

Family still waiting

VIGNERY, from Page 1

a life to live.”

His wife Judy said Monday morning that the first call came on Sunday evening from a *Topeka Capital Journal* reporter who wouldn’t say how the newspaper had gotten her son’s name. People had been asked to pray for Jeff during Sunday church services, Mrs. Vignery said, and someone from Goodland may have called the newspaper.

“I wish now I hadn’t talked to them,” she said. “You’re so upset anyway that you don’t think about it.”

Ron Vignery said Jeff’s sister Jessica, a junior at Goodland High School, has not been approached by reporters, but other relatives have. He said Jeff, 27, has an older sister Jennifer, 30, and a younger brother,

Joshua, 19, both of whom live outside Goodland.

Ron Vignery, a former Navy lawyer, said Jeff’s commanding officer called from Whidbey Island, Wash., on Monday night, asking if the family wanted a Naval officer to come to Goodland. He said they are optimistic that Jeff, whose wife Julie lives at the Naval Air Station at Whidbey Island, will return home soon.

“We think it’s going to turn out all right,” he said.

Vignery said the family has received a lot of support from Goodland people.

“We’ve received hundreds of phone calls from friends in Goodland,” he said. “That’s the reason I wanted to move back: Small towns pull together. It’s a tremendously good feeling.”

Winter wheat crop struggling

WICHITA (AP)—Hugoton farmer Bob Parsons didn’t plant winter wheat on his parched land last fall until after late rains broke a long drought.

And when natural gas prices soared, he couldn’t justify the cost of pumping water to irrigate 300 acres he had

seeded into wheat. On other fields, he put in barely enough water to sprout the crop.

So Parsons was not surprised this spring that the wheat he seeded on those 300 acres did not come up until late February and early March.

Chinese won’t say whether they boarded plane

CHINA, from Page 1

blamed on the American plane. The pilot of the Chinese fighter parachuted out and remains missing.

Zhu refused to say whether Chinese officials had boarded the plane, which is packed with hi-tech surveillance equipment. But he dismissed U.S. claims that the plane is sovereign American territory and therefore cannot be boarded.

“If this plane is sovereign American territory, how did it land in China?” Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu said. “There’s no question of immunity at all. Therefore China has all rights to handle this case.”

Zhu said China has a right to conduct “an investigation” into the collision.

Zhu said Washington should “admit its mistakes” and “make an explanation to the Chinese government and people on this incident instead of raising this or that demand or try to shirk its responsibilities.”

Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who expressed “great concern” for the Chinese pilot, was quoted by Zhu as saying, “The responsibility fully lies with the American side. We have full evidence for that.” Jiang called for an end to U.S. surveillance flights off China’s coast “so as to prevent similar acci-

dents from happening again,” Zhu said.

U.S. military officials say the Chinese undoubtedly boarded the plane and examined its sophisticated equipment. U.S. Ambassador Joseph Prueher, interviewed on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” said: “We have every reason to think the Chinese have been all over the airplane.”

The collision occurred about 60 miles southeast of Hainan, a popular tourist destination 400 miles west of Hong Kong. The U.S. military says the EP-3 was on a routine surveillance mission in international air space. After its left wing and left-most of its four engines were damaged, the pilot put out a distress call and landed at the nearest air field on Hainan.

U.S. officials have complained that China is slow in responding to diplomatic contacts. It’s not unusual for China’s secretive bureaucratic system to take a long time to make decisions, especially where the military or na-

tional security concerns are involved.

U.S. officials say China did not respond to an offer to help in the search for the missing Chinese pilot.

A sailor at a facility adjacent to the Lingshui base said Monday the plane was standing empty on the runway and the crew had been taken to a military guesthouse.

China says the American pilot caused the crash by suddenly veering into the Chinese jet, one of two sent up to follow the plane into Chinese airspace.

Aviation Machinist’s Mate Senior Chief Nicholas Mellos of Ypsilanti, Mich.

Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Ramon Mercado of Moreno Valley, Calif.

Lt. Shane Osborn of Norfolk, Neb.

Lt. (j.g.) Richard Payne, whose home of record was not listed.

Cryptologic Technician 2nd Class Kenneth Richter of Staten Island, N.Y.

Lt. Marcia Sonon of Lenharstville, Pa.

Lt. (j.g.) Jeffery Vignery of Goodland, Kan.

Aviation Machinist 2nd Class Wendy Westbrook of Rock Creek, Ohio

Cryptologic Technician 3rd Class Rodney Young of Katy, Texas

MARINE CORPS

Sgt. Richard Pray of Geneseo, Ill.

AIR FORCE

Senior Airman Curtis Towne of Hayward, Calif.

Navy releases names of crew members

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Navy on Monday released the names of the 24 members of the crew of the EP-3E Aries II electronic surveillance plane that landed in China after colliding with a Chinese fighter jet.

The crew are members of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One, based at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Wash.

They include 22 members of the Navy, one Air Force senior airman and a Marine Corps sergeant.

Here are the names, ranks and home of record:

Blocher of Charlotte, N.C.

Cryptologic Technician Seaman Bradford Borland, whose home of record was not listed.

Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class David Cecka of Leavenworth, Wash.

Lt. (j.g.) John Comerford of Palos Verdes Estates, Calif.

Cryptologic Technician Operator 1st Class Shawn Coursen of Valdosta, Ga.

Cryptologic Technician Collection Seaman Jeremy Crandall of Poplar Grove, Ill.

Cryptologic Technician Interpretive 1st Class Josef Edmunds of Davis, Calif.

Cryptologic Technician Interpretive 2nd Class Brandon Funk of Showlow, Ariz.

Aviation Electronics Technician 2nd Class Scott Guidry of Satellite Beach, Fla.

Cryptologic Technician 2nd Class Jason Hanser of Billings, Mont.

Lt. Patrick Honeck of La Mesa, Calif.

Lt. (j.g.) Regina Kauffman of Warminster, Pa.

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