

# *North Dakota Roughrider Association*



*Annual Conference 2025*

*20-21 March | Bismarck*



# SERVING THE BRAVE

At American Military University (AMU), National Guard members have the flexibility to choose how to use their education benefits. And their families do, too.

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**To learn more or  
find a rep visit:  
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\*Zero-out-of-pocket tuition may be possible when the Preferred Military Rate is combined with other forms of financial assistance, such as military TA or federal Pell grants. The Preferred Military Rate supersedes all university grants and special promotions and cannot be combined with other special pricing. Please note that a technology fee applies to master's-level courses.

# Content

## **Editor**

Brett R. Nelson  
NGAND Executive Director

# Feature

- 3 ... TAG & Association Welcome Letters**
- 7 ... North Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association**
- 10 ... Deployed North Dakota Guardsmen**
- 13 ... Future Events / Save the Dates**
- 15 ... Roughrider Conference Agenda**
- 17 ... Spotlight: Governor Kelly Armstrong**
- 19 ... National Guard Association of North Dakota**
- 22 ... Spotlight: Brig Gen Mitchell Johnson**
- 23 ... Outstanding Officers of the Year**
- 30 ... Roughrider Society Scholarship Recipients**





**NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL**  
**P.O. BOX 5511**  
**BISMARCK, ND 58506-5511**

*The Honorable Kelly Armstrong*  
*North Dakota Governor*  
  
*Brigadier General Mitchell R. Johnson*  
*The Adjutant General and*  
*Director of Emergency Services*

26 February 2025

Greetings and Welcome to the 2025 Roughrider Conference!

I want to offer my appreciation to you as we start the 2025 Roughrider Conference. Over the years, I have seen the national impact this organization has made, as well as the direct impact on the development of our Soldiers and Airmen.

Your dedication to this important event reflects your commitment to our association and the Soldiers, Airmen, Civilian Employees, and Families who make us a premier team. The fellowship, networking, and leading of the next generation to further state and national initiatives is what keeps our formations moving forward.

NGAUS and EANGUS represent the interests of the National Guard at the federal level with a focus on modernization, recapitalization, expansion of benefits and benefits parity. They handle federal advocacy, and you handle state advocacy. In some cases, continually educating decision makers in North Dakota is more essential, especially as we approach a legislature governed by term limits.

When we look at the 2025 legislative session, I am already seeing wins. You spoke against House Bill 1315 "Defend the Guard" and it was defeated. We are also looking at the significant increase of critical infrastructure maintenance, funding for new construction, the naming of a Dickinson bridge to honor Spc. Jon Fettig, and a death benefit payment if a Guardsman pays the ultimate sacrifice while serving on State Active Duty. These are important bills working through our legislative session.

The North Dakota National Guard is the operational reserve of the Army and Air Force. We advocate through all channels to receive the resources needed to make our Guard the organization to complete that mission. That is a federal and state fight.

Thank you for supporting our Officer and Enlisted Associations. Please discuss, share, and debate the challenges we can attack in order to make our North Dakota National Guard stronger.

Sincerely,

MITCHELL R. JOHNSON  
Brigadier General, NDNG  
The Adjutant General



Greetings Soldiers, Airmen, Guests and Friends,

Welcome to the 2025 Bismarck and the Roughrider Conference! Your attendance, participation, and desire to serve are the foundation of our efforts at both the state and national levels. I thank each of you as active members, life members, retirees, and guests.

The National Guard Association of North Dakota (NGAND) stands to serve our officers, and their families. Your loyalty and support help all members of the North Dakota National Guard by providing low-cost State Sponsored Life Insurance (SSLI), promoting professional development activities including the National Capitol Summit, giving back through college scholarships, and most importantly, advocating for benefits and equipment that will build a stronger National Guard moving forward.

I would like to extend a special thank you to our tremendous corporate sponsors who generously support our organization and make events like this conference possible. We are very fortunate to have the support of these organizations and their representatives. Take time to stop by each booth during our breaks, discover what they have to offer the National Guard, and most of all, thank them.

We have a new social event this year that we encourage you to participate in at the Laughing Sun Brewery in Bismarck Thursday evening. This is designed to spark social conversation that builds relationships between Soldiers, Airmen, Corporate Sponsors, and guests attending in a more relaxed, fun environment. We are also excited to once again announce that the annual Roughrider Golf Tournament will be held at Hawktree Golf Course in Bismarck on Friday, September 26, 2025.

The 147th NGAUS General Conference will be hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard in Milwaukee over the weekend of August 22nd-25th, 2025. With strong attendance last year in Detroit, we hope to build upon the current momentum by sending an even larger contingent of officers this year. The national conference is truly an eye-opening experience to see how our state and national associations work to support our Soldiers and Airmen.

Throughout the conference, enjoy the company of your fellow Guardsmen, ask questions, consider becoming a life member, and above all, have a great weekend.

*Steve Hoikkala*

Steve Hoikkala  
NGAND Chairman



Dear Family, Friends, Guests, and Members,

On behalf of the North Dakota Enlisted Association, it is my honor to welcome you to Bismarck, ND, for the 2025 North Dakota State Combined Conference. We are excited to come together once again to strengthen our network, share our experiences, and continue our mission of advocating for our Enlisted Service Members and their Families. Your presence here is invaluable, and I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to contribute to an organization that has done so much for our Airmen and Soldiers.

