Runs Held in Honor of POW/MIA Day a Great Success

VFW member organized 5K, 10K in Afghanistan

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VFW Post 3396 member SFC David Sousa wanted to do something special for POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 16. He decided to organize a 5K and 10K run in Kandahar, Afghanistan, where he is stationed, as a way to remember and honor his fellow comrades who suffered as POWs or who never returned home.

The 422 Expeditionary Signal Battalion and VFW Post 3396 in Sparks, Nev., rallied behind the idea and agreed to sponsor the event. Proceeds from the run would be donated to VFW Foundation's Return the Favor campaign. Return the Favor is an awareness and fundraising campaign to honor, celebrate, and support active-duty military members, veterans, and their families. The campaign supports programs and services that provide financial assistance for military families, free phone calls for service members overseas, VIP treatment for troops and their families at entertainment events and at morale boosting events for military units.

The run kicked off with a presentation about the significance of POW/MIA Recognition Day, introductions of the TF Mercury Command staff and a short prayer. Then the 422nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion's LTC Jeffrey Hansen and CSM Jose Aragon were awarded a U.S. flag that was flown over the Capitol in Washington, D.C. – a gift from U.S. Sen. Harry Reid for hosting the event.

Over 600 people participated in the run and more than $11,000 was raised.

"I was very proud and grateful for all of the support from the Kandahar Air Field community and their support for the VFW POW/MIA Remembrance Day Run," said Sousa. "I feel the race was a big success."

He plans to present the money to VFW Foundation with his Battalion Commander at the 113th VFW National Convention in Reno, Nev.

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Sousa was truly honored to have coordinated the event. “Thank you for allowing me the honor and privilege of hosting this great event here on Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan,” he said.

To learn more about the VFW Foundation’s Return the Favor campaign, click here.