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**88th Texas  
Legislative  
Session Update  
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**ON THE COVER:**  
Photo of the Texas State Capitol in Austin, Texas.

Follow us on

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

## To Our Members,



**ALL I CAN SAY THUS FAR FOR 2023 IS "WOW."** Since taking the Presidency in March your NGAT Board of Directors team have hit the ground running. We have appointed new committee leads, incorporated fully all our new board members, and have set expectations on what is required from each. I'm saying all that to inform YOU, our membership, that your association is actively working.

I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge our fantastic full-time staff. A handful of staff members is what manages this organization day to day, and I could not be more grateful for all they do.

The fall brings about a lot of activity in our Association. It's National Conference season (EANGUS and NGAUS) and many of our board members and membership will be representing Texas there. Keep a watchful eye on all our social media platforms and in our next issue for all of the resolutions, legislation, and business that will be conducted there.

Check out the success we had for our Texas Guardsmen and our veterans in general during the 88th Texas Legislative Session on pages 8 and 9. Your membership continues to help our voice be heard at the State and National level. Why not ask someone to join us as a member today!

I encourage all of you, if you haven't already, to "like us" on our social media platforms. If you have already, I encourage you to turn those notifications on. Activity is going to steadily increase and we would love to gauge if we are moving in the direction that you'd like us to. Bottom line is WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU. Interact with our posts and give us your constructive suggestions and comments.

I am excited at the direction that our association is heading, but we have a lot of work yet to do. Your board of directors are committed to growing and increasing the value of membership while continuing to advocate on your behalf legislatively. I am immensely proud of our Association and our members. With your help and participation, I know our organization, the National Guard Association of Texas will thrive for years to come. ★

Thankful for all your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mireya Cruz".

**Mireya Cruz**  
NGAT President



**PICTURED IS 1LT EDWARD M. YTURRI** when he was a member of 1-141st Infantry Regiment in the 36th Infantry Division following his service in Japan after WWII.

## NGAT LIFE MEMBER #2 EDWARD M. YTURRI SERVED ON GENERAL MACARTHUR'S STAFF

*Original Story by David Clifton*

**Edward M. Yturri** never knew as a young boy growing up in Texas that he'd one day be part of a legendary United States general's staff, but that's just what happened to him after being drafted into the U.S. Army toward the tail end of World War II.

After basic training, Yturri began studying the Japanese language. After he completed those classes, the Army sent him to Japan, where he served as a counter-intelligence member of General Douglas MacArthur's staff. This was during the period MacArthur was heading up the post-war rebuilding of Japan, but there were still many challenges to the U.S. military. Yturri served 39 months in Japan.

Following this stint, Yturri stayed in the Army for eight years. After leaving active duty, Yturri continued his military service in the Texas National Guard. He entered the Army as a private, but would eventually work his way into the officer ranks before retiring after 30 years of active and National Guard service as a Colonel.

COL (Ret) Edward M. Yturri became a life member of NGAT on Mar 1, 1959 and was issued Life Membership #2. Today Yturri is 96 years old and still enjoys life and visiting with family and friends. Thank you for your service COL Yturri. ★



**THIS IS A PHOTO OF COL (RET) EDWARD M. YTURRI** taken for his 90th birthday. However today he is 96 about to turn 97. Happy Birthday COL Yturri!





# MEMBERS Spotlight

## BODYBUILDING RECRUITER

**SSG PAUL DANG**, a Recruiter in the Texas Army National Guard Recruiting & Retention Command, competed for the first time in the 2023 Lee Labrada Bodybuilding Classic held at The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center June 30-July 1. Not only did he win first place overall in the True Novice A



category he also placed second in the Novice B category and 3rd in the Class B Open category. During the event SSG Dang competed against people who have trained for years. He did an incredible job for it being his very first competition. At the end of the day, he was right there at the top and was one spot away from qualifying to compete on a national level. His prep for this competition was a bit of a rollercoaster ride from working long hours and attending two schools for weeks at a time to maintain his MOS as a medic and become a qualified Texas Army National Guard recruiter. SSG Dang said "I am beyond grateful for this experience, challenges, and achievements that I accomplished! I came prepared to give the show my best and left nothing in the tank!" Congratulations to NGAT Member SSG Paul Dang on your accomplishments. ★

## SPC WAITE NAMED "RUNNER-UP" AT REGION V BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

**CONGRATULATIONS TO SPC DYLAN WAITE**, 36th Infantry Division for placing as the Second Runner-up, Best Soldier in the Region V Best Warrior Competition. Soldiers competed for the title of Region V Best Warrior May 7-12, 2023, at Camp Crowder, Missouri. Soldiers from



Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas competed to determine who will represent Region V at the 2023 National Best Warrior Competition. Participants tested their physical, mental, and psychological limits over a 5-day period. Each day warriors faced vigorous tests including the Army Combat Fitness Test, 12-mile ruck march, obstacle course, and stress shoot, among other events. ★

## TWO TEXANS MAKE ALL-GUARD MARATHON TEAM

**SIX TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS** competed for a spot on the National Guard Military Competitions All Guard Marathon Team, running 26.2 miles at the 46th annual Lincoln Marathon, May 7, 2023, in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Texas Army National Guard was represented by **MAJ Amanda Tooke**, **CPT Melinda Dominguez**, **CPT Ethan McIntosh**, **1LT Sarah Perez**, **SSG Alicia Reagan**, and **SPC Zakary Widenor**.



