



INSIDE

6

Key Leadership Update

10

Conference Event Winners

17

NGATEF Scholarship Winners

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RDS FAST FACTS

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SYSTEMS**

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Binghamton, NY 13903 USA
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CONTENTS

p7



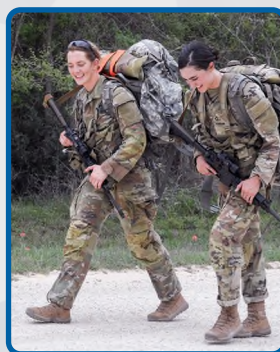
NGAT CONFERENCE RECAP

p12



NGAT CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

p18



BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

4	From the President
5	2024-2025 Executive Committee Outgoing/Incoming NGAT Board of Directors
6	Key Leadership Update 66th Annual NGAT Conference (2025)
7	NGAT Conference Recap
8	NGAT Minuteman Award LTC Spring Humanitarianism Award
9	Committee Reports
10	Conference Event Winners
11	Corporate Sponsors
12-13	NGAT Conference Highlights
14	National Guard Base in Eagle Pass
15	TXMF Hall of Honor Best Sapper Competition
16	Legislative Update
17	NGAT Educational Foundation Scholarship Winners
18	Best Warrior Competition
20	EANGUS Update
21	NGAUS Update
22	TAPS
24	NGAT Planning Calendar

ON THE COVER:

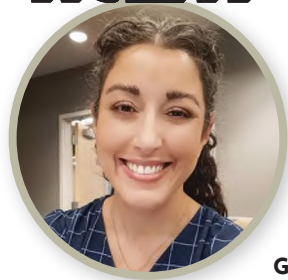
At the NGAT Conference on Mar 23, 2024, at the Kalahari Resort **COL (Ret) Paul Tressa** was named the 2024 NGAT Minuteman recipient for his more than 43 years of support to the National Guard Association of Texas. *(Photo by Chris Evans)*

Follow us on

FROM THE PRESIDENT



To Our Members,



We made it through Conference and wasn't it AMAZING? I hope that those of you who were able to attend in person saw firsthand the changes that our association is undergoing. For those of you that we missed seeing in person this year, it is my hope that you are making plans now to join us in **Houston at the Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria on March 27-30, 2025.** Please know that for

the board of directors and me, this success doesn't mean the end. Our foot is firmly on the accelerator, and we are going full throttle.

Work is underway legislatively. Our Resolution Committee is hard at work on converting your approved resolutions into white papers to hand to our Government Affairs committee. They are also working with our lobbyist to filter through all your suggestions for future resolution consideration later this year and leading into our next conference. If you have any more ideas that have come to mind that you would like considered, please email us at resolutions@ngat.org. The Government Affairs Committee now has what YOU want, and as such we will be focusing our efforts on that front.

None of our efforts could have been possible without you, our members. As in anything there is STENGTH in numbers. Therefore, we are vigorously attacking our membership efforts and continuing with our membership drive. It is vitally important that we improve our numbers both within NGAT and nationally with NGAUS and EANGUS. We have made huge strides so far but there is still a long way to go. The board is confident that we can

get there but the effort will take us all. Please go to our website www.ngat.org and look at the tools provided for you to host your own drive at your respective workplaces. Let us know how we can help in your efforts. Together we can come up with creative ways to promote the organization and improve our numbers for the betterment of our soldiers and airmen. Let's do this TOGETHER.

I want to take a moment to thank our NGAT staff. They are our behind-the-scenes workers and do a phenomenal job day in and day out making the wishes of the board and those of our members come to fruition. Not to mention ensuring that our office stays running. What they do is not easy, and our staff is not large. They amaze me every day and I am so proud to work alongside them.

As stated at the beginning we are not hitting the brakes. We are leaning in, and I would love each of you to come along for the ride. Trust in your organization, believe in the changes that can be made, and be a part of that effort.

REVITALIZE NGAT!

Mireya Cruz
NGAT President

SCAN HERE TO UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Have you moved, changed email address or phone numbers?
Have you been promoted, changed units, or retired?

Don't miss out on anything!
Stay connected to NGAT and update your information.



THE 136TH AIRLIFT WING "RUSTY WRENCHES," Texas Air National Guard, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Ft. Worth, is a group of retirees and active reservists that meet the first Saturday in June and the first Saturday in December each year at the Spring Creek BBQ located at 4108 S. Carrier Pkwy, Grand Prairie, Texas. The group has been actively meeting there for over ten years. This meeting is open to commissioned and non-commissioned officers and friends and family of personnel. For more information contact **SMSgt (Ret) Steve Marsden** at sjmdallas@yahoo.com.



AT THE TEXAS STATE CAPITOL ON APRIL 6, 2024, OCS Class #67 conducted a commissioning ceremony. **BG Monie R. Ulis** (far left), former NGAT President and Deputy Adjutant General-Army, stood alongside **SFC Mireya Cruz** (far right), the current NGAT President. Together, they bestowed NGAT Life Membership and other honors on Honor Graduate **2LT Carlos G. Rodriguez** (left) and Distinguished Honor Graduate **2LT Dominique M. Anderson** (right) for their outstanding accomplishments.



