YOUR COMMUNICATOR

Wisconsin National Guard Association, Inc.

The Wisconsin National Guard Association exists to promote the readiness, modernization, and relevance of the Wisconsin National Guard family and its members.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

September 2025

147th NGAUS General Conference & Exhibition – Milwaukee, August 22–25, 2025

The Wisconsin National Guard proudly hosted the 147th National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference and Exhibition at Milwaukee's Baird Center, August 22–25. Nearly 4,000 National Guard officers, leaders, and industry partners came together to set the association's legislative agenda, attend professional development sessions, and strengthen relationships across all 54 states and territories.

Key Highlights, Distinguished Speakers & Leaders

This year's conference featured some of the nation's top military leaders. Among them was Gen. Dan Caine, the first Guardsman to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who underscored the Guard's growing role in national defense and homeland security. Other featured speakers included Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus, Chief of the National Guard Bureau; Gen. Randy A. George, Chief of Staff of the Army; and Gen. John D. Lamontagne, Commander of Air Mobility Command.

Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin was honored with the prestigious **Harry S. Truman Award** in recognition of her longstanding support and advocacy for the National Guard.

Legislative Priorities & Professional Development

Business sessions brought together representatives from every state and territory to define NGAUS's legislative agenda, focusing on key issues such as modernization, benefits, and readiness. Professional development panels gave officers the opportunity to collaborate on topics relevant to today's Guard, including how the organization integrates seamlessly with the U.S. Army and Air Force.

Exhibition & Industry Partnerships

The exhibition hall buzzed with innovation, featuring more than 350 exhibitors. Over one-third were first-time participants, underscoring NGAUS's role as a bridge between the defense industry and the operational needs of the Guard. Attendees explored the latest in defense technologies, equipment, and services designed to support the force of the future.

Networking & Social Events

Milwaukee's vibrant venues played host to a series of memorable networking events:

- **Mixers** for company grade officers, warrant officers, and senior leaders took place at the Mecca Sports Bar and Grill and Gather at the Deer District.
- **Governor's Reception** welcomed attendees to Discovery World, overlooking Lake Michigan.

The conference concluded with the **All-States Dinner** in the Baird Ballroom, featuring Wisconsin's own Charlie Berens, who brought the house down with laughter—a fitting way to close a week of hard work and camaraderie.

Wisconsin's Role as Host

Behind the scenes, the success of this large-scale event was made possible by the dedication and professionalism of countless individuals. Special recognition goes to the NGAUS Executive Steering Committee—Mr. Mike Hinman and Mr. Mark Michie—for their leadership, as well as NGAUS Project Lead MAJ Bennet Lardie, whose meticulous planning ensured that every detail was executed flawlessly

The Wisconsin National Guard's J-3/5/7 played a critical role in developing and distributing operational orders, smoothly transitioning responsibilities to the 64th Troop Command. Committee chairs and volunteers—along with the servicemembers who supported each event—went above and beyond to deliver a first-class experience for every attendee. A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved.

From professional development to policy discussions, from forging new partnerships to celebrating old friendships, the 147th NGAUS General Conference was a success.

WINGA State Conf – April 24-26, 2026, with our host being the 32nd IBCT in Rotschild. If anyone has ideas what you would like to implement into the conference or any speakers please send them my direction.
https://forms.gle/c1sLL4ESBsNUCZfp8

NGAUS 148th General Conference & Exhibition in Indianapolis, August 28-31, 2026 hosted by the Indiana National Guard!

Over the next few months, you will see some important changes within WINGA. In this newsletter, we are announcing the opening for **Administrative Assistant position**—please take a moment to review that announcement. In the next newsletter, we will be sharing the **Executive Director position** advertisement. We encourage you to pass these announcements along to anyone who may be interested. Thank you for your continued support.

Jeannie Jeanetta
President, WINGA

TAPS

•COL (Ret) Francis "Jerry" Mader

Please notify us if you are aware of a member's death. We publish the names of those who pass away as we are notified, which may result in a delay of notifying you, our members.

