

THE VOICE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON
JANUARY 2022

WELCOME NEW BOARD

As we start a new calendar year, NGAW welcomes our new Board of Directors for the 2022-24 term! The new Board members are President Naz Brockman, Vice President Dan Wessman, Secretary Jim Kovell, and Director of Member Relations Timothy Thompson. Due to Covid-19, nomination submissions and voting were done virtually, concluding on Dec. 15. In addition to electing these new board members, the election also included two proposed bylaws changes, both of which were approved. Thank you to all who submitted a nomination and to everyone who voted!

These new Board members are excited to get to work and intend to represent you and your voice to the best of their ability. The new President is looking to appoint new committee members and service advisors. If you are interested or have a recommendation, please let Naz know. The Board is also currently assessing the feasibility of hosting an in-person state conference this year.



NGAW sincerely thanks the out-going Board members for all their hard work and dedication. Chris Blanco, Chris Voelker, Bridget Crosby, and Chuck Parsons, we genuinely appreciate you and all that you have done for this association! Each of you brought a great deal of value to the Board with your individual knowledge and expertise. We hope you continue to join us at NGAW events.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 2022 Legislative Session began on Jan. 10 and brings some exciting news about the Washington National Guard Post Secondary Education Grant. Due to student feedback and the work of our Army & Air education program managers, there are updates to the education grant policy that will increase benefits for our Soldiers and Airmen. Nancy Bickford, the Washington Military Department Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy Director, has been working behind the scenes to introduce the changes in this year's session. Through her hard work, it has been scheduled for a public hearing mid-January. A few of the proposed changes of note are: 1. WA Army/Air Members can apply for certifications, 2. Master's degree programs will be available, and 3. Better parity and higher awards for lower income students.

To follow the progress of **SB 5614** and **HB 1642** visit the Washington State Legislature Bill Summary page at this link: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?>, and make sure to select "2021-22" from the drop-down menu.

With the new year, NGAW is also excited to introduce our newly appointed Legislative Director, LT Charles Barnett.

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2019-21 PRESIDENT'S FAREWELL

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the National Guard Association President for the last three years. The opportunity presented a lot of highs and some challenges. When I accepted this opportunity I would not have expected a global pandemic, mass unemployment, and challenges in our way of life. And yet we overcame those challenges and created opportunities for the Association to grow and communicate better to our members.

As an organization, we:

- Increased the sense of selfless service in volunteerism. More Airmen and Soldiers participated in NGAW events and lent a helping hand in pulling off more events than ever before.
- Increased paid annual memberships for both Officers and Enlisted
- Conducted three Golf Tournaments to include one in Eastern WA with over 50 golfers. Well over 300 golfers, generating over \$8000 in additional revenue and sponsorships.
- Increased our participation in National Conferences in 2019, and then surpassed those attendance numbers at the 2021 NGAUS conference in Las Vegas and the EANGUS conference in Albuquerque, NM.
- Secured a Post-secondary Education Grant for our members. Where we have provided over 150 Airmen and Soldiers an opportunity to get a higher education.
- Hired a new Communications Manager, Missy Wessman. She has improved our website and social media presence.
- Initiated our first and multiple Guard on Tap Social Events.
- Improved the Camp Murray Campground Contract with the Washington Military Department, increasing revenue and giving the Guardsman a discount for staying at the campground.
- And most importantly we developed a new business strategy and organizational structure to better meet our needs as a growing organization.

These last three years did not come without any challenges. I was never able to have an in-person Conference and we had to cancel multiple Industry Days, which is a large revenue generator for our association. But I am excited about the future of the Association and proud to be a part of it. We all spent countless volunteer hours wanting this organization to be better and holding each other accountable for it. I am happy about what we did and how far we have come, I look forward to the future of this organization. I'm excited how the NGAW augments our formations as an external partner and I am excited about the next President and executive team.

Thank you for being part of this organization that values you, the Guardsmen and women and our families, and the community we live in. Thank you for letting me be your President and providing your support over the years. It has been an honor and privilege serving you.

Respectfully,

Chris Blanco, NGAW President (2019-21)

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CAPITOL SUMMIT

At the end of October, Angela Spitzer, Capt, WA ANG, attended the NGAUS Capitol Summit in Washington, DC. NGAUS hosts two Capitol Summit events annually. These are officer professional-development programs open to Army and Air National Guard company-grade officers. The Capitol Summit connects Guardsmen from each state and territory in the nation's capital, giving them the opportunity to closely examine how the government works and the role NGAUS plays in the legislative process.

The following is Spitzer's reflection on her experience: I enlisted into the National Guard 15 years ago as an A1C and have transitioned over to the officer side. I've heard about NGAUS throughout my career and I knew they advocated for us on the hill but never thoroughly understood that process. The legislative process is not something that I'm very familiar with and had to force myself to be more involved with NGAUS to be a better leader for my Airmen. NGAU Executive Director Bob Sweeney informed me of this great opportunity so I submitted my application to attend which was only open to one CGO from each state.