If this is your first conference, welcome! I encourage you to get involved, ask questions, and make your voice heard. For those returning to the RoughRider Conference, welcome back, and thank you for your unwavering support. Every voice matters, and together, we make a difference.

This past year has brought both progress and challenges for EANGUS and our military community. The recent passage of the National Defense Authorization Act has introduced crucial updates, including pay adjustments for enlisted members, expanded Tricare coverage for Guardsmen, and continued discussions on retirement benefits for those who serve in reserve capacities. Additionally, the ongoing global security landscape—including rising tensions in Eastern Europe and the Indo-Pacific—reinforces the critical role of our National Guard and the need to ensure our members are trained, resourced, and cared for. At the state level, we continue to push for increased educational benefits, mental health resources, and support for our dual-status families.

During this conference, I encourage you to engage in discussions that shape the future of our enlisted force. We must work together to identify the priorities that will guide our advocacy efforts and ensure our voices are heard at both the state and national levels. This organization's success has always been built on the power of our unified voice, and it is up to us to carry that legacy forward.

To do so, we need a strong balance of motivated Junior Enlisted, experienced Senior Enlisted leaders, and dedicated Retirees. Our collective efforts will ensure we continue to make meaningful progress for the men and women who wear the uniform today and for those who will follow in our footsteps.

As we conduct business this weekend, take time to connect with one another, share your stories, and help inspire the next generation of leaders in our Association. I hope you enjoy your time in Bismarck and have a productive and meaningful conference!

Respectfully,

CMSgt Shane J. Amundson

NDNGEA President



ESGR was established by the Department of Defense in 1972 as a volunteer agency under the DOD with the vision of “Creating a culture where all American employers support and value the military service of their Guard and Reserve employees.”

**Delton Steele, Chair Emeritus**

**ND ESGR Office: 701-333-2202**



**WILEY X**



# Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States

Executive Officers of EANGUS are elected to two-year terms of office by majority vote of the delegates at the General Conference of the Association.

**President:**

CSM (Ret) Robert Sweeney

**Proud Member Organization of The Military Coalition**

**Vice President:**

CMSgt Josh Baker

**Secretary:**

SFC (Ret) Marsha Adams

**Treasurer:**

MSgt Ashley Brodnax

**Past President:**

MSgt (Ret) Daniel Reilly



# North Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2024-2025

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Chase Akers & Tiffany Peterson

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CSM Eric Binstock (ND State CSM)





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# Deployed North Dakota Guardsmen



## History of the Auxiliary

On August 30, 1973 (at the 2nd EANGUS Conference) 44 ladies representing 16 states met in Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines, Iowa, to discuss the possibility of forming a National Auxiliary to EANGUS. Following much discussion, it was voted to form a National Auxiliary. Temporary officers were elected. The following year was spent working on a constitution and by-laws.



The organization meeting of the EANGUS Auxiliary met October 1, 1974 in the Gull Room of the Biloxi-Sheraton Motel in Biloxi, Mississippi. The acting temporary president (Mary McKamey of Louisiana) conducted the business sessions. The Constitution and By-laws Chairman presented the constitution and by-laws which were accepted. Officers were elected for 1974-1976. Area Directors were elected by their respective areas. Doris Williams of Mississippi was elected the first president.

At the Fourth Annual Conference in Colorado (1977), the membership voted to start a scholarship fund with the proceeds from a raffle. The Scholarship Committee set the requirements that an applicant must be the son, daughter, or spouse of an EANGUS Auxiliary member and must have a letter of endorsement from their state Auxiliary president.

On March 3, 1978, the Executive Board of EANGUS Auxiliary approved an emblem for the Auxiliary. It shows the Minuteman and Colonial Lady standing side by side with the name of the organization encircling them.



“Award presented to an individual who has given back to not only their respective association, but has put in the time and effort to better both organizations, therefore impacting the lives of Guardsmen, both Officer and Enlisted.”

### Recipients

**2015 – SGM (Ret) Roger Johnson –Posthumously**

**2016 – MG (Ret) David Sprynczynatyk**

**2017 – Col Christopher Domitrovich**

**2018 – MSG (Ret) Carroll E. Quam**

**2019 – CPT (Ret) Randy Fuss**

**2020 – Maj Gen (Ret) Michael Haugen**

**2021 – SMSgt (Ret) Chuck Kasin**

**2022 – SFC Chuck Votava**

**2023 – MG Alan Dohrmann**



**The National Guard Association of North Dakota received its fourth consecutive 100% Membership Award on August 24, 2024 at the NGAUS Conference in Detroit, Michigan.**



# EANGUS

## Who We Are

### Committees

There are several types of committees involved in the efforts of **EANGUS**:

**Standing Committees** - Appointed by President and approved by Executive Council with the number of committee members determined by President.

**General and Special Conference Committees** - Credentials and Rules Committee. Not more than five members of the Executive Council. Appointed by President and Approved by Executive Council.

**Other Appointments** - Appointed by President and approved by Executive Council.

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) was formally organized in 1972 with the goal of increasing the voice of enlisted persons in the National Guard. As such, EANGUS is a non-profit organization dedicated to the principles of providing an adequate national defense and promoting the status, welfare, and professionalism of the men and women of the Army and Air National Guard by supporting legislation that provides adequate staffing, pay, benefits, entitlements, equipment, and installations for the National Guard.

