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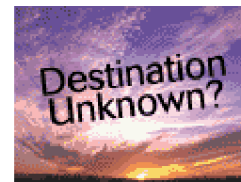
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Wednesday, 11/21/01

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Tennessee hero from another war finally laid to rest

By DENNIS CAMIRE
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Three Navy fighter jets thundering over the burial ceremony for John Anthony Feldhaus at Arlington National Cemetery yesterday were a far cry from the single-engine, propeller-driven bomber the late Navy pilot was flying when he was shot down over North Vietnam in 1966.



BILL PERRY
A caisson carries the remains of Tennessean John Anthony Feldhaus to his final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery 35 years after he was shot down in Vietnam.

But 40 of Feldhaus' relatives — including all four of his children — and friends attending his funeral with full military honors at the nation's premier military cemetery appreciated the sentiment.

"It was exceptional — the best thing they could have done," said Jeff Feldhaus of Houston, one of John Feldhaus' sons. "He got everything he deserved."

John Feldhaus of Lawrenceburg had just turned 28 when his A-1H Skyraider was hit by enemy fire over Thanh Hoa province as he was returning from a bombing mission. The military listed him as missing in action and promoted him to commander before declaring him dead after about a decade.

His body remained in the 20-foot crater from the crash until it was recovered 35 years later, and his siblings and children were told earlier this year that DNA testing had positively identified the remains as the naval aviator.

Feldhaus was the second Tennessean to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in less than two months. Lt. Cmdr. Otis Vincent Tolbert, a Navy intelligence officer born in Millington, near Memphis, and killed in the Sept. 11 attack on the Pentagon, was buried Sept. 27.

Pamela Smith of Houston, the oldest of John Feldhaus' children, was 8 years old when her father was shot down. She said the funeral "brought back the loss." She and her siblings already are older than her father was at his death.

"What I remember a lot is missing him and wondering where he was and what he was doing," she said.

Amanda Rose, who was only 4 when her father died, said it was an honor to be at the funeral.

"I really don't know much about my father — just what other family members have told me," she said.

The services began yesterday with a Mass of Christian burial in a cemetery chapel and included a ceremonial honor guard of a 23-man Navy rifle platoon, a colors unit and a band. Six sailors were pallbearers and made a precision drill out of moving the flag-draped casket from the hearse to the chapel.

After Mass, the mourners and honor guard accompanied a caisson pulled by six gray horses carrying the casket to a grave site under bright sun and brisk northern wind. The short service featured the band playing *The Navy Hymn*, the fly-over, three volleys from a seven-man rifle squad and a bugler playing taps.

The folded American flag was presented along with a note of condolence from Navy Secretary Gordon R. England to Rose and John A. Feldhaus Jr., another of the late aviator's sons. Both now live in Trenton, N.J.

Henry Feldhaus, a cousin and former mayor of Shelbyville, said the family had always held out some slim hope the naval aviator was alive until his remains were positively identified.

"He basically helped preserve our freedom — like the boys are doing today," he said.



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