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THE POW/MIA TABLE

A Place Setting For One, A Table For All

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.

