



# THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS



## OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING



25 SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER:

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<https://www.nj.gov/military/admin/departments/deib/>

**FLAMENCO:** Originating from the Andalusian region of Spain, Flamenco is a captivating art form that combines singing, guitar playing, dancing, and handclapping. This dance is often viewed as emotionally charged and passionate, often being performed as a solo or between partners. When performed in a pair, the intense facial expressions and movements can often be interpreted as a longing between lovers or foes. The castanet, a small handheld instrument, is often used by both dancers to add dramatization to the performance. The castanet that provides the higher-pitched sound is meant for the feminine dancer while the lower-pitched sound is meant for the masculine role. The guitar players supporting the dancers gained a reputation, leading to the flamenco guitar being considered its own art form.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

**SALSA:** The word salsa itself means *spice* or *sauce*, two characteristics that can describe the dance genre perfectly. Like bachata, salsa is often a partnered dance that prioritizes sensuality and romance. Created in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the dancing of salsa has a history of being fused into its own style within the Latino community in New York. This can be due to the 1950s and 60s migration of Latin and Caribbean musicians and dancers to the US. The influence of African and Spanish communities in Cuba played a huge part in the development of salsa, merging African rhythm with European undertones.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

**REGGAETON:** Though the true origin of reggaeton is not known, it is believed Panama was where its roots first began and later sprouted in popularity on the island of Puerto Rico. Reggaeton's influences are a fusion of dancehall and reggae, inspired by those who emigrated from Jamaica and Barbados to assist in the building of the Panama Canal during the early 1900s. In the early 1970s, hip-hop began growing in popularity and spread to Puerto Rico, eventually being the finishing touch to what we today consider Reggaeton. In 2004, Daddy Yankee's classic "Gasolina" was released and became a world favorite, possibly the most popular reggaeton song in history.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

**BACHATA:** Bachata is a beautiful and sensual dance, that is all about the hips! Considered similar to salsa with its turn and romantic routine patterns, it is slightly easier to learn. During the 1960's, bachata was born in the Dominican Republic and later spread throughout the Caribbean. In the beginning stages, the genre was frowned upon by the upper class and favored by the middle and lower. Years later during the 1980's, radio stations began broadcasting bachata and no longer confined it to certain social classes, but rather it grew to be accepted and loved by everyone.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

**¿LATIN OR HISPANIC?** Have you ever wondered why those from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Mexico are referred to as *Hispanic* or *Latin*? The terms are said to date back to early 1910s, became popular in the Westcoast during the 1920s, and was first used in government documentation during the 1980s. When referencing the term *Hispanic*, it is pertaining to those from Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries, which excludes Brazil. When using the term *Latin*, one can be referencing those from Latin America, meaning it includes Brazil but not Spain. Since the definitions broadly specify which regions are connected to each, many of said backgrounds choose to refrain from using the terms as they can appear to group several different cultures into one 'category'. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 47 percent of individuals describe themselves by their family's country of origin, while 39 percent reference themselves as Latin or Hispanic. The term *Latinx* emerged from the LGBTQ+ community and can be seen as the most inclusive of them all, being used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina.

**LEARN MORE**

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

September 15th marks the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month! During these few weeks, we highlight the leaders and moments in history that have led to the Hispanic cultures we know today from South and Central America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Mexico. The celebration kicks off in the middle of the month of September to recognize individual independence days for countries such as: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. The month allows for a greater sense of inclusion and acknowledges the impactful roles of Latinx's and Hispanics within the community. People often find comfort in sharing their cultural backgrounds and this allows us to discover that we probably share more in common than we think. Let us kick off the month by learning about a few popular dances and music! Being exposed to different genres of dance and music, especially of diverse backgrounds, is how we learn new stories and spread culture. If you think about it, learning to enjoy the arts of others allows one to grow in empathy and acceptance of differences or gain insight on diverse world views other than our own.

