[Rolling Thunder says of soldiers left behind: 'We will not forget'](http://www.newportplaintalk.com/content/tncms/live/newportplaintalk.com/news/article_cbd42c04-fb52-11e4-bb1f-23109b3556bf.html)

*The Newport Plain Talk* By NELSON MORAIS NPT Staff Reporter Posted: Friday, May 15, 2015 6:36 pm

NEWPORT—Motorcyclists with Rolling Thunder chapters from Johnson City and Mississippi held a ceremony last weekend in Newport to honor those soldiers still missing in action, or are being held as prisoners of war.

A Rolling Thunder note on the Saturday, May 9 ceremony program held at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, states that the "'Flame of Freedom' is not a motorcycle ride or a single event. It is not carried by one member, but (by) all whose mission is to remind the country we will not forget ... (It's part) of the quest to bring home those still held in captivity. It is also the symbol of our country's commitment to account for the missing. How the flame is transported to ceremonies is not important. What it does to represent the mission of Rolling Thunder, Inc. is the message."

Jeff Kilbourn, Vice President of Rolling Thunder's Tennessee Chapter 4 (Johnson City), was the Master of Ceremonies. John McKendree, "Flame of Freedom" coordinator, gave the opening remarks. McKendree rode to Newport as part of the Rolling Thunder's Mississippi Chapter 1. Ron Meisenburg, of Hardcore Disciples of Jesus Christ Motorcycle Ministries in Newport, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Vaughn Burgin, of the Hardcore Disciples Ministries, gave the invocation. Gold Star mother Brenda Shelton-Metcalf, of the Tennessee Chapter 4, lit the Missing Man Table candle. Shelton-Metcalf also presented the "Flame of Freedom," and was the torchbearer.

Cocke County High Schools' JROTC performed, a roll call ceremony was held, and a bugler with Tennessee Chapter 4 played TAPS. Tammy Carrell, guest relations manager with the Holiday Inn Express in Newport, welcomed the motorcyclists who attended. Cocke County's "The Loose Change Band," performed on Friday night in the parking lot of the hotel

 **PHOTOS SUBMITTED**

**Rolling Thunder motorcyclists**

Rolling Thunder motorcyclists from Mississippi and Johnson City chapters traveled to Newport to hold a ceremony remembering U.S. soldiers who are missing in action or prisoners of war. The “Flame of Freedom” ceremony was held May 9.