



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES**  
459 Patterson Rd., E-Wing, Rm 1-A103  
Honolulu, HI 96819

TESTIMONY

ON

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8, HD1, REQUESTING THE DISPLAY OF THE  
PRISONER OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION FLAG AT THE STATE CAPITOL  
PRESENTATION TO THE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND

MILITARY AFFAIRS

AND

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

April 20, 2022

Chair Nishihara, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and respective Committee members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide comments **in support** of HCR 8, HD1, Requesting the Display of the Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Flag at the State Capitol.

Flying the POW and MIA Flag at the State Capitol on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and on the National POW/MIA Recognition Day reflects on the incredible sacrifices of our military members who defended the freedoms and liberties that our citizenry enjoy today. It is a symbol of the steadfast resolve of a Grateful Nation to never forget these men and women. Proudly flying this flag also displays the United States' unwavering responsibility to do as much as it can within its power to account for those missing or captive. This is a solemn obligation we owe to their surviving family members as the POW/MIA Flag has boldly inscribed, "You Are Not Forgotten."

Thank you for your support of this resolution on behalf of the Military Members, our Veterans and their loved ones who call Hawaii their home!

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Testimony in Support of HCR8, HD1/HSCR1697-22

**RELATING TO DISPLAY OF THE PRISONER OF WAR AND MISSING IN  
ACTION FLAG AT THE STATE CAPITOL**

Presented to the Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental  
and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations

at the Public Hearing 1:20 p. m. Wednesday, April 20, 2022

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE, Hawaii State Capitol  
by David and Sheri Rolf

Chairs Nishihara and Morikawa, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Dela Cruz and members  
of the committees:

The POW/MIA flag is *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.*

On August 10, 1990, Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, designating the  
POW/MIA flag:



In remembering the service to our country of Lt. Gary L. Shank, USNR, and U.S. Navy  
Capt. Jerry Coffee and all of the more than 2,500 servicemembers were listed by the  
Department of Defense as Prisoner of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA), at the end  
of the Vietnam War, we offer our support for House Concurrent Resolution 8, House  
Draft 1, which proposes that the POW/MIA flag be displayed at the State Capitol on  
Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and the national POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The POW/MIA flag has special meaning for Sheri and me and for the many family members and friends of all those who were imprisoned in Vietnam or Missing in Action.

Gary Shank was my roommate in the U.S. Navy flight training command and was Sheri's husband at the time he was shot down by enemy antiaircraft fire July 23, 1972. The A-7B Corsair II Gary was flying crashed into shallow waters off the coast of Thai Binh, 25 miles South of Haiphong.

Search and rescue efforts were started immediately but were unsuccessful and Gary was listed as Missing In Action. Years later, the U.S. Government determined that Gary was killed at the time, and the MIA designation was officially changed to Killed in Action.

As longtime friends, Sheri and I were later married and came to Hawaii and started a business on Dillingham Boulevard.

More than a decade had passed since the end of the war, but Gary's remains were recovered and repatriated to the United States--being sent to Hawaii, on July 17, 1984.

On August 2, 1984, the Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI, now the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) officially identified Gary's remains.

It is all the more fitting and proper that since this vital identification lab, the only one of its kind in world, is located here in Hawaii, that we establish this POW/MIA flag tribute in remembrance of those who have served.

On a very personal note, our office was just a short distance from the lab and Sheri, at the time, was allowed to visit the lab several times during the identification process. Sheri came to know well the skilled staff who performed this vital identification service for the families of those service members who had been Missing in Action.

Lieutenant Gary L. Shank, is memorialized on the Vietnam Wall in the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, in Punchbowl.

Captain Jerry Coffee, a 7-year Vietnam War POW, was my commanding officer in Navy Flight Squadron VC-1 at Barbers Point, when Sheri and I first came to Hawaii more than forty years ago

With the strong U.S. military presence in Hawaii it is fitting that a display of the continuing remembrance of our POW/MIA service members be made on the specially designated days at the State Capitol.

Sheri and I offer our thanks to the committee chairs for hearing this resolution and to Representative Linda Ichiyama for introducing it. We appreciate this opportunity to testify.

HCR-8

**LATE**

I am in total support of this "each and every day" public display of our love and affection for those military personnel who are currently imprisoned or whose whereabouts is still unknown. Ours is the nation's largest per capita military/veterans community

Mahalo,  
Dennis Egge