Sergeant First Class Marvin J. Fogelhut

Hometown: Brooklyn, New York
Entered Service: June 29th, 1953
Unit: 78th Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion
Rank: Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army
Cemetery: Plot 2, Row 8, Grave 602
          Cypress Hill National Cemetery
          Brooklyn, New York

May 15, 1931 - June 29, 1953
Before the War

On May 15, 1931, Marvin Jerome Fogelhut was born to Dorothy and Samuel Fogelhut in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York.

Samuel Fogelhut immigrated from Austria as a teenager in 1909. On September 14, 1929 he married Dorothy ‘Dotty’ Levinger, the daughter of Austrian immigrants. The 1930 census shows the couple living with Samuel’s brother, David, a garment worker. Samuel owned a candy store. Marvin (listed in the 1940 federal census as Maxmin) was born in 1931, followed by sister Vivian four years later. The family were Orthodox Jews.

Coming of age during World War II, Marvin enlisted with the New York National Guard on October 13, 1948. Here he served with the 245th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion in Battery B.

As a result of the downsizing of the U.S. military following World War II, many national guard units were called up to serve in Korea. On August 14, 1950, the unit was federalized and served in the Korean War. They became integrated into the 78th Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion.

On July 3, 1952 Marvin married Chanda Hylander of Newark, New Jersey. Fogelhut was Jewish and Hylander was Christian, in an age when these marriages were less common. In 1953, Chanda gave birth to a daughter, Sharon, whom Marvin never met.

Military Experience

Fogelhut served in Korea as a member of the U.S Army’s 78th Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion. The unit served two functions. First, it provided air defense around enemy targets, such as air fields or bases. Second, the unit was mobile. It would follow the military and provide anti-aircraft support. Early in the war, the unit largely focused on mobile operations, but by 1953, their primary mission was to defend key bases.

As was common practice during this phase of the war, in June 1953, Fogelhut and other members of his unit were granted a five-day rest break in Japan.
On June 18, 1953, Marvin was a passenger on a C-124A Globemaster transport traveling from Tachikawa Air Base, Japan to Korea. He was killed when the aircraft crashed about three miles from Tachikawa. The crash received international coverage and was reported in many press outlets from small newsrooms to *Life Magazine*. Its June 29, 1953, issue deemed the crash, “the world’s worst air disaster.” Seven crew members and 122 passengers perished in the accident. There were no survivors.

Right: Men arriving in Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan for R&R, January 1, 1951. Fogelhut was returning to Korea from five days of rest and relaxation when his plane crashed. National Archives and Records Administration (111-SC-355607).


Commemoration

The severity of the crash and resulting fire made it challenging to identify remains. Fogelhut was identified in part due to his wedding ring and a particular signet ring that had been given to him by his parents.

As his wife, Chandra Fogelhut was given the legal authority to decide what to do with his remains.

His mother Dorothy disagreed. In a series of letters, Dorothy Fogelhut begged everyone, from the Memorial Division of the U.S. Army to President Dwight D. Eisenhower to ensure he would be, “buried as a Jew with the star of David.” She also expressed a desire for him to be buried overseas to spare everyone the heartache of “burying a much beloved, only son.”

The realities of the changing battle lines in Korea removed the option of the overseas cemeteries. In the end, the decision was left solely in the hands of his widow. Sergeant First Class Fogelhut was buried in September 1953 at the Cypress Hill National Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, with a Star of David on his grave.
Bibliography


Ahrens, Sharon. E-mail messages to author. July 23, 2018 - August 1, 2018.


Crowe, Corporal Hubert L. Men unload from the bush which brought them from Tachikaya [sic] AFB to the.... January 2, 1951. National Archives and Records Administration (111-SC-355607). Image.


Marvin Jerome Fogelhut, Individual Deceased Personnel File, Department of the Army.


Bibliography (con't)


