

THE MESSENGER BAG

Mission Driven. Family Focused.





Letter from the President

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Mission: POW-MIA's quarterly newsletter, The Messenger Bag. We are excited for you to see all our partnerships in action through the various events we have participated in over our first five months. Highlights in this issue include getting to know a former POW, hearing from an MIA daughter on her journey in Vietnam and meeting one of the 1578 unaccounted-for Americans from the Vietnam War.

We are committed to the success of the accounting mission through our partnership, research, and outreach efforts. Our vision and determination to be a family-focused organization with mission-driven goals is fueled by unwavering resolve as will be seen throughout the newsletter.

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words...get ready for what you are about to see! Mission: POW-MIA has hit the ground running and we are accelerating to flank speed!



Sincerely,

Jon C. Kreitz

Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

President, Mission: POW-MIA

Meet the Leadership Team



(left to right) Vice-President Pam Cain, Treasurer Michael McPherson, Secretary Cindy Stonebraker Reed, President Jon Kreitz, Outreach & Communication Director Traci Wood, Social Media & Website Director Jeanie Huffman and Executive Director Dave Huffman
(Not pictured, Edward Lundquist)

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HISTORY

The immediate need for a family focused advocacy organization developed following the dissolution of the National League of POW/MIA Families on January 31, 2023. Following a 4-3 vote to close the League, the dissenting Board Members (those who voted to keep the League open) reached out to other POW-MIA families to gauge interest in forming a new family organization.

The response was overwhelming from POW-MIA families as well as retired military officers and concerned Americans. Mission: POW-MIA was incorporated on February 22, 2023 in Chesapeake, Virginia. Our initial Board of Directors includes five family members from unaccounted-for cases and two retired Naval officers.

Our **vision** is to establish Mission: POW-MIA as an inclusive organization recognized for its transparency, determination, and dedication to end the uncertainty faced by generations of America's POW/MIA families.

Our **mission** is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of missing and unaccounted-for Americans from past conflicts through partnerships, research and outreach; by collaborating with like-minded organizations; advocating for our families as they S.E.A.R.C.H. for answers; conducting research and investigations to aid in case resolution to end uncertainty; informing and educating current and future generations; honoring the service and sacrifices made by past generations and their families and ensuring our Nation fulfills its promise to "leave no one behind."

Our **mission objectives** are defined as follows:

S – seeking the fullest possible accounting for our missing and unaccounted-for Americans

E – engaging with partner organizations

A – advocating for the families of our missing

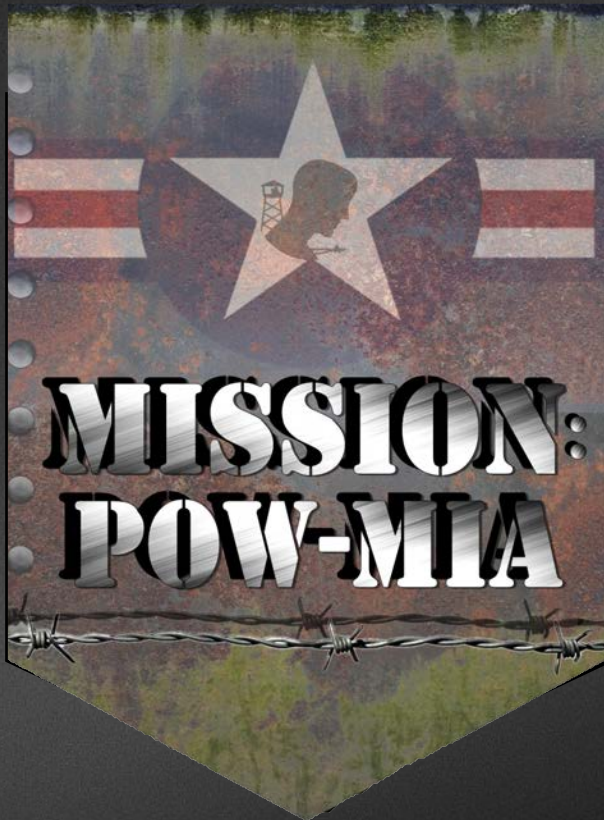
R – researching and investigating for case resolution

C – conducting outreach and education

H – honoring the service and sacrifices of our missing and their families

We are so honored to have set course in a new direction with our family members and concerned supporters. It is time to bring back HOPE as we continue to pursue answers for all our POW-MIA families.

