

Gov. Walker: Honors bravery of Wisconsin prisoner of war at the Captain Lance P. Sijan Memorial Plaza dedication ceremony

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MILWAUKEE – Governor Scott Walker joined Major General Donald Dunbar, members of the Wisconsin Air National Guard, members of the United States Air Force, local leaders, and family members of Captain Lance P. Sijan today in honoring his bravery and resilience as a Prisoner of War at the dedication ceremony of the Captain Lance P. Sijan Memorial Plaza in Milwaukee.

“Captain Lance P. Sijan is an American hero,” Governor Walker said. “Despite enduring harsh treatment and conditions, he adhered to the Code of Conduct for American Prisoners of War and refused to share sensitive information with his captors. He inspired his fellow POWs to do the same and remain strong. Today, I’m proud to honor his legacy by officially dedicating the Captain Lance P. Sijan Memorial Plaza at Milwaukee’s General Mitchell International Airport. The plaza is a testament to Captain Sijan’s patriotism and will remind all who visit of his great service and sacrifice for our country.”

Born and raised in Bay View, Wisconsin, Captain Lance P. Sijan served in Vietnam War as a United States Air Force pilot. While fighting in the Vietnam War, he ejected from his disabled F4 Phantom near Vinh, Vietnam. He evaded capture for more than six weeks. When he was eventually captured, he served as a source of inspiration for his fellow Prisoners of War (POWs), refusing to give his captors any information beyond his name, rank, and serial number. He died of pneumonia in Hoa Lo Prison

in Hanoi on January 22, 1968. For his patriotism, Captain Lance P. Sijan received the Medal of Honor posthumously from President Ford in 1976. The medal was presented to his parents, Sylvester and Jane Sijan.

He was the first graduate of the Air Force Academy to receive the Medal of Honor.

Today's dedication ceremony is the culmination of Operation Phantom Jet, which was spearheaded by Captain Sijan's sister, Janine Sijan-Rozina. An F-4 Phantom, the same class jet Captain Sijan flew in Vietnam, previously resided on a pedestal outside of Milwaukee General Mitchell International Airport's 440th Airlift Wing to honor Captain Sijan's bravery and heroism. In partnership with officials from Milwaukee County and General Mitchell International Airport, Janine Sijan-Rozina has worked to move the Sijan jet to a more prominent location at the entrance of the airport. The new Captain Lance P. Sijan Memorial Plaza, located on the western side of the airport, includes the story of Captain Sijan and honors his legacy.