

# Honoring the POWs of the Hanoi Hilton on National POW/MIA Recognition Day

*On this National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Boulder Crest proudly honors the American POWs held captive at the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" during the Vietnam War.*

BLUEMONT, VA, UNITED STATES,  
September 19, 2025 /  
EINPresswire.com/ -- On this National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Boulder Crest Foundation proudly honors the American prisoners of war who endured captivity at the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" during the Vietnam War. These men endured extraordinary suffering and years of brutal captivity in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" prison camp during the Vietnam War – defying the odds and banding together to create a culture of connection and support that stands as the framework for what we now know as [Posttraumatic Growth \(PTG\)](#) – the process of transforming life's deepest struggles into strength, purpose, and a greater appreciation for life.



POWs at the infamous 'Hanoi Hilton' endured immense suffering yet came home stronger — inspiring examples of Posttraumatic Growth (PTG). Defying expectations, they showed how courage and connection can transform hardship into strength and growth.

“

These men are the poster boys of Posttraumatic Growth, they demonstrate that even in the darkest conditions, human beings can find light through connection and the power of hope.”

*Josh Goldberg, CEO Boulder Crest Foundation*

Against all expectations, these POWs returned with remarkably low rates of PTSD, confounding experts at the time, and underscoring how hardship, when faced with courage and community, can forge strength and growth.

One of the keys to their success was community. Through an ingenious “tap code” communication system — knocks on the walls of their cells — the men shared their stories, confessed their struggles, and supported one another. This courageous act of disclosure allowed them to confront shame, endure torture, and maintain connection in the face of isolation.

Captain Charlie Plumb, a Navy fighter pilot shot down and imprisoned at the Hanoi Hilton, has often described his captivity not only as the most challenging period of his life but also the most formative:

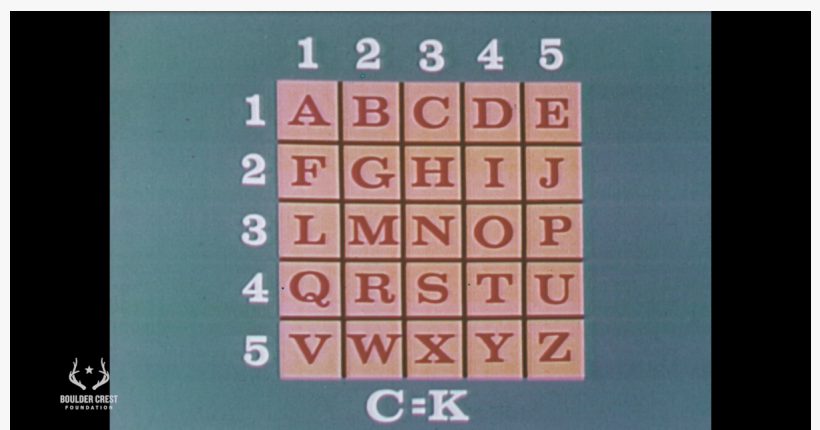
"While I wouldn't wish six years as a POW on anyone, I have to say these were undoubtedly the years of my life when I grew the strongest and matured the most. I learned that just because you're in a prison doesn't mean you are a prisoner. My cramped cell measured just eight feet wide by eight feet long — but the real prison was only eight inches wide: the space between my ears. My challenge, above all, was a mental game."

"POWs are living proof of PTG," Plumb continues. "I survived nearly six years as a prisoner of war — what could challenge me more than that? We only get so many struggles in life, and it's a terrible thing to waste any of them."

The story of these extraordinary Americans is told in Boulder Crest's short film, [Lessons From the Hanoi Hilton: A Posttraumatic Growth Story](#), which underscores how their experiences remain deeply relevant today.

Boulder Crest has carried forward these lessons through their flagship programs — Warrior PATHH and Struggle Well — based on the science of PTG co-developed by Dr. Richard Tedeschi, Executive Director of the Boulder Crest Institute for Posttraumatic Growth. These programs train veterans, first responders, and the military to not just survive trauma but to grow from it, just as the Hanoi Hilton POWs did decades ago.

"These men are the poster boys of Posttraumatic Growth," said Josh Goldberg, CEO of Boulder Crest. "They demonstrate that even in the darkest conditions, human beings can find light through connection and the power of hope."



The POWs devised a secret tap code, using a five-by-five alphabet grid. By tapping the row and column numbers, they spelled out confessions of struggles, encouragement, and reminded each other they were not alone. This connection became the foundation for their healing.



Through the sound of tapping on walls, POWs created a secret language of hope — each knock a lifeline of truth, courage, and connection.

On this day of remembrance, Boulder Crest salutes the Hanoi Hilton POWs for their courage, their lessons, and their legacy of growth. Their story continues to inspire a nation and guide our mission: to transform struggle into strength, and trauma into growth.

Visit [BoulderCrest.org](https://BoulderCrest.org) to see the short film Lessons From the Hanoi Hilton: A Posttraumatic Growth Story and learn more.

About Boulder Crest Foundation  
Boulder Crest Foundation is the home of Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) and the global leader in the development, delivery, study, and scale of PTG-based programs. A nationally recognized nonprofit, Boulder Crest serves veterans, first responders, active-serving military, and their families through transformative programs like Warrior PATHH and Struggle Well. Boulder Crest exists to transform the way our society thinks, feels, and acts about mental health and struggle — moving beyond notions of PTSD, diminishment, diagnosis, and dysfunction toward a future built on growth, strength, and thriving.

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When the POWs of the 'Hanoi Hilton' finally came home, they returned not broken but stronger — carrying with them the hard-earned lessons of trust, courage, and connection that would shape their lives and inspire generations.



# BOULDER CREST

## FOUNDATION

Boulder Crest Foundation is a pioneering nonprofit organization focused on the development of Posttraumatic Growth-based training solutions to times of struggle, including PTSD, anxiety, depression, and suicidality.

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