



# The REGISTER

## Selective Service System

THE REGISTER

Winter 2009 - 2010

### Agency Under New Management With 12th Director

President Barack Obama announced on October 28, 2009, the nomination of Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence G. Romo (USAFR, ret.) as Director of the Selective Service System. On December 4, Romo officially became Director, followed by a swearing-in ceremony held December 12, in San Antonio, TX. Director Romo became the second person from San Antonio to hold the position, following Gil Coronado (1994 to 2001), who served under President Bill Clinton.

Before this appointment, Romo was the soldier and family assistance program manager for the U.S. Army 5th Recruiting Brigade, responsible for the family programs of seven recruiting battalions in a multi-state area. He also was an admissions liaison officer for the U.S. Air Force Academy for 29 years. Since 1988, Romo has served annually on various congressional service academies nomination selection panels.


Prior to these duties, Romo served in various U.S. Air Force assignments both on active duty and in the reserve. He served as a USAF academy admissions advisor, in various positions supporting the operation of the Minuteman Missile Weapon and Launch System, in Training Operations, and as an air transportation officer. Upon retiring from the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Romo was the USAF academy liaison officer director for South Texas.

Romo joined Civil Service in 1987. From 1987 to 1992, he served as an item manager for the Directorate of Special Weapons, and from 1992 through 1999, he was the transition assistance program specialist at Kelly Air Force Base.

Romo served as the chairman of Bexar County Veterans Committee and also as the chair of San Antonio Commission for Children and Families. In addition, he is a member of the American Legion, American GI Forum, Association of United States Army, and the Reserve Officers Association of the United States.



*SELECTIVE SERVICE DIRECTOR — Lawrence G. Romo is the newly appointed Director of the Selective Service System.*

He earned his bachelor of science degree from the USAF Academy and a master of education degree from Montana State University – Northern (formerly Northern Montana College). 

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## Message to Board Members -- From the Director


TO: All Board Members

Upon assuming the responsibilities as the new Director, it is fitting that I introduce myself to you as the largest contingent of personnel within Selective Service. I have already spoken to several of you and am highly impressed with your backgrounds, achievements, and desire to serve our Nation in this important assignment. The Agency cannot activate or conduct its business of conscription without each of you.

Yes, there have been many, many changes at the Selective Service System since 1980 on almost every front: staffing, budget, programs, and organizational structure. However, two things remain constant -- the registration requirement of young men ages 18 through 25 and the indispensable service of a long line of dedicated Board Members.

I am truly appreciative of your volunteering for training and service, together with your civic

efforts to encourage male youth of our Nation to satisfy the law. Your visits to Post Offices and your community outreach efforts are especially helpful because you are reaching the specific local audience that Selective Service must "reach out and touch" so that all might comply with the law and no man inadvertently waives his future opportunities through ignorance of the registration requirement. Your help goes a very long way in our awareness endeavors.

Again, please accept the heartfelt thank you from me and all of us here at the Selective Service System. American owes you a debt of gratitude for your proactive support of this vital national security program. 

  
Lawrence G. Romo


## Former Board Member Recognized By Hometown's Citizens

Former Selective Service board member, Peter Pappas, was recognized by Palmer, MA, citizens for his generous spirit. At a ceremony held at a senior living community in Western Massachusetts, State Rep. Thomas Petrolati read a proclamation honoring Pappas for his work over the years organizing events in Ludlow and Palmer. In the next twenty years, a trophy in Pappas' name will honor the winning football team of annual Veterans Memorial Thanksgiving Classic game between Palmer and Ludlow high schools.



*GENEROUS SPIRIT — State Rep. Thomas Petrolati thanks former Selective Service board member Peter Pappas for his generosity and support.*

The 86-year-old Pappas, resident of Ludlow, was noted for simple acts of kindness: Once when watching Palmer High School cheerleaders perform in the rain, he bought them hooded pullovers and when the town's school committee implemented an athletic fee five-years ago, Pappas donated \$1,000 to a fund to help 20 students who couldn't afford the fee. His generosity is known to range from helping veterans of all ages, including those of his own generation, to ensuring young athletes are recognized for their accomplishments. These are just a few community-minded acts of Pappas' giving spirit.

A World War II veteran, night cook at a diner, post office employee, Palmer's veterans' agent, he was the highest "vote-getter" both times he ran for town council. Pappas said, "What I do for myself will die with me. What I do for others will live for forever." Selective Service was appreciative to have had him serve as a dedicated board member. 

