

DoD Holds Sixth POW/Missing Personnel Prayer Breakfast

By Rudi Williams
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ARLINGTON, Va. -- Ex-POWs and their wives and widows and children of servicemen missing in action were honored here Feb. 3 during DoD's sixth annual POW/Missing Personnel prayer breakfast.

The honored guests were from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and the Cold War. "Most of the families are those of servicemen still missing from those wars," said Peggy Sue Marish-Boos, a spokesperson for DoD's POW/Missing Personnel Office, which hosts the annual event.

POWs experienced a loss of religious and personal freedom and suffered intense brutality, but "they're not bitter, or angry, and they have no hate for their captors," Marish-Boos noted. "And they really enjoy life now because their freedom was taken away."

Elizabeth M. Norman was the keynote speaker. She is the author of "Women at War: The Story of Fifty Military Nurses Who Served in Vietnam," and "We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese." In her remarks, she talked about the survival of the 99 women who served on Bataan and were held prisoner by the Japanese.

Norman, who is working on a sequel to "We Band of Angels," is an associate professor and director of the doctoral program in the division of nursing at New York University's School of Education.

Leaders from veterans service groups such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and AMVETS and family advocate organizations such as the National League of Families attended the breakfast. Senior administrative officials present included Hershel Gober, deputy secretary of veterans affairs; Robert L. Jones, deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs; and J. Alan Liotta, deputy director of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office.