

POW/MIA Table Explained

THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED AND THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES ARE EVER MINDFUL THAT THE SWEETNESS OF ENDURING PEACE HAS ALWAYS BEEN TAINTED BY THE BITTERNESS OF PERSONAL SACRIFICE.

WE ARE COMPELLED TO NEVER FORGET THAT WHILE WE ENJOY OUR DAILY PLEASURES, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO HAVE ENDURED AND MAY STILL BE ENDURING AGONIES OF PAIN, DEPRIVATION AND INTERNMENT.

THIS EVENING, WE CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS SMALL TABLE, WHICH OCCUPIES A PLACE OF DIGNITY AND HONOR NEAR THE HEAD TABLE. IT IS SET FOR ONE, SYMBOLIZING THE FACT THAT MEMBERS OF OUR CORPS ARE MISSING FROM OUR RANKS. THEY ARE REFERRED TO AS PRISONERS OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION. WE CALL THEM COMRADES.

THEY ARE UNABLE TO BE WITH THEIR LOVED ONES AND FAMILIES TONIGHT, SO I ASK - THAT WE JOIN TOGETHER - TO PAY OUR HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO THEM, AND BEAR WITNESS TO THEIR CONTINUED ABSENCE.

THIS TABLE, SET FOR ONE, IS SMALL, SYMBOLIZING THE FRAILTY OF ONE PRISONER, ALONE AGAINST HIS OR HER SUPPRESSORS.

THE TABLECLOTH IS WHITE, SYMBOLIC OF THE PURITY OF THEIR INTENTIONS TO RESPOND TO THEIR NATIONS CALL TO BEAR ARMS.

THE SINGLE ROSE IN THE VASE, SIGNIFIES THE BLOOD THAT MANY HAVE SHED IN SACRIFICE TO ENSURE THE FREEDOM OF OUR BELOVED UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE ROSE ALSO REMINDS US OF THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF OUR MISSING COMRADES WHO KEEP THE FAITH, WHILE AWAITING THEIR RETURN.

THE YELLOW RIBBON ON THE VASE REPRESENTS THE YELLOW RIBBONS WORN ON THE LAPELS OF THE THOUSANDS WHO DEMAND WITH UNYIELDING DETERMINATION, A PROPER ACCOUNTING OF OUR COMRADES WHO ARE NOT AMONG US TONIGHT.

A SLICE OF LEMON ON THE PLATE REMINDS US OF THEIR BITTER FATE. THE SALT SPRINKLED ON THE PLATE REMINDS US OF THE COUNTLESS FALLEN TEARS OF FAMILIES AS THEY WAIT.

THE GLASS INVERTED – THEY CANNOT TOAST WITH US THIS NIGHT. THE CHAIR IS EMPTY – THEY ARE NOT HERE.

THE CANDLE IS REMINISCENT OF THE LIGHT OF HOPE WHICH LIVES IN OUR HEARTS TO ILLUMINATE THEIR WAY HOME, AWAY FROM THEIR CAPTORS, TO THE OPEN ARMS OF A GRATEFUL NATION.

LET US PRAY TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER THAT ALL OF OUR COMRADES WILL SOON BE BACK WITHIN OUR RANKS. LET US REMEMBER THEIR SACRIFICES. MAY GOD FOREVER WATCH OVER THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE RISE AS TAPS IS PLAYED IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR PRISONERS OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION.