

POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Props: 1 small round table, 1 chair leaning against the table, white table cloth, table set for 1, salt shaker, 1 lemon slice, vase with red ribbon, napkin, red rose, water glass inverted on table, recording of Amazing Grace.

Those who have served, and those currently serving in the uniformed services of the United States, are ever mindful that the sweetness of enduring peace has always been tainted by the bitterness of personal sacrifice... We, as Americans who enjoy the blessings of the liberty that were bought and paid for by those who have fought to preserve, protect and defend our way of life, are compelled never to forget that while we enjoy the blessings of liberty, and perhaps take its essence for granted, there are others who endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment at the hands of their oppressors.

We remember them as our Prisoners of War and those who are Missing in Action.

Before we begin our program this evening, we will pause to recognize our Prisoners of War and those who are Missing in Action. With this in mind, I call your attention to the small illuminated table to my front which occupies a place of dignity and honor. The table is set for one... the one being representative of the many members of our armed forces who suffered as-Prisoners-of War and those who are - Missing in Action.

We call them comrades, buddies, pals, friends, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, and countless other terms of endearment and kinship which identify them in our hearts and in our minds... They are missing from our ranks, they are missing from our homes, They are missing from our families, and they are not here tonight... It is for these reasons that we pay humble tribute to them and bear witness to their continued absence.

The table is small, symbolizing the frailty and seeming hopelessness of one prisoner, who stands alone against the hands of his or her captors...

The tablecloth is white, and is symbolic of the purity of their intentions when they responded to the call of our country, and were sent to some far flung corner of the earth to make right the evil master of might...

A single rose in a vase is positioned on the table. It signifies the precious blood that was almost certainly shed to ensure either the freedom of our beloved nation or the defense of an oppressed people who cried for the assistance of our armed forces. The rose also acts to remind us of the love found in the hearts of the families and friends of our missing comrades. For it is the families and friends who keep the faith and offer daily prayers while awaiting the return of their loved ones.

The red ribbon around the vase represents the multitude of red ribbons worn on the lapels and dresses of the tens of thousands who demand, with unyielding determination, a full and proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us this evening...

On the table is a small plate with a slice of lemon to represent the bitterness of their fate. On the plate is a sprinkling of salt to symbolize the countless tears shed by the families and loved ones as they await their return... There is a single inverted, glass on the table ... They cannot toast with us this night, for they are not here... The chair is empty; for they cannot be with us this evening... There is a lighted candle... It is reminiscent of the light of hope that lives in our hearts and our minds to illuminate the way home into the waiting arms of their friends and loved ones...

On the table is an American flag, appropriately folded to remind us of the many who may never return. The many who have made the supreme sacrifice to insure freedom.

Let us pray to the Supreme Commander that all of our comrades will soon be back in our ranks or at the very least that we will receive definitive word of their fate... Let us remember and never forget their sacrifice..., and may God forever watch over them and their families... Let us remember...