



In Memory of my husband: Michael D. Chwan, Captain, USAF

October 26, 1938 - September 30, 1965

Panel 2E – Line 99 on The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Interred at Arlington National Cemetery on April 16, 1985

In 1965, fifty-two years ago, I kissed my pilot husband good-bye, feeling confident that we would see each other in 90 days, the time of his assignment to a base in Ubon, Thailand.

That 90 days stretched to 19 ½ years before a handful of remains were finally returned to American soil in 1985 for burial at Arlington National Cemetery – and finally, there was closure.

Six months after his plane was shot down over North Vietnam, our daughter Michele was born and grew into young womanhood without the love, guidance and care of her missing father.

Our patriotic military personnel who serve their government sincerely believe that they are acting in the highest tradition of helping an ally fight for freedom and the right of self-determination in various countries all over the world wherever they are ordered to go.

As a military widow, I can tell you that the price of service in these wars that are not for our country's benefit is paid in grim coin. In my opinion the loss of our best, brightest and most promising young people is a travesty and a drain on our American society. The only ones who benefit are the arms and materiel manufacturers.

I pray that someday our government leaders will finally come to realize and understand that in war there are no winners. Battered, battle-weary soldiers and their bereft family members are then left to pick up the pieces, heal the emotional and physical wounds and strive to carry on when promised services and care are sometimes sub-par or non-existent.

The Wall – the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. - is sacred ground. Seeing 58,000+ names of Americans who died in service in Vietnam is sobering and tragic. It is a reminder that all these American citizens died not for glory or any good reason except for a false idea that democracy for an ally could be gained through our going to war for them.

Still the South Vietnamese could not sustain after all our efforts, expense and losses and fell anyway after so many deaths on all sides: North, South, Laotian, American and Russian.

When will we ever learn? When will we ever learn.....

With gratitude for those who served, came back and now stand with others working for peace with their hopes and intention for a world without war.

Dana Chwan, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Author: The Reluctant Sorority - The Life, Loves and Loss of Three Vietnam War Widows

My website is: www.thereluctantsorority.com