THE MEANING BEHIND OUR LOGO...



The Mission: POW-MIA logo was the collaborative effort of a dozen POW-MIA family members. We wanted something fresh and exciting yet historic and meaningful to those who have been engaged in this mission since childhood.

The shape of our logo has two meanings. First, the chevron shape, so familiar to all, is reminiscent of the POW/MIA patch often worn by supporters. Secondly, it is the shape of a shield, significant as we continue to fight for answers.

The faded red, white, and blue image is that of the National Insignia. This symbol has been on all US military aircraft since 1947. Variations of this symbol have been used going back to World War II.

The rivets, rust and jungle growth symbolize the strength and the waiting our missing and their families have endured.

The barbed wire reminds us of the captivity of many. We are grateful for those who returned and are reminded of those who still wait.

The POW/MIA image placed inside of the white star of the National Insignia reminds us to Never Forget.

Finally, our name, Mission: POW-MIA ... we are *Mission Driven. Family Focused.*

ROAD TRIP ACROSS THE STATES...



On our first stop, we met Founding Members Wes and Cindy Stonebraker Reed for lunch in North Carolina..



Wes Reed signs the POW/MIA flag. (With Cindy Stonebraker Reed, Board Secretary, and Jeanie Huffman.)



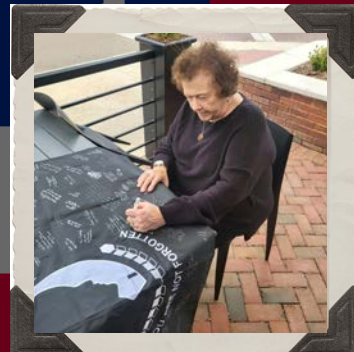
Later that night we stopped in to see Founding Member and Board Treasurer Michael McPherson, near Atlanta, GA.



Michael McPherson and Dave Huffman holding the POW/MIA flag, signed by many throughout our travels.



The next morning we had breakfast with Founding Member Eric Fort in Hoover, AL. Was nice to see him again!



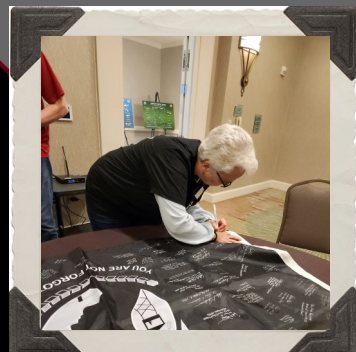
On the road again, we traveled to Mississippi to meet Founding Member Amy Reeder.



Dave Huffman, Amy Reeder and Jeanie Huffman, before we headed back on the road again.



By the evening time we rolled into Arkansas to stay with Founding Members Mandy and Rick Robins. Such a warm welcome and she is one heck of a cook!



It was nice to meet one of our first Mission: POW-MIA members Pat Steed at the Dallas FMU.

MEETING OUR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS...



While visiting the National Museum of the Pacific War, I snapped a photo of Dave Huffman next to memorial.



Along the route we had the opportunity to meet Member Karoni Forrester and the grandson of WW2 POW in Texas.



During our tour of National Museum of the Pacific War we met a Vietnam War veteran who thanked us for what we are doing.



Close to the final leg of our tour, we headed through Pensacola, FL to visit family and friends at the Veterans Memorial Park. (Four MIA daughters and an MIA granddaughter)



We met Gaile BoisClaire Lyons (wife of MIA ADJ2 Ronald BoisClaire) in Jacksonville, FL.



