

## History of the POW/MIA flag

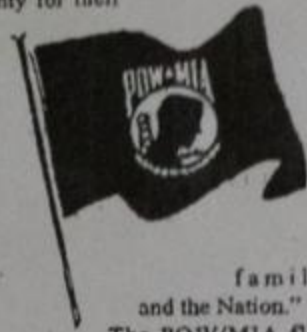
In 1971 Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife, recognized the need for a symbol representing our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida *Times-Union*, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice-President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all UN-member nations. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men.

Since its inception this flag, which was designed on behalf of American POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War, has come to represent our missing countrymen and women from all wars. The POW/MIA flag has been ruled legally to be "public domain" — as is the American flag; therefore, it cannot be claimed as the sole property by any organization or individual.

The POW/MIA flag flew over the White House for the first time on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1988. On March 9, 1989, it was installed in the United States Capitol Rotunda. This occurred as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress and, additionally, in a rare demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

Further, by joint Congressional Resolution, the POW/MIA flag — the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda — stands as a powerful symbol of national commitment to American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their



families and the Nation."

The POW/MIA flag's importance lies in the continued visibility of this symbol as a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory," the POW/MIA flag is the only flag to fly over the White House, and has flown in this place of honor on every National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. In addition, the POW/MIA flag flies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on Federal and State buildings, at each National Cemetery, and at military installations worldwide. It also flies at countless additional locations throughout the nation every day of the year.

Those Americans who fly the POW/MIA flag do so to demonstrate their loyalty and sincere dedication to all Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, and to their return — both alive and dead.