

ID error in Vietnam vet exhumation

by UPI

CALVERTON, N.Y. -- Federal officials say the exhumation of a Vietnam veteran in a mistaken identity case may be the first ever such case at a national cemetery. Officials at Calverton National Cemetery matched Bronx native William Hayes' name and Social Security number to a Vietnam veteran honorably discharged in 1970 and buried him with full military honors. However, the William Hayes from the Bronx was mistaken for a William Hayes from Harlem, The New York Times reported. The Marines gave the Bronx Hayes an "other than honorable" discharge forbidding military honors. The Harlem Hayes served in the Army and was a highly decorated Vietnam veteran discharged in 1970. He is five years younger than the Bronx Hayes. The funeral director at Calverton found the error when the Harlem Hayes died Sept. 30 and cemetery officials said the name, rank, birth date and Social Security number matched a William Hayes already interned at the military cemetery. Bronx officials said it was an obvious case of mistaken identity. "Whether by fraud or mistake, down the line, I have no idea," the Times quoted one official as saying. "We've never seen anything like this happen before, and hope it never happens again," Calverton director Michael Picerno said.

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