

MORANT LEADS
MURRAY STATE
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THE DAILY SENTINEL

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

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'When their country needed them, they answered the call'

Vets gone, not forgotten

Remains finally
are laid to rest

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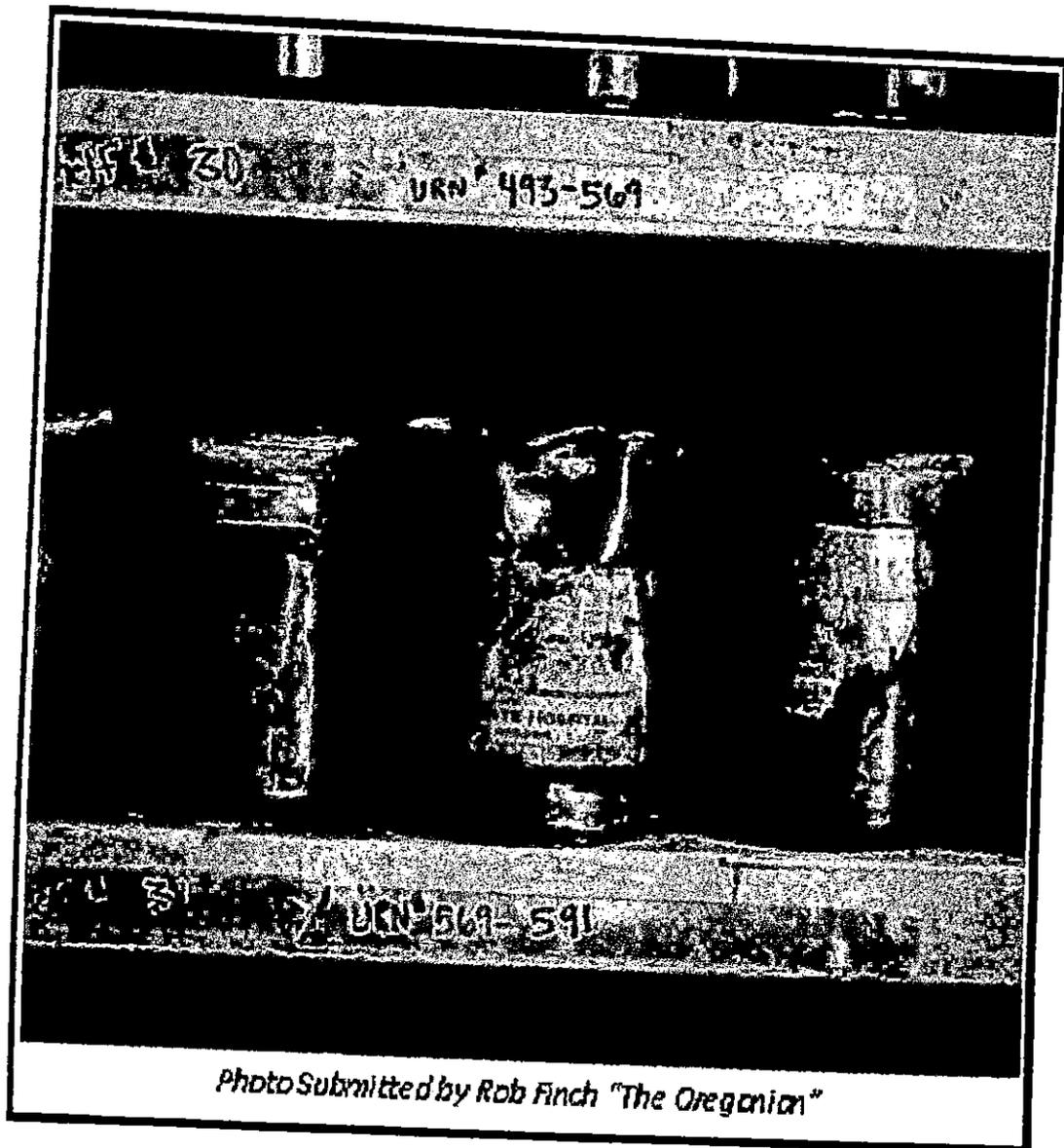
Twenty-six veterans and two military spouses were finally laid to rest Thursday at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado.

For years, their cremains sat on a shelf among 2,000 unclaimed urns and boxes in a storage room at Martin Mortuary, said manager Richard Lewis. The mortuary eventually transported them to Olinger Mount Lindo Cemetery in Morrison.

But one year ago, Vietnam veteran Mike Shults contacted Lewis about his plan to identify and honor unclaimed cremains of local veterans.

Shults had done it once before





Missing in America Project Veteran Recovery Program

You served your country through a war, or through peacetime. You expected to receive a military burial, recognition by our government of your commitment to our great country. You expected to have honor and respect paid to you as a result of your service to our great country. Instead, you reside on a shelf in a

mortuary or a storage facility at a crematorium.

The mission of the MIAP project is to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremains of veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations. These forgotten veterans have served our country and, as such, deserve to be buried with honor and respect. The impetus for our fine program began in November 2006. The Idaho State Veterans cemetery interred 21 cremains of forgotten veterans, with full military honors and the dignity these fallen heroes so richly deserved. Recently, a state hospital announced that 3500 cremains were on shelves to be identified. On the shelf were cremains for the time span of the 1890s to 1971. It is estimated 1,000 of these cremains are veterans. This is happening in every state.

This project has just begun. We need to blanket every mortuary and cemetery in the United States and let them know there are people who desire to claim our veterans. We need to let them know it is our desire to see they are interred with the honor and respect they deserve. They served our great nation. It is now our great nation's turn to serve them.

The veterans languishing on shelves need us. They need America to step forward and ensure they are buried with honor. They need America to show their thanks for their service. Without them, we would not have the freedoms we enjoy today.