## All Hands Meeting Follows Final Report from Human Capital Survey Focus Group Study

Due to the poor performance on the 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Selective Service was mandated by OPM to prepare a response. Used as a tool to measure federal employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present within their agencies, the Federal Human Capital Survey results provide insight into the challenges agency leaders face in ensuring the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce and how well they are responding to the issues. Based on past data, Selective Service had reported a trend of increasing dissatisfaction among its workforce.

As tasked by OPM, Selective Service identified and addressed ten questions in which it scored the lowest compared with the rest of Federal Government. A series of questions were acquired and/or modified from Title 5 (Administrative Personnel) of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1 (Office of Personnel Management), Part 250 (Personnel Management in Agencies). Additional questions were derived from the 2008 and previous surveys.



*ALL HANDS EFFORTS — Then Acting Director Ernie Garcia leads the All-Hand Meeting in response to the human capital survey report.*

A steering committee, led by Tracy Cotton, committee chair and facilitator, along with committee members Pat Schuback and Deborah Pinkney, was established to develop these focus group questions under each specific topic. The group's compiled responses, discussion issues, and solutions were identified. Between August 19 through September 9, nine focus group sessions were conducted covering the specific topics.

The groups consisted of Selective Service employees from National Headquarters and the regions under the GS-14 level who volunteered their time and input. Focus groups participants varied by age, gender, ethnicity, occupational discipline, income, and interests.

Two weeks following the last focus group session, the steering committee delivered a final report in a group setting before the Selective Service leadership, which included the acting director, associate directors, region directors, and general counsel. The report, available on the agency's intranet, conveyed general attitudes and themes, discussion points, and potential solutions.

### Outcomes

An all hands meeting was held by then Acting Director Ernest Garcia, November 4, 2009, after the final report was turned into OPM. He shared his views of the final report to OPM and addressed several common themes. The major consensus was a lack of two-way communication between senior management and the staff.

Actions implemented following the meeting included opening of the conference/training room as a lunch room, weekly staffing report of upcoming happenings and meetings, and drawings for monthly free garage parking.

Once Director Lawrence Romo took office, among the first actions taken were the installations of suggestion boxes, reorganization of the agency's National Headquarters, and steps to reduce backlogs at the Data Management Center.

As a result of the suggestion box submissions, Director Romo terminated restrictive practices that included no personal photos in cubicles, placement of monitors to face the hallways, and no curtains over the entrance way of the cubicles during lunch periods.

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## Region III Attends Training Conference for Mexican American Rights

Mr. Jerry Johnson and Ms. Carol Mills represented Region III Headquarters at the 12th Annual Training Conference for the National Organization for Mexican American Rights (NOMAR). The event was held at Caesars Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, NV, August 26 - 28, 2009. The other federal organizations represented were from the U.S. Census Bureau, Health and Human Services, and nearly all branches of the Armed Forces.

Mr. Valentin Varela, Chairman of the Board for NOMAR, asked everyone to give a short briefing about their agency. Selective

Service focused on the registration requirement. Since one of the main topics during the conference was federal employment, Ms. Mills stressed the importance of young men being registered as the first necessary step.


The Department of Labor ran an advertisement in the local paper indicating they were accepting applications on the second day of the conference. Thus, some attendees thought the conference was a job fair and visited the Selective Service booth seeking employment.

“We weren’t able to help with employment; however, we were able to explain the agency’s mission and the registration requirement. We also discussed the volunteer local board member program and verified a few registrations.” Johnson and Mills added, “Unfortunately,



*PROMOTING REGISTRATION AWARENESS — Jerry Johnson, a program analyst from Region III Headquarters, helps colleague Carol Mills (not shown) manage the Selective Service booth at the National Organization for Mexican American Rights conference.*


we were unable to register any of the young men that came through the exhibit hall; they were only given about 15 minutes to visit all the vendors in the hall. We did provide them with our web site information and explained how user friendly it is to register online.” Selective Service staffers also gave out lots of trinkets and provided multi-language literature.

It was estimated there were approximately 150 attendees at this conference. Selective Service staff reports, “On the second day, there was a lot of down time for the exhibitors with little traffic flow in the exhibit hall. We did not feel we had a significant impact in the registration arena, but hopefully our literature and conversations will provide future results.” 

## Promoting Selective Service Awareness at Michigan Air Show

Three of Region I's Michigan detachment Reserve Force Officers participated at last summer's Selfridge Air National Guard Base Air Show in Michigan. Captains Lynn Smith-Tucker, Brian McDonald, and Ceehl Phillips, of Michigan 1-6 Detachment were joined by Justin Alseldo, Selective Service's contractor for air shows.