2025 WINGA EDUCATION GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

These students were each awarded a $1,000 education scholarship from the Wisconsin National Guard Association, Inc (WINGA) for their academic excellence during the 2024-2025 academic year. The WINGA Awards, Gifts & Grants Committee reviewed the applications that were received by the WINGA Office by the 1 July 2025 deadline and selected the recipients. On behalf of the WINGA Board of Directors and the WINGA Awards, Gifts and Grants Committee, congratulations in your pursuit of a higher education degree.

AWARD	RECIPIENT	SPONSOR
Education Grant	Aiden Dunlap	LtCol Michael Dunlap, 115FW
Education Grant	McKenzie Holmes	COL Jeremy Holmes, JFHQ Det
Education Grant	Brielle Laube	LTC Mike Laube, JFHQ Det
Education Grant	Erik Mikkelson	CW4 (Ret) Leif Mikkelson
Education Grant	Leah Newmann	LTC Cory Newmann, JFHQ Det

THANK YOU FROM 2025 WINGA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Erik Mikkelson: Thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the 2025 WINGA scholarship. I am honored to be chosen for this generous award. This will help me finish off my goal of graduating from UW-LaCrosse debt-free.

McKenzie Holmes: I would like to express my gratitude for the WINGA scholarship. I am truly honored and deeply appreciative of your generous support. I am starting my first year in a Doctor of Pharmacy program at Purdue University. This scholarship will help me immensely and will allow me to focus on my studies and ease the financial burden that comes with a doctorate program.

Wisconsin National Guard Foundation (WINGF) provides post-high school scholarships for any 2-year associate degree, 4-year college degree, or trade school program for Wisconsin National Guard service members or their dependents. Details are on the WINGF website: https://www.wingfoundation.org/scholarshipsandgrants.php Scholarships are awarded year-round..

Columbia Southern University (CSU) Scholarship.

One of Wisconsin's very own was the recipient of the NGAUS-Columbia Southern University (CSU) Scholarship for academic year 2025-2026, which was awarded to **1st Lt Amanda Lafky**, 115th Fighter Wing, during the NGAUS Conference in Milwaukee on Monday 25 August. Congratulations, Amanda!

COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS/WARRANT OFFICERS CORNER

CPT Mitchell Hoh and 1st Lt Jordan Kubenik are the Company Grade Officer representatives on the WINGA Board.

- CPT Mitchell Hoh—represents WIARNG—email mitchellhoh@gmail.com
- 1st Lt Jordan Kubenik—represents WI ANG—email jkubenik@gmail.com

Thank you to all CGOs that helped to plan portions of, run events at, or just attended NGAUS in Milwaukee. If it weren't for the involvement of so many of our group, NGAUS wouldn't have been the same, and we are deeply grateful for that.

As a reminder we have Capitol Summit coming up in October. But if you aren't able to make this one, keep in mind we have another one coming up in Spring!

As we look forward to our annual WINGA conference 24-26 April 2026, in Rothschild, we are planning some CGO specific events and OPD. We are working to create a more cohesive group to help support each other in our careers and life. More details to come, but if you have any ideas or comments on what we can do, let us know!

Be on the lookout for information for next year's WINGA annual conference; we are looking to do a CGO mixer of some sort. Looking for ideas, suggestions, and feedback on how we can make it even better next time!

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT—WINGA ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Lynn Rasmussen, the current WINGA Administrative Assistant, has announced her retirement. Resumes are being accepted for the WINGA Administrative Assistant position. The WINGA Admin Asst is responsible for managing the NGAUS & WINGA membership database, publishing the WINGA newsletter, provide financial reports, assist in the planning of the WINGA and NGAUS conference, and is expected to attend WINGA Board meetings. Applications should be proficient in Microsoft Suite (word, excel, publisher), as well as QuickBooks. This is a part-time position under the supervision of the WINGA Executive Director. Starting salary is $21.00 per hour. Position offers pro-rated vacation and personal leave; details available upon request. Interested applicants should submit a cover letter and resume by 15 November with an anticipated start date in December. To receive a copy of the job announcement, job description, and fringe benefits, contact Michael Williams, WINGA Executive Director at 608-242-3114 or michael.j.williams@winga.org

2025 Membership in NGAUS & WINGA Professional Associations

For the **45th** consecutive year, Wisconsin National Guard Officers Association achieved **100%** membership! Thank you for your timely membership dues payments. Membership in your state association is the key to a strong organization. Your continued support of your state and national associations is critical to our success in making sure our elected officials understand the importance of the National Guard to our state and nation. Benefits include supporting federal military legislative initiatives, number of voting delegates at NGAUS events, and priority seating at NGAUS conferences. Wisconsin will begin collecting the 2026 WINGA & NGAUS membership dues beginning 1 October 2025. Membership is voluntary.

