

The Bulletin

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MAKE CHECKS OUT TO P.A.L.S.



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Vol. 37 No. 12 **Supporting and Encouraging La Societe Public Relations for 37 Years** August 2022



Last month Nurses Training, this month POW/MIA, next month Boxcar—examining how public relations can help and assist.

Great pin BTW!

Membership in P.A.L.S. is down. We keep dues to an absolute minimum—no profit, just enough to sustain the Bulletin and the Program. So if you get the Bulletin and pass it along to others—that's ok—you're promoting public relations—but encourage others to join please.

Should get the next issue out prior to Nationale, if you are a member and do not have your P.A.L.S. pin—see me at the P.A.L.S. table.

Mailing—I've been in direct contact with the head of our printer/mailer and there was an issue with the June and July issues—they should be hitting mailboxes very soon. Blessings!

L'Editeur

"Most people just want to be in the result and not in the process, and it's in the process where you realize who deserves to be in the result."

In this issue!!

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Don Collins

Paul Chevalier



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P.A.L.S. and Blue Chevalier Page

We are into the month of August, well past the date of annual report submission—but if you have not yet completed and sent in the Public Relations Report please fill out and send in anyway. I see from many program Directeurs that only about 30% of the Grands are doing so—I’m willing to bet they would still appreciate any reports even if late. The PR report is quick and easy to fill out. If your Grand has not sent in a report, send in the one from your locale.

This is our second month focusing the Bulletin on a specific program showing how public relations can help, assist and promote. Next month we will focus on the Boxcar Program and the Boxcar Association. With POW/MIA Recognition Day coming up, the Bulletin is full of information that you may wish to consider in your own newsletters for August or September.

Social media is in turmoil right now with growing pains and many changes to formats, requirements and censoring. It seems to me that many locales and Grands have drifted away from our traditional newsletters. One of the main purposes of P.A.L.S. and the Bulletin is to help and assist L’Editeurs—we are dedicated to keeping that going.

This issue also has much background information on the POW/MIA issue itself—use that information to your benefit.

This is the official 2022 National POW/MIA Day poster. To order this poster and see all the previous posters going back to 1999 (Ctrl-click) here: [DPAAPosters \(crmforce.mil\)](http://DPAAPosters.crmforce.mil)

CHECKS MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE "40/8 BLUE CHEVALIERS"

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE BLUE CHEVALIERS		INITIAL MEMBERSHIP			
NAME:			40/8 MEMBER	LA FEMMES MEMBER	NON MEMBER SUPPORTER
ADDRESS:	STREET:	CITY:	ST:	ZIP:	
PHONE:	EMAIL:				

MAIL WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO THE "40/8 BLUE CHEVALIERS" FOR **\$15.00** TO:
40/8 Blue Chevaliers
c/o Robert Cearlock,
7 Lawnwood Dr.
Jackson, TN, 38305

Time is running out to be a charter member—join now. Join and get your card and pin. And be able to recommend those deserving for this prestigious award.

THE CLIPBOARD



Sprite gets a makeover, clearly

This week, Coca-Cola Co. announced it is ditching Sprite's iconic green bottle in favor of more sustainable packaging. It's a major change for the carbonated lemon-lime drink, which debuted in 1961.

On their website, Coca-Cola Co. states the new design is part of an effort to "support a circular economy for plastic packaging." Although the green packaging Sprite currently comes in is recyclable, it's generally converted into single-use items like clothing and carpeting. Taking colors out of bottles increases the likelihood of it being remade into new beverage bottles. •



ISSUES WITH INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK!



Meta (Formerly Facebook)— and with it, legacy social media platforms Facebook and Instagram — is flailing. Profits are down. The products are trying frantically to pivot, Instagram to some unholy mashup of TikTok and Snapchat, Facebook to some metaverse alternate reality future only Mark Zuckerberg can see.



Many have become reliant on these tools to directly reach their audiences. But every day it feels like these platforms are telling us they're going to change — and we must change with them. All that matters about these social media platforms is whether or not they're working for you and your audiences. Remember: The goal of social media is never to be good at social media. It's to be good at social media so that it serves your goals. What Facebook and Instagram value in terms of engagement may not be the things you value.