CPT Melinda Dominguez, Joint Forces Headquarters, Austin, Texas, placed 2nd in her age group and earned a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team after completing the 26.2 miles in 3:44:16. CPT Ethan McIntosh, Recruiting and Retention Command, Houston, Texas, placed 10th in his age group and earned a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team after completing the 26.2 miles in 2:58:35.

More than 200 Airmen and Soldiers representing the National Guard from all 50 states, three U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia ran the Lincoln Marathon. This is the first time in over three decades that "all 54" were represented in the field of National Guard competitors for the marathon.

The runners on the All-Guard Marathon Team will travel to other races over the next two years throughout the United States. The National Guard Military Competitions Program, which includes both a Marathon Team and an Endurance Team, exists to promote physical fitness, self-discipline, and esprit de corps among National Guard members while assisting recruiting and retention efforts at each community where they compete. ★

## TWO TEXANS COMPLETE THE AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

**MAJ KELLY WEST (LEFT) AND MAJ SABRINA ZOWADA** successfully graduated from the Air Academy's Air Command and Staff College with a Masters of Military Operational Art and Science degree on May 25th at Maxwell Air Force Base.



They were among 5 Army National Guard officers selected to attend the program and both graduated in the top 25% of the 511 students. Following graduation, MAJ West is attending the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) and MAJ Zowada will report to the Pentagon to serve as XO to the senior military advisor to the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA). ★





# KEY LEADERSHIP Update



**COL JOSE RIVERA** and his wife Margaret celebrate with cake, family and friends following his promotion to Brigadier General on June 6, 2023, at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. BG Rivera will serve as the Director of Operations, Plans, Training, and Exercises (G3,5,7) at U.S. Army Central, Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.



**Col Carol J. Kohtz**  
Wing Commander  
149th Fighter Wing



**COL Tony B. Fears**  
Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) J4  
Chief, Future Operations and Plans  
Division in the J45  
Washington, D.C.



**Lt Col Brian Chesko**  
Commander  
147th Maintenance Squadron



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Conference Committee  
Facilities Committee  
Financial Investments Committee  
Membership Committee  
Resolutions Committee

Contact Marvin Harris at [mharris@ngat.org](mailto:mharris@ngat.org) for more information

**COMMITTEES AVAILABLE**  
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Facilities Committee, Financial Investments Committee,  
Membership Committee, Resolutions Committee



**1st Lt Keith Cook**  
149th Fighter Wing



**1SG Justin Meyers**  
176th Engr Bde



**LTC John Robinson**  
72nd IBCT





# MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO ATTEND THE 65th ANNUAL NGAT CONFERENCE

Mix business and pleasure at the 65th Annual NGAT Conference held March 21-24, 2024, at the Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center in Round Rock, Texas.

This is an excellent opportunity to bring the family to enjoy all that Kalahari has to offer. Kalahari Resorts & Conventions are full-service vacation destinations, including meeting and convention facilities that combine America's largest indoor Waterparks with the magic of Africa. Starting with the innovative Waterparks, family entertainment centers, luxury spas, adventurous restaurants, and convention centers, all under one roof. Whether you're 3, 83, or anything in-between, Kalahari has something for everyone!

In June of 2023 Kalahari opened a new multi-million-dollar expansion to the African-themed waterpark which added several new attractions, including a 900-foot-long lazy river, an adults-only swim

up bar, and a water-play area featuring nine bug-themed slides for kids. Get waterpark access as early as 12:00 p.m. day of check-in and stay until close day of check-out. With the waterpark expansion the outdoor waterpark now roughly covers five acres.

In addition to the waterpark, NGAT has a great conference rate of \$189 per night with no resort fee. The key is to book early. NGAT will also have a limited number of suites available at a discounted price on a first come, first served basis for those who wish to book a larger room for a family. Hotel reservations can be made now on the NGAT Conference page located at <https://ngat.org/ngat-conference/>.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (TENTATIVE)

- Mar 21, 2024 Exhibitor & Leadership Reception  
Come early and enjoy the Waterpark
- Mar 22, 2024 NGAT Educational Foundation Golf Tournament — Forest Creek Golf Club  
NGAT Fun Run  
Wine Tasting at Sortino Lounge  
License to Carry Certification  
NGAT Committee Meetings  
Exhibitors and Attendees Reception in the Exhibit Hall  
Silent Auction  
Scavenger Hunt \*NEW  
Company Grade and Junior Enlisted Reception \*NEW\*  
Welcome Party at the Barn with entertainment
- Mar 23, 2024 NGAT Annual Meeting  
General Session  
Breakout Session — Coming Soon  
Lunch with Exhibitors/Spouses Luncheon/Retirees Luncheon  
Awards Banquet with entertainment
- Mar 24, 2024 NGAT Prayer Breakfast  
Stay and enjoy the Waterpark



Watch our website at <https://ngat.org/ngat-conference> for updates.



# 88th Texas Legislature: Veteran Related Bills



The 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, convened on January 10, 2023, and adjourned May 29, 2023. Below are some of the Veteran-related bills that passed that NGAT has supported. Most have an effective date of September 1, 2023, unless otherwise noted. For a complete review of all bills and further details concerning those bills listed below go to <https://legiscan.com/TX/bill>.

