

Our Prisoners of War and Missing in Action



The POW/MIA flag is inextricably tied to the National League of POW/MIA Families, which was born in June 1969 as the National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast Asia. Its mission was to spread awareness of the mistreatment of POWs at the hands of their captors.²⁸⁸

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation".²⁸⁹

The Department of Defense (DOD) established the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency²⁹⁰ to coordinate these issues. It provides quite a bit of information including names from WWII to the present. It is a valuable reference source.

Prisoners of War

Three South Park students were POW's during World War II, and one from Korea. They are Ltjg Thomas James "Jimmy" Eugene Crotty, (1929) US Coast Guard; PFC Eugene "Mike" J. McCourt, (1940) US Army; T5 Gerald P. Hannon, (1945) US Army and PFC Ronald Halliman (1949).

Crotty and McCourt were both held by the Japanese in the Philippines following their survival of the Bataan "Death March" in 1942. During this infamous trek the prisoners were forced to march 85 miles in six days, with only one meal of rice during the entire journey.²⁹¹

At the time of their arrival at Camp Frank O'Donnell, prisoners were dying at a rate of 50 per day. Because of the number of prisoners, the Japanese moved many of those healthy enough to Cabanatuan Camp, 8 kilometers away in July 1942.

"Mike" McCourt (1940) died in PW Camp 4, Camp O'Donnell, Tarlac, Luzon, Philippines on June 18, 1942 at age 19. McCourt's remains were returned to the United States in 1948 and he was reburied in Holy Cross Cemetery, in October 1948.

²⁸⁸ <http://www.historynet.com/the-story-of-the-powmia-flag.htm>

²⁸⁹ <http://www.pow-miafamilies.org/powmia-bracelets/>

²⁹⁰ <http://www.dpaa.mil/Home.aspx>

²⁹¹ <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/bataan-death-march-begins>

“Jimmy” Crotty (1929) survived his journey to Cabanatuan, Philippines but died on *September 30, 1942*, three days after he contracted diphtheria at age 30. He was buried in a mass grave outside the camp and remains there.

Gerald Hannon (1945) was captured by the Nazi army on D-Day, June 6, 1944 during the allied invasion at Normandy. He was held as a prisoner of war and listed as having been shot while trying to escape on June 17, 1944. He was 19 when he lost his life. His remains were returned to the United States and he is buried in the Long Island National Cemetery in Suffolk, NY.

On September 3, 1950 PFC Ronald Halliman (1949) was listed as Missing in Action while fighting the Defense of Pusan/Naktong Perimeter and presumed dead on December 31, 1953. It is reported that his “last name appears among many others on blackboards Moo Hak school Seoul, South Korea, 9/20/1950. Men were then marched to Pyongyang and loaded on trains there heading North mid-1950.²⁹²

Missing in Action

Of the South Park students who gave their lives in wartime, 30 remain as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action. 28 from World War II, one from Korea, and one from Vietnam.

South Park High School POW/MIA Service Affiliation

POW/MIA's	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1950	1971	Total
Merchant Marine		1							1
U.S. Army	2	1	1	1			1	1	7
U.S. Army Air Force		1	1	5,1	3	1			12
U.S. Coast Guard		1							1
U.S. Navy		4	2	2	2				10
U.S. Navy Air Corps				1					1
Total	2	8	4	10	5	1	1	1	32

South Park High School POW/MIA's (Red are POW's)

South Park High School POW/MIA Remembrance

Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia

Daniel J. Kraynik, USAAF – recovered and repatriated to America, 1950

Courts of the Missing, National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Hawaii

Salvatore Balestrieri, USN

Stanley Brudny, USAAF

Robert J. Freedenberg, USN

²⁹² www.koreanwarpowmia.net/Missing

Theodore M. Herda, USN
Joseph J. Kuebler, USAAF
Edward C. McGowan, USN
Robert H. Moyle, USN
Bernard Ziegler, USAAF

East Coast Memorial, New York, NY

William J. Geary, USAAF
Gerald P. Hannon, USA – Died as a POW

Holy Cross, Lackawanna, NY

Eugene J. McCourt, USA - Died as a POW, repatriated to America, 1948

Tablets of the Missing, North Africa American Cemetery, Carthage, TU

Salvatore Della Penta, USA
Charles W. Knop, USAAF

Tablets of the Missing, Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial, Liege BE

William E. Burden, USA
Leonard W. Jerome, USAAF
Robert A. Wheeler, USA

Tablets of the Missing, Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, UK

James W. Cole, USAAF
John A. Heimburger, USAAF
John J. Lausted, USN

Unknown/Korea

Ronald E. Halliman, USA – Died as a POW

Unknown/Laos

Donald P. Knutsen, USA

Wall of the Missing, Manila American Cemetery, RP

David S. Clark, USAAF
T. James Crotty, USCG – Died as a POW
George F. Dailey, USN AC
Wallace B. Gillman, USN
John J. Hess, USAAF
Gerard F. Kline, USN
Theodore F. Polanowski, USN
Jeremiah W. Reilly, USN

Wall of the Missing, Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial, NE

Robert E. Hamm, USAAF

Additional information can be found at DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY,
<http://www.dpaa.mil>.