

VANBENDEGOM

FORMER POW/MIA REMAINS ARE IDENTIFIED AFTER 47 YEARS

MIA No Longer

In October of 2014, eighty nine year old Virginia VanBendegom received word that her her sons remains had been identified. Son James had been missing since February 1967. He was now coming home.

VETERANS DAY BURIAL IN HIS HOME TOWN

As the day began, the first wintery blast of winter was descending over Kenosha, Wisconsin. Heavy cold rains pounded the area and temperatures were dropping. But as the funeral procession got closer to the cemetery, the rains paused. Kenosha streets were lined with those wishing to pay their final respects to their native son. Hundreds of people, veterans and civilians, gathered graveside to pay their tribute. Flanked by her 3 surviving sons, family and friends, Jim's mother Virginia walked the final yards to her sons final resting place. It had been a 47 year wait



Jim VanBendegom

Jim VanBendegom died as a result of the costliest battle in Vietnam Red Warrior history. Over 30 men died at the hands of an NVA ambush in February 1967.

Wounded and then captured by the enemy, along with 4 other Red Warriors, he was led into Cambodia, where he later died from his wounds.



Left, 89 year old mother of Jim VanBendegom, Virginia, receives her son's flag.

Photo by Brian Passino, AP CamearawsStarTribune photo



GRAVESIDE: The family gathers for a full military honor salute to James Van Bendegom. Hundreds gathered from all over the U.S. to pay their respect.



JIM'S CASKET: This simple silver casket holds the remains of Red Warrior Jim VanBendegom. Jim was a member of Bravo Company in 1967.



RESPECT ALONG THE PROCESSION: Sommers, Wisconsin firefighters form a flag draped arch for the procession to drive under.

Red Warriors pay respects

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Hundreds of people respectfully attended the burial of Red Warrior Jim VanBendegom. The cemetery grounds were packed by mourners, and South Eastern Wisconsin veteran organizations were on hand as flag bearers and honor guards. Also attending were nearly two dozen RED WARRIORS from our association. Some had traveled great distances to be there. There were even two who served with Jim VanBendegom. Representatives from Headquarters company of the 1/12th from Ft. Carson, Colorado also attended. The main body of present day Red Warriors are currently serving in Afghanistan. They are due to come home soon.

HUNDREDS GATHER GRAVESIDE



* The Red Warriors Vietnam Association presented a wreath and placed it at the head of Jim VanBendegom's casket.



A contingent of current Red Warriors from Ft. Carson talk with the 2 dozen Vietnam era Red Warriors who travelled to Kenosha. They made the trip from Colorado to honor Jim VanBendegom

HUNDREDS TURN OUT TO SEND JIM HOME



Some mourners still wore Jim's MIA Bracelet.



Top: Members of the Sommers Village Fire Department salute as Jim's hearse passes by.

Top: The funeral procession began in heavy rains, but they quit along route to the cemetery.

Below: Red Warriors past and present flank Virginia VanBendegom.

Below: Veteran groups from SE Wisconsin were on hand.