

55th Annual Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Mississippi Conference Minutes

23 March 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER: At 0900 hours the 54th Annual Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Mississippi meeting was called to order by President Brian Stroka at the Sheraton Flowood, The Refuge Hotel and Conference Center, Flowood, MS.

2. POSTING OF COLORS: The 41st Army Band performed as the colors were posted. The Army Flag was posted by SSG Michelle Nunley. The Air Force Flag was posted by A1C Craig Taylor. The POW/MIA Flag to honor those who have been Prisoners of War or who are Missing in Action posted by MSgt Michael Wilhite.

3. NATIONAL ANTHEM: Performed by the 41st Army Band.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by President Brian Stroka.

5. INVOCATION: The chairs located on the front row with the white covers represent our deceased Past Presidents. Moment of silence for our deceased past presidents and our guard members on active duty and their families. Invocation was led by Chaplain Justin Tyler.

6. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS: Recognition of guests was conducted by Vice President Air MSgt Hank Fairchild. MG Trent Kelly (Assistant Adjutant General MS ARNG), CW5 Donnie Dukes (President of the MS National Guard Assoc), Jeff Frisby (EANGUS Executive Director), Michael Lane (EANGUS Legislative Director), MSgt Ashley Brodnax (EANGUS Area IV Chair), Brigade Commanders, Unit Commanders, State Enlisted Leadership, EANGMS Auxiliary, and EANGMS Retirees.

7. RECOGNITION OF PAST PRESIDENTS: Recognition of Past Presidents in attendance was conducted by Vice President Army Julius Johnson.

8. PRESIDENTS COMMENTS: President Stroka stated his goal was to have a brief meeting. Thanked everyone for their assistance in the past year. Went over highlights of what we were working on the past year.

9. ADDRESS: MG Trent Kelly, Assistant Adjutant General, Mississippi Army National Guard. He stated that we had the greatest enlisted core in the world. He went over the items going on in the Mississippi National Guard and discussed the deployments and areas that the units of Mississippi are involved in.

10. ADDRESS: Mrs. Connie Myers, President of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Mississippi Auxiliary. She talked about the awards that were presented to the Mississippi Auxiliary and/or members of the auxiliary during the last EANGUS National Conference. The MS Auxiliary received the Outstanding State Award. Bo Plunk, EANGMS member and Auxiliary Associate Member, was presented an award for the outstanding support he had given in making the Silent Auctions a success. EANGMS President Stroka presented a monetary contribution to the Auxiliary President Myers for their help and dedication to EANGMS.

AUXILIARY MEMBERS DISMISSED

11. ADDRESS: CW5 Donnie Dukes, President of the Mississippi National Guard Association. Mississippi has the highest membership in the nation. We have the largest voting bloc, and it would not be possible without the enlisted association. We have had five (5) deaths in the guard that did not have the NG Insurance. Part of our role is to ensure the readiness of our enlisted force and giving them access and knowledge about the insurance is part of this readiness.

12. ADDRESS: Jeff Frisby, Executive Director of EANGUS and Michael Lane, Legislative Director of EANGUS. You should be incredibly proud of how your organization represents you on the hill in Washington DC. We are trying to ensure that every time your members put on their uniforms that they are getting credit for it. Tricare of All remains one of our top priorities. We participate in a lot of great conversations to do things for the guard. We need to do a better job of getting out the message of what we do and how we do it. The EANGUS National Convention will be in Detroit in August and there will be no registration fee. There is the 9/11 event in the fall. Trying to get a congressional charter for the “We Care for America Foundation.”

13. ADDRESS: MSgt Ashley Brodnax, Chairperson of EANGUS Area IV. Discussed what the Association had done for her and helped her grow as an individual. Hasn’t always shown but always had mentors to help pick her up and get back on her feet. Thanked Mississippi for their efforts. She stated she was working hard to ensure our goals were met.

BREAK FOR 15 MINUTES (1025)

BUSINESS SESSION RECONVENED (1043)

14. ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS: Everyone was encouraged to go to the Auxiliary Silent Auction and place their bids when possible. Secretary McKinion related to the body that the “A” Directors were up for election this afternoon and to be putting serious consideration and thought into their selection.

15. ROLL CALL OF UNITS: Secretary MSgt Gail McKinion performed the Roll Call of Units. All units were present and/or accounted for. A quorum was determined to be present.

16. READING AND/OR APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Secretary McKinion stated that the 2023 MS NG NCO Association minutes were posted on the website since May 2023 and in the program using the scan code. She requested that the minutes be accepted as published on the website. Minutes were accepted as posted.

17. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

(1) NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT: Nominations Chairperson Brooks gave the committee report. The committee met on 20 March 2024 and reviewed and verified the nominations that had been submitted. They received the following nominations for office for the 2024-2025 board:

Treasurer:	CSM (Ret) Keith Ales
Secretary:	MSgt (Ret) Gail McKinion
Vice President Army:	SFC Julius Johnson
Vice President Air:	MSgt Charles (Hank) Fairchild
President:	SFC Brian Stroka

This was a committee report and needed no motion. The Nomination Committee Report was approved.

President Stroka opened the meeting to nominations from the floor.

Treasurer: No motions were made from the floor. The motion to close the nominations and accept CSM (Ret) Keith Ales by acclamation was made by member September Wallace and seconded by member SGM Newman.

Secretary: No motions were made from the floor. The motion to close the nominations and accept MSgt (Ret) Gail McKinion by acclamation was made by member September Wallace and seconded by SFC Chris Mitchke.

Vice President Army: No motions were made from the floor. The motion to close the nominations and accept SFC Julius Johnson by acclamation was made by CSM (Ret) Keith Ales and seconded by SFC Chris Mitchke.

Vice President Air: No motions were made from the floor. The motion to close the nominations and accept MSgt Charles (Hank) Fairchild by acclamation was made by member MSgt Michael Wilhite and seconded by SFC Chris Mitchke.

President: No motions were made from the floor. The motion to close the nominations and accept SFC Brian Stroka by acclamation was made by member CSM Cliff Jones and seconded by SFC Chris Mitchke.

(2) BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT: The Bylaws Chair SFC Chris Mitchke gave the committee report. He read the bylaw (2024-001, New to EANGMS Membership) that had been submitted and recommended by the committee to be passed by the membership. The bylaw had been published for the required time frame on the EANGMS website. The bylaw required a 2/3 vote. The committee report required no motion and was approved.

Secretary MSgt (Ret) Gail McKinion made a motion to accept the Bylaw as written and Past President Tommy Morgan seconded the motion. Motion passed by with no NAYS.

18. ARMY MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Four Army Membership Awards for the Battalion SGM's and higher, for reaching the highest membership in 3 divisions (light, medium, heavy) and the highest member in the Brigade division. The CSM's will keep these awards until next year and either retain them or hand them over to the CSM that beats them in membership.

Vice President Army Julius Johnson presented the awards to the CSMs of each Division.

Light Division: 0-250 Enlisted Members
CSM Clifford James
Recruiting and Retention
66% Membership

Medium Division: 251-500 Enlisted Members

CSM Steven "Russel" Gay

2-20th Special Forces Group

79% Membership

Heavy Division: 501-1300 Enlisted Members

CSM William P. Kelly

298th Corps Support

93% Membership

Army Guard Brigade Division

CSM Brian K. Belue

155th Brigade Combat Team

75% Membership

Overhead Division

CSM Rickie L. Fortner

Camp McCain

93% Membership

19. Air Guard Membership Award: Beginning this year, we will be giving an award to the Air Guard Base with the highest membership. Vice President Air MSgt Hank Fairchild will be giving out this award.

Winner: Key Field Enlisted Association, Meridian, MS – 71% membership

MSgt Brandy Bond accepted the award for the Key Field Enlisted Association Chapter which represents the 186th ARW and its components.

20. AIR AWARDS PROGRAM: Command CMSgt John Myers, State Command Chief of the Mississippi Air National Guard will present these awards.

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President Stroka released the rostrum to Command CMSgt John Myers for the presentation.

MG Blanchard, CSM Tatum, and EANGMS President Stroka joined CCMSgt Myers for presentation of the awards. CCMSgt Myers thanked the USAA Representative for their assistance with this award. The following awards were given along with certificates, coins, and other mementos/gifts:

Airman of the Year (ANG): SSgt Tyler Fant (SRA at time of winning)
NCO of the Year (ANG): TSgt Hans D. Van Houten
Senior NCO of the Year (ANG): MSgt James Munn
First Sergeant of the Year (ANG): 1st Sgt MSgt Ashley R. Thompson

Command CMSgt Myers released the rostrum back to President Stroka.

