

46th Annual Meeting

June 24 – 27, 2015

The 2015/2017 Board of Directors Election results are in. The new Board will begin serving at the Annual Meeting.

The new Board is:

Ann Mills Griffiths

Karoni Forrester

Mark Stephensen

Sue Scott

Cindy Stonebraker

Eldon Robinson

Pam Cain

Thanks to all – candidates and voters – for participating!

IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING HOTEL RESERVATIONS FOR THE LEAGUE'S 46th ANNUAL MEETING The group code for making your reservations at the Hilton has changed. It is no longer MIA2015 -the group code is now PML. To call the Hilton using the group code PML 800-445-8667 To make your reservations online, go to:
http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/D/DCANAHF-PML-20150621/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

YOUR HELP IS CRUCIAL

April 24, 2015

As all of you know by now, the POW/MIA accounting mission is undergoing the most critical changes in the 40 years since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Throughout that time, the League has played a vital role in helping to bring home 956 men previously missing from that long-ago war. The League also played a crucial role in setting the stage for the expanded effort that has evolved. Yet, despite all the work for all those years, there are reasons for greater concern now than at any time since 1975. The future of this mission depends on decisions now being made. Can we be sure the comparatively small number of 1,627 US personnel still missing will continue to be a primary focus of US accounting efforts? The loud competing interests garner attention in Congress and the Administration and our small voice is in danger of being swamped.

Secretary Hagel's personal involvement and commitment gave reason for optimism that the reorganization he directed would be successful. The outcome is far from assured, although senior military officers were selected to restructure the various elements into one efficient, effective agency with higher priority and support. Clearly, former Secretary Hagel was determined to "get this right" and was not tolerant of

excuses; however, initial reorganization steps showed reluctance to build on the existing strengths in the process and look for ways to improve and expand the effort.

Things continue to move rapidly and with significant confusion and internal dissension within the three major organizations – DPMO, JPAC and LSEL – being consolidated into one agency, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA. RADM Michael T. Franken, USN, appointed by Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) Christine Wormuth as the Interim Director, met with the Board of Directors on March 14th. His presentation gave reason for optimism that he was open to new ideas, such as Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) now under consideration. The League Board welcomed the concept, while recognizing that P3s would likely be most useful on WWII incidents that occurred in Europe, the Pacific Islands, India and other countries in Asia, rather than to Vietnam War losses. Longstanding, hard-earned agreements reached with Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia give US officials access in the context of bilateral government-to-government cooperation.

What this means should be very clear: Now is the time for you to come to Washington, DC, to attend the League's 46th Annual Meeting. Your presence is needed! Numbers count, willingness to speak out and express your views counts, especially to Members of the House and Senate, and leaders in the Administration. **THE BOARD CANNOT DO THIS ALONE. NEVER HAS THERE BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME TO SHOW STRENGTH AND UNITY, IN LARGE NUMBERS, THAN NOW!**

Each missing man should be represented by at least two family members, designated by the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK), flown FREE to Washington, DC, as mandated by Congress and authorized by the Secretary of Defense. Yes, you must pay for your own hotel, but at greatly reduced rates negotiated by the League: \$149 plus taxes, per room, per night, single or double. Call the Hilton Crystal City Hotel, 800-445-8667, and use Code PML to obtain these rates. Register for the League's 46th Annual Meeting for only \$50 a person (if a League Member), and \$50 additional if you wish to attend the 46th Annual Meeting Dinner.

OUR POW/MIA NEED YOU, AND SO DOES THE LEAGUE, FOR STRENGTH AND IMPACT GOING FORWARD LEAGUE 46TH ANNUAL MEETING: This national convention will be the first opportunity to receive an In-Process Review (IPR) on complete reorganization of the accounting process. The Secretary of Defense will be invited as Keynote Speaker at the Opening Session on Thursday, June 25th, 9:00 a.m. Initial Operating Capability (IOC) of the new Agency will have been in place for six months, so there should be ample information to share with the families. Certainly, Interim Director RADM Michael Franken and Interim Deputy Director Maj Gen Kelly McKeague will be asked to provide their views and, in this era of mandated transparency, it should be very informative. We also hope to see the return of familiar, trusted people such as Johnnie Webb, Jennifer Nasarenko, Ron Ward, Bill Gadoury, Bob Maves, Bill Habeeb, our "Task Element 1, 2 & 3" leaders, all Stony Beach Team specialists, and many other dedicated civilians who play key roles in the accounting mission.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ALL LEAGUE MEMBERS ATTEND! COIN Assist transportation – Congressionally mandated, DoD-directed and Service-provided – will once again be available for two family members per man still missing and unaccounted-for to attend. Funding, personnel and leadership changes, and challenges within the POW/MIA community ensure information provided during the briefings and panels will be critical and will affect every interested family member.

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