



## NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

The National League of POW/MIA Families, [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://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 search for relevant historical archives and records and sources of information that may pertain to unreturned US personnel, and recovery and return of 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.

### Activity

1. Read aloud the following definition of "veteran." "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, called Veterans Day, that we celebrate on November 11 each year to honor all the men and women who served in the Armed Services."
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. Ask your students why it is important to recognize and remember veterans and their families and what they do to protect all Americans, our freedom and our way of life. Discuss the special days that our nation designates to honor them, such as Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. Ask what special things their families do to celebrate these days and have your students draw pictures of their families celebrating these veteran-focused holidays.
5. Use these vocabulary words as a dictionary exercise or spelling test: airplane, soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, loss, family, missing, veteran, father, mother, remember, honor, duty, flag, memorial, service, defend, democracy.

6. Discuss the quotation from President Calvin Coolidge: "The Nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten." Where did he say this and when? Ask your students what this quotation means to them.



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 veterans and to 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 our country's flag and know the days when it is especially important to fly 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 towards 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 protect and defend it.
4. Patriotism is another way of showing our love for our country. Showing this love includes sacrifices. Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day are patriotic days when 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), Drug

Enforcement Agency (DEA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), US Aid for International Development (USAID), among others) – to protect our nation and our way of life.

5. Have your students write an essay about what patriotism means to them personally and how they can demonstrate patriotism every day, especially in support of those serving today, to recognize their service defending our liberty, freedom and education.
6. 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.
7. Ask a representative from a Veteran's 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.
8. A very 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 make sacrifices for our freedom.

## 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 discuss what those reasons might include, such as being killed or badly wounded or captured.
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. Ask your students which would be harder, being captured and losing your freedom, or being captured and forgotten by your country.
4. If a veteran does not return from a battle or from a mission, or their commander does not know where they are during combat, they are listed as Missing in Action (MIA). They may be killed, captured or wounded. If you have a student who has a family member who is either in the military or was in the military, have them describe how they would feel if their family member was missing in action or nobody knows where they are. 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 as fully as possible.
5. Review with your students the global map of past conflicts that shows where and how many veterans are unaccounted for. [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency > Our Missing > Past Conflicts \(dpaa.mil\)](#)





## Lesson 4: How Do We Commemorate POW/MIA Recognition Day?

### Materials

### 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. Have your students research names of unaccounted for POW/MIAs and send their families a note thanking them for their loved one's service and that their loved ones are not forgotten, plus that you support efforts to account for them as fully as possible. Since the names and addresses of family members are private information and protected, you can send your note/card addressed "To the Family of (the missing man's name), addressed to the appropriate Service Casualty Office:

Army-

[usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-tapcper@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-tapcper@mail.mil)

Navy-

[MILL.NAVYPOW-MIA@navy.mil](mailto:MILL.NAVYPOW-MIA@navy.mil)

Marines-

[repatriation@usmc.mil](mailto:repatriation@usmc.mil)

Air Force-

[AFPC.DPFC.POW.MIA@us.af.mil](mailto: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.

2. 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.
3. Have your students order posters for National POW/MIA Recognition Day from the [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency \(DPAA\)](#) and display them around their towns, cities and school.
4. 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.
5. 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. [Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony - National League of POWMIA Families \(www.pow-miafamilies.org\)](#)





### Missing Man Honors Table

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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](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)