

Juan Rivera-Martinez, 51

Jan. 22, 1946 - July 13, 1997

HARLAN - Juan Rivera-Martinez, son of Elogio and Guillamera Martinez Rivera, was born Jan. 22, 1946, in Caguas, Puerto Rico. He joined the Air Force when he was 18 years old and was stationed at Offutt Air Base.

June 26, 1965, he married Fran Anne Rief in Woodbine. Thirty days after being married, he was called to Vietnam to serve his country. He returned home after his tour to a loving wife and a brand new baby girl, Patricia Anne Rivera-Martinez. His next tour brought him closer to home. He served at the Ramey Air Force Base in Puerto Rico. It was here that he was blessed with another daughter, Donna Marie Rivera, and a son, Ricardo Juan Rivera. He was then stationed in Taiwan while Fran and the children made their home in Woodbine. After serving in Taiwan for a year, he served his country in Cheyenne, WY for 2 1/2 years. He and his family were then sent to Terceida, Azores, an island off the coast of Portugal. His military career took him and his family all over the world. After serving two years in Terceida, Juan and his family were sent to the Aviano Air Force Base at the foot of the Alps in northern Italy. He returned to the United States and spent five years at the Altus Air Force Base in Altus, OK. He then was called to serve - the NATO Base in Naples, Italy. This was difficult for Juan because Donna graduated from Naples and went on to college and Ricardo was transported back to the United States with his mother when he became ill. A short time later, he was reunited with his family. They bought a house in Plattsmouth, NE, and it was here that all three children were married and began families of their own. He died July 13, 1997, at Myrtue Memorial Hospital at age 51 years, five months and 21 days.

Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by his granddaughter, Cossette. Survivors include his wife, Frances Rivera of Harlan; his children, Patricia (Gerald) Marshall of Thomas, OK; Donna Marie (Lincoln) Burnham of Vernon, British Columbia and Ricardo Rivera of Papillion, NE; eight grandchildren; his sisters, Ampara Caballero, Marie Rivera and Sonia Rivera all of Caguas, Puerto Rico, and other relatives.

Funeral services were held July 16, 1997, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Logan, with Elder Kenneth Moore officiating. Burial was in the Harlan Cemetery with military rites conducted by the American Legion, Helmer Reyelt Post #150 and the Shelby County V.F.W. Post #941 of Harlan. Casket bearers were John Rief, Michael Rief, Fred Black, Butch Marshall, Mark Wallen and Lincoln Burnham.