

MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 6683
GREAT FALLS, MT 59406

MINUTES OF MEETING BUSINESS SESSION
44th GENERAL CONFERENCE 2001

HELD: 21 APRIL 2001

CALL TO ORDER The Business Session of the Montana National Guard Association's 44th General Conference was called to order by President (Lieutenant Colonel) J. Pete Hronek at 0930 hours, Saturday, April 21, 2001 at Chico Hot Springs, Pray, Montana.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was rendered. Major John Swanson gave the Invocation.

APPOINTMENT OF SERGEANT AT ARMS Captain Orlan Strom and Second Lieutenant Tim Crowe were appointed as Sergeants at Arms.

APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIAN Major Jim Moran was appointed as Parliamentarian.

INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS Col. Bill Goss USAF (retired) was introduced.

APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATIONS COMMITTEES FOR BOARD/OFFICER VACANCIES Brigadier General Randy Mosley was appointed to form a committee to nominate a candidate for president and one company grade director on the army side. Brigadier General Frank Tobel was appointed to form a committee to nominate a candidate for vice president, one company grade director and one director (any grade) on the air side.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS The keynote address was given by Mr. Bill Goss, Colonel USAF (Retired), Legislative Director, National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS). Mr. Goss described how the National Guard obtains the resources necessary to do its job as well as how the budgetary process winds its way to Congress and how grass roots efforts play a part in that process. Mr. Goss also described the resolution process, and how each year NGAUS puts out a call for resolutions that are then consolidated and forwarded to the National Guard Bureau resolutions committee for review and organization. At the National Conference the resolutions are then voted on. NGAUS staff prepares legislative priorities and task force resolutions for NGAUS. These are then taken to Congress. NGAUS works with many different entities to accomplish its goals such as the Department of Defense, state associations, TAGS, the Enlisted

Association, and the defense industry, to name a few.

Some of the benefits that NGAUS has recently gained for its members include Tricare for life - regardless of age, beginning in 2002, an increase in the number of IDT days credited for retirement from 75 to 90 and the Thrift Savings Plan. NGAUS is currently working to extend the Veteran Administration loan program (presently scheduled to end in 2007) and is also trying to obtain tax right off authorization for traveling to and from drills.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES The minutes for the 43rd General Conference were presented. A motion to approve the minutes was seconded and unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT Major Jeff Ireland reported that at year's end there was \$106.61 in the Association's savings account. The checkbook balance at the beginning of 2000 was \$8,452.97; at the end of 2000 the balance was \$7,146.91. The cash flow for the year 2000 was a negative \$1,437.00. Most income for the Association is derived from dues. Accordingly, we need to encourage membership. President Hronek noted that last year we had a decrease in membership as well as lower returns from the insurance program which resulted in the loss of \$1,437.00. Major Moran thanked Major Tom Mora and ILt Stan Kowalczyk for their audit of the year 2000 books performed in accordance with G.A.O.S. Their opinion is that the financial statement conforms to generally accepted accounting principles.

The goal for the 2001 budget was to try to anticipate costs better. The three previous years were used as a guide. For 2001 we are anticipating an income of \$11,275.00, mostly from dues. Expected expenses are \$14,300.00, for a net loss of \$3,025.00.

A motion was made to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Lieutenant Colonel Steve Mehring reported that the executive director's position was created in order to provide more day-to-day continuity for the organization and more contact with the members. His goal has been to provide more timely communication with the membership. LTC Mehring believes that this goal is being accomplished and the efforts to this end will continue to improve. The job is fairly time consuming at 40-60 hours per month at a minimum. Along with the dues statement a survey form was sent to the membership. 128 officers responded to the survey. This input has been helpful in helping ascertain the needs and concerns of our members:

In response to the survey question concerning how members desired to pay dues, the majority responded that they desire to pay by check via mail. A significant number indicated that they would like to have the ability to pay their dues on line. In response to the survey question concerning website awareness, 50% stated that they had visited the site. 30% stated that they had not heard of the website. We want to decrease this percentage in the future.

Concerning comments made in the survey, on the positive side many stated that

notification of issues on the website is great and the site looks professional. LTC Mehring thanked president Hronek and the board for their input and information provided on the website. On the negative side, many responded that they could not download forms that were available.

In response to the survey question on what the Association could do to serve our members, the number one item was to work toward allowing guard and reserve members to receive retired pay immediately upon retirement.

