

# THE VOICE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON  
FEBRUARY 2025

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Written by President Dan Wessman*

It's been another busy quarter for NGAW. Thank you for your continued support as we work to amplify your voice and strengthen the support we are able to provide to the Soldiers and Airmen of the Washington National Guard. We have quite a few things coming up that I want to highlight.

- **State Conference.** Please SAVE THE DATE: **May 17th**. Our theme this year is “Share Your Story” and we have a great lineup headed your way. The conference will be held at the Courtyard Marriott Downtown Tacoma again this year, and we should have a registration link available soon. Watch our social media accounts for more details and a booking link with a discounted price for anyone who'd like to stay at the hotel.
- **Legislative Initiatives.** We are advocating for improved access to childcare for guard members and tax incentives for employers to encouraging hiring National Guard members.
- **Looking for a new Executive Director.** NGAW is officially searching for a new Executive Director. You can view the vacancy announcement and job description at: <https://tinyurl.com/5baj69e6>. If you have any questions, would like to apply or recommend someone, please reach out!
- **Scholarships!** It's that time of year again. Get your packets ready. We will be handing out \$12,000 this year to Guard members and their dependents.
- **Upcoming Elections.** The President, Vice President, and a couple other positions will be up for election this year. That's right. My tenure is coming to an end as your president. This is your chance to ensure our board is as strong as possible to keep moving our efforts forward. Stay tuned and make sure you vote!
- **We want to hear from you.** This is your association. We speak for you. We work for you. We need you. Your voice, your thoughts, suggestions, ideas, and concerns. We use your suggestions to generate legislative proposals, resolutions, and efforts we pursue to improve the quality of life for our Guard Family.



As I said above, my tenure as your president comes to a close on May 17th. It has been an absolute honor representing you and working with the board to advance our efforts at the state and national levels. Thank you for all support to put our members first. Don't let me off easy though! Challenge me. Challenge the team. We will finish this year strong.

Thanks,  
Dan

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## QUARTERLY NGAW MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

*Prepared by Secretary Jim Kovell*

Meeting Date: 23 Jan 2024

Board Members Present: D. Wessman, Garcia, Kovell, Vuleta, Ulsted, Morgan

Employees Present: Golonka, M. Wessman

### President's Report

- Opening Comments with discussion to soft launch an NGAW Bar in advance of the State Conference on 16 May 2025. Jim to take lead on securing waiver from TAG for alcohol service.

### Development Report

- Collected \$7,500 from Industry Day. Looking to kick off the Annual Giving campaign on or about the State Conference by engaging with previous TAGs and ATAGs.

### Membership Report

- Dip in membership numbers due to scrubbing list (deceased members). Noticed a problem with complimentary membership falling off. Looking to pilot an NGAW Coffee event in March, coordinated across the state. Will work with Missy to develop flyers for the State Conference, with an electronic 'Save the Date' followed by mid-March mailers.

### Legislative Report

- Fernando and Jesse participating in the National Legislative Workshops.

### Calendar Review

- Scholarships projected to open 1 March -15 April 2025.
- Discussion regarding planning for an Association Offsite.

### Open Business

- 17 May 2025 State Conference at Marriott. Looking at a Breakfast event for Corporate Sponsors engagement with senior leaders. Guest Speaker options: Corporate Sponsor, MOH Recipient from Spanaway, MG Barry (Former TAG-NV). Additional speaker Dr. Perrin with the theme "Telling Your Story".
- Discussed a raffle option with board members supporting.
- Looking to sponsor 1 Jr. Enlisted and 1 NCO per MSC/Wing with free attendance.

For the full Jan 2024 Meeting Minutes, visit: <https://ngaw.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2025/02/NGAW-Minutes-BoD-Meeting-20250123.pdf>

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Legislative Committee has been working hard! The 2025 Washington State Legislative Session convened on January 13, and this “long session” will adjourn on April 27. Watch for *Call to Action* emails from NGAW, which will encourage you to contact your legislators and encourage them to support the bills that would have an impact on the lives of our Washington service members and their families. Your voice matters and it’s powerful! Our elected officials need to hear from you!

Last year, we helped pass a number of significant, military-related pieces of state legislation, including HB 1943, which expands the Guard Education Grant to spouses and dependent children, as well as SB 5803 and HB 1869, regarding Guard Referral & Bonuses.

We also helped pass the following legislation:

HB 1862 Disabled Veteran Assist./tax  
HB 1917 Physician Assistant Compact  
HB 1939 Social Work Compact  
HB 1943 National Guard Grant  
HB 2004 Military Student Early Registration  
HB 2111 Subsidized Child Care  
SB 5803 National Guard Recruitment

Our top Priority Bills for this current session are:

**HB 1073** – Keeping our Washington National Guard Strong Act.

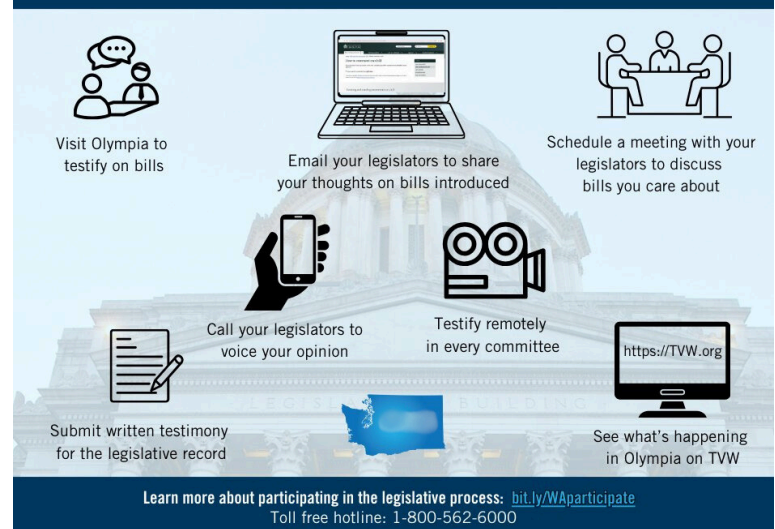
**HB 1016** – Providing employer tax incentives for the support of veterans and military families.

