**National Guard Association of South Dakota**

**61st State Joint Enlisted/Officer Conference**

**Ramkota Hotel, Rapid City, SD**

**1300 hrs, (MST), 22 April 2016**

**Call to Order President Wolfe**

* President Wolfe recognized distinguished guests, conference vendors, and thanked RSG for hosting the conference.
* Reminded attendees of raffle and silent auction.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Chaplain Invocation Chaplain Warfel**

**Rapid City Mayor Mayor Steve Allender**

* Welcomed attendees, and thanked SDNG members for service and representing the community and state.
* Encouraged visitors to explore downtown Rapid City.
* NGASD presented Mayor Allender with a SDNG jacket.

**Best Warrior Challenge Results CSM Hoekman**

* The Best Warrior Challenge occurred April 20th-22nd of April, 2016.
* Participants were: SPC Miller (200th EN CO), SPC Welsh (235th MP CO), SPC McLaughlin (147th Army Band), SPC Mergen (1/112th AVN DET), SSG Fredrickson (B Btry 1/147th), SSG Henstein (JFHQ), SGT Hulbert (740th TRANS CO), SSG Zubko (2/196th RTI).
* Winners of the ruck march were SPC Miller and SSG Bjornstein.
* Best shooters were SPC Mergen, SPC Welsch, SSG Frederickson, SSG Henstein.
* The alternate to the best warriors are SPC Mergen and SSG Zubko.
* The best warriors are SPC Miller and SSG Henstein. They will compete in region 6 competitions in Montana this May.

**President of NGAUS MG Hargett (Ret)**

* Enjoyed visit with retirees at the retiree breakfast.
* Thanked SD for 17 years of 100%.
* Congratulated MG Reisch on becoming a NGAUS board member.
* Sent greetings from Ray Carpenter.
* Commented on the success of a National Guardsmen winning the Army Ranger competition.
* For two years in a row – NGAUS has brought in junior officers for a one year tour, and will continue to hold OPD events, with a meeting with General Grass.
* Discussed successes:
	+ National Commission of the Future of the Army
		- ‘Graded’ the commission with a B+ and stated that the commission makes supportive statements on behalf of the guard. Predicted that recommendations for the commission will do well for the guard.
		- Total recommendations discussed within the commission.
		- Testified for a guard strength of 1.2 million, more integration with active components, improve school system, and to asses/change the ARFORGEN cycle/mobilization process. He disagreed with the recommendations for consolidating the recruiting and marketing force and commented on the continued need to improve Tricare and federal technician inequities.
	+ New blended retirement plans.
	+ Counter drug money retention.
	+ Securing NGREA funding.
	+ $122 million acquired from the senate this year.
	+ Local senators and congressman make a positive impact on the National Guard in Washington D.C.
* Commented on sequesters and CRAs - does not predict a budget will pass this year, or until a new Congress is established.
* Predicts that the next two F-35 fieldings will be on the west coast of the nation. Encouraged the importance of securing the F-35 and modernizing C130 jets.
* MG Hargett (Ret) was presented a book on South Dakota by the NGASD.

**The Adjutant General MG Reisch**

* Thanked conference attendees and commended SD’s participation in state and national conference attendance.
* Reminded attendees of the importance of his priorities:
	+ Taking care of Soldiers, Airmen and their families. Knowing that reaching out for help is a sign of strength; and the importance of suicide prevention and SHARP programs.
	+ Readiness. Units being sourced are on the rise, and it is important to stay motivated and relevant.
	+ Safety
	+ Relevancy. Continue to think of the future of the army and securing F-35s. Recent changes in force structure have a purpose, and it is important to continue forward with changes.
	+ Diversity and Inclusion. It is important to look for talent in all backgrounds to create more opportunities.
	+ Communications. We need to bridge the gap between millennials and traditionals.
	+ Mentorship and Developing Leaders. Brought up the example of Fox Conner recognizing potential in Dwight Eisenhower, and the value in looking for talent in our formations and providing professional feedback and support to young leaders.
* SDNG has been around since 1862, and all the success and momentum forward revolves around taking care of Soldiers, Airmen and their families.
* Expressed pride in the SDNG.

**Town Hall Meeting with MG Hargett (Ret) and MG Reisch**

**Q:** Does NGAUS endorse a presidential candidate?

A: No, it is a bi-partisan organization (Hargett)

Q: What are your thoughts about the impact of recruiting women into all fields?

A: Not sure if there will be a specific impact on recruiting, but I think it will help our ability to promote more women into senior leadership positions. (Reisch). MG Hargett accompanied this response by commenting on the success of the females who passed the infantry school and agreed it will only improve the organization.

Q: Where do we stand (in our own organization) on protecting ourselves with cyber security, and what is the way forward with this?