On our last stop before heading back to Virginia, we enjoyed dinner and a cozy night's stay with Founding Member Pam Cain, Board Vice-President in Jacksonville, FL. (Jeanie Huffman, Gaile and Charlie Lyons and Pam Cain.) (left to right)

FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF MISSION:POW-MIA IN DALLAS, TX

DPAA FAMILY MEMBER UPDATE (FMU): DALLAS



AND THE OFFICIAL START OF MISSION: POW-MIA



Mission: POW-MIA officially launched on March 24, 2023 at the DPAA Family Member Update in Dallas, TX.



APRIL

DPAA Family Member Update (FMU): Chicago



Founding Members - Traci Wood (Outreach & Communications Director) Bill Wood, Laurie Burns and Cliff Burns



Brad Taylor, Stony Beach with Traci Wood and Cliff Burns



Traci Wood, Jennifer Nasarenko and Fern Sumpter Winbush of DPAA at the FMU in Chicago, IL.



Veterans Memorial Park - Pensacola, Florida



National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum - Jacksonville, Florida

MAY



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Wreath Laying Ceremony, Arlington, VA



Cindy Stonebraker Reed, Banner Elk, NC



Clay County, Florida TAPS Monument: Photos by Pam Cain



Dave Huffman, Memorial Day, Norfolk International Airport



Gold Star Families Monument, Chesapeake, VA

MAY



Memorial Day Parade, Wood Family, Geneva, IL



MAY



Cindy Stonebraker Reed, Banner Elk, NC.



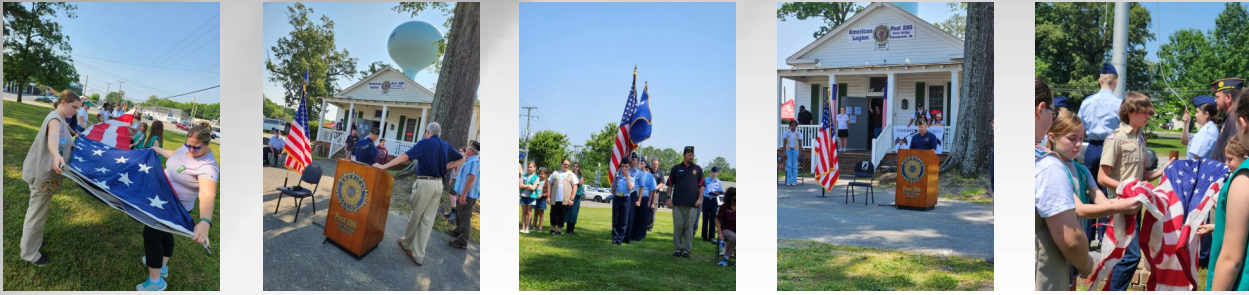
MAY VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



"WELCOME HOME" WASHINGTON, DC



JUNE



Flag Day at the American Legion Post 280, Chesapeake, VA



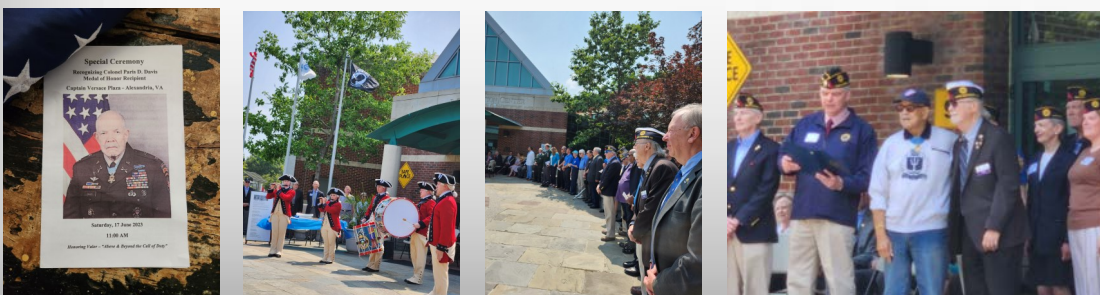
Unveiling of the DPAA 2023 National POW/MIA Recognition Day Poster, The Pentagon



Unwavering Book Event, Arlington, VA



Linville Land Harbor Veterans Dinner and Banner Elk Breakfast



Rocky Versace Plaza, Medal of Honor Reception for Colonel Paris Davis

MIA CASE SPOTLIGHT

John Robert Adams was born in Anderson Dam, Idaho on July 31, 1946, to Jack and Margaret Adams. John was born premature and Jack built his own incubator so that they could bring John home. The family moved to California in 1947. John has two sisters, Lynette and Mandy.

