

# Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association Chaplain Handbook

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I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh  
from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. Psalms 121: 1,2

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### CHAPLAIN'S DUTIES

1. Be responsible for Invocations and Benedictions at business meetings and social functions.
2. Advisable to have in their possession copies of "Manual Explanatory of the Privileges, Rights and Benefits Provided for All Persons Who are, or Have been Members of the Armed Forces of the United States and of Those Dependent Upon Them", published by the Government Printing Offices, Washington, D.C., and "Benefits for World War II Veterans", published by the Veteran's Administration, Washington, D. C., and a copy of "The Chaplain's Handbook", of the Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association.
3. Offer condolences and assistance. Participate at funerals or services of members or family, when requested to participate by the family.
4. Report to the National Chaplain the death of members or immediate family for publication *in* the Channel. Only members of the WAC Veterans Association, and mothers who were members of the, original WAC Mothers Association will be mentioned by name at the Memorial Service of the National Convention. Chapters may include anyone they wish in their local memorial services.
5. Chapter Chaplains may obtain sympathy or Get Well cards from the Nation Chaplain at cost, Plus postage.

Note: The order is always God then Country so the Invocation is given before the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble.

After the advancement of the Colors by the Honor open the service with an invocation, which may be one of the following:

### OPENING OF MEETINGS

Heavenly Father, we bow before Thee in mind and heart, to give thanks for the sunshine that comes after the rain, for hope that displace despair, when we lift our eyes heavenward. For this we are grateful. We come to Thee not for an answer as to why, but we come to ask Thee for grace and strength to face our sorrow with dignity and composure. Father, Thou has promise never to leave nor forsake us and we recognize Thy help is adequate and sufficient to sustain us. Help our hearts to smile through our tears as we give thanks to Thee for all the years of life, joy and love we have shared with them. Amen

Dear Lord, once again we meet to renew our friendships and ask for your blessing upon the women who served our country with honor, valor, and dignity during war and peace. Give us guidance as we continue to serve our country and help the ill and underprivileged. Amen

Dear God, we are grateful to Thee for this happy occasion to meet. We recall the rich fellowship across the changing years, and we anticipate the future when fresh dreams may come to full power as blessed by Thy guidance. We pause to thank Thee for all who have labored for this association in the intervening years, from it's beginning until now, and we ask that all of us may be motivated by their devotion and loyalty to return a greater measure of service to the group as a whole. Let the years we enjoy together be free of friction, blessed with harmonious action, that all may be done to Thy honor and glory. We seek Thy help that we may give of ourselves in utmost sincerity to the completion of every task. Surely no duty is too difficult to discharge, no task too hard to carry to

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completion when Thee, Dear God, refresh us and renew our strength. May we help and encourage one another every day. May we ever try to feel the emotions, think the thoughts, and perform the deeds that are befitting to us as veterans. Amen

Thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. Be with us during this day, guide and keep us. Amen

Almighty God, save us this day from all failure in our endeavor, from being easily discouraged, from giving up too soon, and from allowing any task to discourage us because it is difficult. We ask that all the members present here gain new vision and insight from this meeting. Amen

O God, Our Father, we beseech Thee for wisdom and discernment as we face the problems of our day, for grace and strength as we take up our tasks, and for courage and perseverance as we discharge our duties. May we have a vision of world needs, as well as needs that are close at hand, and a confident assurance that our Father can meet our every need. Use us, our talents, our time, and our possessions, in the supplying of these needs, we pray. Grant us the desire to help and encourage one another, each day, and may love, unselfishness, and kindness radiate from each of us and brighten the lives of all with whom we labor. Amen

Almighty God, Father of all mankind, send Thy peace to all nations of the world. We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare that by Thy blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We ask Thy blessing and comfort for those members who are sick and shut-in. Cheer them and bring them blessings of health and happiness. We pray Thee to guide our work as we conduct the business of this meeting to the best of our ability with an open mind and heart. Amen

Lord, bless our Association with openness, to real communication, with sharing, in all our joys and sorrows, with freedom, to let each other grow, with understanding for the gifts each has to give, and of course, with love, no matter what, no matter when. Amen

### **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association, humbly petition the blessing of our Heavenly Father upon all our activities, that we may grow in grace and glorify our purpose to be of service to all veterans. We pledge allegiance to the United States of America and the members in whose name we serve. We are resolved to promote justice, tolerance, peace and good will among all men toward the end that all wars may cease.

