

POW Ceremony

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BEFORE WE PROCEED WITH THE EVENTS OF THE EVENING, I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE TABLE AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM...

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THE SMALL TABLE, SET FOR ONE. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.

MILITARY TRADITION IS FILLED WITH SYMBOLISM, AND THIS TABLE IS OUR WAY OF REPRESENTING THE FACT THAT MEMBERS OF OUR BRETHREN ARE MISSING FROM OUR MIDST. THEY ARE COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS POW/MIA, WE CALL THEM BROTHERS AND SISTERS. THEY ARE UNABLE TO BE HERE WITH US THIS EVENING, SO WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM.

THIS TABLE IS SMALL – SYMBOLIZING THE FRAILTY OF ONE ALONE AGAINST THEIR OPPRESSORS.

THE TABLECLOTH IS WHITE – SYMBOLIZING THE PURITY OF THEIR INTENTIONS TO RESPOND TO THEIR COUNTRY'S CALL TO ARMS.

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

THE RED RIBBON AROUND THE ROSE IS REMINISCENT OF THE RED RIBBON WORN UPON THE LAPELS AND BREASTS OF THOUSANDS WHO BEAR WITNESS TO AN UNYIELDING DETERMINATION TO DEMAND A PROPER ACCOUNTING OF OUR MISSING.

A SLICE OF LEMON ON THE PLATE REMINDS US OF THEIR BITTER FATE. AND THERE IS SALT ON THE PLATE, SYMBOLIC OF THE TEARS SHED BY THOSE WHO WAIT.

THE GLASS IS INVERTED, THEY CANNOT TOAST WITH US TONIGHT.

THE CHAIR IS EMPTY, THEY ARE NOT HERE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE JOIN ME IN A MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR PRISONERS OF WAR AND MISSING IN ACTION...

(PAUSE) THANK-YOU