



**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of California
National Security Bulletin
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September is National Preparedness Month. Start planning now so you are prepared to have the best promotion of our National Security program possible.

The best defense is one that is practiced, trained, and prepared. Encourage your members to complete Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) guide, Community Emergency Response Teams, is a guide with specific information and steps to take should you need them. Know your environment and know what disasters may befall your community, both natural and environmental. Hold training exercises in your post home to give training in emergency skills, first aid, and CPR.

Encourage the development of a disaster plan. Work with local hospitals, police, and fire departments so they can share their information. Offer to assist them if needed. Volunteer to help on the disaster drills held in your community.

Be a good neighbor. Be aware of what goes on in your neighborhood. If you have elderly nearby, help them to prepare an emergency preparedness plan and kit. Make sure their homes are well lit, offer to give them assistance in checking their fire alarm batteries and changing porch lights, and check to see if their first aid kits are updated. Many communities have programs designed to check on the elderly. One program is Are You OK? Developed to check on the elderly living alone, it is simply a matter of making a phone call daily to check to see if everything is OK. You can involve your Junior members in this program. After they make a call, they can contact a senior member and let them know how things are. Snow removal can be very difficult for the elderly. Start a snow removal program in your community. This is another great way to involve your Junior members. Set up teams and a calling committee. This is very important to their safety as well as to emergency response teams, should they be needed.

Talk with your local police departments about setting up a Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) program. This is a program designed to allow citizens to assist the police whenever there is a need. Directing traffic at motor vehicle accidents, fires, or large events are a few ways VIPS helps out. There is extensive training, one evening a week for eight weeks, but it is well worth the time and effort.

Emergency preparedness kits can be assembled at your post. Collect supplies and assemble the kits and distribute them in your community. Involve your Junior members in this program. Contact businesses in your community to see if they can help with donations. Remember your military families. They may not be familiar with your community and they would appreciate any information you can provide.

POW/MIA

According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, there are more than 82,000 Americans that remain missing from WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf Wars, and other conflicts. Of these, 75% of the losses are located in the Indo-Pacific, and over 41,000 of the missing are lost at sea.

The Defense Department remembers and honors those Americans who were prisoners of war and those who served and never returned home. DOD's POW/MIA Accounting Agency continues the search for the missing, fulfilling the nation's promise to leave no service member behind.



Michael Hoff, the wife of a U.S. military officer listed as missing in action during the Vietnam War, developed the idea for a national flag to remind every American of the U.S. service members whose fates were never accounted for during the war. The flag is black, and features a white disk bearing in black silhouette the bust of a man, watch tower with a guard, and a strand of barbed wire; above the disk are the white letters POW and MIA on each side of a white 5-

pointed star; below the disk is a black and white wreath with the motto: "You are not Forgotten."

POW/MIA Recognition Day is commemorated on the third Friday of every September, a date that's not associated with any particular war. 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. This year POW/MIA day is on September 15, 2023.

Observances are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. A Pentagon ceremony featuring members of each branch of military service is held annually on National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The tradition of setting a separate table in honor of our prisoners of war and missing comrades has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The manner in which this table is decorated is full of special symbols to help us remember our brothers and sisters in arms.



There are simple things we can do to Raise awareness of POW/MIAs

- Post a POW/MIA flag at every meeting or event.
- **Read about POW/MIA** from the US Department of Defense: <https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Experience/POW-MIA/>
 - Host events in honor of National POW/MIA Recognition Day on the third Friday in September
 - Post the annual POW.MIA Poster for this year in your post: <https://dpaa-mil.sites.crmforce.mil/dpaaFamWebPosters>

Recognize the work being performed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in the search for missing personnel.

•If you or someone you know is related to a service member classified as Missing in Action, please consider donating mitochondrial DNA to assist identification processes: <https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness/AFMES?type=Articles>.

Remember to support those families whose service members made the ultimate sacrifice.

- Work with like-minded organizations to support the families of service members who died during service to our country:
 - American Gold Star Mothers
 - American Gold Star Families
 - Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

For God and Country
The Golden State – United as One

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