

**SDNGEA 44<sup>th</sup> STATE CONFERENCE**  
**“The Place To Be In 2003”**  
**Ramkota Hotel Best Western, Rapid City, SD**  
**24-26 April 2003**

The South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association Conference opened at 0800, April 25, 2003. Colors were advanced by the Color Guard, and the body recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Invocation by Sergeant Major Dennis Roy. President Craig Towns welcomed everyone to the 44<sup>th</sup> SDNGEA 44<sup>th</sup> State Conference.

44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference called to order by President Craig Towns.

Honored guest, Mayor Jerry Munson, addressed the group. He felt privileged to have been the mayor of Rapid City. He expressed that it has been his honor to share stages with some of the best leaders of the world, some of who were in the room. He also expressed his pride in the Army and Air National Guard of South Dakota.

Distinguished guest, Mrs. Lois Davis, from the Best Western Ramkota Hotel welcomed the group and offered the hotel services. She also wanted to thank the SDNG for the fantastic job they have done.

Distinguished guest, The Adjutant General MG Michael Gorman, addressed the body. He thanked CSM Lever for being here and being a great supporter of the SDNG and the National Guard nationwide. MG Gorman supported the Officer's and Enlisted Associations explaining the importance of these organizations in lobbying for SDNG issues such as health care (TRICARE) for all National Guard and Reserve members. He addressed the need for caution when passing legislation such as the bill for early retirement. He discussed the five pillars of Readiness: people, training & equipment, organization, structure, and facilities. He complimented the excellent leadership evident in the recent mobilizations, both army and air, and discussed the status of units mobilized. Lastly, MG Gorman conveyed his philosophy for looking at the past, present and future: Past - Respect, Present – readiness, reliability, responsibility, and respect, Future - Relevance. He looks forward to working with each and everyone.

President Craig Towns welcomes MG Gorman on behalf of the SDNGEA as the new Adjutant General for the SDNG.

Distinguished Guest from the National Guard Bureau, Command Sergeant Major A. Frank Lever III, of the Army National Guard addressed the group. He stated that he has been to SD so many times, because it is very possibly the best Army National Guard in this nation. He challenged the guard to welcome our soldiers back as heroes. He addressed some other challenges such as the mobilization process, demobilization process and post demobilization process. He addressed the challenge of health & dental care for the soldiers, as well as the challenge of providing support for the employers who lose their employees due to mobilization. Finally, he addressed the need for transformation and modernization of our military noting that equipment modernization is the

responsibility of *both* the Enlisted and Officer's Associations, because it deals with soldiers and readiness.

Distinguished Guest representing the South Dakota National Guard Museum, COL (Ret) Steve Gomez gave SDNG Museum update. There are many positive changes to museum. President Towns on behalf of the SDNGEA donated \$500 in support of the museum. Report accepted as given.

Treasurer of the SDNG Museum, LTC Vern Erickson, gave the treasurer's report. The goal of the board is to have enough funds in the endowment to sustain the operational function of the museum through interest and return. Recognized recent Life Club donors of \$100: CSM Tom & Rebecca Hafner, MSgt Neil Harris, CSM Roger and MaryLou Niederwerder, and SGM Darald & JoAnn McElroy. Report accepted as given.

Distinguished Guest and, president of the Auxiliary, Mary Williams addressed the group concerning the need for more members. Auxiliary adjourned to start their meeting.

Roll Call of council officers by President Towns with a quorum present.

Audit Committee report was given by Diane Bitner. Books of the SDNGEA were audited on 24 April 2003, and one \$10 discrepancy was found in the computation of an expense voucher. Recommend that the treasurer collect the \$10 from the individual. The committee recommends that all corrections be initialed in the future. Report Accepted as given.

Distinguished Guest representing the NAUGUS Insurance Program, Jim McEwen, gave the insurance report. Last year the insurance to the Officer and Enlisted Association was \$5500. This year the committee voted to pay \$7000, but in order to continue to do this, it is necessary to increase the members participating in the insurance program. Percentages of participation: STARC (-) and attached units – 30.46%, Engineer Group – 12.12%, 109<sup>th</sup> Battalion – 16.53 %, 153<sup>rd</sup> – 12.98%, the brigade is 10.08%, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – 9.87%, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion – 8.67%, Troop Command – 17.67%, Airguard 3.97% of assigned strength. Report accepted as given.

*Conference breaks from 0940 to 1015.*

*President Towns called the meeting back to order and turned podium over to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Ben Lamp (President went to address the Auxiliary Meeting)*

Treasurer's Report was given by Bruce Anderson. Report handed out for review of changes. Bruce Anderson announced his resignation as treasurer. Report accepted as given.  
*1<sup>st</sup> Vice turns meeting back to President Towns.*

Distinguished Guest, President of the Officer's Association, Marlon Thompson, welcomed the group. He addressed the early retirement legislation that didn't pass last year, and noted that this is a good time to bring it forward again. He stressed that it is vital to keep the communications open between the Officer's and Enlisted organizations, so that we don't fight each other in trying

to achieve the same goals. The Officer's Association will vote to match the Enlisted Association's \$10,000 to the Duke Corning Scholarship fund.