LTC Mehring reported that to date, he has email addresses for 100% of the Air side and 30% of the Army side. Having this information greatly enhances the Association's ability to contact its members not only for routine matters but matters that are time sensitive, such as legislative issues.

President Hronek emphasized that it is important to keep the secretary, treasurer and executive director positions in place for continuity purposes. Directors and presidents come and go, so we need a means to preserve continuity. President Hronek also felt that the stipends for the executive director, treasurer and secretary were important and should be continued. President Hronek also stated that the website is only one way we communicate with our members. We will continue to use mail as in the past.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Report: Brigadier General Mosley presented the legislative report. The Association felt that there were several key issues that needed work on. Two of these were the state scholarship program and the Youth Challenge program. State active duty issues were also considered important but were not brought up this year as we were not ready at this time to carry the issue. We want to address this issue next session.

BG Mosley also summarized the legislative report from Roger Hagen. HB 2 contains the funding for the Department of Military Affairs (DMA). The DMA and Association did one of the best jobs with the budget committee that he had ever witnessed. This is important because our relationship with the legislature is so critical. The state scholarship program is one of our most important retention and recruitment tools. Governor Racicot's budget had funded this program at 350,000.00. Governor Martz reduced this amount to \$300,000.00. We were questioned on whether the scholarship program was even working. Moreover, this money has to be justified every session because it is not part of the regular budget. However, this is where the Association's membership contacting their legislators was crucial. We were able to save the program albeit was cut back to \$250,000.00.

HB 2 contained 13 million dollars for the Air and Army. Seven additional employees were given to the army to improve maintenance. The Challenge Program received 2.8 million. Given the very tight money situation, the Association did quite well.

Resolutions Report: Col. Tanberg presented the resolutions now recommended for passage by the Association. It was moved, seconded that the following Joint, Army and Air Resolutions for FY 2002 be approved:

JOINT

- A-2: Relating to the role of the National Guard in counter-terrorism and weapons of mass destruction response
- A-3: Relating to the National Guard Youth Challenge Program
- A-4: Relating to national missile defense
- A-5: Relating to National Guard support for counter drug missions and demand reduction programs

ARMY

- B-1: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard's fire support/field artillery battle operating systems and related training devices
- B-2: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard aviation area
- B-4: Relating to the modernization of the ARNG
- B-5: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard combat engineer force
- B-6: Relating to the modernization of the Army National Guard combat support / combat service support force

AIR

- C-1: Relating to Air National Guard
- C-3: Relating to Air National Guard F-15 A/B aircraft
- C-4: Relating to the Air National Guard A/OA-10 aircraft
- C-5: Relating to Air National Guard B-1B aircraft
- C-6: Relating to Air National Guard C/EC/HC/LC-130 aircraft
- C-7: Relating to Air National Guard KC-135 aircraft
- C-8: Relating to the C-17 Globemaster III aircraft
- C-9: Relating to the Air National Guard C-5A/B aircraft
- C-10: Relating to the Air National Guard support aircraft
- C-11: Relating to air traffic control radar
- C-12: Relating to the procurement of ANG modern deployable communications-electronics equipment
- C-13: Relating to technology infusion to integrated communications access

Col Tanberg then presented the committee's recommendation for passage of individual Resolutions sponsored by the State:

- A-1: Relating to equitable personnel benefits, prioritized as follows: Health care benefits, payment of a full month's flight pay to all crew members, buy-back of Title 32 service time and, incentive bonus payments for re-enlistments in predetermined critical AFSC's/MOS's regardless of status.

A motion was made to add as a fifth priority item to A-1 the payment of retirement benefits immediately upon retirement. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. A motion was then made to approve Resolution A-1 with all five priorities as listed above. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

A-6: Relating to National Guard full time personnel policy. The Resolutions Committee recommended to adopt this resolution “as is” with the exception of that the portion relating to use of military leave. A motion was made to adopt Resolution A-6 as recommended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B-3: Relating to the modernization and sustainment of Army National Guard combat maneuver (mounted) force. A motion to adopt this Resolution as it pertains to upgrade of the Bradley fighting vehicles, conversion of M88A1 tank recovery vehicles, extension of the service life of M2/M3 Bradley fighting vehicles and, extension of the service life of Army National Guard M1 series tanks was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

