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Newsclipping: Presumed killed: But the reminders and memories linger

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U-B photos by John Froshauer

Harry and Esther Francisco with a picture of their son, Major San Dwayne Francisco.

Presumed killed

But the reminders and memories linger

By DEBBIE CAFAZZO
Of the Union-Bulletin

There's a big, black granite wall in Washington, D.C., a plain white marker atop an empty grave in Arlington National Cemetery and an aching, empty spot in the hearts of two Walla Walla County parents.

Those stark stone reminders, at the national Vietnam War Memorial and at Arlington, are all that's left of U.S. Air Force Major San Dwayne Francisco. Those reminders and the memories carried by his Burbank parents, his Seattle widow Kay and their 19-year-old son Tod.

Francisco, a first lieutenant and fighter bomber pilot when he was shot down in an escort mission over Vietnam Nov. 25, 1968, is one of the many persons listed by the United States government as unaccounted for in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The Pentagon lists 2,491 military and civilian personnel in that category.

Officially, Francisco, like nearly all of the missing, has had his classification changed from MIA (Missing in Action) to Presumed Killed in Action (PKIA). That change came in 1978, 10 years after Francisco was shot down.

Pentagon spokesman Major Bob Shields

promoted in military rank and salary as if he were on active duty. But he is not.

If Francisco's aircraft had not been shot down, he would have met his wife in Hawaii the next week. An ROTC student who trained to be a teacher at Central Washington University, Francisco was the only biological child of Harry and Esther. They also have two adopted daughters, both married.

Perhaps the worst part of the POW/MIA family ordeal is *not knowing*. Not knowing for certain whether he is dead or alive.

"We don't want sympathy for us but concern for the unaccounted 2,400 men," says Esther Francisco. "This should be brought before the public again before we get involved in another armed conflict."

It could happen anywhere, she notes: in Chad, in El Salvador.

When the United States pulled its last troops out of Vietnam in 1975, Harry Francisco says, it "just bailed out and left" its missing soldiers behind. President Gerald Ford, speaking only days before the April, 1975, Saigon evacuation, told Americans the Vietnam War was finished "as far as American troops are concerned."

A 24-year-old Kennewick man was in fair and stable condition at St. Mary's Community Hospital Saturday night.

County Superior Court if an unbiased jury can be found. Otherwise the trial will have to be moved. Judge Robert Day from Benton and Franklin coun-

and Penrose Street when he lost control of his car, Walla Walla police said. The car went through a fence and stopped in the backyard of a house at 904 Stadium Drive.