

VFW Witnesses Landmark Presidential Signing of the POW MIA Flag Act

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WASHINGTON – Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) stood in solidarity with fellow members of the Veterans Service Organization (VSO) community as President Donald Trump signed the National POW/MIA Flag Act into law today.

“This is a historic victory for every man and woman who courageously defended this nation and remain unaccounted for,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. “Today’s presidential signing and the daily display of the POW/MIA flag at all prominent federal properties now serves as a daily reminder that these heroes, and their families, are forever etched in our DNA.”

Law now requires the POW/MIA flag to be displayed whenever the American flag is displayed on prominent federal properties, including the White House, U.S. Capitol, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, every national cemetery, the buildings containing the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, office of the Director of the Selective Service System, each major military installation, each Department of Veterans Affairs medical center, and each U.S. Postal Service post office.

The National POW/MIA Flag Act was initially introduced by U.S. Rep. and Marine Corps Lt. Gen. (ret.) Jack Bergman and U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas March 7, 2019. The bipartisan bill received endorsement from the VFW, the National League of POW/MIA Families, and other veterans service organizations.

“Over 82,000 men and women who’ve served our nation in uniform are unaccounted for or listed as POW/MIA, including many Michiganders,” said Congressman Bergman. “Flying this flag at federal properties 365 days a year is just a small way that we can ensure their

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sacrifice and devotion to our nation is never forgotten.”

Pappas added that the POW/MIA flag is a symbol of courage and sacrifice that our armed forces have given on behalf of this nation.

“I have seen how important the flag is to demonstrate that these heroes are not forgotten,” said Congressman Pappas. “By putting the flag on full display outside of prominent federal buildings, memorials, and national cemeteries, we are reaffirming our commitment to the more than 82,000 service members who remain unaccounted for.”

Prior to today’s landmark signing, the POW/MIA flag was only required to be displayed by the federal government on certain prominent federal properties only six days per year to include Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, and Veterans Day.

The National League of POW/MIA Families is the reason the POW/MIA flag exists today. The organization’s mission supports our POW/MIAs and killed-in-action from the Vietnam War by obtaining the release and return of all prisoners, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and the repatriation of remains of those not yet recovered.

Evelyn Grubb, former national coordinator of The National League of POW/MIA Families, oversaw the development of the POW/MIA flag and campaigned to gain its widespread acceptance and use by the U.S. government in 1972.

B.J. Lawrence, executive director of the VFW Washington Office, expressed his sincere appreciation for today’s signing because it only furthers the relationship the VFW has with both The National League of POW/MIA Families and the DPAA.

“The VFW continues to stand firm on its relationship and dedication with both The National League of POW/MIA Families and DPAA,” said Lawrence. “Today is a huge step in the right direction. Our nation’s leaders made a pledge to account for every service member who did not come home. This is a pledge which also holds true for today’s servicemen and women. We must always ensure that if they do fall in battle, they are not forgotten and our nation will do everything in its power to bring them home.”