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**MERENGUE:** Merengue is the national dance of the Dominican Republic and is known for its simple and energetic movements. It is a fast-paced dance style that combines quick footwork with playful hip movements. Merengue is often performed in pairs, alone, or in groups. The dance is heavily influenced by African rhythms and European musical elements, particularly the French Minuet. The music evolved to include instruments like the accordion, a type of drum called the Tambora, and a hand-held metal scraper believed to be of native Taino origin, while the Tambora is a two-headed drum of African origin. Together with the European accordion, the traditional group symbolizes the cultures that combined to make today's Dominican Republic. There are several theories that explain the origin of merengue, but none of them have yet been confirmed. In terms of attire, the traditional outfit for the men is a white shirt with an opened collar, dark slacks, a hat and/or scarf. For the women, a white shirt and mid-length or ankle-length flowy skirt is worn often in the colors of white, red, or blue.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

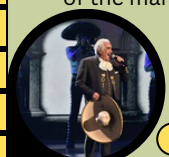
**CUMBIA:** Cumbia began its roots in Colombia and made its way through Central America, the rest of south America, and the United States. It was, and can still be looked at, as a form of courtship dance, but also was assumed to be used in spiritual or cultural rituals. Traditional cumbia used a rhythmic pattern common in Afro-Cuban music often referred to as the clave. Modern cumbia music features instruments like accordions, new types of drums, guitars, and horn instruments. The word cumbia is said to be derivative of the word Cumbe, meaning dance in an unspecified African dialect. The dance became very popular in Texas, especially due to the late icon Selena Quintanilla. Selena's music broke down borders and combined modern-day musical influence with that of the traditional cumbia. She is the number 1 selling Hispanic artist of all time with 70 million records sold worldwide.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

**RANCHERA:** Ranchera music is a popular genre that originated in Mexico. It was given the name due to typically being performed by someone from ranch lands or the countryside. These specific songs are seen as emotional and often sentimental, with lyrics relating to romance, culture, family, or betrayal. Ranchera compositions typically incorporate rhythms inspired by waltz, polka, folk, country, and bolero styles as well as guitars from the Spanish tradition. Related to ranchera is the use of the mariachi, an ensemble of violins, guitars, and trumpets- a Mexican staple. It is commonly sung by a conjunto (small band), dueto (a duet), trío, or a single singer. When referring to attire, The *traje de charro* is a Mexican adaptation of a typical horseman's riding outfit that originated in Spain.



**TAKE A LISTEN**

**LEARN THE DANCE**

Bomba was created during the European colonial period in Puerto Rico, coming from 17th century African influence. Bomba music was an outlet for political, spiritual, & emotional expression.

**BOMBA**

Tango was born in Buenos Aires in the late 19th century. During a cultural renaissance of the early 20th century, Tango became the culture of Buenos Aires of neighborhoods, bars, nightclubs, and popular theater.

**TANGO**

Paso doble is considered an emotional form of Latin ballroom dance. Infantry soldiers in Spain as well as bullfighters used the moves to assist with speed. Troops were able to move at 120 steps per minute since paso uses swift running-like movements.

**PASO DOBLE**

Punta is considered a high-paced dance that requires consistent side-to-side hip movements and footwork. It is often considered a partnered dance but does not require physical touch. Similar to most Latin dances, Punta is of African origin.

**PUNTA**



# NATIONAL POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY

## SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

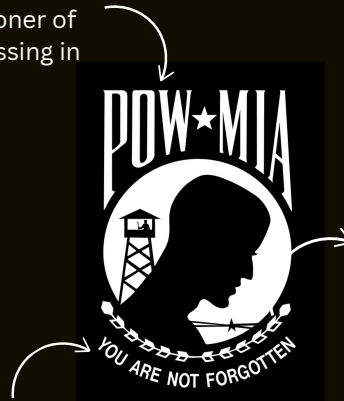


National POW-MIA Recognition Day, established by Congress in 1979 and formalized by President Jimmy Carter, is a significant observance dedicated to honoring and remembering those who have been prisoners of war (POW) and those who are missing in action (MIA). Held annually on the third Friday of September, this day is a poignant reminder of the immense sacrifices made by military personnel and their families.

The DMAVA Office of DEIB joins the nation in commemorating this day to reflect on the courage and hardships faced by POWs and MIAs. This observance underscores the continued commitment to accounting for missing service members and ensuring that their bravery is never forgotten.

### POW - MIA FLAG

POW-MIA: Stands for Prisoner of War, Missing in Action



The POW-MIA flag, designed by former World War II pilot Newt Heisley, features a stark black-and-white image of a gaunt silhouette, barbed wire, and an ominous watchtower. This design reflects the severe conditions faced by prisoners of war and those missing in action.

"You Are Not Forgotten" underscores the nation's pledge to remember and honor these service members and to continually strive to bring them home. It embodies the commitment of our armed forces to never leave a soldier behind.

