

County's 145th Barn Quilt Focuses on POW-MIA Concerns

When Shawano County's barn quilt project coordinator Jim Leuenberger contacted Mike Wright about putting a barn quilt on his barn, Mike said that would be fine as long as it had a patriotic theme and included the POW-MIA flag as the central focus. Wright served in Vietnam for a year and one of his Vietnam Vets' motorcycle club's main causes is to make people aware that there are over 83,000 American POW-MIAs since World War I.

The impactful barn quilt, the pattern of which is called "You Are Not Forgotten," is mounted on Wright's barn at W11313 State Highway 29, about 10 miles west of Shawano. The gold stars on the quilt represent what Wright calls the "Gold Star Mothers" whose sons and daughters went off to war and never came home.

The quilt, Shawano County's 145th, was sponsored by Dr. Bill Stern, owner of Vision Health Eyecare of Shawano. Dr. Stern has provided quality vision and medical eye care in the Shawano area for over 34 years. "It was an honor to be asked to sponsor this particular barn quilt," Stern said. "My wife, LuAnn, and I have enjoyed seeing the barn quilts dotting the Shawano County countryside and reading about the history of the local farms and their families. We would especially like to acknowledge all the work Jim and Irene Leuenberger have put into this wonderful project."

The POW-MIA flag was designed as a symbol of citizen concerns about U.S. military personnel taken as a Prisoner of War (POW) or listed as Missing in Action (MIA). It was created by the National League of Families and officially recognized by Congress in conjunction with the Vietnam POW-MIA issue as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoners and unaccounted for in southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation. Beyond southeast Asia, it has been as symbol for POW-MIAs from all U.S. wars.

Wright feels it is important that we continue to work to identify Americans being held as prisoners of war and those missing in action. "It's the least we can do for those who helped secure and maintain our freedom," Wright said. Wright has been to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. a couple times, and when the replica of the Memorial, called "The Moving Wall," came to Shawano a few years ago, Mike and his Vietnam Vets motorcycle club escorted it from Wittenberg to Shawano.

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