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POW/MIA FLAGS AND BRACELETS

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History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1970, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida, Times-Union, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice President of Annin & Company, which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China (PRC), as part of their policy to manufacture flags for all United Nations member states.

Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he and an Annin advertising agency employee, Newt Heisley, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution. Wanting the widest possible dissemination and use of the symbol to advocate improved treatment for and answers on American POW/MIAs, no trade mark or copyright was sought. The widespread use of the League's POW/MIA flag is not restricted legally, nor do profits from its commercial sale benefit the League.

On March 9, 1989, an official League flag that flew over the White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day 1988 was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it stands as a powerful symbol of America's determination to account for US personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation".

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs from all wars, including those now ongoing.

Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Days since 1982.

Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act required that the League's POW/MIA flag fly six days each year: Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. It must be displayed at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the headquarters of the Selective Service System, major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all

Federal cemeteries and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service. In addition to the specific dates stipulated, the Department of Veterans Affairs voluntarily displays our POW/MIA flag 24/7. The National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial and World War II Memorial are now also required by law to display the POW/MIA flag daily, and most State Capitols have adopted similar laws, as have local governments nationwide.

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