Membership report was given by Gary Kafka. We have an increase in membership again this year and stands at 2,797 combined life and annual members. Need system to track of members that retire, so they can be coded in the database. Due to mobilization, we need to step up in collecting dues. Suggestion was presented and noted to make a chart to put in the Echo to reflect percentages of past membership. Report accepted as given.

State Sponsorship Report was given by Bruce Anderson. Due to the mobilizations SDNGEA did not sponsor any soldiers or airmen. First Sergeant Kevin Speirs from Headquarters STARC (-) did sponsor four members: SGT Wayne Garner, SPC Heath Huehl, SGT Vanessa Powles, and SPC Julie Harpe. Report accepted as given.

Distinguished Guest, representing the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, Area 5 Director CSM (Ret) Bob Aiken addressed the body. Area 5 Caucus is 16-17 May in Sioux Falls, and that caucus encompasses nine states. He expressed that it's really an honor to go to these conferences at the national level because SD leads the nation in membership, percentage wise per capita. Past president Delano Kerby, current president Terry Dell and Chairman Area 5 Diane Metcalf have home state conferences to attend and send their regrets.

Junior Enlisted Report was given by Wayne Fokken on behalf of Junior Enlisted Council. Junior Enlisted raised \$2100 to take three junior enlisted officers to the Conference in Niagara Falls. Officers voted in for the year are: Jeremy Doohen – president, David Benda – vice president, Ariel Keating – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice, Eric Young – Treasurer, and Jeff Nelson – Sgt of Arms. Junior enlisted will focus on orientation training and will put together a continuity binder. The Council will motion for a constitutional by-law change to add two members to the Executive Council. Report accepted as given.

Distinguished guests from the Ramkota Hotel Best Western, Jan Gustin, director of sales and Gloria Roseland, director of catering. President Towns turns podium over to Conference chairman Jim Ball to present a "We The People" plaque in appreciation for their hard work on behalf of the SDNGEA. Jan Gustin addressed the group to say thank you to the SDNG and the Association.

Legislative Committee Report was given by Donavon List. The state representative Ron Williamson will introduce legislation next year to provide bonuses to South Dakotans serving in Iraq. The SDNG must continue to contact both our State Legislators and Senators and Representatives in Washington, DC regarding issues that concern the guard. The SD Legislators will listen to the concerns of the SDNG and can be contacted either in person, by e-mail, telephone or through the mail. Report accepted as given.

Announcement by Donavon List that Bill Hollmann, past president, broke his hip about 5-6 weeks ago. This is the first state or national conference that he has ever missed. Another past president, Bob Youngbluth from Mitchell has cancer. Cards will be passed around for everyone to sign. The address will be available if anyone would like to send a personal card.

Memorial Service was conducted by SGM Roy.  
*Conference recessed until 0830 Saturday.*

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*Reconvened Conference at 0830 on April 26, 2003.*

President Towns called the meeting to order 0830, April 26, 2003.

State Command Sergeant Major Birnbaum addressed the body to read memorandum from CSM Roger Niederwerder, 109<sup>th</sup> ENGR BN sending his regrets and expressing gratitude toward the SDNGEA for all it has done.

Time and Place Committee report was given by Wayne Fokken. Watertown is unable to host SDNGEA Conference next year and due to Ops Tempo no city has stepped forward to bid for the conference. Meeting suspended for Executive Council to meet to determine site for 2004. Meeting reconvened at 0845. The following cities have volunteered to host the SDNGEA Conference as follows: Deadwood 2004, Pierre 2005, Spearfish 2006, Yankton/Watertown 2007. Report accepted as given.

Credentials report was given by Gary Kafka. Nine proxy letters were reviewed, five were approved, four were not approved due to lack of signatures. All annual membership calculations and documents were reviewed for accuracy to verify individual unit level voting strength reporting. The final tally of 2807 members is submitted. Report accepted as given.

Position Evaluation Committee report was given by Ben Lamp. All position descriptions were reviewed. It is the finding of the committee that no changes are needed at this time. Report accepted as given.

Ways and Means Committee Report was given by Scott Schmitt. Randy Decker is the replacement for Dean Flage. Insurance and membership are up from last year. Associate membership will be a good source for revenue. Membership information will soon be online. Report accepted as given.

Constitution By Laws was given by Wayne Fokken. There is one Constitution and Bylaw change and this time to include two Junior Enlisted Council members to be voting members on the SDNGEA Executive Council. Report accepted as given.

Resolutions Committee report was given by Randy Decker. There were five resolutions that were discussed by the committee. Copies have been passed out for consideration. Committee recommends pass.

**#200301** – The cost and annual cap n Tri-Care Dental Insurance for the Traditional Guard and Reserve members. Resolution passed.

