



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

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## **New Chairman of the Board Takes Reins at NGAUS**

WASHINGTON (Sept. 8, 2010) — The uniformed head of military forces in the First State now also leads the nation's oldest military association.

Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala, the Delaware adjutant general, was elected chairman of the board of the National Guard Association of the United States during its 132nd General Conference and Exhibition in Austin, Texas, last month.

Vavala is the 51st chairman of NGAUS, which was established by militia officers in 1878 to petition Congress for better equipment and training, a mission that continues today.

The new chairman said he was "awed and humbled" by the confidence placed in him by the association's nearly 45,000 members nationwide.

"The National Guard owes its pay, benefits, much of its modern equipment and, perhaps, even its very existence to our association's success on Capitol Hill," Vavala said. "That's the legacy I inherit. My job is simple: Maintain the momentum."

Vavala said the current fiscal climate creates challenges and opportunities for NGAUS and the National Guard.

"As citizens, as well as soldiers and airmen, we agree with Defense Secretary [Robert M.] Gates' efforts to cut excessive overhead and bloat in the U.S. military," he said. "In fact, we think we are the solution."

The Guard provides nearly half of the Army's combat power and a third of the Air Force's combat capability for about 7 percent of the defense budget, Vavala said.

"It's time for the nation to start talking about cutting the active-component military and growing the Guard," he said. "Relying more on the Guard may be the only way we can truly hold the line on defense spending without cutting American military power."

He took the reins from Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the Kansas adjutant general, who was elected chairman in 2008. NGAUS bylaws limit the association president to a single, two-year term.

Vavala joined the Delaware Army Guard as a private in 1967. He was commissioned as an officer in 1970 after attending the Delaware Military Academy Officer Candidate School. He has served as adjutant general since 1999.

He was one of five Guard leaders to win officer posts on the NGAUS board during elections at the conference.

Brig. Gen. John E. Walsh, the Montana adjutant general since 2008, was elected vice chairman (Army). He is a 2007 graduate of the Army War College who commanded a Montana Army Guard infantry battalion in Iraq from December 2004 to November 2005.

Brig. Gen. Bill Burks, the Nevada adjutant general, is the board's new vice chairman (Air). He is a 2000 graduate of the National Defense University and a master navigator with more than 2,000 flight hours and 29 combat missions.

Retired Brig. Gen. Ken Ross of Louisiana and Col. Al Faber of Ohio were re-elected to serve as the board's treasurer and secretary, respectively.

In addition, several others were elected to serve on the board. From NGAUS geographical Area I, the newly elected board members are Maj. Gen. Bill Reddel of New Hampshire, who will be the adjutant general representative; Col. Frank McGinn of Massachusetts, the Army representative; and Maj. Nicole Ivers of Massachusetts, the air representative.

Board members elected from Area IV are Brig. Gen. Stephen Danner of Missouri, the adjutant general representative; Lt. Col. Martin Fries of Kansas, the Army representative; and Lt. Col. Tony DeJesus of Kansas, the Air representative.

Capt. Sharel Paradis of Oregon was elected as the board's company-grade officer representative for Army, and retired Lt. Col. Ron Wagner of Wisconsin was elected the board's retired/separated representative.

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**About NGAUS:** The association includes nearly 45,000 current or former Guard officers. It was created in 1878 to provide unified National Guard representation in Washington. In their first productive meeting after Reconstruction, militia officers from the North and South formed the association with the goal of obtaining better equipment and training by petitioning Congress for more resources. Today, 132 years later, NGAUS has the same mission.

**Internet Availability:** This document and other Guard and NGAUS news and information are available at [www.ngaus.org](http://www.ngaus.org).