John's home of record when he entered the United States Army was Chico, California. John enlisted in January of 1966. After completing his basic training at Fort Ord, John attended his military occupational specialty school and was certified as a 67N, or helicopter mechanic. John was a member of 189th Aviation Company, 17th Aviation Group and held the rank of Specialist Five.

On November 8, 1967, he was assigned as the Crew Chief aboard a UH-1C Iroquois (serial number 695) helicopter gunship on a special forces insertion mission west of Dak To, Vietnam. While circling the inserted troops, the Iroquois was hit by enemy fire, began to experience mechanical problems, and then lost power and crashed into the jungle.

The impact through the trees snapped the tail boom of the helicopter. The crew exited the aircraft after impact; however, SP5 Adams was severely injured during the incident, and his fellow crew members reported that after exiting the helicopter he could not move from the spot where he had landed. SP5 Adams had a broken arm and more than likely internal injuries as well.

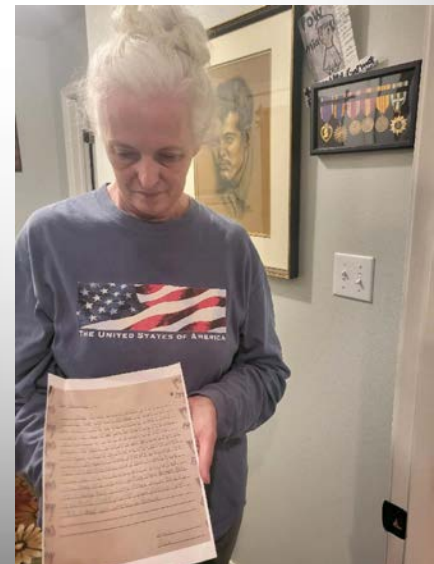
Hostile forces began moving in on the downed crew. His fellow crew members attempted to move SP5 Adams out of the range of fire, but the enemy attack intensified, and they were forced to leave him. Further attempts to rescue SP5 Adams were unsuccessful, and his remains were not located or identified following the war.

John's parents were notified by a Western Union telegram on November 17, 1967, that he had died from his injuries and his body had been recovered. This turned out to be a case of mistaken identity. On November 24, 1967, his parents were informed that he was still missing in action.

Both his Chico High School identification card and his military identification card has been on display in the Central Military Museum of Hanoi, yet no further information regarding his remains have been provided by the Vietnamese government.

SP5 John Adams was subsequently promoted to Sergeant First Class. SFC Adams awards and decorations include his Army Air Crew wings, Expert qualification with rifle and pistol, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense, Vietnam Service Medal, and the RVN Campaign Medal.

John's sister, Mandy, and her husband, Rick Robins, are both Founding Members of Mission: POW-MIA. They currently reside in Arkansas, and they carry on the mission to bring John home.



DPAA VIETNAM WAR ANNUAL GOVERNMENT BRIEFINGS

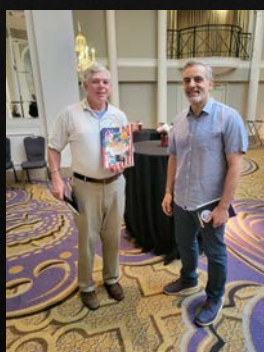


June 29 - 30, 2023 Washington, DC



MISSION: POW-MIA MEET & GREET BRUNCH

Sponsored by the Gary Sinise Foundation



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

They say that life begins at the end of your comfort zone. I took the leap in July of this year as I got on a plane to Ho Chi Minh City to visit the crash area of my father, USAF Captain Vincent J Hickman, who was shot down over South Vietnam on January 14, 1964, and is still unaccounted for to this day. Scared, but finally ready to face my fears, I set off to find some answers and heal my broken heart.