B-7: Relating to the Army National Guard force structure and personnel strength. A motion to adopt this Resolution supporting all objectives for the Army National Guard with the exception of modernization over the entire Army National Guard Force Structure was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

C-2: Relating to Air National Guard. A motion to adopt the Resolution was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

C-2A: Relating to Air National Guard F-16 aircraft. A motion to adopt the Resolution was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Draft Resolution A-X: Relating to donation of sick leave credits by federal technicians. A motion to adopt the Resolution was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Montana National Guard Distinguished Service Award. President Hronek informed the membership that the board desired creation of an award entitled the Montana National Guard Officers Association Distinguished Service Award” to be awarded by the board to recognize the exceptional contributions of individual members who have distinguished themselves in support of the Association and its mission. A motion to approve the award was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Membership Report: Lieutenant Colonel Mehring presented the membership report. Lieutenant Colonel Mehring reported that the number of memberships paid to date is 69%. Out of 445 officers, 304 have paid. There has been a decrease in membership over the last couple of years. To improve this the board commenced the 2001 membership drive during December

2000. If the Association can obtain 70% of its dues by February 28 of each year, we qualify for a dues rebate from NGAUS. As our communication with members gets better the percentage of members paying by this date should improve. Dues collection was ahead of last year as a result of this effort. We hope to make the 70% goal by February 28, 2002.

LTC Mehring thanked LTC Kevin Collins for his continued efforts to encourage membership participation.

Insurance Report: Lieutenant Colonel Jackson gave the insurance report. Lieutenant Colonel Jackson reported that revenues from the insurance program have been decreasing over the last few years. This is due primarily for two reasons:

1. The life insurance benefit under SGLI was increased to \$250,000.00
2. There has been an increase in death benefits paid out by the program.

LTC Remick (retired) reported that due to recent death claims, we can expect very little income from the insurance program in the foreseeable future. This year LTC Remick stated that he would have a check for \$1500.00 for the Association.

LTC Jackson then stated that in order to expand the Association's sources of revenue the board desires to look to the potential of obtaining corporate sponsorships. Doing this will help our own legislative efforts and our cash flow. There are many businesses and organizations that support the Guard such as banks, defense contractors and local businesses/corporations that do business with Guardsmen, to name a few. The benefit to the corporate sponsor is the high exposure and recognition that comes from being a supporter of the Association.

President Hronek stated that we will continue to look to the insurance program as a source of revenue however, we also need to look to other sources of income to assist in our financial position.

By-Laws Report: Major Boettger discussed the various proposed by-laws amendments submitted to the membership for approval. One change deals with amendments to Article V of the by-laws relating to committees and their duties. The change would authorize the president to appoint a chairperson for each committee to oversee the business of that committee and convene that committee on at least an annual basis. The Insurance Committee would be re-named the Insurance/Corporation committee. A Scholarship Committee would be added. In addition, a short description would be added concerning the mission for the Insurance/Corporation Committee, the Retired Members Committee and the Scholarship Committee.

The second proposed amendment is to Article II of the by-laws, dealing with membership dues. This amendment would tie State Association dues to 40% of the NGAUS dues and would change automatically whenever NGAUS dues are revised. A provision would also be added encouraging members to pay their dues not later than February 15 of each year.

President Hronek stated that dues have not changed since the 1980's. The board believes

that our dues structure needs to reflect the realities of the cost of doing business today. This new proposal would generate approximately \$8500.00. This will not allow us to increase our activities a great deal, but it will allow us to continue day to day what we have been doing. State dues would only increase if national dues increased. A handout was given to the membership showing the projected impact of the proposed dues increase.

Discussion by the membership was held concerning the proposed by-laws changes. A motion to approve both of the two proposed amendments was made and seconded. The motion carried with two votes against the amendments.

Scholarship Report: Major Nikki DeWolf presented the scholarship report. Maj. DeWolf reported that the \$250,000.00 appropriation from the state has been expended. 500 scholarships had been given at \$500.00 each. Enlistments are up as is retention. There has been a 14% increase in enlistments. New recruits have identified educational benefits as the main reason they joined the Guard. Nineteen other state offer full tuition assistance for those joining the Guard. Montana, with the scholarships, pays approximately 40% of tuition.

