



Volume 3- November 2015 - © 2015 WreathsForTheFallen.org

Happy Veteran's Day!

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Happy Veteran's Day to all who are serving or have served our country!

This is the day we officially honor your service and your sacrifice. To our youngest Veterans who recently earned this honored title up to our WWII Veterans, we salute you!

One day a year isn't enough to honor those who serve, and there are many ways to show appreciation throughout the year to those currently serving, their families, and Veterans.

For remembering those currently serving, organizing or taking part in care package drives can be a way to show thanks. School classrooms could even "adopt" a deployed soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine.

We can also remember the often forgotten families of deployed troops. While their loved one is deployed, they take over the responsibilities of the absent parent. Babysitting, lawn care, snow removal, and help with others tasks would be greatly appreciated!

A reminder that this Sunday, November 8th, is the 9th annual Veteran's Day Parade & Social, which starts at the St Cloud VA Health Care

System at 1:00 PM, and ends at the north side of Apollo High School. A social at Apollo follows the parade.

In addition many local businesses and national chains are offering Veterans a **free meal on Veteran's Day**. For a complete listing, please go to:

<http://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-day-free-meals-and-discounts/> OR

<http://militarybenefits.info/veterans-day-discounts-sales-deals-free-meals/>

"A Veteran is someone who, at one point, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including their life.'"

If you would like further information on volunteering opportunities throughout the year, you can contact your local VA or Veteran's organizations for ways to help, as well as WreathsForTheFallen.org (as we can always use volunteers). For ideas of some organizations that may need help, you can visit our Website "Events" page and also the "Veterans Information" page.

Thank A Veteran!

Missing Man Table

While we celebrate the upcoming holidays with family and friends, there are those among us who won't have the luxury of having all those near and dear to them available to share good food, good company, and memories of the past.

Their loved ones may be deployed, or be among the Fallen Heroes whose earthly bodies are laid to rest, or those who never returned to their loved ones- our POW's and MIA's.

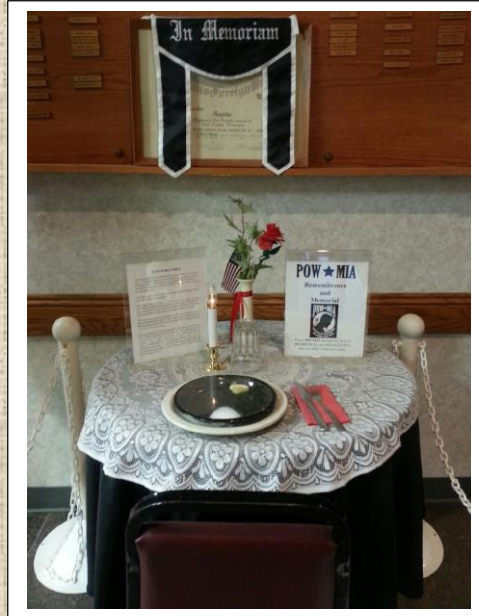
Originally called the POW/MIA Table, the table pictured was a way to honor the Prisoners of War and the Missing in Action from Vietnam. In recent times it has grown to include those Killed in Action and is also known as the Fallen Comrade or Missing Man table.

Each part of the table has a symbolic meaning:

Table: set for one, is small, symbolizing the frailty of one isolated prisoner. The table is usually set close to, or within sight of, the entrance to the dining room. For large events, the Missing Man Table is set for six places: members of the five armed services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard) and a sixth place setting reminiscent of the civilians who died during service alongside the armed forces or missing during armed conflict. The table is round to represent everlasting concern on the part of the survivors for their missing loved ones.

Tablecloth: is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

Lit candle: reminiscent of the light of hope which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.



Single red rose in the vase: signifies the blood that many have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep the faith, while awaiting their return.

Yellow ribbon on the vase: represents the yellow ribbons worn on the lapels of the thousands who demand with unyielding determination a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us tonight.

Slice of lemon on the bread plate:

represents the bitter fate of the missing.

Inverted glass: represents the fact that the missing and fallen cannot partake.

Salt sprinkled on the bread plate: symbolic of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.

Empty chair: the missing and fallen aren't present.