Instagram wants more videos. Facebook wants a metaverse evolution. And they'll encourage you to want the same things. At any given time, they can throttle your reach, denying you access to fans and followers you've spent more than a decade amassing. The chaos at social networks is a reminder that any platform with that kind of power should never be your only — or even your primary — way of communicating with your audiences, members or others.

This is a critical time to put a renewed emphasis on your newsletter platform. To invest in brand journalism that people want to read. To seek out media outlets that matter to your audience and build strong bonds with journalists who can tell your story.

The whole point of PR is to share your organization's story in an organic way. That usually means relying on others to spread the word, one way or another. But never put all your eggs in one basket. Especially not a basket that's already hemorrhaging eggs.

The noise will continue—You're only going to hear about more social media madness in the coming weeks. Social media is now close to two decades old and is going through the cyclical growing pains that come with any industry. TikTok is going to keep having issues with privacy. Twitter has its whole Elon Musk thing going on.

Keep focused on your audience and your goals. Give yourself options besides these platforms. And don't respond frantically to every tweak and announcement. Their chaos is not yours. • *From www.prdaily*

What's an em dash? If you guessed that it's as wide as the letter "M," you get a gold star. The dash should be set off with spaces on both sides. It's the most dramatic of all punctuation marks — literally its most common usage is to signify an abrupt change in the sentence or a pregnant pause. It can also be used to set off a clause within a sentence. Ex: *I write sins — not tragedies.* In almost every case when an em dash is used for these purposes, it could be replaced by commas. And sometimes it should be. *Note: You will notice that I seriously abuse the em dash—L'Editeur*

Special Observances—September 2022

Friday Sept. 2—V-J Day (Victory over Japan) - Sept. 2, 1945, is the American date of VJ Day. Also known as Victory Over Japan Day, this date marks the formal surrender of Japan in World War Two aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Sunday Sept. 11 – Patriot Day – An annual observance to remember and honor those who were injured or killed during the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.



Friday Sept. 16 – POW/MIA Recognition Day



Friday Sept. 16—American Legion Day—While the American Legion was formed in 1919, it wasn't until 2009 that this special day was created. On September 15, 2009, Congress proclaimed September 16 as American Legion Day.

Saturday Sept. 17—Sept. 17th is the day when two important observances take place: Citizenship Day and Constitution Day. There is also Constitution Week which is observed the week of Sept. 17 – 23. The Library of Congress official site describes these observances as being created to both commemorate the signing of the Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787, and “recognize all who, by coming of age or by naturalization, have become citizens.” During this time, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services “encourages Americans to reflect on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and what it means to be a U.S. citizen.”

Sunday Sept. 18 – Air Force Birthday—Founded September 18, 1947. Between 1909 -- when that the US military purchased its first aircraft -- and 1947, the U.S. Air Force did not exist as a separate and independent military service organization. It went through a series of designations: Aeronautical Section, Signal Corps (1909); Aviation Section, Signal Corps (1914); United States Army Air Service (1918); United States Army Air Corps (1926), and United States Army Air Forces (1941).

Sunday Sept. 18—Air National Guard Birthday—The National Guard includes the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. These two components have a mission to equip, train, and deploy when needed in emergencies for contingencies around the world. The end of the first Operation Desert Storm led to a serious reconsideration of how Guard and Reserve forces could be used to augment active duty missions. This brought the reshaping of the work and deployment of these part-time forces. The official birth date of the Air National Guard as a reserve component of the Air Force is Sept. 18, 1947. The oldest Air National Guard Unit is the New York 102nd Rescue Squadron. It was originally designated the Aero Company, Signal Corps in 1915.



Sunday Sept. 25 – Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day – A day to honor the families of fallen Service members. The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as “Gold Star Mother's Day.”

Thursday Sept. 29—VFW Day—The Veterans Of Foreign Wars was founded by James C. Putnam on 29 September 1899, and since then the date has been celebrated at posts in America and later all over the globe. There are some six thousand VFW posts worldwide and 52 “departments” stateside offering services and advocacy to vets and their families.

Saturday Sept. 3rd—International Bacon Day (Yum yum)

Sunday Sept. 11—Grandparents Day—Always the first Sunday after Labor Day.

Tuesday Sept. 13—Uncle Sam Day—celebrates a symbol of America. Uncle Sam is certainly one of America's most recognized symbols. Uncle Sam appears on everything from military posters to cartoon images to advertising media. He is perhaps, the most recognizable symbol in the world. (Well, I would say that the McDonald arches is the best known but Uncle Sam is up there.) •



PR Editorial — Whose “Missing in Action”

This month we are focusing on our POW/MIA Program and its relationship to public relations. Well, La Societe does not have POW's of course but we certainly do have “missing in action.”

