

POW-MIA



Newt Heisley and Keith Ferris were colleagues at the same ad agency in the 1970s and remained friend until his passing in 2009.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THIS FLAG

As Creative Director for an ad agency in New Jersey, I was chosen to design the POW - MIA FLAG (Prisoners of War - Missing In Action) for the group by the same name. That was in 1971. The design caught on and became very popular to represent veterans from all wars, initially designed for the Vietnam War Veterans.

The silhouette of the soldier is actually my son, Jeffrey, while the words, "You Are Not Forgotten" came from my World War II experiences. As a Troop Carrier pilot during that war, flying all over the South Pacific Theater, I thought what a shame it would be if captured by the enemy and forgotten by my family and my wife in the United States.

Thus, it became part of my flag design. The POW - MIA Flag is second in sales only to the flag of the United States and I am proud of the many veterans who made it so.

May God bless our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, wherever they may be!

Here's a Toast to Newt

The POW/MIA flag was designed by Newt Heisley, a graphic artist and World War II veteran. In 1971, Heisley was working for Hayden Advertising, a small agency contracted by Annin & Company, a major flag manufacturer. The idea for the flag originated with Mrs. Mary Hoff, a member of the National League of POW/MIA Families, whose husband, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Hoff, was missing in action during the Vietnam War. She approached Annin & Company to create a symbol for American prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Heisley sketched the now-iconic black-and-white design, featuring a silhouette of a gaunt man (modeled after his son Jeffrey, who had recently returned from Marine training looking thin and unwell), a guard tower, barbed wire, and the words "POW/MIA" above and "You Are Not Forgotten" below. Initially intending to add color, Heisley ultimately kept it stark black and white, a choice that resonated widely. The flag was approved by the National League of Families in 1972 and later became a national symbol, officially recognized by Congress in 1990 under U.S. Public Law 101-355. Heisley, who passed away in 2009, expressed pride in his design, emphasizing it was created to honor the missing, not for personal gain.