



AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DONALD ELLIOTT.

Colonel Donald Elliott insists that the high point of his life is not necessarily marked by a single event or circumstance, but by the accumulative experiences of having served with distinction for 29 years in the United States Air Force and in his primary career as a Certified Registered Nurse-Anesthetist.

The Guyanese native, however, discusses with immense pride his role in “Desert Storm”, where he served as Director of all Aero medical Evacuation Elements in the Middle East and coordinated the return of POW’s from Iraq while leading a team of over 2,000, he coordinated and implemented deployment of Aero medical personnel to “hubs” located throughout the Middle East and established training programs for Aero medical personnel there.

Since Desert Storm, Colonel Elliott has returned to the Air Evacuation Squad at Maguire as Chief of Standard and Evaluation, where he supervised a staff of 22 Flight Nurse Examiners; later was assigned to Malcolm Grow Medical Center, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, where he retired..

The Colonel’s career in nursing began in Guyana as a Registered Nurse at the Georgetown Hospital School of Nursing in 1957. He finished his secondary education at Tutorial High School, and then worked as a cub reporter at Graphic newspaper before turning his attention to nursing.

Colonel Elliot served in the British Guiana Volunteer Force from 1953 up to the time of his departure for the United States in 1962.

On arrival in the United States in 1962, he became the first RN at Orange Memorial Hospital in New Jersey. Apart from the New York University Medical Center and many other hospitals where he worked as an operating room nurse and nurse anesthetist, Colonel Elliott was part of the vascular research team at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York that pioneered the use of Hyperbaric Chamber. His participation drew national attention and considerable media coverage. It was also at Mt. Sinai and later at Beth Israel Hospital that the young nurse helped conduct studies and uses of methadone.

In April, 1968, he enlisted in the US Air Force and completed Official Basic Training in Texas.

One of the Colonel's most memorable assignments as an Officer, took him to the 3rd US Air Force Hospital in Bien Hoa, then in the Republic of South Vietnam. There the young Lieutenant spearheaded the US Military participation in an International Medical Team that provided medical treatment to South Vietnamese locals in far-flung and dangerous outposts. Codenamed "Operation Win Hearts and Minds", the outreach program involved personnel from Australia, England and the main branches of the US Military, namely: the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines.

Over the years Colonel Elliott has continued to give of his service and expertise to communities in need, most notable in recent times was his work in Guyana as a Coordinator of the Health of the Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) training program. In 1995, the Washington-based organization launched a two-year initial program for training graduate nurses to become Nurse Anesthetists. Colonel Elliott has also been a voluntary consultant to the Guyana IDB Health Care Project at the Georgetown Hospital, where he used his vast expertise in advising on the establishment of a state-of-the-art Anesthesia Department.

Academic and professional institutions he attended includes: Jersey City State College, where he completed a BA in Health Education, and the National Defense University and Air War College.

Colonel Elliott is the father of five children, fourteen grandchildren and two great grands. He holds membership in professional organizations such as the United States Association of Military Surgeons and AANA.

As for his hobbies includes tennis and cricket, but his greatest satisfaction is spending quality time with his wife Grace and reviewing his memoirs, decorations and other evidence of his life and colorful career as an Air Force Officer and Nurse Anesthetist.