**HB 1335** – Protecting military spouses from employment discrimination.

You can learn more about these and all the other bills facing the state legislature this session at <https://leg.wa.gov/bills-meetings-and-session/bills/>.

The next Legislative Committee meeting is **February 20 at noon in Building 1 on Camp Murray**. If you’re interested in working with the Legislative Committee, contact our Legislative Director Jesse Morgan at [ngaw@ngaw.org](mailto:ngaw@ngaw.org). There’s also still time for you to get involved with this legislative session, even if you’re not on the Committee. Please make sure to reach out to your elected officials and let them know what matters to you!

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



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## 2025 NGAW BOARD ELECTION



A new Board term is almost upon us! We will start accepting nominations for our new NGAW President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer on **March 20**, and voting will begin in **April**. The individuals selected to fill these positions will be sworn in at the State Conference on May 17, and they will serve for the 2025-27 term. Each term, the President and VP positions alternate between Officer and Enlisted members-- this time around, the President will be an *Enlisted* member and the VP will be an *Officer*.

As with our previous recent elections, voting will be conducted via Google Forms. A link will be emailed to all current members. Now is the time to update your records with our office. If you're reading this newsletter on social media, rather than in your inbox, please send your correct email address to [ngaw@ngaw.org](mailto:ngaw@ngaw.org), and reference the election.

For more information about the election, including position descriptions, watch our social media or visit <https://ngaw.org/elections-guide/>.

## MUG SHOTS

We want to see your Mug Shots!! In 2022, we started giving all of our new Lifetime members an NGAW travel mug, and now we want *you* to show us your mug! Whether you drink out of it, use it as a pen cup, or a paper weight, we want to see your Lifetime mug in action. Post a picture of your NGAW mug on social media and tag us. Or email it to us. **We'll have prizes for the best Mug Shots!**

Did you sign up for a Lifetime membership recently and haven't received your Lifetime mug? You can come by our office in BLDG 2 to get yours, set up a time to get your mug on Drill weekend, or make arrangements with our Spokane staff.





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## EANGUS AREA VII MID-WINTER

*Written by Vice President Fernando Garcia*

The EANGUS Area VII Mid-Winter Conference in Sacramento last month delivered excellent results by helping everyone understand regional and national updates. Attendees learned about our ongoing projects and upcoming targets through detailed presentations at the conference.

Breakout sessions during the conference helped participants learn from each other by discussing effective workplace strategies. The meetings created an environment where attendees exchanged knowledge about what worked best in their teams and how to use fresh ideas to improve their performance.

The sessions helped people learn new knowledge and share useful methods which they could use right away.

The event showed our dedication to better work practices through team partnerships. Our discussions will help us develop further as a team



## 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. The Enlisted group is headed to Reno, while the Officers will be in Milwaukee.



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. Interested in attending? Contact our office today.



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## 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for our 2025 Scholarships will open on **March 1**, so start gathering your two letters of recommendation now! NGAW members and their dependents are eligible for a variety of scholarships offered by NGAW, the NGAW Foundation, and USAA (enlisted only), with awards starting at \$500. Last year we awarded over \$11,000 in scholarships to our members and their dependents!

Our scholarships are available for Soldiers and Airmen, Officers and Enlisted, members and their dependents. Applicants must be a current paid or lifetime member of NGAW or the dependent of a current or lifetime member. Applicants must submit an essay and two letters of recommendation. For current Guardsmen, one letter must come from your Unit Commander or First Sergeant. **All applications must be submitted by the April 15, 2025 deadline.** Recipients will be announced by the end of April, and the scholarships will be presented at our State Conference on May 17.

For more information and to apply, check out our [Scholarships page](https://ngaw.org/scholarships/), where you can also learn about a variety of other scholarships open to our members (<https://ngaw.org/scholarships/>).



## 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](mailto:ngaw@ngaw.org) or complete the Unit Event Support Request form on the Contact Us page of our website: <https://ngaw.org/unit-supportrequest/>. Let us help you.



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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 WA National Guard, as well as retirees, and installment payment options are available. For more information contact [ngaw@ngaw.org](mailto:ngaw@ngaw.org) or visit: [ngaw.org/membership-account/membershiplevels/](https://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
- A super cool commemorative NGAW insulated mug!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 24-26 EANGUS Legislative Workshop

April 13-15 Capitol Summit

**May 17 NGAW State Conference**

Aug 11-14 EANGUS Conference

Aug 22-25 NGAUS Conference

Sept 14 NGAW Golf Scramble



## CONNECT WITH US!



@NationalGuardAssociationofWashington



@NationalGuardAssociationofWashington



@NGAW

## WE NEED YOUR CIVILIAN EMAIL ADDRESS!

Please update your membership account with a **civilian email address** so that you can better view our messages.

## THANK YOU CORPORATE PARTNERS

