



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

The National League of POW/MIA Families, www.pow-miafamilies.org, was founded on May 28, 1970, by the wives, parents and other family members of American servicemen listed as Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) and designated civilians listed as captured and missing during the Vietnam War.

Our sole mission is to obtain:

The release of all prisoners

The fullest possible accounting for the missing

The repatriation of all recoverable remains of those who died serving our nation during the Vietnam War

The League accomplishes this mission through:

Education of the public, our Armed Forces, America's veterans, federal/state/local officials and Members of Congress, among many others.

Advocating for efforts by the US and foreign governments to access and utilize relevant historical archives and records and sources of information that may pertain to unreturned US personnel and provide evidence to help recover, return and identify all possible remains of those who died serving our country.

Serving as advocate for families whose loved ones served in the Vietnam War and have not yet returned, to help end their uncertainty.

The League's voting membership is comprised of the wives, children, parents, siblings and other close relatives of Americans who were or are listed as POW, MIA, KIA/BNR (Killed in Action/Body not

Recovered) or returned US POWs from the Vietnam War. Non-voting Associate members include extended family members, students, veterans and other concerned citizens.

Lesson 1: Who are Veterans?

Materials

Pictures of Veterans

Objective

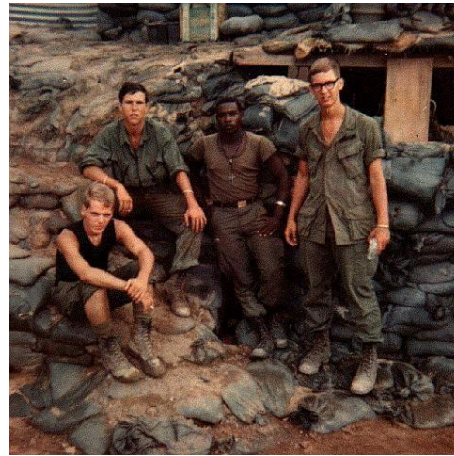
In this activity, students learn about veterans and who they are, hopefully seeing them as belonging to the different Armed Services defending our country, freedom and way of life, and that they have families and how sometimes they don't come home.

CAUTION: Due to the large number of students who either have friends or family that serve in the Armed Forces, please take care to be sensitive when discussing veterans and both wartime and peacetime losses.

Activity

1. Begin a discussion with students describing what they know about soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, Coast Guardsmen and women, and Space Force Guardians. All the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States are US veterans. They have served during wartime or peacetime. We have a special holiday, Veterans Day, that we celebrate on November 11 each year to honor them and their service to our country.
2. A veteran was once a soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, or Coast Guardsman. Active-duty soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and Space Force Guardians serving now will become veterans. Explain how we, as citizens, honor all Service personnel, those serving now and after they have served. Ask your class if anyone in their family, or their neighbors, have served in the Armed Forces and are now veterans or are serving today.
3. Have your students develop a list of what veterans have done for us in the past and what they do for us today, both in peacetime and in war. This list should include, among many others, jobs such as firefighters, journalists, teachers, cooks, scientists, engineers, nurses, doctors, scuba divers, laboratory researchers, police, border patrol officers, etc.

4. Use examples of conflicts they have already studied to explain any differences in what veterans in past wars did to serve versus what they might be asked to do in future conflicts.
5. Discuss the quotation from President Calvin Coolidge, "The nation that forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten." [Calvin Coolidge Quotes \(notable-quotes.com\)](http://www.notable-quotes.com) Ask your students why it is important to recognize and remember veterans and their families and what they do to protect our freedom. Discuss the special days that our nation designates to honor our veterans and their families, such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day and National POW/MIA Recognition Day. What special things do their families and/or their communities do to celebrate these days?
6. Watch the short film, Bet You Didn't Know: Veterans Day, on the History Channel website: <https://youtu.be/mWD4Oy6fKlo> Discuss any key issues or impacts that the students may raise.
7. As a class, brainstorm the risks and benefits of being a soldier and list the answers on the board. Let the class know that these issues may become important or irrelevant when they take a closer look at those risks in Lessons 3 and 4.
8. Have your students visit veterans groups or Veterans Homes to see and hear directly from veterans their stories, their lives and their dedication and sacrifices for freedom. This can be done during their monthly dinners or open events. Some students might want to volunteer to help at Veterans Homes and then report back to the class what they observed and learned.



Images of veterans for transparencies or slides

Lesson 2: What is Patriotism?