The main attraction at the free event, with approximately 190,000 attendees over the two days, was the U.S. Air Force Thunderbird Demonstration Team. The Selective Service booth was next to static displays of the USAF A-10 and F-16. One person manned the booth, while two officers discussed Selective Service and the registration requirement with visitors.

A total of nine actual registrations, five registration verifications, and 31 potential registrations (where the registrants did not know their Selective Service registration number) were handled at the booth. Overall, there were 695 total inquiries during the event, which provided a positive public relations experience for Selective Service. 



*SELFRIDGE AIR SHOW* — Selective Service RFOs from Michigan Detachment 1-6 manned the booth at the Thunderbirds Air Show held at Selfridge Air National Guard Base Air Show August 22 - 23, 2009.



*SELECTIVE SERVICE PROMOTES HANDS-ON AWARENESS* — Above photo: Captain Lynn Smith-Tucker, USAFR (right) answers questions regarding benefits and programs linked to the Selective Service registration requirement.

*Left photo: Captain Ceehl Phillips, USAFR, (standing left) watches as a young man registers with Selective Service. Meanwhile, Captain Brian McDonald, USAFR, (seat at lower right) discusses a man's civic responsibility to register with Selective Service.*



## Remembering Carlos C. Ogden

As citizens of this great nation, we are inspired by those who have preceded us and made it possible for us to enjoy the liberties we hold dear. Their valiant sacrifices are the very foundation on which America was founded. Our brave patriots are the backbone of a powerful legacy we proudly pass to the next generation of Americans.

Here at Selective Service we, too, have heroes. If there was a hall of fame here at National Headquarters, we would without question, include Carlos C. Ogden.

Mr. Ogden's first encounter with the Selective Service was in 1941, when the agency drafted him. At that time he was attending Eastern Illinois University where he was a star athlete in two sports, basketball and football, aspiring to become a teacher. The Army sent him to Officer Candidate School, and he was subsequently stationed at Camp Roberts, in California.

In June 1944, now a First Lieutenant in the Army, he and his division, Company K, 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Division landed in Normandy just after D-Day. A division made up mostly of unseasoned soldiers. Their mission was to capture the port city of Cherbourg, heavily defended by the Germans. Just days later, on June 25, 1944, the commanding officer was wounded and German gunfire were decimating the American troops. Lieutenant Ogden's thoughts at that time were "I might as well get killed going forward as back." He stepped out and single-handedly destroyed three German gun emplacements. His actions that day are described in detail on the citation read at his Medal of Honor ceremony held one year later. The citation reads "On the morning of 25 June 1944, near Fort du Roule, guarding the approaches to Cherbourg, France, 1st Lieutenant Ogden's company was pinned down by fire from a German 88-mm gun and 2 machine guns. Arming himself with an M-1 rifle, a grenade launcher, and a number of rifle and hand grenades, he left his company in position and advanced alone, under fire, up the slope toward the enemy emplacements. Struck on the head and knocked down by a glancing machine gun bullet, 1st Lt. Ogden, in spite of his painful wound and enemy fire from close range, continued up the hill. Reaching a vantage point, he silenced the 88mm with a well-placed rifle grenade and then, with hand grenades, knocked out the 2 machine guns, again being painfully wounded. 1st Lt. Ogden's heroic leadership and indomitable courage

in alone silencing these enemy weapons inspired his men to greater effort and cleared the way for the company to continue the advance and reach its objectives."

Mr. Ogden told the story this way, "Two bullets went through my helmet and they glazed my head and knocked me down. And I had a grenade in my hand with the pin pulled." The fall had broken his wrist, but he clutched the handle of the grenade so it would not detonate. Then he got up and wiped out the gun position and two machine guns with hand grenades. Although suffering a leg wound and incurring damage to his eardrums from the head concussion and bleeding, he refused medical treatment. He then rallied his troops for an assault on the remaining German defenders.

Mr. Ogden reached the rank of major before leaving the Army in 1946. His military awards are Medal of Honor, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart (4).



After the war, he was a counselor with the Veterans Administration in California for ten years, an executive with the Greater San Jose Chamber of Commerce, and later served as our Selective Service State Director for California. He served as our State Director during the Vietnam War, when there were anti-war and anti-draft demonstrations. Mr. Ogden said that was a difficult time and he received threats on his life.

He was married to Louise, and had four sons, Jim, Bud, Ralph, and Fred, and they lived in San Jose, California. He coached basketball and Little League baseball, was a scoutmaster and a civic leader in his community of San Jose. He also served as the national president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society – known as 'the most exclusive society in the country.'

