

NGAMA Visits  
Washington, D.C.

On March 4-5, 2009, a delegation of senior NGAMA members traveled to Washington, D.C., to discuss budget priorities with the Massachusetts Congressional delegation. The group was led by COL Frank McGinn, NGAMA's Legislative Committee Chairman. The NGAMA delegation personally met with Senator John Kerry, Congressmen William Delahunt, James McGovern John Tierney, Richard Neal, Edward Markey, John Olver and Congresswoman Nikki Tsongas. They also met with senior staff members of Senator Edward Kennedy's office as well as Congressmen Barney Frank, Michael Capuano, and Stephen Lynch.

Massachusetts Legislative priorities that were discussed included the following budget add ons: Joint Forces Headquarters, Hanscom AFB (\$60M), Combined Arms Collective Training Facility at Camp Edwards (\$2.7M), Composite Operations and Training Facility at Otis (\$12M), and Aircraft Shelters at Barnes (\$13M). We also discussed the Active Electronic Scanned Array (AESA) for ANG F-15's and the Youth Challenge Program. NGAUS priorities included Early Retirement credit for service performed since September 11 and increasing Army end-strength to ensure units are manned at 100% for deployments.

The Massachusetts Congressional delegation was very supportive of NGAMA's legislative priorities but they also voiced concerns about the weakening national economy and how that might affect Congressional earmarks and funding. The Senators and Congress members we met with expressed genuine support for our military service members and the National Guard. NGAMA agreed to work with them and to continue to communicate with them.

Throughout the year NGAMA will track the progress of these priority projects and we will keep the membership advised. At the appropriate times we will need the NGAMA membership to contact their Congressional members concerning these budget items. Please check the NGAMA web site for legislative updates. Also we hope to soon institute an email system of Legislative Alerts.

If you have any questions or ideas concerning national or state funding of National Guard programs, please contact COL McGinn or the NGAMA Legislative Committee.