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FACT SHEET – POW/MIA FACTS AND STATISTICS

September 2, 2005



Overview:

Each year, the third Friday in September is set aside to honor the commitment and the sacrifices made by this nation's Prisoners of War and those who are still Missing in Action, as well as their families. This year, National POW/MIA Recognition Day 2005 will be observed on **Friday, September 16, 2005**

Date:

By custom, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is often observed in Pentagon ceremonies on the third Friday in September. This year, on Friday, September 16, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will host the Pentagon's National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremony at the Pentagon River Parade Field at 11:00 A.M.

Decisions on exact dates of observance rest with local planners depending on the needs of the military or civilian community. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is one of the six days specified by federal law [36 USC 902] on which the black POW/MIA flag shall be flown over federal facilities and cemeteries, post offices and military installations.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day legislation was introduced yearly, until 1995, when it was deemed by Congress that legislation designating special commemorative days would no longer be considered by Congress. The President now signs a proclamation each year.

Historical Beginning:

July 18, 1979, was the first official commemoration to honor American's POW/MIAs, those returned and those still missing and unaccounted for from our nation's wars. During that year, resolutions were passed in the Congress and a national ceremony was held at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C. The Missing Man formation was flown by the 1st Tactical Squadron, Langley AFB, Virginia.

Until 1982, the Department of Veterans Affairs published a poster including only the letters "POW/MIA" and that format was continued, year after year, until the black and white drawing of a POW in harsh captivity was used to officially convey the urgency of situation and the priority that President Ronald Reagan assigned to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans still missing from the Vietnam War.

Story Behind POW/MIA Flag:

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, who was the Vice President of Annin & Company, and used his advertising agency to help design the flag. Newt Heisley, a designer with the agency, created the winning design, which was eventually adopted as the official POW/MIA flag.

Mr. Heisley based his winning design, the silhouette of a young man on the profile of his own son, who had been medically discharged from the military after suffering from Hepatitis while undergoing combat training. As Mr. Heisley looked at his returning son's gaunt features, he began to imagine what life must be like for those behind barbed wire fences on foreign shores. He then sketched the profile of his son as the new flag's design was created in his mind. Barbed wire, a tower, and most prominently the visage of a gaunt young man became the initial proposal. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

The importance of the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag is its continual visual reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than the Stars and Stripes, the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, which will continue to symbolize the nation's solidarity until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for. It is also the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

Congress has recognized the POW/MIA flag of the National League of Families as the official flag to represent our missing service members. The flag is to be flown over:

- The Capitol and the White House in Washington, D.C.
- Any building containing official offices of the Secretary of State
- The offices of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- The offices of the Director of the Selective Service System
- The Korean War and Vietnam Veterans War Memorials
- Every National Cemetery
- Every major military installation
- Every VA Medical Center
- Every Post Office
- The POW/MIA flag is also displayed daily in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol Building and should be flown at all VA Medical facilities on any day the National colors are displayed. In addition to POW/MIA Recognition Day, the flag should be displayed on the following days:
 - Armed Forces Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Veterans Day
 - Flag Day

POW/MIA Facts:

Of the 125,214 Americans surviving captivity, about 32,550 were estimated to be alive as of the end of 2004. Records show that 142,246 Americans were captured and interned during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Somalia and Kosovo conflicts, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. There were no service members reported missing in action from the Bosnia deployment nor the recent Afghanistan operations.

American Prisoners of War as of January 2005

	Captured and Interred	Died while POW	Returned to U.S. Military Control	Refused to be repatriated to the U.S.	Ex-POWs still living at end of 2004
Grand Total	142,246	17,009	125,214	21	32,550
WWI	4,120	147	3,973	--	--
WW II	130,201	14,072	116,129	--	29,850
Korea	7,140	2,701	4,418	21	2,100
Vietnam	725	64	661	--	587
Gulf War	47	25	21	--	21
Somalia	1	--	1	--	1
Kosovo	3	--	3	--	3
Iraq	9	--	8	--	8

*Notes: A more detailed analysis is at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/POW/DOCS/POW4-06-05.doc>. The Iraq column includes one service member who continues to be listed as “missing/captured” and while not counted in the column of living former POWs, this is not meant to imply anything about his vital status. One Gulf War service member is listed as missing-captured after his status was changed. The estimate of the number alive from World War II and the Korean War at the end of 2004 is based on mortality estimates from VA’s Office of the Actuary that are rounded to the nearest 50. This report assumes all returned POWs of the Gulf War, Somalia, and Kosovo are still alive but the government has not individually tracked their vital status. Because of the advanced age of those World War I veterans still living, estimates of those alive would be too unreliable to report.

Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) WI Specific POW/MIA Statistics:

Vietnam War KIA/POW/MIA Statistics for WI (Report Prepared 08/09/05)

Accounted For	Totals	Unaccounted For	Totals
AWOL/Deserter/Collaborator Returnee	0	Killed in Action, body not recovered	16
Body Recovered	0	Died in Captivity, Remains not Returned	1
Escapee	0	Missing (Civilians Only)	0
Died in Captivity, Remains Returned	1	Prisoner (Civilians Only)	1
Remains Returned, Remains Recovered	9	Presumptive Finding of Death	12
POW Returnee	0	-	-
Total	10	Total	30

Korean War KIA/POW/MIA Statistics for WI (Report Prepared 5/6/05)

Killed in Action	45
Prisoner of War	45
Missing in Action	84
Non-Battle Death	1
Total	175

Cold War KIA/POW/MIA Statistics for WI (Unknown Date Prepared)

Unaccounted For	1
Remains Returned as a Result of Negotiations	1
Total	2

Wisconsin Designated Ex-POW Days 2001 Wisconsin Acts (100 and 20):

2001 Assembly Bill 497

Date of enactment: April 24, 2002

Date of publication*: May 8, 2002

2001 WISCONSIN ACT 100

AN ACT to create 14.16 (10) and 118.02 (17) of the statutes; relating to: designating and observing POW-MIA Recognition Day.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 14.16 (10) of the statutes is created to read:

14.16 (10) POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY. To recognize the sacrifices of those persons who suffered or suffer captivity in foreign countries while in active service with the U.S. armed forces or who are or were missing in action, the 3rd Friday of September of each year is designated "POW-MIA Recognition Day." The governor

shall issue annually a suitable proclamation for the observance of "POW-MIA Recognition Day" and request that some portion of the day be used for solemn contemplation on the plight of members of the U.S. armed forces who are or have been held prisoners of war and members of the U.S. armed forces who are or have been missing in action.

SECTION 2. 118.02 (17) of the statutes is created to read:

118.02 (17) Friday of the 3rd week in September, POW-MIA Recognition Day.

2001 Assembly Bill 238

Date of enactment: November 29, 2001

Date of publication*: December 13, 2001

2001 WISCONSIN ACT 20

AN ACT to create 14.16 (10) and 118.02 (17) of the statutes; relating to: designating and observing Prisoners of War Remembrance Day.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 14.16 (10) of the statutes is created to read:

14.16 (10) PRISONERS OF WAR REMEMBRANCE DAY. To recognize the sacrifices of those persons who suffered captivity in foreign countries while in active service with the U.S. armed forces, April 9 of each year is designated "Prisoners of War Remembrance Day." The governor

shall issue annually a suitable proclamation for the observance of "Prisoners of War Remembrance Day" and request that some portion of the day be used for solemn contemplation on the plight of members of the U.S. armed forces who have been held prisoners of war.

SECTION 2. 118.02 (17) of the statutes is created to read:

118.02 (17) April 9, Prisoners of War Remembrance Day.