

Johnson on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2001

September 21, 2001

Today U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson (TX-03) released the following statement in recognition of National POW/MIA (Prisoner of War/ Missing in Action) Day, September 21, 2001.

Johnson served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Johnson spent nearly seven years as a POW in Vietnam. Over half of that time was spent in solitary confinement because his enemies labeled him a "die hard." He endured leg irons, malnutrition and other grueling conditions with ten others in the high-security prison unit. Johnson and friends called the high-security unit Alcatraz.

Johnson is the Chairman of the Korean War Working Group on the U.S. / Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA's.

"This weekend, I'll celebrate life with people I never would have met, were it not for my time in Alcatraz as a POW in Vietnam.

"Jerry Denton, Harry Jenkins, George McKnight, Jim Mulligan, Howie Rutledge, Bob Shumaker, Jim Stockdale, and Nels Tanner have been friends for life. In fact, this weekend, we're having an Alcatraz reunion with our wives in Washington, D.C., something we do every year or so. We joke that we know more about one another than our wives do!

"All joking aside - we were the lucky ones. We made it out of Vietnam. I think other POWs would feel the same.

"Obviously, some didn't return, like our friend, Ron. It's people like Ron and the others who didn't make it home, who I pray for daily.

"Whether the young, selfless soldiers left for World War II or Desert Storm, we must never give up hope of finding them. They gave us their all, without demanding anything in return.

"Continuing the search is the least we could do for the loved ones of those missing. Recognizing National POW/MIA day is one more way to always have their memory live on.

"We will never forget."

Congressman Sam Johnson

Third Congressional District of Texas