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**Date:** 10/5/2016 3:01:54 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: DJJ Positive Press

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Brian,

Just FYSA on a positive story this week in the LexChron.

-Patrick Montgomery

Begin forwarded message:

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Subject: DJJ Positive Press

Director,

Very nice and positive story in the Lexington Chronicle on DJJ this week. Great work by Mr. Sam Bower and his shop.

<http://lexingtonchronicle.com/teens-craft-urns-for-unclaimed-soldiers-remains-p38984-550.htm>

## Teens Craft Urns For Unclaimed Soldiers' Remains

It's about laying them to rest with the dignity they deserve.

Every year, deceased veterans' remains go unclaimed.

For years, Chapin's American Legion Post 193 has claimed their remains to give them a proper burial.

"We talk to coroners and funeral home directors across the state, looking for these unclaimed veterans," said Post 193 Commander Richard Strobel, a Marine. "We take it on ourselves."

## Placing the ashes

In addition to providing a respectful ceremony, Post members also wanted worthy containers to hold these veterans' ashes.

Post 193 turned to young people being kept behind the fence at the Department of Juvenile Justice on Broad River Road.

Carpentry instructor Sam Bower has taught DJJ's woodshop four years.

"Folks from the Legion asked for something simple," Bower said. "This is what we came up with."

The wooden cubes are made from poplar, stained dark walnut and coated with seven to eight layers of glossy lacquer. Each takes six to eight hours to complete.

"One of the hardest things to make in carpentry is a cube," Bower said. "It's next to impossible to make a perfect cube."

The cubes will later be decorated with seals of each veteran's branch of service and a nameplate with their name, rank, dates of service, birth and death.

## Impact on teenagers

The teenagers must apply for a woodshop position just as they would for a job.

Over the last two years, they have crafted more than 50 urns for Post 193.

One of the craftsmen, who cannot legally be identified, reflected on being part of an honorable process.

"These (urns) are my favorite project," he said. "These mean something. My dad's a Marine, and my grandpa was in the Air Force.

"When (Sam Bower) first told me we were making urns, I didn't know what an urn was. But he told me what they were and that soldiers would be (laid to rest) in them. These are men who did something great for America. That's when it got me."

The 17-year-old said it's easy for his mind to wander when he's at peace in the shop.

"It's like I'm not even here, I'm in my own little world," he said.

## The ceremony

The two most recently constructed urns will help lay to rest the remains of U.S. Army Pvt. Joseph E. Redfern and Marine Corps Pvt. John G. Dunkley, two previously unclaimed veterans.

Their remains will be interred Friday, Sept. 30, at Fort Jackson, Strobel said, but the ritual begins in Chapin.

Early that morning, a motorcycle escort will leave the American Legion post in Chapin, along with police and a hearse provided by Kornegay & Moseley Funeral Home.

The procession will include Legionnaires from Post 193, American Legion Riders and members of the Patriot Guard.

Post 193 extended invitations to the young men who crafted the urns.

Riders will then proceed to Fort Jackson National Cemetery, where the ceremony will take place, with full military honors.

"There is little known about these two veterans beyond that they served their country and there is no family to lay them to rest with the honor and dignity they deserve," Post 193 1st Vice Commander Steven Goulet wrote. "The American Legion, Patriot Guard and many other veterans from across the state will ensure that these two receive the interment they deserve."





ROB COTTINGHAM | CHRONICLE

Sam Bower, instructor at the Department of Juvenile Justice's woodshop, stands next to two finished urns craft-

ed by one of his employees. The urns will be used to lay to rest the remains of unclaimed veterans U.S. Army Pvt.

Joseph E. Redfern and Marine Corps Pvt. John G. Dunkley at Fort Jackson National Cemetery on Sept. 30.

## Teens craft urns for unclaimed soldiers' remains

BY ROB COTTINGHAM

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