

THE VOICE

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON
SEPTEMBER 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we move into September, I think we're all trying to hold onto summer for as long as we can. With the arrival of fall just around the corner, it's a great time to reflect on what has been a fun-filled and productive summer for NGAW. EANGUS and NAGUS both held their national conferences this summer, giving us an opportunity to connect with Guard members, leaders, and partners from across the country. I want to thank everyone who attended our Professional Development program. The feedback has been extremely positive, and it's great to hear how much our members enjoyed the learning experience and the opportunity to grow professionally. We also spent time with our corporate partners, strengthening existing relationships and building new ones. These partnerships are important to NGAW and help us continue to provide opportunities and support for our members.

One of the highlights of the summer was NGAW's successful bid to host the 2029 EANGUS National Conference. Each Area Representative had the opportunity to vote, and NGAW was selected to host the national conference in Washington. This is a tremendous opportunity for our association, and we are looking forward to showcasing Washington and our National Guard community in 2029.

Before we officially say goodbye to summer, we have one more great NGAW event. Our Annual Golf Tournament will be held in Olympia on September 18th. Get your teams together and get registered before all the spots are filled. We look forward to seeing everyone on the course.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the Washington National Guard members who supported the Spokane wildland fires. To our aviation teams and hand crews who spent more than 40 days fighting wildland fires and supporting communities across Washington, thank you. Your dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to serving our state represent the very best of the Washington National Guard. NGAW also stood ready to support our Guardsmen and their families who were personally affected by the fires. Our commitment to our members extends beyond our events and programs. When our Guardsmen need support, NGAW will be there.

As we enter the fall season, I am proud of what we have accomplished together. Our strength comes from our members, our volunteers, our corporate partners, and the continued support of the Washington National Guard community.

Thank you for your continued membership, your service, and your commitment to NGAW. Together, we will continue to advocate for our members, support our Guard families, and strengthen our association.

I look forward to seeing you at the golf tournament and at the many NGAW events ahead.

Very Respectfully,
Fernando Garcia
President, National Guard Association of Washington

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QUARTERLY NGAW MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Date: 18 June 2026 Call to Order: 1133

Board Members Present: Garcia, Morgan, Kovell, Anderson, Androski, Lawson, Cole, Wahto

Employees Present: McMicheal, Golonka, Wessman

Motions and Approvals

- Motion to approve May Board Meeting Minutes - Approved
- Motion to approve the FY26-27 Budget as presented - Approved
- Motion to approve \$500 from the Unit Giving Fund to support the E9 luncheon on FAFB - Approved
- Motion to formally recognize and thank Erin McMicheal for her service and hard work - Approved

Upcoming Events

31 July - 4 Aug EANGUS Conference, Daytona Beach, FL

28-31 Aug NGAUS Conference, Indianapolis, IN

18 Sept NGAW Golf Scramble, Capitol City Golf Club, Olympia, WA

4 Nov Industry Day

Open Business

- **Golf Scramble:** Clarified account routing: Sponsorship revenues go to the Foundation account; registration fees go to the Association account.
- **ED Vacancy Interim Plan:** In lieu of an immediate ED replacement, the Board will launch the Ambassador Program (budgeted at \$36K for travel/meal expenses). This program leverages recent retirees to assist in fundraising.
- **Operational Duties:** The President and Vice President will absorb remaining ED responsibilities in the interim. Delineation of separate grant writing duties and a future reduced-responsibility ED role remain options.
- **Club/Bar Initiative:** TAG remains interested in opening an on-base bar. Courtney Lawson will assist. The board will research Idaho's successful model program.
- **Payment Processing:** Brian proposed utilizing Stripe portable readers to replace aging & finicky Gravity processing. Detailed proposal to be submitted before the next meeting.
- **Corporate Partnership Question:** Discussed and Rejected the option of a Lifetime Corporate Partnership
- **Professional Development (PD) Coordination for EANGUS/NGAUS Conferences:** Deadline for NGAUS is 3 July, EANGUS is 7 July

Adjourn: 1235

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REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2026 GOLF SCRAMBLE

YOU STILL HAVE TIME to register for the 2026 NGAW Golf Scramble! Join us on the links of **Capitol City Golf Club** in Olympia on **Friday, September 18 (that's NEXT WEEK!)** for an 8:30am shotgun start. We'll follow a standard scramble format, with teams of 4, and Mulligans will be available for purchase. Registration costs cover the price of golf, cart, range balls, and lunch.

