

9/11 Tribute

This ceremony is to remember our nation's heroes. The heroes who swore on their lives to protect our values, defend our nation, and protect our families and our communities. We do it to HONOR and REMEMBER them for they are NOT with us.

This table, which is round, to show our everlasting concern will be set for all POW-MIAs, Police officers, Fire Fighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel so that WE may REMEMBER!

The chair is empty for THEY are NOT here, though WE ever hope for their return, REMEMBER!

The white tablecloth-which stands for purity and their willingness to answer our country's call to arms so that future generations will remain free. REMEMBER!

The table which is set for only one, symbolizing the frailty of one against all his oppressors, REMEMBER!

The wineglass is inverted, they cannot toast with us today for THEY are not here, maybe tomorrow, when THEY are home if we REMEMBER!

The candle reminds us of the light of hope that lives in our hearts to light the way home away from their captors and back to a grateful nation. The candle with the Black ribbon reminds us of those POW/MIAs who will NEVER be coming home. The candle with the Red, White, and Blue ribbon reminds us of those who gave their lives in the tragedies of 9/11 and all Police officers, Fire Fighter and Emergency Medical Services personnel who serve their communities. REMEMBER!

The single rose-reminds us of loved ones and families of our comrades who keep the faith and await their return. The red ribbon on the vase, just like the ones worn by thousands back home that admire their will, determination and who DEMAND a proper accounting of ALL our missing. REMEMBER!

The slice of lemon is on the plate to remind us of their bitter fate if WE do not bring them home. REMEMBER!

The salt on the table which symbolizes the families tears as THEY wait and REMEMBER!

The Bible which represents strength achieved from faith, helping to sustain those lost from our country founded as ONE NATION UNDER GOD. REMEMBER!

The faded picture on the table serves as a reminder to the families that THEY are LOVED AND MISSED VERY MUCH. REMEMBER!

THE CANDLE WILL BE LIT TO SYMBOLIZE THE UPWARD REACH OF THEIR UNEQUALED SPIRIT.

We light this candle today, with the Rolling Thunder® Flame of Freedom as it makes its way across the country to its final destination, The Vietnam Veteran Wall in Washington DC for Memorial Day ceremonies.

For hundreds of years the light in the distance meant hope. The flickering in the distance of the light high atop the lighthouse tells of nearing land in a heavy fog, the dim light of a front porch says come inside to the warmth of home, and let us not forget the lantern of Paul Revere riding through the streets to warn the British were coming. There was a time long ago that our forefathers fought to provide us with freedom, then came other wars fought to preserve those freedoms. Today we fight to protect that freedom.

The flame is a symbol. For the POW it lights the way home and lets them know we will always wait. For others, it is here to tell everyone they stand with Pride and Honor. For both it says they stand watch to keep us free.

The light does not cast a shadow for its sole purpose is to send the message of hope and to let everyone know we will never forget. REMEMBER!

Please join us now as we bow our heads in a moment of silence to HONOR all of our POW-MIAs, Police Officers, Fire Fighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel For THEY will surely REMEMBER what we did here today...

As you look upon this empty table remember not ghosts of the past REMEMBER OUR HEROES, remember how WE depended on them each and every day. Now THEY depend on us to BRING THEM HOME. Remember our friends, the ones we loved, for they love life and freedom as we do. Remember all of you who served with them, who called them comrades, who served at their side in good times and in bad. THEY were there for YOU now YOU need to be there for THEM. REMEMBER!

We would like to thank those of you who invited us here, as well as all of you who joined us for our ceremony. As each year passes, finding our missing becomes harder and harder. Some witnesses may die, forget where a plane went down or where a service member was shot, killed or captured. The ground where they lay can erode, or their bones may just crumble and disappear. THE LONGER THEY ARE MISSING THE EASIER IT IS TO FORGET! Our POW MIA wound is one NO amount of time can EVER heal. Only with OUR actions can WE bring our NATIONS HEROES back to the forefront of everyone's thoughts and prayers!

We take great HONOR AND PRIDE in presenting this ceremony and your attendance with us here today tells us that you are KEEPING THE FAITH, just as we do. With that in mind we would like to issue a personal challenge to each and every one of you – the challenge for you to be the one who REMEMBERS!

Please stand as our detail is dismissed and thank you again for being here.