Beginning with twenty-three states, EANGUS now represents all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia, and has an association comprised of those who serve the National Guard on national tour. With a constituency base of over 414,000 soldiers and airmen, their families, as well as thousands of retired members, and headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, a stone's throw from Washington DC, EANGUS maintains a full-time staff to represent your interests to the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill.

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) has established the EANGUS "We Care For America" Foundation Inc. (WCFA). WCFA provides Scholarships, Awards, Patriotism Awareness, Veterans Against Drugs Program and the National Guard Soldier and Airmen Emergency Relief Fund.



# Future Events: Save the Date

## 54th Annual EANGUS Conference

Grand Sierra Resort – Reno, Nevada  
August 11-14, 2025



## 5th Annual Roughrider Golf Tournament

Friday, Sept 26, 2025  
Hawktree Golf Course, Bismarck, ND



## Roughrider Conferences

TBD 2026  
West Fargo, ND



## NGAUS Conferences



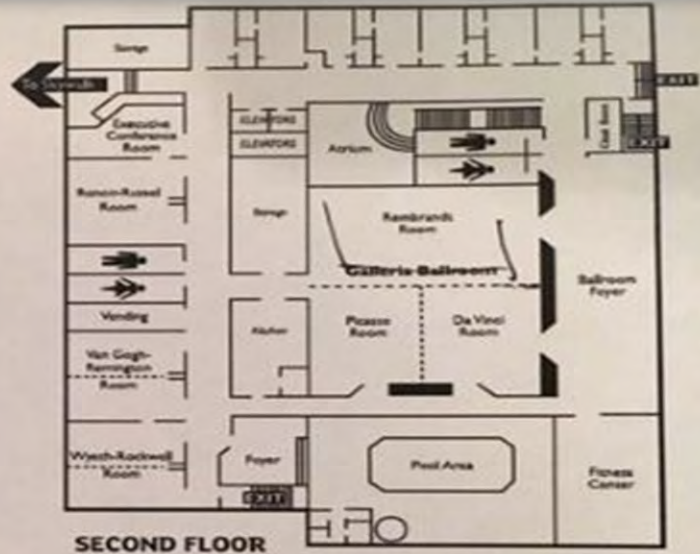
**147th General Conference**  
Aug 22-25, 2025 in Milwaukee  
Hosted by the Wisconsin National Guard

**148th General Conference**  
Aug 28-31, 2026 in Indianapolis  
Hosted by the Indiana National Guard

**149th General Conference**  
Aug 27-30, 2027 in Salt Lake City  
Hosted by the Utah National Guard

**150th General Conference**  
Aug 23-26, 2028 in San Juan  
Hosted by the Puerto Rico National Guard

# Radisson Hotel - Bismarck



Radisson Hotel Bismarck  
6th & Broadway  
Bismarck, ND 58501

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## Team North Dakota represents at the 146<sup>th</sup> NGAUS General Conference

*The North Dakota delegation had a strong showing at the NGAUS Conference in Detroit, Michigan from August 23-26, 2024. We look forward to next year's event to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from August 22-25, 2025, and hope to see you there!*



# 2025 Roughrider Conference Agenda

## Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> – Radisson Hotel & Laughing Sun Brewery

- 1400-1730 Conference Set-Up (Radisson Hotel)
- 1730-1930 Annual Association Meetings (Radisson Hotel)
- 2000-2300 Friends of the Roughrider Association Social (Laughing Sun Brewery)  
- Military Attendees, Retirees, Corporate Partners & Guests

## Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup> – Radisson Hotel

- 0730-0830 Registration / Refreshments
- 0830-0845 Welcome: Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance
- 0845-0900 CODEL Address: Rep. Julie Fedorchak
- 0900-0930 Governor's Address: Gov. Kelly Armstrong
- 0930-0945 Break
- 0945-1015 CODEL Address: Sen. John Hoeven
- 1015-1030 Break
- 1030-1100 NDNG Update: BG Jackie Huber & LTC Jay Sheldon
- 1100-1200 Scholarship & Officer of the Year Presentations / Lunch
- 1200-1230 CODEL Address: Sen. Kevin Cramer
- 1230-1300 Capitol Hill Update: Mr. Russ Read, NGAUS Legislative Affairs Manager
- 1300-1330 Break
- 1330-1530 Professional Development: Paul Krismer, Warrior Leader Training
- 1530-1600 End-of-Day Recap / Feedback



**2026 Roughrider Conference:**  
**Location & Dates TBD**  
**Fargo, North Dakota**







## The Grand Lodge Of North Dakota Welcome To Our Home - Come In And Visit

*North Dakota Masons -  
Good Men Working To Be Better*



## **SUPPORTING YOU, BECAUSE WE ARE YOU**

Since the 1860's, many U.S. Soldiers in North Dakota were Freemasons. They started masonic lodges in Dakota Territory at Fort Burford and Fort Pembina. In 1898, the First Regiment, United States Volunteers of North Dakota embarked for the Philippines. Many of those men were freemasons, who brought the tenants of freemasonry to that country. Lt. Col. Treumann, Major White, Major Fraine, and Lt. Col. Gilbert C. Grafton—whose names we all know—were freemasons there. What they started there, later became a national organization called the National Sojourners.

From Medal of Honor Recipients to Adjutants General, Freemasonry is an integral part of the North Dakota National Guard.