Do an assessment—how many members do you have and what percentage of those attend promenades? Like most locales attendance goes up and down depending on what time of year, health/family issues, vacations, etc.

We can also assume that in the “outside” world where most of us have worked our entire lives, MIAs are absent due primarily for medical issues (calling in sick). It seems that many employees are also MIA due to stress related issues within the workplace. But within our Locales and Grands—who are our “MIAs” and why?

For me, we have to look at who actually is missing and define it for each member. Is it a new member who seems to have been initially motivated and then seemed to disappear? Is it a seasoned Forty and Eighter who has mysteriously stopped attending and renewing—or somewhere in-between?

First let's discount those that fade from attendance due to age and infirmities or are genuinely sick. We support those with calls and visits and give rides if they are up to it. Communication is essential. Sometimes it is necessary (or the right thing to do) to pay for someone in a situation where renewing might be difficult.

So we are at the point where we have to determine how we fix the MIA problem. Let's start with your membership as a whole or as a team. Month after month it seems we are beating the same drum and covering much of the same material, however we need to look at what perhaps may be at the heart of this MIA issue by asking some basic questions.

Between our membership and leadership is there a mutual trust and respect? This is a real issue...

Does leadership communicate frequently, often and early about issues within the locale?

Does everyone know their specific role and duties within the locale or Grand? Or...

Rather than just taking an oath or accepting an appointment—does everyone accept responsibility for their position?

Do you have goals, direction, and a clear sense of purpose? These unify the group and motivate the membership. Everyone is not lost in a spaghetti bowl.

Are we mentoring new members and educating the rest? Mentorship sustains your membership and supports growth.

Are we suppressing alternative ideas or opinions?

Are we following our ritual and Roberts Rules of Order?

Do you recognize and reward those deserving in your Locale or Grand? It's called showing gratitude!

Do you focus on what you seem to do best or financially able to do? What programs do you pick to support?

If you can get a handle on the above questions—a miracle will happen— I truly believe. Your membership will grow internally and externally. Attendance will increase.

If you don't, your membership will tune out, feel their ideas or opinions are dismissed, not run for office or advancement and not support you with continued membership or other financial support. You will truly have MIA's.

The POW/MIA issue is a unique one, an important part of our history. It has been almost an impossible task to get a full accounting while some progress is being made. But for La Societe its different to us as an organization, because we know who our MIA's are. Calling, emailing, texting, writing all helps—but at it's core if we do not fix the above questions and issues—none of that will matter.



“Our mistakes are worth millions if we can invest in what they taught us.”- Matshona Dhliwayo

“We're surrounded. That simplifies the problem—Col. Chesty Puller

“Am I my brother's keeper? If you are a veteran, the answer is yes.” - L'Editeur

**Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Remarks at National POW/MIA Recognition Day
(As Delivered) - SEPT. 17, 2021**

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we come together as a nation to honor all those who served, and all those who were held captive and returned home, and to pay tribute to those who remain unaccounted for, and to stand by all of our POW and MIA families.

We know that the missing and the returned are in the hearts of their families and loved ones—today and every day. They are in our hearts as well.

I'm honored to welcome to the Pentagon former POWs and their loved ones and family members of those missing in action. We're humbled by your sacrifice and your resilience. So thanks for being here with us.

We still feel the pain of those missing from conflicts fought generations ago, and we share the uncertainty that many of you endure. We also thank you for your advocacy and involvement in our work to recover our fallen and our missing.

Today, more than 81,900 U.S. personnel remain unaccounted for—including more than 72,000 from World War II, more than 7,500 from the Korean War, and more than 1,500 from the Vietnam War. Many of the missing are lost deep at sea. But our experts estimate that some 38,000 may be recoverable. So we still have a lot of work to do. And we see each case as a sacred pact.

While I was in Hawaii last April, I visited with our team at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. And it absolutely astounded me to see firsthand the lengths that they go through to identify and to return to families the remains of so many of our fallen from so many conflicts overseas.

It is painstaking work, and in some cases it is dangerous. But they know how much it means to you and to our fellow citizens. They do it with care and with compassion, but also with a deeply felt desire to honor the service and the sacrifice of those who gave their lives defending this nation.

