NGAUS

National Guard Association of the United States

About NGAUS

NGAUS History

A group of Civil War veterans from the North and South gathered in Richmond, Virginia, in 1878, to discuss “matters of practical reform which would make the Militia a more effective instrumentality in our system of National Defense.” They sought unified representation before Congress to increase the value and efficiency of what would become the National Guard.

When they met again in St. Louis, they named their fledgling organization the National Guard Association.

Today, the goals of NGAUS have changed little. The National Guard Association of the United States exists to promote national security and to ensure a strong Army and Air National Guard are part of the Total Force and the nation’s first line of defense.

The first effort of this new organization more than 100 years ago was to reform the Militia Act of 1792, which was woefully out of date. For example, it required each militia man to provide himself with a musket or firelock. Believe it or not, this was not an easy sell.

In fact, it took the mobilization in 1898 for the Spanish-American War to expose the defects of the Militia Act. Maj. Gen. Charles Dick of the Ohio Guard served in the war and later found himself in a position to do something about it.

As senator, Dick fought for secure funding for the Guard, a battle he won with what are known as the Dick Acts of 1903 and 1908, which provided a budget to the Guard of $1 million in 1903 and $2 million in 1908. The laws also required active-component Army officers to train Guard units according to Army doctrine and supply them with weapons. During this time, Dick was also president of NGAUS.

It is little wonder that one of the most important awards now offered by NGAUS is the Charles Dick Medal of Merit awarded to elected officials who show extraordinary support of the Guard.

In 1916, NGAUS efforts helped created the Militia Bureau, now the National Guard Bureau, to administer federal programs established for the Guard. Later, NGAUS helped overturn the requirement that Guardsmen drafted into the Army give up their obligations to the states, essentially removing them from the Guard.

NGAUS was instrumental in making the Guard an Army component. The National Defense Act of 1933 officially named the National Guard of the United States, and each member belonged both to his state's Guard and the federal National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Ellard A. Walsh is the association's most prominent name in the middle of the 20th century and remains a giant in the history of NGAUS. He served two years as president in the 1920s while he was adjutant general of Minnesota, but later agreed to take the reins in 1943, remaining in that role until 1957.

It was Walsh who had the vision of a NGAUS headquarters in the nation's capital city. He rented a small apartment and hired a secretary in 1944. Washington, D.C., has been the association's home ever since, with headquarters in the National Guard Memorial at 1 Massachusetts Avenue NW since 1959, almost in the shadow of the Capitol dome.

An important change to the association was adopted at the NGAUS General Conference in 1946 in Baltimore. Annual dues from individual members would fund the association's efforts.

In 1947, NGAUS began fighting a proposed merger of the Army Guard and Army Reserve into a single federal reserve, winning the battle two years later.

Accomplishment are many during post-World War II era, including a retirement system for reserve-component troops signed into law in 1948 by a former Guardsmen, President Harry S. Truman. Public Law 810 also established death and disability benefits for Guardsmen.

Congress approved the first armory construction bill in 1950 with the federal government providing 75 percent of the cost. Also in 1950, medical care was established for retired Guardsmen and their families.

In the 1960s, re-employment rights and job protection for Guardsmen were clarified and efforts by the Pentagon to reduce Army Guard end-strength were stopped. NGAUS also blocked a proposal to cut Guard and Reserve pay tables to 75 percent of the active-component rate.

During the 70s and 80s, NGAUS efforts resulted bolstered Guard benefits to improve recruiting and retention, expanded exchange privileges, improved group life insurance, and established space-available travel. The late 70s also saw the Air National Guard receiving its first new C-130 transports as a result of congressional "adds."

In 1983, the National Defense Appropriations Act, for the first time, provided dedicated funding for the procurement of miscellaneous equipment in support of Army Guard support units.

In 1985, temporary G.I. Bill funding was provided to any Guardsman working toward a baccalaureate degree or equivalen. The Montgomery G.I. Bill was made permanent in 1987.