Materials

Objective

In this activity, students learn about patriotism and its importance to our active-duty military serving today, our veterans and the American people.

Activity

1. Have pictures (or actual items) of symbols, songs, and uniforms displayed in a section of the classroom. Ask your students, "Do you know what the colors of the flag stand for?" Red is for valor or bravery; white is for purity and goodness; blue is for justice and fairness. These are the qualities all veterans tried to achieve while serving their country in the Armed Forces.
2. Armed Forces – past, present and future - have the utmost respect for their country's flag and know the days when it is especially important to display it: Presidents' Day, Armed Forces Day, Flag Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. Throughout our history, veterans have sacrificed everything to protect and defend our nation's flag. Ask your students to list the ways they can respect the US flag. Proper etiquette toward the flag includes to always stand and place your hand over your heart when the US flag enters a room, and never turn your back to the US flag as it formally enters or is retired. For example, when you see the honor guard in a parade carrying the US flag, always stand and place your hand over your heart as it passes by.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance is an important demonstration of patriotism. Have your students look in the dictionary for these words: allegiance, pledge, republic, united, nation, indivisible, liberty, justice. When you say the Pledge of Allegiance, always stand and place your hand over your heart as a sign of respect for our nation and for those who defend it.
4. Patriotism is another way of showing one's love for our country. Showing this love includes sacrifices. Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day are special patriotic days where we remember the sacrifices of veterans. Have your students discuss what sacrifices have been made by those who serve – military and civilian (State Department, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Department

of Homeland Security (DHS), US Aid for International Development (USAID), among others) – for our liberty and freedom.

5. Ask your students what would happen to our country if no one was willing to defend our liberty and freedom and to protect us from those who want to take our freedom away.
6. Ask a representative from a Veterans Service Organization (VSO), such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), The American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), American Veterans (AMVETS), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Special Operations Association (SOA), Special Forces Association (SFA), the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), the Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) or the National League of POW/MIA Families to speak to your class on or around Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day or Veterans Day.
7. Have your students access the PBS webpage, National Salute to Our Veterans, that honors our veterans, <http://www.pbs.org/national-salute-to-Veterans/home/>.
8. A good lesson on patriotism comes from a veteran who can teach us about how to live our lives and make the world a better place. Watch this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxBQLFLei70> This is a graduation speech about how to change for the better by showing pride in what we do and never accepting less than our best performance, all of which honors those who serve and sacrifice for our freedom.

Patriotic Symbols and Icons:

<https://www.uscitizenship.info/Guide-to-Patriotic-Symbols-presented-by-uscitizenship-info/>

<https://statesymbolsusa.org/us/symbols/national>

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/content/american-symbols-flag-statue-liberty-and-great-seal>

Patriotic Songs:

<https://100mostsongsofusamerica.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.liveabout.com/best-patriotic-country-songs-933750>

Military Uniforms:

<https://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/military-uniforms/uniform-and-insignia-guide.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniforms_of_the_United_States_Armed_Forces

Lesson 3: Who are POW/MIAs?

Materials

Handout: [POW/MIA FLAG](#)

Objective

This lesson will teach students that sometimes during wars and conflicts, those who serve our nation don't come home and, often, nobody knows what happened to them.

Activity

1. There are several reasons why a veteran may not return home from a war. Have your students write a narrative to develop real or imaginary scenarios or situations where a veteran might become a Prisoner of War or Missing in Action. Discuss what those reasons might include, such as being wounded, captured or killed.
2. If a veteran is captured or kept in prison by an enemy, or we capture an enemy soldier, sailor, airman or armed civilian in combat, he or she is called a Prisoner of War (POW). Have your students discuss how POWs are depicted in movies and on TV.
3. If a veteran does not return from a battle or from a mission, or their commander does not know where they are or what happened during combat, they are listed as Missing in Action (MIA). They may be killed, captured or wounded, but the reality of their situation is unknown. If you have a student who has a family member who is or was in the military, and with the appropriate level of sensitivity and respect, have them describe how they would feel if their family member was Missing in Action or nobody knew where they were or what happened to them. If that occurs, the Armed Forces will do everything in their power to find those who are MIA and, if at all possible, bring them home. It is important for your students to know that the US Government is looking for MIAs to this day, and the National League of POW/MIA Families urges all Americans to support responsible efforts to account for them.
4. Invite a returned POW from any war to come to your class and describe their ordeal. Have your students prepare some questions ahead of time and, if possible, let the returned POW know what questions he/she might expect. Because it might be difficult to locate a returned POW, the following reading list might suffice: [When Hell Was In Session](#), by Jeremiah Denton; [The Passing of the Night](#) by Robinson Risner; [Code-Name Bright Light](#), by George Veith; [Chained Eagle](#), by Everett Alvarez and Anthony Pitch.

