

POW Status - The Department of Defense (DOD) quietly eliminated the designation/status Prisoner of War (POW) as it applies to captured American service personnel. DOD representatives, specifically those from the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) have told us we are wrong. They say the POW status still exists. In the last year, we've asked representatives of DPMO, on more than one occasion, to provide us with a copy of the controlling directive governing and describing the conditions under which a member of the Armed Forces would be listed POW. To date, they have been unable or unwilling to provide this directive. This leads us to believe, in spite of their statements to us and the media, that there is no directive under which a member of the Armed Forces would be listed as POW.

Who Wants to Tell Matt Maupin
He's Not a POW?



DOD Controlling Directive 1300.18, issued Dec. 18, 2000, does not provide for a POW designation/status. Under this directive, the most captured service members can hope for is the ambiguous designation/status Missing/Captured or MIA-C. Section E2.1.1.24. of the Directive reads, in part: "Missing. A casualty status applicable to a person who is not at his or her duty location due to apparent involuntary reasons and whose location may or may not be known . . ."

Subsection E2.1.1.24.3 deals with captured personnel stating: "Captured. The casualty has been seized as the result of action of an unfriendly military or paramilitary force in a foreign country." Thus the new status "Missing-Captured."

When the Navy changed Capt. Scott Speicher's status from Missing to Missing/Captured, then Secretary of Navy Gordon England wrote, "This category denotes that a service member has been seized as the result of action of an unfriendly military or paramilitary force in a foreign country . . . if the government of Iraq is holding Captain Speicher he is entitled to Prisoner of War status under international law and the Geneva Convention . . . **Although the controlling missing persons statute and directives do not use the term "Prisoner of War,"** the facts supporting a change in Captain Speicher's category from Missing in Action to Missing/Captured would also support the conclusion that, if alive, he is a Prisoner of War."

In other words if the status existed, the Secretary of Navy would have designated Capt. Speicher a POW.

We realize that our enemies violate the rules of international law and the Geneva Conventions regarding the care and treatment of captured American Service Personnel. Terminology will not change that. Terminology does change world perception regarding the value we place on our captured personnel. In the eyes of the enemy, doesn't it downgrade the worth of a battered American service member, displayed on television worldwide, for the Department of Defense to designate him or her Missing/Captured rather than Prisoner of War?

The status Missing/Captured is not recognized by the Geneva Conventions and it fails to provide this nation's service members the moral dignity and international recognition provided by the Prisoner of War status.

When will Congress Right this Wrong?

Demand the Dept of Defense either produce the controlling directive governing conditions under which Service Personnel may be listed POW

or:

RE-INSTATE THE PRISONER OF WAR DESIGNATION/STATUS... NOW!