



**MG**

**STEPHEN**

**SEPT 17, 2011**

**TOM**

**REMARKS**

**JPAC POW/MIA**

**CEREMONY/ANN**

**MILLS-**

**GRIFFITHS**

**INTRODUCTION**

**ALOHA AND GOOD MORNING! I WOULD LIKE TO START  
BY EXTENDING A SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE  
FOLLOWING DIGNITARIES TODAY: ALLEN HOE,  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY,, REAR ADMIRAL DIXON  
SMITHCOMMANDER, NAVY REGION HAWAII AND OF  
COURSE A A GRACIOUS WELCOME AND MAHOLO TO MS.  
ANN MILLS-GRIFFITHS: OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER WHO I  
WILL INTRODUCE TO YOU LATER IN MY REMARKS.  
ALSO, THANK YOU MR. CASTAGNETTI FOR HOSTING  
THIS EVENT AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOUR  
WONDERFUL STAFF FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE. I'D  
ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE GREAT STATE OF HAWAII  
FOR HOSTING THE JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING  
COMMAND FOR ALL OF THESE YEARS.**

**MAHALO TO ALL OF YOU – VETERANS, FRIENDS,  
FAMILIES, AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS – FOR JOINING  
US THIS MORNING. I WANT TO BEGIN BY NOTING THAT  
THIS IS ALSO A DAY TO REMEMBER THOSE BRAVE MEN  
AND WOMEN WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN HARM’S WAY IN  
IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN.**

**WE PAUSE TODAY TO REFLECT ON THE HEROISM OF  
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS WHO ENDURED  
THE HARDSHIP OF ENEMY CONFINEMENT, AND OF  
THOSE WHOSE FATE IN TIME OF WAR REMAINS  
UNKNOWN.**

**POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY EVENTS ARE BEING HELD  
THROUGHOUT OUR NATION ON THIS DAY TO REMIND**

**US OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH FOR THEIR COUNTRY.**

**HOW DO WE, AS A NATION, THANK THOSE WHO HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH ON OUR BEHALF?**

**WE BEGIN BY NEVER FORGETTING THEM OR THEIR SACRIFICE. AMERICA'S FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR ARE AMONG OUR NATION'S MOST REVERED HEROES. THEY SERVED WITH DIGNITY AND HONOR UNDER THE WORST OF HUMAN CONDITIONS – STARVATION, ISOLATION, TORTURE AND THE EVER-PRESENT THREAT OF DEATH. YET EVEN DURING THEIR DARKEST HOUR, THEY DEMONSTRATED REMARKABLE PERSONAL COURAGE AND UNWAVERING DEVOTION TO FAMILY AND COUNTRY. THEIR STRENGTH IS A TESTAMENT TO AMERICAN CHARACTER.**

**AND AS WE THINK ABOUT THE HEROES WHO  
SACRIFICED SO MUCH, WE MUST NOT FORGET THE  
THOUSANDS OF MILITARY FAMILIES TORMENTED BY  
UNCERTAINTY DUE TO THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES  
WHOSE WHEREABOUTS REMAIN UNKNOWN. WHILE WE  
CANNOT KNOW, WE CANNOT FEEL THE SAME PAIN AS  
YOU -- AS PART OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY, OUR  
HEARTS GO OUT TO YOU FOR YOUR SUFFERING. WE  
WILL NEVER CEASE IN OUR MISSION TO BRING  
AMERICA'S MISSING SERVICE MEMBERS HOME; WE WILL  
NEVER FORGET THE SACRIFICES THEY MADE TO KEEP  
THIS NATION FREE AND WE WILL NOT FORGET THE  
FAMILIES WHO SACRIFICED SO MUCH.**

**WITH THAT I WOULD LIKE TO NOW TALK ABOUT  
OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER TODAY MS. ANN MILLS-  
GRIFFITHS. ANN MILLS-GRIFFITHS CURRENTLY SERVES  
AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BI-ANNUALLY ELECTED BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA  
FAMILIES. SHE SERVED FOR 30 YEARS AS THE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF  
THE NONPROFIT, HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION IN  
WASHINGTON, DC. SHE IS A FRIEND AND PATRIOT,  
FIGHTING FOR THE POW/MIA CAUSE FOR MORE THAN  
FOUR DECADES. SHE STEPPED DOWN FROM HER  
POSITION AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BUT FOR THOSE OF  
YOU WHO KNOW ANN, IT IS NOT BECAUSE SHE IS  
TAKING A BREAK OR RESPITE FROM THE CAUSE.**

**WHAT STARTED OUT AS A COMMUNITY OF POW  
WIVES...MOTHERS, FATHERS...SISTERS AND BROTHERS  
SEEKING ANSWERS ABOUT THEIR LOVED ONES HAS  
EVOLVED INTO A MASSIVE COMMUNITY OF FAMILIES  
SACRIFICING THROUGHOUT THE YEARS TO HONOR A  
COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNT FOR OUR HEROES.**

**I AM TRULY HUMBLLED BY THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
AND BY ANN'S TIRELESS PERSERVERANCE FOR THIS  
MOST NOBLE CAUSE.**

**PAUSE**

**PLEASE WELCOME MS. ANN MILLS-GRIFFITHS.**