5. Have your students access the website of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Agency (DPAA), <https://www.dpaa.mil/>, to learn how our government is seeking the fullest possible accounting for our POW/MIAs. Review with your students the global map of past conflicts that shows where and how many Veterans are unaccounted for today. [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency > Our Missing > Past Conflicts \(dpaa.mil\)](#)
6. Have your students access the website of the National League of POW/MIA Families to learn of the work and efforts of the families of missing US Vietnam War veterans, <https://www.pow-miafamilies.org/>
7. During the Vietnam War, Americans began wearing metal POW/MIA bracelets to honor a US serviceman who was either a POW or was listed as MIA and to show their support for bringing him home. Have your students ask their older family members if they ever had a POW/MIA bracelet or might still have it. Ask them to bring it to class to show and share. POW/MIA bracelets are available today from the League website, noted below, that also has the POW/MIA bracelet history and description.

<http://www.thewall-usa.com/bracelet.asp>

<https://www.pow-miafamilies.org/history-of-the-powmia-bracelets.html>

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), in cooperation with the National League of POW/MIA Families, created a video, National POW/MIA Bracelet Stories, of dozens of families and veterans who talk about the bracelets they wear and why. They describe the missing man the bracelet represents.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa5rZeQW-CI>

POW/MIA Tribute video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqtDiZaBcAo>



Photo of US POWs held in a prison in North Vietnam during the war.



POW/MIA bracelets:





Lesson 4: Commemorating POW/MIA Recognition Day

Materials

Link: <https://www.pow-miafamilies.org/recognition-day-ndash-background.html>

Photo: Two styles of the Missing Man Table

Objective

This lesson will teach students about National POW/MIA Recognition Day, its importance and how our Nation, our State and our local communities distinguish this day.

Activity

1. National POW/MIA Recognition Day honors those who were Prisoners of War (POW) or are listed as Missing in Action (MIA). The important point of this day is to ensure that America remembers to stand behind those who serve and to make sure we do everything we can to account for those not yet returned.
<https://www.military.com/history/4-things-know-pow-mia-recognition-day.html>
https://www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/POW-MIA_ReferenceGuide.pdf
<https://www.pow-miafamilies.org/recognition-day-ndash-background.html>
2. Have your students send a letter to the Governor's office requesting a copy of the State's proclamation to commemorate POW/MIA Recognition Day.
3. Using local city, county or State maps, have your students mark the location of businesses, government buildings or other structures where they see POW/MIA flags displayed, inside or outside.
4. Have your students learn about the Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony and recreate the ceremony, especially during National POW/MIA Recognition Day/Week. The National League of POW/MIA Families is a good source for researching facts on the issue and this ceremony. <https://www.pow-miafamilies.org/missing-man-table-and-honors-ceremony1.html>
5. The United States is one of the few countries in the world which places priority on actively searching for and attempting to recover its unreturned veterans. Have your students pretend they are citizens of a different country and that they have a missing relative from a conflict. Have them write a compelling commentary or opinion article to their imaginary government appealing for a search to recover an unreturned loved one.

6. Have your students research a name of a missing and unaccounted for POW/MIA and send his family an email note thanking them for their loved one's service and confirming that he is not forgotten and that they support efforts to account for him and other POW/MIAs as fully as possible. Since the names and addresses of family members are private information and protected, they can send their email addressed "To the Family of (the missing man's name), to the appropriate Service Casualty Office:

Army – usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-tapcper@mail.mil

Navy – MILL NAVYPOW-MIA@navy.mil

Marine Corps – repatriation@usmc.mil

Air Force – AFPC.DPFC.POW.MIA@us.af.mil

You can also contact your local DAV, VFW, VVA or American Legion Post to see if they have releasable contact information for any returned POWs or POW/MIA families in the area.



Missing Man Honors Table

+++++++

The Missing Man Honors Table was a ceremony started by US Air Force pilots during the Vietnam War to remember their missing comrades. There is a generic narrative that is usually read during the ceremony. Missing man tables can be seen in many public and private facilities, especially on military installations around the world.

www.pow-miafamilies.org

