

THE MISSING MAN TABLE & CEREMONY

The Missing Man Ceremony is a dignified and solemn moment in many formal dinners and other occasions. There have been many different narratives written for the ceremony, but the symbolism is quite constant.

The Missing Man Ceremony usually follows the "Posting of the Colors" and the "National Anthem in the order of the program.

THE CEREMONY

MODERATOR:

As you entered the dining area, you may have noticed a table at the front, raised to call your attention to its purpose -- it is reserved to honor our missing loved comrades.

Set for six, the empty places represent our men missing from each of the five services - Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard - and civilians. This Honors Ceremony symbolizes that they are with us, here in spirit.

Some here today/tonight were very young when the Vietnam War began; however, all Americans should never forget our brave men and women who answered our nation's call and served the cause of freedom in a special way.

As the Honor Guard places one of the five service covers or a civilian cap on each empty plate, I would like to ask you to consider their sacrifices, followed by a moment of silent prayer.

HONOR GUARD:

In silence or with dignified, reverent music as background, the Honor Guard moves into position around the table and simultaneously places one of the service covers, of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard, or a civilian hat, on each empty dinner plate at each table setting. The Honor Guard then departs.

MODERATOR:

Please be seated.....I would like to explain the meaning of the items on this special table.

The table is round - to show our everlasting concern for our men still missing.

The cloth is white - symbolizing the purity of their motives when answering the call to duty.

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The single red rose, displayed in a vase, reminds us of the life of each of the missing, and their loved ones and friends who keep the faith, awaiting answers.

The vase is tied with a red ribbon, symbol of our continued determination to account for our missing.

A slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of the bitter fate of those captured and missing in a foreign land.

A pinch of salt symbolizes the tears endured by those missing and their families who seek answers.

The Bible represents the strength gained through faith to sustain those lost from our country, founded as one nation under God.

The glass is inverted to symbolize their inability to share this evening's toast.
The chairs are empty - they are not here.

Join me now and let us raise our water glasses in a toast to honor America's POW/MIA's and to the success of our efforts to account for them.

TABLE SET UP

- A small, round bistro table
- White tablecloth
- Single place setting, preferably all white
- Wine glass - inverted
- Salt shaker
- Slice of lemon on bread plate with a pile of spilled salt
- Small bud vase with a single stem red rose
- RED ribbon tied around the vase
- Candle - lit
- Empty chair

***"When one American is not worth the effort to be found, we as
Americans have lost!"***