



# **NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS AWARDS PROGRAM MANUAL**

**October 20, 2025**

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## **PURPOSE**

- a. The National Guard Association of Illinois (NGAI) awards program provides recognition for individuals and organizations who have promoted, fostered, and improved the wellbeing of the current and retired personnel of the Illinois National Guard (ILNG). These individuals will be honored for their outstanding performance, service of a meritorious nature, service that has made a major contribution to the ILNG or NGAI.
- b. The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) operates a separate and distinct award program.

## **AVAILABLE AWARDS**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Basic Eligibility</b>
Abraham Lincoln Award – Legislator of the Year	Individual	State/Federal Legislator
Ulysses S. Grant Award for Distinguished Service	Individual	ILNG Member
Distinguished Service	Individual	ILNG Member
Meritorious Service	Individual	ILNG Member / DMA Employee
John A. Logan Leadership	Individual	ILNG Member
Harold E. Keistler Service	Individual	NGAI Executive Board Member
Outstanding Unit	Unit / Organization	ILNG Unit
NGAI Citation	Individual / Organization	Any Individual or Organization

## **NOMINATION PROCEDURES**

- a. Each award has specific eligibility criteria.
- b. The NGAI Award Nomination form will be used for all submissions.
- c. A nomination may be submitted at any time. A deadline will be established each year prior to the NGAUS Awards submission deadline.
- d. A reminder of the nominations deadline and procedures will be published sufficiently in advance to allow for proper submission.
- e. Awards nominations received after the deadline will be processed on a case-by-case basis and retained for the following year if not processed.

## **PRESENTATION**

- a. Awards will be presented by the NGAI President during the Annual NGAI Conference Business Session.
- b. An alternate presentation or shipping the award can be coordinated through the Executive Director.

## **NGAUS AWARD PROGRAM**

- a. Award types and criteria are obtained from the NGAUS Website.
- b. NGAUS Awards require nomination by State Association (NGAI) president or Adjutant General.
- c. NGAI will determine if any NGAI Award winner will also be submitted for a NGAUS Award.
- d. Individuals may choose to only submit a NGAUS Award nomination and should work with their MSC/Wing Representative to route the nomination through the NGAI Executive Director.

## **Abraham Lincoln Award – Legislator of the Year**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for distinguished Legislators whose contributions to the defense of our country have been of great significance at the state or national level.

### **Eligibility:**

Any duly elected / appointed legislator at the state or national level.

### **Description:**

This award is a statue of Abraham Lincoln affixed to a wooden base with a name plate inscribed with indicative data.

### **Criteria:**

- a. The individual to be selected should have made a significant contribution through introduction or support of legislative actions which enhanced the Illinois National Guard, the NGAI, the “Reserve Forces – Total Force Concept” or the overall National Defense posture of the United States.
- b. Although a single deed or action, if it is of significant magnitude may be considered as qualification for this award, priority should be given to sustained contributions over a period.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Individuals that may nominate:
  - a. The Adjutant General of Illinois
  - b. President of NGAI
  - c. Chief of Staff of the Department of Military Affairs
- b. Nominations will be coordinated directly with the NGAI Executive Director or President.
- c. Up to one award will be presented each year.
- d. An individual may not receive this award more than once.

## **Ulyssess S. Grant Award for Distinguished Service**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for any individual who as a member of the ILNG renders outstanding support to the pursuit of NGAI purposes and objectives over a significant period of time.

### **Eligibility:**

Any current or retired member of the ILNG.

### **Description:**

This award is a plaque affixed with the NGAI emblem and a name plate with inscription.

### **Criteria:**

An individual must have distinguished themselves in support of NGAI objectives over a minimum period of five years and encompassing multiple duty positions.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Individuals that may nominate:
  - a. Leadership at the Brigade / Wing level and above
  - b. President / Vice-President / Executive Director of NGAI
  - c. Chief of Staff of the Department of Military Affairs
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAI Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to one award will be presented each year.
- d. An individual may not receive this award more than once.

## **Distinguished Service Award**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for any individual who as a member of the ILNG performed exceptionally outstanding service to the United States Government, the ILNG, or NGAJ.

### **Eligibility:**

Any current or retired member of the ILNG.

### **Description:**

This award is a plaque affixed with the NGAJ emblem and a name plate with inscription.

### **Criteria:**

- a. An individual must have distinguished themselves in exceptionally outstanding service to the United States Government, the ILNG, or NGAJ.
- b. Outstanding performance of duties normal to the grade, branch, specialty, or assignment of an individual are not considered adequate for this award.
- c. An individual must have offered exceptionally outstanding contributions over an extended period to clearly merit this award.
- d. Contributions must be at the Brigade/Wing or State Level.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Individuals that may nominate:
  - a. Leadership at the Brigade / Wing level and above
  - b. President / Vice-President / Executive Director of NGAJ
  - c. Chief of Staff of the Department of Military Affairs
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAJ Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to two awards will be presented each year.