Learn more, [here](#).

*"Honoring their **sacrifice**. Earnestly **searching** for those still missing."*  
-DPAA

### UNACCOUNTED FOR SERVICE MEMBERS FOR THE STATE OF NJ



### ACCOUNTED FOR SERVICE MEMBERS FOR THE STATE OF NJ



This National POW-MIA Recognition Day commemorates the unwavering commitment of our armed forces, families, and supporting organizations to bring service members home. The principle of "No Soldier Left Behind" drives efforts led by organizations like the National League of POW-MIA Families, which diligently works to account for and return missing service members while providing closure to families. The Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) plays a crucial role in maintaining records on those missing.

The DMAVA Office of DEIB is dedicated to recognizing the contributions of all service members and veterans. By honoring their experiences and sacrifices, we ensure that the legacy of courage and resilience among POWs and MIAs continues to inspire future generations. On this National POW-MIA Recognition Day, we pay tribute to these heroes and reflect on the profound cost of our freedom.

Below are the names of veterans who have shared their stories of perseverance as POWs with The National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey. Access their stories of valor by clicking their individual links. Today, we honor their bravery and valor by amplifying their voices. We encourage everyone to stay informed by visiting the websites of these organizations and connecting with local veteran support groups to support ongoing efforts and honor those who have served as you observe National POW-MIA Recognition Day this year.

Visit the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey:

<https://njmilitiamuseum.org/>



Visit the National League of POW-MIA Families:

<https://www.pow-miafamilies.org>

Visit the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA):

<https://www.dpaa.mil>



CLICK [HERE](#), TO VIEW THE DPAA ANNUAL RECOGNITION POSTER

# NATIONAL POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY

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## LEONARD FELLER

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran served as a navigator on a B-24 bomber, having begun his military career in an anti-tank unit before attending airborne school. He lived to the age of 101."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## RICHARD A. RITCHINGS

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran was a prisoner of war (POW) in Stalag Luft I for 14 months and flew 38 missions as a fighter pilot during World War II."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## CHRISTOPHER GERALD MCANDREWS

**Korean War US Army  
Ex-POW of the North Koreans**

"This veteran was captured on July 20, 1953, at Taejon, South Korea, and returned home in September 1953. A "Tiger Survivor", he sustained injuries from shrapnel, read more [here](#).

Read his full story, [here](#).

## JOHN CIRELLI

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran flew 19 missions from England before being shot down. On April 7, 1945, he was wounded by flak while over Germany."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## MATTHEW W. PARKS

**World War II US Army  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran was captured at the Battle of the Bulge on December 23, 1944, and spent four and a half months at a lumber work camp in Stalag XII-A. He was rescued by the American 8th Division on May 4, 1945."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## GORDON D. PROUT

**World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

"This veteran served as a navigator on a B-17 Flying Fortress. His plane was shot down on January 7, 1944, and he spent about 16 months as a POW at Stalag Luft I in Germany."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## WILLIAM J. BROWN

**World War II US Army  
Ex-POW of the Germans**

Read his full story, [here](#).

Visit the National Guard Militia  
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## ELLIS NORMAN BEESLEY

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

## MORTIMER M. HUGHES

World War II US Army

Ex-POW of the Germans for 97 days

"This veteran sustained 30 to 38 pieces of shrapnel from his ankles to his knees."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## WILLIAM E. SCHULTZ

Korean War US Marine Corps

Ex-POW of the Chinese

Read his full story, [here](#).

## FREDERICK TAURECK

World War II US Army

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

## KENNETH E. WILLIAMSON

Korean War US Army

Ex-POW of the Chinese for 28 months

"This veteran sustained a head wound from shrapnel on April 27, 1951, and was a prisoner of war (POW) from April 28, 1951, to August 14, 1953."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## PASQUALE J. LIBRETTI

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

"This veteran served as an aerial gunner and airplane armorer. His aircraft was shot down over Austria, and he was taken as a POW to Stalag VII-A."

Read his full story, [here](#).

## HERMAN FRANK

World War II US Army Air Forces/Corps

Ex-POW of the Germans

Read his full story, [here](#).

\*A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO C. FOWLER FOR PROVIDING EACH OF THESE VETERAN'S ORAL STORIES FOR THIS OBSERVANCE\*

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