21. G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Foundation Patriot Leadership Awards: The Sonny Montgomery Foundation makes this prestigious award a possibility and its purpose is to recognize a Soldier and an Airman within the Mississippi National Guard that has epitomized the professional NCO not only while serving his or her country in uniform, but also by service to the community. Many of our younger Soldiers and Airmen do not realize the impact that Sonny Montgomery had on the Mississippi National Guard and the U.S. Military. Without his efforts, our education programs within the military would most probably not exist. There is a reason it is called the Montgomery GI Bill. He was instrumental in assisting our association get off the ground in its infancy. You can look through the historical pictures and find him attending our conferences and events. Sonny Montgomery had a vision of what our association could and should be. I believe our growth last year and our new growth this year would have made him smile. He would have encouraged us to keep up the fight and continue to work on our benefits. With all this in mind, The Sonny Montgomery Foundation Patriot Leader Award is one of the highest awards given within our state that is not based on achievement but leadership within your unit and community. Only one award is given to the Army Guard and one award to the Air Guard. These two individuals have quite simply exemplified the best leadership in the state for their component.

Mr. Hayes Dent, Board Member of the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery Foundation was escorted to the rostrum to present this award.

Air Winner: MSgt Sadiki Givens
Army Winner: SGT Logan Hunt

22. NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year: Presented by State Command Sergeant Major Darrell Masterson

Soldier of the Year – SPC William Hillman
NCO of the Year – SSG Cody Pellegrin

23. Scholarship Report: Scholarship Chair MSgt Reggie Saxton gave the scholarship report. The EANGMS Board voted on giving a total of 8 scholarships this year. Seven (7) scholarship packages were received on or before the deadline date of 15 February. One package was not accepted due to not meeting the eligibility requirements. Six (6) scholarship packages were submitted for quality review and ranking. The six packages came back with the following rankings:

1. Anna Catherine Clark (sponsor – Michael Clark)
2. McKenzie Lane Tullos (sponsor – Joseph Tullos)
3. Miles C. McAlister (sponsor – John B. McAlister II)
4. Freedom Elise Hutchinson (sponsor – Taurus Hutchinson)
5. Amber Marie Bonnell (Sponsor – Charlotte Kirksey)
6. Blaine Gerald Pigeon (Sponsor – Tony Pigeon)

This is a committee report and needs no motion. Report was approved.

24. Army and Air Caucuses: President Stroka emphasized the importance of these caucuses. The Soldiers and Airmen you elect, as Directors, in your Caucuses are your voice for the Association. It is imperative that you elect someone that is willing to give their personal time to visit units and to speak on behalf of the Association. Our Association will rise, and fall based on the efforts of these individuals. These are not appointments of honor but positions of service. Please choose your directors wisely.

This year's Directors in areas 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6, 7A, and 8A will be elected and Directors 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 7B, and 8B will become the Senior Directors.

After you elect Directors in your District Caucuses, make sure you give the names to Secretary McKinion and that the individual completes a contact information sheet with her.

25. Swearing in of New Officers and Directors: Past President Tommy Morgan swore in the new EANGMS Board members:

President	SFC Brian Stroka
Vice-President Army	SFC Julius Johnson
Vice-President Air	MSgt Charles "Hank" Fairchild
Secretary	MSgt (Ret) Gail McKinion
Treasurer	CSM (Ret) Keith Ales
Continuity Chair	SFC (Ret) Leroy Matthews

Director 1A	SFC Joshua C. Jones
Director 2A	Empty
Director 3A	CSM Larry D. Primeaux II
Director 4A	SFC Christopher E. Mitchke
Director 5A	SSG Christopher Landon Cook
Director 6	TSgt Jameshia J. Gray
Director 7A	MSgt Jospeh "Joey" M. Dearman
Director 8A	MSgt Michael Wilhite

26. Administrative Announcements: The State EANGMS Conference will be held next year in Meridian on 21-23 Mar 2025. There will be a Board of Directors meeting tomorrow morning at 0900 hours, civilian attire. This includes all newly elected officers/directors. Any member that wishes to attend is also welcome to do so.

27. Drawings: Drawings were held for the prizes the Association was giving away.

28. Army and Air Breakouts: Immediately after we conclude the business session, the Army Breakout will be held in this room and the Air Breakout will be two doors down. They will start 10 minutes after the conclusion of this business session. The Junior Enlisted Committee (JEC) will meet in ballroom D.

29. Closing Events: President Stroka asked Chaplain Tyler to lead us in our benediction. President Stroka asked the color guard to retire the colors.

30. Adjournment of Meeting: President Stroka asked for a motion to adjourn the 55th Annual Conference. Past President Tommy Morgan made the motion to adjourn and CMSgt (Ret) Ricky Myers seconded the motion. Motion passed. President Stroka adjourned the conference at 1242 hours. SINE DIE.

////////////////SIGNED////////////////
Gail McKinion, MSgt (Ret), MS ANG
Secretary EANGMS