2024-25 NGAT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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President



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President-Elect



MAJ Jolene Hinojosa
Vice President



SGM Amanda Roberts
Secretary



COL Andrew Wenzel
Treasurer



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136th MEB



SGM Gerald Lorange
TXARNG Rec & Ret

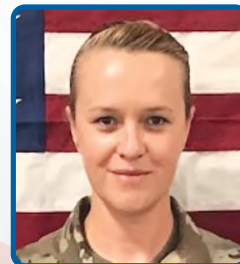
WELCOME TO OUR **INCOMING** NGAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



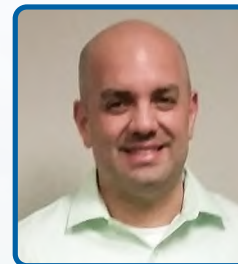
LTC John Robinson
72nd IBCT



Capt Keith Cook
149th Fighter Wing



SFC Michelle Auyer
36th Sustainment Brigade



MAJ Matthew Verdugo
136th MEB



KEY LEADERSHIP Update



BG Robert S. Crockem
Commander
71st Troop Command



Brig Gen Joshlin D. Lewis
Special Assistant to the
Adjutant General
HQ, Texas Air National Guard



COL Matthew D. Calton
Commander
176th Engineer Brigade



COL Brian R. Hildebrand
Commander
36th Division Artillery



CCMSgt Bennie L. Bellvins Jr.
Command Chief Master Sergeant
147th Attack Wing



CSM Howard F. Hewitt
Command Sergeant Major
101st Information Operations Battalion

SAVE THE DATE for the 66th ANNUAL NGAT CONFERENCE

Save the date to attend the 66th Annual NGAT Conference scheduled for March 27-30, 2025, at the Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria. Tucked inside the lively uptown district, The Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria puts you near world-class dining, culture, shopping, and exciting nightlife. Tour the Museum District, get a behind the scenes look at the home of the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park or delight your whole family with a visit to the Houston Zoo.

The Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria is located at 2222 West Loop South, Houston, TX 77027. Our hotel rate will be \$149 per night.

Planning is currently underway for conference events. Watch the NGAT website for updates on scheduled events at: www.ngat.org/ngat-conference/.

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Photos by Chris Evans



RECAP



SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR TONY L. WHITEHEAD, the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Chief, National Guard Bureau speaks at the 65th Annual NGAT Conference general session at the Kalahari Resort in Round Rock, Texas.



CSM (RET) DONNA BALDERSTON (left) a member of the NGAT Board of Directors thanks NGAT Life Members **LTC (RET) John R. Lewis** (right) for his presentation on the importance of a good resume for a job search during the NGAT Conference breakout session.

NGAT LIFE MEMBER COL (RET) DOUG O'CONNELL (right) with O'Connell West, PLLC, briefs attendees on protecting their rights and the rights of other during an investigations and adverse personnel actions during a breakout session at the NGAT Conference.



The 65th Annual NGAT Conference was one of our best yet, with almost 600 in attendance and 68 exhibitors. It was clear that some of our changes are making an impact. We were very fortunate to have Governor Greg Abbott and Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony L. Whitehead, the Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Chief, National Guard Bureau as our guest speakers during the general session.

Despite the increase in price our location was very attractive to our attendees. New this year was a No Host Reception in the Exhibit Hall with our Exhibitors on Friday with complimentary draft beer. This provided a great opportunity for attendees to casually stroll through the exhibit hall and speak with the vendors. We also added a Company Grade Officers/Junior Enlisted Mixer that was held in Redd's Piano Bar at the Kalahari Resort. Despite the low attendance of junior personnel, it did show promise for a future event.

Another change this year was for the Awards Banquet. Instead of the formal uniform dinner we took an idea from the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) and opted for a themed attire banquet. So "Safari Chic" was our theme, and it was a hit as you can see from some of the photos from the conference.

The conference committee has a lot of great ideas for the upcoming conference in 2025. So watch the NGAT website for updates. If you have never, been to a NGAT Conference you just don't know what you are missing.

For more info go to www.ngat.org/ngat-conference/

Addressing a packed crowd at the 65th Annual NGAT Conference held at the Kalahari Resort in Round Rock, Texas, Governor Greg Abbott commended the brave men and women of the Texas National Guard for their service to the state and for the critical work they do to secure the southern border. "To serve your country, to put your life on the line for your fellow man, is to answer a higher calling," said Governor Abbott. "Whether it is a war zone overseas, responding to a natural disaster here at home, or securing our border, each member of the Texas National Guard shows true courage, dedication, and a strong desire to protect their fellow Texan. Our guardsmen have been a critical part of Operation Lone Star since its inception more than three years ago, and I thank the brave men and women of the Texas National Guard for their bravery, dedication, and service to our great state." *(Photo courtesy of the Office of the Governor)*



COL (RET) PAUL TRESSA NAMED NGAT 2024 MINUTEMAN AWARD RECIPIENT

COLONEL (RET) PAUL E. TRESSA JR. was presented the 2024 National Guard Association of Texas (NGAT) Minuteman Award in recognition of his outstanding service to the National Guard Association of Texas and the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) and the Texas Army National Guard.

Colonel Paul E. Tressa, Jr., began his military career as an active-duty U.S. Air Force officer. In 1981 he was appointed in the Texas Army National Guard as a signal officer, serving in increasingly responsible command and staff positions in the 249th Signal Battalion, the 4th Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery, and the 49th Armored Division Aviation Brigade. After commanding the 249th Signal Battalion, he served as G-6 (Communications Officer) for Task Force Texas and later as the Executive Officer of 71st Troop Command and culminating his career as the Commander of the 136th Regional Training Institute (Combat Arms) based in Austin, Texas.

Colonel Tressa has served his community for 31 years as an English teacher, special education teacher, educational diagnostician, assistant principal, principal, and director. He has earned Master of

Education degrees from North Texas State University in both special education and public-school administration. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College and a distinguished graduate of the Command and General Staff College.

COL Tressa served our state and nation in the U.S. Air Force and the Army National Guard for over 30 years. Immediately after joining the Texas Army National Guard in 1981, he became a life member of the NGAT and NGAUS. After retiring from the Army National Guard, COL Tressa served several years as a member of the Texas State Guard.