Throughout the 90s, as the military was drawing down following the Cold War's end, NGAUS defeated several attempts to reduce force structure.

During the late 90s and into the 21st century, many of NGAUS' efforts were directed at congressional "adds" for equipment, full-time manning, military construction and force sustainment. Retirement points for inactive duty were increased. Special pay, bonuses and benefits, including VA home loans were established, and Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits and commissary privileges were enhanced.

In 2007, the efforts of our association resulted in the reinstatement of the Army National Guard end-strength of 350,000 soldiers. And, after a seven-year campaign, all Guardsmen were granted better access to TRICARE.

In 2008, NGAUS worked with Congress to add a fourth star to the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

In 2008, Congress passed the Post-9/11 GI Bill, with significant improvements to the original GI Bill. In 2011, NGAUS successfully pushed for a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the NGB chief and re-established a three-star vice chief position.

In 2012, the Air Force announced drastic cuts to the Air Guard, including more than 5,000 personnel and 200 aircraft. After months of debate, Congress agreed with NGAUS and halted most of the proposed personnel and aircraft cuts.

The Commission on the Future of the Army was created by Congress in 2015 with the urging of NGAUS following a proposal to remove all attack aviation from the Guard, among other disagreements over Army force structure and equipment. In January 2016, the commission report included 63 recommendations, many of which are favorable for the reserve component, including retention of Apache helicopters in the Guard.

Other notable legislative successes include:

- Historic levels of National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account and military construction funds;
- Robust Personnel and Operations and Maintenance funding to maintain an operational reserve;
- Behavior health support for members of the reserve component during scheduled unit

training assemblies;

- Re-employment rights for Title 32 duty;
- Authority for the VA to provide mental-health care for veterans and their families following deployments;
- Extended TRICARE coverage for “gray-area” retirees
- Doubled from 90 to 180 days the time a reserve-component member is covered under TRICARE Prime prior to mobilization;
- Prohibition on cancellation or modification of avionics modernization program for C-130 aircraft; and
- Prohibition on retirement of A-10s.

The list could go on and on. This history has scarcely touched the true impact of NGAUS on the lives of National Guard members throughout the association’s history.

NGAUS Accomplishments

TOP 10 All-Time NGAUS Victories

1	Guard recognized and funded as reserve of the Army	1903
2	Drill Pay	1916
3	Thwarted attempts to cut or relegate Guard	1915, 1920, 1944, 1948, 1959, 1963, 1974, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014
4	Guard included in plans for separate air force	1944
2	NGB Chief added to the Joint Chiefs of Staff	2011
6	Federal retirement pay	1948
7	Federal funds for armory construction	1950
8	Active Guard and Reserve program	1978
9	Civil-service status for full-time technicians	1968
10	(Tie) Federal education benefits	1984, 2008, 2010, 2017
	Low-cost health care for every Guardsman	2006

2018

NGAUS convinces Congress to add language to the fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that authorizes the service secretaries to adjust the effective date of promotion for National Guard officers who experience undue delays in getting federal recognition of their state promotions.

Another provision requires the Army and the Air Force to report to Congress on how they intend to accelerate the fedrec process. With lawmakers focusing on the issue, average fedrec wait times drop from 293 days in March to 175 days in October.

The association also makes serious headway on aircraft recapitalization. Congress adds C-130J Hercules cargo planes and six new-build AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to the president's budget request for the Guard. The new Apaches are the Guard's first E-models.

Lawmakers for the sixth consecutive year add $100 billion to the budget for recapitalization (nearly new) Humvees. They also provide $421 million each for the Army and Air Guard in the National Guard Equipment and Reserve Equipment Account.

Congress also increases funding for Army Cyber Protection Teams and Army and Air Guard mental health pilot programs.

2017

Bringing the benefits National Guardsmen and Reservists receive under 12304b in line with other mobilization authorities tops the NGAUS priorities for the formulation of the fiscal 2018 defense bills.

