



MINUTES

of the 2008 SDNGEA Annual State Conference Business Session
18–19 April 2008

Call to Order at 0830

President Fokken welcomed everyone to the conference and thanked them for attending. A special thank you went to Myrdal Hollman who donated \$150 to the Veteran's Memorial in memory of her husband.

President Fokken then introduced our Soldiers and Airman of the year. MSGT Gerry Lemme, TSGT Shawn Greer, SRA Eric Kolister, TSGT Randy Weegen, and MSGT Jeff Nelson- Honor Guard. The soldiers of the year are PFC Shannon Crane and SGT Kevin King.

Our special guests were introduced.

Joy Nelson, the general manager of our host hotel welcomed us to the hotel and convention center. The mayor of Spearfish welcomed us to the city. He thanked the members for their commitment to our organization and to our country. He had been to activation and welcome home ceremonies for the local units and thanked those who have been deployed and those currently deployed. Darrel Shoemaker, a representative for Sen. Tim Johnson read a letter from Sen. Johnson that thanked us for inviting him, but due to his commitments in Washington he was unable to attend. He is currently working on bills that will help veterans and positions at the guard bureau that will help the guard out tremendously. Sen. Johnson thanked those in attendance and thanked us for serving our country. A staff member from Sen. John Thune's office played a video that Sen. Thune had made. He stated that per capita, we are in the top 10 of those states that have deployed troops, and we are in the top 5 for recruiting and retention. Sen. Thune is working to make sure the Air Guard gets new air planes to keep the air guard in South Dakota. He thanked us for our commitment to our organization and being in support of our country. Kate Kelly, a staff member for Rep. Herseth-Sandlin addressed the body. Currently Rep. Herseth-Sandlin is working on bills that are close to our organization and she is continuing to work with other congressional leaders to strengthen our Air and Army guard. She thanked us for the invitation to meet with our organization and thanked us for our service.

A representative from the National Guard Museum was introduced. The National Guard museum was started in the mid-1970s. There are a lot of items that do not have their story written down. Please keep a record at home and in our home units that will tell the story of our National Guard. There are many people who call and ask for us to look up family members but we do not always have answers for them. When your unit is having a gathering or you are on your two week camps, make sure to take pictures and document it. We would love to have people tell their National Guard story. You can visit our website, <http://www.ngmuseum.sd.gov> to make donations and see what is happening at the museum. Our maintenance is taken care of by the Department of Corrections and they have done a great job helping us. There will be several local events that we will be attending to encourage people to visit the museum. Thank you for your continued support of the National Guard Museum. President Fokken presented \$500 to the National Guard Museum.

The Museum awards were present to the following members: CMS Frock, Life Member; CSM Robert Blue, Life Member; CCMSgt Lane Munger; Life Member; SM (ret.) Mackelroy, AG Club; and Lt. Col. Reid and Ruth Christopherson, Governor's Club.

Cathy Anderson can forward to talk about the Young Hero Awards that will be presented at the conference. There will be three Young Hero Award recipients, all under the age of 5. There are three frames with certificates for each child and we will have them in the hall way for you to sign the back of.

President Fokken then thanked the first time delegates and our conference staff for all the hard work they put into hosting this conference.

BG Ted Johnson addressed the body from the AG's office. He thanked us for the invitation to speak with us and for our dedication to our organization. If you look at how we used to be in the guard, many only did their two weeks of annual training and that is all they did. Now we have our Air Guard flying missions on the east coast and we have people at the boarder protection our nation. This is going to be the new norm of people constantly being deployed. And our guard is willing to take this challenge. The Army side in South Dakota has been 'rearranged' a bit, but they are working well with the new changes. There are some that are still looking to be placed with new units, but they are still committed to the South Dakota Guard. The Air side is looking to change planes from the F-16 to F-35s. You are our past, present, a future.

Officers' Association- Jim Peterson—We, together, can provide many opportunities to our airman and soldiers. We have strong organizations that help our people and we need to do this. Working together will give the National Guard a strong voice in congress and in Washington. Thank you for your time and the effort that you are putting in to your organization and your military career.

CSM Mike Bekaert- The army is now wearing the ABUs and other uniform issues are coming. Both sides need to keep their manning up. Sen. Thune will be working this issue in congress for us. The future missions for both the Army and Air side are concerns for us. TRICARE and Retirement are at the top of our lists as well. There are many changes that are coming our way. The Blackhawk units are changing models, our deployments are changing, and the army in South Dakota is changing. The transformation is not over yet. There are many soldiers that do not have a 'home' yet, but we will be finding them one soon. Be aware that there are many new acronyms coming our way soon. Please support our family programs that are offered in your units. They do a lot for us and we need to support them. In September we will be having the Veteran's Honor March. We want to see as many of you there as we can. Thank you for your time and being here at the conference.

