

A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families

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UPDATE FROM NORTHWESTERN DIVISION

POW/MIA RECOGNITION



The Department of Defense designates one day as NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY each year. This year, it is Friday, September 20th. From the Revolutionary War through the Persian Gulf War, there have been over 558,000 men and women taken as prisoners of War. Over 40% of those prisoners died while in captivity because of malnutrition, torture, and mental abuse. Legion efforts create awareness and remembrance for this initiative — while honoring the service of those troops — by having POW/MIA remembrance services at unit meetings and public events that include a table set in their honor along with a remembrance service.

Typical items required for a remembrance service:

The small table is set for one – symbolizing the fact that our armed forces personnel are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs (Prisoners of War) and MIAs (Missing in Action).

• The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her oppressors.



2024-2025 LEADING THE WAY

- The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.
- The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of our missing comrades' families and friends who keep the faith while awaiting their return.
- The red ribbon on the vase represents the red ribbons worn on the lapels of thousands who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us today.
- A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.
- The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.
- The glass is inverted; they cannot toast with us at this time.
- 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 to the open arms of a grateful nation.
- The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return and have paid the supreme sacrifice to ensure our freedom.