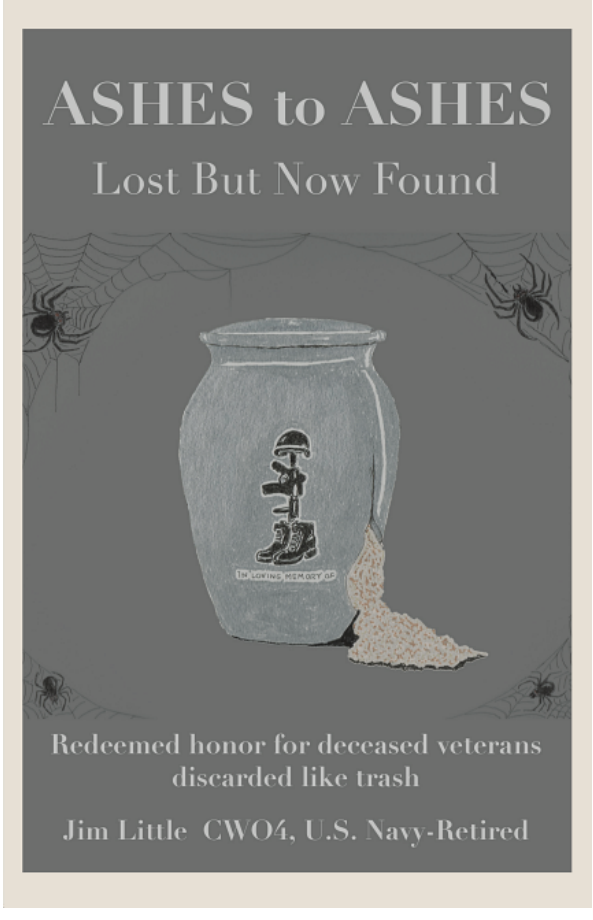


Twenty-eight forgotten veterans found on a mortuary shelf and how an Oregon community came together to right a tragic wrong.

ASHES to ASHES: Lost But Now Found

By Jim Little

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ASHES to ASHES

Lost But Now Found



Redeemed honor for deceased veterans discarded like trash

Jim Little CWO4, U.S. Navy-Retired

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Cover: Pen-and-ink drawing by Jim Little depicting a veteran cremains urn decorated with a battlefield cross, broken open with spilled ashes and surrounded by spiders.

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LAUGHTER BEHIND THE DOOR

Before transferring the twenty-eight cremains from their temporary holding place in the courthouse to the VA National Roseburg Cemetery, many factors had to be considered. The initial burial ceremony was scheduled for one month later. There was to be three services over a three-day period.

During a planning meeting, participants suggested that veterans whose cremated remains had been kept and neglected the longest—especially those from World War I—should be the first to receive honors and be laid to rest. They also recommended using a horse-drawn hearse for the initial service to transport the veterans' cremains from the courthouse to the cemetery. At the time, it was not known, but later revealed, that Mary Newman personally covered the costs of renting and using the horse-drawn hearse.

David Hopkins, during his mortician duties, had knowledge about how to arrange a horse and appropriate carriage. David set about arranging for a horse and carriage, and the first hurdle to overcome was how to house the horse prior to the service, which would need to be fed and cared for the day prior to the service. Commissioner Tim Freeman planned and directed for the horse to be placed in a stable at the county fairgrounds the day prior to the scheduled service. Douglas County Fairgrounds Director Dan Hults graciously donated an RV spot and horse stall for the "The Last Ride" organization, which would be used for the first service. It can be said that this is not only a veteran community effort, but an effort by all of Douglas County's citizens.

Decisions also had to be made about who, in addition to designated next of kin DCVSO Mary Newman, would receive the

folded burial flags during the three services as part of the military honors. When presenting the flag, the honor guard traditionally kneels before the next of kin and says, “On behalf of the President of the United States, the United States Navy (or Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard), and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a symbol of our appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.” For the first service, the recipients selected, in addition to Mary Newman, were ODVA Director Kelly Fitzpatrick, and County Commissioner Tim Freeman.

