



Summer 2020

# VIKANG NEWS

*Citizen - Soldiers and Airmen, St. Paul, Minn.*

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## 142nd General Conference

### A Virtual Experience

Registration is now open through August 29th for the NGAUS 142nd General Conference, A Virtual Experience. The event will be held on the weekend of August 28th, and 29th and members must register.



## President's Report

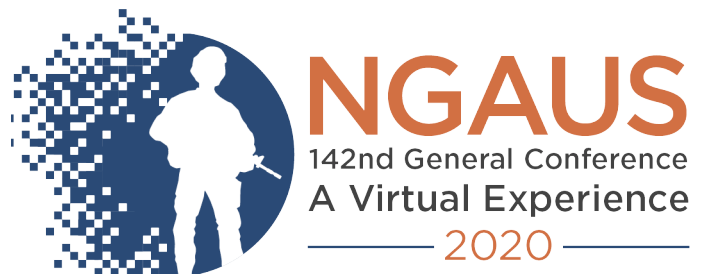
Lt Col Connie Armstrong

There have been so many changes within our community and organization that its challenging to know where to begin. The events of the last couple of months have continually challenged, strengthened, and educated us in ways we likely never contemplated. I'm both humbled and proud to be a part of the Minnesota National Guard and thankful for the leadership and dedication of the men and women who have taken the oath to protect and serve our state.

Of the changes within NGAMN, the most notable are to our leadership team. Welcome to CW5 (Ret.) Pete Panos as our new Executive Director and Col Lyle Shidla as our new VP (Air), I'm excited to have each on our team and look forward to working with them both to grow and strengthen our organization during the next year. We are excited to get to work for our members, and after our first directors' meeting have generated some great ideas and begun implementing news ways to accomplish our objectives.

Additionally, I want to personally recognize and thank Lt Col Lyle Rock for his service to our association. After having served two terms as our President, his transition to Past President was somewhat less than ceremonious. It was under Lyle's leadership that we were able to grow lifetime memberships by initiating a promotion, saving individuals hundreds of dollars. Unfortunately, because of the realities of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing, we were unable to hold our annual state conference and business meeting this year to formally recognize and thank Lyle for his contributions to NGAMN.

Thank you to everyone that joined us online for our virtual business meeting, allowing us to accomplish some necessary organizational tasks and voting on issues important to our state and members. We're all looking forward to next year and the opportunity to celebrate and discuss the issues of importance to our members. However, since only members of NGAMN can attend the annual conference, it is the impetus and yearly reminder to renew membership. Therefore each of us needs to do our part to help increase our membership numbers. Our goal remains unchanged from last year at 76% overall membership, yet as of the end of May (the latest update before publishing), we were only at 46% membership within the state. Our Board of Directors and group representatives cannot do this alone, and we encourage all of our members to reach out and help us grow our organization by emphasizing the importance of membership and its benefits to individuals and the state military units.



Registration is now open through August 29th for the NGAUS 142nd General Conference, A Virtual Experience. The event will be help on the weekend of August 28th, and 29th and members must register themselves at the link below for the discounted rate of \$18.78 (includes



# Vice President - ARMY

LTC Jay Hackett

Crazy Jim peddles Army Surplus in Central Minnesota. You might have seen his store in Brainerd if you were driving through town over the years. His brick and mortar store no longer exists. Now-a-days, he's online. Crazy Jim posted a Facebook ad for sign he was selling and included the photo above.



The sign caught my attention. I thought I recognized it as one that might have been at Camp Ripley. Crazy Jim has a lot of local stuff so it doesn't take a super sleuth to make that leap, never-the-less, I touched base with Crazy Jim to find out. Sure enough, it had been a sign that belonged to the Minnesota Military Academy at Camp Ripley. There used to be a series of motivational reminders to stare at as you contemplated your time in purgatory or in a chow line. This was one of those signs.

The messages may have been the focus of memorization tasks that were meant to take hold in your sub consciousness, later to be tested by Cadre to repeat them in order. It might have been a bullet point in a leadership class module. I don't recall any serious discussions about what that message meant. "The leader must truly care". About what?

I'm not certain that it was intentional but I realized that this vague rhetorical statement was a brilliant way to provoke thought. Do I really care about my Soldiers in every way a leader should? Do I care to get to know and counsel them effectively? Do I care about what it means to swear an oath? Do I truly care about the greater good and my organization's role in bringing about whatever it is I am called to do? Do I care about the legacy, the image, the ability, the relevancy of the Minnesota Army National Guard to carry on long after I'm out of uniform?

I'm preaching to a uniformed choir, I know. So what? So make this a part of your elevator speech to others that aren't currently members. Use this as a conversation starter. I know it's not easy. If it were, we'd be at 100% strength. If we truly care about our profession of arms, we'll do what we can to preserve it, make it better and make it the benefactor of our attention and effort.