COL Tressa has long been a vocal advocate for membership in both NGAT and NGAUS. He has encouraged many Soldiers and Airmen to join NGAT and NGAUS after explaining to them the importance their membership plays in securing their current benefits and benefits for the future.

Over the past 30 years COL Tressa has been a dedicated supporter of the NGAT Conference not only by attending but as a volunteer at the 2002 and 2007 NGAT Conferences held in Corpus Christi,

Texas. In 2010 he served on the Texas NGAUS Committee that provided support for the NGAUS Conference held in Austin, Texas. He has attended 42 NGAT Conferences and has never been afraid to pitch in if needed.

COL Tressa's support of NGAT at the national level has been outstanding. He has served as a NGAT delegate at the NGAUS Conference for over the past 30 years, only missing a few conferences. For many years he represented NGAT at the NGAUS resolutions committee meetings for Army issues to ensure the interests of the Texas Army National Guard were being considered at the national level.

COL Tressa's distinguished service to the Texas Military Forces and the National Guard Association of Texas uniquely qualifies him for the NGAT Minuteman Award. ★



LTC JAMES A. SPRING HUMANITARIANISM AWARD PRESENTED TO SSGT CODY FOSTER

The LTC James A. Spring Humanitarianism Award acknowledges acts of heroism and extreme humanitarianism related to saving or attempting to save lives. LTC James A. Spring, a distinguished 49th Armored Division Medical Battalion Commander in the mid-1970s, lends his name to this prestigious award.

On the evening of November 18, 2022, during a Texas state activation in support of Operation Lone Star, Staff Sergeant Cody J. Foster observed a mother carrying her 3-year-old child across a vast mudflat in the Rio Grande River. As she crossed from the Mexico side of the border, her shoes became stuck in the thick mud. Despite her struggles, she continued, sustaining major injuries and bleeding from her feet. Both the mother and child eventually reached the U.S. side of the border, where Cody was stationed. They were severely malnourished and dehydrated from their arduous journey.



Without hesitation, Cody assessed their condition and applied his Self-Aid Buddy Care training to provide immediate assistance. He continued to support them, coordinating transportation and ensuring they received professional medical care. Cody exemplified the Air Force Core Value of 'Service Before Self,' willingly risking his own life to save others. His heroic actions prevented what could have been a tragic loss of life.

Cody's fortitude and swift response during this crisis demonstrate his suitability for leadership within the Air National Guard, making him an invaluable asset to any organization. Staff Sergeant Cody Foster serves with the 136th Airlift Wing, Texas Air National Guard, in Fort Worth, Texas, and hails from Lubbock, Texas. ★

FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

by Committee Chair
LTC (Ret) Marvin Harris



In November of 2023, the NGAT Board of Directors hired a consultant team to assess the NGAT properties located at 3706 Crawford Street and 3704 Crawford Street in Austin. The properties are the NGAT office building and the bridal shop that NGAT leases out. The consulting team will provide the NGAT board a detailed report outlining the findings and analysis of the real estate holdings, an engineering overview, initial architectural schematic, and a presentation of findings and recommendations. The final analysis report will be presented to the board at the April NGAT board meeting and will include options that the board can decide on how to move forward with the properties. ★

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

by Committee Chair
SMSgt Angela Matthews



Membership in NGAT has increased by 414 since our last conference due to our Board of Directors membership drive initiatives. But we still need your help as members to tell our story.

NGAT isn't just an association; it's a living legacy. It's the embodiment of sacrifice, courage, and resilience. We have spent the past year "Revitalizing NGAT" and with your support we can continue to grow. There are so many benefits to joining an organization of this magnitude. Use the membership toolkit on the NGAT website that will help you not only learn more about NGAT but give you talking points when you want to share the great things NGAT is doing for our service members and their families. We ask that each of you continue to encourage your fellow service members to join our great organization.

On the national front we have had some hits and misses. Due to our membership drive that continues our membership in the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) has increased by over 1300 members this past year. These members mainly are from our retired membership base. However, this is sending a firm message to EANGUS that the enlisted members in Texas are ready to make some changes. Unfortunately, on the officer side our membership in the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) has decreased by 50 members since last year. We continue to work on getting this number increased.

Our membership committee will continue our current membership drive and search for new and innovative ways to get our message out to our Soldiers and Airmen both active and retired. ★

RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

by Committee Chair COL (Ret) Paul Cerniauskas



I would like to start by thanking all the unit delegates who attended the Annual Meeting during the NGAT conference in Round Rock at the Kalahari Resort in March. We presented three candidate resolutions to the membership body for consideration, and I am pleased to say that they all passed — they are now NGAT standing resolutions. There are two state level resolutions and one national level resolution.

State Level Resolutions

Extending Federal Soldiers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) to State Active Duty (SAD). This will provide a key benefit to Texas Guardsmen on long-term SAD missions to minimize the financial impact of long-duration SAD missions to Guardsmen and their families.

Providing employee benefits to Guardsmen on long-duration State Active Duty (SAD) missions. This will go a long way to take care of Soldiers and Airmen and their families who serve on SAD missions by allowing access to benefits our Texas state partners routinely have access to; working at parity for our Guardsmen.

National Level Resolutions

Fully funding the C130H/J Large Aircraft Infrared Counter Measure (LAIRCM) system. This is a key protection system against shoulder-launched IR missiles. If passed this will be worked at the national association level.

Our Association has spoken, and this is what we will work towards. The state level resolutions will be handed off to the NGAT Government Affairs committee which will be worked in cooperation with our lobbying efforts to draft into a bill and find a Texas congressional sponsor. The national resolution will be drafted into a National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) resolution and submitted for voting at the NGAUS conference Resolutions Committee in August 2024. We will keep you updated on the progress of those resolutions.

