

Gone, but not forgotten -
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Gone, but not forgotten

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by BCT staff photographer Dennis Mc Donald

Veterans Buried

Nam Knights member Lou Ethier fires his weapon during a gun salute during a ceremony honoring eight veterans who remains were left unclaimed at a funeral homes throughout the state. The ceremony took place at Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery in North Hanover on Friday afternoon.



by BCT staff photographer Dennis Mc Donald

Veterans Buried

Jerry Skorch of Evesham speaks during the ceremony laying to rest the remains of eight soldiers who whose cremains were left unclaimed at various funeral parlors throughout the state at Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery in North Hanover on Friday afternoon.



by BCT staff photographer Dennis Mc Donald

Veterans Buried

Bugler Richard Pinter of Bordentown plays Taps during a ceremony at Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery in North Hanover on Friday afternoon where the remains of eight veterans who had been unclaimed at a funeral homes throughout the state for many years were honored and buried.



by BCT staff photographer Dennis Mc Donald

Veterans Buried

Army Sgt. Major Levona Toplin carries the cremains of a veteran who was left unclaimed at a funeral homes throughout the state for many years at a ceremony at Brigadier General William C. Doyle Cemetery in North Hanover on Friday afternoon. Saluting at right is Sgt. Damont Brown. The remains of eight veterans were honored during the ceremony.

by [Mark Zimmario](#)

NORTH HANOVER — Frank Dancsecs Jr.'s cremated remains had been sitting on a shelf in a funeral parlor for 30 years.

For decades, phone calls went out to suspected family members of Dancsecs in an effort to bring peace in the form of a final resting place for the Vietnam War Army veteran.

No calls were answered.

On Friday, thanks to a group of local volunteers, the unclaimed cremated remains of Dancsecs and seven other New Jersey veterans found a home after years of uncertainty.

They joined about 50 other recent interments at the Brig. Gen. William C. Doyle Veterans Cemetery in North Hanover over the last three years.

It is called the "Mission of Honor," and several volunteer groups have been pitching in to make sure the quest continues until every unclaimed veteran's remains receive a proper burial or are reunited with family members.

"We have 36 more that are ready for interment," said Jerry Skorch, an Evesham resident who is vice chairman and state chaplain for New Jersey's Mission of Honor for Cremains of American Veterans. "We have been finding more and more all over the place."

A few times a year, the organization provides a ceremony for deceased veterans at the state military cemetery, and often a motorcycle procession will escort the cremains to the final resting place.

Leo "Smooth" Ethier, a Delanco resident who is vice president of the Nam Knights of America motorcycle club, participated in the ceremony Friday and was part of a rifle firing squad that shot three times into the sky in honor of the eight Army veterans.

"This is part of our mission," said Ethier, a Vietnam veteran. "Finally, these men are getting put to rest and given what they deserve."

Nearly 100 people helped lay to rest the ashes of Albert Allen, Robert Benson and Robert Robinson of East Orange; William Coleman, Johnnie Farrow and Carl Martin of Montclair; Paul Choma of Fairmount; and Dancsecs, who lived in Woodbridge.

Each man died in New Jersey after serving in the Army in World War II, the Korean War or Vietnam. Most of the group's remains spent at least a decade on a shelf in a funeral parlor before the organization was able to provide a proper burial.

"It's amazing how people just forgot about them and their military service," said Pemberton Township resident Rudy Irizarry, a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

The program was initiated in 2009 after Gov. Jon S. Corzine signed legislation that allowed veterans' service organizations to receive the cremated remains of veterans for proper burial if the remains were still unclaimed after one year.

To claim the remains, the veterans' organization has to certify that a diligent effort was made to identify, locate and notify a relative or friend of the deceased within that one-year period.

Skorch said that it costs the organization about \$250 for each interment, and that the group is continuously raising money through donations to support the effort. Contributions can be made at www.njsmissionofhonor.org.

"When I heard there is somebody who has worn the country's uniform and has been forgotten on a funeral parlor shelf, it makes my stomach turn and my heart ache," Skorch said. "We are recognizing these men as heroes and as patriots. They honored the flag, and today our flag honors these eight veterans."

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