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### **INVOCATIONS**

Our heavenly Father, as we gather here today, we pray thou accepts our humble gratitude for all the blessings expressed in the lives of our sisters who have served our beloved country with loyalty and devotion. Bless us on this day for having given of ourselves to preserve the ideals of our country and freedom and liberty throughout the world. Shower Your blessings upon all personnel in the Armed Forces of the United States. Extend over them Thy protecting care that no harm may befall them. Inspire, O Lord, the work of our hands, and may we continue to remember those who have sacrificially given their last full measure of devotion. May we also help our veterans at home and in hospitals. Bless our officers and members (and guests), and the work of our hands. Amen

Grant unto us, our Father, in the midst of our service, such sweetness of spirit and such consistency of life that our friends and all who know us may find an attractiveness in our work that will inspire them to good work. We thank Thee for those who have helped us along life's journey. For those who have cheered and inspired us and looked for the good in us that was often not immediately apparent, we give Thee hearty thanks. May we never withhold our help from those who are sick, struggling and discouraged. As Thou has blessed us so greatly, grant that we may continually strive to serve our fellowman. May love, unselfishness, and kindness radiate from each of us and may our own lives be brighter as we try to brighten the lives of others. Amen

Almighty Father, we humbly stand before Thee to offer our thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon us. We are gathering together at this (name occasion). Let us make this day one in which we rededicate ourselves to the principles set forth in our Preamble that we may grow in grace to glorify our purpose to be of service to veterans and pledge allegiance to the United States of America. May the work we do be counted as good deeds that are pleasing in your sight. Amen

### **GRACE AT MEALS**

Heavenly Father, as we gather to feast, we give Thee our grateful thanks for all the lovely things of life, and for our health and strength. May our eyes never be closed to real beauty, nor our hearts insensitive to that which is pleasing, harmonious and inspiring. Remember with Thy blessing our sick and shut-ins, of kinship and friendship. As we partake of the food prepared. We thank Thee for Thy goodness in providing for the needs of our bodies and pray Thy blessings on this our daily bread. Amen

Dear God, thank you for your blessings, which flow through many channels. Thank you for the warm embraces and loving words of family and friends. Thank you, God, for shelter and clothing, transportation and employment. Thank you for those who serve to protect our great country. Thank you, God, for expressing through the beauty and wonder of nature. Thank you for the miracles of sunshine and rain, for snow and gentle breezes. Thank you for the food that nourishes our mind and body, enabling us to think, feel, work, play and share with others. Especially we thank you, God, for the freedom to pray to you, and thank you for blessings us with health, prosperity, love, peace and joy. Amen

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Our Father, we thank Thee for Thy goodness, Bless Thou the families at this gathering. Let love, from Thee, upon us shine. We thank Thee for this food that has been prepared, for those who have prepared it and, most of all, for Thee, who is the true bread of life. Amen

Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies. Make us truly grateful, Our Father, for the blessings we are about to receive, and enable us to see in these another evidence of Thy constant care and love. Amen

For life, health and strength and these blessings and mercies, which we receive constantly for Thy hand, accept our thanks, O Lord. We are grateful for this food. We pray that it may be used to Thy honor. Amen

You are full of love for us, O Lord, as you show us from day to day. Let us show our fellowman the love you teach and convey to them the light we have received for you. Accept this, our thanks, for the food spread before us and help us to live a good and useful life. Amen

### **BENEDICTIONS**

Heavenly Father, as we go forth from this gathering, we thank Thee for the inspiration of the hour. Our hearts overflow with joy for the friendship and camaraderie of our members (and friends). May our deliberations bear fruit, so that we may rededicate ourselves once again to the ideals, which made our country great. O God, Bless America, its constitution, flag and emblems of hope and peace. Amen

