

The Washington Times

www.washingtontimes.com

Group seeks parole denial for border agent killer

By Jerry Seper

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Published June 12, 2006

The National Border Patrol Council, which represents all 10,500 of the U.S. Border Patrol's nonsupervisory agents, has asked the U.S. Parole Board Commission to deny parole to a man convicted in the killing of two Border Patrol agents.

Advertisement

Florencio Lopes Mationg, who was convicted with three other men in the June 1967 murder of agents Theodore L. Newton Jr., 25, and George F. Azrak, 21, is scheduled for a parole hearing this week.

Sentenced to two life terms plus 50 years for murder, robbery and stabbing on a government reservation, Mationg was convicted of killing the agents at a highway checkpoint along a deserted stretch of road in rural San Diego County, Calif.

Border Patrol Agent Ronald Zermeno, who has coordinated an effort to keep Mationg in prison, said that a petition with 4,000 signatures was presented to the commission and that several law-enforcement authorities and family members will attend the hearing tomorrow at the federal prison in Florence, Colo.

"Mationg brutally kidnapped and brutally murdered two young men in the prime of their lives and has never shown any remorse," Agent Zermeno said.

Court records said Mationg and the others were attempting to smuggle 800 pounds of marijuana when they were stopped at the checkpoint. The records show the men overpowered the agents. The petition says the agents "were handcuffed and driven to an abandoned shack in the desert, where they were shot to death at point-blank range while helplessly manacled to a stove. Their bodies were not discovered until three days later."

Mationg, Victor Bono and brothers Harold and Alfred Montoya were arrested in connection with the killings. Although Mationg and Bono were given life sentences and the Montoya brothers were sentenced to 30 years in prison, only Mationg remains in prison.

After Bono was granted parole in 1998, several Border Patrol agents started petition drives with the NBPC to ensure Mationg was not set free.

Agent Newton was married and had two children. Agent Azrak was single and had been on the job less than two months. Each year, the Border Patrol presents the Newton-Azrak Award to agents "for extraordinary contributions, service or accomplishments reflecting unusual courage or bravery in the line of duty."

Mationg has shown no remorse, Agent Zermeno said, noting that in a November 2003 newspaper interview, he described the shooting as a matter of "self-preservation," adding that "it had to be them or us." In the interview, Mationg said he shot Agent Newton and ordered an accomplice to shoot Agent Azrak "in the head."

"Each day throughout the United States, thousands of law-enforcement officers prepare to go to work knowing that they might not return home," Agent Zermeno said. "These officers selflessly put their lives on the line every day. They leave their families at home and perform a major contribution to our society without regard to their personal safety."

The NBPC urged the Parole Board Commission in a petition to "carefully consider the facts of this case and Florencio Lopes Mationg's lack of remorse." The council said any compassion should be "directed toward the families and friends" of the two agents.

"Remember that not all of his victims have died; instead, many were sentenced to a lifetime without a husband, father, son, brother, friend or colleague. Please, do not reopen their painful wounds by releasing this merciless murderer back into society," it said.