

We've been informed that there are at least six official complaints against Mr. Jennings for hostile workplace environment, including one for sexual harassment, that are now under investigation by the DOD Inspector General's office.

Our Executive Director Ann Mills Griffiths was interviewed a couple of weeks ago, and the Chairman of the Korea/Cold War Families of the Missing was reportedly being called today; we strongly oppose Mr. Jennings continuing as DPMO Director, his third position.

Our objections to Mr. Jennings are focused 1st on policy weaknesses and the manner in which he develops policy without substantive interagency integration and dismisses Vietnam's ability to provide answers, 2nd on his hostility toward the families, and 3rd his attempts to take total control of our annual meetings AND operations of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and all DOD-related organizations.

Mr. Jennings plan is increasing DPMO control over operations, and he has several senior personnel assigned to this task, already having published an innocuous-sounding Strategic Plan, but the real agenda is fussy in its portrayal.

Close attention by Congress is his greatest fear, as careful scrutiny would reveal greater intrusion into operations, inappropriate behavior toward DPMO staff and employees, mismanagement of tax-payer funds allocated for the POW/MIA accounting effort, implementing plans to circumvent GS guidelines and attempts to subvert the League and other nonprofit, humanitarian organizations.

Our Board of Directors unanimously voted NO CONFIDENCE in DASD Jennings and the current leadership of DPMO; we are joined by unanimous vote of the Korea/Cold War Families of the Missing Board of Directors, headed by Irene Mandra, New York.

Both have provided our separate views to Dep. Sec. of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary, International Security Affairs, Peter Rodman, as has The Chosin Few, the organization of Korean War veterans who survived the horrible battles at the Chosin Reservoir; their vote was straightforward—to seek Mr. Jennings' removal.

DPMO staff were directed to revise their charter documents to ensure that DPMO is the sole USG organization to negotiate with foreign governments, speak to Congress, the media, the veterans' community and the families on the issue, take control of all field operations worldwide, and to find a way to control and take over all annual meetings of POW/MIA families.

They cite one provision of the DOD regulations pertaining to the ethics code to back their plan to take control of the League's annual meetings, but ignore the provision that allows all DoD elements to respond to invitations to participate in non-government conferences and events, as they routinely do for the Legion, VFW, DAV and countless other community groups, never seeking to control them, or their agenda and program.

In S. 1245/H.R. 2996, the Defense Authorization Bill of 1983, Congress amended 157 of title 10, U.S. Code, to "authorize the Sec. of Defense to provide transportation for next-of-kin of certain persons who are unaccounted for to attend annual national meetings sponsored by the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.

That authorization was amended by the 107th Congress to include the Korea/Cold War families by noting families of American military and certain civilians unaccounted for since the end of World War II, are entitled to DOD transportation to attend the annual meetings (plural).

When we raised this to Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Peter Rod-

man, Mr. Jennings, who had joined the meeting, stated that "Congressional intent is irrelevant."

For the past year, the League has endured repeated attempts by Mr. Jennings and his immediate front-office staff to take total control of our annual meetings, not only the agenda during which the briefings are presented, but even selecting the hotel, setting the date, and holding Congressionally-authorized transportation as leverage to force the League to accede to DPMO's demands.

Mr. Jennings has now gone too far, insisting on total control, contracted with another hotel in Crystal City, set the date one day earlier, has distributed his plan to all Vietnam War POW/MIA families and given instructions to the Military Services about transportation.

For the good of the issue and our system of checks and balances, as well as unity in pursuing answers from what are mostly communist-controlled countries, Mr. Jennings' control mentality must stop.

The League and the Korea/Cold War Families of the Missing have called for his removal, or resignation, in the best interest of the issue, the families and the USG, particularly DPMO employees, but also JPAC and other operational organizations and the Military Service Casualty Offices.

A TRIBUTE TO VERNON PARKER

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2005

Ms. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Vernon Parker. Little did I know as I sat in my Colorado history class in seventh grade my teacher, Mr. Vern Parker, was an extraordinary man.

The community where I grew up was small, and everyone knew everyone else. The school in Galeton was small, too. There were 17 students in my class. When we were in the seventh grade, one of our favorite classes was Colorado History. Evidently classroom space was limited, because we met in the music room and sat on folding chairs. It seemed a little odd not to have desks but we juggled our books on our laps and managed quite well.

Mr. Parker was enthusiastic about the subject and kept us all interested. I remember one quiz that he gave us, in particular. He gave us a list of towns and instructed us to identify those that were located in Colorado. Although I'm a native of the State, I wasn't sure about some of them. When I saw "Parker" on the list, I was convinced it was a trick question. After all, it was my teacher's last name. Needless to say, I didn't get 100 percent on that quiz.

Even though one of the boys in our class was Mr. Parker's nephew, who called him by his first name, I still was in awe of my teacher and I tried to do my best. Once Mr. Parker complimented me on my performance in a talent show and his praise gave me confidence and helped me more than he could ever know.

We were unaware of the incredible experiences Mr. Parker had before he came to be our teacher. We didn't know the hero that stood before us.

Mr. Parker served in the United States Army in the special unit known as "Wolfpack", which worked with friendly South Korean troops during the Korean War, and he was struck by

lightning at Fort Riley between tours in Korea. He served from 1949 until he was wounded in 1953. During this time, he was awarded two Silver Stars for gallantry in action during a battle in which he destroyed a Communist tank using a bazooka. In that same battle, he was wounded by an exploding artillery shell and was awarded the Purple Heart.

When he went home, he married his sweetheart Sylvia Howard in 1953. Vern and Sylvia made sacrifices, and he earned his Master's degree from Colorado State College of Education in 1959. They were blessed with three children—Jim, Jerry, and Joe.

Mr. Parker began teaching school at Galeton, Colorado in 1958. He went on to become the principal of Galeton's elementary and junior high schools. He was the school Superintendent in Briggsdale, Colorado, for three years and he continued teaching in Weldona, Colorado, from 1976 to 1979.

When Mr. Parker retired he opened and ran a small business. He was a member of the Lions Club and the V.F.W., a Boy Scout leader, and a volunteer fireman. Vernon's love of teaching and working with young people has stayed with him always and he takes great pleasure in the accomplishments of his former students and scouts. He has served his community and his country well.

My classmates and I liked him a lot, and we thought he had a good sense of humor. Recently, I acquired one of the textbooks we used in his class. Every time I come across the book, it brings back good memories and I always stop and thumb through it.

I am proud to have been a student of Vernon Parker, and I know Congressman FRANKS is as well. Mr. Speaker, I'm very thankful for the positive influence Vern Parker had on my life as my teacher and I'm also very thankful as an American for the sacrifices he has made for our freedom and liberty. May God bless our teachers who positively influence young people, and may God bless our precious veterans who have made sacrifices on our behalf.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TREEHOUSE AT CRADLE BEACH CAMP

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the completion of the state of New York's first wheelchair accessible treehouse at Cradle Beach Camp in Angola. This 650 square foot structure that sits among the trees eleven feet above the ground is another important chapter in Cradle Beach Camp's mission to provide rewarding and educational summer camp experience to children with disadvantages or special needs. This innovative treehouse will provide a valuable learning and recreational asset for wheelchair-bound campers.

Since 1888 Cradle Beach Camp has provided rewarding summer break fun and learning to disabled children and children who would often not be able to attend a camp. Now approximately 900 children every year are given an unforgettable experience, participating in energetic and entertaining activities