As the table is being set, a script is followed:

"The table that stands before you is a place of honor. In setting this table, we acknowledge those missing from our celebration tonight. And we remember them. (ring bell)

The table is small, and set for one -- Symbolizing the vulnerability of a lone prisoner against his captors. Remember! (ring bell)

The tablecloth is white -- Symbolizing purity of intention in responding to the nation's call to arms. Remember! (ring bell)

The chair is empty, for they are not here. Remember! (ring bell)

The wine glass is inverted -- They cannot toast with us this night. Remember! (ring bell)



Missing Man Table, (continued from p 2)

The slices of lemon -- Reminding us of their bitter suffering. Remember! (ring bell)

The grains of salt -- Representing the countless tears of the families. Remember! (ring bell)

The single red rose -- Reminding us of loved ones who keep the faith awaiting their return. Remember! (ring bell)

The burning candle and yellow ribbon -- Symbolizing everlasting hope of a reunion with the missing. Remember! (ring bell)

Remember! -- All who have served alongside them; we who have donned the same proud uniform, being sworn to the same faith and allegiance -- We will never forget their sacrifice. Remember! (ring bell)

Remember! -- Until the day they return home, or find eternal peace, we will remember." (ring bell)

This holiday season, we will honor and remember these heroes who never returned to their loved ones, as well as those currently serving and the families whose loved ones are serving far from home.

Remembrance Ceremony

This year's Remembrance Ceremony is Saturday, December 12th at 11:00 AM (Little Falls State Veteran's Cemetery). We are still in need of volunteers for several tasks:

- Traffic control
- Serving refreshments
- Section leaders

If you are able to assist with any of the above, please contact us at:

Office@WreathsForTheFallen.org

For those who wish to help place wreaths, it is not necessary to contact us- you may just show up. Please arrive by 10:00 and enjoy some refreshments and socializing before the ceremony!

Upcoming Events & Fundraising

Besides the Remembrance Ceremony on December 12th, and the Veteran's Day Parade on November 8th, here are a few more upcoming events you may be interested in:

[November 8th - 14th Duluth-Superior Military Appreciation Week](#)

[November 10th - Mankato Stand Down for Veterans \(Mankato MN\)](#)

[November 14th Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner at Elks \(Brainerd MN\)](#)

Please check the Website for the most current information:

[Click here to visit the Events page for the most up-to-date information](#)

If you have an event you would like to share, please contact us at:

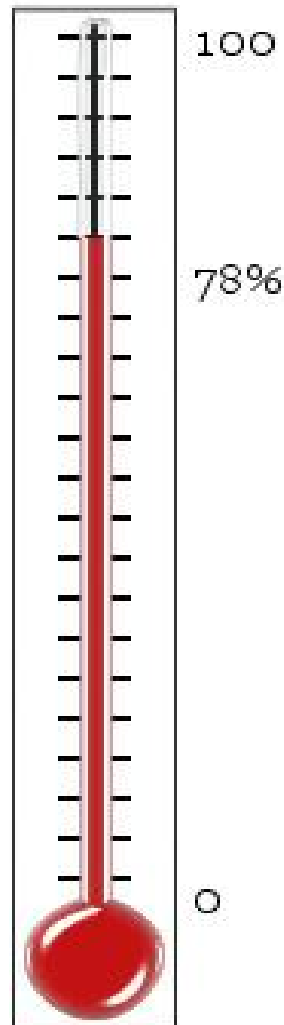
Events@WreathsForTheFallen.org

If you would like to sponsor a wreath in honor of a loved one, you may do so on our Website. Please look for this link on our Home page:



[Click on "Honor a Veteran Here"](#)

