



Reserve Forces Policy Board

Major General (Ret) Arnold L. Punaro, USMCR

Chairman

MajGen (Ret) Arnold L. Punaro, USMCR took the oath of office as Chairman of the Reserve Forces Policy Board on June 10, 2022 after the Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin directed that the Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB) could resume operations after his Zero Base Review (ZBR) on November 29, 2021. On June 9, 2022, he was once again appointed Chair. MajGen (Ret) Punaro originally took the oath of office as Chairman of the Reserve Forces Policy Board on September 12, 2011 by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and served until February 16, 2021 as the result of the ZBR. He was the first person to hold the Chair under the revised functions and structure established by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2011. He was reappointed by Secretaries of Defense Chuck Hagel, Ashton Carter, James Mattis, and Mark Esper for additional terms.



The RFPB serves as an independent advisor to the Secretary of Defense on all National Guard and Reserve matters to include advice and recommendations on strategies, policies and practices to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency and effectiveness of the reserve components.

Mr. Punaro is chief executive officer of The Punaro Group, LLC, a Washington-based firm he founded in 2010, specializing in federal budget and market analysis, business strategy and capture, acquisition due diligence, government relations, communications, sensitive operations, business risk analysis and compliance, and crisis management. He consults for a broad array of Fortune 100 companies and has been recognized by Defense News as one of the 100 most influential individuals in U.S. Defense.

He was previously an Executive Vice President at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) from 1997 to 2010, where he served as a Sector Manager, Deputy President of the Federal Business Segment, and led SAIC's Corporate Business Development organization. He was the senior corporate official responsible for SAIC's government affairs, worldwide communications and support operations, to include crisis and risk management, as well as general manager of their Washington operations and supervisor of SAIC's corporate Small and Disadvantaged Business office.

From 1973 to 1997, Mr. Punaro worked for Senator Sam Nunn in National Security matters. He served as his director of National Security Affairs and then as Staff Director of the Senate Armed Services Committee (eight years) and Staff Director for the Minority (five years). In his work with Senator Nunn and the Senate Armed Services Committee, he was involved in the formulation of all major defense and intelligence legislation, the oversight and review of all policy and programs, and civilian and military nominations.

A retired U.S. Marine Corps Major General, he was assigned as the Director of the Marine Corps Reserve from May 2001 to October 2003, and as Deputy Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (Mobilization) from August 2000 to May 2001. From 1997 to 2000, he served as the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. He served on the Reserve Forces Policy Board as a member from 1997 to 2003.

His previous assignments as a general officer were Commanding General, Marine Corps Mobilization Command, Kansas City, Missouri; and Deputy Commander, Marine Forces Reserve. He served on active duty as an Infantry Platoon Commander in Vietnam where he was awarded the Bronze Star for valor and Purple Heart. In December 1990, he was mobilized for Operation Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia. In December 1993, he completed a tour of extended active duty as Commander of Joint Task Force Provide Promise (Forward) in the former Yugoslavia. He was mobilized for a third time in May 2003 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition to chairing the Reserve Forces Policy Board, Mr. Punaro was Chairman of the National Defense Industrial Association in 2013, the country's largest industry group with over 1,600 member companies. He is on the Board of Advisors for the Center for a New American Security. He is a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., and a visiting scholar at the Bipartisan Policy Center. He serves on the non-profit boards of the Atlantic Council, the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs Board of Visitors, the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, and the Georgia Institute of Technology Sam Nunn School of International Affairs.

Beginning in January 2005, Mr. Punaro chaired the independent Commission on the National Guard and Reserves established by Congress. The Commission submitted three reports and completed their work in April 2008 with most of their 117 recommendations largely adopted by DoD and the Congress. In September 2010, with the Center for New American Security Studies (CNAS), he co-chaired a review, which issued a "Report Card" covering the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. He served on the Defense Business Board (DBB) as a founding member at its inception in 2002 until 2013, and resumed serving on the DBB in 2015 until 2021.

He also served as a Commissioner on the Statutory Independent Commission on the Iraqi Security Forces, which submitted their assessment to Congress on September 6, 2007. In 2008, he was a task force member for retired U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Jim Jones, then the U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Regional Security. In 1997, he chaired The Defense Reform Task Force for Secretary of Defense William Cohen, supporting the Secretary's Defense Reform Initiative. Finally, he served as Deputy Executive Director of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century (1998-2001).

He has a Master of Arts degree from the University of Georgia and a Master of Arts degree from Georgetown University, the latter in national security studies. He was on the Adjunct Faculty of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University for ten years where he taught an annual graduate level course entitled "National Security Decision-making."

Mr. Punaro is the recipient of numerous recognitions including the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service in March 2009 and again in January 2014. In August 1993, he received the Marine Corps League's "Iron Mike" Award for "exceptionally outstanding service" and "unwavering commitment" for over 20 years to "ensuring a strong national defense." He has received the Air Force Association's "Exceptional Service Award," the National Guard "Minuteman Award," the Army's "Outstanding Civilian Service Medal," and SAIC's "Founders Award" and two special CEO awards. He has over 20 military awards and decorations to include the Distinguished Service Medal as well as numerous civic recognitions.

He is the author of two books, *"On War and Politics: The Battlefield Inside Washington's Beltway,"* published by the Naval Institute Press in October 2016; and *"The Ever-Shrinking Fighting Force,"* published by the Punaro Press, LLC in June 2021.
(As of June 2023)