

# MID-WINTER MEETING

## INTRODUCTION

Good \_\_\_\_\_ – Bill and I are very proud to honor our military families today. Thank you to Dept President Gail and Americanism Chairman Carol Kratz for the invitation.

As you can see, the Missing Man Table is already set to honor our POWs and our MIAs.

This table is “the most important image we have that a person has said ‘yes’ to duty, and that that duty is always to be honored and to never forget ...”

Our military continue to answer the call to service every day as they defend our country’s freedom.

That service often comes at a great personal sacrifice, not only for our military, but also for their families, their children.

“When an Air Force Officer was asked what he needed while deployed to Iraq, he said, ‘Please don’t send cookies, care packages, or socks. Just help take care of our children.

A new table will be set today. This table honors our military children, their friends and their classmates.

this is just one way you could honor the family’s bravery, resilience and their sacrifice.

April is the **Month** of the **Military Child**. This awareness **month** was established to underscore the important role **children** play in the Armed Forces community. There are approximately 2 million **military children**, ranging in ages from newborn to 18 years old; 1.3 million **military children** are school-aged. This is just one way you could honor the family’s bravery, resilience and their sacrifice.

Now, let’s set the table:

- The **potted flowering plant** symbolizes that a military child flowers and grows wherever they are planted. Military resilience is a big part of this.

- The **hand spade** recognizes that the family may be transplanted to a new place in the world at a moment's notice. Many times the family moves closer to family during a deployment for help and support. Or, are left alone in a community that does not even know or understand a deployment.
- The **birthday hat, the unlit candles, a baseball cap, and a jump rope for the school jump rope contest** represent all the special community events that are missed by the service member that is deployed. But the family will do their best to enjoy these events even though there is someone special that cannot attend.
- **Games for game night, a library book to be read, a Christmas ornament to be hung, a valentine bag to fill ...** these symbolize some of the family occasions that will continue on at home but with an empty chair.
- The **family photo** shows a child with their uniformed parent which demonstrates our country's strength. The child is carrying his parent's bag ... representing the weight of a deployment on the whole family.
- The **white bible** represents the special occasions within the faith-based family, that are missed during a year of deployment.
- The final touch is the **American Flag**. Our Country's flag reminds us that military families are united in their commitment to national service, at home or away, no matter the sacrifice.

In closing, let this table remind us all that when one parent deploys the whole family deploys. We, as the VFW Auxiliary, need to always remember the purpose of our organization – that is to care for our veterans, currently serving military and their families. We, as a good neighbor, as a friend, as a citizen; need to be there to assist in any way that we can. Remember the words of the Air Force Officer – “Please take care of my family”. We can never forget ...