One comment I have heard from several members is not being more informed on which resolutions will be voted on at the conference. I absolutely acknowledge that we can (and will) improve how we socialize the resolutions going into the conference next year; printing resolutions information for the unit delegates' welcome packets, publishing as far in advance in the NGAT magazine, etc.

Also, please know that we have made great improvements on providing status of the resolutions on the NGAT website. Everyone can be more informed on all things resolutions by visiting the website: <https://ngat.org/resolutions/>. On the website, I provide the status of all resolutions — including which will be going to conference for voting. All members are invited to attend the Resolutions Committee (virtual) meetings. I have included those dates and times on that website. Please email resolutions@ngat.org if you want to attend a Resolution Committee meeting and I will provide a MS Teams link for your attendance.

Finally, your input matters! Share your ideas with us to form future resolutions so that we can make them a reality. Soon, we'll have an online form for submitting future resolution proposals. Until then, send your ideas to resolutions@ngat.org. Thank you for your continued support. ★

2024 NGAT Conference

WINNERS

Photos by
Chris Evans

Golf Tournament Winners

1ST PLACE:

Los Muchacho's Plus 1 (Score 54)

Carlos Cuellar

Col (Ret) Larry Werbiski

COL (Ret) Kurt Leslie

Juan Varela

1st Place
Winners



2ND PLACE:

Fore the Troops (Score 62)

MAJ Chris Mendez

MAJ Matthew Hasenkamp

Corwin Davidson

Miguel Maldonado



3RD PLACE: PBO Chiefs (Score 63)

CW5 Darin Henningsen

CW4 Jason Brushingham

CW3 Tom Chesnutt

WO1 John Welch

Longest Drive: Brian Deasker (321yds)

Closest to the Pin: CSM (Ret) Jeff Meyer (6ft)

The golf tournament raised \$235.00 onsite from mulligan sales.

Fun Run

On Saturday, March 22, 2024, NGAT held it's Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk at Old Settlers Park in Round Rock, TX. Pictured (L-R) are the winners:

SSG Julie Perez – NGAT Board Member;

CSM (Ret) Donna Balderston – 3rd

Place Female Category; MSG Sean

Nichols – 3rd Place Male Category; Sylvia Newby – 2nd Place Female Category; Angela

Mena – 1st Place Female Category; Gabriel Lorange – 2nd Place Male Category; LTC John

Melendez – 1st Place Male Category; and SGM Gerald Lorange – NGAT Vice President.

(Photo by Chris Evans)



Silent Auction

The 20th Annual NGAT Silent Auction was a resounding success, raising an impressive \$3,874 for the Texas National Guard Foundation. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the generous donors who contributed to our auction, as well as to those who enthusiastically purchased items. Your support is invaluable and greatly appreciated!



Big Screen TV Winner

Congratulations to Madison Roberts, daughter of SGM Amanda Roberts who was the winner of the big screen TV from the exhibit hall passport drawing.



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(Photos by Chris Evans)

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Casino



NGAT members enjoy a game of Texas Hold'em during the Casino Night Welcome Party at the Kalahari Resort.

Thank You



NGAT President, **SFC Mireya Cruz** (center) presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Meredith Crawford (left) and Melissa Kirk (right) of the University of Texas at Austin Extended Campus for their Corporate Membership.

Karaoke



At the NGAT Welcome Party many of our NGAT members displayed their hidden musical talents singing Karaoke.

Awards Banquet



The NGAT Awards Banquet had a safari chic theme this year. We asked our members to wear their best safari outfits and as you can see, we were not disappointed.

Wine Tasting



Attendees at the NGAT Wine Tasting enjoyed a wide selection of wines and the many charcuterie items for tasting.

Lowest Membership Number



NGAT President – **SFC Mireya Cruz** (right), recognizes **LTG (Ret) Don O. Daniel**, former Commander of the 49th Armored Division and NGAT Minuteman recipient with a coin for being the person at the conference with the lowest membership number. LTG Daniel's NGAT Life Membership number is 2090.

Cigar Bar



NGAT's Cigar Bar was a huge hit. Members enjoyed the insight provided on different cigar type by cigar aficionado **MAJ Ace Jamieson** (left).

Air Guard



The Air Guard breakout was a huge success. With so many Airmen in attendance we decided to capture the moment with a photo. Say Cheese!

Army Officers



New this year was a successful Texas Army National Guard (TXARNG) O3/O4 Breakout. This networking and collaboration event was facilitated by TXARNG O3/O4 volunteer AGRs aimed to "Develop Our People" by encouraging the sharing of outstanding products and mentorship channels.

Dancing



Members danced the night away to DJ Robflex in their safari chic attire after the NGAT Awards Banquet.



EAGLE PASS TO GET A NATIONAL GUARD BASE

GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT has announced that the state is building an 80-acre base camp in Eagle Pass for the Texas National Guard Soldiers who are deployed for Operation Lone Star. The new facility will house 1,800 Soldiers, with the ability to accommodate an additional 500, who are deployed to respond to open border issues that may arise. The base camp will also feature a 700-seat dining facility, a recreation center, laundry facilities, Wi-Fi access, individual rooms for soldiers starting at 118 square feet, chaplaincy programs, and medical and psychological health facilities. By mid-May the base will be able to hold 300 Soldiers and will add 300 more beds roughly every 30 days until the base is complete.

“Before now, the Texas National Guard had been scattered across this entire region in cramped quarters, away from fellow soldiers and sometimes traveling

long distances to do their job,” Abbott said during a news conference while flanked by a banner that read “Future Home of the Texas Military Department, Forward Operating Base.”