Our Heavenly Father, as we go about our own activities following the close of this meeting, let us each renew our pledge of service to the WAC Veterans' Association and support our officers in the task which lie ahead. Let us remember the many friendships we have made and will continue to make, and pledge ourselves to love one another, and be of service to our fellowman. Amen

May the Lord watch between thee, and me while we are absent one from another. Amen

May the strength of God sustain us. May the power of God, preserve us. May the hand of God, protect us. May the way of God, direct us. May the love of God, go with us. Amen

### **SPECIAL PRAYERS AFTER INSTALLATION**

Dear Lord, as we begin another year of devoted service to our beloved Association, let us pause to give thanks for all those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. WE know that without their service, we might not be living in a free country. Bless and guide our new officers that they will lead with fairness and dedication, as they carry out their duties and responsibilities to the Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association and its members. Keep us ever aware of our dedication and service to God and Country. Amen

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### **DEDICATION OF FLAGS**

Today, with loving hands, we dedicate our flags. We pray, O Lord, that the flag of this nation may ever be the emblem of a might land, free and just. May its red speak to us of the courage of those who have fought for it; its white speak of the rows of white crosses of those who have died for it; and its blue speak of the loyalty we owe to them and to this nation. May our Chapter's banner remind us ever of our resolve to promote tolerance, peace and good will among all men. Grant O Lord, peace, prosperity, and us but above all, grant that our land may become more a nation with the ability, the power, and the inspiration to unite all nations and people into a true brotherhood. This we ask in Your Name. Amen

### **DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL DAY**

We thank Thee for those dear to us, forgotten by the world but still living in our hearts, who rest from their labors. Make this day a memory of a day of peace and dedication. Bud us further every cause of righteousness and truth. Amen

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY (JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>)**

We ask Your blessing today upon this glorious Republic. Shield her from error, guard her from corruption, and make of her a nation after Thine own heart. For the Liberty whose birthday we celebrate today we give You gracious thanks, especially wisdom. Keep save Your continued providence over us. Amen

### **THANKSGIVING**

O giver of every good and perfect gift. We give thanks to Thee for the blessings that come to us during all the days of the year. We thank Thee for the joys that brighten our lives and the sorrows that disciple our spirits. We thank Thee for the friends who have helped us bear the burdens of life and whose faith in us has spurred us on to harder efforts and higher purpose. May those to whom life has seemed hard have revealed to them many causes for rejoicing that hitherto they have not seen. May those who are the more fortunate of the world rejoice in the service they can render to their fellow man, and may we all rejoice in the fellowship that we have with each other and with Thee. Amen

Once more we come, Lord, to the day of special thanksgiving. Our thoughts are turned backward. The days have rolled into the seasons, the seasons into the year. Each day has been crowed with Thee. Each season has brought forth new proofs of Thy loving forethought. May we this day pledge our gratitude anew. Continue, we pray, to surround us with Thy care. Amen

### **NEW YEARS**

THOU WHO ART, from everlasting to everlasting, God, be with us as we enter the New Year. Thou, who knowest the end from the beginning, guide and bless us through the perplexing paths ahead. Thou, who remains unchanged, establish our hearts and strengthen our wills as we set forth upon the days allotted us. May we as a people be not apprehensive, but put our trust in Thee, work to do Thy will and serve the best interests of this Nation for the benefit of all mankind. Renew our devotion to the tasks we have undertaken, and grant unto us Thy strength, love, guidance and wisdom in the days that lie ahead. Amen

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### MEMORIAL SERVICE

(This is intended as a guide only)

National:

The following prayers and service were studied carefully so as not to offend any religious group. In a memorial service, the choice of a wreath or urn is an individual preference. At a funeral service, a flower may be placed at the casket by each member present saying the following', or giving some little personal message:

I place this flower in loving memory of our departed member who has during the past year left this I earthly place.