Today, the North Dakota Masonic Foundation is a 501c3 that has supported many charitable organizations. We've supported the North Dakota Military Museum project, Veterans Cemetery in Fargo, Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, George Washington Masonic National Memorial, and many more.

For more information on freemasonry, feel free to go to [beafreemason.org](http://beafreemason.org) or [ndmasons.com](http://ndmasons.com). You can also contact Lt. Daniel Haugen with the Highway Patrol at [dhaugen@nd-masons.com](mailto:dhaugen@nd-masons.com).

**201 14th Ave North Fargo, ND 58102 | (701) 235-8321**

# ***NDNG Commander-in-Chief***

## GOVERNOR KELLY ARMSTRONG

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Kelly Armstrong took office as the 34th governor of North Dakota on Dec. 15, 2024 and brings a background in business, a love for the outdoors and a passion for volunteering and public service to the Governor's Office.

Kelly is a lifelong, devoted North Dakotan and a tireless advocate for making North Dakota a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Kelly was elected to the U.S. House of Representative in 2018, representing North Dakota's at-large congressional district. During his tenure, Armstrong was an advocate for energy independence, agricultural interests and conservative fiscal policies, reflecting the priorities of his largely rural and resource-rich home state.

A staunch supporter of North Dakota's oil and gas industries, Armstrong worked to advance legislation aimed at reducing regulatory burdens and promoting domestic energy production. He has also championed policies to support farmers and ranchers, advocating for fair trade agreements and federal assistance during economic challenges.

In Congress, Armstrong was an active member of the House Judiciary Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Prior to his congressional career, Kelly served in the North Dakota Senate from 2012 to 2019 representing District 36. He spearheaded legislation to reform DUI laws and pass a \$2 billion statewide investment into our infrastructure. Kelly was elected Chairman of the North Dakota Republican Party in 2015 and led the party to landslide victories for President Donald Trump, Gov. Doug Burgum, and ND Legislative Majorities. His legal background as an attorney has influenced his legislative priorities and contributions to legal and regulatory debates.

Kelly grew up in Dickinson, he earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota and received his law degree in 2003 from UND as well.

Kelly married his wife Kjersti in 2004 and they have two children, Anna and Eli.



# EANGUS Membership

## Why should you join today?

Your membership dues help EANGUS lobby for the following benefits for you:

- ⦿ **Pay!** We lobby for pay raises to reduce pay equity
- ⦿ **Money!** Hazardous duty pay was increased
- ⦿ **Benefits!** \$300 per weekend for IDT travel
- ⦿ **Education!** New GI Bill with stipends and benefits
- ⦿ **Affordability!** Held TRICARE fees at today's level instead of 350% increase
- ⦿ **Healthcare!** Extended 5-year VA care eligibility
- ⦿ **Retirement!** Retirement points of 130 per year, up from 90
- ⦿ **Earlier Retirement!** Deployment time counts for earlier retirement





***NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF NORTH DAKOTA  
Board of Directors***

**Executive Board**

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| <b>Chair</b>              | <b>CW4 Steve Hoikkala</b>    |
| <b>Chair Elect</b>        | <b>Maj Kris Jacobs</b>       |
| <b>Vice Chair – Air</b>   | <b>CPT Josh Roller</b>       |
| <b>Secretary</b>          | <b>LTC Jay Sheldon</b>       |
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| <b>JFHQ</b>                                       | <b>COL Pat Flanagan / LTC Rachel Berg</b>      |
| <b>141st MEB</b>                                  | <b>CPT Amanda Tang</b>                         |
| <b>142<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Battalion</b>        | <b>CPT Cody Brekken / CPT Eric Moen</b>        |
| <b>164th Engineering Battalion</b>                | <b>MAJ Justin Johnson / CPT Chris Spangler</b> |
| <b>68th Troop Command</b>                         | <b>MAJ Waylon Tomac / MAJ Danduran</b>         |
| <b>1-112th AVN</b>                                | <b>MAJ Josh Yri</b>                            |
| <b>131<sup>st</sup> MP Battallion</b>             | <b>MAJ Justin Huber</b>                        |
| <b>ARNG Med Det</b>                               | <b>CPT Matthew Winters</b>                     |
| <b>164th RTI, Camp Grafton Training Center</b>    | <b>MAJ Brett J. Nelson</b>                     |
| <b>188th Air Defense Artillery</b>                | <b>CPT Bruce Shields</b>                       |
| <b>119th Wing Staff and Air NDHQ</b>              | <b>Lt Col Ed Crary</b>                         |
| <b>119th Operations Group</b>                     | <b>Maj Ryan Bergh</b>                          |
| <b>119th Mission Support Group</b>                | <b>Maj Greg Goodman</b>                        |
| <b>119th Wing Medical Group</b>                   | <b>Maj Samantha Nuenthel</b>                   |
| <b>119th Intel Surveillance &amp; Recon Group</b> | <b>Maj Kimbely Nelson</b>                      |
| <b>Retired Army Guard Officers</b>                | <b>BG (Ret) Anderson / CPT (Ret) Fuss</b>      |
| <b>Retired Air Guard Officer</b>                  | <b>Maj (Ret) Shaun Carlson</b>                 |
| <br>  |  |
| <b>Resolutions - Army</b>                         | <b>LTC Stan Brown</b>                          |
| <b>Resolutions - Air</b>                          | <b>Lt Col Lee Teigen</b>                       |

**NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF NORTH DAKOTA  
PAST CHAIRS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
& PAST CONFERENCE LOCATIONS**

|                |                                 |                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1994-95</b> | <b>Lt Col Terrence Thilmony</b> | <b>Minot</b>            |
| <b>1995-96</b> | <b>LTC Gene Orson</b>           | <b>Mandan</b>           |
| <b>1996-97</b> | <b>Lt Col William Ziegler</b>   | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>1997-98</b> | <b>MAJ (Ret) Michael Starr</b>  | <b>Grand Forks</b>      |
| <b>1998-99</b> | <b>Lt Col Randall Herman</b>    | <b>Minot</b>            |
| <b>1999-00</b> | <b>COL (Ret) Ken Heitkamp</b>   | <b>Jamestown</b>        |
| <b>2000-01</b> | <b>Lt Col Scott Rising</b>      | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2001-02</b> | <b>LTC Jill Thomas</b>          | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2002-03</b> | <b>Lt Col William Hejl</b>      | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2003-04</b> | <b>COL Myron Lepp</b>           | <b>Minot</b>            |
| <b>2004-05</b> | <b>Lt Col Brent Ehrichs</b>     | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2005-06</b> | <b>COL Robert Kilber</b>        | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2006-07</b> | <b>Col Patrick Martin</b>       | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2007-08</b> | <b>MAJ Brian Keller</b>         | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2008-09</b> | <b>MAJ Sean Johnson</b>         | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2009-10</b> | <b>Lt Col Nate Erstad</b>       | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2010-11</b> | <b>MAJ Patrick Flanagan</b>     | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2011-12</b> | <b>Lt Col Greg McDonald</b>     | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2012-13</b> | <b>MAJ Patrick Flanagan</b>     | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2013-14</b> | <b>LTC Jim Loegering</b>        | <b>Fargo</b>            |
| <b>2014-15</b> | <b>LTC Jim Loegering</b>        | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2015-16</b> | <b>MAJ Jason McEvers</b>        | <b>West Fargo</b>       |
| <b>2016-17</b> | <b>CW2 Joshua Simmers</b>       | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2017-18</b> | <b>Capt Roy Thomsen</b>         | <b>West Fargo</b>       |
| <b>2018-19</b> | <b>MAJ Stan Brown</b>           | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2019-20</b> | <b>Maj Lee Teigen</b>           | <b>West Fargo</b>       |
| <b>2020-21</b> | <b>CPT David Stein</b>          | <b>Virtual/Bismarck</b> |
| <b>2021-22</b> | <b>Capt Brett Nelson</b>        | <b>West Fargo</b>       |
| <b>2022-23</b> | <b>LTC Lucas Klettke</b>        | <b>Bismarck</b>         |
| <b>2023-24</b> | <b>Maj Nick Hanson</b>          | <b>West Fargo</b>       |
| <b>2024-25</b> | <b>CW4 Steve Hoikkala</b>       | <b>Bismarck</b>         |

# The National Guard Association of North Dakota State Sponsored Group Life Insurance Program

- **Over \$1,000,000 coverage available\***
- **Members covered in combat**
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- **Most valid claims paid within 24 to 48 hours of receipt of proof of loss**
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- **Coverage does not end and rates DO NOT go up just because you separate from the National Guard**
- **SSLI can be payroll deducted from drill check or AGR payroll**
- **All SSLI group plans cover members while serving in the North Dakota National Guard including deployment**

\*Over \$1,000,000 coverage available through all MIT SSLI plans.

For coverage details including eligibility, benefits, rates, exclusions, limitations and renewal provisions please contact the plan administrator toll free at **800-633-8333**.

National Guard Association of North Dakota State Sponsored Life Insurance is provided under group life insurance policies issued to the Militia Insurance Trust (MIT). The Guardian group life policy and the Uniformed Services Benefit Association (USBA) 10, 15 and 20 year level term life policies are underwritten by New York Life Insurance Company.

Standard & Poor's (AA+), A.M. Best (A++), Moody's (Aaa) and Fitch (AAA) for financial strength.  
Source: Individual Third-Party Ratings Report (as of 11/17/23).

New York Life Insurance Company, 51 Madison Avenue,  
New York, NY 10010 Policy form GMR

5032705

# *The Adjutant General*

## BRIGADIER GENERAL MITCHELL R. JOHNSON

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Brig Gen Mitchell R. Johnson is the North Dakota National Guard Adjutant General and Director of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES) at Bismarck, N.D. The department provides 24/7 emergency communications and resource coordination with more than 50 lead and support agencies, private enterprise, and voluntary organizations to assist local jurisdictions in disaster and emergency response activities. It administers federal disaster recovery program and the Homeland Security Grant Program. NDDDES also manages the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) that serves as a national clearinghouse through which member states may request and provide mutual aid assistance.

Brig Gen Johnson was commissioned in May 1997 through ROTC at Michigan Tech, Houghton, Mich. He was selected for an Air Force Institute of Technology Civilian Institution Program and earned his Master's Degree in 1998. Upon completion of pilot training, General Johnson served in multiple flying assignments in AMC, AETC, and AFSOC during his 12 years on active duty. He has held command at the Wing, Group and Squadron level, and flown tactical aircraft, special

operations attack and remotely piloted aircraft deployments. Prior to his assignment, General Johnson served as the Chief of Staff – Air for Joint Force Headquarters. He is a native of Central Minnesota.