Since launching Operation Lone Star in March 2021, Abbott has sent state troopers and the Texas National Guard to different parts of the state’s 1,200-mile border with Mexico. Governor Abbott, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Texas National Guard continue to work together to secure the border; stop the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and people into Texas; and prevent, detect, and interdict transnational criminal activity between ports of entry. ★



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CCMSgt Marlon K. Nation Inducted into the Texas Military Department Hall of Honor

ON FEB 3, 2024, at the conclusion of the Inaugural Adjutant General Senior Leaders Symposium, **CCMSgt (Ret) Marlon K. Nation** was inducted into the Texas Military Department Hall of Honor for the year 2022. Chief Nation served honorably for more than 40 years in the United States Air Force and the Texas Air National Guard, from September 6, 1977, thru February 9, 2018. During his distinctive career Chief Nation demonstrated the highest level of enlisted leadership, and commitment to the Core values of the United States Air Force and the Texas Military Department. His hard work and dedication enabled him to rise to the office of Wing Command Chief in the 147th Reconnaissance Wing and subsequently in December 2014 he was selected as the 12th Texas Air National Guard State Command Chief. As the State Command Chief, he was charged with advising the Assistant Adjutant General on matters affecting more than 3000 enlisted Airmen statewide. He was a member of the State Air Executive Council and Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for the State Senior Enlisted Advisory Council in these positions he had direct involvement in all enlisted matters of the Texas Air National Guard. He refined and advanced the State Senior Enlisted Promotion regulation which governs the development and implementation of all state enlisted promotions ensuring that the selection process is fair and equitable.

His initial assignment was with the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Bergstrom Air Force Base Texas, where he was promoted early via the Air Force Below-The- Zone promotion program. After completing a later assignment with the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, Kunsan AB South Korea, Chief Nation joined the 147th Fighter Interceptor Group of the Texas Air National Guard. He began as an Aircraft Weapons Technician and was later selected as the Loading Standardization Crew Chief where he was responsible for implementing academic

and hands on training for more than 30 Aircraft Armament Load Crews. He subsequently served as the Section Supervisor. Chief Nation was later selected for a position on the Maintenance Group Staff as the Superintendent of the Aircraft Quality Assurance section. He further demonstrated his leadership abilities when appointed as the 147th Maintenance Operations Flight Chief. Where he managed day to day operations of several aircraft maintenance functions including, Maintenance Analysis, Plans and Scheduling, Maintenance Operations Control and Budgeting. Chief Nation later served as the Chief Enlisted Manager for more than 300 enlisted personnel assigned to the 147th Operations Group. These functions were critical to the mission readiness of all assigned fighter aircraft.

Operationally, Chief Nation assisted or served as the NCOIC for several highly visible aircraft conversions, exercises, transitions, and deployments. Including mission changes from the F-4 Phantom, F-16 Falcon and MQ-1 Predator aircraft. Along with a state activation tour for Hurricane Harvey response, Chief Nation has assisted in planning or deployed all over the world in support of named exercises or operations including, Operations "Maple Flag" (Canada), "Cope Thunder" (Republic of the Philippines), "Coronet Nighthawk" (Republic of Panama) and "Michelle" (State of Israel). He served as the Aircraft Maintenance NCOIC for one of two combat deployments to Balad, AB Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where the 147th set the standard for mission capable aircraft delivery. Chief Nation drafted and implemented guidance for the "Chief Master Sergeant Joseph Briggs Leadership award" that recognized aircraft maintenance members for outstanding service. Always a strong advocate for Professional Military Education (PME), Chief Nation served as the first Commandant for the initial Texas Airman Leadership Seminar held at Camp Mabry, Austin



THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF TEXAS MAJ GEN THOMAS SUELZER presents **CCMSgt (Ret) Marlon K. Nation** with an eagle during his induction ceremony into the Texas Military Department Hall of Honor. (Photo courtesy of the Texas Military Department)

Texas. As a result, Texas Air National Guard Airmen were given an option to fulfill a mandatory PME requirement, in-residence in the State of Texas. Chief Nation earned the John Levitow Leadership Award for outstanding leadership and scholastic qualities while attending the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Academy. He is also a Distinguished Graduate of the United States Air Force Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy. During his career he earned AS., BA., and MA. Degrees as well. In sustained service to his country and community, Chief Nation was selected as a Congressional Intern for the U.S House of Representatives. His federal and state awards include the Air Force Legion of Merit, Texas Superior Service and Operation Iraqi Freedom medals. He is also a recipient of Virtuosi of Houston Freedom award. He currently serves as an Adjunct Professor, of U.S. History at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas. Chief Nation's legacy of positive leadership, influence, selfless service, and professionalism contributes directly to enhancing the image of the Texas Military Forces. ★



COMPETING TO BE THE BEST SAPPER

TWO TEXANS EARNED THE RIGHT to compete for the LTG (Ret) Robert B. Flowers Best Sapper Competition recently held at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Representing the 11th Engineer Battalion was **1LT Copeland Zaunbrecher** and **Cadet Nickalus Johnson**. The competition's concept is to not only determine the next "Best Sapper" team, but to challenge and test the service members' knowledge, physical prowess and mental fortitude. The competition showcases the Army's elite Soldiers in combat engineering military occupation specialties. Out of the 50 competing teams our Texas team completed the course in 28th place. Great job! ★



LEGISLATIVE Update



Eric Knustrom



Chad Cantella

There have been some recent developments regarding our government affairs and legislative outreach efforts that I am happy to share. Earlier this year, the NGAT Board of Directors engaged Eric Knustrom and Chad Cantella from Texas Star Alliance. Their mission? To champion NGAT's interests before the Texas Legislature and state agencies.

As NGAT's trusted consultants, Eric and Chad collaborate closely with the Board of Directors and Committees. Together, they prepare for the 89th Session of the Texas Legislature by identifying critical issues and policies that resonate with NGAT's members.

