

Ahlmeyer finally home

SUNY athlete killed in Vietnam will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery

KINGSTON — It will be exactly 38 years to the day of his death that the remains of 1966 SUNY New Paltz alumnus and U.S. Marine Heinz Ahlmeyer are laid in their final resting place today at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia with full military honors.



Ahlmeyer

On May 10, 1967, Ahlmeyer, a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps, and three other U.S. servicemen — Marine Sgt. James Neil Tycz of Milwaukee, Navy corpsman Malcolm Miller of Tampa, Fla. and Marine Lance Cpl. Samuel Sharp of San Jose, Calif. — were killed in action on Hill 665 near Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

AHLMAYER WAS presumed dead and missing in action, his fate unknown due to the lack of cooperation from the Vietnamese government.

That all changed early this year when all four men were positively identified and their remains were released to the United States.

During his years at New Paltz, Ahlmeyer was a stand-out player for the Hawks men's soccer team, played on the baseball team and swam the backstroke for the swimming team.

In addition to Ahlmeyer's sister, Irene Healea of Watertown, Tenn., today's ceremony will be attended by a number of his teammates from the men's soccer team, including Gino Ventriglia of Highland and Dutchess County resident

Rich Lotze, as well as Al Miller, the team's coach, and Stuart Robinson, New Paltz's current athletic director and men's soccer coach.

New Paltz president Steven Poskanzer is also expected to attend.

"THE NEW PALTZ college community was clearly enriched by Heinz Ahlmeyer's presence on this campus," Poskanzer said. "He touched so many lives here and is remembered with great affection and honor. We hope that we can now convey our gratitude to his family and ensure his spirit will always be very much alive at New Paltz."

The college plans to honor Ahlmeyer's memory at a special ceremony during Alumni Weekend in October that will include many of those teammates from the 1965 squad.

Additionally, the team will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of its 1965 championship season.

As a tribute to his memory, classmates rallied years ago to create the Heinz Ahlmeyer Award, which the college presents annually to an athlete that demonstrates dedication, perseverance and service beyond self, and has been an inspiration to teammates and fellow students.

"It is considered the most prestigious honor to be bestowed upon any athlete at New Paltz," Robinson said. "It speaks of one's ability to completely dedicate to the team, giving everything despite the outcome, not only in competition, but every aspect of student life."

Ahlmeyer was a native of Pearl River and attended Pearl River High where he played baseball, football and soccer.

After graduating from New Paltz in June 1966, Ahlmeyer entered the Officer's Candidate School in Quantico, Va.

He began his tour of duty on May 9, 1967, one day before he was killed at age 23.

His name is engraved on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. and on a flagpole in Braunsdorf Park in Pearl River.

Friends plan to hold a ceremony on Sept. 17 on the Central Avenue field in Pearl River where Ahlmeyer once played football.