**HB 90 – REP JARED PATTERSON – SURVIVOR BENEFITS:** This bill was named after Texas Army National Guardsmen Sergeant Bishop Evans, who drowned in the Rio Grande River while on state active duty attempting to rescue individuals who were attempting to swim across the river. The bill allows compensation for certain survivors of members of the Texas Military Forces.

**HB 282 – REP VALOREE SWANSON – SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES:** Texas Department of Motor Vehicles will issue specialty license plates for recipients of the Texas Homeland Defense Service Medal, Texas Superior Service Medal, Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal, Texas Outstanding Service Medal, and Texas Medal of Merit.

**HB 621 – REP. MATTHEW SHAHEEN – SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES:** Texas Department of Motor Vehicles will issue specialty license plates for recipients of the Commendation Medal or Commendation Medal with Valor for each branch of the military and for joint.

**HB 671 – REP MARK GONZALEZ – SUICIDE PREVENTION:** Texas Veterans Commission shall conduct a suicide prevention campaign to provide veterans with information regarding suicide prevention by establishing a dedicated Internet website to provide veterans with information regarding suicide prevention and collaborate with community-based, nonprofit, or private organizations to conduct the suicide prevention campaign.

**HB 1633 – REP LINA ORTEGA – DISABLED PLACARD FINES:** Additional fines have been added for violations in regards to disabled parking placards.

**HB 1740 – REP JEFF LEACH – WAIVER OF STATE PARK FEE:** Waiver of certain state park fees for resident of Texas who are 65 years old or over who has resided in the state for six consecutive month preceding the date of the application, honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, a member of the United States armed services on active duty, surviving spouse, parent, child, or sibling of a person who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

**HB 2503 – REP JOHN LUJAN – SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES:** Texas Department of Motor Vehicles will issue specialty license plates for recipients of the Texas Humanitarian Service Medal.

**HB 2892 – REP BRAD BUCKLEY – TRANSFER OF STUDENTS:** Transfer of students to other school districts who are children of servicemembers, which means an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, or the Texas National Guard.

**HB 5142 – REP KYLE KACAL – TX VETERANS DRIVER'S LICENSE:** To obtain a specially marked veterans driver's license the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles must accept a veteran ID card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or a ID card issued by the United States Department of Defense as sufficient proof of the veteran's military service and honorable discharge.

**SB 423 – SENATOR ANGELA PAXTON – UNMANNED AIRCRAFTS:** Effective immediately this bill add verbiage that makes it lawful to capture an image using an unmanned aircraft in the State of Texas as part of an operation, exercise, or mission of the Texas Military Forces.





**GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT** thanked Texas National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) troopers for their selfless service at the southern border and provided an update on Texas' response to the ongoing border crisis during a press conference in Brownsville on May 19, 2023.

*(Photo courtesy of the Texas Governor's Office)*



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# TEXAS ARMY GUARD TEAM WINS MARKSMANSHIP CONTEST

Original story by CPT Christopher Jensen

**FOUR TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS** won the 52nd Annual Winston P. Wilson Championship in Little Rock, Arkansas, April 29-May 5, 2023.

The National Guard annually hosts the competition to promote marksmanship training. Guard members test their marksmanship skills and weapon systems in a battle-focused environment.

“Marksmanship is the quintessential skill of a Soldier,” said **COL Kevin Crawford**, 176th Engineer Brigade Commander. “Having Soldiers of this caliber are a force multiplier to having trained, mission-ready forces. The outcome was fantastic, allowing their world-class performance to take the competition.”

This year’s competition featured 57 four-person teams representing 43 states and territories.

The Texas Army National Guard team, known as the Texas Alpha Team, included **SFC Charles Stevener and SFC Stephen Duron**, both from 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment; **ILT Samuel Slichter** of the 386th Engineer Battalion, and **CPT Ross Buntyn** of the 111th Engineer Battalion. During the event CPT Buntyn served as team captain.

Team awards won by Texas Alpha Team included High Overall Team Aggregate and High Overall Rifle Team Aggregate. Individual awards included 1st Place Overall Novice, 1st Place Rifle Novice, 3rd Place Rifle Novice, and 3rd Place Pistol Novice.

Established by **Maj Gen Winston P. Wilson**, then chief of the National Guard Bureau, the first rifle and pistol championships took place at Camp Robinson in 1971.

In 2007, the competition was revamped to focus on combat survivability and the capability of service members to employ their service weapons effectively. While basic marksmanship is still integral to the competition, combat realism, physical exertion and close individual and team coordination of the participants are now emphasized.

This year, the Texas Alpha Team competed day and night against other teams in 29 marksmanship challenges, using their M4A1 carbine and M17 service weapons. Challenges included individual and team events ranging from close-quarter battle scenarios to long-distance marksmanship. Teams navigated strong winds, harsh sunlight, exhaustion, and various shooting formats. ★



PICTURED IS THE TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TEAM, known as the Texas Alpha Team: (L-R) **SFC Charles Stevener** and **SFC Stephen Duron**, both from 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry Regiment; **CPT Ross Buntyn** of the 111th Engineer Battalion and **ILT Samuel Slichter** of the 386th Engineer Battalion.

(Photo by CPT Nadine Wiley De Moura)



# DUTY ★ HONOR ★ TEXAS



**GEORGETOWN**

**CW4 JEFF LIGHTSEY**, Commander and Bandmaster directs the 36th Infantry Division "Lone Star Band" during a concert. For the 16th consecutive year, the 36th Infantry Division Lone Star Band performed a Memorial Day concert at the Veterans Memorial Plaza in Sun City, Texas, in Georgetown. Follow the band on Facebook for other concert dates.