Dear God, we are especially aware today of that precious verse which says, that to be absent from the world is to be present with Thee. For recently one whom we have loved has gone from our midst, giving us a new perspective on the meaning of the words absent and present. Help us to live that these may be halves of one whole, which finds its true life and meaning within the circle of service with Thee. Grant us the special blessing of happy and sacred memory of one who is gone from us, for there is an aching void in our hearts and a vacant chair in our association. Fill Thou that void, O Lord, with mercy, strength and love to comfort our hearts, as those of us who remain pick up the unfurnished work and carry on. Bless us as we rededicate ourselves to the principle set forth in our Preamble. Amen'

Let us repeat the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm in unison:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou annoinest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever Amen

They are now in the hands of God. There shall be no torment to touch them. No more sorrows, no more tears, for they have gone to rest in peace with God.

Our Father, we gather here today, not only to remember and honor those who were closely associated with us during their earthly existence, but also, the many who lie in quiet places throughout the world.

At this time a designated member as the names of the departed members are called places a flower in an urn or wreath, a symbol of eternal life. Then one flower is presented to honor all service women, mothers of members and family of members who passed away during the year.

Tributes may be made as follows:

We speak of death as a mystery. It is life that is the great mystery and death is one of the least of the disturbing experiences on the pathway of life. Life is a conscious growth toward God and one of the stages of this growth is death.

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May they be granted peace and rest in Eternal Life.  
May they find grace and mercy before the Lord of heaven and earth.  
May their souls rejoice in the heavenly good will God has made for those who fear him, and may their memory be a blessing to those who treasure it.

A soloist or instrumentalist giving an appropriate selection, followed by TAPS, should conclude the ceremony. If this is not available, the Lord's Prayer may be said in unison.

Retire the Colors.

### Taps

Day is done, gone the sun, from the lake, from the hill, from the sky.  
All is well, Safely rest, God is nigh.  
Thanks and praise for our days, 'neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky.  
As we go, this we know, God is nigh.

### GENERAL PRAYERS FOR MEMORIAL SERVICE

The following prayers are intended as a guide only. Also see prayers in the preceding section.

I place this flower in loving memory of our departed member who has left this earthly place.

O God, We give thanks for the life of this honorable veteran. We commend her soul to you and ask for your comfort for those who mourn her passing. We pray for everlasting peace for her family and loved ones. This veteran offered up her life and her essence for the work of the preservation of freedom for this country and its citizens. Let us never forget nor take for granted her contributions for all of us toward this goal. Let us remember her life and all that she stood for the kind words, the good works, and the daily struggles of human existence. Let us in her memory commit ourselves to carry on the good things that make life a worth-living experience amidst our own mortality and vulnerability. Amen

By: Chaplain Will Kinnaird

Special Intercession for the Bereaved:

O Thou who are the God of all comfort, who heals the broken in heart and kindest of their wounds, mercifully look upon those who are bereaved. Be near to them in their sorrow; draw them nearer to Thee. Grant that the things unseen and eternal may become more full of meaning and power. Sustain them in their sorrow. Stay their minds on Thee in perfect trust. And give them grace to return to their homes and work and to discharge their duties with fidelity and loyalty. Amen

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From the American Legion:

O Lord, who art full of compassion, who dwells on high - God of forgiveness, who are merciful, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness - grant pardon of transgressions, nearness of salvation, and perfect rest beneath the shadow of thy diving presence, in the exalted places among the holy and pure, who shine as the brightness of the firmament, to (name of the deceased) who hath gone to her eternal home. We beseech thee, O Lord of compassion; remember unto her for good all the meritorious and pious deeds, which she wrought while on earth. Open unto her the gates of the righteousness and light, the gates of pity and grace. O shelter her for evermore under the cover of thy wings; and let her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May she rest in peace. Amen

### FINAL SALUTE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR WACVA CHAPTER USE

Suggested Chapter Memorial Service with prayers and readings:

Coordinate all items with the family and/or person in charge of the Memorial Service

#### SETUP:

Flags (American, State, Chapter):

If all three flags are used the American flag is placed in the center with the State flag on the right and the Chapter flag on the left facing the audience.