**#200302** – Allowing AGR's to buy into the Montgomery GI Bill. Discussion. Resolution passed.  
*0907 President turns meeting over to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice.*

**#200303** – Moving the MGIB-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) from Title 10, Chapter 1606 under the oversight of the Armed Services Committee to Title 38, Chapters 30, 32, 34, 35, and 36 under the oversight of the Veterans Committee. Resolution passed.

#200304 – Extend fourteen-year limitation for MGIB benefits for Selected Reserve members. Resolution passed. *0920 1<sup>st</sup> Vice turns meeting back over to President.*

#200305 – Recognition of host units. Resolution passed.  
Report accepted as given.

Young Heros Committee report was given by President Towns. The Young Hero's continues to recognize young people throughout the state of SD who have faced difficulties either health or accident wise. President Towns addressed the need for increased participation in the program on all levels. Only three medals were awarded last year and there are 100+ medals to give away. If you have somebody to recognize for their courage, please submit their information to Chief Towns. (605) 988-5719. Report accepted as given.

Athletic Committee Report was given by Ken Shoultz. The athletic tournaments are as follows:  
Softball Tournament – MSG Blue, HHC 153d En BN to be held 13 Jul 03 Iroquois, SD  
Motorcycle Rally – SSG Randy Decker, 1085<sup>th</sup> MED CO  
Snowmobile Rally – CW4 (Ret) Preston Fischer, 740<sup>th</sup> TC  
Pool Tournament – SSG Al Osborne, 1742<sup>nd</sup> TC  
ATV Rally - MSG Moore, State Medical CMD, HQs STARC  
Report accepted as given.

Publications report was given by Kim Chase. The spring edition of the Enlisted ECHO was mailed to members on 15 March 2003. The cost for the 32-page summer edition was \$2,123.46. Remember the ECHO magazine is the voice of our Association and your support is needed by sending in articles, pictures and patronizing the advertisers. If you know any local businesses that might be interested in running an ad in an upcoming issue of the ECHO, please contact the editor. She will forward their name to the ad sales department at Tri-State. Deadline to submit materials for the upcoming ECHO issue is June 15, 2003. Report accepted as given.

*0930 President turned podium over to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice.*

Call for President's Report was given by President Towns. Report accepted as given.

*0935 1<sup>st</sup> Vice turned podium back over to the President.*

Nominations Committee report was given by Tom Eichacker (Ed Revell was unable to attend).

President – Craig Towns

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Ben Lamp

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Dean Steinberg & Wayne Fokken

Treasurer – Randy Decker

Committee-Member-at-Large – Jim Wranek, Scott Schmitt, Dave Heeren & Joshua Wermers

At the time of election of officers, Tom Eichacker will ask for any names from the floor. Report accepted as given.

**Old business:** Report about the status of the new SDNGEA webpage was given by President Towns. Lori Hoop has accepted the position as webmaster. The webpage is projected to be up and running by June first. It will include, history, membership, constitution and by-laws, announcements, the Enlisted ECHO and much more. The Association will revisit this when the projector is set up to view the page and Lori Hoop will explain in more detail.

*Adjourn 0943 until 1030. Reconvene 1035.*

President Towns introduces distinguished guest South Dakota Senator Tim Johnson. Senator Johnson addressed where the SDNG is in Congress and the role of the SDNG in general. He expressed gratitude to all guard members and their families for the sacrifices they make everyday to protect our freedom.

*Adjourn 1055-1100. Reconvene 1100.*

Awards Committee report given by President Towns. 20-year awards were presented. 2003 Unit 100% membership awards were presented to units. Mike Valland presents the Outstanding Service Award to SGM (Ret) Jim Ball. Life Membership Certificates were presented. The remainder of the awards will be presented at the Banquet tonight. Report accepted as given.

Return to Old Business: Lori Hoop addressed the group about the website: what information it will contain, how it will be accessed, some possibilities, and cost. The website address is [www.sdngca.com](http://www.sdngca.com).

### **New Business:**

Wayne Fokken proposes Constitution and By-Law Amendment to Article IV, Section II to include one each (Army/Air) Junior Enlisted Council members to the SDNGEA Executive Council. Passed.

Tom Eichacker presents a motion for the President to appoint a committee to research the Constitution & By-Laws to make sure they are current and the committee to meet with the state JAG to see if it should be updated. Passed.

Ben Lamp combined all different membership packets into one in order to make them more efficient. 2004 packet examples handed out and described. Please give Ben Lamp any recommendations for additions or deletions.

Nomination and election of officers:

New officers for the upcoming year are: President – Craig Towns, Ben Lamp – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice, Wayne Fokken – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice, Treasurer – Randy Decker, Committee Members at Large – Scott Schmitt, Jim Wranek, Dave Heeren and Joshua Wermers. Passed.

Installation of new officers.

Benediction by SGM Roy. Colors Retired by Color Guard. Adjournment of the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association 1230, 26 April 2003.