Congress created 12304b in fiscal 2012 to provide the services with easy access to the Guard and Reserve, but failed to include education benefits, predeployment and transitional health care, and credit toward early retirement.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 signed by President Donald Trump in August extends the Post-9/11 GI Bill to 12304b. It also eliminates the expiration date on benefits for anyone who left the military after Jan. 1, 2013.

And the fiscal 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provides predeployment and transitional TRICARE health coverage to those on 12304b orders.

In addition, the fiscal 2018 defense budget finalized last month includes dollars beyond the president's budget request for modernization of standard Humvees and Humvee ambulances, UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the Army Guard, and to modernize Air Guard C-130H cargo planes and A-10, F-15 and F-16 fighters.

2016

Among the association's victories is a change in the federal definition of veteran to include all Guard and Reserve retirees. The old definition limited veteran status to those who served more than 179 days on federal active duty for other than training.

Veteran status conveys no new benefits, only the honor of being a veteran in the eyes of the federal government, which is what retired NGAUS members requested. It culminates a six-year effort by the association that failed the previous five due

to a small group of lawmakers who thought the request was about additional benefits.

NGAUS also works with Congress to pass legislation recognizing the remotely pilot aircraft mission as aeronautical under the Federal Aviation Administration definition. The change enables Air Guard RPA units to remain eligible for low- or nocost leases at civilian airports.

In addition, the association convinces lawmakers to nix an Army request to cut Army Guard endstrength from 342,000 to 335,000 troops, and to treat deaths on drill weekends the same as those on active duty under the Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP).

2015

NGAUS supports successful efforts in Congress to prohibit the retirement of the A-10, which it believes has no peers in close-air support.

The association joins with other veterans and military service organizations to win congressional passage of the military's Blended Retirement System, which combines the

traditional legacy retirement pension with a defined contribution to service members' 401(k)-style Thrift Savings Plan account. BRS will provide benefits to roughly 85 percent of service members. Only 17 percent of service members benefited from the old 20-year, cliff-vested defined benefit annuity.

2014

The association works with Congress to establish the National Commission on the Future of the Army. Evaluating the Army's controversial plan to transfer all of the Army Guard's AH-64 Apache attack helicopters to the active component is among the commission's assignments.

In addition, lawmakers, at NGAUS urging, remove the requirement that the 90 days of active-duty service associated with the early retirement program be performed in a single fiscal year. However, it only applies to activations beginning in fiscal 2015 or later.

2013

The fiscal 2014 NDAA also includes increased procurement of UH-72 Lakota helicopters, requires a Defense Department report on the Guard's role in Cyber Command and cyber operations, and places limits on cancelling Guard deployments.

2012

Spurred by NGAUS, Congress beats back most the personnel and aircraft cuts the Air Force wanted to take from the Air Guard. And to ensure more transparency and Guard input in the development of future budget requests, lawmakers, at the association's urging, establish the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, which would study the appropriate force-structure mix—active, Guard and Reserve.

At the association's request, the fiscal 2013 NDAA also authorizes the National Guard Bureau chief to provide transition-assistance advisors in each state, restores Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence leave and approves automatic federal recognition of all Guard warrant officers promoted to chief warrant officer 2.

NGAUS also leads the charge against a recommendation by the 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation to cut drill pay in half. The proposal ends up being dead on arrival when it reaches Capitol Hill.

2011

The association overcomes strenuous Pentagon opposition to score one of the Guard's biggest legislative victories in a century—a seat for the NGB chief on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In addition, NGAUS wins congressional approval of re-employment rights for extended Title 32 duty and expands access to health care for Guardsmen in rural areas.

2010

Congress corrects an oversight in the Post-9/11 GI Bill to ensure Guardsmen who perform

homeland security missions in a Title 32 (state) status would be eligible for the new education benefits.

