



POW/MIA Recognition Day – Friday, September 16

The traditional POW/MIA flag that's well-known across America was actually created many years before the Recognition Day became official. In 1979, Congress and the President passed resolutions making it official after the families of the more than 2,500 Vietnam War POW/MIAs pushed for full accountability.

In 1971, Mary Hoff contacted a flag company near her home to see whether a flag reminding people of POWs and the missing could be made. She was one of the many waiting to see whether her husband, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Hoff, would ever return home after his plane had been shot down over Laos. He is still listed as MIA. No POWs were ever released from Laos.

World War II pilot Newt Heisley designed the now-famous flag, which was made in black and white to represent the sorrow, anxiety and hope symbolized by the image of the gaunt man featured on it.

For every POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982, the flag has flown just below the Stars and Stripes at the White House – the only other flag to ever do so. In 1998, Congress ordered it to also be displayed on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.