2015 FUNDRAISING EFFORTS



2015
Donations
as of
11/4/15

November News



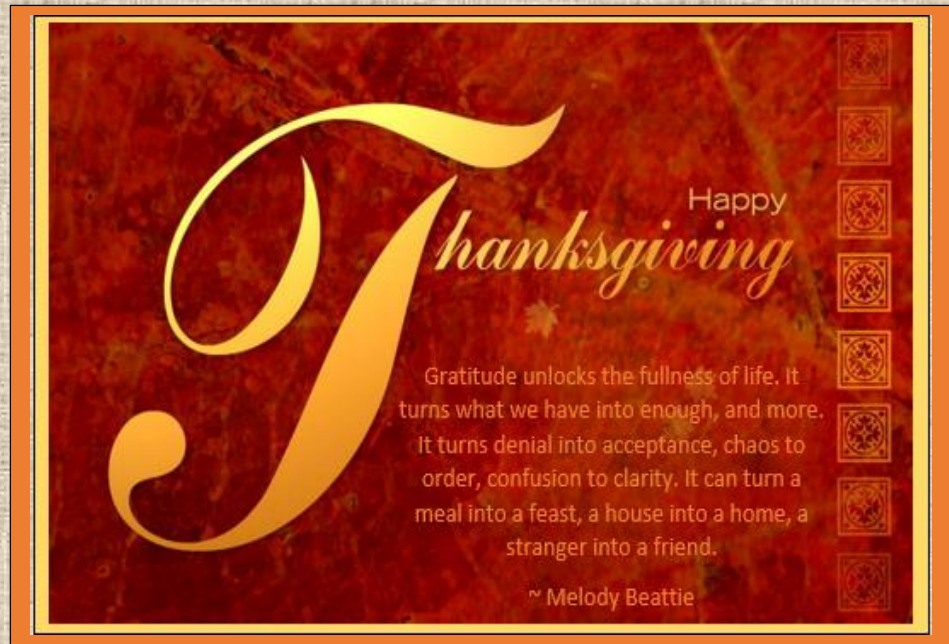
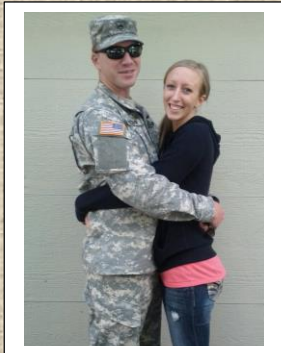
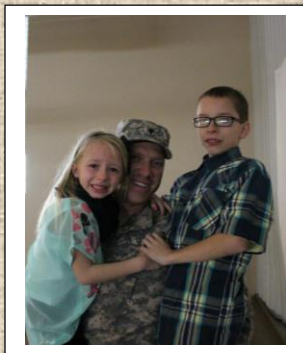
Month of the Military Family

Since 1993, November has been designated the month to celebrate military families. To honor the sacrifices these families make on the home front, there are ways beyond a thank you to show appreciation (some were mentioned on page one).

Your local communities may have events throughout the holiday season for military families. Contact Veteran's organizations in your area for further information, and if you would like us to publish any of these events on our "Events" page, please contact us at: Office@WreathsForTheFallen.org



To our military families, we would like to express our gratitude not only for the support you show our troops, but to the sacrifices your family makes while your loved one(s) serves our country. We salute you!



With the cold weather soon arriving, what's better than settling in for the evening with family, movie, and popcorn? Keeping in theme of the month of the Military Family, here are some suggestions for Movie Night:

Suggestions (some may be kid-friendly):

- Max
- Memorial Day (filmed entirely in Minnesota and featuring some of our Red Bulls)
- Taking Chance
- Windtalkers
- Flags of Our Fathers
- Saving Private Ryan
- Letters From Iwo Jima
- Red Tails
- Unbroken
- American Sniper
- The Red Badge of Courage
- Pearl Harbor
- Band of Brothers
- Fury
- The Thin Red Line

The Things I Carry

~By Michael Marks

The old train lumbered up the track amid a hoofbeat clatter,
its cloudy windows streaked by rain that fell in gentle patter.
With duffle heavy on my back I trudged along the aisle
until I saw an empty seat next to a welcome smile.

A stifled groan curled in my chest beneath the weight I bore;
I shrugged the duffle off my back, it thudded on the floor.
“That pack looks awfully heavy friend” he said with narrowed stare,
“You got a load of cinderblocks or something tucked in there?”

My gaze fell to the weathered bag; its corners taped and patched;
the olive drab a faded grey, one canvas strap mismatched.
I forced a smile that in my heart was anything but merry
and through my gritted teeth replied, “It’s just the things I carry.”