The association also convinces lawmakers to halt an Air Force attempt to reassign Air Guard C-130 cargo aircraft from several states to an active-component training unit. The congressional language requires the secretary of the Air Force to gain the written approval of all involved parties before moving aircraft from one component to another in the future.

2009

Extending the availability of TRICARE medical coverage to gray-area retirees tops several NGAUS accomplishments. Others include an increase from 90 to 180 days the time a Guardsman or Reservist is eligible for TRICARE coverage prior to mobilization.

The association also wins an increase from 60 to 75 percent in the federal share of the Guard Youth Challenge program.

2008

The association wins the largest increase in Army Guard Active Guard and Reserve positions (2,110) in 22 years. NGAUS also convinces Congress to increase controlled grades for the Army and Air Guard and expand Department of Veterans Affairs' health care for rural veterans.

In addition, lawmakers enhance protections against deployment foreclosures and mortgage interest-rate hikes and pass a new GI Bill for recent veterans. The Post-9/11 GI Bill covers tuition, housing and books. It's also the first GI Bill to allow service members to transfer benefits to family members.

Lawmakers, also at NGAUS behest, put the brakes on an Air Force scheme to consolidate aircraft maintenance, which would have cut hundreds of Air Guard positions.

2007

The association convinces Congress to extend to 10 years the time limit for mobilized Guardsmen and Reservists to use their education benefits, and increase from 90 to 130 the amount of points per year that are applicable to a reserve retirement.

Lawmakers also reduce the age some Guardsmen and Reservists are eligible for retirement pay. For every 90 days of active duty, they will receive retirement three months earlier. However, early retirement covers service only from January 2008 forward.

2006

Congress streamlines several different TRICARE programs for part-time Guardsmen and Reservists into TRICARE Reserve Select. For the first time, every traditional Guardsman and Reservist is eligible for low-cost health coverage. The victory culminates a seven-year NGAUS effort to improve the Guard's medical readiness.

The association also leads the successful fight against an Army plan to cut more than 17,000 soldiers from the Army Guard's personnel end-strength.

2005

NGAUS becomes the focal point for opposition to the 2005 Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure recommendations to ground 29 Air Guard flying units. Most of the units survive. The association also helps win more than $1 billion in congressional add-ons. Included are funds for 15 C-17s, eight C-130Js and five KC-130Js.

2004

Congress agrees to permanently provide Guardsmen and Reservists access to TRICARE 90 days prior to mobilization and 180 days after separation. In addition, lawmakers approve a measure that allows the defense secretary to provide states with funds to employ Guardsmen for domestic missions under Title 32 for up to 180 days.

2003

NGAUS convinces Congress to overcome strenuous Pentagon objections and provide the first major expansion of TRICARE coverage to the Guard and Reserve. While only temporary, it provides access to coverage 60 days before mobilization and 180 days after separation. The measure also offers low-cost coverage to part-time Guardsmen and Reservists, who don't have employer-provided coverage.

Lawmakers, at the association's request, make Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loans for Guardsmen and Reservists with six years of service a permanent benefit. It had been temporary since 1992. They also approve unlimited use of commissary stores on military bases and concurrent receiptfor those with disabilities of 50 percent or more.

2002

Lawmakers expand the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act (now called the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act) protections to Guardsmen mobilized under Title 32 for more than 30 days.

In addition, Congress, also at NGAUS urging, authorizes federal agencies to pay their Guard employees' federal health-insurance premiums when activated for 30 or more days, and provides TRICARE Prime to activated Guardsmen without access to a military medical facility.

2001

The association convinces Congress to give disability coverage to Guardsmen injured overnight within normal commuting distance to their homes.

2000

Congress increases the maximum number of retirement points per year from 75 to 90 and extends several special pays, bonuses and benefits, all at NGAUS request.

The association is also among several military and veterans service organizations that convince lawmakers to provide TRICARE for Life eligibility to all Medicare-eligible retirees of the uniformed services and their family members.