My father enlisted in the Air Force, as did his three brothers and one sister. At the time of his death, the Hickman's were the largest commissioned Air Force family in history. He left for Vietnam in October of 1963 as a navigator with the 1st Air Commando Squadron in Bien Hoa. We received a Christmas card that year from him saying he missed us and promised he would be home next Christmas to celebrate with us but that was never to happen. His B-26 aircraft was shot down by enemy fire on January 14, 1964. When the South Vietnamese Air Force was able to get to the crash site, they found evidence of the downed aircraft, and evidence that there were no survivors. No evidence was collected due to hostile forces in the area, and the obvious lack of protocol at the time.

My mother, Anna M. Hickman, was left with four daughters under the age of five to raise on her own. She was 29 years old and a widow. She received the telegram at our new Cape Cod in Willingboro, New Jersey as my father had been stationed at McGuire Air Force Base. It was delivered by a Bond Bread delivery truck, the driver handing it to her silently and departing quickly. No uniformed men, no sedan, no explanation. Mom was getting Eileen ready for kindergarten. I still remember that day clearly. Mom crying softly in her bedroom, me at four years old asking what was wrong, and the neighbor scooping us all up and taking us across the street to sing songs on her couch. Our lives were changed forever, and evening prayers asking God to Bless Daddy in Heaven.

The sixties were a tumultuous time, and the Vietnam War very unpopular. We didn't talk or ask about it. Mom received calls from the Philadelphia Inquirer asking disrespectful questions. Mom raised her four young daughters to become strong and resilient women. Still with us today at a spry 89 years old and a great-grandmother, she never remarried and will always be my hero and role model.



MAUREEN HICKMAN CAPORASO

On June 30th of this year, I boarded a Qatar flight from Philadelphia to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and met my friend Glenn Hines with Healing Through History, to conquer my fears, answer my questions and let the DPAA know I am serious about finally getting the answers to questions I never asked but now needed to know. I was absolutely at the end of my comfort zone.

We drove to the presumed crash area about 17 miles NW of Bien Hoa. I had no idea what to expect as we drove through the chaotic mass of motorbikes in HCM out into the rural areas seeing rice paddies, small villages, water buffalo and rubber tree plantations outside of the city. We picked up Luke Johnston, another Aussie who speaks fluent Vietnamese. I was silent during the drive. I was scared and unaware of what I was going to see and feel. We arrived at what is now a fish farm and guava plantation that the two had canvassed earlier in the week. They had tried to get to it from one side and were met with hornets, snakes and a tangle of bamboo, trees, and undergrowth. They told me we would not be going to the crash area as it was unnavigable. I told them I was bringing my boots anyway, as I was going to the area no matter what!

The entrance through the fish farm was much easier to navigate. We parked right on top of the DPAA crash coordinates and hiked to an entry in the trees, sliding down a muddy slope as we grabbed for bamboo to steady our gait, and arrived at a muddy river which we were unable to navigate. I did an interview for Healing Through History while choking back tears and 60 years of pent-up emotions. We hiked back out and used the metal detector to search for any items which would help with the search for remains and aircraft remnants. We found nothing of consequence and after hiking, climbing, and searching in the scorching heat and humidity of Vietnam, we headed back to HCM.

In my hotel room I sobbed and researched some of my questions online. I read about the difference between the A-26 and B-26, why my father received the Air Force Cross and the reference to the CIA in his records. I learned about Farm Gate and the mission of the 1st Air Commando Squadron. My questions only begot more questions.

I realized that I did not pay a proper tribute to my dad and his pilot, Major Carl Mitchell. I had to return to the crash area before I left Vietnam. I went back two days later, bringing flowers and leaving the boots I was told not to bring, but brought anyway. They got me there, they served their purpose, and the concept of boots on the ground is meaningful. I had a nice long chat with my father, honoring him and paying him a proper tribute. I told him we missed him every day, that mom is good, and that he would be so proud of his four girls, Eileen, Maureen, Peggy and Patty, his grandkids, and great grandkids. Grandson Christopher looks just like him and is in the Coast Guard.