Officers who paid their 2025 WINGA & NGAUS membership dues by 30 June were entered into a drawing for five complimentary WINGA & NGAUS Digital Active Life Memberships (DALM). The winners were drawn on 15 July. The $580 membership value made the $45 CGO or $90 FGO annual dues payment a great investment. Congratulations to these lucky winners!

- ARNG CGO: CPT Johnathon Gause, 173BEB
- ARNG FGO: MAJ James Gruenewald, WI Med Det
- WO: CW2 Dan Clay, 32IBCT
- ANG CGO: Capt Luke Cofax, 128ARW
- ANG FGO: LtCol James Sullivan, 128ARW

2025 was scheduled to be the 4th and final year in a 4-year trial program for the Digital Active Life Membership (DALM). However, it was announced at the NGAUS Conference in Milwaukee that the NGAUS Board of Directors agreed to continue to offer the DALM. The WINGA Board will also continue to offer the life membership incentive program in Membership Year 2026 so the **Digital Active Life Membership (DALM) will continue to cost only $330 for Company Grade Officers and $455 for Field Grade Officers.** The 25% NGAUS rebate that Wisconsin receives funds the Life Membership Incentive Program.

Now is the ideal time to secure your Digital Active Life Membership. If you purchase a Digital Active Life Membership between 15 September and 15 December, you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a 50% reimbursement of your membership fee! Don't miss this opportunity to invest in your professional future and potentially recoup a significant portion of your investment. Dues can be paid via the 1) WINGA website www.winga.org (or scan the WINGA website QRC); 2) via Venmo (scan the WINGA Venmo QRC), or 3) call Lynn Rasmussen at 608-206-7006 to pay via credit card.

WINGA Website

WINGA WINGA Assn
@WINGA-WINGAAssn

venmo

Thank you to the following individuals who gifted (either full or partially gifted) NGAUS & WINGA Memberships:

RECIPIENT	TYPE	DONOR
MAJ Ben Lardie	DALM (partial)	COL (Ret) Mike Williams
LTC Seth Kaste	DALM (partial)	MAJ (Ret) Lynn Rasmussen
1LT Zachary Kielar	DALM (full)	Anonymous
CPT Cole Cobb	DALM (partial)	MAJ (Ret) Lynn Rasmussen
CW5 Jason Tobias	DALM (partial)	MAJ (Ret) Lynn Rasmussen
1LT Andrew Kyle	Annual (full)	CPT Alexa Woodward
1LT Ethan Fox	Annual (full)	CPT Alexa Woodward
CPT Matthew Hicks	Annual (full)	CPT Mitch Hoh
1LT Alexandra Hornung	Annual (full)	CPT Mitch Hoh
1LT Alexis Souksavath	Annual (full)	CPT Mitch Hoh
CPT Jason Permann	Annual (full)	CPT Mitch Hoh

WINGA Golf Outing
30 May

The 2025 WINGA Golf Outing was held on Friday, 30 May at Prairie Pines Golf Course, Sun Prairie. 58 golfers enjoyed a great day for golfing and comradery. COL Jeremy Holmes worked hard to ensure all attendees had a great golf outing. A total of $572 was raised for WINGA.