Have that conversation to find out if the leaders in your organization truly care enough to advance the causes that benefit us all. A chow line is a great place to start.

fees), in honor of the year NGAUS was founded. In honor of the event, all registrants will receive a commemorative coin mailed directly to their address. Any questions concerning registration should be addressed to [ngaus.registration@ngaus.org](mailto:ngaus.registration@ngaus.org).

[www.eventbrite.com/e/142nd-general-conference-a-virtual-experience-tickets-105532023122](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/142nd-general-conference-a-virtual-experience-tickets-105532023122)

In closing, I would also like to acknowledge, congratulate, and thank our Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jon Jensen, for his support and efforts to reinvigorate our organization and on his nomination as the next Director, Army National Guard. While we will miss him and his leadership here in Minnesota, we know that he is the right choice to lead the Army National Guard. Godspeed General Jensen!





## Vice President - Air

Col Lyle Shidla

Greeting NGAMN! I am Colonel Lyle Shidla and I am very honored and excited to be your new Vice President for Air. I have enjoyed being a member of NGAUS for

the last several years and I am happy to now more directly contribute as a member of your board.

For a quick background, I am currently the Mission Support Group Commander for the 148th Fighter Wing. I am a drill status guardsman and my full time job is at Boston Scientific where I am a project manager in the Electrophysiology division. I joined the Minnesota Air National Guard in 2004 when I moved back to my home city of Bloomington after serving several years in Active Duty and the Air Force Reserves. The first 11 years of my Guard career were in the 210th Engineering and Installation Squadron, culminating as the squadron commander for my last two years in the unit. From there I moved to Joint Force Headquarters as the Director of Cyber Operations for Air, and then on to the 148th FW in 2019. Go Bulldogs!

When I joined the National Guard, I did not immediately join NGAUS. I did not know what NGAUS was nor did I understand how the organization benefits the Guard as a whole. It was mentioned several times during commanders calls and other group meetings but I did not take the time to learn what it was about. It was not until one day in the 210th that I had a conversation with Brian Winter where he gave me the details that spurred me to join. I started as an annual member and eventually became a life member as I continued to learn how much the organization works for us. After my experience, I'm convinced those one-on-one conversations are critical for growing membership. Guardsmen are busy people and subjects mentioned casually will be forgotten just as casually as we continue to juggle all aspects of our lives. Let's make sure we make the time for those conversations as we continue to strive to grow Minnesota's membership percentage.



I would be remiss if I did not comment on the recent events in our state and country. We were first challenged by a pandemic unprecedented in our lifetimes, and then an unprecedented callup of the Minnesota National Guard to help confront civil unrest after the death of George Floyd. These events will inevitably usher in a period of change, and history tells us change is never easy. As a commander I've held the same three priorities that I think hold true now as much as ever: Communicate – make sure you have a voice, along with listening and trying to understand other perspectives. Lead – this country is starving for objective, apolitical leadership and National Guard members can be such leaders. Be Ready – change is unsettling and can turn violent. June 2020 may not be the last time we are needed to protect our state's citizens.

Thank you again for the honor of being your VP for Air. I'm hoping it will not be long before we can all get together again as an organization and celebrate the good work we do.

Cheers!



## Vice President – Alumni

Brigadier General (Retired) Tim Kennedy

We all have seen significant change since the last newsletter. The

pandemic has changed the way we plan and operate. At this time, we are still planning to have our holiday dinner on Friday, December 4th. We will make the final decision on that event at our NGAMN Board meeting at the end of August. Our guest speaker will be Allison Alstrin of Project Got Your Back. Project Got Your Back, serves as the backbone organization in Minnesota to grow and sustain collective impact to support all MN 'Military Connected' (currently serving, prior service, veterans, families and caregivers). They are working across the state to identify resources (public and private) and then connecting individuals, communities, and regions. The goal is improved awareness and engagement unifying efforts to honor and support 'Military Connected' in MN. If we conduct this event, please join us.

Because of the pandemic, many events have been postponed or cancelled. The Minnesota National Guard Youth Camp has been cancelled for this year. Many golf fund raisers have also been shelved as we struggle to understand how to proceed in a pandemic. The Army National Guard memorialization (Court of Honor) induction ceremony is scheduled to place on Sunday, October 4, 2020. At this point, I have not heard of any change to those plans.

The pandemic has also created a unique opportunity. This year, the National Guard Association National conference will be held as a virtual conference on Friday, August 28 and Saturday, August 29th. For \$18.78 you can experience a national conference. You can see the schedule and register at [NGAUS.org](http://NGAUS.org).

