



A51.—Prisoner of War (POW) Missing-in-Action (MIA) CEREMONY

Background.

The basic ceremony is provided below. There is a narrative section followed by an annotated script. Note that the script contains several suggestions for actions by the Honor Guard, which are in addition to those of the narrative. You should be selective and develop an approach, which works for the time and resources available to you.

Set-up.

This ceremony has many symbols. Below is a list of the materials needed to complete the ceremony. If you cannot find something to represent a symbol then omit that section of the ceremony. The music for the ceremony is *AMAZING GRACE*; preferably performed by a Drum & Bagpipe Corps. A tape of the music is satisfactory. It is started just before you begin to read the part, "LET US REMEMBER THEN UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ..."

Materials needed.

- POW-MIA Script (Which Is Attached To This Document)
- Wheel Cap
- White tablecloth
- White candle
- Small bread plate
- Yellow ribbon
- Black ribbon (tied to candle)
- Framed, faded picture
- Red rose in a vase
- 1 Wineglasses
- Salt
- 1 Table setting
- Slice of lemon
- Lighter
- *Caps for Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps.
- Music recording of TAPS or someone to play TAPS on a bugle or trumpet

Honor Guard.

All movements in this ceremony are slow and remorseful.

There should be no jerky movements. The only sharp movement will be the facing movement at the end to leave the table after setting it. Hold the wheel cap in the right hand with fingers holding the rim. Your arm should be cradling the cap as you form an "L" from your shoulder to your elbow to your hand. It should rest on the forearm. Once at the table, the Honor Guard members will slowly bring the left hand up and over the wheel cap to have the fingers at "5 o'clock". Once there, the cap is pivoted on the tips of the fingers of the right hand so the wheel cap is now facing toward the Honor Guard member. There will be a slow bend at the waist to place the cap on the table. Once there, the member will slowly straighten up and slow salute the cap still keeping their eyes caged on the cap. After holding the salute for about four beats, slowly drop the salute and look straight ahead, eyes caged.



Narrator. He/she should try to memorize parts of the ceremony and practice making eye contact with the audience. This is very important as the narrator will set the tone for the mood of the ceremony. He/she should take a deep breath and pause before speaking each section.

Retiring the Table.

You may wish to retire the POW-MIA table at the end of the night. This is usually done before or during the closing comments by the Master of Ceremonies. The Honor Guard will come in again at funeral march pace and stand behind their respective wheel caps. One person will blow out the candle and stand upright. All four will salute at the same time slowly and will hold the salute. The music of TAPS will then be played. When the music is over the four will slowly order arms. The Honor Guard commander will then call a "Post" and "Forward, March." The Honor Guard will then slowly march out of the room.

POW-MIA CEREMONY SCRIPT.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE CENTER OF OUR GATHERING. YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THE TABLE SET BEFORE YOU. IT IS FILLED WITH SYMBOLISM. I WILL EXPLAIN. THIS TABLE IS SET FOR OUR PRISONERS OF WAR AND THOSE MISSING IN ACTION -- FROM ALL WARS. THEY ARE NOT WITH US TODAY. THEIR CHAIR IS EMPTY, BUT SAVED FOR THEIR HOPED RETURN. LET US REMEMBER THEIR ABSENCE. LET US REMEMBER THE MEN AND WOMEN PRISONERS OF WAR FROM ALL BRANCHES OF SERVICE THAT ARE TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN. LET US REMEMBER THEM. THE TABLE CLOTH IS WHITE, SYMBOLIZING THE PURITY OF THEIR INTENTIONS TO RESPOND TO THEIR COUNTRY'S CALL TO ARMS -- SO THAT THEIR CHILDREN COULD REMAIN FREE. REMEMBER. THE LONE CANDLE SYMBOLIZES THE FRAILTY OF A PRISONER ALONE, TRYING TO STAND UP AGAINST HIS OPPRESSORS. REMEMBER.

(A cadet lights the candle)

THE BLACK RIBBON ON THE CANDLE REMINDS US OF THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE COMING HOME. REMEMBER

THE SINGLE ROSE REMINDS US OF THE LOVED ONES AND FAMILIES OF OUR COMRADES IN ARMS WHO KEEP THE FAITH AND AWAIT THEIR RETURN. REMEMBER

A SLICE OF LEMON IS ON THE BREAD PLATE TO REMIND US OF THEIR BITTER FATE -- IF WE DO NOT BRING THEM HOME. REMEMBER

THERE IS SALT ON THE PLATE, SYMBOLIC OF THE FAMILY'S TEARS AS THEY WAIT AND REMEMBER.

THE GLASSES ARE INVERTED. THEY CANNOT TOAST WITH US TONIGHT -- MAYBE TOMORROW, IF WE REMEMBER.

(The cadets execute a slow bend at the waist and pick up the wineglasses to eye level. At the word, "INVERTED", the Honor Guard members quickly flip the wineglasses upside down with a twist of the wrist. Then slowly bring down the wineglasses to the table inverted).

THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE RIBBON IS TIED TO THE FLOWER VASE BY A YELLOW RIBBON THAT WAS WORN BY THOUSANDS WHO AWAITED THEIR RETURN. REMEMBER

THE FADED PICTURE ON THE TABLE IS A REMINDER THAT THEY ARE MISSED VERY MUCH AND ARE REMEMBERED BY THEIR FAMILIES. REMEMBER.

AS WE LOOK UPON THIS EMPTY TABLE, DO NOT REMEMBER GHOSTS FROM THE PAST, REMEMBER OUR COMRADES.

REMEMBER THOSE WHOM WE DEPENDED ON IN BATTLE. THEY DEPEND ON US TO BRING THEM HOME.



TUSCOLA AIRPOWER

A black silhouette of an airplane, shown from a side profile, pointing to the right. It is positioned to the right of the word "AIRPOWER" and appears to be flying towards it.

REMEMBER OUR FRIENDS. THEY ARE THE ONES WE LOVE—WHO LOVE LIFE AND FREEDOM AS WE DO.

THEY WILL REMEMBER WHAT WE DO. PLEASE HONOR AND REMEMBER THEM.

(The Honor Guard executes a slow salute together. They hold it approximately 10 seconds after the music has ended. Afterwards, the members slowly order arms and the Honor Guard commander will call "POST" and the members will execute a Left or Right Face. (Whichever is more convenient). "Forward March" will then move the members out of the room in a slow fashion.)

SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR RETIRING THE TABLE.

(One cadet approaches the table ready to extinguish the candle. If the hats are to be retired as well, the entire Honor Guard should enter with one identified to extinguish the candle.)

AS CADET (RECOMMEND CADET CORPS COMMAND CHIEF) EXTINGUISHES THIS CANDLE, LET US TRANSFER IT'S FLAME TO OUR HEARTS—AND REMEMBER.

(Command Chief) extinguishes the candle and retreats).