

BLUE WATER SHOPPER

'WELCOME HOME, SHIPMATE'

Pearl Harbor sailor is laid to rest at Lakeside Cemetery

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TIMES HERALD

Under blue skies and with birds singing in the trees, Port Huron's Fred Jones came home.

Jones, who died aboard the USS Okla-homa during the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, until recently was in-terred in Hawaii



Fred Jones

with other unidentified casualties of the bombing. His remains were identified by the U.S. Navy and his body was brought back to Lakeside Cemetery in Port Huron for burial on Saturday.

People with American flags lined the route of

the funeral procession along the St. Clair River from Kares-Simpson Funeral Home. A large crowd gathered at the cemetery to pay their respects as Jones was buried with military honors.

Helen Kellie Cosner is Jones' granddaughter. She came from Seattle, Wash-ington — where Jones' descendants live — to be in Port Huron for the service. "I'm so happy," she said. "It's over-whelming, the support and the fact that he's home."

"I don't have words to say,"

She received an American flag that had draped Jones' simple coffin. The flag, she said, would go in a special place.

Sue Nichols, of Burton, also received a flag that she held close to her chest. Jones is her great-uncle.

"It's overwhelming," she said. "It's amazing. I'm so blessed because all these people showed up."

She said she felt both sad at her great-uncle's death, but also joyous that his body had been returned to Port Hu-ron.

"I'm overwhelmed by it all," she said. Fred Jones was 30 years old when he died. He had joined the U.S. Navy in 1929 and had attained the rank of machinist mate first class.

Mike Phillips came with family from Port Sanilac for the ceremony honoring his great-great-uncle.

"He's family and he served our coun-



The Rev. Thomas Seppo, chaplain for the St. Clair County Sheriff's Office, looks on during military ceremonies Saturday for Pearl Harbor sailor Fred M. Jones.

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Helen Kellie Cosner speaks with James Hiller after the military service for Jones. Jones was Cosner's grandfather.

try," he said. "It's the right way to show respect."

Dr. Roderick Baltzer, from Cheboygan, said Jones was his great-uncle. He said he was contacted by a Navy forensic scientist about finding a female relative so a DNA match could be attempted.

"I think it's fabulous that the United States Navy is still searching for these boys," he said, his voice choking with emotion.



Dr. Roderick Baltzer of Cheboygan, right, speaks with John Minor. Baltzer is the great-nephew of Fred M. Jones.

Many of the people at the short ceremony wore veteran's uniforms or insignia, ball caps with "Army" or "Navy" covering gray hair.

James Hiller, from Clyde Township, was in his U.S. Coast Guard uniform. A veteran of the 1957 Northwest Passage expedition aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Storis, he said he had to be there. "That's a brother," he said. "And I did visit Pearl Harbor and went aboard the memorial."

"It's just wonderful that we get one of our brothers back and he's where he should be."

Ron Graham, who served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, brought his grandchildren, Jacob, 13, and Lauren Behrendt, 11, to witness the ceremony.

"I'm never going to get a chance again to pay respects to someone of this caliber," the Port Huron Township resident said.

"And I wanted them to come," he said, motioning to his grandchildren. "This is going to be a historic day, some-thing they're never going to see again, and I wanted them to be a part of it."

John Minor, of Port Huron, said the sacrifice by Fred Jones and others of his generation was significant.

"That Sunday morning, he had no idea what was going to happen to him," he said.

World War II veterans, he said, "are dying. They are in their 90s. Somebody has to remember them."

Pigeon Kris Hill of Avoca volunteered her services, playing a haunting version of "Amazing Grace" as six white doves soared into the sky above the cemetery.

"I isn't every day that we get to pay our respects and have a victim of Pearl Harbor and someone who was a martyr," he said.

"This is a great honor to me," Hunt said. "That's why I brought my son."

His son, Ian, is 11.

"Probably the same thing that my dad, said: To honor him," Ian said. Lisa Young, of Port Huron, said she was at the ceremony to honor Fred Jones and also in memory of her father, Harrison Richard Young, who served in the U.S. Army and who portrayed an elderly James Ryan in the film, "Saving Private Ryan."

"My father would be here with me if he was here," she said. "He used to meet up with his Army buddies from all over the world once a year."

Petty Officer Glenn Berry, of the U.S. Naval Air Reserve Center at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Harrison Township, spoke during the ceremony. Berry closed his remarks with a salute and a simple, "It is with pride that we say, 'Welcome home, shipmate.'"

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