As a resident of Minneapolis and living less than 2 miles from some of the activities and demonstrations, it was a relief when our Guard was called out to help law enforcement to restore order. The Guard presence helped insure that the demonstrations remained peaceful and under control. Some of our currently serving members went from this duty to prepare for deployment to the Horn of Africa or to prepare for an

NTC rotation. The optempo continues to remain high.

Your membership in NGAUS and NGAMN is as important today as it has ever been. When the 2021 NDAA is planned, there will be great pressure on DOD budgets. We need to continue to advocate for the National Guard because, even though the Guard continues to prove it is a vital part of our defense, it is never put at the front of the line when money is allocated.

Finally, I want to welcome our new Executive Director, CW5 (Ret) Pete Panos to the board. His experience at state headquarters as the Senior Warrant Officer and his time at Guard Bureau in a similar role enables him to bring tremendous depth to the position. Please welcome Pete as our new Executive Director.

Thank you for being a member of NGAUS and NGAMN.





# McGough / NGAMN Academic 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](http://www.ngamn.org/scholarships) or you can request an application from [director@ngamn.org](mailto:director@ngamn.org). Application deadline: July 31, 2020

## Topic: Selfless Service

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. **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.
  3. **Qualifications** to receive the scholarships.
    - The applicant must be currently attending an accredited institution of higher learning ("college") and pursuing a program that will lead to a bachelor's degree, graduate degree, or post graduate degree.
    - The applicant must have a minimum of a 2.75 cumulative GPA to be eligible.
    - The applicant must be attending college at least 6 semester credits/ hours (undergraduate degree) or 3 semester credit hours (graduate/post-graduate degree) each semester during the past 2 semesters.
  4. **Documents that must be provided** to NGAMN Executive Director by email in combined PDF file not later than the deadline.
    - A copy of the applicant's transcripts from the college that the applicant is attending (official transcripts are not required).
    - Typewritten essay prepared by applicant (at least 1 page but not more than 2 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.
  5. 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 July 31st.
    - The application materials will be reviewed and voted on by voting members of the Executive Board in August and the recipients will be invited to the August Executive Board meeting for the presentation of the scholarship checks.
  6. All annual scholarship awards will be paid directly to the applicant for use to offset the costs of pursuing a degree.
  7. All decisions by the NGAMN Executive Board are final.
  8. 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.
  9. Recipients of a scholarship are not eligible to apply again for a minimum of three years.
- If you have question contact Pete Panos at [director@ngamn.org](mailto:director@ngamn.org).



# 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team

CPT Chloe Carlson

Like many units across Minnesota the 1/34 ABCT team has recently completed a historic mission on State Active Duty (SAD) in support to civil authorities. The level of professionalism and teamwork displayed across our formation during the SAD mission was truly impressive and humbling to witness. Employers across the state felt the impact of having their citizen Soldiers called up at short notice, but many communities provided an outpouring of support to their local armories. 1/34 ABCT families demonstrated the utmost resiliency in supporting their Soldiers despite the uncertainty of how long the SAD mission would be in effect. Shortly following the SAD mission the Brigade undertook a significant logistics effort to inspect, repair, and re-stage vehicles and equipment for transport to the National Training Center (NTC) rotation in Ft. Irwin, CA this summer.

Please consider becoming a NGAMN member, or renewing your membership if it has expired. There is still a promotion available for a reduced-cost lifetime State and National NGAUS membership. See [www.ngamn.org/individualmembership](http://www.ngamn.org/individualmembership) for additional details. We have an opening for the 1/34 ABCT Alternate Representative position on the NGAMN Board. If you or one of your Officers is interested please contact me to discuss further.





July 1, 2020

To All Our Partners:

On behalf of the National Guard Association of Minnesota, I want to express my most sincere thank you for your support of our organization!

As you well know, national events prohibited this year's Minnesota National Guard State Conference and the formal recognition of your support. We truly appreciate our partnership with you as we promote the readiness and modernization of the Minnesota National Guard and improve the quality of life, status and professionalism of our members both active and retired.

The Minnesota National Guard has a long history of serving with valor and distinction and as we have seen in the last few months, our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are a vital part of our nation's domestic stability.

Again Thank You,

Peter Panos  
Executive Director







## National Guard Association of Minnesota State Sponsored Life Insurance

The State Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI) program was established in the Minnesota National Guard in 1976.

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.

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

## Great Life Membership Opportunity

Increased NGAMN membership is important to the National Guard now more than ever. Your voice allows NGAUS and NGAMN to work for the equities important to the National Guard and its members, both Army and Air!

Here is a great opportunity for our officers to get a lifetime State and National NGAUS membership for a substantially reduced cost.