**AUSTIN**

**NEWLY PROMOTED SFC ANNE MARIE OCASIO** of the Texas State Guard renders a salute to her daughter, **CPT Leyda Ocasio-Kenzler**, of the Texas Army National Guard following her pinning as the Commander of the Texas State Guard, as **MG Anthony Woods** look on. (Photo courtesy of the Texas State Guard)



**CZECH REPUBLIC**

**147TH ATTACK WING MEMBERS** pose with Ostrava Airport airfield management June 13, 2023, at Ostrava Airport, Czech Republic. Exercise Air Defender 2023 integrates both U.S. and allied air-power to defend shared values, while leveraging and strengthening vital partnerships to deter aggression around the world. (Photo by 1st Lt Daniel Martinez)



**COLLEGE STATION**

**GUARDSMEN FROM 3RD AND 4TH BATTALIONS**, 2nd Brigade, Texas State Guard, navigate the Field Reaction Course at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, May 20, 2023. This course presents numerous obstacles where troops have to move supplies and evacuate simulated casualties with the limited equipment on hand, relying on their creative problem solving in small groups to overcome challenges. (Photos by WO1 Gregory Illich)



**KUWAIT**

**36TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE**, Task Force Mustang, Task Force Rough Rider, Task Force Roosevelt, and Task Force Dark Horse command team members with **MG Matthew W. McFarlane**, Commanding General, CJTF – Operation Inherent Resolve; and **CSM Eric Bohannon**, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, CJTF – Operation Inherent Resolve bid farewell to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, in May, 2023, as they prepare to return to Texas. (Photo courtesy of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade)



**TEXAS BORDER**

**TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS** use drones to prevent, deter and interdict illegal crossings into the United States along the Texas border using different deterrence measures in areas known for criminal activity.





"I join the Texas State Guard because Texas has been good to me and it is quite an honor that I was able to utilize my skills to serve and help my community while giving me an opportunity to develop my personal and professional growth."



I am the Texas State Guard • For the Love of Texas

**#IamTXSG**

**Cheryl Caruthers**

Profession: Registered Respiratory Therapist, specialized in adult critical care at Lydon B Johnson Hospital in Houston  
Texas State Guard: Medical Support

(Below) **TSGT AMANDA NICHOLS AND SRA MAGUT ABEDNEGO** both 136th Airlift Wing Aerospace Medical Technicians assess and apply emergency care for medical grade manikin at U.S. Army Installation Schofield Barracks, May 18, 2023, in Hawaii. The Airmen received half a day of classroom review followed by real-world emergency medical training led by active-duty Army medical training instructors. This training is vital for the 136th Medical Group's next deployment cycle as well as enforcing joint task force operability in a real-world environment.  
*(Photo by SrA Charissa Menken)*



**ROUND ROCK**

**BEFORE A ROUND ROCK EXPRESS BASEBALL GAME** on June 14, 2023, the 36th Infantry Division Commander, **MG Win Burkett** swore in 12 new recruits to the Texas Army National Guard at the Dell Diamond stadium. He was also given the opportunity to throw out the first pitch. *(Photo courtesy of the 36th Infantry Division)*



**HAWAII**



**BASTROP**



**LUBBOCK**

(Left) **SOLDIERS IN THE TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD'S 197TH SPECIAL TROOPS SUPPORT COMPANY SPECIAL OPERATIONS AIRBORNE** conducted its first High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) operation at Camp Swift, near Bastrop, Texas, June 27, 2023. Soldiers from across the United States came together in the Texas locale to execute multiple HALO jumps as part of a mission validation exercise. Although the Texas Army National Guard has HALO qualified Soldiers, this was the first time the Texas Guard has owned the operation and supplied the parachutes and aircraft. *(Photo by CPT Leyda Ocasio-Kanzler)*

(Above) **COMMAND TEAMS POSE FOR A FINAL PHOTO** together in Texas before mobilizing for deployment to MFO Egypt, Task Force Sinai, as USBATT 72. Held in the center is the 142nd Infantry silver bowl, a major piece of the Battalion's storied history. **Front row L-R: CPT Winston Nget(Kneeling), MAJ Garry Gorrell, MAJ Harris Teague, ISG Jason Stockton(Kneeling). 2nd Row L-R: LTC Jeffrey Dudensing, CPT Luis Mendoza, CPT Blake Hoffpauir, ILT Terry Morris, CPT Reese West, ISG Michael VanDenBoom, ISG Randall Richardson, ISG Bradley Burleson, CSM Rodney Morgan.**





# Legal Update with Trinh Warner

## Divorce and the Military



**AS A RETIREE OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE** and having gone through divorce (twice!) as an active-duty member, there is a lot of “legal stuff” to impart in this article. However, there are much more important considerations that have nothing to do with the law and by being concerned about these non-legal issues, military members going through divorce will act in their own best interests regarding divorce.

**Children.** It is not their fault parents are divorcing and they ought never to feel they have any control over parents' behaviors. They need help to process divorce and the best help comes from therapists who deal specifically with children in divorce. This writer believes many of the ills of current society can be directly attributed to adults who were children of divorce. It is important to focus on the children and do what is best for THEM in divorce, and not what might be best for the parents. Family Court cares about the children before they care about the parents. Parents who act in their children's best interests will find their own best interests are also covered.

