

Group making thunder about POW

Veterans organization working to bring home imprisoned soldier

By Abdon Sidibe

Tuesday, December 24, 2013 at 4:22 pm

This is the fifth Christmas U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl is spending away from his family and in captivity as the only known American prisoner of war.



Special to the Chronicle

Bowe Bergdahl - U.S. Army sergeant was taken prisoner by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

And, a local group is part of the national chorus to bring Bergdahl home.

Bergdahl was taken prisoner in Afghanistan by the Taliban on June 30, 2009, and is believed to be held in the tribal areas of Pakistan or southern Afghanistan.

"They have let a lot of Taliban go from Guantanamo Bay, but no one has bothered to exchange Bowe Bergdahl for one of them. I think that is appalling," said Archie Gooding, president of a local chapter of Rolling Thunder.

Gooding and Cynthia Holden, also a Rolling Thunder member, spoke before the Chronicle Editorial Board to help spread the word about Bergdahl's plight and urge people to contact their representatives to help bring him home.

"No family should have to deal with what the family of Bergdahl has been dealing with for more than four years now," Holden said.

Bergdahl, who is from Idaho, has been the subject of an ongoing national campaign to have him released from the custody of his captors.

Gooding said he hopes Bergdahl does not become part of a long cruel tradition of 83,000 POWs who remain unaccounted for dating back to World War I.

"We know he is alive and we are trying to do everything we can to bring Bowe back, alive," Gooding said.

Rolling Thunder is a national organization of veterans who ride motorcycles and Gooding said their mission is to help bring home American veterans from all the wars.

To help or for more information, call Holden at 352-628-6481 or email her at Cyn2719@yahoo.com.

To sign a petition campaign on behalf of Bergdahl, go to www.veteransgrapevine.com.

Contact Chronicle reporter A.B. Sidibe at 352-564-2925 or asidibe@chronicleonline.com.