

## Man waits for answers on brother missing in action

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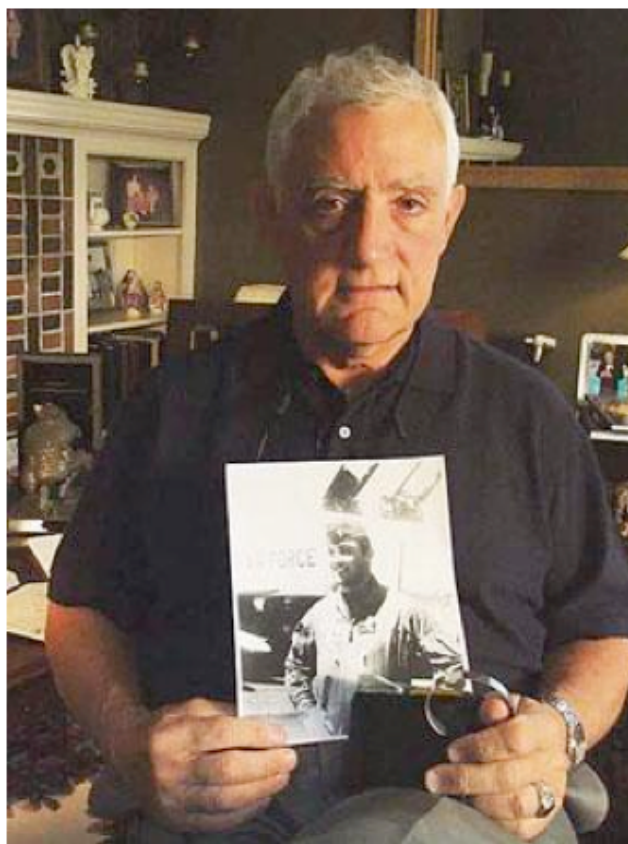
By CATHERINE KAVANAUGH  
For The Oakland Press

ROYAL OAK — When the telegram came in October 1965, the family of F-4C fighter co-pilot Martin Massucci began dealing with the dreaded news that he was missing in action on a reconnaissance mission about 79 miles west of Hanoi.

The 25-year-old lieutenant's mother sank into grief and died of a stroke two years later at age 56. His father never stopped searching for answers about the lone parachute another crew saw descend behind a hill before his son's plane crashed from anti-aircraft fire.

"That was his drive until he died at 90. The two of us spent so much time going through data," Arthur Massucci said of his father. "The fellow my brother had been flying with has been identified. They found the engine and later dental records. It makes sense my brother cleared the crash site, but what happened after that? Forty-five years later we're still trying to find out."

Massucci explains how he and his family came to grips with his brother's disappearance in the documentary "Our Vietnam Generation," which was produced and directed by former Royal Oak restaurateur Keith Famie.



Arthur Massucci of Royal Oak explains how he and his family came to grips with the news his brother, Martin, was MIA. Submitted photo

“That interview was the toughest thing I have ever done,” Massucci said. “It brought back so many feelings. My brother and I were only three years apart. We went to high school together. We played high school sports together. We were pretty tight.

“He got into the Air Force prior to being drafted. He was the kind of person who had to be on the front line. If he wasn’t part of the action, he was upset. He was a character. He liked being on the edge. He went into the Air Force and I went to college and life went on.”

Everything changed Oct. 1, 1965, when Martin Massucci’s plane was shot down a month to the day before his 26th birthday. His mother’s health declined quickly.

“That’s what killed my mother,” Arthur Massucci said. “I say she died of a broken heart. She’s a casualty of the war we didn’t count.”

“Detroit’s Vietnam Generation” also looks at veterans suffering from haunting memories and wounds as well as how society viewed them upon their return.

“Talk about something that’s needed,” Massucci said. “When every war ended the world celebrated, but this one just ended. No thank yous, no nothing. To honor these guys in any way, you can never do it enough.”

State Sen. John Pappageorge, R-Troy, a retired colonel and West Point graduate, also describes a homecoming insult. He served two tours and was awarded the Gallantry Cross and a Bronze Star. Fourteen of his classmates died in Vietnam. He tells a story about sitting at the airport in his full uniform and a stranger asking about his medals.

“I told her what I’d done to earn them, that they were the result of some heavy fighting in Vietnam,” Pappageorge says in the documentary. “‘Oh,’ ” she replied. “‘Well, I’m proud of you anyway.’ ”

He talks about the misconception that American soldiers were responsible for the final outcome of the war and how he is proud of his service and the sacrifices of fellow soldiers. The documentary “Our Vietnam Generation” will air on Detroit Public Television in February.

<http://www.theoaklandpress.com/articles/2011/01/29/news/doc4d44c2cf3bcd9858521052.txt?viewmode=fullstory>