This year alone, DPAA has accounted for 135 U.S. personnel: one from the Vietnam War, 13 from the Korean War, and 121 from World War II. And in the past six years, DPAA has identified 352 unknowns from the USS Oklahoma, which as you know was sunk in Pearl Harbor.

And just this past Monday, on September 13th, Army Sergeant John Phillips was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, decades after he died in a POW camp in the Philippines. After so many years of uncertainty, we were honored and moved to have his family join us as he was laid to rest and received the honors that he deeply deserved.



In July, another MIA family gathered at Arlington. Army Major Harvey Storms was killed in December 1950 in one of the harshest battles of the Korean War. His remains were turned over by North Korea in 2018 and identified by DPAA. Major Storms had four sons—including his youngest, who was born after his father went missing. And all of his sons were at Arlington with their families when Major Storms was finally laid to rest.

You know, in a sense, that's what we still seek: answers to simple questions. Where are they? And when can they come home? That's why we fly the black-and-white flag of the National League of POW/MIA Families. And that's why we commemorate this special day.

To remember. To remember the fallen, the captured, and the missing. To remember the families who still wait for them. And to remember our solemn duty to answering those simple questions and to bringing home those who left these shores so long ago.

The flag's message is still a call to arms: You are not forgotten. And it's on all of us to make sure that our missing and their families know it.

So let me again thank the families and loved ones, those here with us today, and those who are joining us virtually. You have faced absence, you have faced uncertainty, and you have faced loss. And we are inspired by the strength that you've shown, day in and day out.

We will always honor the service and the sacrifice that your loved ones have given our great country.

We stand with you, and we always will. •

Above picture is from the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile. I searched many speeches and this was one of the best. This speech from 2021 speaks to the heart of POW/MIA Day.

Public Relations and the POW/MIA Program

L'Editeur—Last month we focused on nurses training—so I had to decide what to do next—an easy choice since this program is so important and then the third Friday in September is POW/MIA Recognition Day.

For me, I've always felt that the program was essentially the marketing of merchandise to support scholarships. The scholarships—which are at the heart of the program seemed to be working importantly in the background.

The concept of public relations could help and assist the program both internally and in our communities with program identity and publicity.

First—if you are not totally familiar with the program, its history and the scholarship application process—go here...

[The Forty and Eight - POW/MIA](#) (Ctrl-Click)

It is highly suggested to download or view the scholarship application to see in detail the application requirements and process—for example there is a July 15th deadline annually for submission.

So what are the easy and simple steps we can do internally to support the program. Well, there will be no program or scholarships without the obvious selling of pins and other merchandise. Marketing is in itself a part of public relations—you have to sell the program to sell the pins, bolos, etc.

Marketing is two fold and an easy sell— the POW/MIA issue is universal and heartfelt by veterans of all organizations—secondly, no one can dispute the importance of the scholarship program. Ever show the pin around?—they sell themselves. Show them to the Legion Riders—they are gone.

But taking the cash and handing over the pin is not enough. We need to take the additional step and explain the purpose of the pin and the program—a big speech is not needed and you might generate some interest in La Societe. A pin and the “What is the Forty and Eight” brochure can work together for you.

I do not think I have ever seen a press release on a scholarship award—I'm sure they have been done. But a press release or community released fact sheet on the scholarship program itself might reach many who are not aware of the program and in need. A sample press release is in this months “spotlight” on a scholarship award.

Fact sheets are easy to do and can be easily handed out to support the program in the community. Going to the program website—you can cut and paste the essential information—but be sure to have contact information somewhere. Fact sheets are generally one page only. Detailed info here.

[How to Create a Killer Fact Sheet? \(Steps and Template Included\) \(bit.ai\)](#) (Ctrl-click)

Internally we should all adhere to the POW/MIA chair ritual during our promenades and Cheminots. Consider placing a card or placard on the chair for the Directeur or Chef de Train to read.

Go to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) for detailed accounting of returned missing.

[Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency \(DPAA\)](#)

(Ctrl-click)

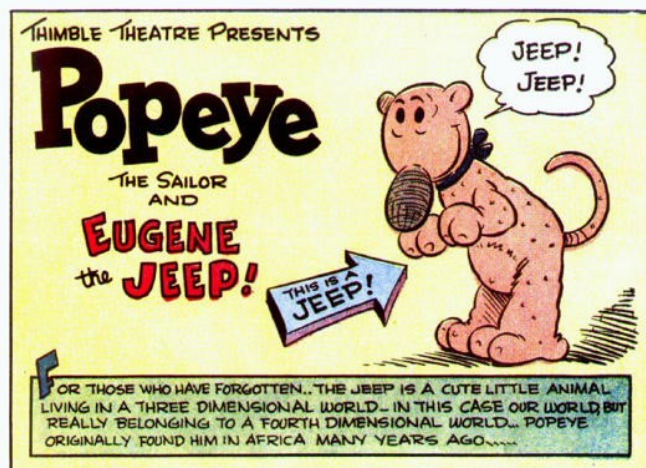
The POW/MIA Remembrance Table with it's associated ceremony is public relations at it's best. Tables settings have several variations but there are some basic items that must be on the table—the POW/MIA website has all the details—The Vietnam Veterans Association website is also a good source. If your table is a permanent display, check to make sure all items are there, it is clean, not dusty and perhaps place on the table or nearby a handout on its meaning and purpose. A small placard on the table showing who sponsors the table is a great idea.

The ceremony takes five minutes or less—if there is a special dinner or function, and its appropriate—do the ceremony—there will be no complaints.

These are basic ideas on how public relations and the POW/MIA program fit together. I'm sure I've left something out. Be sure as the year goes by to collect man-hours, miles and money for the end of year report. •



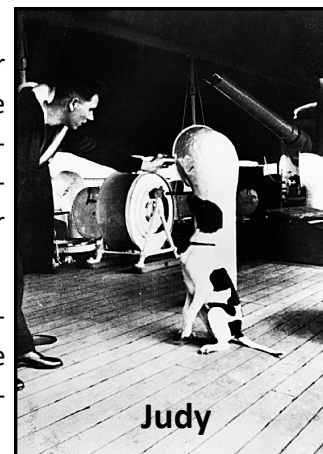
On March 16, 1936, the *Popeye the Sailor* comic strip introduced the character Eugene the Jeep. A mysterious animal with magical or supernatural abilities, Eugene was Popeye's jungle pet. Moreover, his small size and inexplicable powers allowed him to walk through walls, move between dimensions, and generally go anywhere to overcome otherwise impossible situations. By the late 1930s, Eugene the Jeep's ability to go anywhere resulted in troops nicknaming their four-wheel drive vehicles Jeeps. These vehicles included converted four-wheel drive civilian tractors supplied to the Army, and 1/2-ton and 3/4-ton Dodge Reconnaissance/Weapon Carrier trucks. The Canadians also nicknamed their Ford Marmon-Herrington half-track, "Jeep."



The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) of the U.S. Department of Defense lists 687 U.S. POWs as having returned alive from the Vietnam War. North Vietnam acknowledged that 55 American servicemen and 7 civilians died in captivity. During the war, POWs in Hanoi prisons endeavored to maintain a registry of captive Americans; they concluded that at least 766 POWs entered the system. POWs were initially held in four prisons in Hanoi and six facilities within 50 miles (80 km) of the city. No POW ever escaped from Hanoi.

About Judy, a ship's dog on the HMS Grasshopper during WW2. In 1941, the ship sunk after being hit by Japanese bombs, and Judy lived. A sailor found her pinned under lockers. The crew were captured by Japanese, and they became POWs, with Judy among them. She survived the war. Judy, a purebred English pointer who would often jump in to protect prisoners from beatings in a POW camp during WW2. A British Naval pilot bargained to have her officially considered a POW so the guards could not kill her.

Rupert Trimmingham, a black US Army soldier serving in WW2 who wrote a letter to the Army magazine about having to eat behind a train depot restaurant while German POWs were served inside in 1944, sparking support from other soldiers and contributing to the integration of the army in 1948.

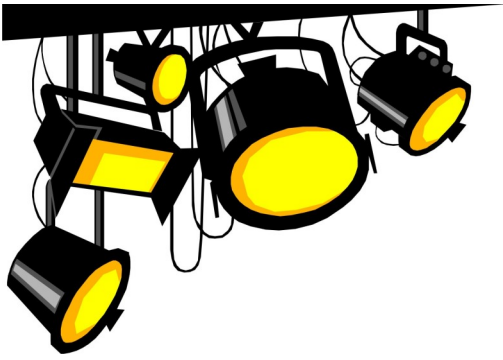


The five Japanese submarines in the Pearl Harbor attack, only one made it to Pearl but was quickly sunk without hitting any target. Three others were sunk as they tried to enter Pearl Harbor, and the fifth washed ashore where its only surviving crewman was the first WW2 POW at American hands.