If only the American flag and the Chapter flag are used the American flag goes on the right facing the audience.

Table:

With a casket place a table at the front of the room off to the side.

Without a casket a table may be placed in the center of the room.

Flowers & Vase:

Give each Chapter member a flower prior to the service. These will be placed in the vase at the appropriate time.

Table Items:

Place a picture of the WAC Vet (if available) on the table along with a vase and other personal memorabilia.

Seating:

All Chapter members should be seated together in a section near the front. If a distinguishing clothing item is worn by the chapter members (e.g., caps, Chapter uniform), have all members do so

National Honor Guard members:

If members of the National Honor Guard are available they may participate in uniform. The family may request that they stand beside the flags or the casket.

#### SERVICE (At the appropriate time):

Readings or prayers:

The Chapter Chaplain may be asked to offer a prayer or give a reading.

Final Salute:

WACVA Chapter members will stand in unison.

File by the table place a flower in the vase.

Slowly salute the picture of our comrade.

Return to their chair and remain standing so that everyone sits at the same time.

**READINGS**

**In Memoriam For All Women Who Have Served Our Country**

Let us close our eyes and pray.  
Let us remember those  
Who are not with us this day.  
Listen carefully and you can hear  
The First Sergeant mutter.  
Why you can even hear  
The guidons and Old Glory flutter.  
Let us remember all those  
Who with honor answered the call.  
Remember the formations,  
Everyone standing so tall.  
Remember those who marched  
And served the Red, White and Blue.  
Someday we will meet our Sisters  
Who marched in the last Pass-in-Review.  
At Ease and Amen

**To A Comrade**

When the call to arms was sounded  
You went and gave your best  
And now our Heavenly Father's called you  
For peace and eternal rest.  
Goodbye dear friend and comrade  
Your passing makes us sad  
But knowing God has called you  
Somehow makes us glad.  
Dear God, receive our comrade  
Whom we give to you today  
Bestow your blessings on his soul  
And guide him on his way.

Written by: Pablo J. Cortez

**Do Not Stand**

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep  
I am a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond's gift of snow  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the autumn's gentle rain  
When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight,  
I am the soft stars that shine at night  
Do not stand at my grave and cry.  
I am not there,  
I did not die

**Taps**

"Fading light dims the sight,  
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.  
From afar drawing nigh -- Falls the night.  
"Day is done, gone the sun,  
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky.  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.  
"Then good night, peaceful night,  
Till the light of the dawn shineth bright,  
God is near, do not fear -- Friend, good night."

**Taps (Additional Verses)**

Day is done, gone the sun,  
From the lake, from the hills, from the skies.  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,  
May the soldier or sailor,  
God keep.  
On the land or the deep,  
Safe in sleep.

Love, good night, Must thou go,  
When the day, And the night  
Need thee so?  
All is well. Speedeth all  
To their rest.  
Fades the light; And afar  
Goeth day, And the stars  
Shineth bright,  
Fare thee well; Day has gone,  
Night is on.

Thanks and praise, for our days,  
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky,  
As we go, This we know,  
God is nigh.

**ARLINGTON CEMETERY**

Poised at his shoulder,  
the angel seeks to lift this burden from him,  
memories too long carried  
and not yet carried long enough.  
This too shall pass  
and fade with clock tick,  
faces now too vivid,  
contorted with the horror of surprise...  
so this is pain?  
and this is death?  
and this is being forgotten?  
"The past is never dead;  
it isn't even past," he said.  
Wings beat in futile effort.  
The burden is too heavy  
even for the angels.  
They were children when they left us;  
they are old men now,  
else they shall be buried too long  
for remembering  
though we must remember.

