The **TABLE** … set for one … is small – symbolizing the loneliness we feel without them.

The **TABLECLOTH** is white … symbolizing the purity of their intentions and willingness to respond to their country’s call to arms.

The single **ROSE** in the vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades-in-arms, who kept the faith awaiting their return, and forever left behind.

The **RED RIBBON** tied so prominently on the vase, is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn by many who bear witness to their unyielding determination; to account for every one of our missing.

A **SLICE OF LEMON** is on the bread plate to remind us of their bitter fate.

There is **SALT** upon the bread plate too, symbolic of the river of tears shed by families and loved ones.

The **GLASS** is inverted … they cannot toast with us this night.

The **CHAIR** is empty … they are not here. Our lives are incomplete because they are not here to sit with us tonight. They were there for us … we are still here for them.

In honoring them … each of them … all of them … we stand silently and face their table … the table where they should be sitting with us tonight. We stand silently in their absence.

Please raise your glass in a toast. To the Missing Man. We flew with you and called you comrade; we will never forget your ultimate sacrifice.

*5 July 2005*