Shinyō Maru was a Japanese merchant vessel during WW2. Thinking it was carrying enemy soldiers, the USS Paddle attacked and sunk it, later realizing there were 750 American POWs aboard.

The last German WW2 POWs weren't released from the USSR until 1956.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter. Since then, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. National POW/MIA Recognition Day legislation was introduced yearly until 1995 when Congress opted to discontinue considering legislation to designate special commemorative days. Subsequently, in an effort to accommodate all returned POWs and all Americans still missing and unaccounted for from all wars, it was proposed the third Friday in September, a date not associated with any particular war, not in conjunction with any organization's national convention, and a time of year when weather nationwide is usually moderate. **Congress established National POW/MIA Recognition Day with the passage of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act.** •



Spotlight on Public Relations

Spotlight on the POW/MIA Program—Press Release

A basic—simple press release format for a POW/MIA Scholarship award. Modify to your own needs and preferences.

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: (Contact information of person responsible for press release— name, phone number, email)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forty and Eight POW/MIA Survivors Scholarship Awarded

[City, State—Date] - The Forty and Eight, an Honor Society of American Veterans, is pleased to announce the award of a POW/MIA Survivors Scholarship Award to *(Name)*. *(Name)* is attending *(school)* and is an honored survivor of *(Name, etc. of POW/MIA)*. *(Date of scholarship awarded and any special details of place, time and location is appropriate.)* Note: I would do this first paragraph in bold

The Forty and Eight, a veterans organization in its 102nd year, has since 1997 provided college scholarships to the Spouse, Children, Grand Children, Great Grand Children, Widow or Widower of known and verified POW's or MIA's who served in the U. S. Military after WWI Draft day of May 28, 1917. This scholarship is available to all of their survivors and is worthy of the support of all us who have not forgotten them.

(Use this paragraph to provide more detailed personal information about the recipient, using information from the application or personal interview. You could also expand on the relationship to the POW or MIA.)

The purpose of the Forty and Eight National POW/MIA Program is to raise funds in honor of the servicemen & women who were Prisoners of War, or are considered Missing in Action while serving in the defense of the United States of America, or its allies during times of armed conflict. The funds are raised to facilitate the formation and continuance of a Scholarship Trust Fund for the direct descendants of verifiable POW/MIA Servicemen and Women.

The Forty and Eight is committed to charitable and patriotic aims. Our purpose is to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, to promote the well-being of veterans, their widows, widowers and orphans, and to actively participate in selected charitable endeavors, which include programs that supports the descendants of POW/MIAs.

The Forty and Eight (add Locale or Grand if appropriate) congratulates scholarship awardee (name).

Note: Does the recipient have an appropriate picture?—send with the press release. Keep press release to a single page, font size no smaller than 11 or 12, with line spacing at 1 or 1.1. This page is font 12 and 1.19.

POSTER OF THE MONTH



“In prison, I fell in love with my country. I had loved her before then, but like most young people, my affection was little more than a simple appreciation for the comforts and privileges most Americans enjoyed and took for granted. It wasn't until I had lost America for a time that I realized how much I loved her.”

— John McCain, Faith of My Fathers: A Family Memoir

Motivation—Inspiration of the Month—POW/MIA

When Carole Hickerson’s husband, Steve Hansen, was missing in action during the Vietnam War, she started a movement of families frustrated by a lack of information on their missing loved ones.

Carol and a dedicated group of other young women did in the late 1960s and early ‘70s was important. They changed the way the nation looks at its service members and veterans. Hickerson, for her part, helped create one of the most-recognizable symbols of anger, despair, admiration and support. She began by starting the “The League of Families.”

In 1971, the League of Families had a name, a mission and thousands of supporters. But it didn’t have a logo. Using her background in art, she created a simple design: the silhouette of a man’s head, barbed wire, a guard tower and a simple message, *You Are Not Forgotten*. The silhouette is of Steve. She did not design the flag—but her logo was used to create it.

