A MEMORIAL TO VALMORE WILLIAM BOURQUE
1936 - 1964

Twenty five years ago this week my husband's plane was shot down in Vietnam. It was to have been his last flight before coming home. The world crashed in on Wendy and me.

During those years in the 60s, it was not possible as a war widow to speak up and defend his being there. No one wants war, and the pain of loss had to be borne silently amid all the loud, sometimes "violent" protests for peace. I'll never forget the signs of protestors outside the classroom where I taught at the University of Washington which read, "American Officers are Murderers."

One of his diary entries read, "Linda, it something happens to me I want you to know that it was important that we are here. I have seen communism and it doesn't work. It is terrible what it does to crush people's spirits. Freedom is so necessary, I want that for others. But I don't want to die."

He may have had a different view of the war later. But what is important to me is that in three years this man gave me a daughter, he started me off in my art career, and he gave me his ability to forgive himself and start over after failing. By his sacrifice, I learned the value of committing my time, money, or life to people and worthy ideals.

God has been faithful to Wendy and me. He gave us a new family to love and to love us. He brought people into my life who have supported and encouraged me to develop my faith. God never left me alone to wallow in grief, but has walked with me out of that grief.

I thank God for this man - for his life and for his sacrifice. And I thank God for God's faithfulness to me.

Please pray for healing and understanding for all those who lived through that difficult war.

Linda Sheppard