Coordinating the event also involved arranging escorts from the courthouse to the VA Cemetery with both the Roseburg City Police and the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office. Officer Brad Odell, Four Chaplains Legion of Honor member from the Sheriff’s Department, was especially accommodating, and he was set to be promoted to Douglas County Undersheriff (the second-highest position under the sheriff) in the future. The whole community seemed eager to assist in any way they could to ensure these veterans finally received the respectful resting place they deserved.



At rest in wooden trays at the Douglas County Courthouse, awaiting transfer to the Roseburg VA Cemetery (Photo by Michael Sullivan, The News Review)

Mary Newman kept the twenty-eight veterans' cremains secure in the courthouse storage room, locked, and with the key in her possession. During this time, something happened that had no rational explanation and is considered by many to be supernatural.

Kimberly (Kim) Jasper, a U.S Air Force veteran, is an attractive young lady with medium-length red hair and striking green eyes. Kim was awarded Legion of Honor membership following confirmation and approval by the Philadelphia Four Chaplains Chapel selection board.

Kim worked in the Douglas County Veteran Service office for a couple of years. She kept in contact and maintained a friendship with Mary Newman. One day, during the time the cremains were stored, Kim called Mary and explained that she had an intense dream that was very strange to her. Kim had not talked to Mary for a lengthy period of time, and she was unaware of the finding and arrangements made for the forgotten unclaimed veterans' cremains.

Kim recounted her dream: "I recall that, during my time working in the office, there was a hallway with a bathroom at the far end. As I proceeded down the hallway, there was a room to my right, which I believe had a door. Behind this door, I distinctly heard the loud sounds of several men shouting and laughing with joy."

Kim was stunned when Mary revealed the existence of the storage room containing the cremated remains. The veterans involved in the project were equally astonished to learn about Kim's dream.

Plans were soon arranged for Kim to visit the storage area and witness firsthand where the veterans' remains rested.





Kimberly Jasper U.S. Air Force *Kimberly in 2025*
(Photos provided by Kim Jasper)

Kim was joined in the room by Mary Newman, Larry Hill, Carol Hunt, Jim Little, and Doug Page, making it a quiet and respectful occasion. There was no doubt that it actually happened as Kim described.

The News Review reported the story in the following manner[7].

In April, the remains were transferred to the courthouse in a room near the Veterans Service Office where Newman worked. Before that happened, and before anyone outside of a small committee knew about the plan to store the remains there, she said a friend contacted her and told her about a dream.

"She said that, in her dream, there was another room in a hallway across from our office. She said she heard people talking there, so she went to that room and stood at the door," Newman said. Newman added that she was astounded because her friend described the exact location of the room in which the remains

were soon to be kept. "She stated that, inside the room there were a lot of veterans, and they were standing in groups talking to each other," Newman said. Only then did Newman tell Kim about the plan.

Kim then said*, "Well, just so you know, in my dream all the veterans in that room were really, really happy."* While there is no clear explanation for Kim's dream, Jim Little has often viewed it as a sign from above, affirming to everyone involved in a supernatural way that their actions were indeed meaningful and appropriate, and they were doing the "right thing."



Douglas County Courthouse hallway leading to restroom at the end of the hall near the Veteran Service Office. Storage room door into the storage room that was used to store the veterans' cremains is seen on the right. (Photo taken in 2026 by Jim Little)

The "happy veterans" listed below:

John Allread, Navy, WWII, died May 15, 1985, aged 62.

Thomas Allsbrook, Army, WWII, died Oct. 27, 1975, aged 60.

Ulysses Brown, Air Force, Korean War, died Nov. 15, 2000, aged 71.

Frank Clark, Army, Korean War, died Dec. 22, 1986, aged 61.

Robert Connolly, Army. Korean War, Died March 14, 1984, aged 53.

Harley Dean, Army, WWI and WWII, died Nov. 15, 1983, aged 83.

James Eades, Navy, WWII, death date unknown, age unknown.

Earl Gilday, Army, WWII, died March 3, 1988, aged 64.

Adam Heussner, Navy, WWI, died March 8, 1975, aged 76.

Joseph Houston, Army, WWII, died Oct. 10, 1987, aged 74.

Joseph Jacobs, Air Force, Korean War, died Oct. 27, 1994, aged 65.

Charles Johnson, Air Force, Vietnam War, died Sept. 9, 1999, aged 53.

