

# MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 6683  
GREAT FALLS, MT 59406

## MINUTES OF MEETING BUSINESS SESSION 45<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CONFERENCE 2002

HELD: 20 APRIL 2002

**CALL TO ORDER** The Business Session of the Montana National Guard Association's 45<sup>th</sup> General Conference was called to order by President (Lieutenant Colonel) Loren Oelkers at 0900 hours, Saturday, April 20, 2002 at the Heritage Inn, Great Falls, Montana.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was rendered. Chaplain Major Richard Wilkin gave the Invocation.

**APPOINTMENT OF SERGEANT AT ARMS** Second Lieutenant Todd Mortag and CW3 John Purpuro were appointed as Sergeants at Arms.

**APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIAN** LTC Monte Boettger was appointed as Parliamentarian.

**INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS** MG John Prendergast, BG Randy Mosely, BG Frank Tobel, BG (ret) James Higgins and BG Doug Henneman were introduced.

**APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATIONS COMMITTEES FOR BOARD/OFFICER VACANCIES** Brigadier General Randy Mosley was appointed to form a committee to nominate a candidates for two board of director positions on the army side. Brigadier General Frank Tobel was appointed to form a committee to nominate two candidates for board of director positions on the air side.

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS** The keynote address was given by Captain Brian K. Sims, NGAUS Deputy Director for Air Activities. Captain Sims reported that the national legislative priorities for 2002 include a budget of 1.2 billion dollars over and above what was asked for by the President. If approved, this would translate into more money for the Army National Guard for manning and equipment as well as more money for the Air National Guard for equipment. There would also be more money for pay raises, a possibility of extending Tricare to guardsmen as well as expanded commissary benefits.

The legislative priorities for 2003 include increases in full time manning for the guard.

Other legislative efforts include extending the protections of the soldiers' and sailors' civil relief act to title 32 members instead of only title 10 members as is now the case and tax credits for employees of members of the National Guard. There also is a need for special duty pay to keep highly trained persons in the guard/reserve in such areas as programs to deal with weapons of mass destruction. There are also efforts to restore the 75% federal, 25% state split in funding for the Youth Challenge Program.

Captain Sims also spoke about the resolution process used by NGAUS. In December of each year the resolutions adopted at the national conference are passed out and sent to Congress as recommendations. In January, a call for resolutions is sent to the state associations who then, in turn, need to have the resolutions passed by June.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** The minutes for the 44th General Conference were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Major Lincoln, seconded by LTC Collins and unanimously approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** LTC Jeff Ireland reported that at year's end (2001) there was \$3,332.54 in the Association's accounts. The checkbook balance at the beginning of 2001 was \$3,196.28. There was net income for the year 2001 in the amount of \$11,976.16. Major Mora conducted an audit of the Association's books in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards. His opinion is that the financial statement conforms with those principles.

Colonel Morrison moved to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Colonel Tanberg and unanimously passed.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Lieutenant Colonel Steve Mehring reported that responses to the survey increased dramatically this year. Those results indicate:

- a. That the majority of members still prefer to pay dues by check. A small minority would like the ability to pay on-line. However, given the limited interest, it would not be financially feasible to offer this as an option at this time.
- b. Website use has increase dramatically over the past year.
- c. On the positive side, many believe the website is a good way to get information. On the negative side, the survey shows a resistance by some to use the website.

LTC Mehring reported that there are several action items he plans for the coming year such as putting the website address on membership cards; publishing an MTGNA E-Newsletter each month (with the first one starting April '02); modifying the '03 dues invoice to give a receipt and possibly a detachable membership card; continuing to get e-mail addresses from as many members as possible; and, adding more functionality to the website with more links to other resources.

Major Ireland reported that using the website is saving the Association money in printing and mailing costs which can then be used for other purposes. LTC Oelkers recognized LTC

Mehring for his work and contributions to the Association as Executive Director.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Legislative Report:** Brigadier General Mosley presented the legislative report. There has been much interest in changes for benefits for National Guard members. Both the officer and enlisted Associations have met with the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to seek their support on many issues. DMA is considering these requests. However, both Associations still have the ability to seek sponsorships from individual legislators to pursue this legislation.

**Resolutions Report:** Colonel Tanberg presented the Joint, Army and Air Resolutions for FY 2003 proposed by NGAUS. Col. Tanberg recommended that the Association endorse all of the proposed resolutions with the further recommendation that Montana sign on as a co-sponsor to the following resolutions:

### JOINT

A-1: Relating to equitable personnel benefits

### ARMY

B-1: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard Aviation

B-2: Relating to the modernization and sustainment of the Army National Guard combat maneuver (mounted) force

B-3: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard command control

B-5: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard combat support/combat service support force

### AIR

C-1: Relating to Air National Guard force structure

C-2: Relating to Air National Guard F-16 aircraft

C-11: Relating to Air National Guard aircraft rescue and fire fighting vehicles

It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the Association endorse all proposed NGAUS resolutions and that Montana sign on as a co-sponsor to the above-listed resolutions. Upon further recommendation of Col. Tanberg, LTC Oelkers moved to sign on as a co-sponsor to Wisconsin's draft resolution. The motion was seconded by BG Tobel and unanimously approved.

**Membership Report:** Lieutenant Colonel Mehring presented the membership report. Lieutenant Colonel Mehring reported that as of April 19 the percentage of memberships paid is 70%. This breaks down to 65% for the army side and 92% for the air side. This is a positive sign. However, had we obtained this percentage by February 28, the Association would have qualified for a dues rebate from NGAUS. For comparison purposes the final percentages of paid up dues for 2001 was 82%; for 2000 was 79% and for 1999 was 87%.