WINGA Sporting Challenge
19 September

The 16th Annual WINGA Sporting Challenge was attended by nearly 40 participants and raised $1,860 for WINGA. 39 of the attendees chose to test their skills in one of the 7 competitive events (Pistol Challenge, Trap, Skeet, .22 LR Shooting, Crossbow, Archery, and Archery Longshot). The competitors with the highest scores were recognized and awarded Gift Cards, along with other valuables donated by our event sponsors. After the competitive events were over, attendees enjoyed a wonderful lunch (courtesy of the North Bristol Sportsman's Club) and had the opportunity to participate in a raffle event with great prizes such as firearms, a Matthews compound bow, and guided Pheasant Hunts available for the winning ticketholder. This event could not have been made possible without donations from organizations such as **Top Pack Defense, Vortex Optics, The North Bristol Sportsman's Club, Matthews Bows, and Mission Specific Worldwide.**

This year's Competitive Event Winners were:

Matt Pitzer - Crossbow	Wes Van Huss – Skeet, Archery Long Shot
Michael Schall - Skeet	Jeremiah Hellenbrand – Pistol
Charles Mattison – Trap	Justine Zander – 22 LR, Archery

This event generated nearly $54,300 in revenue from direct donations, registration fees, and the raffle. After covering the cost of raffle items and a donation of $1,055 to North Bristol Sportsman's Club, this event generated $1,860 for WINGA. The event was positively received by the participants, and we have some great ideas to make the 17th Annual Sporting Challenge even more memorable.

The 17th Annual Sporting Challenge is scheduled for 18 September 2026 at North Bristol Sportsman's Club, Sun Prairie, WI.

A big thank you to LTC Jeremiah Hellenbrand, MAJ Bryant Volling, and CPT Mark Stoeger for organizing a very successful Sporting Challenge!

Marshall McCarty

Ben Lardie

Matt McDonald

Hannah Moat

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

19-22 October—NGAUS Capitol Summit
2 December—WINGA Executive Committee Meeting
9 December—WINGA Board Meeting

WINGA/WNGEA Conf
Rothschild, WI (Hosted by 32d IBCT)
24-26 April 2026

148th NGAUS Conf
Indianapolis, Indiana
28-31 August 2026

2025 NGAUS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS
Milwaukee
22-25 August

Conference Overview. 204 active & retired delegates & their guests represented Wisconsin in Milwaukee. 12 Company Grade Officers received a WINGA scholarship to cover their travel expenses: Capt Luke Cofax, Capt Kainoa Chun-Moy, Capt Greg Greenwood, 2nd Lt Timothy Kaminski, CPT Dusty McCormick, CPT Jennifer Vanden Bosch, CPT Kolt Knutson, 1LT Morgan Schwittay, 2LT JohnPaul Gaston, CW3 LeRoy Fox, WO1 Erin Mendez, and WO1 Betsy TaylorHart. CW3 Matt Hipp and WO1 Betsy TaylorHart performed for Wisconsin's 1 minute Roll Call of States; video is available for viewing on WINGA's website. Mark Michie and Mike Hinman served as conference co-chairs. 113 of our attendees were Committee Chairs or committee members who worked incredibly hard on their conference events. Delegates voted on resolutions that will be the foundation for next year's legislative agenda. There were 350 NGAUS industry exhibitors in Milwaukee. Congratulations and thank you to all who worked very hard to make this conference a huge success!

Keynote Speakers. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine; Chief of Staff of the Army, General Randy George; Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Steven Nordhaus; Commander of Air Mobility Command, General John Lamontagne; Director of the Army National Guard, LTG Jonathan Stubbs; Commanding General First Army, LTG Mark Landes; and Acting Director of the Air National Guard, Maj Gen Duke Pirak. There were also two Panel Discussions: 1) the National Guard's Strategic Importance in the Indo-Pacific; and 2) the threat at home and abroad posed by unmanned aerial systems.

Award Winners.

- Senator Tamny Baldwin—Harry S Truman Award
- CPT Kelton Heinemann, Det 1 Co G 2d Bn 104th Avn Regt—Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award for Company Grade Officers
- 1st Lt Rachel Jones, 128ARW—Theodore Roosevelt Leadership Award for Company Grade Officers
- CW3 Cynthia Betts, JFHQ Det—Eagle Rising Award for Warrant Officers

Elections.

- CPT Mitch Hoh, 54th CST, was elected as the Area V CGO Rep. He also serves on the NGAUS DOMOPS Task Force.

NGAUS Business. NGAUS Business was conducted during three Professional Development (PD) Sessions. CGOs also attended three additional CGO PD sessions. There were also Army & Air Breakout Sessions, Resolutions Committee meetings, and Task Force Meetings.