I decided to leave earlier than planned, as I was emotionally drained and had seen and done what I wanted to do. I expected to see a beautiful land and beautiful people and I honestly cannot say that is what I found as Ho Chi Minh City/Saigon is busy and dirty. On my last day I wanted to visit a Catholic Church to say some prayers for my dad, myself, and my family. I took a GRAB (Vietnamese Uber) and chose the motorbike option. Zipping through town on the back of the motorbike, risking my life and smiling from ear to ear, I spent some time at the church and had a final conversation with my dad in the land where his life came to an end. I bought a pair of turquoise rosary beads with a picture of a Vietnamese Mary, my only purchase on my trip. It was a beautiful and meaningful end to my adventure.

I will update DPAA on my visit, with the assistance of Healing Through History, and strengthen my resolve to get the answers that my family deserves. My heart is lighter, and I know my father is proud of his family, and his Maureen Pumpkin. I love you, Daddy. xo

FORMER POW SPOTLIGHT

Story sent in by Pam Cain, Vice President, Mission: POW-MIA

Honoring Capt Dale Raebel, USN (Ret.), R-POW, Vietnam War

We thank and honor....CAPT Dale Raebel, USN (Ret.), R-POW, Vietnam War.

As LCDR, Raebel transitioned to the A-7 Corsair II with VA-174 from June 1970 to March 1971, and then served as an A-7 pilot with VA-37 at NAS Cecil Field, FL, later flying off the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga (CV-60) from March 1971 until he was forced to eject over North Vietnam and was taken as a Prisoner of War (POW) on August 17, 1972.

Dale endured capture and returned to the USA during Operation Homecoming on March 29, 1973. He continued his military service for several more years. His final assignment was as Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Management Support in the Bureau of Naval Personnel from May 1991 until his retirement from the Navy on March 1, 1993.

CAPT Raebel lives in Jacksonville, FL and continues to participate in local organizations and share his experiences through public speaking opportunities. His name is inscribed on the A-7 which is permanently displayed at the National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum at the former NAS Cecil Field. He is such an outstanding, but low-key, individual, and I am proud to know him and his wife, Patty. I treasure their friendship and support.



NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY 2023

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

15 SEPT 2023



Courage - Sacrifice - Hope



The Most Exclusive Club

I am a member of a most exclusive club, a club nobody wishes to join...

I represent all races and creeds and I hail from across all states...

I represent the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps and even a few civilians..

I am one of over 58,000 names etched in black granite in our Nation's capitol but I am part of an exclusive subset of that number...

I am Missing and Unaccounted-For...

I can be a member of many other clubs but few, thank God, are part of mine...

As an American serviceman, I meet the qualifications for membership in the American Legion and American Veterans service organizations ...

The period in which I served makes me eligible to join the Vietnam Veterans of America and my Vietnamese Campaign Medal would grant me membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars ...

I was combat wounded and my injuries never healed which qualifies me for membership in the Disabled American Veterans and the Purple Heart awarded to my family posthumously gives me the right to be recognized by The Military Order of the Purple Heart ...

My Blue Star Mother, who with the stroke of a pen, became a Gold Star Mother when I was declared Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered...even though in many cases I was last seen alive ...

My wife became a Gold Star spouse when she lost her best friend, not at her request...she was given a small gold and purple pin in memory of me...

My children lost their Dad, their hero, qualifying them for membership in another club no child asked to be part of, the children of those killed or missing in action ...

I flew my aircraft out to sea when I was hit by enemy fire, as I was told to do but nobody rescued me...

I called in my grid location in the jungle, but the canopy enveloped me and kept me hidden as I heard the rotors flying over my position I waved and I yelled but I am still wait for them to return...

I followed the Code of Conduct as an American fighting man and I fought with all my strength to escape, evade and resist...I did not break... I did not fail... I did not give up hope...

I was not a pawn in a game of war, I knew the risks and I accepted them and honorably did my duty because I love my country and I am proud of my service, my comrades with whom I fought side by side and my family...