Her husbands only remains – a single tooth – were recovered and sent to the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii. In 2000 he was then finally given a proper burial at Arlington National Cemetery. He died in captivity after 5 years as a POW.

John Wayne wore Steve’s POW/MIA bracelet and sent gifts and letters to his 8-year-old son Todd for years, often ending the notes: “Give ‘em hell.”

Hickerson downplays her role in today’s appreciation of our armed forces.

But long ago she forced us to take an honest look at the men and women in uniform.

She let us know that while it is acceptable to criticize U.S. policy, those tasked with carrying out that policy deserve respect and honor. That is her place in history. •



Photos courtesy Carole Hickerson



Photos courtesy Carole Hickerson

P.A.L.S. APPLICATION—RENEWAL or NEW MEMBER

Full Name _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ New Member Renewal

Email _____ PUFL \$100.00

Voiture Locale _____

Dues: Mail only \$17.00

Mail and Digital \$17.00

Digital only \$10.00

PUFL down payment (minimum \$25)

Checks made out to P.A.L.S.

Remit to:

Renslar R. Keagle

8714 Marble Drive

El Paso, TX 79904-1710

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The Unremembered—Heroes we don't hear about

Floyd James "Jim" Thompson (July 8, 1933 – July 16, 2002) was a United States Army colonel. He was one of the longest-held American prisoner of war in U.S. history that was returned or captured by troops, spending nearly nine years in captivity in the forests and mountains of South Vietnam and Laos, and in North Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

After completing Officer Candidate School, Thompson served stateside and also spent a year in Korea. He was stationed at Fort Bragg when he was recruited into the Army Special Forces as a Green Beret. After completing Ranger School and Jump School, he served as an instructor with the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, from August 1958 to June 1960. His next assignment was as a platoon commander in the 2nd Brigade of the 34th Infantry Regiment, stationed in South Korea from June 1960 to July 1961.



Captain Thompson went to Vietnam in December 1963. Prior to his deployment, he hadn't heard of the country. He was to serve only a six-month tour of duty but was captured on March 26, 1964. He was released on March 16, 1973, ten days short of nine years.

On March 26, 1964, Thompson was a passenger on an observation plane (an L-19/O-1 Bird Dog) flown by Captain Richard L. Whitesides when it was downed by enemy small arms fire at 16°39'12"N 106°46'21"E, about 20 kilometers from Thompson's Special Forces Camp near Quảng Tri, South Vietnam. Thompson survived the crash with burns, a bullet wound across the cheek, and a broken back. Whitesides was killed in the crash. Thompson was quickly captured by the Viet Cong.

Aerial search and ground patrols failed to find any trace of the aircraft. On March 27, 1964, an Army officer visited Thompson's home and told his pregnant wife Alyce that he was missing. The trauma sent her into labor and their son was born that evening.

Thompson spent the next nine years (3,278 days) as a prisoner of war, first at the hands of the Viet Cong in the South Vietnam forests, until he was moved in 1967 to the Hanoi prison system. During his captivity, he was tortured, starved, and isolated from other American POWs. His captors pressured him to sign statements proving that the United States' involvement in Vietnam was criminal. He refused and was beaten, choked and hanged by his thumbs. They also tied his elbows behind his back and hung him from a rafter until he passed out. At night he was tossed into a tiny wooden cage, where he was handcuffed and shackled in leg irons. At one point, Thompson did not speak to another American for over five years. In January 1973, Thompson was transferred to Hỏa Lò Prison. He was released with the other POWs in mid-March 1973 in Operation Homecoming.

He had difficulty adjusting to a vastly changed peacetime Army. In addition, Thompson's marriage had been troubled even before his captivity, and his wife Alyce, believing him dead, was living with another man at the time he was repatriated. His daughters were 6, 5 and 4 when he left, and his son was born the day of his capture. Only his eldest child barely remembered him. He eventually became completely estranged from all of them.

In 1981, while still on active duty, Thompson suffered a massive heart attack and a severe stroke. He was in a coma for months and was left seriously disabled. He was paralyzed on one side and could speak only in brief phrases for the rest of his life.

The stroke that left Thompson's left side paralyzed and his age contributed to his forced retirement from active duty in the Army. A ceremony was held for him in The Pentagon on January 28, 1982. Thompson received the Distinguished Service Medal in appreciation for his 25 years of service to his country as an Army officer. •

From a variety of web sources