Currently, dues are \$1,000 for National and \$250 for State Lifetime Memberships. NGAMN is offering to subsidize \$250 to offset the National lifetime membership and waive the State membership fee of \$250. That would bring the overall cost down to \$750.

Please help to improve our membership numbers. If you don't have a lifetime State and National membership, consider getting one now and share this great opportunity with other officers for their consideration also.

To take advantage of this promotion, call NGAUS at 202-408-5880 and ask to participate. There are

three options for you to choose:

- Pay the entire \$750 lifetime membership fee up front;
- Make three payments of \$250 due in 6-month intervals; or
- Make seven payments of \$100 and one \$50 payment over an 8-month span.

We all benefit from the great work our association is doing. Thanks for your consideration and strong voice in actively working to increase your respective organizations membership.

# NGAMN Webmaster

MAJ (Ret) Christopher Kline

Greetings Membership: With the new normal among us and everything going virtual to survive, our association has adopted the same strategy. I'd like to share with you three initiatives we have implemented.

Recently we purchased a subscription to Microsoft Teams, to include audio conferencing. This allows us to conduct our monthly business meeting and store association documents in a secure environment that promotes collaboration. We are migrating association documents and member's personal identification information (PII) from NGAMN.org to MS Teams. Our first milestone using MS Teams was to successfully host this year's State Conference online and we plan to build from there. Of course we long for the day when we can meet face to face, but until then, I hope to see you at one of our virtual meetings. If you are interested in attending an online meeting, use our contact form ([www.ngamn.org/contact](http://www.ngamn.org/contact)) to notify me and I will send you an invite.

Another initiative we are working on is going paperless with our



VIKANG newsletter. This quarters notification will go out strictly via email. This Go Green, save Green initiative accomplishes a number of things like preserving the environment (save trees) and literally saving thousands of dollars in publication costs. To ensure you receive your copy, make sure your civilian email is correct in the NGAUS membership database. To check the details of your membership, log in here: [ams.ngaus.org/eweb](http://ams.ngaus.org/eweb)

This year we partnered with Eventbrite to handle our large activities such as the State Conference, National Conference, Holiday Social and other NGAMN promoted events. This allows us more promotional flexibility, as well as securing our payment platform. Although COVID required us to cancel all these face-to-face events, we are excited for a time when we can leverage all these new tools. We have made every attempt to incorporate these changes into our site to make it a seamless one shop stop to you, our members.

All these initiatives have three things in common, more user friendly, protects sensitive data, and promotes collaboration in a virtual environment.



## Executive Director

Peter Panos

Greetings NGAMN. For those of you who are not familiar with me, I am CW5(R) Pete Panos, former CCWO of the Army National Guard, the Minnesota Army National Guard.

I assumed the duties of Executive

Director for our organization on May 01, 2020. I owe a Big Thank You to the former Director Carl Willis for all he did to put the organization's business practices in a comprehensive and organized format, increasing our corporate sponsorship, improving efficiency and adding to the professionalism of our organization.

A forward looking company grade officer wrote to me "The real challenge as we move forward is input from our Company and newer Field grade officers, they don't want or need another membership card. We need to have pertinent issues that are actively being worked, and give these officers the opportunity to engage with these issues". With this in mind and after speaking with the Board of Directors, I have developed a 180 day plan; why 180 days and not the customary 90...it's a part time job, I am a retiree!

### The Plan:

1. Develop a comprehensive mission statement along with what our membership can expect from us in the current year and our most recent successes.
2. Ensure we as a state organization and our members are receiving any and all benefits and cost savings from NGAUS.
3. Improve membership understanding of the "WHY" belonging to the organization is so important.
4. Improve our outreach to corporate sponsors, especially MN based companies.
5. Develop a Corporate sponsor "Meet/ Greet" and education event that fosters strong partnerships while educates sponsors on how Minnesota National Guard works.

I look forward to working with every member of the organization to improve our advocacy efforts and work as a team in achieving those improvements.

Lastly, the next version (Fall 2020) of Vikang News will be DIGITAL and sent to your on file e-mail or on the NGAMN web site [www.ngamn.org](http://www.ngamn.org).



# 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

PO Box 131766  
St Paul, MN  
55113-0020

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Twin Cities, MN

763-229-3984

director@ngamn.org

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

### Board Members & Staff

Executive Director: CW5(R) Pete Panos

President: Lt Col Connie Armstrong

Vice President (Army): LTC Jay Hackett

Vice President (Air): Col Lyle Shidla

Vice President Alumni: BG (Ret) Tim Kennedy

Vice President Legislative: LTC Jeramy Browning

Treasurer: COL (Ret) Al Timm

Secretary: WO1 Shannon Siroin

Webmaster: MAJ (Ret) Christopher Kline

### Update your information

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

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

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

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

(If different from mailing)

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