Our Tools: The NGAT Legislative Priorities Questionnaire

At the recent NGAT Conference, attendees had the opportunity to visit our "Legislative Corner" in the exhibition hall. Eric and Chad encouraged everyone to complete the NGAT Legislative Priorities Questionnaire.

Excitingly, a few lucky NGAT members won prizes—courtesy of Texas Star Alliance—in a drawing from those who participated. Among the prizes were a Yeti cooler and a pair of Stanley Tumblers.

Your Voice Matters: Complete the Questionnaire

We value every NGAT member's opinion and insights. Whether you have specific concerns or ideas, we want to hear from you. Please take a moment to complete the questionnaire using the following link: <https://forms.gle/SdgK5nW69yRLmRZY8>

Thank you for your time and active participation. Stay tuned for updates on our legislative efforts in the near future.

Mireya Cruz, NGAT President



Scan me to take the Survey

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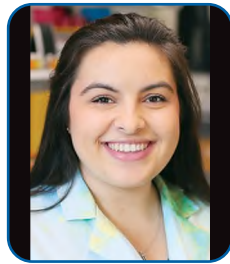
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2024 NGAT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS WINNERS

Congratulations to all our winners!



NGAT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP – \$5,000
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1st Brigade, HHC G9 (PAO)



NGAT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP – \$4,000
HANNAH HAMONTREE
Daughter of LTC (Ret) George Hamontree III



NGAT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP – \$3,000
KALEB LORANCE
Son of SGM Gerald Lorance



NGAT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP – \$2,000
1LT TRUMAN PETTY
136th Regional Training Institute



MG (RET) WILLIAM A. "BILL" HALL & FAMILY LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,500
GABRIEL LORANCE
Son of SGM Gerald Lorance



MG (RET) PATRICK HAMILTON LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,500
MASSIMILIANO RUSSOLILLO
Son of SPC Stefano Russolillo



GLORIA JENELL AND MARLIN E. MOTE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,250
PV2 ISABELLA RAMOS
B Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade (Texas State Guard)



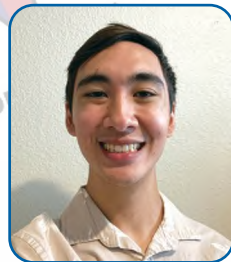
LEN AND JEAN TALLAS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
A1C EDUARDO FIGUEROA
147th Attack Wing



NGAT PAST PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
CAMRYN LESLIE
Daughter of Col (Ret) Kurt Leslie



TXNG RETIREES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
SSG BRANDY LAM-HAMER
386th Engineer Battalion



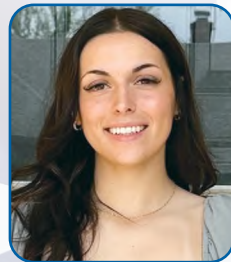
USAA SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
CHRISTOPHER ABRAHAMS
Son of SSgt Jeffery Abrahams



MG (RET) JAMES K. "RED" BROWN LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
ROSELINE NEELEY
Daughter of MAJ Craig Neeley



MG (RET) CHARLES K. ARIS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
GRACE BARROW
Daughter of COL (Ret) Gregory Barrow



MG (RET) WILLIAM WILSON HONORARY SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
SYDNEY BEARDEN
Daughter of CMSgt (Ret) Shawn Bearden



COL (RET) STANLEY A. AND SHERRY MURRELL LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$1,000
ADRIAN BARAJAS
B Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade (Texas State Guard)



136TH MP LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP – \$500
BRIANNA GONZALEZ
Daughter of SGM Jesus Gonzalez

2024 BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

THE ONLY FEMALE COMPETITORS in the 2024 Texas Military Department Best Warrior competition SGT Lauren Christopher (left) and PFC Anna Bueno (right) share a laugh during the tactical road march in Bastrop, Texas.

IN THE HEART OF BASTROP, TEXAS, a symphony of valor and camaraderie unfolded—the Texas Military Department’s Best Warrior Competition (BWC). Warriors from the Texas Army and Air National Guard stood shoulder-to-shoulder with their counterparts from Chilean and Czech Armed Forces. Chilean and Czech Armed Forces have competed in the Texas BWC for several years, strengthening the partnership with Texas Guard members. Both Army and Air National Guard members compete against each other for the title of “Best Warrior” and “Best non-commissioned officer” in the State of Texas.

This year two women, SGT Lauren Christopher – 136th MEB and PFC Anna Bueno – 36th Sustainment Brigade, qualified to represent their respective commands to compete for the Best Warrior title. Though gender is a way to distinguish them from the field, their outlook and determination on the competition itself was their most defining feature.

The Best Warrior Competition is a rigorous competition that tests the tactical and technical expertise of Soldiers and Airmen through scored events, such as an oral knowledge exam board, a tactical road march, obstacle course and physical fitness test, as well as “a mystery event” announced the day of the competition.

The winners will move on to represent Texas at the National Guard Bureau’s Region V Best Warrior Competition in Nebraska, May 12-17. ★



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THE 2024 TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT BEST WARRIORS (L-R) SPC Brian Burch – 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, Army Best Junior Enlisted winner; SSG Kameron Fletcher – 71st TIOG, Army Non-commissioned officer winner; and TSgt Malachi Strong – 147th Attack Wing, Air Non-commissioned officer winner. The owners of Crosshairs Texas in Bastrop, Devon Michalik (far left) and Troy Michalik (far right) donated the pistols that were presented to the Best Warrior winners.



TEXAS MILITARY DEPARTMENT, Chilean and Czech Republic leaders pose for a photo with all the competitors of the 2024 Best Warrior Competition in early March at Camp Swift in Bastrop, Texas.