**Child support.** Parents who do not think of the children's futures regarding child support are generally not acting in the children's best interests. If not used immediately to care for the children, put the money in a 529 account for the children's college education or place it in a savings account, long-term CD, etc. for the children's future needs. Teenagers are expensive and children of divorce should be able to go to college, buy the prom dress, rent

the tux, take a date to dinner, etc. Child support is for the CHILDREN's best interest.

**Marital Property.** In the State of Texas, the default position is all property acquired after the marriage date is marital property and all property acquired before marriage is separate property, subject to liabilities that may exist with the property. There are some exceptions (inheritance, pre- and post-nuptial agreements, fault in divorce, etc.), but generally, the court will liquidate and divide the property in half, after the liabilities are paid. It behooves the marital couple to work out who may keep what property because in most cases, liquidation of marital properties in retirement accounts, pensions, and/or real property, etc. may be more expensive to the marital estate. Don't “cut off your nose to spite your face,” cooperation will save both married people in attorney fees; in tax liability; in preserving property; etc.

O'Connell West supports military members and Veterans in divorce and subsequent cases after divorce. Let us know how we can support you! ★

*Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Trinh Warner is an Attorney in the San Antonio office of O'Connell West, PLLC. If you need a free legal consultation regarding a legal issue, call 512-547-7265.*



# MISSION READY FUTURE DRIVEN



[www.amgeneral.com](http://www.amgeneral.com)





**COL Ross Walker**  
Commander



# UNIT SPOTLIGHT

**Texas Army National Guard  
36th Infantry Division  
56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT)**



**CSM Jeffrey Stewart**  
Command Sergeant Major

**The 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is a modular Brigade of the Texas Army National Guard, headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.**



**WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS** with over 280,000 followers they don't normally think of National Guardsmen. Texas Army National Guard **Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eugene Hunyadi** is a targeting officer for the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and 36th Infantry Division. But he is also a local celebrity within the unit and across the force, for making viral videos about his service in the Texas Military Department and the military. Before he started making videos, he had a blog where he talked about everything fitness related as well as his weight loss journey of losing 130 pounds to rejoin the military.

In the past few years, the military has updated guidance on the use of social media for service members. The updated guidance can be found in ALARACT 073/2022. "I've been asked by several Soldiers 'what would happen if I was told by the brigade commander or somebody else that I can't post videos on one of my pages anymore?' And my answer to them is, you know, I wouldn't make videos on that platform anymore," Hunyadi said. "I'm always going to follow the rules, regulations and directives that we're given, and I do think that the military should make sure that what we're doing is safe and right."

"It's like when you hand a private a rifle, it's a dangerous weapon if it's not handled properly," Hunyadi said. "If they don't have the right training, they can hurt themselves or hurt others. When you have the proper training, the proper guidance and you've been shown how to use that weapon properly, it is a tool that you can use to accomplish your commander's mission. I think that the same is true of social media if we receive good guidance, if we receive good information, it is possible that it can be a tool for positive gains in morale, in mentoring, coaching, in teaching and in showing that the military lifestyle, while not easy, is something that's fulfilling and rewarding." (Story by SGT Gauret Stearns, Photo by SSG Terry Rajsoobath)

**COL ROSS WALKER**, incoming Commander of Regional Command-East (RC-E), and **CSM Jeffrey Stewart**, incoming Command Sergeant Major of RC-E, unfurl their brigade colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, June 30, 2023. This ceremony signifies the transfer of authority from the 76th IBCT from Indiana to the 56th IBCT from Texas. KFOR remains fully focused on the daily implementation of its mandate – based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999 – to ensure a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all the people living in Kosovo. (Photo by SGT Dauret Stearns)



## **TF TEXANS FROM TEXAS AND RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD**

conduct freedom of movement direct (FOM-D) training, June 5, 2023, at the Hohenfels Training Center, Germany, in preparation for their deployment to Kosovo. FOM-D training provides Soldiers the skills needed

to clear barriers from roadways and passages during civil unrest, defend themselves from combatants, as well as how to diplomatically speak with local key leaders to quell civil unrest.

(Photo by SSG Terry Rajsoobath)



**COL RITA HOLTON** (center) chats with Dads in the 56th IBCT during their Father's Day celebration of a relaxing evening and dinner.





# EANGUS Legislative Quarterly Summit (LQS) 15-16 November 2023

**Homewood Suites by Hilton Washington D.C.  
Capitol-Navy Yard  
50 M St SE • Washington, DC • 20003**

**THE EANGUS LEGISLATIVE TEAM** has developed a new 4-part information, training, and update Summit program. There will now be four Quarterly Summits that will provide this information to our members. The next in-person LQS is on 15-16 NOV 2023, focusing on three issues and giving all the participants an in-depth look at each issue and white paper. We ask that all participants make as many appointments as possible with their Congressional Members and staff on the 16th of November and brief those topics along with any state issues you may have in your priorities. This is our opportunity to get a jump on legislation going into the 118th Congress. This event will focus on hearing from our Sr. Leaders from NGB, Congressional Staff, other association legislative staff members, and training to aid in the legislative process. This event is how your EANGUS Legislative Committee solidifies our positions and starts the legislative information process in Congress.

