

Ceremony held at Gallup State Veterans Cemetery for unclaimed veteran

Written by gallupsun

Saturday, 16 November 2019 13:32



The cremated remains of former U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark were laid to rest at a special unclaimed veterans' funeral at the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery Nov. 15.

Clark went unclaimed by family members when he passed away at the age of 69 on Sept. 14, 2016 in the Four Corners area. A small gathering of local veterans attended today's funeral, including State Representative Harry Garcia, D-Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Socorro, San Juan & Valencia, and Medal of Honor Recipient and Gallup native Hiroshi Miyamura.

At the funeral, the Tohatchi Veterans Organization Honor Guard provided a Rifle Volley and a bugle rendition of *Taps*. New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Judy Griego eulogized Clark as someone worthy of today's "final salute" provided by the funeral.

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“Former Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark should be thanked for serving and protecting our country through his service in the U.S. Army,” Griego said during her Eulogy. “Though he was alone at the end, he is not alone today. Everyone here is serving as his designated ‘family.’ Although he is no longer with us ... and though no one knew him personally ... he is not forgotten ... and not alone as he is finally laid to rest today.”

The funeral was part of the agency’s *Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program* which ensures that all honorably-discharged veterans who are unclaimed upon their deaths will be buried with military honors. Students from Mr. Geno Perez’s woodshop class at Valley High School in Albuquerque made and then donated the urn. The class had provided 22 similar urns for a Forgotten Heroes Funeral at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on Sept. 26.

According to DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva, nothing else was known about Mr. Clark other than his name and Social Security number when his cremated remains were brought to the cemetery.

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“We contacted the VA Regional Office in Albuquerque, which has the ability to track down identities of veterans based on even this basic information,” Seva said. “The VARO was able to confirm that Mr. Clark was honorably discharged as a Staff Sgt. after serving in the Army from 1965-1970.”

Seva said someone had arranged for a cremation, and it was an unnamed individual who brought the cremains to the service organizations before eventually being brought to the cemetery — which opened this past Memorial Day and is managed by DVS.

Story by Ray Seva, public information officer, N.M. Dept. of Veterans Affairs