Raymond Lomas, Navy, WWII, died Oct. 21, 1984, aged 70.

Paul Loyd, Army, WWII, died March 10, 1982, aged 68.

Archie Miller, Army, WWI, died July 31, 1975, aged 82.

Claude Mott, Army, WWII, died Oct. 29, 1984, aged 77.

Darold Munion, Army, Korea, died Aug. 18, 1989, aged 58.

Robert Pendergast, Navy, WWII, died July 24, 1978, aged 52.

Laurance Peterson, Navy, WWII, died Dec. 25, 1982, aged 65.

Chester Pettit, Army, WWII, died June 23, 1980, aged 67.

Leonard Rhodes, Air Force, Korean War, died Aug. 17, 1997, aged 71.

William Roughcore, Army, WWI, died Apr. 5, 1982, aged 86.

William Taylor, Army, WWII, died Oct. 12, 1998, aged 71.

George Teply, Navy, WWII, died Feb. 13, 1979, aged 67.

Arthur Tranberg, Army, WWII, died Oct. 30, 1983, aged 68.

Louis Wiegert, Navy, WWII, died May 7, 1987, aged 64.

Albert Withers, Navy, WWII, died July 21, 1987, aged 80.

Robert Young, Navy, died July 4, 1982, aged 52.

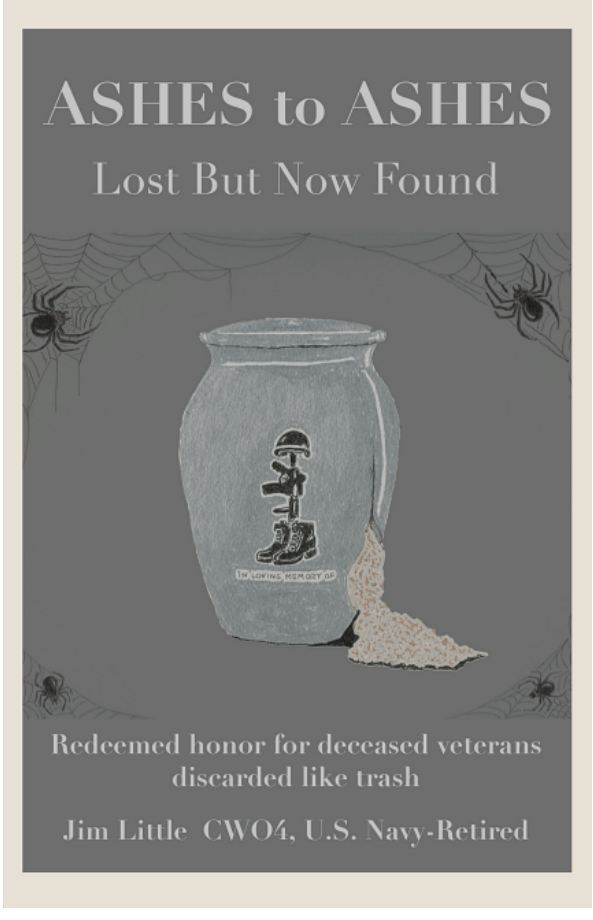
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jim Little, pictured with his wife, Carmen, and dog, Lucky. A retired U.S. Navy officer with thirty years active duty (1960–1991). After retirement, he and his wife settled in rural Oregon and became involved in veteran causes and issues. He has authored two books. Brotherhood of Doom: Memoirs of a Navy Nuclear Weaponsman (published by BookLocker.com, Inc. in 2007) and Sweet & Sour Uncle (published by BookLocker.co, Inc. in 2021). He is always mindful of the forty-two sailors who gave their lives serving in the U.S. Navy during his Navy career.

Jim shall also never forget the twenty-eight veterans who were found forgotten on a shelf, and how the Douglas County, Oregon community responded with compassion and determination to do the right thing.

For decades, a dark and disgraceful secret remained hidden in a forested community in the American Northwest. The remains of twenty-eight honorable veterans lay unclaimed and forgotten in a dark, dusty mortuary storage room, while denied the military honors and memorial services they had earned and deserved. The question was whether this dishonor—an affront not only to those veterans, but to all who have served America—would finally be corrected.



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