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Subject: After Action Review for NGAUS Conference 2008 Professional Development

The opportunity provided by the Iowa National Guard Officers Association (INGOA) to attend the NGAUS Conference in Baltimore, MD was tremendous. The excitement of just being given the opportunity to discuss key issues with some of the most senior-ranking leaders in the National Guard seemed fascinating to me when I first heard about the opportunity to attend the conference.

The subjects of the professional development sessions were very appropriate and I learned a tremendous amount of information about the National Guard's history, the role of other types of Officers, and the number of battles that NGAUS has fought and won on Capitol Hill. Although the professional development and business sessions were the focus of the OPD attendees, my professional development experiences were greatly enhanced by the hallway conversations with LTG Blum, MG Nuttall and other senior-ranking Officers, Warrant Officers, and retirees in attendance. These senior leaders took quite an interest in the feedback that I provided about issues with the National Guard, offered mentorship and advice, and in many cases offered personal contact information in case I thought of anything else or needed anything in the future.

Of Course, it was anything but all business all the time at the Conference. There were a variety of social events planned, to include a golf outing, Company Grade Mixer, Ft. McHenry Battle Reenactment, hospitality night, and the States Dinner.

I would recommend that anyone attending the conference should bring their spouse or significant other. As a professional development attendee, it was a great opportunity for me to get my spouse familiar with the National Guard and the other spouses in attendance. We did discover that it is very important to verify that spouses are registered attendees as your spouse or you may not be paired together for any of the events. This did lead to us missing the Company Grade Mixer and adjusting partners on the golf tournament, so it is very important to make sure registration is correct.

I came home motivated to ensure that the Guard stays strong and becomes a stronger strategic reserve for the future. I learned many things that definitely made me want to stay in the Iowa Guard, and more importantly, I learned about the voice we have as National Guard Men and Women on Capitol Hill. Thanks to the INGOA for giving me this opportunity!

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