A: South Dakota along with other states will a part of a cyber-protection team, but we need to stand these teams up quickly and keep up with the active cyber war. The training needed for cyber-protection is lengthy and it can be difficult to retain Soldier and Airmen due to a competitive corporate market (Reisch). MG Hargett (Ret) echoed this comment by agreeing that the threat is on the rise.

Q: Do you have any insight on the future of GI Bill benefits?

A: Never trust any rumor until you see it in writing. It will not affect the guard as much as the active component, but there isn’t a definitive change in writing yet. It is a fact that whatever changes occur, it will not affect people currently enrolled, just those who may use the benefit in the future (Hargett).

Q: How will the national office facilitate the desire to have a separate enlisted charter in NGAUS?

A: It is up to the enlisted association and the door is open for them to occupy the NGAUS building and participate in conferences/meetings with us if and when they want (Hargett).

Q: How will ‘Ammendment R’ affect tuition assistance and school systems in South Dakota?

A: Unsure exact details of ‘Ammendment R,’ however, currently state regional schools have combined tuition and fees to create a comprehensive cost for guard members that will take effect July 1, 2016. A credit hour, on average costs $234, and it will cost a guard member $117. Unfortunately technical schools were not involved in this change, but the Governor’s office is working to update and correct this to include technical schools. The discussion is to create a letter of agreement with the Board of Regents to use some of the money from the half-penny sales tax increase to assist with this tech school cost, but if it does not happen this year, it will be addressed next year (Reisch).

**Senator John Thune Mark Haugen**

* Read message on behalf of Senator Thune – Thanked the SDNG for readiness and leadership in defending the country and our state.

**Senator Mike Rounds BG Marlette (Ret.)**

* Relayed message from Rounds of sincere appreciation for the SDNG and believes in increasing funding and strengthening the military.
* Our office continually works with veterans, the VA, and Tricare to ensure needs are being met.
* In the legislative side, our office is working on the current items:
	+ Increase the size of the Black Hills National Cemetery (currently at House level)
	+ The Veteran’s Choice Act: improving rural health from the VA
	+ Veteran’s compensation from Agent Orange
	+ PTSD and how they are discharged from the military
	+ Maintaining the state partnership program
	+ Non-deployed veterans status
	+ Tricare enrollment
	+ Securing Reaper missions at EAFB

**The Assistant Adjutant General of the SDANG BG Jamison**

* Reviewed the SDANG’s 2015 ‘year in review’; deployment to Korea, domestic response, awards received (Outstanding Air Force unit, 7th consecutive year; Distinguished Flying Cross, Outstanding Maintenance Support and Safety Council award).
* BG Warren will be replacing BG Jamison.
* SDANG has their first female command chief.
* 70th anniversary of the Air Show is this July.
* Anticipates being near the top of a competitive list for the F-35s.
* BG Jamison hopes to serve on the military board of the Chamber of Commerce.

**Congresswoman Kristi Noem**

* Thanked the association for the invitation.
* Recognized the importance of national security and expressed appreciation SD’s leadership, work ethic and strong military families.
* National Defense Act is at the House.
* Pentagon’s request for guard’s strength was a little less than should be.
* 2.1 increase in military pay.
* 18 million was sent for military training and resources.
* Bill will pass with strong bi-partisan support.
* When asked what the odds are of getting a budget passed at the beginning of this fiscal year, Congresswoman Noem responded with the fact that the House does not have an agreement on the budget and/or with military spending. Appropriations will be passed and is optimistic that there will not be a CR on military spending. The House cannot touch 2/3 of the federal government’s dollars. To deal with the debt and spending problem, the House has to deal with that 2/3.

**The Assistant Adjutant General of the SDARNG BG Griese**

* Themed that the SDNG are the ‘Leaders of the Best.’
* Current senior leadership changes (CoS, SEL, CCWO).
* Council of Colonel’s recognized the importance of keeping Soldiers closer to their HOR.
* Current authorized strength is 3125, current assigned is 3151.
* 15 units likely to be awarded the Superior Unit Award, the 211th for four consecutive years.
* Reminded attendees to capture accomplishments.
* The Unit Assessment Tool reflects that 8 of our units are #1 of their type in the nation.
* Outlined 2015 Awards won by SDARNG.
* See through budget challenges and continue to achieve over-strength and be “The Best Getting Better”

**State Command Sergeants Major CSM Hoekman**

* Commented on the importance of coaching, mentoring and leadership. ‘Knowing your people’ and always doing the right thing. Using MSAT and My Vector to develop self and others.
* Announced the SDANG Airmen of the year:
	+ Airmen of the year – SrA Spade
	+ NCO of the year – TSgt Bauman
	+ Senior NCO of the year – MSgt Johnson
	+ First Sergeant of the year – MSgt Ray
	+ Lieutenant of the year – Lt Nelson

**Administrative Announcements/Adjourn President Wolfe**

* President adjourned meeting at 1548..

 **Submitted by: Approved by:**

 **Jodi Gilberti Tracy Wolfe**

 **Secretary President**