA/DHS when requested by a Governor for NG Soldiers and Airmen responding to Presidentially Declared Stafford Act Emergencies. (A “Stafford Act emergency” is a disaster situation declared by POTUS that allows the federal government to provide financial and logistical assistance to affected areas when a state or local government is unable to manage a disaster on its own; essentially, it is a designation that enables federal aid to be deployed in response to a significant emergency).
- Establish permanent funding for Full-time National Guard Duty Military Funeral Honor position (Enduring “no fail” mission).
- Extend Flex spending to T32 AGRs, currently only available for T10. This was a win for NGAUS and is now available to T32 AGRs.



Retirement & Veterans Issues

- To permit concurrent disability and retirement pay for all service members, regardless of if they have reached the 50% disability rating threshold.

Technicians

- Amend the law to allow dual status technicians and Title 32 Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members to keep Selected Reserve Incentive Program (SRIP), enlistment, reenlistment, and affiliation bonuses.

Force Reduction

Authorizing the following force management tools for future end strength reductions that could impact the Guard and Reserve:

- 15-year military retirement for traditional guardsmen and start pension pay at age 55.
- Tricare Reserve Select and Tricare Dental offered for up to 6 months after discharge from military service due to a draw down.
- Involuntary Separation Pay for personnel separated due to unit manpower reduction or closure (Traditional, AGR, Technician).
- Gray Area retiree (age 55 instead of 60) eligibility for: TRICARE for Life, Space Available travel, retired pay.
- Fund Permanent Change of Station moves for mandatory transfers to another installation for traditional guardsmen and technicians.

Current Joint Task Forces contact: <https://www.ngaus.org/legislation/task-forces>



Each year, approximately four **Company Grade Officers have the opportunity to attend the national conference for professional development in a funded status.** This includes all travel expenses, allowing them to spend the weekend engaging with guest speakers and participating in development sessions alongside Army and Air Guard Officers from across the nation. Along with the Capital Summit, this event offers an outstanding opportunity to witness the tangible benefits of NGAUS membership in strengthening the National Guard force. It also provides CGOs the chance to network with and pose questions directly to Department of Defense leadership. Here are some reflections from our CGOs who attended the 2024 Conference in Detroit:

“The National Conference was absolutely worth taking a few days away from home. I was very impressed by the sincere and direct information shared by DoD senior leaders. Hearing the genuine perspective of the DANG on the role of the ANG in future conflicts was eye-opening. There was some seriously interesting conversation held in the CGO breakouts. The events held after work hours were pretty impressive networking opportunities, and really showcased the local area. The meetings and breakouts were great, but don't discount the expo hall, there were hundreds of vendors showcasing everything from notebooks and first aid kits to robotic guard dogs and flight simulators, one vendor literally parked a whole helicopter in the expo hall. I'm looking forward to the conference in Milwaukee next year, it should be a blast.”

Capt John Kenyon, 148th FW

“The conference was a rewarding professional development experience as a Company Grade Officer. As a first-time conference attendee, it was an invaluable experience to see NGAUS's role in furthering the goals of the MNNG. NGAUS's efforts give The Soldiers and Airmen a voice and affect change at the highest levels. Being part of that was a truly beneficial experience. Speaking with and hearing comments from Senior ranking officers in the organization was also an invaluable developmental opportunity. I would highly encourage all Guard Members who have the opportunity to attend in the future to do so.”

CPT Lance Richter 34th Avn Brigade

“The 2024 NGAUS National Conference was my second national conference I've attended as a Company Grade Representative. I was able to attend the Joint and Army Resolutions committees, professional development sessions, and networking social events. I thought it was very informative and worthwhile going to the conference, and I plan on attending next year in Milwaukee.

Conducting the professional development and social events with so many officers from all over the 54 states and territories over the weekend was a great networking experience. Meeting fellow Aviators in other states and discussing current training methods was very beneficial. The resolutions process shows how NGAUS fights for our National Guard parity with Active-Duty counterparts. I was able to see how new resolutions are voted on and what the NGAUS priorities are. I fully recommend other CGO's to participate in the upcoming State Conference to learn more about the organization and network with leaders across the state.”

1LT Brett Bye, 834th ASB

“I attended my first NGAUS conference this year, which was a wonderful experience. The energy, comradery, and networking opportunities were truly unmatched by anything else I've done in my career. It really helped me understand the resounding impact NGAUS has had on the quality of life for National Guard service members and their families and inspired me to enroll in a lifetime membership. I will certainly be encouraging others to join and support this outstanding organization!”

Capt Andrew Piazza
133rd MXS/133rd AW MASO

NGAUS Awards

This year, our chapter had the pleasure of nominating and presenting national-level awards to some of our Congressional members and civic organizations that have gone above and beyond to support our National Guard members and their families. The 2024 awardees from Minnesota:



US Senator Amy Klobuchar received The Montgomery Medal on October 24th for her efforts to secure investments in the Guard's readiness and operational capabilities, ensure Guardsmen exposed to toxic substances receive the health care they have earned, and support the "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" program. This is the association's 2nd highest honor.

Congressman Tim Emmer received the Charles Dick Medal of Merit on December 4th at a ceremony in his D.C. office for his steadfast support of the MNNG's mission. Emmer worked to help secure eight new C-130J transport planes on behalf of the 133rd AW. Also, following the tragic death of three Guardsmen in a helicopter crash near St. Cloud in 2019, Congressman Emmer honored them on the floor of the House of Representatives and introduced legislation to remember their service.