**Away**

By: James Whitcomb Riley

I cannot say, and I will not say  
That she is dead! She is just away!  
With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand  
She has wandered into an unknown land.  
And left us dreaming how very fair  
It must be, since she lingers there.  
And you, O you, who the wildest yearn  
For the old-time step, and the glad return.  
Think of her fairing on, as dear  
In the love of there, and the love of here;  
Mild and gentle as she was brave  
When the sweetest love, of her life she gave.  
To simple things, where the violets grew  
Pure as the eyes they were likened to,  
The touches of her hands have strayed  
As reverently as her lips have prayed.  
Thin of her still as the same, I say,  
She is not dead she is just away.

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### FINAL ROLL CALL

Did you hear the sad news today?  
Another veteran warrior has passed away.  
Called by the Supreme Commander over all.  
Today he has made his final roll call.

Come fellow vets; let us reverently bow and pray  
For our valiant comrade, who has fallen this day.  
We'll drape his casket with a banner of beautiful hues,  
Those glorious American colors: red, white and blue.

That star spangled banner he gallantly fought to defend,  
Unyielding and undaunted, he fought to win.  
He fought bravely and he passed the battle test.  
Now the Supreme Commander grants him, "eternal rest".

With dignity and honor, we'll commit his body to the ground,  
The bugler will sound "Taps" and we'll fire the volley rounds.  
The final military honors we'll render somberly and ever so sadly;  
"Old Glory" we'll solemnly precisely fold and reverently give to his family.

Each Memorial Day we will recall our fallen comrade names,  
And attest that their selfless sacrifices were not in vain;  
For this lasting legacy they gave to all generations;  
*"It's honorable to respect our flag and to defend our great nation."*  
So close ranks aging warriors, for our ranks are thinning.  
We must keep on fighting and keep on winning.  
With pride and honor we'll march and stand tall,  
And we'll proudly - *proudly* - salute "Old Glory"  
'til we too make our final roll call.

Used with permission

Poem was written by: Major Carroll R. Michaud, Ret. 7046 Greenwood Road,  
Shreveport, LA. 71119

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**LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE**

(These are intended as a guide only)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We know how much your mother meant to you and how great your sorrow must be. We sincerely wish we could help share your burden until it gets lighter.

We send our heartfelt condolences to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We have heard the sad news and hasten to offer you our sympathy.

We hope you will call on us if there is anything we can do to help.

Sincerely yours,

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

It is with great sorrow that we have just learned of the death of your husband.

We know there is little we can say to lessen your grief; but we would like you to know you have our deepest sympathy in your bereavement.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Warmest regards,

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### POW/MIA Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony

**Set up the following items on a stage or at the front of the room ...**

1 small round table

1 chair leaning against the table

Cover the table with a white table cloth

Put a place-setting for 1 on the table

Place a lemon-slice on the plate

Place a salt-shaker on the table

Place a black vase with 1 red rose in it on the table

Tie a yellow ribbon around the vase

Place 1 black napkin on the table

Place a water glass, turned upside-down, on the table

Place 1 lighted candle on the table

Have a recording of *Taps* and *Some Gave All* by Billy Ray Cyrus ready to play

**Stand off-stage. If possible, dim all lighting except for a spotlight focused on the table.**

Read the following:

Those who have served ...

and those currently serving in the Armed Forces of the United States ...

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 ...

the agonies of pain, deprivation and internment.

As we remember those are no longer with us ...

we pause to recognize our POWs and MIAs.

We call your attention to this small table ...

which occupies the place of dignity and honor.

It is set for one ...

symbolizing the fact that members of our Armed Forces ...

are missing from our ranks.

We call them POWs and MIAs.

We call them comrades.

They are unable to be with their loved ones and families...

so we join together to pay a 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 table cloth is white ...

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symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

The single red rose in the vase ...

signifies the blood they have shed ...

to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America.

The rose also reminds us of the family and friends ...

who keep the faith ...

while awaiting their return.

The yellow ribbon on the vase represents those who demand a final accounting of our comrades who are not among us.

The slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

The salt, when sprinkled onto the plate ...

reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

The glass is inverted ...

they cannot toast with us this day.

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 ...

and into 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 them and never forget their sacrifices.

May God forever watch over them ...

and protect them and their families.

***Play Taps and then Some Gave All.***