### **EDUCATION**

1997 Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Mich.

1998 Master of Science, Aerospace Engineering, AFIT Civilian Institution, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colo.

2003 Squadron Officer school, Distinguished Graduate, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

2007 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence

2016 Air War College, by correspondence

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

1. June 1997 – June 1998, AFIT Civilian Institution Program, Peterson AFB, Colo.
2. June 1998 – September 1999, Undergraduate Pilot Training, Vance AFB, Okla.
3. September 1999 – January 2002, C-130 Pilot, Chief of Flying Safety, 50 Airlift Squadron, Little Rock AFB, Ark.
4. January 2002 – June 2005, T-37 IP, Flight Commander, Wing SATAF Officer, Vance AFB, Okla.
5. June 2005 – February 2009, AC-130U Aircraft Commander, Chief of Plans, Hurlburt Field, Fla.
6. February 2009 – February 2010, MQ-1 Instructor Pilot, Flight Commander, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
7. February 2010 – November 2011, Operations Officer, 119th Operations Support Squadron, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
8. November 2011 – May 2012, Commander, 177th Airlift Squadron, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
9. May 2012 – October 2014, Commander, 119th Operations Support Squadron, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
10. November 2014 – March 2016, Commander, 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
11. March 2016 – August 2018, Commander, 119th Operations Group, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
12. August 2018 – March 2021, Vice Commander, 119th Wing, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
13. March 2021 – January 2024, Commander, 119th Wing, Hector IAP, Fargo, N.D.
14. February 2024 – April 2024, Deputy Chief of Staff, Air, JFHQ, Fargo, N.D.
15. May 2024 – September 2024, Chief of Staff, Air, JFHQ, Fargo, N.D.
16. September 2024 – Present, The Adjutant General, North Dakota, Bismarck, N.D.



## ***Outstanding Company Grade Officer – Air Capt Kyle Knutson | 177th Intelligence Squadron***

Capt Kyle Knutson serves as the 177th Intelligence Squadron (IS) Assistant Director of Operations, overseeing the daily production of serialized intelligence reports produced by 76 analysts for three USAF Major Commands, four Combatant Commands, and the United States Intelligence Community on behalf of the Air Force Targeting Enterprise. In 2024, Capt Knutson led the stand up of a technical electronic signals intelligence exploitation team consisting of 10 highly skilled Airmen analysts who quickly adapted their communications intelligence backgrounds to discover new and unique signals of interest as part of a high-priority Headquarters Air Force mission. Under his oversight, this mission evolved to include over 20 Airmen analysts from three Air National Guard units and paved the way for new methods of large data transport, exploitation, and operationalization. Capt Knutson also oversaw the research and serialized reporting efforts of 12 members who produced 14 products for the United States Intelligence Community. Furthermore, Kyle prepared the 177 IS for a critical Air Force Cryptologic Office inspection. He assessed requirements, assigned subject matter experts, and coordinated activities across 15 inspectable areas while reviewing 338 checklist items and ensuring 10 visiting inspectors had access to required workstations and critical programs. His contributions directly resulted in the 177 IS receiving a 100% compliance rating during the inspection along with a rarely given "best seen to date" accolade from the inspection team. His actions reflect the core values of the Air Force and have significantly contributed to the success of the 119<sup>th</sup> Wing.



## ***Outstanding Field Grade Officer – Air Lt Col Gregory Ames | 178th Attack Squadron***

Lt Col Gregory Ames serves as the 178th Attack Squadron Director of Operations where he successfully led over 70 members in a constantly evolving and increasingly contested 24/7/365 combat environment. Greg also played a key role in overseeing the largest Continuation Training program in the Air National Guard, facilitating live-fly sorties for six squadrons. Furthermore, he volunteered to work a new combat line rotation on behalf of the Air National Guard Operations Group Council, reducing the mission planning cell burden by half. In 2024, Lt Col Ames led efforts during the 119th Operations Group's successful transition to Satellite Launch and Recovery operations. As the lead instructor, Lt Col Ames ensured mission readiness by personally certifying 15 aircrew members from the Operations Group and two Marine Corps aircrew in satellite-only operations. His unwavering commitment to self-improvement and unit advancement led to Group compliance with the Headquarters Air Force Task Order 18 months ahead of the final operational capability deadline. Greg's proactive approach to terminal operations enhanced remotely piloted aircraft agility and opened new exercise opportunities by eliminating the need to airlift C-band equipment forward. During Exercise PHANTOM HOOLIGAN, his expertise was crucial in executing the first-ever MQ-9 Satellite Launch and Recovery operations at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. As part of this exercise, he validated the MQ-9's fight-to-get-in-theater concept by planning and executing the Group's first oceanic transit from Fargo to Hawaii, while also integrating Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel in maritime domain awareness and search and rescue training missions.





## ***Outstanding Warrant Officer – Army***

### **CW2 Brandon Nelson | HHC 142nd ENGR BN**

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brandon Nelson is currently deployed and assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Engineer Battalion. CW2 Nelson has demonstrated exceptional leadership and technical expertise, particularly during the Southern Border Mission. He has processed 25 damage statements and FLIPLs, saving untold man-hours and reducing administrative burdens, and corrected critical discrepancies in property book management, ensuring accurate accountability of equipment worth over \$730,000. CW2 Nelson has also provided over 50 hours of training to supply sergeants across Task Force Southwest and assisted the 817th with demobilization, preventing potential equipment losses and facilitating a smooth transition. Additionally, CW2 Nelson volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America and works with the American Legion to facilitate community engagement events.



