



HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to become involved with the local MIAP effort, contact Fred Salanti via e-mail at ducpho@miap.us.

Monetary donations are also requested. MIAP will need donations to pay for fees in states where burial and transfer fees aren't waived. MIAP is a nonprofit, so donations are tax-deductible.

For more information about MIAP and Patriot Guard, visit them online at www.miap.us



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
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Photos: Department of Defense



THE AMERICAN LEGION

MISSING IN AMERICA *PROJECT*



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*For generations, they've waited.
Unclaimed, forgotten...*

MISSING IN AMERICA PROJECT

For generations, they've waited.

Unclaimed, forgotten, silently occupying the shelves of mortuaries and state hospitals across the United States.

The cremated remains (cremains) of veterans, many indigent, many more forgotten through loss of family and friends wait for someone to remember them.

Today, the Missing in America Project – called MIAP for short – is seeking out what could potentially be tens of thousands of unburied veterans who served in wars throughout the past century.

Their stories have begun to emerge from the shadows of society's forgetfulness.

The American Legion, partnered with MIAP, want to see them honored and given a final resting place.

RESOLUTION 24

Identify, Honor And Inter Unclaimed Cremated Remains Of Veterans

Submitted by: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, state and nation; and

WHEREAS, Veterans have served our country and, as such, deserve to be buried with honor and respect; and

WHEREAS, Since July 17, 1862, veterans have been buried with honor in National Cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, Unclaimed cremated remains of veterans are languishing on the shelves of funeral homes and crematoriums; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Missing In America Project (MIAP) is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations; to provide honor and respect to those who have served this country, by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes; and

WHEREAS, MIAP does not retain the human resources to adequately fulfill the mission it has started and would like The American Legion's help and support; and

WHEREAS, Local Legionnaires can assist in locating and identifying the abandoned cremated remains of veterans across the nation and obtain the documentation on cremated remains left unclaimed at funeral homes in their local area; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2007, That The American Legion support the mission of the Missing In America Project in locating and identifying the unclaimed cremated remains of veterans and securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes.

BACKGROUND

The movement's founder is Vietnam veteran Fred Salanti of Grants Pass, Ore. While working as a regional facilitator for the Patriot Guard Riders, Salanti became involved with conducting monthly services at regional and state cemeteries for veterans with no family and no money.

It was then that he stumbled across the unrecognized need to bury indigent and forgotten veterans, who's cremains have been languishing on the shelves of funeral homes, mortuaries and state hospitals across the United States for decades.

MIAP, with the help of The American Legion, will meet that need.

The MIAP's guidelines call for assisting funeral homes with researching all cremains in their possession to find veterans, submitting the cremain's records to the Veterans Administration Cemetery System for screening for eligibility for burial and notifying funeral homes of cremains eligible for burial.

The funeral homes must then follow requirements for submitting the cremains to a VA cemetery. From there, MIAP will coordinate a full military service with the cemetery involved.

SOME HISTORY

In a piece that won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing, The Oregonian told the story of 3,500 cremains, many of people who had been patients in the state hospital, which were put in copper, quart-sized cans and stacked on shelves in a basement storage room.

One thousand of those forgotten souls are expected to be veterans. The findings span the years from 1890 to 1971, an era that begins with the Spanish American War and ends with Vietnam.

While Oregon is the most glaring case, the discoveries are taking place around the country.

In Michigan, they're working to identify 350 sets of cremains recently discovered. In Reno, 34 unburied vets recently were discovered. Idaho alone has found and interred 91 vets.