1999

At the association's behest, Congress creates a Thrift Savings Plan for the Guard and Reserve, opens the TRICARE Dental Program to family members, and extends VA loans to the Guard and Reserves for eight years.

1998

Congress provides imminent danger pay comparable to the active component.

1996

Lawmakers, at NGAUS request, thwart cuts to Army Guard divisions and a proposal to reduce authorized aircraft from 15 to 12 in the Air Guard's general-purpose flying units. Personnel successes include increases in available retirement points for all Guardsmen and retired credit for time served in the ROTC as part of the simultaneous membership program.

1995

The association leads efforts to defeat Guard military technician cuts under President Bill Clinton's Reinventing Government proposal. Congress directs that force structure dictate any future military technician cuts.

1994

NGAUS turns away an attempt to apply across-theboard civilian cuts to the Guard's full-time force as well as Pentagon proposals to reduce funding for new equipment and personnel benefits.

Congress also authorizes burial of retired Guardsmen and Reservists at any VA cemetery. It also approves the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, which overhauls, clarifies and improves the 1940 veteran's re-employment rights law.

1993

Congress expands the Montgomery GI Bill to include Active Guard and Reserve personnel and to provide benefits for graduate studies.

1992

The association convinces Congress to halt Pentagon plans to cut 48,100 Army Guard troops. Lawmakers also fund a Guard pilot program to work with at-risk youth in 12 states called Youth ChalleNGe, and authorizes a seven-year program to provide VA home loans to Guardsmen and Reservists with six years of service.

1991

Operations Desert Shield/Storm move Congress to authorize several personnel benefits for Guardsmen, including a basic allowance for quarters for single members without dependents, payment of medical special pay at active-duty rates and a variable housing allowance upon mobilization.

1987

NGAUS persuades Congress to make permanent the Montgomery GI Bill.

1986

Lawmakers pass the Montgomery Amendment to protect the Guard's overseas training program.

1984

The Montgomery GI Bill provides, for the first time, federal financial support to Guardsmen going to college. It's named after principal Capitol Hill sponsor, Rep. G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, a retired Mississippi National Guard major general.

1983

Congress directs DoD to test year-round commissary access for the Guard and Reserve.

1982

NGAUS wins passage of civil-service retirement disability pay to Guard technicians separated from their jobs due to a physical inability to maintain drilling membership. Congress also clarifies its intent to have the Guard AGR personnel under state control.

1981

Lawmakers, at the association's request, reject a proposal to cut military retirement pay for federal employees. In addition, the fiscal 1982 defense budget includes, for the first time, a separate congressionally directed account for Army Guard equipment. The National Guard and Reserves Equipment Account will eventually include funds every year for each of the reserve components.

1980

NGAUS helps defeat a proposal to eliminate military leave pay for federal employees and win additional administrative assemblies to compensate for a loss of administrative pay. Congress also doubles to 100,000 the number of Guardsmen and Reservists the president can mobilize without the declaration of a national emergency.

1979

Congress authorizes pay for simultaneous membership in ROTC and the Army Guard.

1978

Lawmakers approve a test of full-time manning in AGR status in addition to military technicians. Other victories include passage of a Survivor Benefit Plan and re-enlistment bonuses.

1976

Congress passes legislation to allow the presidential call-up of 50,000 Guardsmen and Reservists without declaration of a national emergency.

1973-1975

NGAUS focuses on bolstering Guard benefits to improve recruiting and retention in the new all-volunteer force. Among the victories are housing allowances for new Guardsmen under the Reserve Enlists Program, full-time group life insurance coverage, authority to withhold premiums from drill pay for state-sponsored insurance, burial flags and some access to space-available travel.

1968

Congress passes and the president signs the National Guard Technician Act. This closes a 10-year NGAUS effort to bring more than 40,000 Guard fulltime technicians into civil-service status.

1961-1965

The association neutralizes another Pentagon effort to reduce Army Guard personnel end-strength and eliminate four combat divisions. The association also helps defeat a DoD proposal to reduce defense spending by cutting Guard and Reserve pay tables to 75 percent of the active component's.