In addition to the NGAUS Business Sessions, attendees were treated to a variety of social events: Golf Tournament, 5K Fun Run, Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Ride, Lake Michigan Sport Fishing, CGO & WO Mixer, Senior WO Mixer, TAG Reception, Governor's Reception, Retiree Caucus Meeting & Luncheon, TAG Spouses Luncheon, Warrant Officer Luncheon & Meeting, Retiree Luncheon & Meeting, Spouses Luncheon, and the States Dinner which included a performance by Wisconsin native Charlie Berens. CW3 Matt Hipp served as the Master of Ceremonies.

WINGA's Hospitality Room: COL (Ret) Bob Klinger entertained with his accordion & voice in WINGA's Hospitality Room. In addition, WINGA received several generous donations which were then raffled off to several lucky winners; WINGA raised $xxx selling raffle tickets. Thank you to the following individuals/organizations for their donations: **Top Pack Defense, Sun Prairie,** (9mm pistol), **Ken Skowronski** (wildlife prints), **Mission BBQ** (gift basket), **Harley Davidson** (gift basket), **Miller High Life** (gift basket), and **Milwaukee Polish Center** (gift basket). Winners were: 9mm pistol (Leah Moore); Veterans Afield 12 Gauge Flag Art (John Freeman), Loon Print (Staci Callahan), Loon Print (Frederica Schuster), Drake Duck Print (Gina Schedivy), Eagle Print (John Freeman), Mission BBQ Basket (Charlotte Koshick), Miller High Life Bucket (William Gelhaus), Polish Center bucket (Leah Moore).

Partners in Patriotism: A HUGE thank you to our 2025 NGAUS Conference Partners in Patriotism for their generous support of the Wisconsin delegation. **Aeroforce Logistics, Boeing, Armed Forces Benefits Association (AFBA), Beyond Clothing, Boeing, Government Employees Health Association (GEHA), HTX Labs, Leonardo Helicopters, Mead & Hunt, Mine Lab Metal Detectors, National Guard Employment Network,/VetJobs, Old Wisconsin, Patriot Taxiway, Robertson Fuel Systems, and Vortex Optics**.

Roll Call of States—CW3 Hipp & WO1 TaylorHart

CW3 Cynthia Betts Eagle Rising Award

100% Membership Award—MG Strub, Col Jeanetta, Lynn Rasmussen

Partners in Patriotism—BG Aderman with Patriot Taxiway

Partners in Patriotism—Brig Gen Zuccaro with AFBA

COL (Ret) Bob Klinger & his accordion

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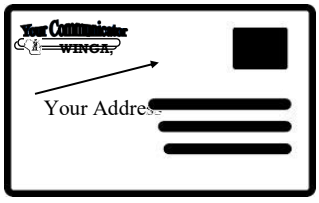

DIRECT BENEFITS OF YOUR WINGA/NGAUS MEMBERSHIP

- Tax-free retired military pay in Wisconsin
- WI State Tuition Assistance Program and post 9-11 GI Bill
- Since 2016, funded $129,750 for NGAUS Life Membership Incentive for 418 officers
- Since 20123 funded over $98,000 Educational Scholarships for 128 members and dependents
- Annual WINGA Conference, including sponsoring of no-cost Professional Development
- No-cost $10,000 life insurance policy to new members of the WI National Guard for 1 year
- No-cost $1,000 life insurance coverage for all actively serving WI National Guard members
- Annual funding for WIARNG Hall of Honor & WI ANG Hall of Fame Programs
- Annual grants of $500 to each MSC and Wing Commands
- Funded Officer and Warrant Officer Summits
- VA Home Loans available for Title 32 service
- Three month parental leave from unit training assemblies with pay & retirement credit for drill-status members
- Reemployment rights for State Active Duty or responding to a national emergency or natural disaster
- Definition of "veteran" now includes National Guard and reservists with 20 years of service
- Enhanced mental health care & TRICARE Coverage
- WINGA newsletter (published up to 6 times per year) & monthly NGAUS magazine
- Benefit parity for the National Guard

NGAUS
The National Guard Association of the United States