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53rd Annual EANGUS Conference

Detroit, Michigan | August 16-22, 2024

Get ready to head to the Motor City with the Texas delegation for the 53rd Annual EANGUS Conference that will be held at Huntington Place in Detroit, Michigan. Our host state the National Guard Association of Michigan (NGAM) has worked tirelessly fundraising for this conference, which is enabling them to offer free conference attendance for enlisted service members or enlisted retirees.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

Host State Efforts: The National Guard Association of Michigan (NGAM) has diligently fundraised for this conference, allowing them to provide free attendance to enlisted service members and retirees.

Hotel Accommodations: Our designated hotel is the Marriott at the Renaissance Center, offering a nightly rate of \$145 (plus taxes). All EANGUS attendees will be staying at the same hotel this year. To secure your spot, book a room and pay a \$100 deposit, which will be applied toward your hotel charges. To register, visit this link: <https://ngat.org/eangus-conference/>.

SCHEDULED EVENTS:

FUN RUN: Saturday, August 17

SHOOTING COMPETITION: Held in the exhibit hall August 18-20

WELCOME PARTY: Sunday, August 18

ALL STATES BANQUET & AWARDS: Moved to Monday, August 19

JUNIOR ENLISTED EVENT: Moved to Tuesday, August 20

ALL AREA HOSPITALITY NIGHT: Moved to Wednesday, August 21

GOLF TOURNAMENT: Thursday, August 22



Of course there will be plenty of time for business, professional development, mentoring, networking and special presentations. Plus, you won't want to miss the trade show that features products specifically for service members and their families. Find out more about Detroit at www.visitdetroit.com.



IN FEBRUARY, MEMBERS OF THE NGAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS attended the EANGUS Legislative Workshop in Washington D.C. This was conducted in conjunction with the NGAUS Legislative event where NGAT also had an officer presence. During the workshop they heard from NGB and Congressional leadership. It provided them with the tools to speak with our congressional delegation with confidence and purpose. Team NGAT conducted several legislative visits while in Washington D.C. They discussed matters of importance for our membership and how the Association can work together with our elected officials to better the lives of our Retirees, Soldiers and Airmen. Pictured left to right are **SSG Julie Perez** – NGAT Board Member; **SFC Mireya Cruz** – NGAT President; and **SMSgt Angela Matthews** – NGAT Board Member.



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146th NGAUS CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION PREVIEW



The host city of Detroit, Michigan and the National Guard Association of Michigan (NGAM) will host the 146th NGAUS General Conference & Exhibition, August 23-26, 2024.

NGAM has declared 2024 the “Year of the Company Grade Officer” and is offering **FREE REGISTRATION to all currently serving lieutenants, captains, warrant officer 1s and chief warrant officer 2s and a guest.** Additionally, NGAM will charge only \$50 to currently serving field-grade officers and CW3, CW4, CW5 and a guest. All other attendees will pay the standard \$180. Texas will be staying at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center with a room rate of \$151 per night plus tax.

Attendees will arrive via air at the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW), which is about 25 minutes from downtown. NGAUS will provide transportation to and from the airport on the main travel days, Aug 21, 22 and 27. Delta Air Lines is pleased to offer special discounts for those flying to Detroit for the conference. Book your flight at www.delta.com or call Delta Meeting Network® at 1-800-328-1111, Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (EST) and refer to Meeting Event Code NM3JH.

PLANNED EVENTS:

NGAUS MEMBER GOLF TOURNAMENT: Friday, August 23, 2024
Pine Knob Golf Course, Village of Clarkston, MI

COMPANY GRADE/WARRANT OFFICER/FIELD GRADE MIXERS: Friday, August 23, 2024 | Belle Isle in the Detroit River separating the United States and Canada

The National Guard Association of Michigan will partner with the Virgin Islands National Guard Association to offer a taste of Caribbean Carnival. Events include a short parade featuring Calypso music costumed Moko Jumbies — the Caribbean’s costumed stilt walkers. There will also be a Carnival market and Carnival-style food and drink.

5K URBANATHLON: Saturday, August 24, 2024 | Downtown Detroit

The annual fun run this year is a 5K road race with obstacles, including barrels, hurdles, tires and inflatable barriers.

GOVERNOR’S RECEPTION: Saturday, August 24, 2024
Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, MI

The Henry Ford Museum is one of the area’s top attractions. The collection includes the presidential limousine of John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln’s chair from Ford’s Theatre, the Rosa Parks bus, and many other historical and cultural exhibits.

Retiree Caucus Meeting & Luncheon: Sunday, August 25, 2024
Ovation Yacht, Detroit, MI

A cruise on the Detroit River, which separates the United States and Canada, is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided prior to the business session conducted by NGAUS retiree board members. The vessel has three decks. Each has TV screens and microphones that can be used during the business session.

HOSPITALITY NIGHT: Sunday, August 25, 2024

Various Locations in Greektown and Conference Hotels, Detroit, MI

SPOUSES LUNCHEON: Monday, August 26, 2024 | Detroit Institute of Arts

The event will include lunch, entertainment, and an opportunity to tour the Detroit Institute of Arts, which is one of the nation’s largest art collections, with more than 65,000 works. It includes Vincent van Gogh’s Self-Portrait, the first Van Gogh painting to enter a U.S. museum.