CMS Lane Munger— Thank you to all the retirees for being here and all the support that you give us. I would also like to thank CSM Bekaert for helping me this year and giving me some "Army 101". Obviously the price of everything is going up. With the new manning documents we are trying to keep costs low but still function and keep our benefits. With all of these new requirements, they will be looking to cut our benefits. Our voice here, let's those in congress know that our benefits are important to us and we do not want them taken away.

A1C Naomi Boom recited the new Airman's Creed and was presented with coins from CSM Bekaert and CMS Munger.

National Guard Insurance Representative Jim McEwen. We offer three different programs that are available to you. They range from \$1000 to \$50,000 in coverage. Thank you for your time and enjoy your conference.

USAA - Dick Ort. We have gone through some changes with our eligibility. As long as you wear the uniform and are under the age of 35 you can be covered. We support many programs and scholarships all across the United States. Please stop by our both if you have any questions.

American Military University - Sherry Anderson. AMU is 100% on-line and you do not have to be in the military to be enrolled. There are several benefits that we offer to you in several degrees. I really believe that with all of our programs we have one that will fit you. Please feel free to stop by our booth if you have further questions.

CSM (Ret) Gordy Kotab. I am here to talk to you today about the retiree council that was started last fall. We have been meeting monthly and we are continuing to grow. We have an e-mail system that seems to be working very well. If you would like more information, our website is: <http://www.sdmr.org>. You can go to the North Dakota or Minnesota websites to see what we would like in the future. If you know of retirees that would like to join, please inform them of our council. Thank you for your time.

Sponsorship Report - Bruce Anderson introduced those members present that were sponsored by the state association as well as from the Chief's Council.

Treasurer's Report - SMSgt Nancy Ausland. Profit/Loss sheets were handed out to members present. We have paid for the spring edition of the Echo but we paid for it before the conference. SMSgt Ausland has been doing the designing and layout but the publisher does it now and that is why the price has gone up. We are talking with them to get that back part back and save the association some money. Our increase in membership has affected our numbers and our summer issue is in color so it will be more. That is were most of the increase in cost has come from.

Membership Report - Jim Poppen. Thank you to Chief Simmons for help with membership from the Air side. Our membership is at 3333 which is up from 3009. We have 11 new life members this year. Newly promoted E5 and E6 people get some of their dues paid by USAA but we will not be doing this program any more.

Nominations Committee, Ed Revell. Nominations need to be turned in so we can have a report for the morning. We will still take nominations from the floor.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 12:03 pm. We will reconvene on Saturday, 19 April 2008 to conclude business.

SATURDAY, 19 APRIL 2008

The meeting was called to order at 0830, 19 April 08

Committee reports:

Young Hero Awards: Cathy Anderson. We have done many of these over the years in my different places. We are going to do three presentations today. The Sergeant at Arms escorted our guests forward. Each family introduced their hero and told us their story. Each hero was presented with a medal and a plaque that was signed by many of the members in attendance.

Credentials: Jim Poppen. We have collected 14 proxy letters and have validated them. We have passed out a roll call sheet that is at the end of your tables.

Time and Place: There was discussion about future conference locations and the need for other communities to get involved. For 2011 the committee recommends the city of Mitchell to host the conference.

Position and Evaluation: We have found two changes and will be giving the suggestions to the Constitution and By-Laws committee for review.

Ways and Means: We have stated that our membership is up and we need to continue to keep it up. We are strongly pushing the Honor March in September. The committee meets frequently each month. There are several units that are in charge of rest stops along the way. Mile markers are available for \$50 each. You can buy one as a memorial for a friend or family member. Thank you to the group that went out before the conference on sold mile marker signs. If you are interested in volunteering please sign up.

Constitution and By-Laws: We have a proposed change from a veteran but we voted no because it was already stated elsewhere in the Constitution and By-Laws.

Budget: We had a drop in membership to USAA and that caused a drop in revenue. There was on other drop in income due to the Echo. Echo expenses have gone up due to an increase in membership. Awards also caused an increase because we had to re-stock our awards and 20 year pins. We were over budget by almost \$800. The other significant change was the executive council meetings because we moved the September meeting from Chamberlain to Deadwood so we have to pay more mileage.

Investments: We have a CD account this year. It was due in April so we moved it to the savings account and the Air Guard Federal Credit Union. After this conference we can get together and see what we can or want to put back into the CD.

C19 Report: Last year, the association was trying to gain deductible status so we can have those that donate to us deduct it from their taxes. If 90% of our memberships are war veterans we can change our status from C19 to C3. We talked to a lawyer and we did not know that we had to give a report to the secretary of the state of South Dakota. There are several fees that are associated with it. There is a 37 page document that we need to go through and we will be charged up to \$750 for the lawyers time, which he stated would not cost that much. At this time next year, we are hoping to have our status changed.

Legislative - Governor Rounds has signed many of our bills that we wanted to pass. There have been several calls sent out from the EANGUS website. These ask us to contact our legislative people about the bills that affect us. TRICARE for Life is the best thing that has happened to our organization in a long time. It was because of those in this organization that we have these benefits. To combat Identity Theft, the new ID cards will not show the whole SSN. TRICARE has already taken the SSN off of most documents.