## **Meritorious Service Award**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for any individual who performed significant contributions to the United States Government, the ILNG, or NGAI.

### **Eligibility:**

- a. Any current or retired member of the ILNG.
- b. Any civilian federal employee assigned to the ILNG.
- c. Any state employee assigned to the Department of Military Affairs.

### **Description:**

There are two options for this award to be determined by the Awards Committee:

- a. Physical award type to be determined
- b. A framed certificate with the NGAI emblem, brief citation of accomplishments, and indicative data.

### **Criteria:**

- a. An individual must have distinguished themselves in outstanding service to the United States Government, the ILNG, or NGAI.
- b. Superior performance of duties normal to the grade, branch, specialty, or assignment of an individual are not considered adequate for this award.
- c. A single accomplishment may be considered as qualification for this award if it is of sufficient significance and magnitude. Considerations will be given to those individuals who have contributed outstanding service on a sustained basis.
- d. Contributions to units at the Group/Battalion level and below may be considered, but this award is intended to recognize Wing/Brigade and State level contributions.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Individuals that may nominate:
  - a. Leadership at the Battalion / Group level and above
  - b. President / Vice-President / Executive Director of NGAI
  - c. Chief of Staff of the Department of Military Affairs
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAI Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to five awards will be presented each year.

## **John A. Logan Leadership Award**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for the achievements and dedicated service of ILNG leaders who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and professionalism in their service to country and community.

### **Eligibility:**

Any current member of the ILNG with a minimum grade of O3, CW2, and E6.

### **Description:**

This award is a framed certificate with the NGAI emblem, brief citation of accomplishments, and indicative data.

### **Criteria:**

Whole-career information will be evaluated to include superior performance over multiple duty assignments, training, professional development activities; community service demonstrating leadership or exemplary character; military and civilian education; leadership qualities and character.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Nominations may be submitted by unit leadership at the Company/Squadron level and above.
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAI Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to four awards will be presented each year in the following categories:
  - i. Army Officer
  - ii. Army Enlisted
  - iii. Air Officer
  - iv. Air Enlisted
- d. An individual may not receive this award more than once.



## **Harold E. Keistler Service Award**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for an individual's dedication and service to NGAJ. Specifically, to acknowledge the willingness to devote many hours of personal time and effort in discharging the duties of an elected member of the NGAJ Executive Board.

### **Eligibility:**

Any individual who has served on the NGAJ Executive Board or Committee for a minimum of three years.

### **Description:**

There are two options for this award to be determined by the Awards Committee:

- a. A framed certificate with the NGAJ emblem, brief citation of accomplishments, and indicative data.
- b. A plaque affixed with the NGAJ emblem and a name plate with inscription

### **Criteria:**

- a. Serving on the NGAJ Executive Board or Committee will not alone justify selection for the award.
- b. An individual must have distinguished themselves in support of NGAJ purposes and objectives.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Individuals that may nominate:
  - a. Leadership at the Brigade / Wing level and above
  - b. Any member of the NGAJ Executive Board
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAJ Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included.

## **Outstanding Unit Award**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for one Army and one Air unit or organization for specific accomplishments and achievements of an outstanding nature relative to overall performance.

### **Eligibility:**

- a. ILARNG units at the company or detachment level.
- b. ILANG units at the flight or squadron level.
- c. Army or Air non-unit organizations (staff sections or separate offices).

### **Description:**

This award is a framed certificate with the NGAI emblem, brief citation of accomplishments, and indicative data.

### **Criteria:**

- a. The unit or organizations' contributions in support of NGAI activities and membership.
- b. The unit or organization's overall performance during inspections or training exercises above the State Level.
- c. The unit or organizations' contributions to community activities representing the Illinois National Guard.
- d. The unit or organizations' overall efforts to improve and promote the wellbeing of assigned unit members.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Nominations may be submitted by unit leadership and above.
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAI Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to two awards will be presented each year (one Army and one Air organization).

## **NGAI Citation**

### **Purpose:**

To provide recognition for individuals, units, and organizations for specific accomplishments and achievements of a beneficial nature to the ILNG or NGAI.

### **Eligibility:**

Any individual or organization: military or civilian.

### **Description:**

This award is a framed certificate with the NGAI emblem, brief citation of accomplishments, and indicative data.

### **Criteria:**

An individual or organization that was instrumental in exceptional performance of duty, or a specific achievement or contribution.

### **Nomination and Selection Procedures:**

- a. Any member of the ILNG or NGAI may nominate an individual to receive this award.
- b. Nominations will be submitted using the NGAI Award Nomination Form. Clear detailed statements of supporting justification must be included. Additional documentation may be attached if deemed appropriate.
- c. Up to ten citations will be presented each year.