

**Missing Man Toast and Ceremony  
VHPA 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Reunion  
San Francisco, California**



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.