This American hero died at the age of 83, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on June 25, 2001, on the 57th anniversary of the day he became an American hero.

May each of us keep in mind one of our own who now rests under a simple white stone so close in proximity to Selective Service National Headquarters. [SSS](#)



## A "New Life" as Told By Gaston Naranjo


Sometimes getting to know our coworkers can give new "insight" to bits of history. A member of our own Selective Service family has first-hand knowledge of one of the most crucial times between the U.S. and Cuba. The unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Cuban dictator Fidel Castro during the "Bay of Pigs" attempt was more than just a story to one of our own: National Headquarter's Gaston Naranjo. The events as he recalls, left a lasting impression, even as a young child...



*At that time, I was five years old, too young to remember what happened, but there is something even a young kid does not forget. I remember my parents and sister were in the kitchen area when we received a phone call. It was my grandmother letting us know the invasion was on. Then the phone went dead and we all went under the table...just as kids were trained in school in the U.S. to go under the school desk during a nuclear attack, I assume the same was done in Cuba (in kindergarten then). The next thing I remember was looking out the kitchen window and I saw that it was night time where there were flashes of light with thundering sounds throughout the night, with the only thing missing being the sound of rain. I was too young to be scared, but it all seemed like a bad storm, which we waited until it was over. Cuba had its share of*

*hurricanes where the storms would last several hours. It appears the invasion lasted about the same amount of time, but I can only guess. When you are young, everything seems larger, longer, and more intense than when you become older. This invasion happened in April 1961, and my family left Cuba in November the same year. Fortunately for us, my aunt and uncle were living in the U.S. where they acquired VISAs for us from there. My uncle was a Cuban naval officer, who was one of six navy officers assisting the U.S. during WWII. His assignment was to protect merchant ships traveling from Europe to America from German U-boats. Since he was a naval officer before the revolution, he and all military personnel who served under Batista were considered enemies of the Revolution. He and my aunt had to escape by boat to the U.S. seeking asylum. In November 1961, the Cuban government only allowed one family member to leave the country. So, my father left first during the Thanksgivings holiday and a week later, my mother, sister, and I flew to Miami, FL, with only what we could carry. After that event, began my new life far different from what I left behind.*

Naranjo has been with Selective Service since November 1988, and serves as the statistician. He is a native from the D.C. area and is married to his wife, Andrea, who is a professor at George Washington University, and teaches children with limited English proficiency.

"Get to know those around you...you might be intrigued as well." 


## Region II's Longest Serving High School Registrar

Ms. Mary Riley, formerly principal, Central High School, Phenix City, AL, the only high school in the city's public schools system. She is currently serving as High School Registrar for Selective Service and has served 35 years in school system.



Riley was appointed registrar and received her certificate of appointment for Selective Service on January 10, 1994. She stated she wants to continually help Selective Service in any way she can.

She helps the 17- and 18-year-old males become aware of their civic duty to register with Selective Service by working with counselors, ROTC, and teachers in history classes at Central High School. Riley ensures the students become aware of their responsibilities and obligations and respond in a timely manner. The male students mainly register online.

Riley stated these young males are blessed to have opportunities such as registering with Selective Service. 

## Human Capital Survey Report (Cont. from pg. 3)

Director Romo made organizational changes based on his leadership style, personal assessment of the climate and operations of Selective Service, and the need to improve agency efficiency, including span of control and customer responsiveness.

A chief of staff position in the front office is restored to orchestrate the major planning documents and extra-agency reporting requirements. Actual experience with the prior configuration demonstrated that it was dysfunctional. For instance, the previous merger of Mobilization and Information Technology into one Operations Directorate was a mistake and produced problems in workload management, budget, responsiveness, and span of control. Thus, these two functions are separated into two stand-alone associate directorates.

The development of the Strategic Plan and ensuring its influence on other budget and performance documents was fragmented. This activity is now centralized in a Policy, Analysis, and Evaluation element established under the Office of the Director.

The financial management office was realigned as a stand-alone associate directorate to ensure more responsive, accountable activity to the front office.

The seriousness of the communication backlogs at the Data Management Center is recognized and corrective actions are already underway. Specifically, dollars were allocated immediately to fund overtime to reduce the backlog. Further, five full-time job announcements were posted to provide necessary staff and return to our previous level of satisfactory service. [SSS](#)



*The Register* is an unofficial publication of the Selective Service System, National Headquarters, Arlington, VA 22209. Viewpoints herein do not represent official policy.

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*The Register* welcomes any news of interest to the Selective Service System employees. Send article submissions to Editor, *The Register*, Selective Service System, National Headquarters, Arlington, VA 22209-2425.