

History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Mary Hoff, a MIA wife and member of the National League of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, 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, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all UN member nations. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

On March 9, 1989 a POW/MIA Flag, which flew over the White House on the 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, was installed in the United States Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th session of Congress. The leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony in a demonstration of bipartisan congressional support.

This POW/MIA Flag, the only flag displayed in the United States Capitol Rotunda, stands as a powerful symbol of our national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. 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 POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the 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 Day since 1982. Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act requires that the 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, 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.

By law passed in 2002, it must fly year-round at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial.



This flag was raised during a flag raising ceremony performed by members of Rolling Thunder® Kentucky Chapter 1. Rolling Thunder's major function is to publicize the POW-MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars. To help correct the past and protect future veterans from being left behind should they become prisoners of war-missing in action. They are committed to helping American veterans from all wars!

Rolling Thunder is comprised of veterans from all wars and times of peace. Veteran members have earned such distinctions as the Medal of Honor, Medal of Valor, Bronze Star, Silver Star, Purple Heart, among others. Membership also consists of non-veteran advocates of all ages, generations and backgrounds. RollingThunderKy1.org