

Post Commander Spearheads New POW/MIA Flag Law

Commander Botkin advocates for POW/MIA recognition.

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“People often ask me what the POW/MIA flag means,” said Lindsey Botkin, Commander of Post 10342 in Huachuca City, Ariz. “It’s sad how many people close their minds to the price these POW/MIA’s and their families paid, and continue to pay, in the name of freedom.”

As a Vietnam veteran and personal friend to a former POW, Botkin found this unacceptable. To raise awareness and appreciation, Botkin decided to propose a bill to the City Council.

“I wanted the POW/MIA flag to be flown on a regular basis,” said Botkin, “Because it’s more than just a black piece of fabric.”

Botkin took his argument to Representative Jerry Weiers of Phoenix. After an hour-long meeting, Weiers was convinced that Botkin was on to something. That’s when Bill 2684 was born.

With Weiers’ support, Botkin took his bill before the House of Representatives Committee, the Military Affairs Committee and, eventually, the Senate.

“I was overwhelmed by the amount of support I received from my fellow Arizonans,” said Botkin. “Some 30,000 people stood behind me and were willing to stand in front of the courthouse if the need arose.”

Fortunately, more aggressive tactics weren’t necessary. On May 3, 2010, Bill 2684 was signed, and the law went into effect on July 29.

Now the POW/MIA flag is flown every time the U.S. flag is flown at 152 locations across Arizona—a vast improvement to the prior policy that ordered the flag be flown but once a year.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

“This is a great achievement for me,” said Botkin. “I feel very proud both of myself and of my state for taking the initiative for change.

“More than 83,000 service members are still missing since WWII,” said Botkin. “This is just my way of showing all the families that we are still behind them—that their loved one may be missing, but they will never be forgotten.”

Botkin hopes that people everywhere will push for a similar bill in their state.

“This great flag should be flown nationwide,” said Botkin. “We can make it happen if we just believe in ourselves. I am living proof that one man can make a difference.”