

NATIONAL POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

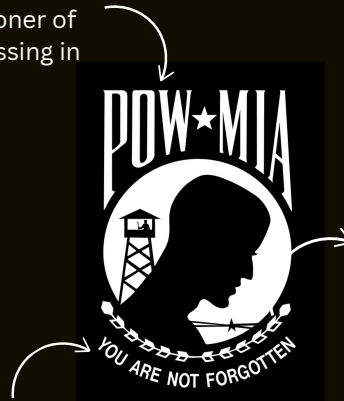


National POW-MIA Recognition Day, established by Congress in 1979 and formalized by President Jimmy Carter, is a significant observance dedicated to honoring and remembering those who have been prisoners of war (POW) and those who are missing in action (MIA). Held annually on the third Friday of September, this day is a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made by military personnel and their families.

The DMAVA Office of DEIB joins the nation in commemorating this day to reflect on the courage and hardships faced by POWs and MIAs. This observance underscores the continued commitment to accounting for missing service members and ensuring that their bravery is never forgotten.

POW - MIA FLAG

POW-MIA: Stands for Prisoner of War, Missing in Action



The POW-MIA flag, designed by former World War II pilot Newt Heisley, features a stark black-and-white image of a gaunt silhouette, barbed wire, and an ominous watchtower. This design reflects the severe conditions faced by prisoners of war and those missing in action.

"You Are Not Forgotten" underscores the nation's pledge to remember and honor these service members and to continually strive to bring them home. It embodies the commitment of our armed forces to never leave a soldier behind.

Learn more, [here](#).

*"Honoring their **sacrifice**. Earnestly **searching** for those still missing."*
-DPAA

UNACCOUNTED FOR SERVICE MEMBERS FOR THE STATE OF NJ



ACCOUNTED FOR SERVICE MEMBERS FOR THE STATE OF NJ



This National POW-MIA Recognition Day commemorates the unwavering commitment of our armed forces, families, and supporting organizations to bring service members home. The principle of "No Soldier Left Behind" drives efforts led by organizations like the National League of POW-MIA Families, which diligently works to account for and return missing service members while providing closure to families. The Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) plays a crucial role in maintaining records on those missing.

The DMAVA Office of DEIB is dedicated to recognizing the contributions of all service members and veterans. By honoring their experiences and sacrifices, we ensure that the legacy of courage and resilience among POWs and MIAs continues to inspire future generations. On this National POW-MIA Recognition Day, we pay tribute to these heroes and reflect on the profound cost of our freedom.

Below are the names of veterans who have shared their stories of perseverance as POWs with The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey. Access their stories of valor by clicking their individual links. Today, we honor their bravery and valor by amplifying their voices. We encourage everyone to stay informed by visiting the websites of these organizations and connecting with local veteran support groups to support ongoing efforts and honor those who have served as you observe National POW-MIA Recognition Day this year.

Visit the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey:

<https://njmilitiamuseum.org/>



Visit the National League of POW-MIA Families:

<https://www.pow-miafamilies.org>

Visit the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA):

<https://www.dpaa.mil>



CLICK [HERE](#), TO VIEW THE DPAA ANNUAL RECOGNITION POSTER

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LEONARD FELLER

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran served as a navigator on a B-24 bomber, having begun his military career in an anti-tank unit before attending airborne school. He lived to the age of 101."

Read his full story, [here](#).

RICHARD A. RITCHINGS

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran was a prisoner of war (POW) in Stalag Luft I for 14 months and flew 38 missions as a fighter pilot during World War II."

Read his full story, [here](#).

CHRISTOPHER GERALD MCANDREWS

**Korean War US Army
Ex-POW of the North Koreans**

"This veteran was captured on July 20, 1953, at Taejon, South Korea, and returned home in September 1953. A "Tiger Survivor", he sustained injuries from shrapnel, read more [here](#).

Read his full story, [here](#).

JOHN CIRELLI

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran flew 19 missions from England before being shot down. On April 7, 1945, he was wounded by flak while over Germany."

Read his full story, [here](#).

MATTHEW W. PARKS

**World War II US Army
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran was captured at the Battle of the Bulge on December 23, 1944, and spent four and a half months at a lumber work camp in Stalag XII-A. He was rescued by the American 8th Division on May 4, 1945."

Read his full story, [here](#).

GORDON D. PROUT

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran served as a navigator on a B-17 Flying Fortress. His plane was shot down on January 7, 1944, and he spent about 16 months as a POW at Stalag Luft I in Germany."

Read his full story, [here](#).

WILLIAM J. BROWN

**World War II US Army
Ex-POW of the Germans**

Read his full story, [here](#).

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ELLIS NORMAN BEESLEY

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

MORTIMER M. HUGHES

World War II US Army

Ex-POW of the Germans for 97 days

"This veteran sustained 30 to 38 pieces of shrapnel from his ankles to his knees."

Read his full story, [here](#).

WILLIAM E. SCHULTZ

Korean War US Marine Corps

Ex-POW of the Chinese

Read his full story, [here](#).

FREDERICK TAURECK

World War II US Army

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

KENNETH E. WILLIAMSON

Korean War US Army

Ex-POW of the Chinese for 28 months

"This veteran sustained a head wound from shrapnel on April 27, 1951, and was a prisoner of war (POW) from April 28, 1951, to August 14, 1953."

Read his full story, [here](#).

PASQUALE J. LIBRETTI

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

"This veteran served as an aerial gunner and airplane armorer. His aircraft was shot down over Austria, and he was taken as a POW to Stalag VII-A."

Read his full story, [here](#).

HERMAN FRANK

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO C. FOWLER FOR PROVIDING EACH OF THESE VETERAN'S ORAL STORIES FOR THIS OBSERVANCE

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