AFA Plans No Rite For Viet Casualty

(See Pasquale Marranzino's Column, Page 31)

If the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs plans a memorial for its first graduate to die in combat, it's a secret.

An Air Academy spokesman late Monday said, "It's still too early to make any statement. We will be happy to let the news media know as things develop."

1st Lt. Valmore W. Bourque Jr., 28, who was graduated from the Academy in 1960, was killed Sunday when the C-123 transport plane he was piloting was shot down by Viet Cong Communists about 100 miles northeast of Saigon. Seven other American servicemen also died in the crash.

Lt. Bourque's wife, Linda, and the couple's 2-year-old daughter, Wendy, live in Colorado Springs. She was notified in a Defense Department telegram that her husband was "missing in action."

Bart Holaday, cadet wing commander at the Air Academy, Monday told the Associated Press, "Although our deepest sympathy goes out to his wife and child, there hasn't been a tremendous reaction here at the Academy. This is for two reasons.

"One, he is not the first Academy graduate to fight in Viet Nam. We have a number of graduates over there.

"And, two, we here realize better than most that whenever there's fighting involved there is also the chance of death involved. We have a greater appreciation of those who are serving their country in Viet Nam. This brings the war in Viet Nam closer to us, but there hasn't been a great reaction here."

Contacted at the family home in South Hadley, Mass., by the AP, Bourque's father said he did not feel bitter about his son's death.

"It struck me so quickly," he said, "we don't really feel bitter—No. The only thing I feel bad about is to think Val went to the Air Force Academy and naturally it cost the Government lots of money to educate the boy.

"Now, in only three and one-half years, he isn't around any more. That's actually all I have to say."

Courtesy Mrs. Marranzino
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