Resolutions: There were three resolutions that were brought up at the national conference. Tax credits for employers who employ military members and military members that are self-employed was one of these resolutions. We passed a resolution in recognition of our host units for this conference. We recommend a round of applause for those individuals that are responsible for putting on this great conference.

RESOLUTION 2008-04- Equitable treatment of Veterans- Motioned by Josh Weermers, seconded by Ed Revell; passed.

RESOLUTION 2008-05- TRICARE- Motioned by Ken Rausch, seconded by Rodger Hansen; passed.

RESOLUTION 2008-06- Host Committee thank you- Motioned by Gary Kafka, seconded by Bruce Anderson; passed.

Athletic Committee- We talked about the softball tournament and how we need folks to step up to leadership positions with this and get more involved. The main problem is field availability and finding a good time to do it. The cost has usually been between \$75-150 per team. The ATV Rally is 28JUNE, \$20 per person.

Publications- Topics that we talked about were ways to cut costs on the publication of the Echo. We had one idea about having a box to check if the members wanted a hard copy or not; we can also have it available on the state website. We also recommend that people are more involved in selling ads for the Echo. It is fairly inexpensive and we can make the ad for them.

Veteran's Honor March- We have meetings every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Please get out and see mile markers for \$50. For the business, this is very easy for them. The tax write off initiative will help this. The intent of the funds raised for this is to continue to help this grow and bring veterans to this event. You can

still sign up for a reduced rate. We still have t-shirts available for you here.

Junior Enlisted. Air - Amber Bekaert gave the report on behalf of Nathan Peterson the newly elected president. There was a new officer position created and Jen Deters is the new Legislative officer. We will be having fundraisers during the evening activities to raise money to help send Junior Enlisted Members to the National Conference in August.

Army - We have a harder time getting together since we have so many units across the state. We are also hoping to work more with the Air side in doing activities and getting involved.

Website- If you have anything you would like to see added to the state website or if there are links that do not work, please contact Kim Chase, our webmaster.

President's Report - During my two years as your President our units have worked diligently to increase our membership catching the eye and being recognized by EANGUS, our National Association. This year we attained 3333 memberships with a 309 member increase. This is phenomenal! Thank you to all of you so dedicated to collecting dues, educating troops and insuring our solvency.

Our Auxiliary has been nothing less than outstanding in supporting our association. Each one of you is to be congratulated for your successes in all you do for us. Thank you Auxiliary.

The Veteran's Honor March Staff is to be commended for their ceaseless efforts in making this event a success. Through your hard work and devotion, it is growing each year. This is an amazing event pulling our National Guard together (Army/Air), creating an awesome team working together. Thanks to Mark Thomas, Ted Deloy and Ben Lamp for kicking this thing off and helping to insure success.

Our Junior Enlisted Council (Army/Air) has been working to educate our young troops (E1-E5) and get them involved. I thank Katie McGuire and Pat Jones for all their hard work in running meetings, visiting units, going to National and getting involved. These young people are our future and we need to keep our energy high and the momentum moving forward.

Why do we do what we do? We are dedicated to our National Guard. We want to always strive to insure we keep our jobs, procure newer more capable equipment, maintain and build new facilities and enjoy the many benefits we have worked so hard for.

In closing, I want to especially thank Gary Kafka, Bruce Anderson, Nancy Ausland, Ben Lamp and many of our Retirees for their great support in helping me be successful as your President. I am looking forward to the Past President position and being invited to join the Past President's and Retired ranks. I leave this position knowing it is better than it was when I was first elected. Thank you again for this opportunity and God Bless!

Nominations: President - Gary Kafka; 1st Vice President- Dale Greenfield; 2nd Vice President- Roger Hansen and Nancy Ausland.

Old Business-

Memorial Equipment - We have been working on this since last conference. It has been done and it is to my left. We will be putting it in case and will be placed at our Museum until we need it for our conferences and meetings. (Motioned by Pete, seconded by Don List; Passed.)

New Business

Co-Located conference with the officers; as it states in our policy it says that we will be co-located every three years. The time and place committee agreed to that.

VA Medical Center - Neal Harris. We love working with the VA center in Sturgis. There are 80 beds that serve many service members. 6 beds are for hospice care and three rooms are dedicated to families to use to be there with their loved on. We take food items to keep in the rooms for the families to use while they are there. It costs about \$300 per room for a whole year to keep it stocked. We would like to ask this association to make a donation yearly to help these families in their time of need. If this happens we would like to put a plaque in each room to show the families that this association is helping their family. There was a donation taken from those present and the donations totaled \$603.

Nominations and Elections

President: Gary Kafka

1st Vice President: Dale Greenfield

2nd Vice President: Roger Hansen

Treasure: Pat Jones

ARMY- Committee Members At-Large

Dallas Vallery, Justin Peterson, Christina Sihrer, and Jerry Einsenbraun

AIR- Committee Members At-Large

Dan Weber

New council members were installed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:26 pm.