



Lannom laid to rest and other MIAs remembered



IN MEMORY OF — Charlotte Shaw remembered her late husband, Lt. Richard “Tito” Lannom, during a funeral service held in memory of the sailor at Discovery Park of America Saturday.



SHOW OF SUPPORT — Rolling Thunder TN Chapter 6 member (from left) Jim Phelps, American Legion Riders Post 55 member Randy Edwards, and RT members Lindsey and Belinda Brockwell were on hand for the day’s events.



POSTING COLORS — Members of VFW Post 4862 posted the colors during the monument unveiling at Discovery Park Saturday morning. A bronze rosette was added to the monument to reflect Lannom’s KIA status.

By KAREN CAMPBELL
Press Reporter

“Laid to rest” is perhaps never more appropriately uttered than when referencing the burial of a sailor who for decades was Missing in Action. On Saturday, March 2, 2019 — 51 years and a day since contact was lost over Vietnam — Lt. Richard Clive “Tito” Lannom finally returned home to Union City and his final resting place.

Activities of the day included a morning unveiling of the updated monument on the grounds of Discovery Park of America that changed Lannom’s status from MIA to KIA. After the unveiling was a time of visitation with Lannom’s widow Charlotte Shaw, nephews John and Ted Lannom and other family members. Following was a memorial service that reflected the naval commander’s love of country and great faith, concluding with a time at the graveside with full military honors and a three-aircraft flyover.

Throughout the day, the reminder came that while the focus was on Lannom, there is a need to continue to hope for those servicemen who served and remain missing.

Since March 1, 1968, only two and a half years after her marriage to the man she knew as “Tito,” she had lived with the unknown. That was the day Lannom’s heroic act of volunteering for a dangerous mission — off an aircraft carrier, in the dark of night, over mountains and with no communications — resulted in what is now known to be his tragic end.

“He looked fear and death in the face,” she said of his willingness to step up when others had declined, “and honor won out.”

In late 2017, a Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) team excavated a crash site on the remote island of Tra Ban. Shaw, in remarks during the memorial service, spoke of the harrowing nature of the two-and-a-half-hour journey each day up steep limestone cliffs in poor weather conditions that the search team endured to ensure that Lannom was found. In Hawaii, DNA and evidence discovered at the crash site were used to officially identify his remains on Sept. 25, 2018. She expressed gratitude for the “lengths they are going to” to ensure more service members are being recovered.

“Today is bigger than one hero’s homecoming,” she reminded the standing-room-only audience that filled Discovery Park’s great hall and extended to fill each subsequent floor. “We are also here to remember those whose remains have not yet been found.”

The news of Lannom’s identification did not reach Shaw immediately. She had married Jackie Shaw and for 40 years their blended family had claimed Tito as an extended member. In remarks at the unveiling, Charlotte’s son Jason Brownlee said it was an August visit to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. last year and an etching he posted on social media that finally allowed for the connections to be made and Shaw to ultimately receive official



BAGPIPE SALUTE — J. Stephen Sanders of the Memphis area provided bagpipe music during the monument unveiling Saturday at DPA in UC. The monument now reflects Lannom’s KIA status.



FLAG LINE — When a service member is killed, at the request of family, members of veteran organizations provide a flag line. Patriot Guard, Combat Veterans, American Legion Riders, and Rolling Thunder stood guard Saturday.



IN APPRECIATION OF — Nathan Cross, 17, and his sister 8-year-old Lilly, of Martin offered appreciation to Lannom’s widow, Charlotte Shaw, at the sailor’s burial at East View Cemetery Saturday afternoon.

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SERVICE AND SACRIFICE — Charlotte Shaw was presented with the flag that was draped across the casket of her late husband, Lt. Richard “Tito” Lannom, during his burial service held at East View Cemetery in Union City Saturday afternoon. Lannom was a pilot in the U.S. Navy when his plane was shot down 51 years ago during the Vietnam War. Lannom was declared MIA until his remains were identified in 2018. Photos by Jennifer Cross

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