**Insurance Report:** Lieutenant Colonel (ret) Remick gave the insurance report. Lieutenant Colonel Remick reported that revenues from the insurance program continue to decrease, primarily because the SGLI insurance has been increased to \$250,000.00 which makes it harder to encourage new members to purchase more life insurance. The insurance program cannot compete with SGLI. Members need to remember that there are real benefits to buying from the state insurance program: Benefits are paid to beneficiaries within 24 hours, the insurance is affordable after you retire and no longer eligible for SGLI; it covers family members and continues that coverage even if the sponsor spouse is deceased.

LTC Remick reported he will be presenting a check for \$1666.00 to the Association from the insurance program. LTC Remick will be retiring from his position in the insurance program in 4-5 years and is looking for someone to take over that program.

**By-Laws Report:** LTC Boettger reported that there were no by-laws changes proposed for this year.

**Corporate Report:** LTC Jackson gave the Corporate Committee report. This past year the Association kicked off its corporate sponsor program. LTC Swanson and LTC Oehmcke have done a tremendous amount of work on this program. LTC Swanson reported that there already has been tremendous support for this new program from the corporate world. Nearly \$2900.00 has already been received from newly signed Association corporate sponsors. The Association looks to build upon this significantly in the coming months/years. LTC Swanson requested that if any members know of potential corporate sponsors to contact him, LTC Oehmcke or LTC Mehring.

LTC Mehring then gave a demonstration of the information available on the website for corporate sponsors showing, among other things, the many benefits of being a corporate sponsor and the application procedures to become a sponsor.

**Scholarship Report:** LTC Oelkers presented the Scholarship report. LTC Oelkers reported that the Association did not solicit for the scholarship program this year. Due to budget constraints the board did not feel that there were sufficient funds to provide the two \$500.00 scholarships this year. However, the Association expects to be in a position to award these scholarships next year.

**Company Grade Report:** First Lieutenant Crowe presented the Company Grade report. LT Crowe reported that membership continues to be a struggle at the company grade level. He requested the support of senior leadership to encourage company grade participation in the Association. LT Crowe has been working to educate members on the difference between just paying dues and being a member of Association, emphasizing the many benefits of being a member. He is presently designing a regionalized meeting process to solicit input from the different areas of the state to hopefully shed light on how to make the Association more a part of members' lives.

**ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS** Brigadier General Mosley presented the following

Army nominations for vacancies on the Board of Directors:

LTC (ret) John Nugent (reappointed)  
Major Richard Ahler (replaces CW2 Messer)

Brigadier General Tobel presented the Air nominations for vacancies on the Board of Directors:

1LT Tim Crowe (Company Grade)  
Major Roy Ingram (replaces LTC Oehmcke)  
BG(ret) Higgins (replaces BG (ret) Hindoien)

A motion to accept the nominations as submitted was duly made, seconded and unanimously passed by the membership.

**2001 NGAUS CONFERENCE REPORT** Colonel Tanberg gave the report. General Tommy Franks, CENTCOM, was the keynote speaker at the 2001 NGAUS Conference. The key issues addressed at the conference were related to budgetary concerns and especially the costs of modernization. A proposed NGAUS dues increase was rejected by the membership.

**2002 NGAUS CONFERENCE REPORT** Lieutenant Colonel Mehring reported that the 2002 NGAUS conference will be at Long Beach, California from September 5-9. All are encouraged to attend. As an incentive to attend, if a member signs by the end of this month and pays the deposit, he/she becomes eligible for a drawing for one free nights lodging in Long Beach. LTC Mehring reported that the commercial airfare from Montana to LAX is approximately \$366.00 roundtrip. There is a possibility of MilAir. Once in Long Beach there is good ground transportation free to all events as well as a free shuttle system. There are many events scheduled such as a golf tournament, the general session, various caucus's, a states dinner and many other special events. Lodging at the convention hotel is \$99.00 per night. LTC Mehring then played a promotional videotape prepared by the California National Guard. More information will be provided on the Association's website.

**ARMY BRIEF** Brigadier General Randy Mosley provided a power point presentation on the Army National Guard's activities over the past year. The Army Guard has had another busy year. The 1st of the 163rd has deployed two companies to Bosnia and the 1st of the 189th Aviation Battalion is undergoing a significant transformation. Since 911 the ARNG has executed over 36,000 man days for various missions such as Airport Guardian to Border Guardian. The ARNG continues its Partnership for Peace Program as well as the Youth Challenge Program in Dillon.

Retaining members continues to be a challenge with the ARNG losing 60 officers in the last twelve months while gaining only 30 during that same period.

**AIR BRIEF** Brigadier General Tobel gave the Air brief. 2001 was a busy year for the air side prior to 911 and even more so after. 1/3 of the 120th Fighter Wing was activated to title 10 after 911. Most of those activated remained in Great Falls although some have deployed. The 120th

also completed a major AEF deployment. The 819th Red Horse will also be leaving for a major deployment in the near future. Only a couple of years ago, our manning was down to 85%. Now manning is back to 95%. BG Tobel then presented a videotape program outlining the Air National Guard's activities over the past year

**CLOSING COMMENTS** President Oelkers reported that the next state general conference is tentatively scheduled for April 25-27 in Helena. Several changes are being considered to try to obtain more involvement and participation.

**BENEDICTION** 1LT Ferda gave the benediction.

**ADJOURN** There being no further business, the Montana National Guard Association's 45<sup>th</sup> General Conference meeting was adjourned.

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**Loren Oelkers**  
Lieutenant Colonel, MT ARNG  
President