



## Group keeps a seat for the missing

By Abdon Sidibe

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The Citrus County chapter of Rolling Thunder Florida is sticking with its mission statement: To educate the public that more than 83,000 Americans from all wars were left behind either as Prisoners of War/Missing in Action. And that the group would not rest until they are all back home.



NANCY KENNEDY/Chronicle

The Citrus County chapter of Rolling Thunder Florida on Tuesday dedicated this chair to the Citrus County Commission to keep the stories and memories of those still missing or imprisoned front and center in the public eye.

On Tuesday, the group helped dedicate a black chair — right in front of the dais of the Board of County Commissioners — to keep the stories and memories of those still missing or imprisoned front and center in the public eye.

Next, stadium chairs bearing the logo of the POW/MIA logo will adorn all three athletic sites at the county's three public high schools — Lecanto, Citrus and Crystal River.

"I think those should be done in the next few weeks," Cynthia Holden, a Rolling Thunder member said Wednesday.

Holden said chapter president Archie Gooding came up with the chair idea, and the group's board adopted the plan during their September meeting.

"It is our mission to keep the issue of all of the more than 83,000 people from all wars in the mind of the public and never forget them," Holden said.

Rolling Thunder is a nonprofit organization that is open to veterans, nonveterans, motorcyclist and nonbikers willing to donate their time to the POW/MIA issue.

The group holds monthly meetings and has been active in the community, helping families with food, clothing and other essentials.

Holden and the group have been famously involved in the agitation to have U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl freed from Taliban custody. The group insisted the campaign to have Bergdahl released, which had come under some criticism, fits the organization's mission to advocate for the return of every American soldier.

Bergdahl, who spent more than five years in captivity, was released earlier this year in a prisoner exchange with the Taliban. Some have accused Bergdahl of desertion which led to his abduction, but Bergdahl remains in the military and an investigation into those allegations is ongoing.

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