## ***Outstanding Company Grade Officer – Army***

### **CPT Nicholas Kindelspire | HHB 1-188th ADA**

Captain Nicholas Kindelspire serves as the Assistant Operations Officer for the 1-188th ADA, where he continues to make a significant impact as a force multiplier at the staff level. As the Commander of Battery B, 1-188th ADA, he led a historic deployment to the US Central Command region, providing short-range air defense and overseeing the battalion's largest ever asset movement. Under his command, the battery successfully engaged enemy aircraft for the first time in battalion history. CPT Kindelspire's exceptional leadership and bravery earned him numerous awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Action Badge, and the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara Award. He demonstrated unwavering commitment to his soldiers and their families, hosting regular readiness group meetings and providing critical support during the deployment. Beyond his military service, CPT Kindelspire serves as a firefighter, risking his life to protect and serve his community. As a leader, he embodies the values of courage, compassion, and integrity, inspiring others to follow in his footsteps.



## ***Outstanding Field Grade Officer – Army***

### **MAJ Justin Johnson | HHC 164th ENGR BN**

Major Justin Johnson is a dedicated and accomplished officer currently serving as a key member of the 164th Engineer Battalion. With a strong track record of leadership and mentorship, MAJ Johnson has made significant contributions to the unit's success. He has served as the Officer in Charge, Executive Officer, and Commander, providing guidance and support to numerous soldiers and units, including those involved in the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Response Enterprise-Bravo mission. He has also played a critical role in the unit's validation exercises. His efforts have directly impacted the success of the 164th Engineer Battalion, resulting in a successful rating in all assigned Mission Essential Tasks. MAJ Johnson is also committed to community service, serving as the Minot Area Committee representative for the Military Affairs Committee and NGAND unit director. Justin's contributions to the 164th Engineer Battalion and the community are truly valued, and his dedication to leadership, mentorship, and community service has made a lasting impact.

**NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF NORTH DAKOTA  
PAST OFFICERS OF THE YEAR**

**AIR GUARD**

**ARMY GUARD**

\* Starting in 1993 NGAND began Field Grade and Company Grade Award Categories

|      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 1993 | Lt Col Lawrence Woodbury<br>1Lt Ronald Solberg | LTC Eugene Lang<br>CPT Kyle Eid               |
| 1994 | Maj Robert Edlund<br>Capt Scott Rising         | CW4 Ralph Metcalf<br>CPT Leslie Norhre        |
| 1995 | Maj Robert Becklund<br>Capt James Kelly        | MAJ Arnold Strebe<br>CPT David D. Isaak       |
| 1996 | Col Albert Lerberg III<br>2Lt Tad Schauer      | COL Dean Hildebrand<br>CPT Judith Van Voorhis |
| 1997 | Lt Col Wesley Belter<br>1Lt Thomas Beynon      | MAJ David Anderson<br>CPT Giselle Wilz        |
| 1998 | Maj James Maroney<br>1Lt Darrin Anderson       | MAJ Jon Hanson<br>CPT Jeff Nelson             |
| 1999 | Maj Marshall Kjelvik<br>Capt Bradley Derrig    | LTC Robert Kilbur<br>CPT Jackie Huber         |
| 2000 | Lt Col Joan Bentz<br>1Lt Gregory McDonald      | MAJ Michael Hall<br>CPT Davina French         |
| 2001 | Lt Col William Hejl<br>1Lt Craig Borgstrom     | MAJ Shawn Ackre<br>CPT Todd Helbling          |
| 2002 | Maj Stacy Matter<br>Capt Nathan Brenneman      | MAJ Lannie Runck<br>CPT Warren Pauling        |
| 2003 | Lt Col Brent Ehrichs<br>Capt Todd Branden      | MAJ David Isaak<br>CPT Brent Naslund          |
| 2004 | Maj Kent Olson<br>Capt Allen Albright          | MAJ Lee Nordin<br>CPT Benjamin Cleghorn       |
| 2005 | Maj Todd Branden<br>2Lt Jennifer Silbernagel   | MAJ Scott Fontaine<br>CW2 Kathleen Mauch      |
| 2006 | Lt Col Michael Nelson<br>Capt Kyle Bakken      | COL Gordan Leingang<br>CW2 Jay Knopp          |
| 2007 | Maj Gregory McDonald<br>Capt Teresa McDonough  | MAJ David Johnson<br>CW2 Kevin Mehrer         |
| 2008 | Lt Col John Dougherty<br>Capt Ryan Rastedt     | MAJ Robert Fugere<br>CPT Paul Helton          |
| 2009 | Lt Col John Flowers<br>1Lt Bobbette Bengs      | LTC Bradley Bekkedahl<br>CPT Ann Mutzenberger |
| 2010 | Maj Jerrad Krapp<br>Capt Grant Larson          | MAJ James Olson<br>CPT Amber Monette          |
| 2011 | Maj Mitch Johnson<br>1Lt Robert Davidson       | MAJ Russ Wolf<br>CPT Derek Kuntz              |
| 2012 | Maj Matt Kiser<br>Capt Brad Jernberg           | MAJ Mark Topp<br>CPT Matt Voeller             |
| 2013 | Maj Kyle Ness<br>Capt Nathan Lagred            | MAJ Jodee Aubol<br>CPT Lucas Klettke          |
| 2014 | Maj Chad Vorderbruggen<br>Capt Roy Thomsen     | MAJ Robert Bohl<br>CPT Chance Schaffner       |

***NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF NORTH DAKOTA  
PAST OFFICERS OF THE YEAR***

**AIR GUARD**

**ARMY GUARD**

\* Starting in 2015 NGAND added the Warrant Officer Award Category

|      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 2015 | Maj Jackie Nord<br>Capt Gregory Goodman       | MAJ Daniel Murphy<br>CPT Jay Sheldon<br>CW3 Cody Hertz         |
| 2016 | Lt Col Ryan Ayers<br>Capt Jeffrey Hovdenes    | MAJ Steven Bohl<br>CPT Justin Gall<br>CW3 Galen Roness         |
| 2017 | Maj Lee Teigen<br>1st Lt Kali Lettenmaier     | LTC Ralph Romans<br>CPT Robert Meland<br>CW3 Jammy Ryckman     |
| 2018 | Maj Joshua Schochenmaier<br>Capt Daniel Sly   | LTC Patrick Flanagan<br>CPT Kalli Swenson<br>CW3 Kiley Kuntz   |
| 2019 | Maj Robert Davidson<br>Capt Brett Nelson      | MAJ Nicolette Daschendorf<br>CPT John Mazur<br>CW3 Arnold Zins |
| 2020 | Maj Eric Mattson<br>Capt Ryan Bergh           | MAJ Robbie Hertz<br>CPT Annie Gerhardt<br>CW3 Steven Hoikkala  |
| 2021 | Maj Nick Hanson<br>Capt Tim Soderstrom        | MAJ Waylon Tomac<br>CPT Thomas Hansen<br>CW5 Kiel Skager       |
| 2022 | Lt Col Jeff Hovdenes<br>Capt Jesse Moch       | MAJ Lucas Klettke<br>CPT Joseph Terveen<br>W01 Richard Blumler |
| 2023 | Maj Dan Sly<br>Capt Cody Chick                | MAJ Alan Roehrich<br>CPT Connor Kelley<br>CW2 Michael Mahon    |
| 2024 | Maj Kimberly Nelson<br>Capt Mitchell Mazaheri | LTC Benjamin Barille<br>CPT Amanda Tang<br>CW3 Lee Renner      |



# NGAUS

## **Notable NGAUS Accomplishments:**

- Early retirement credit for National Guard and Reserve service members under 12304b orders
- Access to TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) for federal employees who serve in the National Guard beginning in 2030, including dual-status technicians
- 1.3 billion for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA), includes: \$395 million for the Army National Guard; \$395 million for the Air National Guard
- \$1.4 billion for UH-60 Black Hawk “M” model helicopters for the Army- Consistent with FY20 DoD budget, which requested 64 “M” model Black Hawks for the Army National Guard
- \$338 million for 4 C-130J Super Hercules aircraft for the Air National Guard
- \$100 million for the Army National Guard High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) modernization program
- \$75 million for F-16 Viper Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars for the Air National Guard
- \$972.4 million for Joint Light Tactical Vehicles (JLTVs) for the Army- Consistent with FY20 DoD budget, which requested 512 JLTVs for the Army National Guard
- Continued C-130H modernization, includes funding for engine upgrades and propeller replacements
- \$7 million for the National Guard preventative mental health program

## **Meet the Team**

### **MG Francis M. McGinn (Ret.)**

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Legislative Assistant  
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## **NGAUS Officers - Term expires 2026**

### **Chairman:**

**Maj. Gen. Paul Rogers, Michigan**

### **Vice Chair (Army):**

**Maj. Gen. Hal Lamberton, Kentucky**

### **Vice Chair (Air):**

**Maj. Gen. Ondra Berry (Ret.), Nevada**

### **Immediate Past Chair:**

**Maj. Gen. Janson “Durr” Boyles, Mississippi**

### **Secretary:**

**Brig. Gen. Bobbi Doorenbos (Ret.), Arkansas**

### **Treasurer:**

**Brig. Gen. Kenneth Ross (Ret.), Louisiana**



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# ***Roughrider Society Scholarships***

## ***2d Lt Shelly Fink Memorial Scholarship***

Prior to commissioning, 2d Lt Shelly Fink was responsible for 187 accessions into the North Dakota Air National Guard as a recruiter. Beyond just bringing talented, motivated Hooligans, Lt Fink created a job touring process and implemented an education-styled Student Flight model that prepared recruits for Basic Military Training. Her program model, which is still used today, has led to a 99% BMT graduation rate and has been adopted by Wings across the nation.

**Alison Fraase | Minnesota State University Moorhead | \$1500**



## ***Lt Col Brent Ehrichs Memorial Scholarship***

For nearly a decade, Lt Col Brent Ehrichs served as the Executive Director for the National Guard Association of North Dakota prior to turning over his duties in 2012. During his tenure, Lt Col Ehrichs was instrumental in advocating for and putting all North Dakota National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, and Retirees first through his advocacy to the National Guard Association of the United States. For his dedication to both the National Guard Association of North Dakota and the National Guard Association of the United States, Brent was awarded the Meritorious Service Award in 2011.

**Jordan Entzel | University of Mary | \$1500**



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