Proceeds from the tournament fund our charitable NGAW Foundation and allow us to help Washington Guard members through scholarships, emergency assistance, and financial support. We raised over \$8,000 last year; help us raise even more this year to help our fellow Guardsmen and their families in need.



Date: Friday, Sept. 18

Location: Capitol City Golf Club
5225 Yelm Highway SE,
Olympia, WA 98513

Cost: \$100/golfer



***Matching outfits are not required,
but always appreciated!***

Not a golfer? Join us as a volunteer. Or even better, sponsor a hole or donate a raffle item!

For more information and to register, visit: <https://ngaw.org/events/golf/>

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2026 EANGUS CONFERENCE RECAP

The month of August saw the annual conferences for both the national enlisted and officer associations. NGAW sent a delegation of enlisted members to Dayton Beach, FL from July 31-Aug 4 this year.

This conference provides valuable professional development opportunities, especially for our junior enlisted members. Our NGAW reps attended presentations by military leaders, networked with fellow service members and retirees from around the nation, and mingled with top industry partners.



NGAW member Nitasa Freund receiving a scholarship from Columbia Southern University.

Reflection from conference attendee Russell Anderson

Attending the EANGUS National Conference was an energizing and rewarding experience. The conference brought together enlisted leaders committed to strengthening our force and improving the quality of life for National Guard members and their families.

As a member of the Legislative and Resolutions Committee, I reviewed and discussed key proposals for next year's legislative workshop and congressional lobbying efforts. Networking with leaders from other states and hearing their shared experiences provided valuable insight into the challenges affecting Guard members nationwide.

It was also inspiring to watch our professional development members learn about the work performed at the national level. Seeing their interest grow and their desire to learn more was one of the most rewarding parts of the conference. The experience reinforced the importance of collaboration, advocacy, professional development, and a unified voice for the enlisted force.



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2026 NGAUS CONFERENCE RECAP

While our enlisted delegation travelled at the beginning of the month, a group of our officer members headed to Indianapolis Aug. 28-31. This group included the Adjutant General of the Washington National Guard, Maj. Gen Gent Welsh. More than 3,880 people attended the conference, representing all 50 states, 3 territories, and the District of Columbia.



This year, NGAW sent four professional development delegates to the conference: Chris Dime, Georgia Lamb, Joelle Wolf, Alysha Chandra, all of whom reported having a great experience. They were able to sit in on a wide range of thought-provoking lectures, panel discussions, and professional developments that highlighted both current challenges and future opportunities for the National Guard. They networked with leaders and representatives from across the country, allowing for connection with both peers and senior leadership. And just like last year, there was karaoke.

Reflection from conference attendee Chris Dime

This was my first time attending NGAUS and I wasn't really sure what to expect. Given my limited experience interacting with National Guard members of other states and territories, I was immediately blown away by the sheer number of delegates and representatives in attendance. Additionally, it was encouraging to see so many General Officers in attendance, which demonstrates their commitment to fostering the next generation of National Guard soldiers and hearing our concerns. Ultimately, while this felt like a once in a lifetime experience, I am excited to make it a recurring trip each and every year!



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SAVE THE DATE: 2026 INDUSTRY DAY

We're excited to announce that we've have set the date for our upcoming Industry Day! Join us and our Corporate Partners on **Thursday, Nov. 4** in Building 81 (PCRC) on Camp Murray.



Do you run a Guard-owned business? Join us at Industry Day!



BID FAREWELL TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ERIN MCMICHEAL



This summer, we bid farewell to Erin McMichael who served as the NGAW Executive Director for the past year. Erin represented NGAW at a slew of events across the state, including resource fairs, the 194th Yellow Ribbon event in May, and she was recognized as a dedicated volunteer by Joint Services Support (JSS).

Erin hasn't gone far, though. She's returned to her JSS roots as an Integrated Primary Prevention Specialist embedded with the 81st MBCT. She can be found in Building 81 most of the time, where she will be doing what she does best, helping people.

Thank you Erin for your hard work, time, and dedication!

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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 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
- A super cool commemorative NGAW insulated mug!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept 12 194th Yellow Ribbon event

Sept 18 NGAW Golf Tournament

Oct 18-21 NGAUS Capitol Summit

Nov 4 NGAW Industry Day



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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

