

VFW Remembers America's POW/MIAs

A day in September is set aside to pay proper tribute to those men and women who were held prisoner in times of war and those whose remains are yet to be repatriated

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Since 1998, the third Saturday of each September is set aside to commemorate National POW/MIA Recognition Day. It is a day to honor those who were prisoners of war as well as those still listed as missing in action.

It also is one of six national observances when the POW/MIA flag can be flown. The other five observances are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

VFW Posts are known to recognize this day of reverence with solemn ceremonies and recognition.

In DeSoto, Missouri, VFW Post 1831 has a 30-foot-by-50-foot POW/MIA flag, which serves as the backdrop to its annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony.

According to Quincy Myrick, senior vice commander for the Department of Missouri and a member of VFW Post 1831, the flag is hoisted between two telephone poles outfitted with pullies.

“It is a team effort to get it up,” Myrick said. “We also have flown it in honor of MIAs that have been repatriated. It was flown in nearby Festus when the Traveling Wall was brought in.”

Myrick added that the Post had eight members that were POWs in World War II, and each of them are remembered every year.

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VFW Post 1831 will host its remembrance event on Sept. 21.

REMEMBERING ON ‘HOLLOWED GROUND’

VFW Post 2485 in Angeles City, Philippines, partnered with the American Battle Monuments Commission last September to mark POW/MIA Recognitions Day at Cabanatuan American Memorial, Nueva Ecija, Philippines.

According to then-VFW Post 2485 Commander James Collins, four out of five Department of the Pacific District 7 Posts were represented at the event. More than 200 people attended, including Scout troops.

A local motorcycle club escorted two buses from the Angeles City VFW Post two hours to the memorial.

The ceremony, which included a picnic hosted by Post 2485, took place on the site of a World War II POW camp.

“This is hallowed ground where many American troops gave their last full measure of devotion to our country and flag,” Collins said.

Among the many notable speakers at the event was retired Air Force Maj. John (Spike) Nasmyth. He was held for 6½ years — 1966-1973 — in Hanoi, North Vietnam.

Nasmyth was with 1st Lt. Raymond P. Salzarulo Jr., on Phantom flight when the pair was shot down over North Vietnam on Sept. 4, 1966. They were over Bac Thai Province, about 10 miles southwest of Thai Nguyen.

Held at the notorious Hanoi Hilton, Nasmyth was released in February 1973 in Operation Homecoming. The North Vietnamese deny knowing how Salzarulo was killed. His remains were returned to the U.S. on Sept. 13, 1990.

Collins said having the Scouts in attendance at last year’s POW/MIA event was important because the VFW aims to teach the youth about their sacrifices made throughout history.

“This also is about making sure that when the children of today hear the history lessons and traditions of our great country, they know that it would have not been possible without veterans,” Collins concluded.

This article is featured in the 2024 September issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Janie Dyhouse](#), senior editor for VFW magazine.