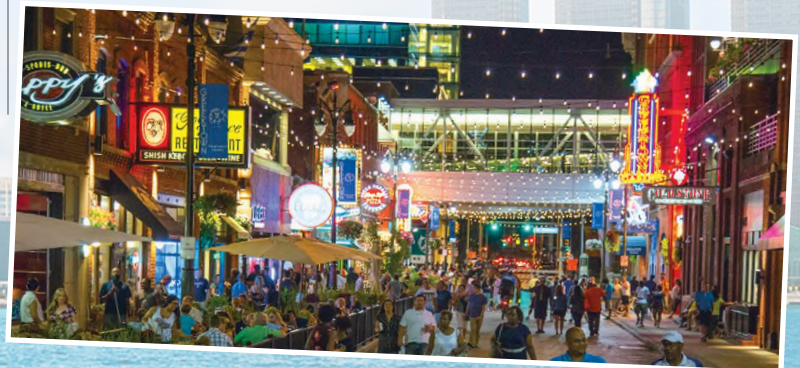
STATES DINNER: Monday, August 26, 2024

Huntington Place Convention Center

The States Dinner and the post-meal entertainment is the final event of the conference. The event is set to begin with a No Host Cocktail reception at 6:30 p.m. The dinner program is scheduled to start at 7:50 p.m. and a special concert is set for 9 p.m. Recommended attire and the concert act will be announced in the weeks ahead.

The conference will also include annual area meetings and caucuses along with a huge tradeshow. As always, key lawmakers and defense leaders along with NGB leadership will be in attendance and will speak at the conference. Additionally, this is a presidential election year, and the association will invite the Democratic and Republican nominees for Commander-in-Chief to speak.

To register go to <https://ngat.org/ngaus-conference/>. Don’t forget your passport, Canada is right across the bridge. Hope to see you there!





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.

MSgt (Ret) Foy E. Armstrong, LM #9899, San Antonio
 CMSgt (Ret) Earl Baker, LM #10351, Pasadena
 CSM (Ret) Oden R. Brooks Jr., LM #2983, Houston
 MSG (Ret) Jody G. Brown, LM #10927, Bridgeport
 CSM (Ret) Donald W. Bunnell, LM #31799, San Angelo
 MSgt (Ret) David Carter, Fort Worth
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 * SPC Kaj Crumby, Co D 1-143rd Inf, Kingsland
 SSgt Dawn Currier-Shaul, Indianapolis, IN
 MSG (Ret) Edward Elsworth, LM #14766, San Antonio
 SGT Michael O. Ford, Dallas
 ** SPC Dawit B. Girma, Co A 3-144 In Bn, Rowlett
 SFC (Ret) Homero A. Gonzales, LM #1486, Corpus Christi
 CMSgt (Ret) Horace E. "Ed" Hobbs, LM #9946, Fair Oaks Ranch, Former Command Chief of the 149th Fighter Wing
 Maj Gen (Ret) Bobby W. Hodges, LM #92, Mansfield, Former 136th Tactical Airlift Wing Commander (1977-1984) and the Deputy Adjutant General-Air for the State of Texas (1984)
 SMSgt (Ret) Timothy S. Hoover, Life Member #25410, Waco
 SSG (Ret) Joe Willie Jackson, LM #24137, Port Arthur
 TSgt (Ret) Kevin B. Jennings, LM #33009, North Richland Hills
 CW2 (Ret) Michael L. Kelinske Sr., LM #4834, West

** SGT Chase McGarity, HHC 1-143rd In Bn, New Braunfels
 MSG (Ret) Stanley A. Melvin, LM #21531, Palestine
 ** SGT Daniel L. Molina, Co C 3-141 In Bn, San Antonio
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CONGRATULATIONS to (L-R) **SPC Luke Ask**, **SPC Caleb Watson** and **SGT Parker Bonneau** for graduating from Air Assault school at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. All are members of 2-142nd Infantry Regiment. The Battalion Executive Officer (far right) **MAJ Gary Gorrell** was on site to pin the badges on the Soldiers. *(Photo courtesy 2/142nd Infantry Regiment)*



IN LATE 2023, the Texas State Guard (TXSG) marked its first-ever Residential Basic Orientation Training (RBOT) class led entirely by a dedicated female cadre, which included Officer-in-Charge **2LT Jill Matte**; Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge **ISG Mary Taylor**; **SSG Kristin Davis**; and **SGT Shuetony Boutte-Prime**. *(Photo by CPL Steven Kahla)*



NGAT PLANNING CALENDAR

(As of April 30, 2024)

2024

24-27	May	Memorial Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
14	Jun	U.S. Army Birthday/Flag Day
19	Jun	Juneteenth (NGAT Office Closed)
4-5	Jul	Independence Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
11-12	Aug	NGAT Board of Directors Meeting, Austin, Texas
17-22	Aug	EANGUS Annual Conference, Detroit, Michigan
23-27	Aug	NGAUS Annual Conference, Detroit, Michigan
30 Aug-2 Sep		Labor Day Observed (NGAT Office Closed)
11	Sep	Patriot Day
14	Oct	Columbus Day (NGAT Office Closed)

NGAT LIFE MEMBER, LTC JOHN W. "SUPER" SUPRYNOWICZ, the Commander of Fort Moore's Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU), a pivotal element under the umbrella of Martin Army Community Hospital (MACH), recently clinched a remarkable achievement by securing the esteemed "Best SRU of the Year" Award and "Best SRU in the entire Army" for FY23 in support of the Army Recovery Care Program, conferred by Brigadier General Raney. This accolade is a testament to the relentless dedication and unwavering commitment of the SRU's Officers, Soldiers, and Staff.



MAJOR DANIEL BOOTHE (center), 531st Band of the Southwest director presents a salute during a recent performance. After seventy years of distinguished service, the 531st Air National Guard Band of the Southwest, 136th Airlift Wing was inactivated on February 3, 2024. For decades, the Band proudly represented the Air National Guard, showcasing excellence and patriotism across the nation. Their primary mission provided musical support for traditional military ceremonies, community outreach, recruiting efforts, and enhancing the morale and esprit de corps of Airmen around the world.