



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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Chartered May 28, 1970

www.pow-miafamilies.org

HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE

The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, also known legally as the National League of POW/MIA Families, was incorporated in the District of Columbia on May 28, 1970. Voting membership is comprised of wives, children, parents, siblings and other close blood and legal relatives of Americans who were or are listed as Prisoners of War (POW), Missing in Action (MIA), Killed in Action/Body not Recovered (KIA/BNR) and returned American Vietnam War POWs. Associate membership is comprised of veterans, other concerned citizens and extended family member POW/MIA and KIA/BNR relatives who do not meet voting membership requirements. As a nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c) 3 humanitarian organization (FEIN #23-7071242), the League is financed by donations from the families, veterans and others. The League's sole mission is to obtain the release of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting for the missing and repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died serving our nation during the Vietnam War.

The League originated on the west coast in the late 1960s. Believing US Government policy of maintaining a low profile on the POW/MIA issue – while urging family members to refrain from publicly discussing the problem – was unjustified, the wife of a ranking POW initiated a loosely organized movement that evolved into the National League of POW/MIA Families. In October 1968, the first POW/MIA story was published. As a result of that publicity, the families began communicating with each other, and the group grew in strength from 50 to 100, to 300, and kept growing. Small POW/MIA family member groups, supported by concerned Americans, met with the North Vietnamese delegation in Paris, and countless thousands of Americans flooded them with telegraphic inquiries regarding the prisoners and missing, the first major activities in which there was widespread public participation.

Eventually, the necessity for formal incorporation was recognized. In May 1970, a special ad hoc meeting of the families was held at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, at which time the League's charter and by-laws were adopted. Elected by the voting membership, now numbering approximately 1,000, a seven-member Board of Directors meets regularly to determine League policy and direction. Board Members, Regional and State Coordinators represent the League nationwide.

The League's national office is directed by the Chairman of the Board and staffed by only three full-time employees: League Administrator Leslie Swindells, Amanda Kingery, Executive Assistant to the Chairman, and Nicholas Disano, dedicated solely to digitizing 50 years of accumulated League records, guided by a part-time specialist. Concerned citizens, family members and university-level interns provide support and are indispensable to the League's efforts. All participate in implementing policies established by the membership and elected, seven-member Board of Directors, as well as advocating and coordinating public awareness and education projects. Principal League spokesman Ann Mills-Griffiths, MIA/RR sister, served as League Executive Director from mid-1978 until mid-2011, at which time she was elected as Chairman of the Board and has continued her role as Chief Executive Officer.

For additional information on League policies, positions and activities, check the web site: www.pow-miafamilies.org. The League is nationally eligible for donations through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #10218) and United Way.

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