If you are interested in participating and need more information please contact Mireya Cruz at [president@ngat.org](mailto:president@ngat.org). ★

*We eagerly anticipate this year's events!*

**Your participation is crucial to the EANGUS Legislative Team.**

## Event Schedule

Oct 17	Cut off to reserve a room at the Homewood Suites
Nov 14	Travel Day, Evening Social
Nov 15	Legislative Quarterly Summit
Nov 16	Hill visits; Congressional Reception
Nov 17	Travel Day



**Late & Onsite Registration still available for \$225 at <https://eangusconference.org>**

**Check out the website for information on additional events that have been added!**

- Fri. Aug 11 Rochester Golf Scramble
- Sat. Aug 12 You Betcha 5K  
Auxiliary's Bubble & Bundts
- Sun. Aug 13 Fitness Challenge Committee  
Shooting Competition
- Tues. Aug 14 Red Cross Blood Drive



## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

in partnership with **PCI** not the big company

Dear EANGUS Members,

More than 90% of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States members we've spoken with in regard to the verification project have made important revisions to their member record. This is the reason I ask you to call 1-866-454-4119 today. It's critical to speak with each EANGUS member.

Up-to-date member information is essential for our organization to serve veterans, their families, and our communities in accordance with the traditions and proud history of EANGUS.

**Please call 1-866-454-4119 (toll-free) to take care of this important matter.**

We are also collecting stories from our members to memorialize the history of their service experience through the years. Please call to verify your data and share your story!

Thank you in advance for your assistance in making this EANGUS project a success. (If you recently verified your member record, thank you for your prompt assistance.)

For more information, please visit <https://eangus.org/oral-history-project/>

Sincerely,

MSgt (Ret) Daniel B. Reilly, USAF  
EANGUS President



# SPOUSES SEMINAR PLANNED FOR NGAUS CONFERENCE

By John Goheen

**NGAUS has added a special breakout session for spouses featuring presentations on family issues to the 145th General Conference & Exhibition agenda, August 18-21 in Reno, Nevada.**

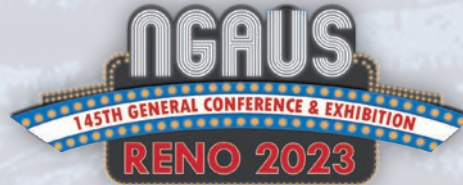
The approximately **one-hour Spouses Seminar** is set for **9:30 a.m. August 20** in the Grade Exposition Hall at the **Silver Legacy Resort Casino**, which is part of The Row complex of hotels in downtown Reno. Most conference attendees will be staying at one of the three hotels at the Row — Circus Circus, El Dorado or the Silver Legacy. The annual **Spouses Luncheon** follows the Spouses Seminar at 11 a.m. across the street at the **Reno Ballroom**.

Kelly Hokanson, the wife of General Daniel R. Hokanson, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Margo Berry, the wife of Maj Gen Ondra Berry, the Adjutant General of Nevada and the association's vice chairman-Air, will host the seminar.

The agenda will focus on the **National Guard's family programs, benefit updates and the PACT Act**, the 2022 law that improves health care access for veterans exposed to toxic substances during military service.

**Purple Resolve** will also be discussed. Begun in the Nevada Guard, the initiative is a **suicide-prevention training and resiliency program** that reinforces the military profession's highest ideals while teaching attendees skills to enhance their performance through resilience, mindfulness and ethical decision-making. A question-and-answer session will conclude the seminar.

"We're happy to add a breakout session focused on spouses and family issues," said Brig Gen (Ret) J. Roy Robinson, the NGAUS president. "General Hokanson brought us the idea, and we're pleased that Mrs. Hokanson and Mrs. Berry are taking a prominent role." ★



**"We're happy to add a breakout session focused on spouses and family issues,"** said Brig Gen (Ret) J. Roy Robinson, the NGAUS president.

**145th General Conference & Exhibition**  
August 18-21 | Reno, Nevada

Register now at:  
<https://ngat.org/ngaus-conference>  
#NGAUS2023

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RENO 2023

Country Music Entertainer Josh Turner to perform

**AMERICA'S NATIONAL GUARD:**  
A Local Force with Global Reach



# STO RETIREES

# CALENDAR

## COL PAUL CERNAUSKAS RETIRES

Deputy Adjutant General – Army, **BG Monie R. Ullis**, presents NGAT President-Elect, **COL Paul Cerniauskas**, with his certificate of retirement from the Texas Army National Guard on May 10, 2023, at a ceremony on Camo Mabry. COL Cerniauskas' official retirement date is May 31, 2023. He closes this chapter with 30 years of military service. Thank you for your Service to our Country! We look forward to what you will accomplish here at NGAT.



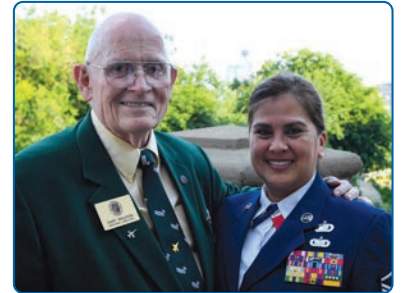
## ENJOYING THE GOOD LIFE

**1SG (Ret) Larry Hoffman** (left), **MG (Ret) Dan Densford** and **CSM (Ret) Johnye Slaughter** (right) enjoy camping, fishing, and BBQ at Dow Reservoir outside of Angleton, Texas. Nothing like getting together with old friends and enjoying life.