I did not take part in Operation Homecoming because I was left behind in the waters of Southeast Asia, in the valleys of Vietnam, in the jungles of Cambodia, on a mountainside in Laos...

I know you remember me with an empty chair at a solitary table, and the black and white flag flown over the White House and on the front porch of my family's home and with a stainless steel bracelet bearing my name on your wrist and a date forever etched in your memory...

I still feel hurt because I am still waiting to come home but I do not want pity, I want to be found because I expect my country to fulfill its duty just as I did mine so many years ago...

I want the uncertainty of what happened to me to end for my family because they are casualties of war as much as I am and I pray daily that the membership in our exclusive club will one day be none...

Do not forget me, be my voice, tell others my story, find me and bring me back where I belong, so that my family, my friends and my comrades who still search for me may finally have peace...

I am the Unreturned Vietnam War Veteran and I am still waiting to come home.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MISSION:POW-MIA

September 13—14, 2023

US Institute for Peace Conference—Washington, DC

September 15, 2023

National POW-MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Pentagon

Rutgers University ROTC POW/MIA Memorial— New Jersey

POW/MIA Chair of Honor Dedication—Orlando, FL

Rolling Thunder POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Jacksonville, NC

Open House, Program & Candlelight Ceremony—National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum

September 16, 2023

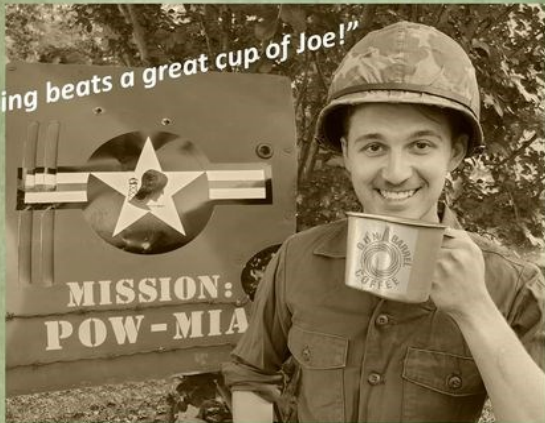
American Legion Ride, traveling Wall on display and Commemorative Program, National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum

POW/MIA Display at Harbor Park Tides Baseball—Norfolk, VA

Please look at the Recognition Day tab on our website for more events across the country!

In observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day on
September 15th, 2023


Mission: POW-MIA and Gun Barrel Coffee
have teamed up for a fundraiser for the month of September.



A portion of the proceeds from coffee sales
when you use the code **MISSION**
at checkout will go to support Mission: POW-MIA.

To order go to gunbarrelcoffee.com or use the QR code.

GUN BARREL COFFEE
VETERAN OWNED COMPANY



Don't forget to order
your bags or k-cups of Gun
Barrel Coffee during the
month of September!

Use code **MISSION** at
checkout and a portion of
the proceeds help support
our organization.

NEXT ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Our next issue will cover Quarter 3—
July through September 2023 and
include more interesting information!

- Cold War Project
- Korean War Armistice Day
- Recognition Day Photos
- More stories from families!



We want to hear from you!

Do you know of an upcoming POW/MIA event?

Have you spoken or written about the POW/MIA issue and would you like to share the story?

Do you have photos or a family story you would like others to know about?

Contact us at info@missionpowmia.org

Haven't become a member yet?

What are you waiting for?

Join Today!!!

www.missionpowmia.org/membership



THANK YOU!

*So many people and organizations opened their arms to us
and we just want to acknowledge the positive and
collaborative partnerships!*

American Legion

Defense Intelligence Agency

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Friends of Rocky Versace

Gary Sinise Foundation

Healing Through History

Jewish War Veterans of the USA

National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum

Sons and Daughters in Touch

Special Operations Association

US Institute for Peace

US Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Vietnam Veterans of America

Vietnam War Commemoration

Woody Williams Foundation

Finally, a special thank you to all of our concerned
supporters and most of all our POW-MIA families!

We are HONORED to work with you all!

Mission Driven. Family Focused.