1960

Public Law 86-632 clarifies re-employment rights and job protection for Guardsmen performing an initial period of active duty for training for up to six months. In addition, NGAUS, with the help of supporters in Congress and the governors, beats back a Pentagon proposal to fold the Army Guard into the Army Reserve.

1959

Lawmakers grant national cemetery burial rights to Guardsmen who die during training, during travel to and from training, or while under treatment for injuries and illnesses contracted while training or traveling.

1956

Public law 845 authorizes female officers in the Guard. Public Law 881 generally increases benefits for survivors of deceased Guardsmen.

1954

Public Law 477 culminates a long fight to obtain official active-duty status for U.S. Property and Fiscal Officers in every state.

1950

Congress approves the first armory-construction bill. It provides federal funds amounting to 75 percent of the cost of new armories on state land and 100 percent if the facility is needed due to federal force-structure changes.

1948

Public Law 810 provides Guardsmen and Reservists their first comprehensive retirement benefits. The action stems from efforts initiated by NGAUS at the 66th General Conference in Baltimore four years earlier.

1944

Maj. Gen. Ellard A. Walsh, the NGAUS president, helps defeat Army and War Department plans to relegate the Guard to a state-only role after World War II with no part in plans for a separate air force. His speeches, articles and letters to major newspapers and magazines expose the effort, undertaken while 18 Guard divisions fight overseas.

1933

A NGAUS-drafted amendment to the National Defense Act streamlines the Guard's transition between state and federal status by creating the National Guard of the United States (NGUS). Guardsmen are now simultaneously members of two separatebut overlapping organizations: their state Guard and NGUS. The same legislation also renames the Militia Bureau the National Guard Bureau.

1920

The National Defense Act stipulates that Guardsmen discharged from active duty will automatically revert to their previous state status, something that didn't occur after World War I.

It also reaffirms, against War Department wishes, the Guard's role as the nation's principal combat reserve.

1916

The National Defense Act guarantees the state militias' status as the Army's primary reserve force. It also mandates use of the term "National Guard." In addition, the act gives the president authority, in the case of war or national emergency, to mobilize the Guard for the duration of the crisis. Drills increase from 24 to 48 each year, and annual training extends from five to 15 days.

Finally, the act authorizes drill pay for the first time, culminating NGAUS lobbying efforts that began in 1910.

1908

Congress enacts the second Dick Act. It removes time and geographic limits to service and specifies that Guardsmen will go to war as units, not replacements. It also creates the Division of Militia Affairs (today the National Guard Bureau) within the War Department. In addition, Congress provides $4 million in appropriations—10 times the amount allotted just a decade earlier.

1903

President Teddy Roosevelt signs the first of two Dick Acts. It replaces the Militia Act of 1792 and transforms all militia units into organized regiments of the National Guard. These units receive more funding and equipment, but in return must conform to federal standard for training and organization as the recognized reserve of the Regular Army. They are named for their architect, Maj. Gen. Charles Dick of Ohio, the NGAUS president and a member of the House of Representatives.

1900

NGAUS convinces Congress to increase total militia appropriations from $400,000 to $1 million annually.

1887

NGAUS efforts bear their initial fruit when Congress doubles total militia appropriations to $400,000. The figure had been $200,000 every year since 1808. But states, private donors (including corporations) and unit members still cover most militia costs.

1879

The fledgling association holds its first convention in St. Louis. Two issues dominate the proceedings: low federal subsidies and the Militia Act of 1792, which hasn't been updated to reflect the growing nation.

1878

Concerned about antiquated federal laws and limited funding, militia leaders from the North and South meet for the first time in Richmond, Virginia, to develop collective solutions to their common problems. One outcome is the establishment of NGAUS.

Compiled from official reference materials available in the library of the National Guard Memorial, the NGAUS headquarters in Washington, D.C.