## VISITING THE WING

**Col (Ret) Gary Walston**, former commander of the 149th Fighter Wing and former President of NGAT, and **MSgt Martha Vasquez-Medelez**, of the 149th Fighter Wing Operations Group, pose for a photo during an F-16 fighter pilot graduation ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, June 2, 2023. There was a total of 11 pilots that graduated and became the newest F-16 fighter pilots. (Photo by AIC Derek Gutierrez)




## FULLER NAMED VFW DISTRICT 28 COMMANDER

**NGAT Life Member Mitch Fuller** was recently elected by the members of 15 VFW Posts in Texas VFW District 28 to serve as the District Commander for 2023-2024. Taking the sacred oath of office while holding our nation's flag is a VFW tradition for incoming Commanders at all levels and a solemn reminder of the obligation to our past, present, and future. Congratulations!



## VETERANS YOGA PROJECT

Mindful Resilience 

## INHALE THE FUTURE, EXHALE THE PAST

Veterans are eligible for free online or in-person Yoga classes. Find free online or in-person yoga classes with the Veterans Yoga Project (VYP). Yoga is a mind and body practice with origins in ancient Indian philosophy. It combines physical posture, breathing, and meditation techniques, which can improve mental health, sleep, and overall quality of life. This program offers a wide variety of resources for you, your family members, and caregivers to learn about yoga poses, experience guided meditation, or practice mindful movement. Classes are offered daily and cover stretching, breathwork, and stress management from beginning to advanced levels.





## TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT

2200 W. 35th Street, Bldg. 34

Austin, Texas 78703



# NATIONAL GUARD M-DAY PRE-RETIREMENT BRIEFING

**Saturday, 26 August 2023 | 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**Westheimer Armory | 15150 Westheimer Pkwy**

**Houston, TX 77082**

(Sign-in begins at 8:30am)



**Soldiers, Retirees, those in the “Gray Area” and their families, are invited to receive information on Retirement Points Accounting Management (RPAM), Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) options, TRICARE medical/dental benefits, Employment, Education, Veteran Affairs and much more.**

### Eligibility:

- 1** Soldiers who have completed a minimum of 15 qualifying years of service and who are likely to receive a non-regular retirement are encouraged to attend.
- 2** Retired Soldiers who are awaiting receipt of retired pay (Gray Area Retirees).
- 3** Spouses and Families of Soldiers and Retired Soldiers in the above categories are also encouraged to attend.

**REGISTRATION  
SUSPENSE:  
16 August 2023**

Seats are limited.  
To register today via  
email scan this QR code:



**OR REGISTER DIRECTLY AT**  
[ng.tx.txarng.mbx.s-retirement-services@army.mil](mailto:ng.tx.txarng.mbx.s-retirement-services@army.mil)

**For more information please contact Retirement Services (M-Day)**  
**at (512) 782-6855.**



# Senior Protect

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underwritten by 5Star Life Insurance Company



You know what it means to serve and protect. You also know what it means to have others depend on you. Protect your family's financial future with coverage you can count on. AFBA survivor benefits are funded by life insurance underwritten by 5Star Life Insurance Company.

**Eligibility:** All current and former military, federal employees and contractors, government groups, first responders, and spouses between the age of 50-75 are eligible to apply with coverage continuing through age 121.

### Senior Protect coverage features



**24 hour coverage.** No war or terrorism exclusions. Coverage on and off duty with no hazardous, line of duty or occupational restrictions.



**Emergency death benefit.** Once you have coverage for two years, up to \$15,000 of the total death benefit is released as an Emergency Death Benefit (EDB).\* No emergency death benefit if Terminal Illness rider exercised.



**Terminal illness benefit.** Receive 50% of the death benefit in a lump sum amount in the event of a terminal illness with less than one year of life expectancy (24-months in Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Washington). The money can be spent entirely at your discretion - to pay medical bills, out of pocket expenses, or anything else. The remainder benefit amount is paid to the beneficiary upon death.



**Keep the coverage.** After you retire or separate, you can continue coverage for you and your spouse.

### Non-insurance AFBA member benefit



**Family survivor college scholarship.** Benefit of \$10,000 per year per family, up to a total of \$40,000 towards an undergraduate college degree for the surviving spouse and children in case of death as a result of operations going to, coming from, or at the scene of an incident. (Not available in Virginia)

Guaranteed level death benefit. Your death benefit does not decrease with age. Whatever coverage amount you select, it remains the same until death. Choose the level of coverage that best suits your needs - between \$5,000 and \$30,000 in \$5,000 increments. Rates are based on your current age when you purchase coverage.

\* EDB is released within one business day once all requirements are met. It can be done over the phone without the need to provide a death certificate as long as third-party proof of death can be verified (subject to contestability).

Member death benefits provided by AFBA are underwritten by 5Star Life Insurance Company (a Lincoln, Nebraska company) with an administrative office at 909 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Member death benefits not available in all states and U.S. territories.

Group Policy: LT050197 (Rev), LTCERT2016  
SeniorProtectFlyerGR R0922

### About AFBA

The Armed Forces Benefit Association (AFBA) was established in 1947 to promote the general welfare and economic interests of military families during war and peace. At the time, service members could not purchase life insurance that would pay a benefit if the member was killed in a war zone. Today, we serve over 535,000 members in the armed forces, government employees and contractors, law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel.

