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Army, Air Force Leaders To Speak at Guard Conference in Nashville

Nashville, Tenn. — The new uniformed leader of the Army and the civilian head of the Air Force will top the list of speakers when 4,200 National Guard officers and their guests gather in Nashville this week for the 137th National Guard Association of the United States General Conference & Exhibition.

The conference opens Sept. 11 with speeches by **Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam**, the commander in chief of the Tennessee National Guard; **Gen. Mark A. Milley**, who took over as the Army chief of staff last month; and **Gen. Frank J. Grass**, the National Guard Bureau chief.

Speakers Sept. 12 include **Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges**, the commanding general of U.S. Army Europe, who will address the Army National Guard's role in deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe; retired **Gen. Carter Ham**, the chairman of the congressionally created National Commission on the Future of the Army; **Rep. Steve Womack**, R-Ark., a member of the House Appropriations Committee; and **Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James**.

Rep. Jim Bridenstine, R-Okla.; **Rep. Trent Kelly**, R-Miss.; and **Rep. Mark Takai**, D-Hawaii, will speak Sept. 13. All three are currently serving National Guard officers in their respective states.

Most speakers will address the conference theme, *The National Guard: Ready for America's Call*, or any of a number of current military and homeland security issues affecting the Guard.

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These issues include overseas operations, domestic missions, equipment modernization, current fiscal challenges, and future Guard roles and missions.

The gathering serves as the annual NGAUS business meeting. Conference delegates from all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia will set the foundation for their 2016 legislative agenda and elect members to their board of directors.

Also included in the event is a large trade show featuring 300 companies and organizations that market products and services to the Guard.

More conference information, the full business agenda and a complete list of exhibitors are available at <http://www.ngaus.org/ngaus2015>.

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Media: All major conference events will be held at **Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville**. A press office will be established in the facility on Sept. 10. Additional contact information will be provided in a later release.

About NGAUS: The association includes nearly 45,000 current or former Army and Air Guard officers nationwide. It was created in 1878 to provide unified 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 educating Congress on militia requirements. Today, 137 years later, NGAUS has the same mission.