



# National Museum of the American Sailor

May 2021  
Newsletter



## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN SAILOR MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER

"Individuals play the game, but teams beat the odds." This powerful Navy SEALs quote applies to all sailors enlisted in the United States Navy. Teamwork is a vital part of any successful naval operation abroad, at home, and even here at the National Museum of the American Sailor. Each individual sailor plays an important role in completing missions, and all roles are instrumental in the Navy's success and no member of the team is ever forgotten. Read on to learn more about how the National Museum of the American Sailor is highlighting Navy teamwork during the month of May.

## Scuttlebutt and Cup o' Joe Video Series

Starting this May, peek through the porthole with the National Museum of the American Sailor to learn more about the Navy "team." Each month, museum staff members sit down with sailors and historians to discover the history and culture of the U.S. Navy's enlisted sailors. Grab a "cup of Joe" and discover stories of the Navy. Watch Scuttlebutt and Cup o' Joe on [YouTube](#) beginning May 3 with a team member from NHHC's Underwater Archaeology branch.



BRINGING  
HISTORY TO  
LIFE



# THE POW/MIA TABLE

A Place Setting For One, A Table For All

www.history.navy.mil

The tradition of setting a separate table in honor of our prisoners of war and missing comrades has been in place since the end of the Vietnam War. The manner in which this table is decorated is full of special symbols to help us remember our brothers and sisters in arms.

The POW/MIA table is separate from the others and can be set for one to four place settings to represent each service participating in the event.

**The table is smaller than the others**  
symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his or her oppressors.

**The white tablecloth**  
draped over the table represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms.

**The empty chair**  
depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, but all who are not here with us.

**The round table**  
shows that our concern for them is never ending.

**The Bible**  
represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.

**The black napkin**  
stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends. A Purple Heart medal can be pinned to the napkin.

**The single red rose**  
reminds us of their families and loved ones. The red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call.

**The yellow candle and its ribbon**  
symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet accounted for.

**The slices of lemon**  
on the bread plate remind us of their bitter fate.

**The salt upon the bread plate**  
represent the tears of their families.

**The inverted wine glass**  
reminds us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us to drink a toast or join in the festivities of the evening.

Source: OPNAVNET 1715.2A, Department of the Navy Social Usage and Protocol Handbook.

## Missing Man Table

Memorial Day honors all members of the military team, past, present, and those lost in the line of duty. Traditionally at military events, small tables are set to honor prisoners of war (POWs) and those missing in action (MIA). This tradition began at the end of the Vietnam War to pay homage to those team members lost but not forgotten. These tables are intentionally smaller to symbolize the vulnerability of one against many. See the graphic on the left to learn the meaning behind each element and to create a Missing Man table at home.



## DIVING INTO HISTORY

### Sailor Spotlight

The WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services) in the photograph below, served as Aviation Metalsmiths, an important part of naval aviation during World War II. They performed daily inspections of Navy aircrafts, including the fuselage, undercarriage, and wings to maintain the planes' peak performance. These WAVES, from the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Norman, Oklahoma, are members of the 1943 graduating class. This class was the first WAVES class to graduation from the Aviation Metalsmith School. The teamwork of these WAVES was imperative for the success of naval aviation and their work was crucial to the completion of naval aviation missions.

WAVES Aviation Metalsmiths,  
Norman, Oklahoma 1943.  
Photo courtesy of the Naval  
History and Heritage  
Command.



### Sailor's Attic: Stories of the Enlisted Sailor

The team sport of basketball plays an important role in strengthening sailor morale and camaraderie. In this month's blog, "[Pick and Roll: Basketball and Athletics on United States Navy Ships](#)" explore the history and evolution of team sports in the Navy, including a photo of a 1941 game onboard the USS *Monterey* (CVL-26) with future President Gerald Ford.



*Left:* A game of basketball underway in the foreword elevator during Mariana's operations, June-July 1944. Photo Courtesy of the National Archives.

*Right:* NUSS Houston (CA-30) Ship's basketball team, 1940-1941. Photo Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command.

## ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

### Great Lakes Bluejackets Football, 1943

Athletics play an important role in the Navy by improving physical fitness, morale, and instilling the importance of teamwork amongst sailors. One Navy team, the Great Lakes Bluejackets football team, played with this football in the height of World War II during their 1943 season. The team finished the season with a winning 10-2 record, the most successful season in Bluejacket history. The Associated Press ranked the team as the sixth best in the nation that year.



The final game of the season pitted Great Lakes against the undefeated Fighting Irish from the University of Notre Dame. Great Lakes used teamwork to win the game, squashing the Irish's perfect record. The 1943 team had several well-known college and professional athletes on the roster, including future NFL player Steve Juzwik, future College Football Hall of Famer Steve Lach, with Lt. Gordon "Mickey" Cochren as one of five coaches. Guard Emil Drvaric commemorated the season by recording all the game scores on this football, now in the NMAS permanent collection.

## BECOME PART OF THE NMAS TEAM

Want to become a member of the NMAS team? The museum is currently recruiting volunteers to help with the following:

- Gardening
- Administrative Assistant
- Facilities Assistant
- Collections

To learn more about how to support the only Navy museum dedicated to the preservation of the history and heritage of the American Sailor, please visit our [website](#).