While I was there I became more informed as to what NGAUS does for the National Guard and the concerns they're fighting for on the hill on behalf of our Soldiers and Airmen. I was able to hear the top-level issues from the Vice Chief of NGB, Director of the Army National Guard, and Air National Guard along with what their focus is for the next few years. Even at their level, concerns for their people and readiness was a top topic in their briefs. There was also a forum to ask questions directly to these high-level leaders, which aren't often given at our level so to have that opportunity was significant.



I was unable to have the chance to visit the Washington State Congressional Staff due to the limited capacity on the hill, but even without that chance Capital Summit was a great event to network with peers, learn the NGAUS process on the hill, and have the ability to talk directly to the National Guard leaders. I highly advise all CGOs to take this opportunity to attend this event and become a member of NGAUS. Your membership allows them to advocate for our needs on the hill.

NGAUS is currently soliciting nominees for the next Capitol Summit in July. If you are interested, contact our office at ngaw@ngaw.org.



L to R: Director Air National Guard, Lt Gen Michael A. Loh, Angela Spitzer, and Director Office of Legislative Liaison, BG April Vogel

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HOLIDAY MAGIC 2021

The Joint Services Support Holiday Magic event took place on December 9, 2021. This fantastic program makes the holidays a bit brighter by providing presents and meals to qualifying Guardsmen and their families. JSS helped more than 300 families this year--600 kids!

NGAW supports this event each year with monetary and toy donations, as well as with publicity and volunteers. This year we donated a combined \$3000 on behalf of the Association and our charitable Foundation.



HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

NGAW is YOUR association. How can we help you and your unit? NGAW would love to support your unit event. Do you need coffee for your volunteers or do you need some of our members to help by volunteering? Would our campground be a good spot for your warm weather event? Do you need financial assistance for a holiday event? Let us help you!

Contact our office at ngaw@ngaw.org or complete the Unit Event Support Request form on the Contact Us page of our website: <https://ngaw.org/unit-support-request/>. Let us help you.



UPCOMING NATIONAL CONFERENCES

While the EANGUS and NGAUS annual conferences next August may seem a long way off, the planning has already begun, and NGAW is already looking forward to these important events. Why should you be getting excited about these conferences? They are valuable professional development opportunities. They also provide the best way to get involved at the national level and have an impact not just on your career but also on the future of the National Guard. These events are open to current Guardsmen and retirees. Contact our office if you are interested in attending. Let's get excited for Little Rock and Columbus!

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NATIONAL GUARD MUSEUM

Just like NGAW's promise to "amplify the voice of every Guardsman," the Washington National Guard Museum is striving to do the same. Museums are places where stories are told – stories of history, both present and past. YOUR museum is here to tell YOUR story, but we need your help to do so.

The Museum, located in the oldest building on Camp – Building 2, "The Arsenal" – has been around for longer than you may realize. Founded 30 years ago by a group of incredibly passionate volunteers, many of whom were also former Guardsmen themselves, the museum's purpose is to tell the story of the Washington National Guard.

It's vital that the Museum is actively collecting, interpreting, and displaying our history to learn from it now and to preserve it for the future. Without diligent collecting and preservation now, we will have nothing for future generations to learn from. This is where we rely on YOU to help!



If you have items, photos, or papers that relate to the Guard's history stored away in a cupboard or if your unit has a collection of items no one seems to know what to do with, donate them! We can use it to help tell the story.

Please stop by NGAW's office in Bldg. 2 and take the time to look around YOUR museum.

For further info, please contact the Museum Director/Curator Dr. Stephanie Carter at 253-512-7834 or at Stephanie.l.carter47.civ@army.mil.



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to NGAW member Steve Hobbs who was sworn in as the new Washington Secretary of State in November. LTC Steve Hobbs is an MDAY soldier and commander of the 122nd Theater Public Affairs Support Element. Hobbs is also the proud father of two Washington National Guardsmen.

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DO YOU HAVE A LIFETIME MEMEBRSHIP?

Is remembering to renew your NGAW membership each year a struggle? Do you wish there was a set-it-and-forget-it option? There is! NGAW has affordable lifetime membership options for both Enlisted and Officers.

These memberships are offered to both those currently serving in the National Guard, as well as retirees, and installment payment options are available. For more information contact ngaw@ngaw.org or visit: ngaw.org/membership-account/membershiplevels/.

Lifetime Member Benefits Include:

- Dedicated advocates in Olympia and on Capitol Hill fighting for your benefits
- Access to exclusive professional development, networking and educational opportunities
- Eligibility for member and dependent scholarships
- Insurance supplements designed for members of the National Guard
- The opportunity to serve on association committees and task forces that help drive the future of Guard advocacy

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan. 10 WA State Legislative Session opens
- Jan. 14-16 NGEDA Conference
- Jan. 15-17 EANGUS Area VI & VII Mid-Winter Conference
- Feb. 10 NGAUS Legislative Workshop
- Feb. 13-15 EANGUS Presidents Workshop
- TBD Winter Guard on Tap



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