Perhaps it was the lonely night, the thunder and the rain,
a sense of kindred friendship that I couldn’t quite explain,
but with a snap of rusted clip the duffle opened wide
and reaching in I showed him all the things I had inside.

A heavy armored vest was first, its kevlar torn and frayed,
the gaping hole stained dark with blood was caused by a grenade.
“My best friend’s life” I whispered, fearing that my voice would crack;
“He gave it up to save me in the desert of Iraq.”

“We grew up just like brothers ever since the age of nine,
fishing up on Grady’s Pond or flying kites on twine,
our first car was a Mustang, man we made that baby slide.
He always calls me ‘slick,’ I mean... he did until he died.”

A brick of granite followed, dark and grey as stormy sky,
engraved upon its polished face, a date in mid-July.
“I wasn’t home the day I lost my dad,” I muttered low,
remembering that awful day so many years ago.

“Our unit drew a line that month in deep Afghanistan
protecting little schoolgirls from a bloody Taliban.”
My somber gaze fell to the floor and fixed on muddy shoes.
“Dad was gone two weeks before I even got the news.”

The silence hung a moment broken only by the rain,
the beating of my heart over the rumble of the train,
before I heard him ask about the thing I left inside,
a mason jar that wads of dirty laundry failed to hide.

“Don’t open that,” I said too fast, my voice now tinged with fear.
“There’s things in there that, trust me, you don’t ever wanna hear.”
I thought about the demons bottled up inside that jar;
some things are better left alone... left just the way they are.



The Things I Carry

(continued from page 6)

“I’ve seen a lot of people die, and let me tell you friend,
the sounds, the smells...” I bowed my head, “sometimes they never end.”
I don’t know why the lid slips off, it mostly does at night;
and it can take me hours just to get it back on tight.”

The man then spoke in earnest tones that tugged my memory,
“It seems a lot of weight to haul, but why I cannot see.
What makes a fella like yourself lug such a load of pain?”
A furrow crossed my tired brow, I struggled to explain.

I spoke to him of duty, of the things a man just did,
of old regrets that in the darkness of the heart lay hid;
the ghosts of fallen friends you just can’t bring yourself to bury,
the bridges crossed and moments lost are just the things I carry.

Instead of being saddened now he seemed a bit amused,
“I admire your resolve bub, but you’ve got it all confused;
The memories you’re s’posed to keep aren’t those that weigh a ton,”
and handing me three items said “I’ll trade you one for one.”

The photo showed two lanky guys in t-shirts and blue jeans,
both leaning on a Mustang like a pair of Steve McQueens.
The memories came flooding back of racing ‘round our home
in an overpowered yellow wedge of spoilers and chrome.

The letter was a short one folded carefully in thirds,
my dad had never been a man of very many words;
In careful print it said his greatest pride since life began
was watching me grow up to be a soldier and a man.

Through misty eyes I looked the last upon the ocean shell,
if it had a hidden meaning I’d be damned if I could tell.
“You know the trick,” he softly said, “just hold it to your ear,
and listen to the things in life you’ve earned the right to hear.”

I heard the sounds of my home town where screams were shouts of cheer,
as kids ran up and down the field without the need to fear;
the ring of freedom’s many voices blended in the air,
the sound of open singing and the sound of open prayer.

I turned to find an empty seat, just air and little more
than dust that slowly settled down upon the wooden floor.
Yet on that evanescence hung a voice I knew at last
a whisper from my memory, an echo from my past:

“Remember slick, the way to honor those of us now gone;
is searching for the best ahead in each and every dawn.
Hold on to the good times, not the moments dark and scary,
I’m telling you to let ‘em go... **they aren’t yours to carry.**”



It's not about Us, It's about Them

This is the last newsletter you will receive prior to the Remembrance Ceremony. We look forward to seeing many of you on December 12th, and would like to thank all of you for supporting our Fallen Veterans!

If you have any questions or comments regarding the newsletter, please contact Editor Laura Becker-Pallister at:

Newsletter@WreathsForTheFallen.org

We want to share stories of our Veterans who are interred at the state Veterans cemeteries, as well as information relevant to military and families. Let us know of anything else you would like included. We value your feedback!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