MN Twins (pictured on the cover) and Serving Our Troops received the Patrick Henry Award for their tremendous support of our service members and their families the past two decades. We hope to present Serving Our Troops their award at the state conference in April.



Lt. Gen. (Ret) Jon Jensen received the Distinguished Service Medal for his 42 years of service to our state a nation. He culminated his career as the 22nd Director of the ARNG and the acting vice chief of the National Guard Bureau.

Col. Greg Fix received the Meritorious Service Award for making significant improvements at the Army Aviation Task Force and pushing forward the Aviation Enterprises priorities at the National Level. Col. Fix is set to retire from the MNARNG this summer.



The Brainerd-based 1-194th Armor received the Major General Milton A. Reckord Trophy for their critical support of U.S. and NATO forces during the final days of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan.

Members can submit an individual or organization for an award through our board.

We would love to see more submissions from our fellow service members!

Visit www.ngaus.org/about-ngaus/awards for more information about the types of awards and previous submission examples. Submission Deadline: 1 May 2025 to Executive Director at director@ngamn.org.

147th NGAUS General Conference and Exhibition Save the Date!

August 22-25, 2025
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2024 Holiday Social

This year, the alumni-hosted Holiday Dinner took place on December 7th at the Embassy Suites in Bloomington and was attended by 65 members. The guest speaker this year was retired Command Senior Enlisted Leader Doug Wortham, who is currently serving as the Deputy Director of Veterans Benefits at the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and manages the Veteran's Relief Grant program. He also hosts the Minnesota Military Radio Hour each week.

120th State General Conference & Exhibition

April 25-27, 2025

Register at:

<https://app.glueup.com/event/132330/register/>

Conference Registration Deadline: April 21, 2025

Minneapolis Marriot West

\$136 /night plus tax

Hotel Block Reservation Deadline: Monday, March 31, 2025

Capitol Summit, April 13-15, 2025

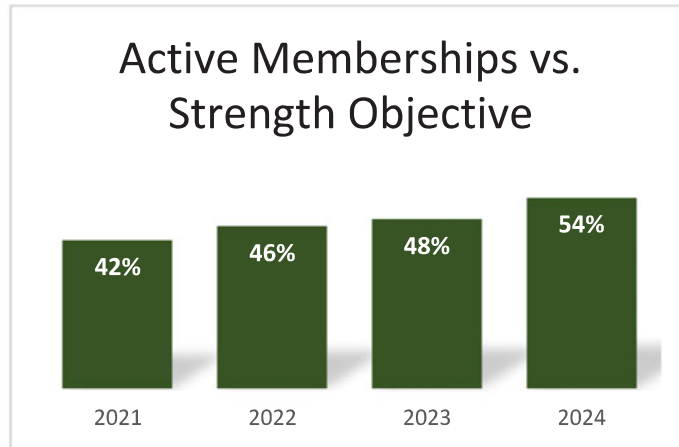
The Capitol Summit is one of two officer professional development programs NGAUS currently offers Army and Air National Guard company-grade officers. The program brings Guard members from each state and territory to the nation's capital for a close look at how the government works and the role NGAUS plays in the legislative process.

Here is a response from 1st Lt Lucas Bonkrude on his trip this past fall: "It was an honor to have been selected as the MNANG representative to attend the NGAUS Capitol Summit 2024, in Washington D.C. It was an amazing opportunity to witness the passion and dedication of the NGAUS representatives and all they do in support of the Air and Army National Guards on Capitol hill. I will be a member of NGAUS for life!"



National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) State Memberships

NGAMN ended strong with a 6% growth vs. 2023 and an increase of 12% over the past three years! Minnesota also ranks in the top five of the 54 states and territories for total digital life memberships.



In 2024, NGAUS provided rebates to the states and territories with 50% active memberships of their total strength objective (retired life memberships do not count) or achieved a 1% growth vs. the previous year. NGAMN qualified for both the early bird and performance incentive rebates.

The minimum requirements will increase to 60% active memberships or a 2% growth in 2025.

An important point to note is active and complimentary annual memberships expire each year. To maintain our current membership percentage, those individuals need to purchase an annual or digital life membership.

The NGAUS digital life membership discount of \$500 ends this year and will return to \$1,000 in 2026.

Go to our website at www.ngamn.org/individual-membership to take advantage of this limited-time discount!



State Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI) Program

The State Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI) program is derived from United States Public Law 93-289, May 1974, Title 37, Section 707, and comprised of a combination of several voluntary group life insurance policies as a benefit provided to all members of the Minnesota National Guard, officers, and enlisted.

In 2024, Minnesota was one of 14 National Guard Associations participating in the Militia Insurance Trust. Minnesota had 515 National Guard member enrollments and ranks second in the premium pool at 14.90%.

To find out more about these insurance benefits, go to our website at www.ngamn.org/insurance or to schedule a briefing in your unit contact Kari Hegg at khegg@ngssli.com or (218) 443-8080.

2024 Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the following college students for their outstanding essays this year!



Alexandra Funk
Univ of Notre Dame
Political Science
\$1000 NGAMN Scholarship



Bennett Lindman
Univ of WI, Madison
Engineering
\$1000 McGough Scholarship



Danica Mark
Union College, NY
Economics
\$500 NGAMN Scholarship



Maria Suarez
Univ of MN, Twin Cities
Forestry
\$500 NGAMN Scholarship

A very special thank you to McGough for their continued support in recognizing our students!



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Thank you to our Corporate Partners!