Each year the Association presents two - \$500.00 scholarships. This year the scholarships go to Ben Sutton, a senior from Libby, and Michelle Handwork from Great Falls.

Company Grade Report: Captain Tim Lincoln presented the Company Grade report. Captain Lincoln emphasized the need to provide information concerning available scholarships because of the positive impact on recruiting and retention. He also reported that another issue that there has been an expressed interest in pursuing is the free hunting and fishing licenses for National Guard personnel.

Retired Members Report: LTC (ret) John Nugent gave the report. LTC Nugent desires to revitalize our retired component. He encouraged all members to invite retirees to Guard functions. An effort to contact all retirees will be undertaken to solicit their support and help on Association issues. There is a wealth of institutional knowledge in our retirees that we could be using.

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS, PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT Brigadier General Mosley presented the following Army nominations for president and vacancies on committees and the Board of Directors:

Resolutions committee: Capt Orlan Strom
Legislative committee: Maj. Steve Martinka
Director: Capt. Tracy Anderson (Company Grade)
President: LTC Loren Oelkers

Brigadier General Tobel presented the Air nominations for vice president and vacancies on committees and Board of Directors:

Resolutions committee: Capt. Tim Lincoln and 1LT Scott Smith
Insurance committee: LTC Jim Taflon; Capt Roy Ingram
Air Directors: 2LT Tim Crowe (Company Grade)
Major Buel Dickson
Vice President: Bryan Fox

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

2000 NGAUS CONFERENCE REPORT Lieutenant Colonel Mehring gave the report. The 2000 NGAUS Conference was held September 12-14, 2000 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. There were a huge number of vendors including numerous defense contractors. There was great interest from younger members to attend the conference which bodes well for the future of the organization. Col Cusker presented his paper at the conference. The 120th Fighter Wing Communications Flight received an award as the top communications squadron in the United States. Presidential candidates George Bush and Al Gore gave a live video presentation.

2001 NGAUS CONFERENCE REPORT Lieutenant Colonel Mehring reported that the 2001 NGAUS conference will be in Indianapolis. The schedule of events includes a golf tournament and area 1-6 meeting, a business session, numerous caucuses, Army and Air sessions and a banquet. More information will be provided on the Association's website.

ARMY BRIEF Brigadier General Randy Mosley gave the Army brief. The worst fires in 100 years brought the Army National Guard to the forefront of the action. 45 different units fought 13 major fires all over the state. The biggest challenge facing the Army Guard continues to be recruiting and retention. Our strength has continued to decline since FY 98. We are currently at 82% of our authorized strength. Losses exceed gains in officers. Our force structure continues to change toward more combat support with a decrease in combat. Combat service remains about the same. The 189th Aviation Battalion commanded by LTC Kevin Keppler was just recognized as the top aviation unit in the National Guard. Many deployments of Army Guard units are scheduled for 2001 in CONUS and the 1-163rd is scheduled to deploy to Bosnia in 2002.

The Army Guard has seen many infrastructure improvements. 55 million in projects are currently under design/construction, creating an atmosphere of success for the future. The distance-learning network is contributing to readiness as well as allowing families the means to have contact with deployed personnel. The Youth Challenge Program for at risk youth continues as a success, bringing those youth back into being productive members of society.

AIR BRIEF Brigadier General Tobel gave the Air brief. Consisting of state staff in Helena, the 219th Red Horse Squadron at Malmstrom AFB and the 120th Fighter Wing in Great Falls, the past year continued to be a busy one. A short video was shown recapping the events that took place during 2000. The 219th had many deployments and the 120th FW deployed over 500 airmen and women to Volk Field, Wisconsin for training. The conversion of the 120th FW to a general purpose role continued with the unit receiving F-16 Block 30's from Kunsan, Korea

starting in December 2000. The Air Guard played a significant role during the fires of 2000, training at Fort Harrison and deploying thereafter to the many different fires in the state.

CLOSING COMMENTS President Hronek reported that the next state general conference is tentatively scheduled for 26-28 April, 2002 in Great Falls. The conference will be sponsored by the 120th Fighter Wing and will be held in conjunction with the Enlisted Association's general conference. Various events will be co-attended by both Associations.

BENEDICTION Major Swanson gave the benediction.

ADJOURN There being no further business, the Montana National Guard Association's 44th General Conference meeting was adjourned.

J. Pete Hronek
Lieutenant Colonel, MT ANG
President