

Charles Johanson

106th Infantry Division

September 17, 2006 - POW-MIA vigil held in Carmel

CARMEL — This year, Frank Bove was the last guy out of the cage, and after a 24-hour vigil for American prisoners of war, there were only a handful of veterans on hand for the closing ceremony to mark National POW-MIA Recognition Day at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1374 on Gleneida Avenue yesterday.

In past years, they had so many volunteers that each man spent only 15 minutes in the 4-foot-by-6-foot bamboo cage set up in front of the post. This year, Charlie Johansen took four one-hour turns to make sure the cage always had a man in it.

"We do it because we have to let people know what's going on," said Johansen, who served in the U.S. Army's [106th Infantry Division](#) between 1943 and 1945. "Young people today don't know what it's all about. That's one of the reasons we're out here."

After his buddies helped Bove out of the cage, past commander Karl Rohde thanked all the men who participated and read a brief dedication as part of the closing ceremony.

"Let us remember those who put their country before self and did not return home to their families," Rohde said. "Let us remember the families of the missing who continue to burn the candle of hope. And let us continue to tell America the story that without the service and sacrifice of the American servicemen and women, there would not be a United States of America."

The National Day of Recognition was established by Congress in 1979, three years after the Department of Defense established the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii to recover and identify the remains of all U.S. service members killed in past wars.

More than 78,000 service members are listed as missing and unaccounted for from World War II, 8,100 from the Korean War and 1,800 from Vietnam, according to Department of Defense records.

During the Cold War, 165 air crew members went missing in action when their planes crashed or were shot down. Of those, 41 have been accounted for, the Defense Department says.

One service member is listed as missing in action from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and Ohio resident Keith "Matt" Maupin remains the only missing serviceman from the current Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Rohde, a Vietnam veteran and Kent town councilman, said that despite the small turnout for this year's event, he and his fellow veterans would continue the tradition. As he said that, a car passed by in front of the post, and the driver honked his horn and waved at the group.

"You see that? There are some people who understand why we're out here," Rohde said.
"For the others who have no idea, well, the more we can educate the public, the better off
we are as a country. BILL HUGHES, "The Journal News.com - Westchester,NY,US



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