



## Take time to honor true heroes

By The Staff

Thursday, September 19, 2013 at 9:23 pm (Updated: September 19, 9:24 pm)

THE ISSUE: National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

OUR OPINION: A day of remembrance and renewal.

Today is a very special day. It is a very special day because the third Friday of each September marks the national observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

Established by the Congress in 1979 as a day for honoring Americans held as prisoners of war (POW) and for reaffirming our national resolve to account for those Americans still missing in action (MIA) from past wars and conflicts, it stands as a day of remembrance and renewal.

In remembering those Americans held as prisoners of war, it is a time to reflect on their indomitable courage and unbreakable resolve that enabled them to endure unspeakable suffering, inhumane treatment and profound anguish.

In renewing our call for a full accounting of those Americans still missing in action, it is a time for reasserting our moral obligation as a people to never forget the extraordinary sacrifices of those left behind and to never break faith with their families by assuring them that their loved ones will live on in our hearts.

Tomorrow, Citrus County residents will also have a special opportunity to honor our local POW heroes and to keep the spirit of those still unaccounted for alive by attending an event hosted by Rolling Thunder Florida Chapter 7 and Inverness Elks Lodge 2522.

The event begins at the Citrus County Fairgrounds, where residents can meet and thank local ex-POWs, followed at 11 a.m. by a police-escorted ride from the fairgrounds through Inverness to the Inverness Elks Lodge on beautiful Lake Hernando in Hernando. At noon, there will be a ceremony featuring a special rendition of The Missing Man Table Ceremony followed by an all-American cookout with refreshments.

With nearly 88,000 Americans still missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the 1991 Gulf War and Global War on Terrorism, county residents are urged to take time today to reflect on the immeasurable sacrifices made in defense of our freedoms by our nation's POWs, MIAs and their families, as well as attend tomorrow's special event.

When the esteemed reporter Ernie Pyle chronicled the experiences of our GIs during World War II, he wrote that the rest of us could never know their world. While we can never know the experiences of our POWs and MIAs or the world of uncertainty endured by their families, we can pay solemn tribute to them by always remembering their sacrifices and by renewing our resolve for a full accounting.

Citrus County has a reputation of being a patriotic and veteran friendly place to live. By flying our national colors and the POW/MIA flag in solemn tribute today and by joining with Rolling Thunder to honor their heroic sacrifices tomorrow, we, as a community, can affirm, "You are not forgotten."