Since 1947, we have paid over \$2 billion of survivor benefits to the families of our members.

Survivor benefits are funded by life insurance underwritten by 5Star Life Insurance Company.

**Learn more by contacting NGAT at 512-454-7300 or email us at [insurance@ngat.org](mailto:insurance@ngat.org).  
[www.ngat.org/insurance](http://www.ngat.org/insurance)**





# 2023-24 NGAT CORPORATE Partners

Thank you to our Corporate Partners who continue to support the National Guard Association of Texas and the Texas Military Forces. Together we strive to make a difference for those who serve in the National Guard, today and in the future.

## PLATINUM



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**SGT (Ret) Adam Rodriguez Jr.**, Life Member #9252, Edna

**1st Lt Felipe "Alex" Sanchez**, 147th Security Forces Squadron, Pearland

**\*\*SGT Travis Sheffield**, HHC 3-278 ACR, Northlake

**1SG (Ret) Bert J. Stutsman**, Life Member #14907, Austin

*\* Had NGAT Life Insurance Policy*

*\*\* Had No-Cost Active Guard Policy of \$1,000*



IF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE PASSING OF A CURRENT OR FORMER TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER, PLEASE NOTIFY US BY PHONE, MAIL OR EMAIL [NGATNEWS@NGAT.ORG](mailto:NGATNEWS@NGAT.ORG).





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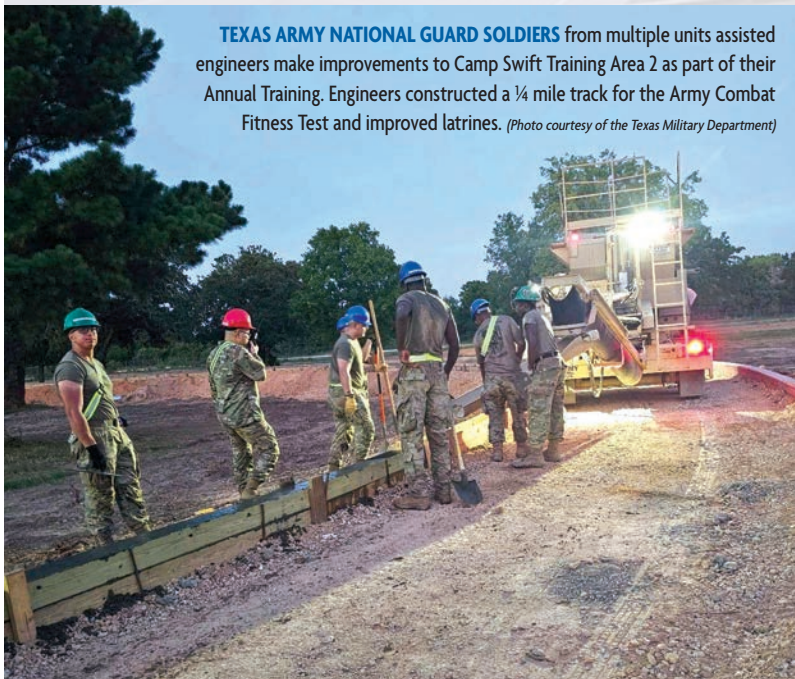
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 3706 Crawford Avenue  
 Austin, Texas 78731-6308

ngat.org

PERIODICAL



**136TH MEDICAL GROUP OPTOMETRIST**, Maj Benjamin Lundeen checks soldiers' eyes in a routine vision test at U.S. Army Health Clinic on Schofield Barracks on May 24, 2023. The autorefractor is another device used to measure the refractive error of the eyes and prescribe lenses. Medical care is vital for airmen and soldiers deploying for gas mask inserts and overall health. *(Photo by SrA Charissa Menken)*



**TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS** from multiple units assisted engineers make improvements to Camp Swift Training Area 2 as part of their Annual Training. Engineers constructed a ¼ mile track for the Army Combat Fitness Test and improved latrines. *(Photo courtesy of the Texas Military Department)*

(Right) **THE COLOR GUARD** of the 2nd Brigade, Texas State Guard, leads the 31st Annual Villages Independence Festival Parade, Houston, Texas, July 4th, 2023. The color guard escorted the lead float representing Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8790. *(Photo courtesy of Jaden Oldaker)*



# NGAT PLANNING CALENDAR

(As of July 31, 2023)

## 2023

13-16	Aug	EANGUS Conference, Rochester, MN
28-21	Aug	NGAUS Conference, Reno, NV
27-28	Aug	NGAT Board of Director Meeting, Austin
1-4	Sep	Labor Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
11	Sep	Patriot Day
9	Oct	Columbus Day (NGAT Office Closed)
12-15	Oct	AFBA Conference, Tempe, AZ
31	Oct	Happy Halloween — Send us your Halloween Photos
1	Nov	Registration for 2024 NGAT Conference opens
10-13	Nov	Veteran's Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
23-24	Nov	Thanksgiving Break (NGAT Office Closed)
13	Dec	National Guard's Birthday
25-29	Dec	Christmas Break (NGAT Office Closed)

## 2024

1	Jan	New Year's Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
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**MEMBERS OF HQ 3-133RD FIELD ARTILLERY** prepare guns on the pads at the range in Fort Sill, OK as they ready the crew for validation of their live fire exercises. *(Photo courtesy of HQ 3-133rd FA)*