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Melrose plans event for POW/MIA Recognition Day

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(Editor's note: This report was contributed by the city of Melrose.)

The city of Melrose will rededicate its POW/MIA Chair of Honor in the name of Carleton Pierce Miller Jr., a Melrose resident and Vietnam naval pilot whose remains were lost at sea.

The chair will be rededicated on the steps of Memorial Hall at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 20, which is National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The public is invited to attend the ceremony.

The Melrose POW/MIA Chair of Honor was first dedicated at Melrose City Hall on Jan. 22, 2013. The effort, sponsored by Melrose Veteran Services, Rolling Thunder Chapter MA 1 and the Melrose Veteran's Advisory Board, and aims to help keep the commitment to the more than 83,000 U.S. service members still unaccounted for as Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA).

"This is one of the most important causes in the veteran community and the city pays tribute to the nation's POW/MIA daily by flying the National League of Families POW/MIA Flag and housing its Chair of Honor tribute at City Hall," Melrose Veteran Director Ryan McLane said. "By rededicating the chair in this way, we are paying special recognition to a heroic Melrose resident who is still officially missing in action."

"Ryan McLane and the Veterans Services Advisory Board continue to work to ensure that every soldier who has not come home will not be forgotten," said Mayor Rob Dolan. "I commend their work and encourage everyone to participate in this important event."

Melrose is home to LTJG Carleton P. Miller Jr., a Vietnam veteran whose remains are still unaccounted for after his F4J Phantom fighter aircraft was lost off the USS Ranger 70 miles east of the North Vietnamese city of Ron. Jan. 6, 2013, marked the 42nd anniversary of LTJG Miller's sacrifice for his country.

Members of the Miller family will be on hand for the ceremony and dedication and have agreed to speak about this very important cause. Additionally, Joe D'Entremont, president of Rolling Thunder MA1, will attend to offer comments about his organization's relentless efforts to continue to remember our POW/MIA population. Rolling Thunder MA1 has dedicated dozens of chairs around the commonwealth, to include assisting in installations at Fenway Park, the TD Garden, Gillette Stadium and the State House.

The Chair of Honor display entails an empty seat demonstrating the city's commitment to never forget that the battle is not over for many veterans and their families. The U.S. flag and the National League of Families POW/MIA flag will flank the empty chair. Only when all are accounted for will the display be retired. To personalize the chair, Miller's name, biography, picture and original POW bracelet will be added to the display.

Melrose residents and area supporters are invited to attend a brief ceremony unveiling the new display. The ceremony will begin at 9:30 a.m. at Memorial Hall



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Joseph D'Entremont, president of the Wakefield chapter of Rolling Thunder, a motorcycle riding advocacy group for POW/MIA, speaks at the Wakefield WWII Memorial during the National Recognition Day event.

and is one of many being held in Massachusetts to honor National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Parking will be available in the City Hall Parking Lot and attendants on motorcycles can park their bikes adjacent to Memorial Hall the morning of the ceremony.

After the 30-minute ceremony, Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School students will lay a wreath at the Melrose Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Main Street. Miller's name is prominently displayed on the center of the monument as are 10 other Melrose residents who gave their lives for their country during the Vietnam War.

For more information, contact Ryan McLane, veteran services director, at 781-979-4186 or rmclane@cityofmelrose.org.

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